



# Lamoille County Planning Commission

Lamoille County  
Planning Commission

Spring 2009

## Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 appropriated \$3.2 billion for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program. The program provides federal grants to local governments, Native American tribes, states, and territories to reduce energy use and fossil fuel emissions, and for improvements in energy efficiency. The program aims to assist entities with implementing strategies that:

1. reduce fossil fuel emissions reduce total energy use;
2. improve energy efficiency
3. spur economic growth and create and/or retain jobs.

The ten most populous communities in Vermont will receive a direct allocation of funds ranging from \$50-\$180,000. The State of Vermont will receive a direct allocation of approximately \$9.6 million. The State must subgrant at least 60% of this amount (\$5.76 million) to units of local government that are not eligible for direct allocations. The State has until May 26 to develop its plan for distributing the funds.

The LCPC Board of Directors has asked staff to contact municipalities and other potential partners to frame a regional energy proposal and to develop a cost estimate for implementing the proposal. Eligible activities under the program

include:

- building energy audits;
- financial incentive programs and mechanisms for energy efficiency improvements;
- performing energy efficiency retrofits;
- energy efficiency and conservation programs for buildings and facilities;
- development and implementation of transportation programs to conserve energy;
- building codes and inspections to promote building energy efficiency;
- energy distribution technologies that significantly increase energy efficiency;
- building material conservation programs
- reduction and capture of methane and greenhouse gases generated by landfills etc;
- energy efficient traffic signals and street lighting;
- renewable energy technologies on government buildings; and
- any other appropriate activity approved by the US Dept. of Energy

If you, your community, or a local business has ideas or projects that might fit with a regional program or for more information or updates about the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program and the State of Vermont's effort, please contact Bonnie Waninger at 888-4548.

## Wastewater Solutions for Vermont Communities

Vermont's long time goal of encouraging compact development in and around existing settlements and planned growth centers is challenged by a lack of wastewater treatment options. More than 200 historic village centers have no public wastewater treatment facilities. Failed septic systems are suspected to be common, and efforts to create new housing and businesses are often stymied by the lack of sewage treatment facilities. Federal grants that were once readily available for constructing large, centralized public wastewater treatment facilities have been consistently cut. How can towns prosper and grow under these circumstances? Wastewater Solutions for Communities was designed to help community leaders learn about the critical need to engage the public in the wastewater planning process. It introduces recent technological advancements in small-scale

wastewater treatment, changes in permitting, innovations in the way wastewater treatment systems can be managed, and funding options for wastewater solutions. It also provides guidance for preventing over-engineering and keeping solutions within the scale and cost range appropriate for each community. "Decentralized" approaches, the varied, fine-tuned strategies for treating and managing wastewater, may be the future of Vermont; helping solve wastewater problems and thus bringing needed housing and new business vitality to our communities. This simple and easy-to-read guide was produced by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs. The guide is available online at:

[www.dhca.state.us/Planning/SewageSolutions/WWW\\_SolutionsVermont.pdf](http://www.dhca.state.us/Planning/SewageSolutions/WWW_SolutionsVermont.pdf)

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### Upcoming meetings:

- April 28, 2009 LCPC Board of Directors, 7pm at TEGU Building in Morrisville
- May 26, 2009 LCPC Board of Directors, 7pm at TEGU Building in Morrisville
- April 29, 2009 Lamoille County Transportation Advisory Committee, 12noon at TEGU Building in Morrisville
- May 5, 2009 LVRT Advisory Committee, 3pm at TEGU Building in Morrisville
- June, 2009 Disaster Response & Recovery for Road Crews (see back page for details)



## VELCO Leads New Process for Electricity Transmission Reliability Planning

The public is invited to review and provide input on Vermont Electric Power Company's (VELCO) Long Range Transmission Plan -- Public Review Draft set for release in early April. The document is part of a collaboratively designed planning process approved by Vermont's Public Service Board (PSB) in 2007. The plan, which looks out 20 years and must be updated every three, identifies transmission upgrades that may be needed to maintain reliability and where generation and demand reduction could potentially address those reliability needs. The new 20-year planning horizon offers additional opportunities for public input and is intended to provide ample time for "full, fair and timely consideration" of alternatives to building transmission. The draft plan will be on-line and available at [www.velco.com/publicoutreach](http://www.velco.com/publicoutreach).

Public outreach related to the draft plan will be conducted during April and May. VELCO is working with the Snelling Cen-

ter for Government to design and execute an extensive statewide public outreach process, which will include traditional and electronic media to publicize the plan's release, a website to share the findings of VELCO's technical analysis and to gather public input, engagement of key regional partners, and six public forums at locations around Vermont. Please join us at one these public sessions, convened by the Snelling Center for Government:

- Tuesday, May 5 at 5:30 pm  
Sheraton Hotel, Burlington
- Thursday, May 7 at 5:30 pm  
Catamount Arts Academy, St. Johnsbury
- Monday, May 18 at 1:30 pm  
VT College of Fine Arts, Montpelier

Contact [publicoutreach@velco.com](mailto:publicoutreach@velco.com) one week in advance to arrange for ASL interpreters.

## LCPC Assists LU Middle School Place-Based Learning Project

LCPC GIS Planner Adrienne Adamek recently assisted Lamoille Union Middle-school teacher Amy Rex by providing a large-scale aerial photographic image of Johnson village. The image will be used in a "Place-Based" learning exercise.

Placed-Based learning is an educational focus on community that includes culture, history, socio-political issues and the natural and built environments. Students learn about civic responsibility, public participation, and the resolution of political issues. Seventh and eighth grade students of the Alpha Omega Team at Lamoille Union Middle School are participating in a three phase interdisciplinary unit on Vermont Communities utilizing place-based learning.

In Phase I students identified and researched their town's historical, civic, economic and environmental treasures. In Phase II students work in town groups and choose a service learning project to complete. The Johnson Town group has chosen to construct a scale model of Johnson Village that will highlight and describe the historic buildings there within. The model will be presented to the Johnson Historic Society with the intent of being used for educational purposes. In the final phase, students will engage in an in-depth research project on a particular topic or issue of a Vermont community over time.

LCPC is happy to assist with such educational opportunities as time and resources permit. Please contact LCPC if you have an idea about how we might be able to assist your class or school in a learning experience related to community development, planning, or civics.

## LCPC Transportation Data Collection Field Season Upon Us

Lamoille County Planning Commission is gearing up for field season, preparing to collect various types of transportation data.

LCPC, through the Transportation Planning Initiative agreement with the Vermont Agency of Transportation, collects highway traffic data, road surface and bridge and culvert information, and various other types of data. This information allows for tracking of trends and informed planning based on quantitative measures.

Road surface and bridge and culvert condition assessments provide valuable information to municipalities for planning and budgeting for annual road repairs and longer term improvements to the local road network. This is always good practice but in times when funding is especially tight, having an accurate inventory of infrastructure is critical to inform local decision makers of where money is best invested in roads, bridges, and culverts.

Lamoille County Planning Commission has worked with all towns and villages within the county over the years in collecting such data. LCPC's GIS database has the ability to map locations of culverts and bridges for local roads.

Having an inventory of this infrastructure updated at least every three years serves toward reduced match requirements for state-administered town highway structures and paving programs. The other requirement is that the municipality have adopted road and bridge standards.

Contact Dave at LCPC if you have questions about your transportation infrastructure inventory.

LCPC will also be operating its annual traffic count program so contact Dave if you would like traffic volumes counted on a road in your town.



## Planning Commissioners Summer Retreat

Do you serve on your Town's Planning Commission? Are you looking for an opportunity to network with other planning commissioners across the state, while gaining innovative and inspirational information to bring back to your respective community?

Consider attending the Planning Commissioners Retreat this June on Lake Fairlee! The Planning Commissioners Retreat is being coordinated by the Vermont Law School's Land Use Institute. It will be held at the Ohana camp

on Lake Fairlee, VT from Friday June 5th to Saturday June 6th. The setting is a real treat! Keynote speakers include Secretary of State Deb Markowitz and VT Law School land use professors Tim Duane and Sean Nolon. Individuals will be rewarded for their volunteerism and gain advanced training. Space will be limited to 45 attendees. For more information, visit [www.vermontlaw.edu](http://www.vermontlaw.edu)

## Congratulations to 2008 Lamoille County Better Back Roads Grant Recipients

Congratulations to the following Lamoille County municipalities that were awarded 2008 Better Back Roads grants.

- Town of Cambridge: drainage improvements on Junction Hill Road
- Town of Eden: drainage improvements on Warren Road
- Town of Elmore: Lacasse Road stabilization
- Town of Hyde Park: Cleveland Corners drainage improvements
- Town of Johnson: Gould Hill Road drainage improvements

The Better Back Road Grant program is administered by Northern Vermont Resource Conservation and Development Council located in Berlin. This annual grant program provides opportunities for municipalities and other qualified organizations to conduct road erosion inventories, develop roadway project capital budget plans, and implement road-related erosion-control projects that will have a positive impact on water quality. These projects in Lamoille County totaled almost \$40,000!

## LCPC Assisting Town of Wolcott with School Street Design Project

The Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC) is assisting the Town of Wolcott in contracting with a qualified consultant to develop a plan for School Street to help this area develop into a new village core for Wolcott. The project will take place over the next year and will include many public participation opportunities for Wolcott citizens, business owners, and property owners.

The Town of Wolcott has initiated a transformation of School Street into more of a community focal point through a series of public projects. The historic School Street steel truss bridge was restored and painted in 2008, improving the aesthetics of the entrance to School Street from Route 15. The Town Clerk's Office was relocated from Route 15 to a new building at the old school site on School Street. The railroad depot building, which houses the Wolcott Historical Society and is located behind the new clerk's office, is newly renovated. Both of these buildings border the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail which promises to be a premier recreation facility for northern Vermont.

The Vermont Route 15 corridor will likely continue to serve its role as a commercially-oriented area, but the Town envisions a quieter, mixed use environment for School Street. The development of a trailhead for the Rail Trail, and provision of attractive facilities to access the recreation fields further down School Street will tie the neighborhood together in a cohesive fashion. The town intends to maintain and enhance the historic charm of this area as they provide improved public amenities.

The School Street Plan will provide a blueprint for the town to focus new development in this area and eventually apply for Village Center Designation to help provide incentives for further historic preservation in the area. Wolcott's vision for this area is for a safe, attractive location for families and residents to visit. This project is aimed at refining and conceptualizing that vision, identifying required elements, and developing a strategic implementation plan in order to realize their goal. Please contact Dave at LCPC if you have questions about this project.

LU Middle school students measure features on an aerial photograph as part of Place-Based Learning. See the article on page 2 for more information.







## Lamoille County Planning Commission

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*"Planning for the future of Lamoille County"*

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## Workshop: Disaster Response & Recovery for Road Crews

Vermont Local Roads in partnership with Vermont Emergency Management, VTTrans, Vermont League of Cities and Towns, and select Regional Planning Commissions will offer a new workshop this summer designed to inform road crews about many topics that arise when responding to natural disasters. Road crews are often some of the first responders to such emergencies since maintaining mobility through the highway system is a fundamental element to disaster management. This workshop will draw on the experience of many seasoned professionals and answer questions such as who is the first point of contact during an emergency, whether or not it is okay to fix a road prior to FEMA approval, and clarify what costs are eligible for recovery from the various emergency-response funding sources. These daylong workshops will take place in Lyndon on June 16, and in South Burlington on June 17. Please contact Dave at LCPC if you are interested in attending.

## Way to Go! Commuter Challenge Enters 6th Year this May 4-8

Registration is now open for the sixth annual Way to Go! Commuter Challenge, which will take place May 4-8, 2009. This event encourages the use of cheaper, healthier, and more earth-friendly transportation alternatives to driving alone. Everyone who commits to walk, bike, telecommute, carpool, take the bus or use any alternative to driving solo will receive free giveaways and be entered in a drawing to win great prizes—iPods, Neuton® battery-powered mowers, Burton snowboards, overnight stays, restaurant gift certificates, yoga passes, golf and ski passes and more. Online registration is fast and easy at [www.waytogo.org](http://www.waytogo.org).

Last year nearly 3,000 Way to Go! participants saved an estimated 237,000 commuting miles, 206,000 pounds of carbon dioxide, and \$49,000 in transportation expenses. Organizers have set this year's goal to save at least 500,000 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>, so be sure to register today at [www.waytogo.org](http://www.waytogo.org).

"This event is a great opportunity for folks to accept a new way to get to work, school or anywhere else they might usually drive," said Debra Sachs of Community Climate Action, 10% Challenge, one of the event's organizers. "Way to Go! is designed to be easy and fun and encourage everyone to explore other ways than driving alone every day. Interest in commuting alternatively is sky-high and the Commuter Challenge proves that other ways to commute are indeed the 'Way to Go!'"

As in past years, businesses can compete in the "2009 Workplace Commuter Challenge" and go head-to-head with other businesses to see who can encourage the highest percentage of employees to walk, bike, telecommute, carpool or take the bus from May 4-8. The winning employers will receive awards at a ceremony on June 5.

Similarly, schools can compete with each other through the Way to Go! School Challenge.

New this year is a challenge to Vermont communities. Who will be Vermont's "greenest commuting city or town?" The winner will be decided based on the highest participation rate of residents.

Way to Go! Commuter Challenge is made possible through the generous support of area businesses and a partnership between the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Vermont Agency of Transportation, Go Vermont, Chittenden County Transportation Authority, Lake Champlain Committee, Local Motion, Campus Area Transportation Management Association, and Community Climate Action, 10% Challenge. More information on the Way to Go! Commuter Challenge is available at [www.waytogo.org](http://www.waytogo.org).

