



72nd Annual Town Officers Education Conferences

Agenda and Workshop Descriptions

April 4, 2017

Lake Morey Resort
Fairlee

April 11, 2017

Capitol Plaza Hotel
Montpelier

8:00-8:30 a.m. | Registration Open, Exhibitor Display and Light Breakfast

8:30-8:40 a.m. | Welcome: Your Key to Understanding the Day

8:40-9:30 a.m. | Session 1

Homestead and Property Tax Issues

Facilitated by Staff from PVR

Listers process homestead declarations on a weekly basis. This will be an overview of processing downloads, reporting to the State, and issues that arise as a result throughout the year.

Effective & Efficient Meeting Management

Lee Krohn, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (RPC)

Strategies from the trenches: We all have meetings, but are they meaningful and productive? Who drives our agendas? Learn tips and strategies for running effective, efficient meetings that have purpose and meaning; are reasonably structured yet citizen friendly; satisfy or exceed open meeting law requirements; remain focused on the business at hand; and conclude timely, with outcomes and direction.

9-1-1 and You!

Dawn Anderson, Tyler Hermanson, Elizabeth Tracy, Vermont Enhanced 9-1-1 Board

This workshop/open forum will provide an overview of 9-1-1 in Vermont. We will answer questions such as: Why is proper 9-1-1 addressing important? What is a PSAP? What is the difference between a dispatcher and a call-taker? What is my role as a Town Officer? And so much more ...

Records Management Best Practices for Municipal Records

Megan Wheaton-Book, Vermont State Archives and Records Administration

This workshop will provide a broad understanding of the records management program - because whatever our role in state government is, we are all responsible for records. You will walk away knowing the importance of records and information management, or RIM, and you will be able to explain the fundamental benefits of records management. The workshop will provide and update on the Vermont Local Records Program, a few resources regarding record keeping requirements, steps to conduct an inventory, and things to consider when writing your records management policy and procedure.

Drones for Community Mapping

Jarlath O'Neil-Dunne and Tayler Engel, UVM Spatial Analysis Lab

Drones are providing new ways for communities to gather information from above to support everything from resiliency planning to downtown redesigns. Come and see how drones can help provide your town with imagery and 3D models to drive better decision making.

9:40-10:20 a.m. | Session 2

Keynote: Building Unity, Direction and Priorities through Community Engagement

Paul Costello, Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD)

Have you noticed how the same volunteers do most of the work in your town? Do you feel besieged by long lists of problems or ideas for initiatives that 'someone' should undertake to address? Many towns face the same challenges of engaging their community in a way that establishes direction and leadership to advance common priorities. Paul will address a few useful ways to pull people together, to build a stronger community, to advance key projects, and to better connect to resources to help your town move forward.

10:20-10:40 a.m. | Networking and Exhibitor Display

10:40-11:50 a.m. | Session 3

Plenary: Engaging Communities in a Changing Demographic Landscape

Susan Clark, Slow Democracy and Vermont Institute for Government (VIG); Leanne Tingay, Orton Family Foundation; Ellen Rowe, UVM Extension

Every community faces similar obstacles to better connect with their members. In this interactive session, three leaders in community engagement will share Vermont-centered tips and techniques.

11:50 a.m.-12:50 p.m. | Lunch

12:50-1:40 p.m. | Session 4

Lister Forum

Todd LeBlanc, VALA

An open forum for Listers and other municipal officers interested in a group discussion of current issues facing property valuation within the State of Vermont.

How Engagement Leads to Action - that actually gets implemented - do it the Heart & Soul Way!

Leanne Tingay, Orton Family Foundation

Learn how to use Community Heart & Soul™ - a rich set of tools developed by the Orton Family Foundation to learn and discover more about their communities. These tools help to gather information and use local knowledge to develop powerful and effective plans for the future. Through this interactive and learner centered workshop, you will learn effective ways to move ideas from thought to action and see the resulting change that the community wants for their town.

Ingredients for Downtown & Village Revitalization

Gary Holloway and Lori Hirschfield, Department of Housing and Community Development and Town of Hartford
Looking for tips on revitalizing your downtown or village? This session will look at strategies that State Downtown Program uses to support local efforts, with a focus on the ingredients Hartford has used to transform Downtown White River Junction into a vibrant hub in the Upper Valley.

How to Respond to Public Records Requests

Facilitated by VLCT Municipal Assistance Center Attorneys

Are you the "custodian" of a public record? If so, then you are responsible for making a timely and effective response to a request to inspect any copy of public records under Vermont's Public Records Act. To do so, you must become familiar with definitions, exemptions, deadlines, costs, and the nuances of the law in order to avoid penalties. This introductory session will show you how to properly respond to a public records request.

Every Town Will Benefit from Statewide Parcel Mapping

Leslie Pelch, Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI)

The funded statewide parcel mapping project will create or improve parcel (tax map) data in every town in Vermont! Learn more about the current status of the project as well as how the ongoing program will continue to support the update and maintenance of parcel data. Bring your questions about how your town can use and benefit from parcel data!

1:40-2:00 p.m. | Networking, Exhibitor Display and Snack Break

2:00-2:50 p.m. | Session 5

myVTax - Introduction for Municipal Officials

Elizabeth Hunt, Jill Remick, MaryLee Woods, PVR, Tax Department

An introduction to and overview of myVTax, the online portal which is now accepting Real Estate Transaction Taxes. Learn how as Listers and Town Clerks you can work in the system.

Civil Communication in Difficult Situations

Mary Peabody and/or Ellen Rowe, UVM Extension

When people feel disrespected, it eats away at them - and their potential. In short, incivility kills helpfulness and contribution. In this session, we will review tips and strategies for dealing with difficult conversations and challenging people in ways that are healthy and civil for all parties.

Bikes Mean Business - The Economic Benefits of Bike Friendly Communities in Vermont

Emily Boedecker, Local Motion

In this session we will review the economic benefits of bicycling for communities nationally, and in Vermont. Come learn ways Vermont communities can become more bike friendly for tourism, and residents. We will go over events and policies, easy changes on the ground, and marketing.

Vermont DEC Municipal Roads General Permit

Jim Ryan, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

This workshop will cover the forthcoming Municipal Road General Permit (MRGP), one of the several new Vermont Clean Water Act (Act 64) requirements. The presentation will include a discussion of the new draft MRGP Framework document; the latest MRGP practice standards and implementation triggers; MRGP timelines; road erosion inventory; the implementation plan and schedules spreadsheet template; and semi - annual compliance reporting.

Census Data for Your Community: An Overview of Data Resources and Tips for Data Storytelling

Michael Moser, Vermont State Data Center

Participants with any level of data experience/interest are invited to learn about community - level data sets available through the Census Bureau. In addition to highlighting available data sets and how to access them, we will also cover standard uses for Census community data including: How to see changes over time in your community and how to compare your community with other places.

3:00–3:50 p.m. | Session 6

Current Use in Vermont!

Christie Wright, Property Valuation and Review (PVR) and Elizabeth Hunt

An overview of the current state of Current Use, also known as the Use Value Appraisal Program, designed to provide the equitable taxation for undeveloped lands and to encourage maintenance of productive and conservation lands.

Mobilizing Elders

Fred Schmidt and/or Kelly Stoddard Poor, AARP

Our communities have been designed for automobile travel with very little consideration given to the needs of the people who walk. You can help make walking safer by teaching small groups to take simple "walkability" surveys in their neighborhoods. This workshop will go over everything you need to know about conducting a walk audit. Why conduct a walk audit? Walk audits increase exercise opportunities, improve health, boost social interactions by creating a walk-friendly environment, reduces traffic congestion, and increase property values as walkable communities are associated with higher home values.

What Does Success Look Like for Your Town?

Jeffery Lewis and Jennifer Stromsten, Vermont Futures Project

How do local policies, practices and attitudes shape your local economy? How do the actions of a town, small or large, affect the overall Vermont economy? In this workshop, we will go over Vermont Futures Project targets and what they mean to local communities and what strategies you can select.

Managing Good Town Roads

Stu Johnson, Vermont Local Roads Branch Manager and Milly Archer, VLCT Water Resources Coordinator

In this workshop, we will provide information about the various training programs and cooperative opportunities available to support local road crews through Vermont Local Roads Program. VLR will discuss different highway department management styles and levels of service across the state. We will also provide information about how municipalities manage town road access and discuss some best practices to help control drainage into the town right-of-way.

Supporting the Town Planning Process with Demographic Data and Analysis

Dan Currier (Central VT RPC) and/or Pete Fellows (Two River Ottaqhechee RPC), VCGI

Regional planning commissions support towns in many ways, but with their ability to turn data to visualization of geospatial data, they can provide required elements to the town plan, and they can help towns ask and answer "what if" questions about implementing zoning, bylaws, and economic development activities. Learn more about some of the projects that RPC's have worked on with their towns.

3:50–4:00 p.m. | Complete Evaluations and Conference End

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