



73rd Annual Town Officers Education Conferences

Agenda and Workshop Descriptions

April 3, 2018
Lake Morey Resort
Fairlee

April 10, 2018
Capitol Plaza Hotel
Montpelier

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

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

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

Keynote: Technology, Efficiency, and Collaboration: Innovations to Improve Municipal Practice

Jim Condos, Secretary of State; John Quinn, Secretary of VT Agency of Digital Services and Chief Information Officer; Michael Schirling, Secretary of Agency of Commerce and Community Development

Do you sense funding streams drying up or getting diverted away from your municipal work? When this happens we look for ways to work smarter by turning our focus to innovative approaches like using technology, increasing efficiency and building collaborations. These three approaches form the theme for our 2018 Conference looking for innovative ways to improve municipal practices. Keynote panelists will share their state-level insight for Vermont and offer suggestions on how municipalities can incorporate these approaches to extend resources.

9:50-10:40 a.m. | Session 2

myVTax Part 1 - Finding PTTR's and Verifying Sales

VT Tax Department, PVR Staff

Participants will learn how to access and navigate the sales portions of myVTax. This session will include how to create lists of sales for comparison, both within your town and in other towns. Also, this session will cover the new portion of myVTax towns will be using to verify sales of the equalization study.

Technology and Municipal Government: The Impact of Technology on Open Meeting Law and the Public Records Act

Jim Condos, Secretary of State

Secretary of State Jim Condos will discuss the implications of evolving technology on Vermont's Open Meeting Law and Public Records Act, and considerations municipal employees and elected municipal officials must keep in mind to stay compliant with VT's open government laws. In addition, we'll discuss the ways technology can help with compliance, specifically records management and electronic meeting options. Join us to discuss these topics, and other tips and best practices!

Accessing and Using Data for Community Planning (Lake Morey Only)

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 and other places. Participants will learn the basics of accessing and analyzing data for community planning purposes. Plenty of time for Q&A provided. Please bring real examples to be integrated into the workshop.

The Emergency Management Director (EMD) as Teambuilder (Capitol Plaza Only)

Emily Harris, MPA, Vermont Emergency Management

This session will focus on the roles, responsibilities, and key products produced by a municipality's EMD. Skills in planning, collaboration, and stakeholder team building in all phases of emergency management will be highlighted.

Your Town and Drinking Water - Everything You Wanted to Know But Were Afraid to Ask

Liz Royer, Vermont Rural Water Association; Sille Larsen, Vermont Department of Health; Zeno Levy, Vermont DEC Drinking Water Program

Many Vermont residents rely on private sources for drinking water. This workshop will address private well concerns and naturally occurring contaminants as well as give attendees the opportunity to discuss all aspects of public drinking water supplies in Vermont communities. Topics may include groundwater mapping, development of town water supplies, options in zoning and ordinances, protection of water sources, and hazard mitigation planning.

10:40-11:00 a.m. | Networking and Exhibitor Display

11:00-11:50 a.m. | Session 3

myVTax Part 2 - Property Transfer Returns and Current Use

VT Tax Department, PVR Staff

Participants will learn how to access and navigate the RET (Real Estate Transfer Tax) portion of myVTax. This session will include access to and completion of the LV 314 form (Land Use Change Tax/Current Use Penalty) value request. This is the form used by towns to report values for land use change tax purpose when a taxpayer withdraws or develops land enrolled in the current use program.

DEC Permit Process: Technology, Notice, and Comment Standardization

Jessica Mendizabel & Peter Kopsco, VT Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

The focus of the workshop is first to offer a short presentation by the DEC Permit Specialists as it relates to what services they provide, how they can be reached, and what they can do to assist with entering into the permit application process. The second is to offer a walkthrough of the Environmental Notice Bulletin which had a launch date of January 2018 to meet Act 150 standardization requirements for public notice and comment steps/timelines.

The Extraordinary Value of Parcel Data

Jenny Bower, Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI)

The Statewide Parcel Mapping Project is currently working with 73 towns to create, update, and enhance the digital map data behind their parcel maps. We'll talk about how this data is useful to the town, citizens, and state entities.

Heard Enough Complaints for a Lifetime? How to Make Public Engagement Vibrant, Constructive, and Positive

Susan Clark, Slow Democracy

We all know that engaging the public in decision-making is important, but why is it often so hard? Learn about how to ensure that community participation is civil and productive, and discover the building blocks for stronger systems of engagement. Come away with specific tools, including Public Agenda's "Strengthening and Sustaining Public Engagement in Vermont" packet.

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

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

Lister Forum

VALA & VT Tax Department, PVR Staff

An open forum for listers and other municipal officials to discuss issues relative to the grand list and listing process. There will also be an opportunity for a group discussion of current issues facing property valuation within the State of Vermont. Participants will be able to voice concerns, ask specific questions and gain knowledge from their peers.

Town Road Erosion Inventory and Highway Access Drainage Management

Dan Currier, CVRPC & Milly Archer, Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT)

The Municipal Road General Permit requires towns to implement customized, multi-year plans to stabilize road drainage systems. The permit jurisdiction is limited to the municipal road right-of-way. In this workshop we will demonstrate how towns inventory road erosion problems and discuss how municipal highway access policies addressing drainage into the ROW from outside the road drainage system can help towns comply with the MRGP.

Vermont's Open Meeting Law

VLCT Municipal Assistance Center Attorneys

Vermont's Open Meeting Law requires municipal officials to conduct their business in an open and transparent manner. What are those requirements, and how do local officials comply? This session will address these questions as well as practical application of the Open Meeting Law.

Vermont's Solid Waste Requirements

Paul Tomasi & Bruce Westcott, Vermont Solid Waste District Manager's Association (SWDMA)

This workshop will assist municipalities with unraveling Vermont's Universal Recycling Law (Act 148) and the State-mandated Materials Management Plan (MMP). It will focus on who is responsible for what, when they need to comply, and steps for reaching compliance.

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

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

Finding Efficiencies from Mapping the Assessment Process and use of Metrics

John Vickery, Vermont Assessors and Listers Association (VALA)

We will map the assessor/lister office process, and discuss the use of metrics and stats as a way to improve office efficiency.

Technology Panel - Integrating Technology into Your Workplace

Franco Rossi, CAI Technologies & Ernie Saunders, New England Municipal Resource Center (NEMRC)

Moderated by Michael Moser and Fred Schmidt

Integrating technology into your municipal workplace may seem daunting and time-consuming for busy municipal officials. This panel presentation by two municipal technology providers will highlight examples of useful technology integration and explore the challenges (perceived and real) and opportunities your town can realize through adopting new technologies. Panel presentation with plenty of time for Q&A.

Managing Your Online Presence: Privacy, Transparency and the First Amendment

James W. Barlow, PLC, Vermont Local Government Law

Webpages and social media platforms provide a host of benefits for municipalities, from direct, timely and cost-effective communication, to increased public participation in local decision making. But there are a number of legal issues to consider when municipalities use electronic media to communicate. This session will look beyond the Vermont Open Meeting Law and examine some of the broader legal concerns implicated by electronic communication, including privacy issues, the First Amendment, and discrimination concerns.

Community Innovations Respond to Aging

Fred Schmidt, Director Emeritus of UVM Center for Rural Studies; Kelly Stoddard-Poor, Associate State Director, AARP; Marie Houghton, President Vermont AARP Volunteers

Explore aging in Vermont communities, especially impact on leadership. Consider the future by challenging outdated beliefs about what it means to age. Address new solutions in the process in order that we can all choose how we live AND lead as we age.

3:00-3:50 p.m. | Session 6

Technology, Efficiency and Collaborations in a Professional Office - Town of Reading

John Fike and Penny Allyn, Town of Reading Listers, VALA

Identifying internal and external stakeholders to build a professional and collaborative environment in the information age.

Front Porch Forum and SeeClickFix: Engaging Your Community Where They Are

Michael Wood-Lewis, Co-Founder of Front Porch Forum (FPF); Bill Ward, Director of Burlington Code Enforcement

All of us who represent and work for the people of our community should be aware of these two powerful electronic tools; both have the potential to dramatically facilitate our democratic processes through pervasive and inclusive access to our citizenry as well as responding to citizen quest for information. This workshop will introduce participants to the power of these tools as well as provide tools for further access and evaluation of their potential impact.

Records Management Best Practices for Municipal Records

Megan Wheaton-Book, Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA)

This workshop will provide a broad understanding of records management. You will walk away knowing the importance of records and information management, or RIM, and you'll be able to explain the fundamentals and benefits of records management. The workshop will provide an update on the Vermont Local Records Program, a few resources regarding record keeping requirements, steps to conducting an inventory, and what to consider in writing your records management policy and procedure.

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

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