

River Byway News

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CONNECTICUT RIVER BYWAY



First Byway Marketing Summit Follows Governors’ Tour, National Designation

CONTINUITY, connections, and collaboration were the themes struck by Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Gayle Ottmann in opening the first-ever Marketing Summit hosted by the Connecticut River Byway Council. The summit preceded the council’s annual meeting Nov. 16 at the Thetford Center Community Building.

In August, the council sponsored a tour of southern byway communities for New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch and Vermont Gov. Jim Douglas. The pair issued a proclamation directing the two states to work together promoting the Connecticut River valley. In September, the byway was awarded national scenic byway status.

Continued page 3



Photo: Shelley Hadfield

Members of the Byway Council announce the designation of the Connecticut River Byway as a National Scenic Byway on Sept. 23 with a plaque from the Federal Highway Administration at the Windsor-Cornish Covered Bridge. From left are John Tucker, Sharon Francis, Matt Mann, Steve Walasewicz, Tom Kennedy, Glenn English, Gayle Ottmann, Peter Gregory, Robert McBride, Ann DiBernardo, and Ellen Howard.

Byway on the National Stage

BRUCE HYDE and Mary Sloat were among the representatives of the Connecticut River Byway Council who attended the celebration for new national scenic byways in Washington, D.C. in September. Hyde is commissioner of the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing. Sloat is a New Hampshire representative on the

Connecticut River Joint Commissions. They answered some questions about their experiences in Washington.

Q. What distinguishes the Connecticut River Byway from others?

Mary Sloat: [The Federal Highway Administration] feels that we are way ahead of the other byways as we

Continued page 6

Connecticut River Scenic Byway Council

STEERING COMMITTEE

Glenn English, *Town of Haverhill, N.H.*
Ellen Howard, *Town of Rockingham, Vt.*
Gayle Ottmann,
Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce, Vt.
Lynn Morgan,
Greater Falls Chamber of Commerce, Vt.
Allan Berggren, *Claremont Chamber of Commerce,
N.H. (alternate)*
Barbara Morrow, *St. Johnsbury Works, Vt.*
Kathleen Carriere, *Consultant, Brownsville, Vt.*
Stacey Doll, *North Country Council, N.H.*
Tom Kennedy,
Southern Windsor County RPC, Vt.
Matt Mann, *Windham
Regional Commission, Vt. (alternate)*
Vicki Boundy, *Upper Valley
Lake Sunapee RPC, Vt. (alternate)*
Laurie Zilbauer, *Northern Vt.
Development Assoc., Vt. (alternate)*
Alice DeSouza, *Director, Travel & Tourism, N.H.*
Bruce Hyde, *Commissioner
of Tourism & Marketing, Vt.*
Jeanie McIntyre, *Upper Valley Land Trust, N.H./Vt.*
Steve Walasewicz,
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, N.H.
Wally Elton, *Upper Valley Trails Alliance, N.H./Vt.*
Robert McBride,
Rockingham Arts & Museum Project, Vt.
Robert Welsch,
Lebanon Historic District Commission, N.H.
Nancy Hoggson,
American Precision Museum, Vt. (alternate)
Nancy Franklin, *Riverview Farm, Plainfield, N.H.*
Lisa Johnson, *Vital Communities, Vt.*
Lew Sorenson, *Dummerston, Vt.*
Keith Darby, *Haverhill, N.H.*
John Tucker, *New London, N.H.*
Nathaniel Tripp, *Barnet, Vt.*
Peter Gregory, *Woodstock, Vt. (alternate)*
Cheston Newbold, *Cornish, N.H. (alternate)*
John LaBarge,
Vermont Agency of Transportation
Matt Langham,
Vermont Agency of Transportation (alternate)
Carol Barleon,
N.H. Office of Energy & Planning
Tom Jameson,
N.H. Department of Transportation (alternate)

River Byway News

is published on behalf of the Byway Council by the Connecticut River Joint Commissions.

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St. Johnsbury Tells Love Story

ST. JOHNSBURY, Vt. has a new CD featuring its history and culture. St. Johnsbury Works, a Main Street program which helps operate the town's waypoint and welcome center, organized the project.

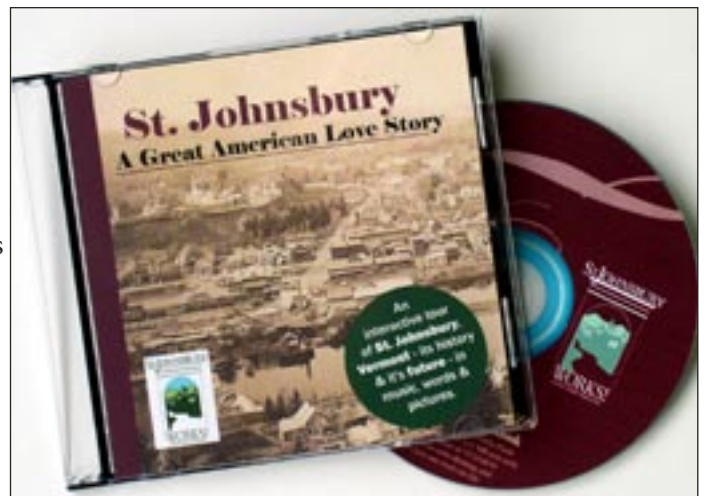
The interactive CD, called "A Great American Love Story," tours the town's history, culture, people, and places including many historic photos and local music. It presents the histories of the key businesses, as well as introducing current residents and entrepreneurs who are creating today's culture and growing businesses.

The CD is intended as a marketing tool, and will be used in the welcome center for a St. Johnsbury kiosk, explains St. Johnsbury Works Executive Director Barbara Morrow. Its depiction of the area's richness makes it useful for businesses recruiting new employees, for general economic development efforts, for realtors introducing

people to the area, and for schools. A curriculum around the town's history is in the works, in collaboration with the Fairbanks Museum.

For other communities who might think about doing their own CD, Morrow advises them to think of the key elements and assets that define their community identity. "Every community has its unique story and their brand arises from that story. Find it, and tell it to the world."

Contact St. Johnsbury Works at stjworks@kingcon.com or 802-748-7121 for more information. Visit their Web site at www.stjworks.org.



Vermont Landmark Conserved

MONADNOCK Mountain, presiding over the towns of Lemington, Vt., and Colebrook, N.H., provides a grand backdrop for the Connecticut River Byway. This solitary mountain, rising steeply from the valley floor, is a well-loved Northeast Kingdom landmark.

Today, the mountain and the stunning view it provides are protected. The town of Lemington, working with the Trust for Public Lands, has purchased 1,400 acres of former Champion International Corporation holdings on Monadnock Mountain with the help of federal Forest Legacy funds. The state of

Vermont holds a conservation easement on the property.

A trail to the newly restored fire tower passes through old growth forest and along steep mountain brooks. The Green Mountain Club rebuilt the fire tower in the summer of 2005, while the Kingdom Corps of the North Woods Stewardship Center began work to restore and reroute the trail.

A local Boy Scout troop has also dedicated much effort to the mountain over the years. The view of the river valley from the top of Monadnock inspired the woodblock image on the cover of CRJC's *Connecticut River Corridor Management Plan, Volume I*.

Byway Marketing, continued

Vermont Tourism Commissioner Bruce Hyde and New Hampshire Director of Travel and Tourism Alice DeSouza joined over a dozen representatives of the Byway Council, waypoint communities, and chambers of commerce for the summit.

“We have the governors’ mandate to work cooperatively,” observed Hyde. “Our visitors don’t see the river as dividing our two states,” said DeSouza. She urged the creation of a byway marketing plan that includes methods for evaluating its effectiveness.

Looking ahead to the next steps after national designation of the byway, Connecticut River Joint Commissions Executive Director Sharon Francis noted the mission of the Byway Council to balance promotion and preservation. “The perception of quality is what will draw people here,” she said. “We are the high priests of keeping that sense of quality for our visitors and ourselves.”

Wearing a pineapple lapel pin, the colonial American symbol of welcome, Bill Peterson, dean of the School of Hospitality, Tourism & Culinary Management at Southern New Hampshire University, talked with the group about “empowering” the byway.

Stressing that “hospitality comes from the heart,” he suggested that community residents, as well as waypoint and chamber volunteers, can be coached in the skills for welcoming people to the region.

He recommended the Byway Council undertake “asset mapping” of the byway’s built environment, human and natural resources, focusing on the services and experiences visitors want and need, and developing a marketing strategy from that inventory. He urged the participants to think about their aspirations for the byway, to consider what the current visitor experience is, and what it could and should be.

Sharing Peterson’s theme of creating a cadre of guides with a common body of knowledge was Judi Window of Granite State Ambassadors, the

hospitality training program that operates out of Southern New Hampshire University. Window will make a proposal to the Byway Council on hospitality training in 2006.

“People want a sense of belonging,” agreed Mark Chain, who directs Alumni Hall, the waypoint center that has become a cultural gathering place in Haverhill, N.H. Visitors feel that connection through learning about the history of a community, and through learning about their volunteer guides’ own lives and stories.

Several other points of interest arose in the general discussion of marketing:

- The council may work through the national byway Web site to suggest itineraries for touring the Connecticut River Byway;
- People seek “value,” rather than “deals” when trip planning, and value includes activities that allow them to experience places as participants, not just as observers;
- While states tourism efforts help attract people generally, the Byway must be marketed to bring people to the waypoint centers and other communities;
- Visitors continue to use the Internet to research and plan trips, but requests for printed material increased last year.

While this first marketing summit proved a successful forum for sharing ideas, because of long travel distances, Byway Council members recognized the need to hold similar discussions in the northern and southern regions in order to facilitate participation from more communities. The steering committee will hold its meetings in the different regions, starting in January in St. Johnsbury. ☒



Photo: Adri Molligan

On Aug. 3, 2005, at the Windsor-Cornish Covered Bridge, Vermont Gov. Jim Douglas, left, and New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch proclaim that the two states would collaborate on promoting the Connecticut River Byway.

HERE’S WHAT the Brattleboro Reformer had to say in an editorial following the designation of the Connecticut River Byway as a National Scenic Byway:

“New Hampshire may own the Connecticut River, but the state was slow to recognize the potential of the river as a tourist attraction. ... So it was left to quasi-governmental groups like the Connecticut River Joint Commissions to work to bring the two states together and convince them that jointly promoting the towns and attractions on both sides of the Connecticut River was a good thing. The result was the creation of the Connecticut River Byway and a new opportunity to embrace the cultural heritage of the river and to share it with the rest of the nation. ... By seeing [the river] as a shared resource, Vermont and New Hampshire will both greatly benefit.”

Happening Around the Byway

ORFORD, N.H. received the gift of 31 acres of land from resident Ted Eck. The Orford Conservation Commission says that the land, located on Route 10, is suited for a trail and has great views of the river valley. Members hope to provide for public access and install a sign.

Littleton's United Methodist Church earned the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance's Preservation Achievement Award for restoring prized stained glass windows. The church raised \$88,000 entirely from within its own community to hire glass preservation specialists for the delicate work on the circa 1901 windows. The windows were designed and built by stained glass artist James Singleton after paintings by 17th century artist Samuel Hofmann.



Bradford, Vt. voters approved spending \$30,000 toward the purchase of 165 acres that will become part of the town forest. In related transactions, the Upper Valley Land Trust will purchase the development rights on another 106 acres, and will receive the donation of development rights on 184 acres. All of the land is on the eastern slope of Wright's Mountain, where tributary streams eventually feed into the Connecticut River. Counting the present town forest, these transactions will make an approximately 730-acre tract of unbroken forest land, and will provide recreational opportunities for people as well as important winter

habitat for deer and other wildlife, according to UVLT. The project also received a \$203,000 grant from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and \$30,000 from the Bradford Conservation Commission.


The **Bradford Public Library** is undergoing restoration work that includes replacing storm windows. The library received a \$35,000 grant from the Preservation Trust of Vermont for the job, which is estimated to cost \$43,000. Library trustees are continuing to raise funds for exterior masonry restoration on the 1895 building.

The **Dana House in West Lebanon, N.H.** is open to the public after a long journey. The small cape, thought to have been built in 1765 by one of Lebanon's earliest colonial settlers, Jonathan Dana, had been slated for demolition in the 1980s. Local preservationists convinced the town to purchase it and move it about a half-mile away from what had grown into a district of superstores and heavy traffic. The local committee overseeing the house is planning renovations, and has opened it to the public in the warm weather months.

A private landowner in **Lyme, N.H.** has placed conservation restrictions

on 58 acres of prime agricultural land along the Connecticut River. The Upper Valley Land Trust holds the conservation easement. The trust also completed work with three private landowners in **Norwich, Vt.**, who donated the development rights on land totaling about 150 acres.

An information kiosk for the **Northern Forest Canoe Trail** is planned for the Upper Ammonoosuc River bank in **Groveton, N.H.** The canoe trail runs 740 miles from Old Forge, N.Y. to Fort Kent, Maine. In New Hampshire, it follows the Connecticut River from the Nulhegan River to the Upper Ammonoosuc. On June 3, organizers will hold their official trail opening ceremony at the kiosk.

The trail to **Fourth Connecticut Lake, 22 miles north of Pittsburg, N.H.** got a lot easier to negotiate last summer, thanks to the hard work of 10 teenagers and young adults working with the North Woods Stewardship Center of East Charleston, Vt. The crew installed log bog bridges on the notoriously wet trail that runs from the U.S. customs station to the 2.5-acre pond, the source of the Connecticut River. The Nature Conservancy, which owns the land surrounding the lake, has also issued a new guide to the Fourth Connecticut Lake Preserve. 



Snowshoers enjoy the view from conserved land on Wright's Mountain.

Photo: UVLT

WAYPOINT NEWS

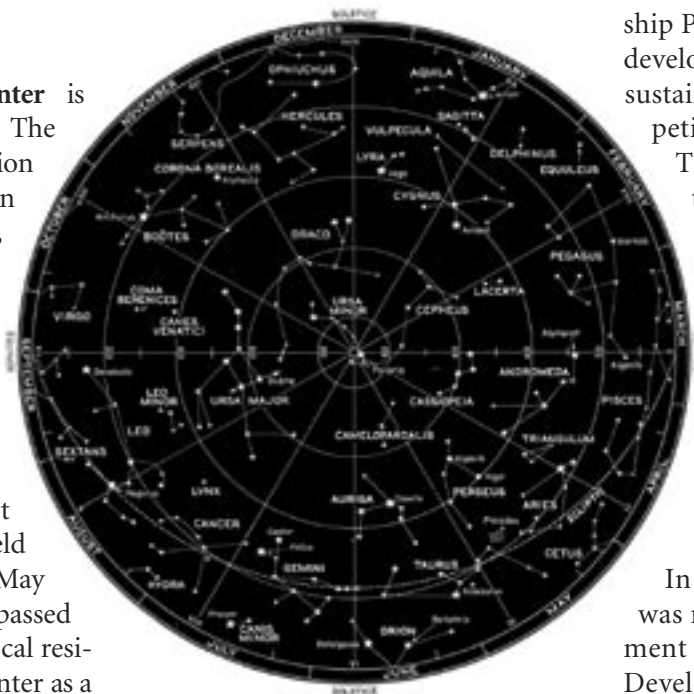
THE Windsor-Cornish Covered Bridge, built in 1866, the venerable Connecticut River landmark, is the longest covered bridge in the United States – for now. A new covered bridge measuring 600 feet, 150 longer than ours, is scheduled to open this spring over the Ashtabula River in Ohio. But as the Eagle Times wrote, “who cares?” The bridge “remains a unique and remarkable engineering achievement whose place in history and in the hearts of covered bridge lovers is secure, regardless of what other covered bridges are built in the years to come.”

The Windsor Waypoint Center is due to open in early summer. The Windsor-Mount Ascutney Region Chamber of Commerce has been without a home for two years, and members are eagerly awaiting the new facility, which is a joint operation of the chamber and the Windsor Improvement Corporation.

Representatives of the Bellows Falls Waypoint Center report that the farmers’ market held there drew good crowds from May to October. Over 4,000 people passed through the center last year. Local residents have started using the center as a place to hold community events. In July, WBUR, a National Public Radio affiliate in Boston, aired a story about the growing “creative economy” in Bellows Falls. It spotlighted the annual **Roots on the River** festival held in June, and included interviews with local residents, including artist and Byway Council steering committee member Robert McBride.

Listeners of Vermont Public Radio are well acquainted with the “Eye on the Sky” weather forecasts. The Fair-

banks Museum and Planetarium in St. Johnsbury, Vt., which produces them, plans to unveil a new “Eye on the Night Sky” program early this year. The planetarium received over \$250,000 in grant money for the program, which will include radio broadcasts, public presentations and workshops, and an interactive, transportable astronomy exhibit. A “star party” is planned so VPR listeners can take their radios outside and hear about the constellations and other features as they observe the night sky.



Students at St. Johnsbury Academy completed a four-year project building scenic and interpretive trails through the town’s forest. Four miles of trails now lead through the 73-acre tract, which is managed for timber. The trails feature benches, footbridges, a scenic lookout, wetlands, and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Also in the St. Johnsbury region, the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail project has been taking shape. The 96-mile

stretch of abandoned railroad runs through 17 towns from Swanton to St. Johnsbury, and is intended to be converted into a four-season, multi-use trail. The project is led by the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, and has received federal transportation funding. Construction may start this spring.

The Alumni Hall Cultural and Interpretive Center in Haverhill, a byway waypoint center, was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Art Ventures Fund, G. Lawton and Louise G. Johnson Fund, and the Jean and William Hallager Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation to support its executive director position. It also received a Northern Forest Partnership Program grant of \$4,800 to develop programming capacity and sustainability. The hall has new carpeting, drapes, and stage curtains. The visitors’ center is closed for the winter, but the hall remains open for events and exhibits.

In Lancaster, N.H., the Rotary Club has installed eight “dog pots” around town where people can drop their pet’s deposits. The “pots” come equipped with disposable plastic bags.

In December, Colebrook, N.H. was recognized by the state Department of Resources and Economic Development with its 2005 **Economic Development Excellence Award**. The town was lauded for its “can-do attitude” in supporting economic development and attracting new businesses. Only a month before, the town and the Colebrook Development Corporation were jointly named as the annual **Volunteer N.H.! Champion** by Gov. John Lynch. Among other initiatives, the town is building a wireless Internet network, and it has welcomed a new business, D & E Machine Tools, to its industrial park. ☒

Sloat and Hyde, continued

already have a number of waypoint centers, and many of them do not. Other byways seemed to be more transportation rather than culturally oriented, as ours is. The byway in North and South Dakota is similar to us in that the byway goes back and forth between the states, but when speaking with people involved I learned that there is no communication between the towns along the byway. Our Connecticut River Joint Commissions are an incredible asset to hold the byway together.

Bruce Hyde: This is a cooperative effort between the two states along the entire border. Both New Hampshire and Vermont are equally committed to promoting the rich resources that are on each side of the border.

Q. Did anything about the federal byway program surprise you?

Sloat: My biggest surprise was the Alaska Byway that has no road. It is all water with boats going from island to island. I had not realized that this was

possible. I also was surprised at the number of states with several federal byways. [The Connecticut River Byway is Vermont's first national byway. New Hampshire has two others.]

Q. What did you learn that would be helpful to our waypoint centers?

Sloat: I think it would be extremely valuable to conduct training sessions for both paid individuals and volunteers at the waypoint centers. Sharing information between the waypoint centers would also be valuable. I think it is important to point out that the waypoint centers are a team working together, not a competition to see who is best. I like to think of it as raising water raises all boats. We want to work together to raise the level of expertise and quality at all waypoint centers.

Hyde: It is critical to educate the waypoint center staff and volunteers about the entire byway from north to south. The travelers who take the journey should be able to get information about everything available along the byway, not just what is local to that waypoint center. ☒

View From New Mexico

“TELL people your story and they will want to come,” said New Mexico Scenic Byways Coordinator Laurie Franz at the Byway Council Harvest Supper, held after the marketing summit Nov. 14.

Franz, keynote speaker for the supper, oversees New Mexico's 26 byways, eight of which are nationally designated.

Stressing that the byways are “key to economic development in small towns,” Franz promotes the destinations as much to residents as to tourists. One of her initiatives is showing residents where they can go on a tank of gas, a nod both to travel costs but also a way of encouraging them to explore their own state. Franz submits columns featuring individual byways to the state's official travel magazine. She plans to start pitching byway travel stories to national travel publications.

Franz described an annual “Trek for Trash,” supported by federal transportation funds, where people pick up roadside litter and then enjoy a celebration centered on a byway. She is currently trying to get state approval for commemorative byway license plates.

Other ideas for promotion include offering “iPod interviews” – sound and video clips about the byways that may be downloaded from the state's Web site. She is also planning a quarterly newsletter.

As energetic and successful as Franz has been (particularly as she is a one-person operation), she cautioned that her byway promotional work has not always been easy. Federal highway cut-backs left her without signs for one of the byways, for instance. She stressed the importance of creating alliances with the business community to help augment public funding.

For more information on New Mexico's scenic byways, see www.newmexico.org. ☒



Photo: Kingdom Trails Association

Kingdom Trails Association (KTA), the nonprofit operator of a 110-mile non-motorized trail system in East Burke, Vt., saw users steadily increase again last year. In their respective seasons, mountain bikers and cross-country skiers are coming from all over New England, as well as Canada and Europe, to enjoy the trails, as well as provide a boost to local eateries, general stores, artisans, and other retail businesses. KTA used a CRJC Partnership Grant to do erosion control, relocation, and other work on four of its trails, including its popular “Tody's Tour” along the West Branch of the Passumpsic River, which it estimates 6,000 people have since enjoyed.

Waypoint Communities Earn 'Preserve America' Honors


CONNECTICUT River waypoint communities St. Johnsbury, Brattleboro, Bellows Falls, and Windsor are among the Vermont towns named Preserve America communities by First Lady Laura Bush.

Preserve America is a White House initiative to encourage and support community efforts for the preservation and enjoyment of our priceless cultural and natural heritage. The goals of the initiative include a greater shared knowledge about the nation's past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased local participation in preserving the country's cultural and natural heritage assets, and support for the economic vitality of our communities.

Applicants were asked to submit an example of their community's care and appreciation for its historic and cultural assets. St. Johnsbury, for instance, submitted the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum's Landmark Restoration Project, describing how the community collaborated to completely restore and upgrade this National Historic Landmark, which is a key part of the

community's daily life.

Five million dollars are available for FY 2006 for projects that focus on creative public-private partnerships that can serve as models to other communities to advance national goals of historic preservation, heritage tourism and education, and related economic development. The grants will encourage sustainable resource management strategies and sound business practices to ensure the long-term success of projects and the continued preservation of heritage assets. The grants are administered by the National Park Service. Grant applications can be found at www.cr.nps.gov/hps/hpg/PreserveAmerica/index.htm or www.PreserveAmerica.gov.

Other Vermont towns that achieved Preserve America designation this year include Bennington, Barre, Morristown, Montpelier, and Vergennes. All have a designated historic downtown, as does St. Johnsbury. Burlington was named to the roll in 2004. The New Hampshire towns of Keene and Hooksett were also recognized by the program. 

GRANT PROGRAMS

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Tourism Cares for Tomorrow

www.tourismcaresfortomorrow.org

Tourism Cares for Tomorrow makes grants to non-profit organizations to protect, restore, and conserve sites of exceptional natural, cultural, or historic significance; to increase the traveling public's awareness of and involvement in conservation efforts; and/or to promote conservation education within local host communities and to the traveling public. The 2006 deadlines are March 1, June 30, and Nov. 1.


Getty Grant Program: Architectural Conservation Grant Program

www.getty.edu/grants/conservation/

Architectural Conservation Grants support organizations throughout the world in their efforts to preserve buildings or sites of outstanding architectural, historical, and cultural significance. Planning Grants assist in the initial development of an overall architectural conservation plan. Support is also available on a selective basis for the development of archaeological site management plans. Implementation Grants assist in the actual conservation of a building's historic structure and fabric.

1772 Foundation

www.1772foundation.org.

The 1772 Foundation gives grants to preserve and enhance American historical entities, and is particularly interested in farming, industrial development, transportation, and unusual historical buildings. A one-page letter of inquiry (form may be downloaded from their Web site) is required before application. 

Flying High

New Hampshire Audubon will be conducting its late winter bald eagle survey along the Connecticut River on Feb. 25. Since 1980, the annual surveys have helped provide valuable data about eagle population and distribution in the state. For more information, see www.N.H.audubon.org.

The Ascutney Mountain Audubon Society has published a "Black River Birding Guide," covering observable species and 17 birding locations along the Black River, from its source near Shrewsbury Peak to its confluence with the Connecticut River. For more information, see www.sover.net/~mwash.



Farms & Inns Sought for Vacation Packages

A collaborative effort by the N.H. Department of Agriculture and the N.H. Division of Travel and Tourism is aimed at linking farms, inns, hotels, restaurants, and other businesses to create visitor vacation packages that center around the state's seasons. For a listing of inns and attractions, see www.resourceNH.org.

Rockingham, Windsor Selected for Creative Economy Program

ROCKINGHAM and Windsor are among the five towns selected to participate in the Vermont Council on Rural Development's Creative Communities Program. A total of 14 communities will be chosen over the course of two years to participate in the program, which provides technical assistance, planning support, and strategies for building project resources, all under the umbrella of the creative economy.


The creative economy framework "allows us to expand our understanding of a strong Vermont economy," says Helen Labun Jordan, director of the Creative Communities Program. "Through the creative economy we are identifying ways to encourage creativity in every field, while also considering how we can sustain a positive economic environment with a healthy combination of both commerce and culture." Funding for the initiative is a two-year, \$224,000 grant from Jane's Trust.

The other towns selected in the initial phase of the program are Hardwick, Rutland, and St. Albans. According to Jordan, these towns displayed unique and widely diverse assets, from a rich civic life and town history, to creative

use of industrial space, to evolving arts and heritage organizations. The communities represent a broad spectrum of geographic, economic and demographic considerations.

"Our villages of Bellows Falls and Saxtons River are great examples of how the creative economy is working in Vermont," says Richard Ewald, director of community development for Rockingham. "What we need to do

next is broaden our base in the community and create collaborations that will grow and sustain these efforts."

Don Howard, the Windsor town administrator, says the program will be used to coordinate long-range plans to develop the town's creative economy. Communities interested in additional information or in applying to the Creative Communities Program (the next application deadline is April 21) should contact Jordan at (802) 223-3793, or by e-mail at ccp@sover.net. For more information on the Vermont Council on Rural Development see www.sover.net/~vcrd. 



Postcard collection of Frank J. Barrett, Jr.

Windsor preservation specialists Jane Osgood and Ted Hilles have recently acquired Windsor House, a key landmark in a historic byway community. The new owners have extended a lease to Historic Windsor, allowing the preservation organization's headquarters to remain under this well-known roof.



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