

WORK PLAN
TO ACCOMPANY
RURAL ECONOMIC ACTION PARTNERSHIP (REAP)
STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR
THE NORTHEAST KINGDOM OF VERMONT:
ESSEX, ORLEANS AND CALEDONIA COUNTIES

PREPARED BY:
THE NORTHEAST KINGDOM ENTERPRISE COLLABORATIVE

APPROVED MAY 15, 2000



DRAFT REAP WORK PLAN

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G. Technology and Telecommunications

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Project 2 a. Publicize Arts Events through Web Sites and Regional Publication.

Project 3 a. Support artists, artistic performances, and other arts and culture programing through the building of philanthropy.

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I. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES, STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

A. High Unemployment, Low Wages and Low Skills

1. Increase the availability of equity capital and affordable debt financing for small businesses.

Project 1. a. Utilize Rural Development Intermediary Relending Program, SBA Micro-Loan Program, CDBG funding and other funding to re-capitalize existing, successful regional and local revolving loan funds.

Root of the Problem: The Northeast Kingdom derives most of its jobs from businesses employing five or fewer people. In order to develop jobs in this business sector, patient development capital must be available to finance businesses at every stage of their growth, especially for start up businesses. The region's banks are smaller than money center banks, yet are subject to the same regulatory requirements for loan quality as larger institutions. Therefore, the regions banks are often unable to make loans to small, risky start-ups and early stage businesses.

Activities or Project to Address Problem. Provide risk capital for rural areas to assist with new business formation and growth. Provide capital to public non-profit organizations (such as Northern Community Investment Corporation or the Economic Development Council of Northern Vermont) and municipalities that currently utilize or are eligible for federal programs. Federal programs include the Intermediary Relending Program, Rural Business Enterprise Grants and Rural Business Opportunity Grants of the US Department of Agriculture; grants and loans from the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund of the US Treasury Department; grants from the Office of Community Services, Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services; Economic Development Initiative (CDBG) Special Purpose Grants and other grant funding programs of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development; Micro-Loan and other programs of the US Small Business Administration; Economic Development Administration programs of the US Department of Commerce; and other programs proposed but not yet enacted such as America's Private Investment Companies (APICS) and the New Markets Tax Credit Initiative.

Partners: Northern Community Investment Corporation, EDC Fund of Northern Vermont, Northeastern Vermont Development Association, St. Johnsbury Area Economic Development Office, and Towns and Cites of St. Johnsbury, Lyndon, Barton, Hardwick, Brighton, Newport and Canaan.

Resources Needed: all funds available.

Expected Benefits: Higher level of business creation and growth in the Northeast

Kingdom, greater job creation, better quality jobs with livable wage and benefit levels.

2. Provide access to workplace skills training. (See also *Education*)

Project 2 a. Develop a Thrift Store/Re-use Center as an employment training facility

Root of the Problem: In its Community Service Employment Program, the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) found that a number of their ANFC recipients could not be placed in employer training positions due to lack of the most basic work and social skills, such as coming to work on time, notifying the employer if they will be absent, practicing acceptable hygiene, and using socially acceptable language. These barriers were also cited in a 1999 Workforce Investment Board survey in which area employers identified lack of social (interactive) skills as high on the list of significant barriers to employment. DSW also reports having a number of recipients with substance abuse issues and several individuals with IQ's only slightly above the threshold for vocational rehabilitation and supplemental security income eligibility.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: NEKCA will investigate the feasibility of developing a thrift/re-use business with a program that provides training positions in a structured work environment, supply a source of low-cost used houseware and clothing, and reduce the area's solid waste stream. Two other Vermont organizations currently running similar programs will be looked to as models.

Partners: Northeast Kingdom Community Action will work with Northeast Kingdom Learning Services (NEKLS), Rural Community Transportation (RCT), NEKCA's own Parent Child Centers and Umbrella's (women's center) childcare referral program. When operating, staff of the program will work with the Department of Employment and Training and the NEK Solid Waste District. The Department of Social Welfare and Department of Vocational Rehabilitation will also be involved. The Small Business Development Center and NEKCA's Micro Business Development program manager can also be involved.

Resources Needed: Feasibility study costs are unclear at this time. Estimated annual operating costs of the facility are \$290,000, with a gross income from sales of \$130,000.

Expected Benefits: ANFC recipients who have reached the end of the time limits and have been unsuccessful in other training programs, and others with limited workplace skills, can acquire the skills necessary to move into competitive employment.

3. Develop programs and initiatives to raise productivity through improving workplace management and communication skills.

Project 3 a . Workforce Investment Board Management/Supervisory Training

Root of the Problem: Managers in many Northeast Kingdom businesses may not have experience in how to communicate the need for improving “work ethic” skills with their employees. At a workshop on “Managing for Profit: The Work Ethic” thirty plus participants overwhelmingly stated the need for increased and ongoing supervisory and management skills training. Additionally, a survey sent to over 500 businesses in the Northeast Kingdom identified a clear need for skills on how to work with employees to upgrade productivity.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Continue “Managing for Profit” trainings two to four times per year.

Partners: Members of the Northeast Kingdom Workforce Investment Board, other businesses.

Resources Needed: Approximately \$1,000 per workshop, up to \$4,000 per year.

Expected Benefits: The managers/supervisors will benefit in their relationships with employees. Employees will benefit with better working conditions/communications. Businesses will benefit with employees who are happy with their jobs, which translates into better products/production.

4. Provide technical assistance for businesses in the fields of marketing, financial management, and workplace communications.
5. Promote cooperation between businesses within the same business sector or in complimentary sectors when cooperation can lead to more than what individual businesses can achieve on their own.

Project 5 a. Continue Northeast Kingdom Business Networks program

Root of the Problem: The Northeast Kingdom is home to a multitude of small businesses (1-5 employees) that have difficulty in financially marketing their products/services. Most of these business owners find their time consumed with running the business.

Activities to Address the Problem: A 1997 USDA grant was initiated to provide up to \$5,000 in matching funds to any three or more NEK businesses willing to work together to market their products/services, manufacture goods, develop new technologies, and other cooperative activities. Networks initiated under existing program include manufacturing and marketing of specialty children’s furniture, marketing of organic food products, marketing of a consortium of cross-country ski trails, marketing

of Vermont specialty food products, marketing of a variety of businesses to provide wedding services, and a network of cedar garden furniture and landscapers. Demand for network funds continues, but the existing grant monies are nearly depleted.

Partners: Northeastern Vermont Development Association and the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund.

Resources Needed: Estimated cost, \$30,000 per year for five years.

Expected Benefits: Funds would provide existing and new businesses to form partnerships/networks. Increased business provides increased jobs.

Project 5. b. Develop existing and potential outdoor recreational services.

Root of the Problem: The Northeast Kingdom has great potential for expanded tourism opportunities based on outdoor recreation. Currently, there is a lack of information regarding existing outdoor services and opportunities. An inventory of natural resources conducive to specific outdoor activities is needed, along with ethical standards of use for specific resources. A knowledgeable customer service base for recreation related visitors is also not in place.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: The Vermont Outdoor Guides Association is implementing a pilot project to begin developing an inventory of services, resources and opportunities; adopting recommended standards of use for outdoor related services; and developing recreation related vacation packages, guided and unguided.

Partners: Vermont Outdoor Guides Association; with VT Departments of Fish and Wildlife, Tourism and Marketing, Forests Parks and Recreation; trail organizations, guide services, outdoor centers, recreation clubs, sporting good retail outlets, accommodations, Chambers of Commerce, land owners and management and the Northeast Kingdom Travel and Tourism Association (NEKTTA).

Resources Needed: A \$20,000 grant from the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing has been received to begin this process. Continued funding over the next three years is needed to complete process.

Expected Benefits: Growth in the adventure and recreation tourism sectors; protection of the resources used to lure travelers.

6. Connect youth to workplace opportunities.

Project 6 a. Summer Youth Employment.

Root of the Problem: The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) does not provide for a stand-alone Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). In 1999 over 200 area youth were placed in summer jobs yet only roughly half of

the eligible applicants were served do to funding constraints. The elimination of SYEP will create a void for many 14 through 18 year old youth who have significant barriers to obtaining employment, i.e., age, lack of a work history, transportation issues, disabilities, emotional/behavioral issues, etc. The Department of Employment and Training will be able to provide some disadvantaged youth with subsidized employment opportunities through WIA, but the numbers will be significantly smaller than in the past.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Work with local employers to hire more youth into unsubsidized positions and utilize Work Opportunities Tax Credit for hiring a disadvantage youth.

Partners: DET and other community partners are working together on youth issues through the Northeast Kingdom Workforce Investment Board (WIB) Youth Council. Partners on the Youth Council include DET, Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Community Action Youth Services, Orleans-Northern Essex School- to- Work, Department of Social Welfare, Vocational Rehabilitation, North Country Schools Alternative Programs, and North Country Union High School.

Resources Needed: Work Opportunities Tax Credit.

Expected Benefits: Summer employment for youth.

7. Promote the recruitment of industries paying a livable wage and that do not have an adverse effect on the environment.
8. Promote career ladders with educational opportunities within the region.

B. Limited Infrastructure

9. Develop, maintain and support the physical infrastructure needed to support economic development, including industrial sites in each labor market area with access to adequate water/sewer and transportation (Hardwick, St. Johnsbury-Lyndon, Newport-Derby, and Barton.)

Project 9 a: Industrial Park Upgrade in Hardwick

Root of the Problem: Industrial park in Hardwick has additional space in the rear of the park if water, sewer and road improvements can be extended. Negotiations are underway with a new tenant willing to build in the space if infrastructure is in place.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Extend water, sewer and access to new site.

Partners: Northeastern Vermont Development Association, Town of Hardwick,

potential tenant.

Resources Needed: (Project cost has not been estimated.)

Expected Benefits: Job creation at new site. Additional tenant in the industrial park.

Project 9 b: Warehouse and Industrial Space in St. Johnsbury

Root of the Problem: Workforce in the St. Johnsbury/Lyndonville area has the capacity to fill additional industrial sites. The St. Johnsbury/Lyndon Industrial Park has space that can be developed.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Construct a 20,000 square foot warehouse or industrial space in the park.

Partners: Northeastern Vermont Development Association, Towns of St. Johnsbury and Lyndon.

Resources Needed: Estimated cost is \$750,000.

Expected Benefits: Employment of approximately 15-30 people.

Project 9 c. St. Johnsbury Truck to Rail Distribution Center

Root of the Problem: St. Johnsbury is a major transportation hub, connecting Interstates 91 and 93 and US Route 2, along with the Canadian Pacific Rail Line. The rail line does not have adequate facilities to transfer truck to rail cargo.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Construct a truck to rail distribution center and warehouse to serve as a transportation hub for the area.

Partners: St. Johnsbury Area Economic Development Office.

Resources Needed: (No estimate at this time).

Expected Benefits: Existing companies will be strengthened by transportation options. The center will also be a resource that will attract new businesses to the area.

Project 9 d. Orleans Industrial Park Multi-Purpose Building

Root of the Problem: There is a shortage of existing space for existing and emerging businesses in the Orleans/Barton area.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Construct a multi-purpose building in the Orleans Industrial Park to provide separate space for businesses or serve as an incubator building with shared space and resources for new and growing businesses.

Partners: Northeastern Vermont Development Association; Town of Barton

Resources Needed: (Not estimated)

Expected Benefits: Increased capacity to expand business in the area.

Project 9 e. Feasibility Study for the Establishment of an Electric Supply Utility for St. Johnsbury/Lyndon Industrial Park.

Root of Problem: EHV Weidmann and other industries in and near the St. Johnsbury/Lyndon Industrial Park use large amounts of electricity. Lower cost electricity would bring significant competitive advantages for these companies.

Activities or Projects to Address the Problem: Develop feasibility study to establish an electric supply utility to generate power or purchase power for the industrial users in and near the park.

Partners: St. Johnsbury Area Economic Development Office, Northeastern Vermont Development Association, companies in and near industrial park.

Resources Needed: Funding for feasibility study.

Anticipated Benefits: Competitive advantage that would lead to job creation.

Project 9 f. Upgrade Water and Sewer to Newport Industrial Park

Root of the Problem: The City of Newport has placed a moratorium on additional hookups and expansions on the east side of the city due to insufficient water and sewer capacity. The City has passed a \$1.5 million bond for sewer upgrades, but this does not include upgrades for expansion at the industrial park. Expansion at an existing wood products manufacturer with 300 employees, a proposed 200 seat call center, and other new businesses are threatened.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Install gravity and force main sewer lines for the industrial park.

Partners: City of Newport, Northeastern Vermont Development Association, businesses accessing facilities.

Resources Needed: Estimate for the upgrade to the industrial park is \$209,622.

Expected Benefits: Retention or expansion of 500 jobs.

Project 9 g. Newport State Airport Industrial Park.

Root of Problem: Industries in Newport area have expressed interest in locating near the airport. There is presently no water or sewer infrastructure at the airport, and the nearest pump station is located exactly three miles from the proposed park.

Activities or Project to Address the Problem: The Newport State Airport, located in Coventry, is currently being assessed for feasibility of locating a 16-20 acre business park next to the airport.

Partners: The property would be leased from the State of Vermont and managed by Northeastern Vermont Development Association.

Resources Needed: Costs have not been determined.

Expected Benefits: These services would enhance efforts for development of this business park.

C. Telecommunications

10. Develop telecommunications infrastructure and knowledge capabilities. (*see also Education and Healthcare sections*)

Project 10 a. Provide Technical and Financial Assistance to the businesses of the region to adopt an e-commerce strategy.

Root of the Problem: Individuals trained in information technology will have to leave the region if information technology businesses are not located here or if existing Northeast Kingdom businesses are not fully taking advantage of information technology opportunities.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Create a business technical assistance program to help existing and new businesses in the Northeast Kingdom take advantage of Information Technology opportunities; and to help recruit businesses dependent on information technology. A loan fund would be set up for e-commerce businesses.

Partners: Small Business Development Center, Northern Communities Investment Corporation.

Resources Needed: Estimated \$525,000 over three years, with request to the US Department of Labor.

Expected Benefits: Business expansions and increased number of businesses recruited to the area who are using information technology and e-commerce.

D. Maintaining Village Vitality

11. Maintain and upgrade existing water, sewer, and other community infrastructure serving the region's downtowns and village centers.

Project 11 a. Town of Lyndon Wastewater Treatment Expansion

Root of the Problem: Lyndon has a twenty-five year old waste water treatment facility in need to upgrading to handle commercial and industrial growth in the community.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Upgrade waste water treatment facility. Extensive permitting will be required.

Partners: Town of Lyndon, USDA Rural Development Administration.

Resources Needed: Estimated cost of \$3.5 million.

Expected Benefits: Number of jobs to be created is uncertain.

Project 11 b. Upgrade Town of Canaan Water System.

Resources Needed: Estimated cost is \$600,000. A hydraulic modeling and testing is needed in the preliminary engineering to determine the status of some piping and extent of work needed.

Project 11 c. Upgrade Village of Orleans Water System

Estimated Cost: \$1,050,000.

Project 11 d. Village of Lyndonville Downtown Streetscape

Root of the Problem: The Village of Lyndonville has many historic buildings that can be renovated to improve the historic character of the village.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Implement a sidewalk and facade improvement project.

Partners: Village of Lyndonville, Vermont Division of Historic Preservation, local building owners.

Resources Needed: (Estimate has not been done to date)

Expected Benefits: Strengthening of the village as a retail and community center.

(NOTE: SEE APPENDIX A FOR OTHER WASTEWATER AND WATER SYSTEM FACILITIES IN THE NORTHEAST KINGDOM.)

12. Coordinate new infrastructure improvements where they will be most effective.

Project 12 a. Combined Sewer Overflow infrastructure work in St. Johnsbury.

Root of the Problem: Efforts to revitalize the urban core of St. Johnsbury require sewer infrastructure improvements.

Activities or Project to Address the Problem: Construction of Combined Sewer Overflow improvements.

Resources Needed: Current projections of cost are somewhere in the \$15,000,000 range which is burdensome to both residences and businesses.

Partners: The Town anticipates assistance from a variety of different sources, including Rural Development.

Expected Benefits: Revitalization of St. Johnsbury's urban Core.

13. Undertake redevelopment projects for underutilized sections of existing town and village centers.

13 a. Redevelopment of Bay Street Area in St. Johnsbury.

(Summary) Area near downtown St. Johnsbury and the Connecticut River is underutilized and has tremendous long term potential for commercial/industrial development while also allowing for access to the river for residents and tourists.

Project 13 b. Downtown Revitalization Feasibility Study for the Northeast Kingdom

Root of the Problem: The Northeast Kingdom has many downtown village centers which must compete with retail development outside the village

center and also in sales-tax free New Hampshire.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Conduct a study on downtown revitalization in the Northeast Kingdom that will index historic areas, assist in educating communities on the criteria for receiving downtown revitalization funds and provide technical assistance for communities searching for funds.

Partners: Northeastern Vermont Development Association, area towns, Vermont Main Street Program.

Resources Needed: Funds for study of downtown revitalization.

Expected Benefits: Historic preservation of village centers, increased economic activity within village centers.

E. Child Care

14. Provide technical assistance and other support for child care providers.

Project 14 a. Provide on-site and/or distance learning micro-business technical and financial services support to child care entrepreneurs and centers.

Root of Problem: The Northeast Kingdom has a lack of accessible and high quality child care services which has reached the crisis point. Increasing numbers of TANF recipients and others are returning to work in the area's relatively strong economy. The NEK, however, experiences with the rest of the state a 44% turnover each year in state-approved child care providers. There are very few child care centers in the region and currently no openings. A recent statewide study conducted by R&P Associates revealed that a strong underlying reason for provider turnover is their lack of basic micro-business skills and subsequent inability to sustain themselves financially. Even within the child development scope, there are only two state-supported resource and referral specialists to deal with providers in a 2000 square mile area.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Augment the current state-sponsored child development training to include a broader range of child care topics, including micro business management. Using a telephone bridge or other methods, provide one-to-one and small group learning and discussion groups for providers, particularly after-hours. Simultaneously, work with businesses and others to open up markets for on-site centers run by private micro-entrepreneurs. Encourage the development of Family Centers, a model which includes child care services and other family services within a center. Examples of other services at the center would include a visiting mental health provider, nurse, or Social Welfare case manager.

Partners: Moderate sized businesses such as VT Teddy Bear or the Call Center; NEKCA's Micro-business Development Program, State of Vermont

(program that assists with child care support services).

Additional Resources Needed: \$250,000 over three years to underwrite intensive technical assistance and education for child care entrepreneurs; a revolving loan fund for high risk, small loans of \$500-\$5000.

Anticipated Benefits: The result will be a greater number of providers moving from the minimum state-approved level of "registered provider" to the higher quality "licensed provider," which in turn receives a higher level of subsidy from the State for child care services.

Project 14 b. Create a formal Family Day Care System

Root of the Problem: The Northeast Kingdom has a diverse system of child care which includes independent day care homes, relative care, and center based group care. Low reimbursement rates and isolation have lead to high turnover rates and inconsistent opportunities for training.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Develop a formal Family Day Care system that can provide day care providers with a "package" of benefits and incentives, timely reimbursement, and staffing support.

Partners: Northeast Kingdom Community Action Child and Family Development Program, Success by Six Coordinators, day care providers, Umbrella, and Parent Child Centers.

Resources Needed: \$50,000 for coordinator and expenses including of substitute providers.

Expected Benefits: Improved compensation for day care, improved quality of day care, improved day care options.

15. Develop additional site-based child care centers offering high quality educational-based care.

16. Expand existing Head Start Centers to full day, full year model.

F. Agriculture

17. Support activities for commodity producer associations to enable collective processing and marketing efforts.

Project 17 a. Create a Meat Producers Cooperative.

Root of the Problem: Meat farmers in Northern Vermont do not have a readily available market for their products. Currently, farmers must transport their animals five hours to auction in Northhampton, MA or individually sell their animals to the public. Due to the distance to available auctions and slaughter facilities, it is cost prohibitive for small farmers to realize a profit in their efforts.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Establish a cooperative so area farmers

could realize profits from both direct marketing and cost sharing efforts. Results from a prospective member survey indicate interest in developing a cooperative for both marketing and group labeling of meat. The group is currently developing multiple markets: wholesale accounts such as restaurants, direct sales to customers and an Internet marketing firm. The group has been invited to join the newly established year round Burlington Farmers Market and is actively investigating the logistics of this market.

Partners: Area meat farmers, Economic Development Council of Northern Vermont, Burlington Farmer's market; Rural Vermont; Farms to Communities Forum.

Resources Needed: Estimated \$95,485.

Expected Benefits: Estimated 5 jobs created and 75 jobs retained. The project would preserve small farms and open space.

G. Natural Resource Stewardship

18. Support activities that help landowners and loggers manage and harvest timber in an environmentally sound manner that also maximizes income for landowners and loggers.

II. EDUCATION CHALLENGES, STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS.

A. Isolation

1. Develop cost effective means to meet the professional development needs of our schools to deliver excellent educational programs.

Project 1 a. Develop “EXCALIBER,” the Essex Caledonia Institute for Best Practice and Educational Reform, to create and to sustain a cost-effective mechanism for meeting the professional development needs of our schools in order to deliver excellent educational programs to all students.

Root of the Problem: The Northeast Kingdom has limited resources and limited access to good professional development for educators. The region is isolated from the University of Vermont or other Vermont colleges with the exception of Lyndon State College. Unlike other regions of the state, there also are not opportunities to access professional development expertise across state lines. Northern New Hampshire has a low population density similar to the Northeast Kingdom, and hence has a similar lack of professional development opportunities. Across the international border in Quebec, the dominant language is French.

Project or Activities to Address the Problem: EXCALIBER plans two initial strategies 1) to present a Summer 2000 symposium that addresses common needs in professional development for the staff of the area schools and 2) to organize and to sustain at Lyndon State College a professional development center that can address in an on-going fashion the professional development needs of the schools. Excalibur will also develop other strategies that involve educational and professional development between schools via site visits and telecommunications.

Partners: EXCALIBER is a collaborative formed by all of the superintendents of southern Essex and Caledonia counties, the headmasters of Lyndon Institute, St. Johnsbury Academy, and Burke Mountain Academy, and the Dean of Academic Affairs of Lyndon State College in order to use available resources effectively.

Additional Resources Needed: The schools bring the tuition reimbursement dollars in their budgets to this project. We have applied for two grants to reduce local costs for the Summer 2000 Symposium. We recognize the need for a year-round part-time position that would broker various professional development options and would facilitate communication among all the partners. We are discussing with the Vermont Department of Education how the brand new “Vermont Teacher Quality Enhancement Program” might support this specific need as well as our

more general needs. Members of the collaborative are participating in discussions in a variety of venues about upgrades to the informational technology capacity of the region.

Expected Benefits: Seventy-five educators are expected to participate in Summer 2000 Symposium directly affecting the education of at least 1500 students. The long term intent is to impact the normative behavior and aspirations of students and teachers in order to provide students with the skills, knowledge, and aspirations to have choices about the quality of their lives at home, in the work place, and in the community. Partner schools will be able to utilize resources that none of them would have if they had “to go it alone.”

B. Skills Training

2. Develop plans, initiatives and facilities to improve the provision of training in post secondary degree, trades occupation skills, and high tech computer related skills. The provision of training should be market driven according to the needs of traditional age students, mature students, employees, employers, and entrepreneurs.

Project 2 a. Recast the existing regional Technical Center in the Newport-Derby region into a Workforce Development Center (WDC) to technically train and retrain young and mature students (Adults) to industrial skill standards at the High School, Skills Certificated and Associate Degree levels.

Root of the Problem: Low incomes in the Northeast Kingdom can be attributed to both a lack of people trained for high paying technical skills and few employers aware of the need for high technology skills. There is evidence that the many life style attraction of the region will cause higher technology firms to grow and relocate to the region provided the technology skills are available.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Build and outfit by the year 2002 a Workforce Development Center in the region that will maintain a technical training curriculum that fosters regional economic development and maintains a knowledge-pool of cutting-edge technology. The WDC will technically train and retrain young and mature students (Adults) to industrial skill standards at the High School, Skills Certificated and Associate Degree levels. Training activities will be physically located at the WDC building or provided via Internet or other distance learning mechanisms.

Partners: Training partners will be physically located at the Workforce Development Center, including, but not limited to, the North Country Career Center, Vermont Technical College, University of Vermont,

Lyndon State College, Community College of Vermont and other higher educational institutions whose applications are under review. These other institutions include Software Institutes, Polytechnic Institutes, Culinary Schools, and business training partnerships for specific businesses skills training. The Center will also have virtual (Internet) connections to other education providers.

Resources Needed: Primary funding of \$15 million for construction of the Workforce Development Center will come from the State of Vermont. Estimates for land purchase and/or infrastructure improvements for identified suitable properties will be up to \$2 million. Funding will also be needed for state of the art equipment including a numerical controlled machine; metals hardening equipment (heat treatment); local area computer networks for instillation and software training; computer work stations and Internet servers; fiber optic technology laboratory and network for training and demonstration; automotive laboratory equipment; body work laboratory; engine analysis laboratory; fuel cell laboratory (For fuel conversion to electricity to power cars); transmission laboratory; diesel laboratory; biotechnology laboratory equipment; and nursing station equipment.

Expected Benefits: The Workforce Development Center will graduate an estimated 50 secondary students and 48 post-secondary students per year. The total direct and indirect economic output of Workforce Development Center graduates over the first five years is estimated at \$37 million, with 600 jobs created for graduates and others by existing and new industries in the area. The \$15 million construction project would provide 277 jobs and have an economic multiplier in the region of approximately \$21 million. (Estimates from a study conducted by the Community Development and Applied Economics Program at the University of Vermont, 2000).

Project 2 b. Northeast Kingdom Center for Excellence located at Lyndon State College.

Root of the Problem: There is a need among businesses to have access to a trained and skilled workforce and there is a need for current workers and people moving from welfare to work to increase their skills and raise their standard of living.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Create a Center for Excellence at Lyndon State College. The project would include courses that would meet the needs of the region's businesses, employees, and people entering the workforce. Participants can participate in a skill building class or a degree or certificate program. Lyndon State College will coordinate the program and develop the curriculum in conjunction with area businesses. The College will also provide classes and act as a "broker" for those courses it

cannot teach and must divide out to other institutions in the area. The project would also entail a major equipment upgrade and expansion at Lyndon Technical Institute where employers can send their employees and the Department for Employment and Training can send new workers for hands on skill development. The second phase of the project may include a business incubator space on the campus where new and expanding business can grow receiving technical assistance and support while sharing space and overhead costs. It will also be a facility where students can observe and learn from emerging businesses. A third phase may include a research lab where businesses can do product development.

Partners: Lyndon State College, Vermont Technical College, Community College of Vermont, Department of Economic Development, Northeastern Vermont Development Association, Economic Development Council of Northern Vermont, Northeast Kingdom Chamber of Commerce, Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity, North Country Career Center, Lydall Westex, Fred's Plumbing and Heating, North County Engineering, NSA Industries, Lyndonville Savings Bank, Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital; Citizens Utilities Company, Columbia Forest Products, Greenfield Industries, Vermont's North Country Chamber of Commerce, Newport Plastics Corporation, Passumpsic Savings Bank, and Tivoly USA.

Resources Needed: Funds for planning, curriculum development and implementation.

Expected Benefits: A trained workforce, expanded employment opportunities, higher wages, decrease in out-migration.

Project 2 c. Develop plan to establish post-secondary degree and continuing workforce education and training programs for trades occupation skills and high-tech computer related skills, in coordination with adult education and technical training providers in the Kingdom.

Root of the Problem: Workforce education and training providers do a high quality job in what they do. However, there are no post secondary degree programs for skilled trades occupations or comprehensive computer related skills programs in our region. Our high school graduates must leave Vermont for these programs and our current businesses send their employees to training programs out of our state.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Clearly determine the roles, responsibilities and current capacity of Northeast Kingdom workforce education and training providers to deliver post secondary degree, industry credential training, and continuing education programs. Determine how this capacity might be expanded to address current unmet needs and to prepare for forecasted needs. Solicit public input and support for an

initiative to establish post secondary degree programs for trades skill occupations, industry standards credential training programs, and continuing education programs in the Northeast Kingdom.

Partners: Applied Technology Center at St. Johnsbury Academy; Lyndon Institute Technical Center Adult Tech Ed; North Country Career Center Adult Tech Ed; Lyndon State College; Community College of Vermont; Sterling College; Springfield College; Northeast Kingdom Learning Services; Department of Employment and Training; UVM Extension Service.

Resources Needed: Initially, all of this work will require a person to collect information, assist regional providers to articulate their areas of responsibility, assist area employers and economic development agency personnel to articulate their workforce education and training needs - now and in the future, to compile this information, synthesize it and present it to the Northeast Kingdom Collaborative with recommendations for further actions. This person will require administrative support and office space.

Expected Benefits: Providers and users of post secondary education and training programs will have a clearer understanding of workforce education and training opportunities in our region and how to access them to serve their needs. The capacity of our current workforce education and training providers will become more clear to business, education, community and economic development leaders.

C. Telecommunications

3. Develop and implement plans and initiatives to improve Telecommunications infrastructure in the region to serve schools, businesses, health care systems, libraries, families, and other users.

Project 3 a. Improve Telecommunications infrastructure by convening community users of telecommunications networks and commercial providers to insure all interests are being understood and met, leading to a long-range planning effort to identify the demand and need for economical high-speed access to broadband services for multiple users at rural community facilities in the NEK.

Root of the Problem: Absence of an adequate, integrated electronic communication system limits the development of the NEK technologically, economically, socially, and culturally. As a result, the NEK and its residents are limited in their ability to participate in a rapidly changing world.

Project or Activities to Address the Problem: Community users of telecommunications networks would be brought together by the

Collaborative to enter into an exploratory dialog with communications providers to see that the interests of all parties are understood and met to the extent possible. This would involve sharing recent planning efforts, better knowledge of what works, pooled services and resources, and systems tailored to local needs and audiences. A long-range planning effort to identify the demand and need for economical high-speed access to broadband services for multiple users at rural community facilities in the NEK will be implemented. The long range plan will interconnect existing service providers and hubs.

Partners: Telecommunications users, Vermont Interactive Television Sites, Bell Atlantic telephone, Internet service providers, cable television providers. Telecommunications users includes individuals, businesses, schools, libraries and health care centers.

Additional Resources Needed: A first stage plan will be priced out so that a phased implementation can take place. The cost of alternative solutions will be part of the mix, i.e., will wireless systems be feasible and cost effective versus fibre, copper, and hybrid distribution systems? Additional resources would be available in the form of grants and loans from State and Federal programs for education, medicine, commerce, and labor as well as charitable foundations and corporate support.

Expected Benefits: We anticipate creating 1) a robust physical infrastructure that is capable of expansion as the demand arises, 2) skilled workers to build and maintain the infrastructure, 3) a workforce that can implement and use the infrastructure effectively, and 4) a way to grow the skills and understanding necessary to make all this happen. Rural homes will have better connections. Community libraries will be utilized as natural facilities for providing computer skill development training to low-income residents. High-speed Internet connections in such facilities would increase their value and utility.

4. Develop plans and initiatives to use distance learning to increase access to educational opportunities for all learners.
5. Develop plans and initiatives to improve the telecommunications knowledge and capabilities of all residents of all ages in the Northeast Kingdom.

Project 5 a. Integrate an information technology curriculum into middle and secondary curriculum.

Root of the Problem: Vermont has done a good, if fairly spotty, job of putting computers into classrooms. There is not an integrated curriculum developed for computer applications, especially for Information Technology and computer networks. Young people in the Northeast

Kingdom have not had an adequate introduction to Information Technology in order to properly train for Information Technology jobs in the near future.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Develop and implement curricula for Grades 6-8 on hardware, word processing, Internet navigation and research techniques; Grades 9-10 on spread sheets, data base software and web page construction; Grades 11-14 on career fields, industry standards and transition to post secondary education. Professionals would be hired to carry out training with Northeast Kingdom schools.

Partners: EXCALIBUR (mentioned above), Lyndon State College, area schools, Northern Communities Investment Corporation.

Resources Needed: Estimated budget of \$1,140,000 over three years, with request to the US Department of Labor.

Expected Benefits: Young people educated to take advantage of employment opportunities in the Information Technology field; increased capacity for the region to support expanded business opportunities in the Information Technology field.

Project 5 b. Create an adult education training facility for Information Technology disciplines.

Root of the Problem: The Northeast Kingdom lacks people skilled in the basics of Information Technology, and the region does not have training centers where individuals can acquire these skills.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Create a center that would train adults to work in the Information Technology field and provide credentials offered by software vendors, hardware manufacturers, and professional associations. Adults would take courses in major Information Technology applications, and infrastructure set up and maintenance.

Partners: Lyndon State College, regional technical centers, Northern Communities Investment Corporation.

Resources Needed: Estimated budget to begin program of \$1,545,000 over three years, with request to the US Department of Labor.

Expected Benefits: The Northeast Kingdom would have the intellectual infrastructure to participate in the Information Technology economy.

Project 5 c. "Learning for the Future in the Northeast Kingdom:" 21st Century Grant Application.

Root of the Problem: Children in six isolated communities in Northern Vermont live in an area with low incomes and high unemployment.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Expand educational and technology opportunities for 1174 school age children and 145 children aged three and four, and a significant adult population in six isolated communities in

rural, northern Vermont. The program will include an after-school and evening component targeting literacy, technology and substance abuse prevention in the k-12 age group, while encouraging healthy lifestyles and increasing intergenerational contact. A strong summer component, with and experiential program, will emphasize improving cognitive skills and literacy. Implement the most thorough pre-school program in the supervisory district's history.

Partners: Orleans Northern Essex Supervisory Union, others.

Resources Needed: Budget to be determined

Expected Benefits: Improvement on Vermont standards based tests. Improved literacy and technology skills. Prevention of substance abuse by children.

D. School/Community Connections

6. Develop curriculum and activities that connect schools to the community, recognize youth as an important asset in the Northeast Kingdom, and support youth to take leadership roles in their communities.

Project 6 a. Develop a Teen Leadership Curriculum for High Schools and Middle Schools.

Root of the Problem: Students in rural communities often have limited voice in their schools and communities for effecting positive outcomes. The need to develop these skills to become active citizens in the future. Communities can be strengthened by better meeting the needs of young people.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: A school teen leadership program of leadership skill building activities is currently being piloted and evaluated. Other schools and community organizations in Vermont will be invited to a "training of trainers" to be held in the fall of 2000 to implement the leadership program at more schools. The programs components include Introduction & Establishment of Class Norms; Exploration of Leadership and Leaders; Embracing Diversity; Goal Setting; Strengths or Asset Based Leadership; Problem Solving/Decision Making; Communication; Conflict Resolution; Team Building; and Systems and Power.

Partners: Schools in the Vermont Rural Partnership; Vermont Children's Forum; Senator Jeffords Office; Bell Atlantic.

Resources Needed: An initial grant for this program came from Bell Atlantic Telephone, with subsequent support through the Annenburg Rural Challenge.

Expected Benefits: Students will benefit from a better understanding of their inherent leadership capacities and will actively use their skills to enhance

their schools and communities.

Project 6 b. Develop “Communities of Purpose” by connecting Northeast Kingdom schools and communities to articulate a vision for the community.

Root of the Problem: While Northeast Kingdom communities have rich traditions and civic involvement, people do not have the opportunity to develop a common vision or “community of purpose” to sustain their spirits and foster collaboration.

Activities or Project to Address the Problem: In many rural towns, the schools are the center of the community and have the ability to bring people together in a learning environment. The Vermont Rural Partnership works to strengthen the ties between schools and communities and are starting to work with The Snelling Center to develop “communities of purpose”. The Snelling Center will work directly with 4 to 6 VRP schools each year to facilitate dialogue and collaboration between school and community. First, between 10 and 15 school and community members per school will be brought together for one or two days of training to outline to the common purpose and goals of a “community of purpose” in small group format. The groups will be as inclusive as possible: school administrators and teachers, students, parents, and town elders and volunteers will all be encouraged to participate. Individual plans to foster “communities of purpose” will then be designed by and for each school and community for implementation over the following weeks.

Partners: This effort will involve any community volunteer in the VRP communities. The Snelling Center will work closely with the VRP schools to initiate the process and provide facilitators and facilitator training to develop meaningful community of purpose statements.

Resources Needed: Part of this initiative is funded by resources within the Vermont Rural Partnership. Additional support will be needed to continue and sustain this program.

Expected Benefits: Communities will develop a dynamic, inclusive statements of their “purpose” or vision of their community. Each will be as distinctive as the community and involve all who want to participate. The “community of purpose” will represent the commitment of the community’s resources to its most important reasons for existence and will characterize the special qualities of the community to provide an understanding of what makes the community a special place to live and function. It will serve as the “flag ship” in guiding the direction and activities of the community.

Project 6 c. Support Vermont Rural Partnership’s member schools efforts to support each other through sharing information and building a network of

support in three primary areas: curriculum of place; assessment and documentation; and youth leadership and service learning.

Root of the Problem: Small rural schools are challenged by limited information and collegial resources. Students, educators, and community members often feel isolated and disconnected from their community's heritage and inherent attributes.

Activities or Project to Address the Problem: The Vermont Rural Partnership is a consortium of 18 rural schools across Vermont, many in the Northeast Kingdom. Their mission is to support each other through sharing information and building a network of support in three primary areas: curriculum of place; assessment and documentation; and youth leadership and service learning. The goals are to: reconnect people of all ages to their community; honor and tap into the variety of strengths and assets within the community; and respect the value of rural life. Partnership schools meet regularly to distribute grant money to specific projects and govern their mission. They also convene retreats to share information, practice new skills, and celebrate their accomplishments.

Partners: Vermont Rural Partnership schools, VRP Governance Board, The Snelling Center for Government, and Advisors to VRP.

Additional Resources Needed: Activities are supported by grants from the Rural Schools and Community Trust and federal Learn & Serve funds. Collaborations between other programs to share resources will help further the goals of VRP and connect to broader citizen participation.

Expected Benefits: By expanding the participation of community members, VRP activities will harness the diverse assets in the Northeast Kingdom and truly reflect the spirit of the region. This will ultimately support small schools and improve student performance, especially those of low income.

7. Promote the use of community libraries as important educational and community resources.

**PART III. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES,
STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS.**

A. Maintain our Citizen Form of Government; Lack of land use planning; Preserve our Sense of Community; Service Providing Agencies are in Transition; and Fragmentation around Community Process.

1. Implement Leadership Development Programs.

Project 1 a. Implement Leadership Development Programs:

Root of the Problem: Individuals do not always have the skills or confidence to participate in local governance or advocacy within their community.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Continue to implement and devise a number of leadership development programs for all walks of community life. The primary audience for these programs will be town government officials, local businesses, youth and community citizens.

Partners: UVM Extension, Vermont Leadership Center, Snelling Center for Government, Vermont Children's Forum, Vermont Rural Partnership, VT Department of Social Welfare, Business and Professional Women's Association.

Resources Needed: Program funding to run a variety of leadership conferences and workshop series.

Expected Benefits: More citizens become involved in the local governance process. More inclusion in local decision making. Greater respect for the hard work of volunteer leaders in their community.

Project 1b. Support attendance by Northeast Kingdom School Professionals in the Vermont School Leadership Project.

Root of the Problem: Professional development for educators often focuses on techniques, assessments, and reform efforts and rarely provides educators with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills. Those in leadership positions are often isolated from colleagues and do not have a strong support network to turn to for advice and assistance.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: With the assistance of business and education leaders, The Snelling Center for Government created The Vermont School Leadership Project to meet the pressing need to support professional development in our school leaders. Participants explore their personal leadership styles and current challenges in their work. They also practice ways to engage their entire communities in finding innovative solutions. The Project meets these objectives in two summer sessions and four two-day sessions during the academic year. The summer retreats provide participants with the opportunity to experience an in-depth

personal and professional immersion in the many facets of leadership. The program uses the action research model of learning to combine theory with experiential practice. The characteristics of leadership in education are highlighted and compared to leadership in other fields. The unique social context of leadership in Vermont is a core component of the curriculum and underlies each session.

Partners: The Snelling Center for Government and the Advisory Committee for The Vermont School Leadership Project, consisting of volunteers from businesses and education who assist with program design and implementation.

Resources Needed: Tuition costs are \$1,000 per year per participant. Program costs are \$5,000 per year per participant.

Expected Benefits: The Project is designed to help educators improve their ability to initiate and sustain change in Vermont's public schools; establish a network of Vermont school leaders and connect NEK school leaders with school leaders outside the region; bring together school and other community leaders; and improve the quality of education delivered to the Northeast Kingdom's and Vermont's children.

Project 1 c. Participation by Northeast Kingdom Residents in the The Vermont Leadership Institute.

Root of the Problem: Vermonters who aspire to leadership positions do so at great personal sacrifice and often without thanks. Whether they are our citizen legislators, people appointed to state and local review boards, community volunteers, or people who chose a public service profession, they all spend countless hours to move Vermont forward. In addition to managing limited resources, they are challenged to find ways to develop their leadership skills to make the most of their commitment to our state.

Activities or Project to Address the Problem: The Snelling Center for Government created The Vermont Leadership Institute to provide leaders with the tools and information they need to do their work better. The Institute is designed to: stimulate citizen enthusiasm for and participation in public service; increase understanding of how to take thoughtful action within the public sector in Vermont; and improve the capacity of citizens to work together to bring about positive change. The Institute is a 10-month, leadership development program of The Snelling Center for Government. Now in its fifth year, the program attracts Vermonters, who through their professional and personal achievement and ability, have shown the potential for responsible leadership. The Snelling Center encourages and strengthens the civic aspirations of these dedicated Vermonters by providing developmental opportunities and cultivating their personal leadership qualities.

Partners: The Snelling Center works with a variety of facilitators and past program participants to design and present The Vermont Leadership Institute. These people include past and current public leaders, leadership development consultants, and alumni of the program.

Resources Needed: \$2,000 tuition per participant. Program costs of \$6,500 per participant.

Expected Benefits: A strong network of leaders in the region who, through their shared learning experience, find ways to collaborate and improve the work they do for their communities. In addition to personal mastery, they would also enhance their personal stake in Vermont's future.

2. Provide expertise to communities of place and communities of interest to assist them in techniques for citizen involvement.

Project 2 a. Provide expertise to communities of place and communities of interest to assist them in techniques for community involvement.

Root of the Problem: Demands on time and other personal interests make it increasingly difficult for people to be involved in the local decision making process. Incorporating citizen input to the decision making process is an ongoing challenge.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Provide local government and organizations with expertise on strategic planning, group facilitation, surveys, and other community involvement activities.

Partners: UVM Extension, others.

Resources Needed: Program funding to assist communities.

Expected Benefits: Decision making processes will include more public input and result in better implementation of public policy and projects.

3. Provide support services for volunteers.
4. Provide expertise in conflict resolution to increase civility in community interactions.
5. Provide technical assistance for grant writing and fundraising to local governments and organizations

B. Aging historic community buildings.

6. Provide financial and technical resources to maintain, restore, upgrade and make accessible historic community buildings.

Project 6 a. Create a Partnership for St. Johnsbury's Historic Main Street to study proposed changes in the Main Street Historic District.

Root of the Problem: St. Johnsbury's has a Main Street Historic District rich in cultural resources. A long range vision and plan for use of buildings and changes in the historic district has not been made. Changes include expansion of St. Johnsbury Athenaeum into existing town office building, and renovation of County Courthouse.

Activities to Address the Problem: Create the Partnership for Historic Main Street to study proposed changes occurring in the historic district. The Partnership will bring parties together to communicate; build trust, study the community's future needs and determine best uses for historic buildings located within the district. Study will include building utilization study; parking study; Athenaeum expansion plans, and organizational framework.

Partners: Town of St. Johnsbury; St. Johnsbury Athenaeum; Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium; Caledonia County Courthouse.

Resources Needed: \$40,000 planning grant.

Expected Benefits: Preservation of historic buildings and character of the Main Street Historic District; Coordination of uses for historic buildings.

Project 6 b. Municipal Buildings Upgrade for Town of Greensboro

Root of the Problem: The Town of Greensboro is in need of upgrades to its salt shed, roof of town garage, and to paint and refurbish town hall. There is a salt runoff problem with the salt shed.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Construct new salt shed, repair roof on town garage, and refurbish town hall.

Partners: Town of Greensboro.

Resources Needed: Total of \$35,000.

Expected Benefits: Long term stability of town infrastructure, decreased salt runoff, as many as six jobs created and five retained.

Project 6 c. Town of Guildhall, Public Library

Root of the Problem: Guildhall has a major goal of preserving the Guildhall Historic District and Town Common. Renovation of the Public Library is an integral component of this preservation.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Make the library handicapped accessible, repair the roof, and conduct an overall assessment of renovations needed.

Partners: Town of Guildhall, others.

Resources Needed: \$20,000 minimum for accessibility and roof repairs.

Expected Benefits: Library will be renovated as a resource for the community. At

least one part-time job will be created.

Project 6 d. Town of Stannard Old School House renovations for Town Meeting Place.

Root of the Problem: The Town of Stannard utilizes its Old School House for a public meeting space. The Old School House is in need of renovation.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: The Town of Stannard has received a planning grant to plan the renovations of their old schoolhouse. Capital improvement funds will be needed to carry out the restoration when the plan is completed.

Partners: Town of Stannard, USDA Rural Development

Resources Needed: Capital improvement funds through Rural Development Community Facilities Loan and/or Grant and CDBG.

Expected Benefits: Old School House will be restored. Town of Stannard will have a meeting place in a historic building.

Project 6 e. Renovation of Old School House or Grange Hall in Brownington for Town Clerk's office.

Root of the Problem: Present Brownington Town Clerk's office is a cinder block structure inadequate for the town's current needs. Brownington has a population of less than 700 residents and limited tax base. Other historical buildings could serve as town clerk's office.

Activities or Project to Address the Problem: Renovate Old School House, Grange Hall or other historic building to serve as town clerk's office.

Partners: Town of Brownington, USDA Rural Development.

Resources Needed: Undetermined Community Facilities Grants or Loans.

Expected Benefits: Preservation of historic building; safe and secure town offices, town meeting space and home for town records.

PART IV. HEALTH CARE AND WELLNESS CHALLENGES, STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS.

A. Increase the Numbers of Health Care Providers

1. Support recruitment and retention of health care providers in the region.

B. Professional Development for Health Care Providers

2. Develop health professions education programs within the region.

Project 2 a. Regional MSW Program:

Activities: The University of Vermont's Department of Social Work has agreed to offer its MSW program in the NEK through distance learning courses and local internships. Pre-requisite courses will be offered during the summer of 2000 with 1st year courses beginning in the Fall of 2000.

Partners: UVM Department of Social Work graduate program; Local agencies: Mental Health, SRS, DSW, Health Department for internships; Northeastern Vt. AHEC: Student and preceptor support services.

Project 2 b. Develop nursing programs, accessible within the region for LPN to RN to BSN.

Root of the Problem: The health care field employs 11% of the workforce in the Northeast Kingdom. A shortage of registered nurses is anticipated in the coming years. There are no registered nurse training opportunities in the region. In addition, there is not a professional advancement track for those entering the less skilled levels of nursing care.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Develop a nurse training program in the region that will be accessible and provide career advancement.

Partners: Vermont Technical College; Vermont Community College; Lyndon State College; Hospitals, Home Health Agencies and Nursing Homes will serve as clinical training sites.

Resources Needed: Funding to develop program feasibility.

Expected Benefits: Increased number of NEK residents finding employment in the health care field; Professional advancement for employees in the health care field, fully staffed nursing departments at area hospitals and home health agencies.

3. Use telecommunication technology to provide local access to medical specialties and diagnostic services that can not be sustained on a full-time basis within the region.

Project 3 a. Determine Feasibility of Increasing Child Psychiatric Services and Consultation through Teleconferencing.

Root of the Problem: A child psychiatrist is available to Northeast Kingdom Human Services for only a few hours a month. There is currently a six month waiting list to access child psychiatric services.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Develop teleconferencing link for children to receive psychiatric consultations and evaluations with specialists at Dartmouth Hitchcock or Fletcher Allen hospitals.

Partners: Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Dartmouth Hitchcock and Fletcher Allen hospitals.

Resources Needed: Funds for tele-conferencing infrastructure.

Expected Benefits: Decreased child and family trauma due to improved access to child psychiatric services.

C. Transportation Difficulties

4. Identify services that could be delivered regionally rather than at tertiary centers.

Project 4 a. Establish Renal Dialysis Center in the region.

Root of the Problem: There are no Kidney Dialysis services in the Northeast Kingdom. Patients need to travel to Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Hanover, New Hampshire three times a week.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Explore the feasibility of establishing a dialysis center in the region.

Partners: North Country Hospital, Northeast Vermont Regional Hospital, Northeastern Vermont Area Health Education Center.

Resources Needed: Funding for feasibility study of locating dialysis facility within region, including financial feasibility.

Expected Benefits: Ready access to kidney dialysis. Time saving of 100 to 200 mile round trip to Dartmouth/Hitchcock.

Project 4 b: Conduct Feasibility Study for Establishing Radiation Therapy Center in the Region.

5. Evaluate feasibility of establishing satellite clinic sites in remote communities.

D. Health Improvement and Education

6. Promote local resource centers that support community health and wellness.

Project 6 a. Develop Cross Generational Center in St. Johnsbury

Root of the Problem: Senior citizens in the St. Johnsbury area and the Northeast Kingdom are interested in using services that are delivered in an intergenerational setting. Many recent changes in St. Johnsbury open up the opportunity to develop such a center. The St. Johnsbury House senior living facility is being privatized and will no longer be the site for senior meals in St. Johnsbury. New Move Adult Day Care is looking for a new home, and infant and toddler programs of the Vermont Department of Health are also looking for a new home. The community does not have a focal point for teenagers and others to go.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Develop a cross generational facility in the soon to be vacated Summer Street School. The facility would include a senior meal site, Internet café, arts programs, Neighbor to Neighbor volunteer program, infant and toddler programs, and other activities.

Partners: Area Agency on Aging, New Move, Catamount Arts, Vermont Department of Health, Town of St. Johnsbury.

Resources Needed: Costs of purchasing the school and renovations have not been fully defined, but an estimate is \$150,000. Operating costs are estimated at \$50,000 per year.

Expected Benefits: Improved wellbeing of seniors and younger people.

Project 6 b. Develop a Patch Resource Center in Wells River.

Activities. Community groups have initiated plans to develop a Community Resource Center in Wells River that would bring together social and health services, currently not accessible in this community

Partners. Agency of Human Services; St. Johnsbury Coordinating Council; Northeastern Vermont Area Health Education Center

7. Develop comprehensive education and wellness strategy for the Northeast Kingdom.

E. Capital Improvements

8. Upgrade hospitals' and other health care facility's infrastructures

Project 8 a. North Country Hospital: Upgrade and renovate major structural systems.

Root of the Problem: North Country Hospital was built in 1973. Many of the existing mechanical, electrical, plumbing and other infrastructure systems

are at the end of their life expectancy.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Complete infrastructure related upgrades over the next five years. Key areas in need of renovation include hot and cold water pipes, steam valves, roof replacement; domestic hot water tanks; Otis elevators; air handling units; boiler room renovations; expansion of HVAC control system; software for tracking maintenance and preventive work schedule; boiler upgrades; water treatment system; replacement of chiller tubes; steam to water heat exchanger replacement; cooling tower replacement; A/C cooling coil additions; replacement of medical vacuum pumps; re-pipe existing boiler floor drains; reconstruct bulk oxygen concrete pad; replacement of Medical Arts windows; back up water system development; replacement of kitchen grease traps.

Partners: North Country Hospital, others.

Resources Needed: Total 5-year infrastructure upgrade plan is \$522,000.

Expected Benefits: Sound functioning of North Country Hospital, reduced cost of delivering health care services.

Project 8 b. Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital: Renovate facility to accommodate improved day surgery and outpatient services.

Project 8 c. Purchase of New Facility for Umbrella, Inc.

Root of the Problem: Umbrella, an organization that provides 24 hour crisis counseling for victims of domestic violence and a safe house, is at the end of its building lease and needs to find a new home.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Purchase new facility.

Partners: Umbrella, USDA Rural Development

Resources Needed: \$125,000 in Community Facility Direct or Guaranteed Loan and Community Facility Grant

Expected Benefits: Continued service to provide counseling and safe housing for victims of domestic violence.

F. Availability and Sustainability of Services

9. Redirect services of hospitals to meet new and emerging community needs.

Project 9 a. Conduct needs assessment to determine community needs for hospital services at both facilities including feasibility of Critical Access Hospital designations and expansion of Federally Qualified Health Center designations.

G. Technology and Telecommunications

10. Develop more integrated health care networks supported by information technology across health and mental health service delivery systems.

Project 10 a. Inventory the Existing Telecommunication Systems within the Region

Root of the Problem: Geographic isolation within the region limits access to specialized medicine and training in the Northeast Kingdom.

Telecommunications technologies have the ability to access remote specialists for referral as well as training. Care providers can also use telecommunications technology to share information between hospitals, primary care providers, and mental health providers in the Northeast Kingdom.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Determine capabilities of existing infrastructure to provide for medical telecommunications, and develop plan to upgrade infrastructure accordingly.

Partners: Northern Communities Investment Corporation, Lyndon State College, telecommunications providers, hospitals. (See telecommunications strategy under Education).

Resources Needed: Funding to collect base line information and develop plan for upgrade.

Expected Benefits: Improved access to specialized medicine; improved training opportunities, improved communication between area health care providers.

H. Improve the Availability of Health Services

11. Maximize funding and reimbursement opportunities to increase health, dental and mental health services in the region.
12. Develop family oriented mental health and case management services linked to and coordinated with primary care health services through Medicaid reimbursement opportunities.

Project 12 a. Evaluate existing models that include mental health and case management services in primary care settings and develop plan to integrate these services in all primary care practices in the region.

13. Improve efficiency and accessibility of services through improved coordination of services and through information and referral services.

Project 13 a. Establish a 24 hour nursing triage phone service to assist consumers in accessing appropriate health care.

Root of the Problem: Individuals often are not sure when they need health care, do not know where to go, how to get there, or how they can pay for services. Some services, such as emergency rooms, are overused by patients who could have sought a different level of treatment.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Set up a phone service that individuals could call for immediate information or referrals regarding any health care question.

Partners: All area health providers.

Resources Needed: Funding for 24 hour coverage of phone line. Coverage could be provided by medical personnel in connection with their other duties.

Expected Benefits: Improved access to health care when needed. A decrease in overuse of inappropriate health care services, such as emergency rooms.

Project 13 b. Conduct feasibility study to determine the cost - benefits of networking small rural practices to improve efficiencies, accessibility of services and provider retention.

PART V. HOUSING CHALLENGES, STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS.

A. Preservation of Village and Town Centers as Center of Community Life

1. Preserve Landmark Historic Structures as Affordable Housing through continued or adaptive reuse as multi-family housing.

Project 1 a. Maintain landmark structures through continued or adaptive reuse as multi-family housing.

Root of the Problem: Historic structures are generally centrally located with good access to public facilities, schools, shops, services, and have access to municipal infrastructure. However, old buildings require reinvestment beyond the ability of most property owners and provide a return on investment below other investments.

Activities to Address the Problem: Provide incentives such as low interest or deferred loans, tax deferral, or tax credits to property owners who agree to improvements in privately owned residential buildings while maintaining affordable housing. Promote the renovation of the most deteriorated units. Encourage upgrading of fire suppression systems, health and safety improvements, and access modifications to extend the useful life of historic buildings

Partners: Town governments, private owners, non-profit housing providers, banks, Vermont Housing Finance Agency, Vermont Community Development Program; USDA RD, Northern Community Investment Corporation, Northeastern Vermont Development Association.

Resources Needed: Grant funding, low interest loans, tax credits, tax deferral, rental subsidy.

Expected Benefits: Restored historic buildings add to the real value of a community, promote preservation of surrounding property, create a healthy living environment, contribute to the economic vitality of the community, and lend a sense of definition to the streetscape that new buildings miss.

Project 1 b. Rehabilitation of Welch Block in Groton for multi-family housing.

Root of the Problem: Groton has a substandard landmark building that is too large for single family use and with too little demand for conversion to a use other than housing.

Activity to Address the Problem: Acquire the Welch Block in Groton, rehabilitate and manage as affordable family housing.

Partners: Town of Groton, Gilman Housing Trust, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, HOME Program, HUD, USDA, Banks, NETO, and

Efficiency Vermont.

Resources Needed: \$350,000 in grants and loans.

Expected Benefit: Safe, decent, affordable, well managed rental housing for 6 families.

B. Housing for Senior Citizens and Residents with Special Needs

2. Expand Housing Opportunity for Seniors and Persons with Special Needs.

Project 2 a. Create service enriched and accessible housing for senior and mobility impaired residents which will meet a defined housing shortage in our communities.

Root of the Problem: Demographics clearly show an aging population that is placing demands on the existing senior and accessible housing. The aging population will continue to move from larger family homes to more appropriate sized housing. This will provide housing opportunity for families but requires the construction of senior housing that will allow aging individuals to remain independent, involved, and a part of the community. At the same time individuals with mobility impairment or other disabilities need to be accommodated within the community.

Activities to Address the Problem: Create more housing catering to seniors and persons with special needs. This includes service enriched housing that provides medical, social, and rehabilitative services as well. Such facilities should be located within the center of the community allowing the mix of generations and interests. Where existing buildings can be adapted to meet these needs the historic resources of the towns will be enhanced. This will require modification of existing housing or creation of new housing designed to adapt and meet special needs. Once developed good property management is essential to insure fiscal and physical operations.

Partners: Area Agency on Aging, the Vermont Center for Independent Living, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, Vermont Community Development Block Grant Program; HUD, USDA RD, Vermont Housing Finance Agency, Gilman Housing Trust, Private Developers, Northeast Vermont Regional Hospital.

Resources Needed: Programs to fund the development of senior housing and special needs housing exist. The resources are competitive and scarce. Planning must begin well in advance of the need. To remain affordable, operating subsidies attached to the development are needed.

Expected Benefits: Housing alternatives promoting independence will enhance the lives of seniors and persons with special needs and will contribute to the health of the community. Greater socialization, access to goods and services, cultural and economic opportunities for seniors and people with

special needs will benefit the entire community.

Project 2 b. Replacement of buildings destroyed by fire such as the Daniel's Block in St. Johnsbury, or upgrade buildings such as the St. Johnsbury House, with HUD 202 supportive housing for the elderly.

Root of the Problem: Keeping housing in the center of the towns becomes more difficult as the costs of locating downtown increase. Components such as elevators, fire suppression systems, parking, and access become major expenses.

Activities to Address the Problem: Apply to various funding sources to construct replacement buildings or rehab existing buildings to code.

Partners: Gilman Housing Trust, Private Developers, Vermont Community Development Program, Towns, HUD, USDA, Banks, Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston Affordable Housing Program.

Resources Needed: Daniel's Block: \$2,600,000

Expected Benefit: 24 units of subsidized senior rental housing, 2 street level commercial spaces, parking.

C. Home Ownership

3. Support activities and programs that assist individuals to own their own homes.

Project 3 a. Preserve and expand affordable home ownership that enhances the quality of life, the economic and social stability of the community and retains the traditions of our northern rural lifestyle.

Root of the Problem: Most affordable village homes are pre-1940 frame dwellings. They need maintenance, are energy inefficient, contain lead-based paint and other hazardous materials, have dated and worn electrical, plumbing and heating systems and need the care and investment.

Addressing the Problem: Promote affordable home ownership to families that are prepared, supported and motivated to be successful owners in the community. Build programs that finance the purchase and improvements of older homes. Provide low interest loans to low and moderate-income households for repair and improvement to existing single family homes. Apply for \$50,000 in funding for down payment and closing cost loans and apply for \$30,000 in funding for Individual Development Accounts through Vermont Community Development Program.

Partners: Gilman Housing Trust through the NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Centers of Vermont, area Mortgage Lenders, Vermont Housing Finance Agency, USDA - RD, Real Estate Professionals, and the Vermont Community Development Program.

Resources Needed: Funding for a regional revolving loan fund to lend for housing rehabilitation, down payment assistance, access modifications, and historic

preservation; home buyer education, counseling, technical assistance, foreclosure prevention programs, and economic literacy training.

Expected Benefits: Sustaining and improving the rate of home ownership while increasing the resources for repairs and rehabilitation of older homes will increase the stability of the community, increase local economic activity, maintain the tax base, improve property maintenance, and foster community pride.

D. Repair and Rehabilitation of Single Family Homes.

4. Expand programs that rehabilitate existing housing and teach construction rehabilitations skills.

Project 4 a. Apply for Vermont Community Development Funds to support a regional revolving loan fund for rehabilitation of homes throughout the region.

Root of the Problem: Low and moderate income homeowners often lack equity and borrowing power to make affordable major repairs.

Activities or Project: Provide revolving loan funding for the NEK that makes home repair loans at below market rates available along with technical support in preparing specifications, bidding, contract management, and construction inspections. In addition, include a services component to assist low and moderate-income homeowners to correct misuse of debt and to correct credit problems.

Partners: NETO, Gilman Housing Trust, Area Towns, VT Center for Independent Living, Northeast Kingdom Community Action, and Area Agency on Aging.

Resources Needed: Estimated Cost: \$750,000 in initial funding.

Expected Benefits: Housing Rehab for 40 homes, Housing Counseling for 80 families.

E. Meeting Housing Expenses

5. Support programs for fuel assistance, weatherization, and other activities that will help low income people meet household utility bills.

F. Rehabilitation of Mobile Home Parks.

6. Expand affordable programs and resources to upgrade water, sewer, electrical and other systems in the many older parks throughout the Northeast Kingdom.

Project 6 a. Apply for funding for improvements to Mobile Home Park infrastructure in Derby, including water, sewer/septic, electrical systems, and roads.

Root of the Problem: 10% of owned homes in Vermont are mobile homes. Parks where lot rents are affordable are in poor condition with failing septic and water systems, deficient electrical systems, and poor roads.

Activities or Project to address the Problem: The Derby Mobile Home Park and the Shattuck Hill Mobile Home Park for Seniors have both been acquired by non-profit housing organizations at the request of the residents. Both Parks require extensive improvements. Shattuck Hill is scheduling the replacement of a 30-year old water system that is connected to the Town system. At the same time, the project is looking to replace failing septic systems either by connecting to the municipal system or by construction of an on-site system.

Partners: Gilman Housing Trust, State of Vermont - Department of Natural Resources, USDA - RD.

Resources Needed: Estimated Cost: \$345,000

Expected Benefit: 48 mobile home lots connected to safe, sanitary water and sewer with affordable rates.

7. Promote affordable home replacement programs to replace 30 - 50 year old failing mobile homes.

G. Homelessness

8. Provide housing opportunities for homeless, including youth.

Project 8 a. Development of homeless youth program for St. Johnsbury and Newport, including purchase or rental of building in downtown St. Johnsbury and Newport by Northeast Kingdom Youth Services for homeless youth program.

Root of Problem: Homeless youth are often unable to live in their own homes or with their own families for a variety of reasons. These youth often drift from one friend's home to another, "couching it."

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Purchase or rental of buildings in downtown St. Johnsbury and Newport to provide homeless youth services.

Partners: Northeast Kingdom Youth Services, Northeast Kingdom Community Action.

Estimated Cost: \$115,000

Expected Benefits: Safe housing for homeless youth.

9. Expand transitional housing that matches housing opportunity with independent living skill development through transitional housing.

H. Lead Based Paint

10. Support programs to eliminate exposure to lead based paint.

PART VI. TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES, STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS.

A. Geography and Weather; Reliance on Private Vehicles

1. Upgrade infrastructure facilities of roads and bridges, bicycle, pedestrian and trail networks.
2. Support programs that assist low income residents to own their own vehicles.

Project 2 a. Donated Vehicle Program

Root of Problem: The rural nature of the Northeast Kingdom with its thousands of miles of rugged unpaved roads makes it impossible to provide public transportation that can adequately serve the needs of a majority of residents. The cost of owning and operating a private vehicle is beyond the ability of many low income residents. In a 1998 survey of program participants, Northeast Kingdom Community Action learned that the number one unmet need in the area is transportation.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Develop a donated vehicles program in the Northeast Kingdom modeled after the Good News Garage in Burlington. (The Good News Garage takes in donated vehicles, repairs them and offers them to low-income people for the cost of the repairs.) This program would utilize local garages to repair vehicles as well as operate a garage that would provide several options: 1.) Repair donated vehicles to be given to low-income recipients, 2.) Provide garage space for people to maintain their own vehicles, 3.) Part-out donated vehicles that are not suitable for restoration in order to make high-priced items such as transmissions and engines available at an affordable cost to low-income people, 4.) Provide space for training vehicle owners in basic maintenance, and 5.) Provide low cost repairs for eligible people. In addition, to help with financing the cost of the repairs, low-interest loans would be available through a special agreement between NEKCA, The Department of Social Welfare and the Vermont Development Credit Union.

Partners: Northeast Kingdom Community Action; Department of Social Welfare; Northern Community Investment Corporation; Barrup's Fix-It Shop, Newport Center; Allard's Auto, Wes Wards, and St. Johnsbury Academy in St. Johnsbury; Lyndon Institute; North Country High School in Newport and a number of other garages in the area that are eager to join.

Resources Needed: Total budget of \$195,000. \$105,000 in revenues, and \$25,000 in-kind administration. Still needed: \$65,000.

Expected Outcome: 100 vehicles given to low-income people for the cost of repairs (avg. \$750); 50 vehicles repaired at reasonable cost; 100 vehicles maintained by owners at great savings; 25 high-cost parts supplied to low-income people at greatly reduced cost.

B. Speciality Medical Services; Public Transportation; Brokered Ride Services; Integration of Transportation Services

3. Expand and support efforts to recruit volunteer drivers.

Project 3 a. Recruit more volunteer drivers for Rural Community Transportation

Root of the Problem: RCT has funding to reimburse volunteer drivers for direct expenses when they carry eligible riders, but at times there is a shortage of volunteer drivers to meet all requests for rides.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Develop a marketing program to recruit more volunteer drivers. Plan can include printing request on restaurant place mats; notices at town meeting; public service announcements.

Partners: RCT, area restaurants, Community Coordinating Council, area radio stations.

Resources Needed: Information for restaurants to include on their place mats.

Expected Benefits: More potential volunteer drivers will contact RCT.

4. Improve linkages between means of transportation (i.e. local bus to regional bus) by creating functional transportation hubs or facilities that combine as many modes as possible (i.e. public transportation services, rail, taxi, park and ride, and airports).
5. When appropriate, encourage the integration of public transportation and school bus transportation.
6. Improve collaboration among organizations and individuals with shared and interdependent service or economic needs for transportation.

C. Marketing of Options Open to the Public

7. Public awareness campaign to promote a variety of transportation options to make transportation more accessible, lower personal transportation costs, and increase efficient use of energy and fossil fuels.
8. Increase alternatives for non-provider transportation options. For example, (a) a regular or web-based ride-board (realtime ride-match); (b) car share program; (c) community transportation initiatives.

Project 8 a. Increase opportunities for non-provider transportation.

Root of the Problem: The Northeast Kingdom's dispersed population requires innovative solutions to provide more transportation opportunities.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Explore possibilities of increased rides through a local rider program; car share; or sponsorship of vans and buses.

Partners: Northeastern Vermont Development Association; Community Coordinating Council Transportation Task Force, private business willing to sponsor vans/busses.

Resources Needed: Funding to develop alternatives.

Expected Benefits: Increased ride opportunities for seniors, low income individuals and others needing transportation.

D. Airports

9. Bring county airports up to accepted Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) safety standards. Project improvements might enable an airport to operate during non-daylight hours, during inclement weather, or up to fifteen hours per day in the middle of the winter.

Project 9 a. Newport State Airport upgrades.

Root of the Problem: Upgrades are necessary to provide safe and adequate services at a growing airport. Local businesses state their corporate jets have difficulty landing their aircraft at airport. Some cannot use the existing runway for safety reasons. A study is presently being done to create a small business park at the airport.

Activities to Address the Problem: Needed improvements: Expand runway by 1,000 feet, develop automated fuel system, cross wind runway, and various "housekeeping" projects. Some of the needed improvements may be addressed through the airport's master plan which is currently being updated.

Partners: Newport Airport Committee, headed up by Northeastern Vermont Development Association and comprised of pilots, business people, legislators, and municipal officials.

Resources Needed: No estimate at this time for major improvements. The local committee will raise the funds for the "housekeeping" projects.

Expected Benefits: Expanded use of airport as a vehicle for economic development in the region.

Project 9 b. Bring Caledonia County State Airport up to accepted standards for safety and full time utilization.

Root of the Problem: The Caledonia County Airport has inadequate lighting to operate during non-daylight hours, or up to fifteen hours per day in the middle of the winter. The airport is not able to accommodate the needs of

companies who may wish to locate in the area yet require the availability of a full time airport to fly people into or out of the region.

Activities or Project to Address the Problem: The Caledonia Country Airport runway lighting project is currently third on the priority list for state airport projects. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has approved it's share of 90% of the cost of this project, yet Vermont matching funding will not be available for five to six years. Full funding is required from the FAA to move this project forward.

Partners: Northeast Vermont Development Association, Northeast Kingdom Chamber of Commerce, Lyndonville Chamber of Commerce, St. Johnsbury and Lyndonville Selectmen, Vermont Pilot's Association.

Resources Needed: FAA funding and local match totaling \$650,000.

Additionally, the airport improvements require Act 250 approval.

Expected Benefits: Safety standards upgraded to allow pilots non-daylight and inclement weather operations. Increased economic activity and stability for the Northeast Kingdom. Thirty five Northeast Kingdom businesses and service enterprises, reflecting eight hundred eighty full time jobs, have identified the airport improvements as important to their success. FedEx and UPS will be able to use the airport on a daily basis.

E. Railroads

10. Revitalization of the Northern Vermont Railroad as a through route for freight and passenger service connecting to the rest of the U.S. rail system, by connecting rail service from Wells River to White River Junction.

Project 10 a. Revitalization of the Northern Vermont Railroad as a "through" route connecting to the rest of the U.S. rail system, by connecting rail service from Wells River to White River Junction.

Root of the Problem: The Northern Vermont Railroad operates a railroad line for 89 miles from Richford on the Canadian border to Wells River. All rail service originating or terminating on this line must be routed through Canada. Customers of this rail system cannot justify investment for expansion if they do not know the railroad line will remain in place. Without a connection to southbound rail lines the viability of Northern Vermont Railroad system is significantly reduced.

Activities or Project to Address the Problem: To operate and restore rail track from Wells River to White River Junction to FRA Class 3 designation, allowing speeds of 40 miles per hour. Other enhancements may be needed by existing and potential customers to better utilize rail service. Intermodal facilities should be explored thoroughly and implemented where they make sense.

Partners: Southern Quebec Railroad, Canadian American Railroad, Bangor and Aroostook Railroad, Logistics Management Systems, and the Northeastern Vermont Development Association.

Resources Needed: Funding for track upgrades, crossings, bridges and other infrastructure needs should be expected.

Expected Benefits: The rail infrastructure of the Northern Vermont Railroad will be protected. Increased rail traffic will lead to increased economic and environmental benefits for the Northeast Kingdom. Improved rail facilities will attract freight customers from trucks which will mitigate road traffic congestion, reduce truck impacts on local and state road infrastructure, and contribute to better air quality through reduced emissions.

PART VII. ARTS AND CULTURE CHALLENGES, STRATEGIES, AND PROJECTS.

A. Support through Sales; Maintain Artistic and Cultural Venues

1. Support and improve existing facilities and new facilities for performance and visual arts.

Project 1 a. Develop gallery space in the expansion of the Saint Johnsbury Athenaeum to provide area artists with exhibition space.

Root of the Problem: The Northeast Kingdom has very limited venues for artists to show their work.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: The Saint Johnsbury Athenaeum is exploring the opportunity of expanding into the adjacent building currently occupied by the Saint Johnsbury municipal offices. Renovation of the municipal offices for library and gallery space will include a gallery for area artists to exhibit their work.

Partners: Saint Johnsbury Athenaeum, Town of St. Johnsbury.

Resources Needed: Funds will be needed to purchase the building from the town, add a small addition to connect the two buildings (and house the elevator to make both buildings accessible), and renovate the former municipal building to accommodate library functions, art and archives storage (in the town vaults) and gallery space. Restoration architects now working with the Athenaeum have drawn preliminary plans.

Expected Benefits: The Athenaeum will move forward to restore its second floor back to its original function as a lecture hall, a space which seated 200 for lectures and programs in the 19th century. This hall will add a significant space of extraordinary beauty (with 16 foot hand-painted ceilings) for small performances and community programs. Artists will benefit from greater exposure to their work and exposure to the work of other artists. All residents of the Northeast Kingdom, including students, will benefit from appreciation of the artistic experience. The Athenaeum expansion will also help make the area more attractive as a tourist destination.

Project 1 b. Expand Northeast Kingdom Artisans Guild retail space.

Root of the Problem: Artisans in the Northeast Kingdom as individuals are not able to support a retail space in the Northeast Kingdom. The Northeast Kingdom Artisans Guild was formed as a cooperative craft gallery by eight artists and has since grown to include fifty members. The Guild's current retail space on Railroad Street in St. Johnsbury does not adequately serve the Guild's growing needs.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Explore ways to renovate, expand space or make better use of existing space for Artisans Guild.

Partners: Northeast Kingdom Artisans Guild, Town of St. Johnsbury, St. Johnsbury Downtown Commission.

Resources Needed: Low interest loans.

Expected Benefits: Increased sales for area artists. Increased shopping traffic for downtown St. Johnsbury.

Project 1. c. Move G.R.A.C.E. Gallery to the "Firehouse" Building in Hardwick to establish a permanent gallery for G.R.A.C.E.

Project 1 d. Renovation of Hardwick Train Depot by Hardwick Area Historical Society to house historical railroad and other related historical items.

2. Improve communication and marketing for artistic and cultural events and opportunities.

Project 2 a. Publicize Arts Events through Web Sites and Regional Publication.

Root of the Problem: There are many community based arts programs and performances going on throughout the Northeast Kingdom that rely on ticket sales to cover much of their costs. Performances usually have excess seating capacity.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Establish a web site of calendar for arts programs and activities for quick reference by people planning vacations in the Northeast Kingdom. Coordinate publishing calendar of arts activities with Vermont Life, local newspapers, and other regional publications.

Partners: Potential partners include Catamount Arts, the Vermont Council on the Arts, Vermont Life Magazine, area performing arts venues.

Resources Needed: Funds for coordinator to develop calendar, set up web site, and distribute information to publications.

Expected Benefits: Increased attendance at artistic performances and increased ticket receipts; enhanced tourist experience in the Northeast Kingdom.

3. Build philanthropy to support the arts in the Northeast Kingdom.

Project 3 a. Support artists, artistic performances, and other arts and culture programing through the building of philanthropy.

Root of the Problem: The Northeast Kingdom does not have the critical mass of people to support artistic performances and other cultural programming based on the sale of tickets alone.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Work with Northeast Kingdom residents and others who are interested in the Northeast Kingdom and have the philanthropic capacity to set up an endowment for the arts and culture in the Northeast Kingdom.

Partners: Catamount Arts, other artistic and cultural institutions, philanthropists.

Resources Needed: Capital for starting endowment.

Expected Benefits: Improved ability to support and present a wide range of artistic and cultural experiences in the Northeast Kingdom.

B. Children's Limited Connection to the Arts

4. Increase programs for children to participate in the arts, including linking artists with schools and youth programs.

Project 4 a. Support and enhance the lives of preschool children through the integration of the arts into early childhood programs.

Root of the Problem: At-risk preschool children in the Northeast Kingdom have few opportunities to experience the arts during the critical early years. Arts experiences and learning have far-reaching effects on early childhood development.

Activities or Project to Address the Problem: The six-year old Head Start Arts Partnership, currently providing programming in the other areas of the state, would re-establish programming in the Northeast Kingdom. The partnership creates artist residencies at Head Start sites and will be expanding to include other early childhood programs. Artists provide activities for children, staff and parents. Additionally, workshops are held for staff and parents.

Partners: Catamount Arts Center, NEKCA (Head Start), and regional artists.

Resources Needed: Funding for artists. Some funding comes from the Vermont Arts Council with a non-federal match from Head Start, but the amounts are very small. To expand to other early childhood programs, funding for artists and other activities will be needed.

Expected Benefits: Integration of the arts into preschool programs will foster creative thinking and problem solving skills, self-expression, and positive self-concept. Scope of early childhood programs will be expanded to include the arts in their curriculum; staff and parents will expand their skills in this area; children will increase skills that will bolster later school success; at-risk, low income population will be exposed to the arts in many ways.

Project 4 b. Create a means for artists to work in school classrooms and supplement school arts curricula.

Root of the Problem: Many Northeast Kingdom schools operate on limited budgets that do not set arts education as a priority. Although there are heroic efforts by many parents to provide after school theatrical and other

artistic experiences for their children, many students do not have adequate opportunities to express themselves artistically and gain a greater appreciation for the arts.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Work with Vermont Arts Council to increase opportunities and simplify the process to have visiting artists in the schools. Also, work with schools to improve communication regarding artistic resources that can be shared between schools.

Partners: Catamount Arts, the Vermont Arts Council, area schools, area artists.

Resources Needed: Increased funding for visiting artists program.
Communications infrastructure for area schools.

Expected Benefits: Increased opportunities for artistic expression by students.
Greater appreciation of the arts by students and families. More opportunities for artists to work in their communities.

5. Provide programs that honor and support the history and culture of region.

Project 5 a. Develop a Speakers Series on the Cultural and Natural Heritage of the Northern Forest.

Root of the Problem: The Nulhegan River Basin has a rich cultural heritage tied to logging and natural resources that is slowly vanishing.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: Hold a speakers series on the cultural and natural heritage of the Nulhegan basin.

Partners: Northern Forest Alliance, other institutions and businesses.

Resources Needed: minimal funding for speakers or coordinating events.

Expected Benefits: Retaining culture and history tied to the Nulhegan Basin.

PART VIII. RECREATION, PARKS AND CONSERVATION.

A. Recreation Programs and Accessibility

1. Provide support for local recreational programs.

B. Indoor Recreation

2. Develop facilities for increased access to indoor recreation

Project 2 a. Final construction of the proposed ice arena, community room, & swimming pool by Indoor Recreation of Orleans County.

Root of the Problem: Orleans County ranks at or near the top of the list for all health risk factors among Vermont communities. Limited recreational opportunities and long winters contribute to health risks, including substance abuse by teens.

Project to Address Problem: Construction of a multi-use recreational facility designed and programmed to meet the needs of all segments of the community at affordable cost to the consumer.

Partners: Together with individual donors, North Country Hospital, area banks, and area industries have financially supported the project. IROC is a 501(c)(3) corporation with a local Board of Directors.

Resources Needed: Sufficient funds for completion of the \$3.5 million project, part of which can include guaranteed loans. To date, \$700,000 has been raised.

Expected Benefits: Community members can anticipate the following benefits: improved health, reduced crime, reduced teen alcohol use, community pride, enhanced medical rehabilitation, improved family identity.

C. Recreation Impacts; Planning and Coordination

3. Create recreational use plans for newly conserved areas and other trail networks

Project 3 a. Create a recreational use plan and two management plans for the former Champion Lands.

Root of the Problem: The sale of the former Champion lands (132,000 acres), resulted in three new ownerships. 26,000 acres was sold to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, 22,000 acres is now a state Wildlife Management Area and the remaining 84,000 acres is owned by the Essex Timber Company, LLC (ETC). The state and privately held portions of the property are subject to conservation easements and the ETC land is also subject to a public access easement. The sale of the Champion lands

and the resulting ownerships and legal interests represent major changes for the property as well as the region.

Activities or Project to Address Problem: There are now six parties with legal interests in the former Champion lands. Representatives from each of the legal interests serve on a steering committee that will oversee a multi-year effort to develop management plans for the two publicly held parcels and a recreational access plan for the private lands. The development of these plans will require an inventory of the natural and cultural assets of the property, followed by an extensive public process.

Partners: Essex Timber Company, The Nature Conservancy, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, Vermont Land Trust, and the Conte Refuge of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Resources Needed: The partners are jointly responsible for funding the planning process.

Expected Benefits: The public process will result in management and recreational access plans that have broad support and serve the three primary goals of the Champion project; protection of the property's significant biological and cultural attributes, guaranteed public access and a stable, well-managed and profitable timber resource for future generations. Achieving the three goals will result in economic opportunities for the region's residents that will not be subject to the "boom and bust" experience of the past.

4. Manage recreational use on trails corridors.

Project 4 a. Expand off season tourism through expansion, maintenance and marketing of Kingdom Trails and connected trail networks.

Root of the Problem: The Northeast Kingdom has traditionally had a high dependence on winter (ie: skiers & snowmobilers) and fall (foliage tourism) visitors and a relatively low dependence on spring and summer visitors. The net result is near-zero room vacancy during winter vacations and peak foliage with high vacancy during the rest of the year. Thus, the Kingdom's tourism industry is excessively reliant on good foliage and snow conditions, and two or more consecutive mild winters can have a devastating economic effect.

Project to Address Problem: Kingdom Trails Association has constructed and maintains an extensive multi-use recreational trail network centered about the village of East Burke. The network serves to bring visitors during the traditional off-season, filling otherwise vacant rooms and creating other (retail, services, and amenities) business. Kingdom Trails Association is also interested in establish muscle-powered recreational opportunities in

the former Champion land mentioned above and creating a trail link between the Kingdom Trails network and that of the Vermont Leadership Center in East Charleston, VT.

Partners: Kingdom Trails has been granted §501(c)(3) Federal tax-exempt status and is supported by map, advertising, and membership sales, as well as goods, services, and funds donations from the following partners: The Burke Area Chamber of Commerce, Burke Mountain Ski Area, Burke Take Charge, The Connecticut River Valley Partnership Program, Das German Haus Bed & Breakfast, East Burke Sports, Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium, The Inn at Mountain View Creamery, The International Mountain Bike Association, Lyndon State College, National Park Service, The Northeast Kingdom Travel and Tourism Association, Northeast Vermont Development Association, The Northern Forest Alliance, PowerBar Incorporated - Direct Impact on Rivers and Trails Program, The Vermont Community Foundation, The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, The Vermont Leadership Center's Northeast Kingdom Conservation Service Corps, Vermont Mountain Bike Advocates, The Village Inn of East Burke, The Wildflower Inn.

Resources Needed: Kingdom Trails Association needs to establish consistent funds for regular operation, including the hiring of part- and full-time staff as needed, as well as for regular maintenance of a projected 100-250 miles of recreational trails.

Expected Benefits: Kingdom Trails Association will benefit the local economy via the infusion of tourist dollars without the requirement of additional development (through the use of currently underutilized facilities). In addition, the local and regional community will benefit from an extensive and free recreation resource.

D. Water Quality

5. Promote community involvement to improve water quality and conserve key natural resources.

APPENDIX A – WASTEWATER AND WATER FACILITIES IN NEK

EXHIBIT A - PUBLIC WASTEWATER FACILITIES IN THE NEK

<u>Location</u>	<u>Year Built</u>	<u>Last work; Needed Work*</u>
North Troy	1976	Study for refurbishment done
Troy/Jay	1992	None since initial construction - note lost major user (cheese plant)
Newport City	1966/1985	Plant OK; collection work needed as well as expansion to serve industrial park
Newport Town	1982	Some operational problems may exist
Canaan	1973	Upgrade in mid 80's
Brighton	1976	Aeration system upgraded in late 80's
Barton	1981	?
Orleans	1981	?
W Glover	1982	Some operational problems
E. Haven	1992/1999	Recent re-build; OK
Lunenburg	1979	?
Lyndon	1976	Upgrade for sludge currently seeking funding; will also need plant upgrade soon
St. Johnsbury	1964/1990	Major combined sewer overflow project needed
Danville	1983	?
Hardwick	1979	Upgraded aeration system in late 80's
E. Ryegate	1977/1994	Recent re-build; OK
Ryegate Town	1983	?

*Typical life cycle for a wastewater plant is 20-30 years

EXHIBIT B - PUBIC COMMUNITY WATER SYSTEMS IN THE NEK
 (Projects in BOLD recently upgraded with RD \$)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Population Served</u>
Albany Water System	200
Barnet Water System	205
McIndoe Falls FD 3	200
Passumpsic FD 1	170
Barton Water System	1,500
Orleans Water System	825 (Currently seeking RD \$)
Bloomfield Water System	40
Brighton Water System	2,200
Burke FD 1	60
Burke Mountain Water System	3,806
West Burke Housing	32
Canaan Water System	970
Riverside Water Works Co. (Canaan)	336
Coventry FD 1	110
Craftsbury FD 2	420
Danville FD 1	450
Beebe Plan Water System (Derby)	1,030
Derby Center	1,100
Derby Line	900
Derby MHP	150
Shattuck Hill MHP (Derby)	90
Aqua Haven (East Haven)	150
Greensboro Bend Water Coop	55
Greensboro FD 1	650
Guildhall Water System	120
Lunenburg FD 1	320
Lunenburg FD 2	700
Lyn Haven FD 1 (Lyndon)	114
Lyndonville Water System	3,200
Newport City Water System	5,500
Newport Center Water System	246
Peacham FD 1	150
Ryegate FD 2	260
South Ryegate Water Coop	36
Sheffield Village Water	70
St. Johnsbury FD 1	370
St. Johnsbury Water System	4,500
North Troy Water System	750
Troy Water System	300

Westfield FD 1	120
Rolling Acres MHP (Westford)	125
Wheelock FD 1	60