



NVDA

*Northeastern Vermont  
Development Association*

# 2005 Annual Report

# Thank you.

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## From Art...

It is with deep appreciation that I reflect on the two years serving as your president. Your support and contributions to NVDA have been most helpful and have made my responsibilities that much easier. While there is much to be done in the future, our staff and board have poured a solid foundation for economic improvements and well-planned communities in the Northeast Kingdom.

Under Steve Patterson's leadership, the hiring of new staff, due to retirements and employment changes, has enhanced the organization. It has taken an exceptionally capable staff to handle this year's workload. Great progress has been made on the regional plan, which is ready for final statutory approval. Most of our towns have benefited from the work done on all hazards mitigation planning and the training provided by NVDA to deal with new changes in the state planning laws.

On the economic development front, we have seen strong sales in the St. Johnsbury-Lyndon Park and in Hardwick. The Dirigo Paper Plant (formerly Gilman) is up and running again, partially due to assistance from NVDA. A grant has been received from USDA, which will help us expand our economic development efforts and existing business support. Jay Peak is fast becoming a four-season resort with the construction of a world-class golf course, again with assistance from NVDA.

These are but a few of the many, many projects the staff has worked on during 2004-2005. While I am most pleased with the staff performance, much of this work would not have been possible without the support and help of many dedicated board members. I am grateful for all your support.

In closing, I would like to note that this annual report is dedicated to the memory of the late Senator Julius Canns. He ably and passionately represented the interests of the Northeast Kingdom for several years. He loved the region and the people that live here. We will miss him.

Thank you again for the privilege and honor of serving you.

Sincerely,

Art Sanborn

President, Board of Directors



## From Steve...

If I could use only one word to describe my feelings about working at NVDA, it would be "grateful."

I am grateful to the many members of our board that have devoted so much of their time to helping us move towards our goals. As our president, Arthur Sanborn has been especially generous with his time and experience. He has always been available when we needed advice on issues and NVDA has progressed greatly under his leadership.



Our staff, though often stretched to the limit with an overwhelming workload, has performed admirably throughout the year. Many of those achievements are chronicled in other sections of this report. I am grateful for their support and proud to be associated with them.

Community banks, federal, state and town leaders, and a myriad of other organizations and individuals help NVDA on a regular basis. They are too numerous to mention here, but we would be ineffective without their assistance.

Throughout the year, we have worked on a vast array of projects, ranging from economic development to town planning. We are proud of the work we did on reactivating the Gilman Paper Plant and other economic development projects. Emergency management programs and new state planning requirements touched virtually every town in the Kingdom. We are pleased we could assist with these efforts.

We face many challenges in the coming year, but with the continued support of the many friends of NVDA, I am confident we will achieve our objectives.

Thank you,

Steve Patterson

Executive Director

# NVDA's Board...

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## Members at Large

Kelly Deslauriers  
Lawrence Donna  
Conrad Doyon  
Al Duey  
Carol Moore  
Kathleen O'Connor

## Caledonia County

Edward Bates  
Brent Beck  
Doug Bora  
Wendy Bora  
Howard Crawford  
Elwin Cross  
Kenneth Davis  
Martha Feltus  
Kim Fried  
Joseph Garcia  
Wade Johnson  
Don Morrill  
David Redmond  
John Reiss  
John Reynolds  
Arthur Sanborn  
Catherine Sargent  
Lewis Shattuck  
Albert Sponheimer  
Donald Wood

## Essex County

Sherry Belknap  
Evelyn Brassor  
Richard Bryer  
Reginald Bunnell  
Dana Caron  
Joel Cope  
Kirwin Flanders  
Richard Hart  
Steve Hawley  
Fredrick Hodgdon  
Mark Joyce  
David Lunnie  
Joseph Robbason  
Peter Rodin  
David Snedeker  
Lawrence Tighe

## Orleans County

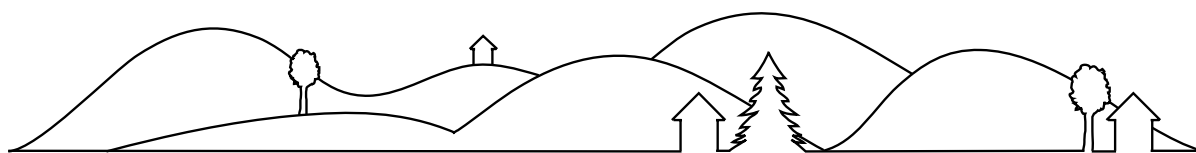
Todd Alix  
Charles Barrows  
Forest Buckland  
Bridget Collier  
Robert Croteau  
Fred Cushing  
William Davies  
Richard Degre  
Louisa Dotoli  
Michael Dunn

James Greenwood  
Ellwood Guyette  
Tom Jensen  
Charles Kezar  
Real Lanoue  
Stephen Marsh  
Roland Mayhew  
Irene McDermut  
Michael Metcalf  
Stephen Pitkin  
Carole Pouliot-Piper  
Beula-Jean Shattuck  
Dale Sweeney  
Robert Walker  
John Ward, Jr.  
Alden Warner

## Legislators

Rep. Donald Bostic  
Rep. David Clark  
Rep. Winston Dowland  
Rep. Cola Hudson  
Rep. William Johnson  
Rep. Duncan Kilmartin  
Rep. Leigh Larocque  
Rep. Steven Larrabee  
Rep. Richard Lawrence  
Rep. Lucy Leriche  
Rep. Michael Marcotte

Rep. John Morley III  
Rep. Harvey Otterman  
Rep. Janice Peaslee  
Rep. Dexter Randall  
Rep. John Rogers  
Rep. Loren Shaw  
Senator George Coppenrath  
Senator Vincent Illuzzi  
Senator Jane Kitchel  
Senator Robert Starr, Jr.



# ...and Staff

**Annalei Babson:** Annalei maintains a busy schedule, telecommuting half-time and mothering full-time to her son and daughter. As a planner, she acquired and administered grants to conduct a soy processing feasibility study, restore a municipal office building in Westmore, and coordinate several watershed councils to address water quality issues. She also continues to assist towns with updating and writing town plans, zoning bylaws, and other regulations. She maintains the NVDA Web site and has helped the Local Emergency Planning Commissions develop their respective Web sites. She is the NVDA representative for the 15 Mile Falls Mitigation and Enhancement Fund, as well as the Nulhegan Gateway Association and would like to challenge anyone willing to participate in a "Club 55" (to mimic the "251 Club") in which we all attempt to visit all 55 Towns and Gores in the Kingdom. Look for this coming to NVDA's Web site!

**Judy Butson:** As business manager, Judy manages the finances of NVDA, as well as the St. Johnsbury-Lyndon Industrial Park Board, and Avenue Associates (NVDA's for-profit entity). The financial management entails many aspects, including budgeting, accounts receivable, accounts payable, payroll, employee benefits, notes payable, notes receivable. If that's not enough, she also manages 11 bank accounts and three revolving loan funds, deals with legal and insurance issues, works closely with multiple auditors, handles day-to-day issues in four industrial parks and three rental properties, and oversees numerous local, state, and federal grants and contracts. Additionally, she administers a special HUD grant on behalf of the Northeast Kingdom Collaborative. Judy joined NVDA in 1992.

**Brian Hanson:** Brian has been with NVDA for nearly 25 years. During this time he has been responsible for helping the towns in the Northeast Kingdom with the writing, adoption, and administration of town plans and zoning bylaws. As implementation specialist, he also provides a great deal of technical assistance over the phone and receives many questions that really keep him on his toes. He's very thankful for the attorneys at the Vermont League of Cities and Towns! During this past year, Brian has also taken on some grant management projects that include the Indoor Recreation in Orleans County (IROC), the Jay Peak Golf Course, and the Troy

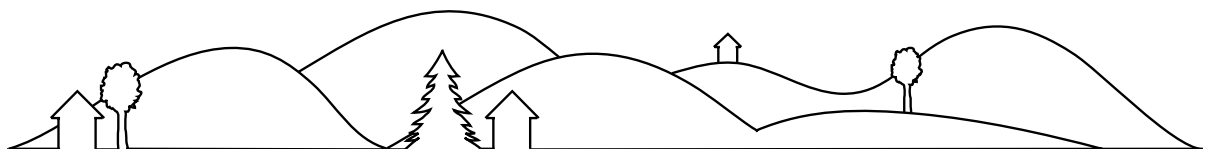


*From left: Tracy McIntyre, Laurie Zilbauer, Brian Hanson, Alison Meaders, Steve Patterson, Merike Petrich, Judy Butson, Doug Morton. Not pictured: Annalei Babson, Mary Paull, Cindy Turner*

cooperative slaughterhouse feasibility study. When Brian is not busy at work, he enjoys time with his son, Nate, hiking, bicycling, and handbell ringing.

**Steve Patterson:** Steve has served as Executive Director of NVDA for two years. He has overall responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the organization. He works closely with state, regional, and community officials on economic development and planning issues impacting the Northeast Kingdom. Working on land sales and providing assistance to business, consumes a great deal of his time. He represents NVDA on several boards and commissions and works closely with a variety of other economic development service providers. Steve lives in St. Johnsbury.

**Tracy McIntyre:** Originally from Derby Line and now living in St. Johnsbury, Tracy has been with NVDA for 16 years, working as both a planner and the GIS specialist. He holds a degree in Natural Science from Lyndon State College (and jokes about having a minor in Miscellaneous). The field of GIS brings together a number of his passions including science, history, sociology, and art, which are reflected in his maps. Being a native to the Northeast Kingdom, he works to see that traditions are maintained while creating new opportunities for the area residents. In the true Kingdom tradition, he prefers to remain quietly behind the scene.



# NVDA Staff (Cont'd.)

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**Alison Meaders:** Alison joined NVDA in 2003. As senior planner, she recently acquired grant funds to launch the North-east Kingdom Wireless Initiative, which involves the design and engineering of a communications tower prototype that will accommodate cellular carriers, broadband, and virtual information technology. Over the course of this past year's extensive work-related travel, she finally saw her first moose ever – a milestone that has made her NEK experience complete! Other work includes Chapter 117 training and consultation, town planning, and administering and managing several grant-funded projects.

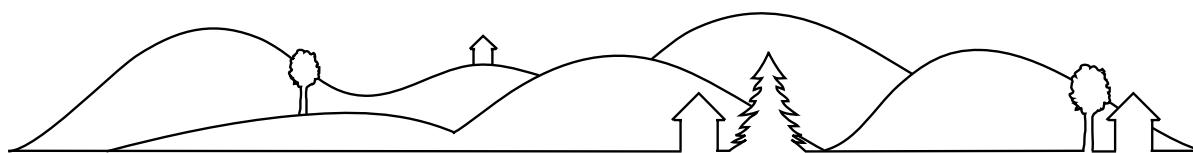
**Douglas Morton:** As transportation planner, Doug handles the administration of NVDA's transportation program. This involves working with the VTrans coordinator, as well as various other VTrans staff to keep our work plan moving on budget and on time. Doug works with other staff to develop the annual work plan and budget, writes and issues Requests for Proposals to perform work plan tasks, and even performs a few of these tasks himself. Some projects from the past year were the Town Bridge and Culvert Inventory, which collected over 4,500 culverts from 12 towns, the completion of a Master Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Town of Troy, grant assistance for several communities, and response to daily requests for technical assistance. Doug has been with NVDA for 2 years.

**Mary Paull:** Mary works out of NVDA's Newport office as the economic development coordinator, a position that she has held for 10 years. Her richly varied business background includes human resources at North Country Hospital and a stint as Executive Director of the Greater Newport Area Chamber of Commerce. She also served two terms in the Vermont House of Representatives, an experience that gives her a great deal of insight into the legislative issues that impact our local business community. Mary has always been a supporter of businesses in the NEK and thoroughly enjoys working with the variety of businesses industries we have. She's also actively involved in visiting businesses with recruitment potential, particularly those in Quebec.

**Merike Petrich:** As NVDA's planning manager, Merike is responsible for preparing and carrying out the regional planning commission's work program, which is funded by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. She also writes and administers community and economic development grants for communities, organizations, and businesses. Other responsibilities include administering a technical assistance fund for small businesses, and heading up emergency management planning efforts and other regional special purpose programs.

**Cindy Turner:** Cindy joined NVDA in October of 2004 as Receptionist/Office Assistant and is responsible for the day-to-day activities at the front desk, such as answering and directing incoming calls, opening and distributing the mail, preparing bulk mailings, organizing meetings, and supporting NVDA staff as needed. She lives in St. Johnsbury with her husband and two teenage children and enjoys activities such as reading, cooking, hiking, camping, and snowshoeing. In August, Cindy will leave NVDA to attend Vermont Technical College's practical nursing program at their satellite site in Newport. We will miss her quiet competence and dry humor.

**Laurie Zilbauer:** Laurie is the most recent staff addition, joining NVDA in February of this year. She is a perfect fit, coming all the way from Buffalo, New York; she's already used to our weather! Laurie is starting up NVDA's new Brownfield Program. The Program will offer property owners the assessment funding and planning tools needed to get moving towards remediation, reuse, and redevelopment of those idle properties. Her other projects touch on transportation planning, homeland security critical facility identification, and Chapter 117 assistance.



# Planning

NVDA is the only regional entity to focus on both planning and economic development. While it's a tall order for our staff, we often benefit from the synergy that comes from combining the two disciplines. A community with a strong local economy is also a community with adequate infrastructure, safe streets, comprehensive emergency response systems, and orderly development. Whether it involves grant administration or GIS mapping, our planners are likely to pursue opportunities that will enhance quality of life in the Northeast Kingdom.

## Chapter 117 Training and Compliance

Technical assistance is one of the key services that we provide to our members communities. The phone rings daily with questions about everything from posting requirements and bylaw adoption processes to freestanding ordinances. Our technical support staff took on new challenges in FY2005, when municipalities were faced with statutory changes in planning and zoning practices.

Title 24 VSA Chapter 117 is the state law that controls all planning and zoning in Vermont. Late last year, the governor signed into effect sweeping changes to the law, the most significant set of revisions since 1988. Zoning bylaw must now make provisions for various forms of affordable housing, such as accessory dwelling units and multi-family dwellings. There are also implications for the way towns can regulate existing small lots and nonconformities, and there are a host of procedural changes in the ways the bylaws must be adopted and administered.

Over this past winter and into the early spring, NVDA staff traveled throughout the Northeast Kingdom to host a series of Chapter 117 workshops. They also helped each town come into compliance with the new law. Staff has been busy reviewing bylaw for individual towns and recommending ways to bring them into compliance. On September 1, all our towns must comply with certain portions of the new statute, or run the risk of having the state take precedence over their bylaws.

## Emergency Planning

In FY2005, a grant from the state's Homeland Security Unit kept NVDA staff hard at work on pre-disaster mitigation planning. NVDA developed a regional All-Hazards Mitigation Plan, a detailed report on the specific hazards our communities are likely to face, as well as strategies that can be taken to mini-

mize the risk. This plan has 25 "annexes," or hazard mitigation plans for individual towns. These plans must be approved by the Vermont Emergency Management and FEMA and then adopted locally in order for the town to be eligible to receive pre-disaster mitigation funds from FEMA. One of these "annex" towns, the Town of Lyndon, has already run the full approval gamut and has been awarded a pre-disaster mitigation grant. Thirteen other annex plans have now been submitted to Vermont Emergency Management for review.

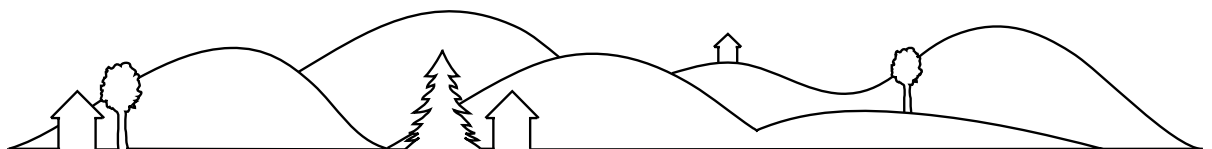
Also under this program, NVDA developed for each community an Emergency Operations Plan (a local-level emergency response manual) and a Rapid Response Plan (a portable guide for the early stages of disaster response). All of these plans can be found on the Web sites that NVDA staff helped to create for the Local Emergency Planning Committees. You can find emergency planning information for your town at one of these sites:

- LEPC 9, which serves Caledonia County and southern Essex County: [www.lepc9.org](http://www.lepc9.org)
- LEPC10, which serves Orleans County and northern Essex County: [www.lepc10.org](http://www.lepc10.org)

## Grant Administration and Management

NVDA planners are highly capable grant writers and are often able to obtain funding for municipal projects that could not otherwise go forward. In FY2005, NVDA staff worked with the Town of Norton to create a new town clerk's office and town hall in the walk-in basement of the former Norton School. The project was made possible with a USDA Rural Development Community Facilities grant, as well as a Help America Vote Act grant from the Vermont Secretary of State's Office. NVDA secured and administered the grant funds and served as project manager for the construction. Other new grant work in FY2005 includes:

- Administration and project management for a Vermont Community Development Program grant, which is funding a feasibility study for of an early childhood professional development center in the Lyndon area.
- Acquisition of funds for a new welcome center in Island Pond. NVDA helped the Town of Brighton obtain a VTrans Enhancement Grant. The town is now awaiting word from USDA Rural Development regarding a grant application, which was prepared by NVDA staff.



# Planning (Cont'd.)

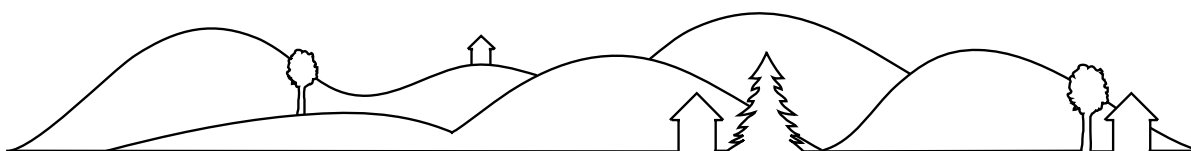
## NVDA's Regional Plan

As the regional planning commission, we are required by state law to write a plan every five years. A working draft of this plan - which is significantly changed from the 2000 plan - will soon be available for public comment. The writing of this plan has been a long process, one that has sparked lively and intelligent discussion and many revisions. We are grateful for the insights of the NVDA board members who actively participated in this process.

## Status of Planning and Zoning in the Kingdom

Over the past year-and-a-half, NVDA planners have been reaching out to towns that do not have plans. Those efforts are beginning to pay off. In FY2005, NVDA staff helped the towns of Glover and Craftsbury obtain Municipal Planning Grants to develop plans that meet the specifications of Chapter 117. The town of Glover has never had an approved plan; Craftsbury had a plan that expired several years ago. Both towns are now well into the writing process, and they should adopting their plans by fall.

Town	Planning	Zoning	Town	Planning	Zoning
Albany	None	Flood only	Kirby	Expired	Adopted
Barnet	Expired	Adopted	Lemington	Expired	Adopted
Barton	Approved	Adopted	Lowell	Approved	Adopted
Bloomfield	None	Flood only	Lunenburg	Expired	None
Brighton	Approved	Adopted	Lyndon	Writing	Adopted
Brownington	Approved	None	Maidstone	Expired	Adopted
Brunswick	Adopted	Adopted	Morgan	Adopted	Adopted
Burke	Approved	Adopted	Newark	Proposed	None
Canaan	Expired	Adopted	Newport City	Approved	Adopted
Charleston	Proposed	None	Newport Town	Approved	Adopted
Concord	Expired	Adopted	Norton	Writing	Adopted
Coventry	Approved	Flood only	Peacham	Proposed	Adopted
Craftsbury	Writing	Flood only	Ryegate	Adopted	Proposed
Danville	Approved	Adopted	Sheffield	Expired	None
Derby	Approved	Adopted	St. Johnsbury	Approved	Proposed
East Haven	Expired	None	Stannard	Proposed	Proposed
Glover	Writing	Flood only	Sutton	Proposed	Proposed
Granby	Expired	Adopted	Troy	Expired	Adopted
Greensboro	Approved	Revising	Victory	None	None
Groton	Expired	Proposed	Unorganized Towns		
Guildhall	Approved	Adopted	& Gores	Writing	Adopted
Hardwick	Approved	Adopted	Walden	Writing	None
Holland	Expired	None	Waterford	Expired	Adopted
Irasburg	None	None	Westfield	Approved	Adopted
Jay	Approved	Adopted	Westmore	Adopted	Adopted
			Wheelock	Adopted	None



# Economic Development

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In Vermont's most rural region, job creation and retention rest largely in the pursuit of small business opportunities. Exploring their potential often takes us in unexpected directions, e.g. conducting a feasibility study for a soy processing plant or investing in telecommunications infrastructure. In any event, NVDA's planners work with our economic development staff and regional partners to create quality jobs that complement our rural traditions.

The Hardwick Industrial Park may soon find a new purpose as a central employment hub for the agricultural processing sector. While the park had struggled to attract and retain tenants for a number of years, it recently acquired a few new tenants who are specializing in agricultural processing. Now we can add to that mix a promising start-up called Vermont Soy, a company that has shown a keen interest in establishing a soy processing facility in the park. Not only does the agricultural theme fit this rural area, but it's also likely to spark additional job creation in the agricultural processing market.

The Town of Hardwick saw the possibilities in soy. In FY 2005, the Town sponsored a Vermont Community Development Program planning grant, which was written and administered by NVDA, to determine the economic feasibility of establishing a soy processing facility in the Hardwick Industrial Park. The study is now completed, and we fully expect to see its implementation very soon.

No signal? We all know how annoyingly spotty cell phone coverage is in the Northeast Kingdom. It's also a constant source of frustration to employers, both existing and potential, who simply cannot afford to be out of reach to customers and colleagues around the world. Although the state's Telecommunications Plan calls for establishing cellular coverage along all Interstate routes by 2007, it doesn't create any funding mechanism for doing so.

In the past year, NVDA launched a new initiative to establish a better telecommunications infrastructure in the Northeast Kingdom. We obtained \$80,000 in grant funds (\$50,000 in USDA Rural Development and \$30,000 in Vermont Community Development Program) to design a tower that will accommodate multiple cellular carriers, as well as wireless broadband and virtual Information Technology for emergency first responders. The first proposed site is on land owned by NVDA in the St. Johnsbury-Lyndon Industrial Park. When

completed, this communications tower will also be instrumental in providing affordable wireless broadband to unserved areas.

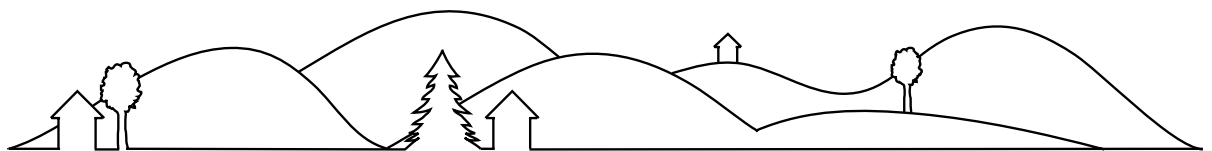
## Industrial Park Activity

Interest in property in the St. Johnsbury-Lyndon Industrial Park has risen sharply. During the past fiscal year, we sold land to Laferriere Construction for the building of a commercial facility for Kroll Corporation, which will have about 30 employees. We also sold a lot to Twin State Site Works for construction of offices and space to house and maintain their heavy equipment. Agreement has been reached on four other lots, and a fifth sale agreement is pending.

The increased activity in the St. Johnsbury-Lyndon Industrial Park can possibly be traced to the completion of the Charles E. Carter Center, which is fast emerging as a best-in-class business resource for the area. Three more businesses signed on as tenants in FY 2005 – a telecommunications provider, a construction company, and a microbrewer – and the warehousing space was rented by Kingdom County Productions during the shooting of Jay Craven's film, *Disappearances*. What's more, bookings for the Center's training facilities are way up; the site is extremely popular among local employers for off-site workforce training programs.

The facility is also being used by Gilman Housing Trust to offer its day-long NeighborWorks Home Ownership Center training program. The courses, which attract about 20 students, focus on all the basics of responsible home ownership: how to budget and analyze expenses, how to calculate affordability, and how to remain in good standing with the lender. The availability of affordable housing is a critical link to a strong local economy, and NVDA looks forward to continuing this collaboration with Gilman Housing Trust.

In Hardwick, we closed on one lot, and agreement has been reached on two other parcels that will be sold to the same corporation. Agreement is pending on another sale. No lots were sold in the industrial parks in North Troy and Orleans in FY 2005, although the Orleans Park did gain a new tenant. It is our intention to focus marketing efforts on both of these sites in the coming fiscal year. In fact, we have already begun to develop a brochure to market the Orleans Industrial Park.



# Economic Development (Cont'd.)

## Outreach to the Business Community

Her office is in our Newport Incubator building, but you're not likely to find her there. That's because NVDA's economic development coordinator Mary Paull is likely to be out and about among the local business operators. Although she's responsible for hosting Legislative Breakfasts series in Orleans County, working one-on-one with business owners is a big part of her job. Company visits take her all over the Kingdom. Mary is now often accompanied by the state's new economic development specialist, Beth Demers, so we can expect these visits to increase. Most of her work with prospective employers is of a highly sensitive nature. We can, however, mention some highlights of FY 2005:

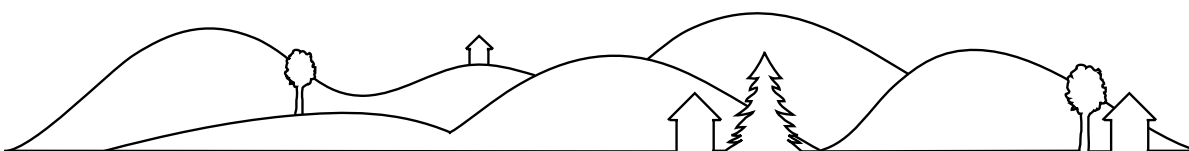
- Mary continued working with Kingdom Come, a planned hotel/housing/conference center in the Newport-Derby area.
- She assisted a subsidiary of Easton Hockey with a Vermont Economic Progress Council application for tax

credit and helped them to settle into the City Center Industrial Park in Newport City.

- After years of planning, Louis le Galle, a chef from France, more recently from Quebec, successfully relocated his gourmet pate company in the Orleans Industrial Park. The addition of his pate company makes the former Comstock building a specialty food production center in its own right. It's collocated with a cheese-smoking business, Vermont Beef Jerky, and Chebe, a manufacturer of gluten-free bread. A candle-making business also operates out of the Orleans Industrial Park.
- Mary participated in the Cross Border Forum, which made its debut last fall. Among the participants from New England and Quebec are business leaders, state and local officials, and interested citizens. The forum presents a great opportunity to explore border security issues, meet potential employers, and make new contacts.
- NVDA also continued to play an active role in the North



*Next time bring the wine. Chef Louis le Galle demonstrates his latest product to Economic Development Coordinator Mary Paull. Le Galle's company, Gourmet Foods of New England, recently relocated from a more regulatory environment in Quebec, to the Orleans Industrial Park. Working out of the former Comstock building, Monsieur le Galle produces a broad offering of high-end gourmet pates and confit: duck, goose, deer, and even moose. His company has also recently added some private label line to its already expanding repertoire.*



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Country Career Center Regional Advisory Board, the Northeast Kingdom Workforce Investment Board, the Northeast Kingdom Collaborative, the Quebec/Vermont steering committees for the Lake Memphremagog, and more recently, Vermont's North Country Chamber.

- Mary assisted the Jay Peak Area Association with the development of bylaws and other pertinent issues.
- The Small Business Administration hosted several HUBZone (Historically Underutilized Business) presentations earlier this summer.
- Senator Leahy's annual e-business seminar was held in June on Vermont Interactive Television.
- The Vermont Economic Development Authority recently hosted an informative meeting for the Northeast Kingdom banking community.

#### **The Small Business Development Center**

NVDA continues to enjoy a solid partnership with the Small Business Development Center, headed in our region by Area Business Advisor Jon Freeman. The SBDC is a federally funded statewide network that works to strengthen existing businesses and assists in start-ups through one-on-one, no-cost business counseling. Additionally, the SBDC provides low-cost training, much of which takes place in the Charles Carter Center:

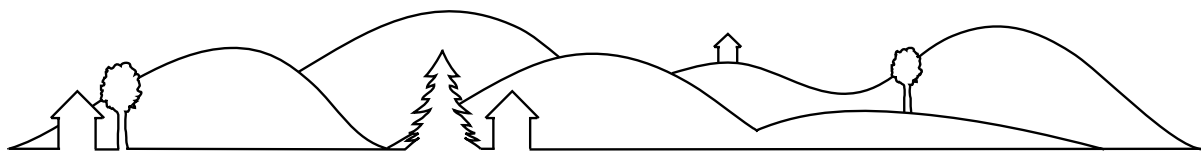
- Jon has led 28 experienced business owners through FastTrac, an 11-week training series intended to sharpen entrepreneurial business skills.
- The SBDC offers SmartBooks training exclusively for Northeast Kingdom businesses, thanks to a grant from USDA Rural Development. The course offers high-tech training and guidance on the use of QuickBooks. To date 23 businesses have participated in this program.

- The SBDC has partnered with the Northeast Kingdom Community Action MicroBusiness program to offer a "Start Your Own Business" workshop. This is the initial portal for startups to begin working with SBDC.

Jon has offices in both our St. Johnsbury and Newport buildings. Since joining the SBDC 2-1/2 years ago, he has helped local businesses raise more than \$20,000,000 in capital and has assisted in the creation of more than 300 jobs in the Northeast Kingdom.

Jon is also active in developing new solutions for local business operators. He's currently working to create a board of advisors for businesses who are looking to take their performance to the next level, as well as a marketing workbook and a business plan guide. NVDA is also working closely with Jon and the Department of Employment and Training to establish a machinist apprenticeship program to develop a skilled workforce that can meet the needs of local businesses and attract new business opportunities.

NVDA truly enjoys a collaborative relationship with SBDC, one that we expect to become even more productive when we add to our staff - which will be soon. In FY2005 NVDA won a \$116,250 grant award from USDA Rural Development to hire a new full-time Economic Development Specialist who will work closely with Jon Freeman and Mary Paull. Face time with local business operators will be a primary responsibility of this individual. We will expect our new specialist to visit companies on a daily basis to gain an in-depth understanding the challenges they face. This latest initiative will be, in effect, preventive maintenance, as it will allow us to learn of company problems early on, when technical assistance is most likely to help.



# Transportation Planning

Transportation Planning is the imprecise science of staying connected. Users of a transportation system must be able to travel from Point A to Point B with the greatest ease and the least expense.

That said, the challenge of connecting Point A to Point B can be daunting in a rural setting. Our region accounts for roughly one-fifth of the state's land mass, yet only 10% of the

population. We have the lowest population densities in a state that's not densely populated to begin with – as few as 9.7 persons per square mile. Our residents stay connected with 2,546 miles of roads, more than half of which are unpaved. Additionally, we have three state airports, passenger and freight rail lines, and railbanked lines that offer significant potential for recreational use.

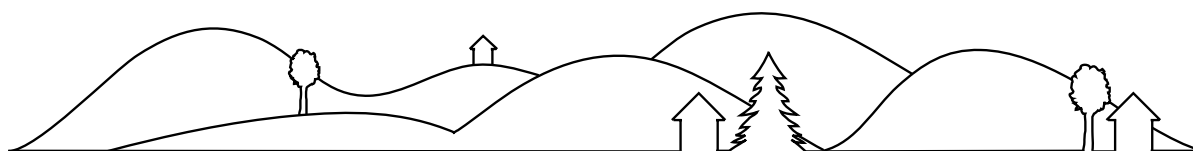
The old saying “you can't get there from here” brings to bear one of the greatest challenges to our uniquely rural way of life. While it's easy to forget that we're just hours away from major metropolitan hubs, staying connected to Boston, New York, and Montreal is critical to the sustainability of our communities. We must be able to transport our goods, services, and people in and out of the Kingdom efficiently.

As the regional planning commission, NVDA is responsible for carrying out a work contract with the Vermont Agency of Transportation to ensure the efficient operations of the Northeast Kingdom's transportation planning program. In effect, we work to keep our connections – within the Kingdom and with the outside world – open and reliable.

In FY2005, NVDA continued to host the monthly Transportation Advisory Council meetings, which give community officials, public transportation providers, interest groups, and interested citizens an opportunity to offer feedback and prioritize state-wide transportation initiatives. We also worked with public transportation and



*NVDA staff are currently reviewing and updating information for a Route 15 Corridor Management Study.*



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human services providers to coordinate the 5310/5311 grant program (now referred to as “Elderly and Disabled” services). This program is critical to meeting the needs of the North-east Kingdom’s under-served population (the most recent U.S. Census shows that we have about 1,700 households with no car), and our continued role as facilitator will help to maximize its efficacy. As in the past, in FY 2005 NVDA continued to serve on the Rural Community Transportation (RCT) Board of Directors.

### Technical Assistance

NVDA also continued to provide valuable technical assistance to its member communities, mainly in the form of traffic counts and culvert inventories. In FY2005, we completed 90 traffic counts from around the region. This data, along with historical traffic count data, is now being integrated into our GIS program to allow planners to analyze development trends. We also collected data on more than 4,500 culverts in 12 communities. Municipalities that participate in our Bridge and Culvert Inventory program can report on their infrastructure assets in a manner that complies with GASB 34 (Government Accounting Standards Boards – pronounced *gasbee*). They’re also able to get more money for improvements, since the state lowers the required local match for state highway funding programs from 20 percent to 10 percent.

NVDA often assists its member communities by guiding them through complex technical or grant-funded projects. We regularly field requests for data, scope projects, help select consultants, and even write grants to fund transportation projects. In FY2005 we helped the Town of Irasburg obtain a Transportation Enhancement Grant to construct a sidewalk from the town green to the elementary school. NVDA has agreed to act as Municipal Project Manager in this enhancement grant. We also managed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant-funded project in Troy.

### Transportation Studies

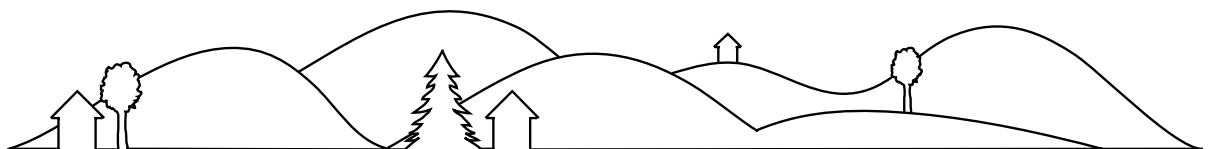
The thousands of drivers who use our state highways every day aren’t likely to give a passing thought to corridor management. In fact they probably don’t even wonder how well our highways systems are working until those systems break down – and it doesn’t take a Phish concert to bring things to a halt. A recent car accident on Route 5 backed up traffic for miles and shut down a critical North-South corridor. It’s not an

uncommon scenario for areas facing development pressures.

*Corridor management* studies look at ways to keep things moving. It’s an evaluation of a highway’s ability to maintain an average level of traffic flow while minimizing the negative effect of development pressures. Increased commercial development creates more *access points* along a corridor. These driveways, turning movements into shopping centers, and intersections with secondary roads all have the potential to slow down traffic and cause accidents. A corridor management study produces a set of engineering recommendations to accommodate maximum build-out potential without clogging the roads. Traffic areas with higher speeds, for example, will call for access points to be spaced further apart to prevent accidents. Such recommendations can then be incorporated in municipality’s permit review process to ensure orderly development over the next several years. In 2005, NVDA worked on a study of the Newport-Derby Route 5 corridor, which has an annual average daily traffic (AADT) count of 11,000 and is also the site of a proposed new commercial development. We also updated a 1997 study of the Route 15 corridor from Hardwick to Danville, which has much lower traffic flow (peaking only at about 4,100 AADT) yet still stands to benefit from access management in certain areas.

In FY2005 NVDA also worked with a consultant to assess the ability of the Twin State railroad to carry freight from Gilman – site of the newly opened Dirigo Paper Plant – to St. Johnsbury. The resulting infrastructure assessment identified the improvements needed to bring the line up to federal FRA Class 1 standards. This report is now with the Agency of Transportation and the Department of Economic Development.

Pedestrians and cyclists also factor into transportation planning. In FY2005, NVDA worked with the Town of Troy to complete a Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, which contains a set of specific recommendations for new sidewalks, crosswalks, wider shoulders to accommodate bicycles, and even strategies for using bicycle and pedestrian amenities to promote economic development in Troy. The town is already working to implement this plan. NVDA also continued to work with Lamoille County Planning Commission, North-western Regional Planning Commission, and the Vermont Agency of Transportation on the Lamoille Valley Rail-to-Trail conversion. This effort includes long-range planning for the development of a 96-mile multiuse path.

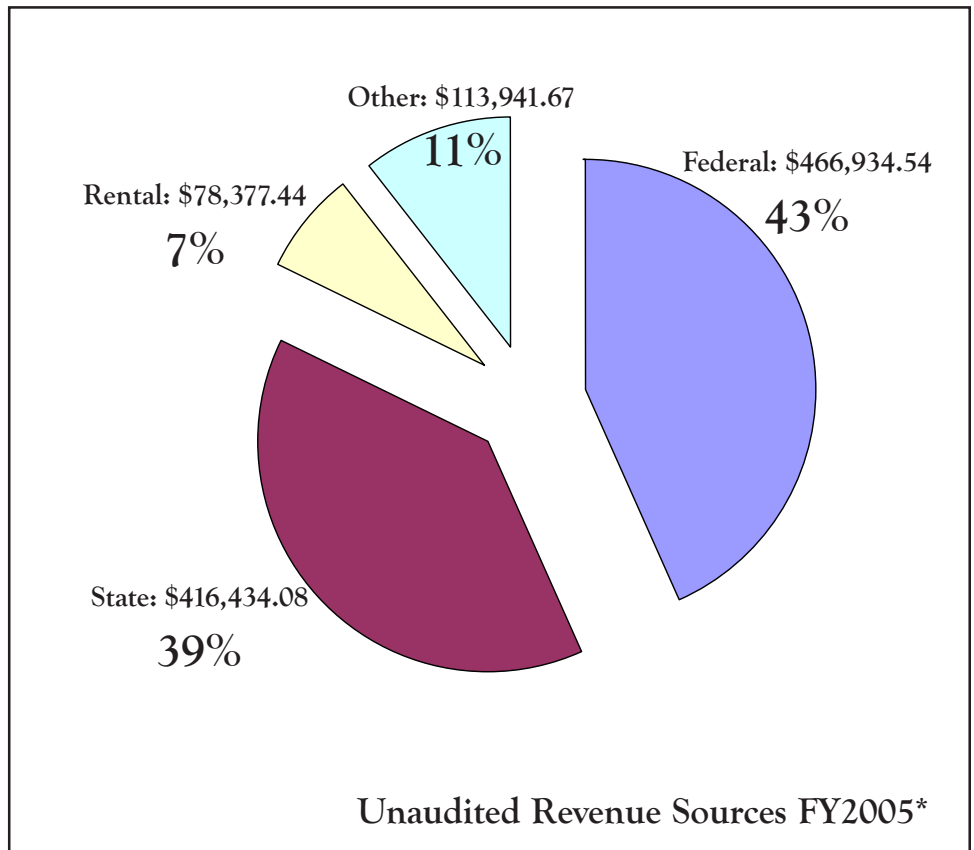


# 2005 Financials\*

NVDA is supported by an annual appropriation from member towns, a share of the state's property transfer tax fund, and by private, state, and federal grants.

Our FY2005 state and federal funding sources were:

- Economic Development Administration - US Department of Commerce
- Economic Development Initiative - US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- USDA Rural Development - US Department of Agriculture
- Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development
- Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation - US Department of Environmental Protection
- Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Vermont Department of Public Safety - Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Vermont Department of Public Safety - US Department of Homeland Security
- Vermont Small Business Development Center - US Small Business Administration
- Vermont Agency of Transportation - US Department of Transportation



## Revolving Loan Funds

NVDA offers new and existing businesses with low-interest financing, primarily through an Intermediary Relending Program (IRP). We have received three loans from USDA to fund active IRPs to date. We also offer loans through a smaller revolving loan fund from local sources.

Program	Revenues*	Expenditures*
Regional Planning	\$578,726.13	\$569,412.68
Transportation	\$261,660.29	\$261,660.29
Economic Development	\$232,774.59	\$253,826.57
EDA	\$2,526.72	\$124.20
Total	\$1,075,687.73	\$1,085,023.74

\*All figures are unaudited. A full audited statement will be available in November 2005.

