

# NVDA IN PROGRESS

## The Masonic Temple Future Home of Catamount Arts

Total renovations to cost around \$1.3 million

Catamount Arts will be taking over the two lower floors of the Masonic Temple in St. Johnsbury, after completing comprehensive rehabilitation and some interior remodeling of this historic landmark building on Eastern Avenue. Given that the building is on the National Register as part of one of St. Johnsbury's historic districts, Catamount Arts will take great pains to preserve the signature appearance of the building.

The improvements will cost around \$1,300,000. In addition to Catamount's own fund raising efforts, NVDA is assisting the organization to apply for grants from state and federal funding sources. "As a rule, NVDA does not prepare grant applications for organizations other than municipalities, but Catamount Arts is such a huge public asset for the town and the region that



The Masonic Temple was built in 1912. At one time, the Masonic Lodge in St. Johnsbury had 700 members.

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**NVDA Regional Plan:** Public comment period to end soon. See page 6 for details.

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**Lamoille Rail-to-Trail Update:** See page 6.

**FYI: Looking for your town's current town plan?** Your neighboring towns' zoning bylaw? NVDA has an comprehensive online collection of planning and zoning documents in the Northeast Kingdom. You'll need Acrobat Reader to open them. Simply visit our homepage: [www.nvda.net](http://www.nvda.net).

it is in a class by itself," explained NVDA Planning Manager Merike Petrich. "Also, the amount to be raised is staggering, and it therefore requires the support of community organizations, agencies, and institutions."

Highlights of the new facility include two movie theaters, a sizable performance space, an art gallery, and a museum and classrooms. Friends of the Masonic Lodge should also rejoice, since the Masons will retain use of the third floor for their traditional activities, while Catamount Arts assumes responsibility for maintaining the building in good repair.

NVDA's initial grant assistance consists of preparing applications to the Division for Historic Preservation, USDA Rural Development and the Vermont Community Development Program. This project is truly a labor of love for our staff.



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## Contact NVDA

**STEVE PATTERSON**  
Executive Director  
spatterson@nvda.net

**ANNALEI BABSON**  
Planner  
annalei@pshift.com

**SHANNON BEDOR**  
Administrative  
Assistant  
shannon@nvda.net

**JUDY BUTSON**  
Business Manager  
judy.butson@nvda.net

**JIM DAVIS**  
Economic Develop-  
ment Specialist  
jim@nvda.net

**BRIAN HANSON**  
Implementation  
Specialist  
brian.hanson@nvda.net

**TRACY MCINTYRE**  
GIS Specialist  
tracymcintyre@nvda.net

**ALISON MEADERS**  
Senior Planner  
alison@nvda.net

**DOUG MORTON**  
Transportation  
Specialist  
morton@nvda.net

**MARY PAULL**  
Economic Develop-  
ment Coordinator  
nvdanort@sover.net

**MERIKE PETRICH**  
Planning Manager  
merike@nvda.net

**SPIKE WELLMAN**  
Economic Develop-  
ment Specialist  
spike@nvda.net

**LAURIE ZILBAUER**  
Regional Planner  
lzilbauer@nvda.net

# New Faces at NVDA

That smiling face and cheery voice belongs to **Shannon Bedor**, who joined NVDA on October 3 as Administrative Assistant. Shannon manages the front desk at our St. Johnsbury office, so she is in many ways an ambassador of NVDA. A Lyndonville native and graduate of Lyndon Institute, Shannon has six years of banking experience (Passumpsic Savings and Lyndonville Savings), and she has worked in a dentist's office. In addition to answering phones and coordinating meetings,



Shannon Bedor



Jim Davis

Shannon will be taking on duties in payroll and accounts receivable and payable. What does she like about the job so far? "All the people here are really nice," she said. "Working with the communities is very rewarding."

In our last issue, we

reported that NVDA had received a Rural Business Opportunity Grant from USDA Rural Development to hire a full-time economic development specialist. Actually, we've hired *two* part-time people to fill the position:

**James (Jim) Davis** joined NVDA in late September to assist NVDA with new business development. His main functions are to assist prospective business owners, local communities, existing business owners, and other organizations in the development, expansion, or creation of new businesses in the Northeast Kingdom.

Jim lives in Lyndonville with his wife, Traci, and has two sons and one daughter. A Vermont native, (having grown up in Derby Line) Jim attended Middlebury College and graduated with a BA in American

History and a minor in education. In 1986, Jim graduated from Goddard College with a master's degree in Business. In 1986 Jim moved to Thousand Oaks, California and worked for National Life of Vermont's LA Cappel Agency and

Prudential Insurance in their sales/marketing departments. While in California, Jim developed and owned indoor roller hockey facilities in Thousand Oaks and Santa Barbara. In 2000, Jim returned to Vermont and joined Indoor Recreation of Orleans County (IROC) as Executive Director. He led the organization in raising \$5 million in direct funding and financing to complete the 55,000 square foot community in October 2004. He continues in his capacity as IROC's Executive Director.

Currently, Jim is leading the development of a local manufacturing facility to build modular affordable homes in the Northeast Kingdom. In addition, he is working with local entrepreneurs in a renewable grass fuel product and the development of a wooden bridge manufacturing plant.

**Leonard (Spike) Wellman**, who also joined NVDA in September, can be found weekday mornings at the Charles E. Carter Business Resource Center in the Lyndonville/



Spike Wellman

# Brownfields Committee Digs In

## NVDA seeks grant funds to target Northeast Kingdom Sites

A brownfield is defined by the *Environmental Protection Agency* as a “real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.”

A brownfield is often defined by a *property owner* as a real property, the ownership of which may be complicated by the annoying presence of potential lawsuits and escalating costs.

Actually, brownfields often present opportunities for communities to revitalize abandoned, neglected, and underutilized areas. Of the 543 Northeast Kingdom brownfields that have already been identified by the Agency of Natural Resources, many are located in historically

desirable locations or near former industrial centers and have ready access to existing infrastructure. Slightly more than half of these brownfields are deemed “hazardous,” which means they contain metals or toxic chemicals. The balance of the brownfields are petroleum-based. By reclaiming and reusing these sites, our communities may be able to redirect growth along existing town centers and infrastructure, thereby preventing the unnecessary development of new “greenfields.”

Over the past several months, NVDA has been working to establish a Brownfields Assessment Program for the Northeast Kingdom. This effort – which will be spearheaded by a citizen-based advisory committee – will not only

help to identify contaminated sites, but will work with property owners to provide funding for initial assessments and remediation plans. The newly formed Brownfields Advisory Committee is currently working under the aegis of NVDA Regional Planner Laurie Zilbauer, and is applying for \$400,000 in EPA Assessment Grant funds.

If funded, the EPA grants will allow the committee to begin prioritizing our brownfields for cleanup. Grant funds will be used to assess individual sites and create remediation plans. The committee will select these sites according to their greatest potential for any of the following:

- 1) redevelopment for affordable housing
- 2) economic develop-

ment and job creation

- 3) overall property revitalization

Meanwhile, the state has launched the Vermont Brownfields Initiative, a collaboration of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the Agency of Natural Resources. Additionally, two new funding sources are available. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program will allocate \$750,000 for assessment and cleanup of brownfields, and another \$750,000 will be available for qualifying projects. In light of these recent developments, Laurie feels that NVDA’s timing is more than fortuitous. With so much happening state-wide, “NVDA has a great opportunity here to become the link between property owners and the state, helping to facilitate redevelopment that will advance our local economy,” she said.

NVDA will be hosting a public hearing on the EPA Grant application on **Thursday, December 8th, at 7:00 pm, at the East Side Restaurant in Newport.** The hearing will coincide with NVDA’s board meeting. If you are interested in attending this hearing, or you have questions about the EPA Assessment Grants, please contact **Laurie Zilbauer at 802-748-5181.**

### **Billy Who???**

#### **How Well Do You Know the Kingdom?**

Many of our towns were incorporated under different names from what they are now. Can you match the past names with the present day name. You’ll find the answers on page 7.

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1) Billymead    | A) Albany     |
| 2) Caldersburgh | B) Westmore   |
| 3) Carthage     | C) Bloomfield |
| 4) Goshen Gore  | D) Waterford  |
| 5) Littleton    | E) Charleston |
| 6) Lutterloh    | F) Troy       |
| 7) Mineshead    | G) Coventry   |
| 8) Missisquoi   | H) Sutton     |
| 9) Navy         | I) Brighton   |
| 10) Orleans     | J) Stannard   |
| 11) Random      | K) Jay        |
| 12) Westford    | L) Morgan     |



# The Hotline:

Administrative officers take note: Here's how to (and how not to) review a zoning permit application

Our staff fields all kinds of technical questions daily, and most of them are related to procedural issues. Now, with the sweeping changes to Chapter 117 in effect, many zoning officials have found good reason to get “reacquainted” with the zoning permitting process. With that in mind, we’ve prepared a quick “how-to” guide.

**Date-stamp the application as soon as you receive it.**

Once you’ve received the zoning application, the statute gives you, the

administrative officer, 30 days to act on a zoning permit application. To “act,” you must approve, deny, or refer the application to an appropriate municipal panel (i.e. zoning board of adjustment, planning commission, or development review board). If you fail to act on a permit application within 30 days, the permit will be deemed approved on the 31<sup>st</sup> day.

**Make sure the application is complete.**

If anything is missing, return the application with a letter explaining what is

needed to complete it. Incidentally, an application may be considered incomplete if the applicant has failed to include the required fee.

**Make the determination.**

Identify the zoning district the property is in, and then compare the application with all the applicable sections of the bylaw. An important reminder to all towns currently amending their bylaw to make it compliant with Chapter 117: If the selectboard has already issued the public notice for the first hearing of the

adoption process, you will need to review the application against the *proposed amended* bylaw, as well as your current bylaw.

*IF the application conforms with the relevant sections of the bylaw...*

**Issue an approval in writing.**

Remember to include the following statement in your approval letter:

*Your permit may be appeal to the zoning board of adjustment (or development review board, if applicable). This permit will therefore not take effect and*

## NVDA Affordable Housing Summit

Held on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, this event drew a strong turnout from both the public and private sectors – despite winter storm conditions. The group discussed goals and outcomes for a Northeast Kingdom manufacturing facility that’s still in the conceptual stages. If successful in the long-term, this facility could alleviate the housing shortage by producing 75-100 new homes a year and add about 100 new jobs to the local economy. From far left, going clockwise: Bob McDonald, USDA Rural Development; John Hall, Department of Housing & Community Affairs; Beth Boutin, Vermont Community Development Program; Sherry Paige, USDA Rural Development; Annalei Babson, NVDA; Jethro Hayman, Old School Builders; Steve Patterson, NVDA; Jim Davis, NVDA; Lew Shattuck, ONE Community Partnership; Sigurd Anderson, Solbakken Technology Partners; Steve Campbell, USDA Rural Development; John Watson, Northeast Kingdom Collaborative; Tina Norton, Chittenden Bank. For more information about NVDA’s affordable housing initiative, please contact **Jim Davis** at [jim@nvda.net](mailto:jim@nvda.net).



## Opportunity Calls

Beth Demers and Kiersten Bourgeois confer with NVDA Executive Director Steve Patterson over plans for the St. Johnsbury-Lyndon Industrial Park. Beth and Kiersten, who are both Business Development Specialists from the State of Vermont, work closely with businesses that are considering expanding in or relocating to Vermont. Their recent visit to the NVDA offices is part of an ongoing effort to provide expanded economic development services to business.

Members of the business community can expect more outreach – from both NVDA and the State Department of Economic Development – in the coming year.



*cannot be acted upon until the 15-day period for appeal has passed. In accordance with Vermont statute, the permit must be posted on a form provided by the municipality within the nearest public right-of-way until the 15-day period for appeal has passed.*

### Post the permit.

As the administrative officer, you must, within 3 days of issuing the permit, deliver the permit to the listers' office and post the permit in at least one public place within the municipality. The permit must also be posted within view of the nearest right of way from the property. Since Vermont statute *doesn't* specify who is responsible for doing this, your bylaw should. Some zoning administrators argue that it's easier to go ahead and do this posting themselves, since they'll know that it actually gets

done. Others claim that it's better to put the responsibility on the property owner. We at NVDA don't expect to settle this debate any time soon.

### Record the permit in

**Since Vermont statute doesn't specify who is responsible for posting the permit notice on the nearest public right-of-way, your bylaw should.**

your town's land records.

According to Vermont statute, this must be done within 30 days by "an appropriate municipal official." If your town fails to do this, you will not be able to enforce penalties of any subsequent permit violations.

*IF the application does not*

*conform with the bylaw...*

### Notify the applicant in writing of the denial.

The letter must explain why the application was denied, and it must include the following statement

*officer's decision to deny your permit will be final.*

NEVER refer a denied permit to the zoning board (or development review board, if you have one) for a variance. By doing so, you are *assuming* that the applicant wants to appeal and request a variance. Maybe the applicant decides to appeal – or maybe he or she simply opts to redesign the project. Whatever the case, *it's not your call*. By referring a denied application for a variance, you are not expediting the process; you're violating the applicant's appeal rights.

If this article has raised any questions, please contact **Brian Hanson** at NVDA: 802-748-5181.

regarding the applicant's appeal rights:

*The denial of your permit may be appealed to the zoning board of adjustment (or development review board) within 15 days of the date of denial.*

*Failure to appeal within this 15-day period will result in the loss of your appeal rights and the zoning*

# Now Hear This...

**Regional Plan Update...** About 75 people representing 20 towns in the Northeast Kingdom attended NVDA's first hearing on the new regional plan. Positive feedback was mainly focused on the plan's extensive and informative (and lengthy) content. Wind energy remains a highly-charged issue, and the inclusion of this topic in the proposed regional plan didn't fail to elicit strong reactions. Of the public present there was unanimous objection to the wind energy language and the related goals as proposed in the plan. The current goals, as it was pointed out by several attendees, did not address the scale of proposed projects, any citing requirements, the effect on regional image, major negative economic effects, or the weighing of pros and cons for developing wind energy production facilities. The next public hearing for the Regional Plan will be held at the Lyndon Institute Cafeteria, on **December 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.** All comments on the regional plan – which must be in writing – are due by that date: Regional Plan Comments c/o NVDA, P.O. Box 630, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819.

**Machinist apprenticeship program in the offing...** Our local manu-

facturing economy is only as strong as the skills of its labor force. With a number of machinists approaching retirement, it is vital to have a new trained and skilled labor pool ready to fill the void. On Thursday, December 1, NVDA and Northern Communities Investment Corporation invited local manufacturers to a presentation and group discussion in the Charles Carter Business Resource Center in the St. Johnsbury-Lyndon Industrial Park. The purpose of the meeting: to explore the opportunities and challenges of an apprenticeship program. After preliminary discussions with the Vermont Department of Labor and the local schools, NVDA and NCIC have developed a rough outline for such a program, which would cover all the trade-related basics, as well as math and blueprint reading. If you missed the December 1st meeting, this program is still in the formative stages, and it's not too late to get involved. Please call NVDA Economic Development Coordinator **Mary Paull at 802-334-5861 or [nvdanort@sover.net](mailto:nvdanort@sover.net).**

**Grant Award...** NVDA recently was awarded a River Corridor Grant through the Lake Champlain Clean and Clear Initiative. We will partner with the North-

west Regional Planning Commission to conduct a Phase 1 Geomorphic Assessment of the Missisquoi Watershed. This project will gather watershed data for the towns of Jay, Troy, Westfield, Newport, and Lowell. To become active in this watershed, please contact the Watershed Coordinator Barry Gruessner at the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation: **802-527-6210, ext. 35, or [Barry.Gruessner@state.vt.us](mailto:Barry.Gruessner@state.vt.us)** or contact the Missisquoi River Basin Association: **802-933-9009, or [mrba@pshift.com](mailto:mrba@pshift.com).**

**Grant Opportunity...** The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation has a 50/50 matching grant program to help restore important historic buildings around the state. Awards of up to \$15,000 are available to restore town halls, municipal buildings, churches, historical societies, granges, and many other kinds of structures. Eligible activities include restoration and repair of roofs, structural work elements, windows, foundations, and other important components of historic buildings. Applications must either be delivered to the Division for Historic Preservation by January 9, 4:30 p.m. or postmarked no later than January 7<sup>th</sup>. You can find

the grant application online at [www.historicvermont.org](http://www.historicvermont.org).

**Rail-to-Trail Project Underway...** The Lamoille Valley Rail-Trail is a proposed 93.2 mile all-season multi-use path that will use the existing right of way for the Lamoille Valley Railroad between St. Johnsbury and Swanton. The path will be accessible to virtually all non-motorized users and will be open to snowmobiles when conditions permit. Snowmobiles will be the only permitted motorized use, aside from maintenance vehicles and motorized wheelchairs; ATVs will not be a permitted use. The path is owned by the State of Vermont and will be leased to the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST), who will be responsible for the day-to-day conversion, maintenance, and operation of the path. VAST is currently in negotiations with the State over details of the lease. No work will begin on the path construction until these items have been worked out.

At this point, the rails and ties are being removed from the entire length of the rail bed. Engineers Construction, Inc. (ECI) is under contract with VTtrans to perform this task and repair the road crossings that will be impacted by the removal of

# Meet the New SBDC Guy: John Mandeville

There's a new face at your local Small Business Development Center (SBDC). John Mandeville has accepted the position of SBDC Area Business Advisor, and he'll be working out of NVDA's St. Johnsbury office, as well as our Newport location. 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 – a vitally important service to our local entrepreneurs.

Since graduating from California State University, Fresno with in BA in 1972, John has enjoyed a 32-year business career that he readily describes as both "interesting and varied." He spent 12 years in publishing in New York and held management positions with Macmillan, Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, and Longman, and Pergamon Press before founding JT Mandeville Publishing Associates, for which he was CEO/COO for seven years.

In 1986, John accepted an offer from one of his long-term clients to move back to California and take on the position of Vice President, Corporate Development, effectively

making him the third person in the executive chain of command for Krames Communications, Inc. Having successfully negotiated the acquisition of Krames by Grolier, Inc. in 1988, he went on to purchase the Central California region of franchisor Decorating Den, Inc., and along with his wife Joyce, proceeded to grow the business in the region by more than 2,500% over the next four years.

In 1992, John joined Rug Doctor, L.P as the executive in charge of their

franchise division. A year later he moved into the position of Director of International Sales and was promoted to Managing Director (COO) of the company's European subsidiary based in Worthing, England. Under his direction over the next 6-1/2 years, this subsidiary moved from a loss position with a negative net worth to one of vigorous financial health. All long-term debt had been repaid out of cash flow, and sales had increased by 450%. In the last two fiscal years of his tenure, the company

turned in an after-tax bottom line performance in excess of 15%.

In 2000, John and his family returned to the U.S. and purposely chose to move to Vermont, having decided that quality-of-life issues were vitally important. He has spent the past five years employed by the New England Culinary Institute in Montpelier and looks forward to new challenges in his new position with SBDC. Welcome aboard, John.



John Mandeville

## **Now Hear This...**

*cont'd. from page 6*

the rails and ties. Barring any unforeseen difficulties, ECI should complete their work by the early winter.

NVDA's Web site has an update page for communities along the trail, as well as links to frequently asked questions: [www.nvda.net/transportation/lvrt.html](http://www.nvda.net/transportation/lvrt.html)

**Wireless Initiative Update...** NVDA has signed a contract with Troy, NY-based engineering firm Erdman Anthony & Associates to design a communications tower for the St. Johnsbury-Lyndon Industrial Park. Initial designs for a 140' monopole tower are being presented to the Lyndon Planning and Zoning Board

on December 1. Once completed, the tower will accommodate multiple cellular carriers and deliver wireless broadband from the Charles E. Carter Business Resource Center, which has an OC3 portal. This work is funded by a \$30,000 grant from Vermont Community Development Program and a \$50,000 Rural Business Opportunity Grant from USDA Rural Development. The scope of work includes getting this first tower ready for construction; it will be designed to serve a prototype for a network of multimodal communication towers.

## **Spike Wellman**

*cont'd. from page 2*

St. Johnsbury Industrial Park. His main responsibilities are to assist prospective tenants for the Carter building, serve as an on-site contact for the current tenants, schedule reservations for the Carter Center's conference facilities, and respond to inquiries regarding the sale of lots in the industrial park.

Spike lives in Lyndonville with his wife and has four grown daughters. He is a Vermont native, having grown up in Cabot. After serving for five years in the Army, Spike attended Lyndon State College and graduated from University of

Vermont with a BS in Social Welfare. He worked for the Vermont Department of Social Welfare as District Director in Newport, and retired from state service in 2002. For the past three years, Spike has been serving as the Workforce Investment Board Coordinator for the Northeast Kingdom.

In 2000, Spike was presented an award from Governor Howard Dean for his role in establishing a Call Center in Newport. He says that he has always recognized the need for more and better paying jobs in the Northeast Kingdom.