



# **CHAMBER & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

of the Rutland Region



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## **2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT**

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# Greetings, Rutland County!

We are pleased to present to you the 2021-2022 Annual Report for Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region. Like all of you, we have continued our journey through the pandemic and feel reassured that our Region has successfully navigated difficult times. We have learned how exhausting back-to-back Zoom meetings can be. We have learned a lot about our economy, our society, and ourselves. Much of what we have learned has been good, requiring that we look carefully at how things have “always been done” and how change is a good thing. We can confidently say that, when we look back, we recognize that we are stronger, more resilient, and perhaps



**John Casella II**  
President

even more patient. At the same time, life has taken on a special meaning, as we recognize more than ever before what is special about living in our Region and in Vermont. We have fared well because we have all supported one another. We live in a special place.

Throughout this report,



**Lyle Jepson**  
Executive Director

you will read about projects and initiatives that we have been working on. We hope that you will enjoy this preview and that you will join us for our Annual Meeting on November 14th. The event will be two-fold. We look forward to unveiling the Hub CoWorks, a public-private partnership

between MKF Properties and CEDRR. The Hub CoWorks, located at 67 Merchants Row, Rutland, is a combined co-working business incubator that will support digital economy business and job creation.

We would like to thank our dedicated Board of Directors, our member organizations, and sponsors of our work, events, and activities. We look forward to expanding our efforts even more in the upcoming year and to serving you – our colleagues, friends, organizations, and businesses – as we focus on supporting this special place we call home.

Again, a special thank you to all of our volunteers past and present, members and friends for your continued support and encouragement.



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- Jessica P., Rutland, VT

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### Staff Members

Lyle Jepson, Executive Director  
Tyler Richardson, Operations Director  
Lori Pinkowski, Office Manager  
Chrispin White, Member Services  
& Events Manager

Olivia Lyons, Communications  
& Marketing Manager

Karly Haven, Concierge Coordinator (not pictured)

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The Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR) was founded in 2020 following a merger of The Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce and The Rutland Economic Development Corporation (REDC). We currently have a staff made up of five full-time employees and one part-time employee.

Our staff is working to ensure that the greater Rutland Region has a vibrant and diversified workforce in the 21st century. We are immersing ourselves and the Rutland Region in a new economic era, assisting current and future business owners with site selection, permitting, and financing, hosting community celebrations and events, and creating connections with people across the country who are interested in moving here.

It is our mission to use collaboration, creativity, and ingenuity to create a regional economic climate conducive to business growth by recruiting talent and businesses of all kinds, growing and retaining employers, while creating a bridge to community and cultural organizations which promote healthy and vibrant neighborhoods and enhance the quality of life in Rutland County.

# Welcoming New Staff Members

While it is hard to say good-bye, the Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR) created some wonderful new hellos by hiring four new staff members this year.

Chrispin White was hired as CEDRR's new Member Services & Event Manager in November 2021. He had recently been the regional director of Vermont Adult Learning, managing the operations of the center, developing regional partnerships with local and state agencies, and creating workforce development programs for the region. At CEDRR, White works directly with the business community, specifically CEDRR members, in identifying ways to help promote the success of their business. White also plans CEDRR events, integrating each into the mission and goals of the organization.

Olivia Lyons was hired as the Communications & Marketing Manager for CEDRR in February 2022. She had been a multimedia journalist for WCAX-TV and Chief of the Rutland Bureau, serving Rutland, Bennington, and parts of Addison Counties. Lyons oversees the Regional Marketing Initiative – Real Rutland – which was recently expanded with in-house efforts at CEDRR. She also manages the day-to-day marketing and all communications efforts for CEDRR including press releases, social media, and regular newsletters.

Lori Pinkowski was hired as CEDRR's Office Manager in February 2022. She has held various managerial roles in the area including positions in event planning and marketing. Pinkowski grew up in Rutland, bringing a wealth of local knowledge to the team. At CEDRR, she arranges special events, maintains calendars, works closely with the Membership & Events Manager, supports the entire office staff, and manages day-to-day tasks to keep the office organized.

Karly Haven was hired as CEDRR's Concierge Coordinator in August 2022. Her most recent job was working at Ann Clark Cookie Cutters in inside sales. At CEDRR, Haven connects virtually with people interested in moving to Rutland County via the Concierge Program, part of the Regional Marketing Initiative – Real Rutland. This includes providing resources to those interested in relocating to the area and learning about their interests to best pair them with a Real Rutland Concierge Program volunteer. Haven will oversee the Real Rutland Concierge Program volunteers as well.



**Chrispin White**

Member Services  
& Event Manager



**Olivia Lyons**

Communications  
& Marketing Manager



**Lori Pinkowski**

Office Manager



**Karly Haven**

Concierge Coordinator

# Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region

## Board of Directors

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Casella Construction

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**George Hodulik**

Ex-Officio – Rutland Young Professionals

## CEDRR Committees

Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region has seven committees made up of various volunteers throughout our community who provide their expertise to our work.

### Finance Committee

Co-Chairs: Karen Garrow, Heritage Family Credit Union, and Russ Marsan, Carpenter & Costin

### Regional Marketing Committee

Co-Chairs: Steve Costello, Green Mountain Power, and Mary Ann Goulette, Town of West Rutland

### Business Development Committee

Chair: Russ Marsan, Carpenter & Costin

### Policy Committee

Chair: Tyler Richardson, Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region

### Events Committee

Chair: Eric Mallette, Paramount Theatre

### Real Estate Committee

Chair: Nicole Kesselring, Enman Kesselring Consulting Engineers

### Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee

Co-Chairs: Shana Louiselle, VELCO

# CEDRR Mixers are Back in 2022



In 2021, the Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR) was still being cautious regarding the COVID-19 virus to ensure our community's safety. But as positive case numbers decreased and more people were vaccinated, we brought in-person mixers back!

CEDRR's first in-person event, a mixer at the Rutland Recreation Community Center, took place on April 14, 2022. This event was the kickoff to bringing community members together. Rutland Town School's Jazz Band brought live entertainment to the well-attended event. The mixers continued in May at Rutland Beer Works' Production Brewery on Granger Street, where all proceeds from beer sales were donated to The Rutland County Humane Society. In June, Cape Air hosted the mixer at the Rutland-Southern Vermont Regional Airport. At this event, attendees had the opportunity to tour Rutland County from the sky in the airport's new Tecnam P2012 Traveller, an eleven-seat plan from Italy. Four Seasons Sotheby's International Realty hosted the July mixer and ribbon-cutting ceremony at their new location in Downtown Rutland. In September, NewStory Center hosted the mixer at their new office location.

As businesses and organizations continue to plan mixers and other events, we are seeing more attendees. To keep things "fresh," the CEDRR staff has been working with mixer hosts to plan fun activities during the mixers, find ways to create new experiences, or offer unique food and drink options. CEDRR is confident that this past year has been the beginning of people safely reconnecting with the rest of the community again.

# CEDRR Holds First Annual Whoopie Pie Festival and Parade of Heroes



A street party, community celebration, fireworks, and the Rutland Region's first annual Whoopie Pie Festival took place on August 27, 2022. The festivities brought the community together for celebration, connection and reflection after two long years of the pandemic.

Center Street in Downtown Rutland shut down, transforming into a grass-covered green street, for activities like yoga. Nine vendors from Vermont, New York, and Maine

handed out samples to hungry festival-goers. Holly Bromley, owner of The Gettin' Place in Whitehall, New York won the People's Choice Award and Overall Best, which was voted on by a panel of five judges. Fiona Graves, the owner of Fiona's Sweets & Tweets, a food truck based in Pittsford, won Most Creative, also voted on by judges. Dream Maker Bakers set the Vermont State Record by baking and putting together (in front of a crowd) a 554-pound whoopie pie! Over

250 people marched in our Parade of Heroes, honoring everyone who has played a major role in keeping our community safe throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

This event would not have been possible if it were not for the support from the community and local businesses. The Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region is already planning to host the Second Annual Whoopie Pie Festival during the early fall of 2023.

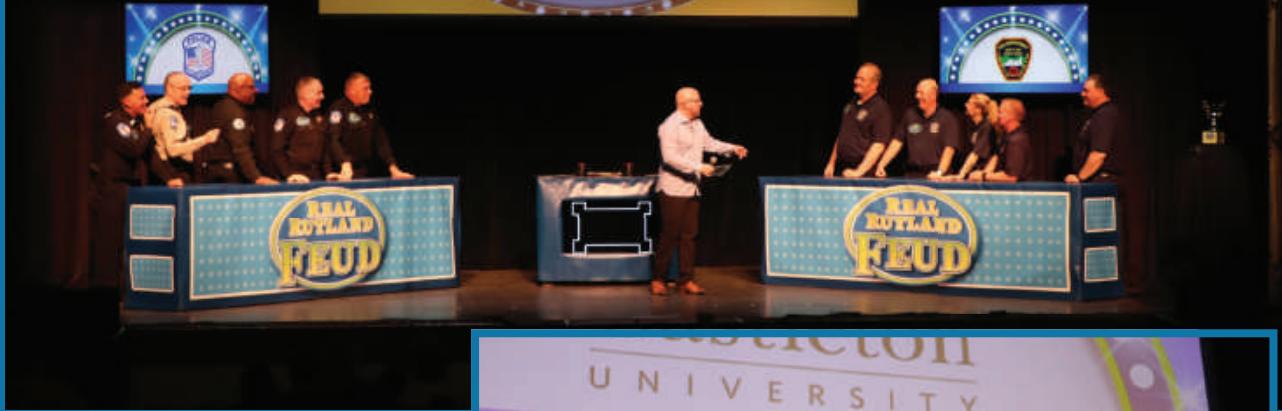




# CEDRR Hosts 4th Annual Real Rutland Feud

Season/Hub	30	
Marlboro	21	
Delcost	18	
Trim	14	
Pound It	7	

288 249



In April, the Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR) hosted the Real Rutland Feud, based on the popular television game Family Feud, at the Paramount Theatre in Downtown Rutland. This is the first year since the start of the pandemic that CEDRR has been able to hold the show.

Castleton University came out on top, as the winner of the game. The nine other teams that took part were Community College of Vermont, Housing Trust of Rutland County, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, Rutland County Solid Waste District, Intrinsic Property Services, Rutland City Fire Department, Rutland City Police Department, The Pines at Rutland Center for Nursing & Rehabilitation, and The Gymnasium.

The contestants and audience had incredible energy throughout the night, which brought the game to life. Mark your calendars for the 5th Annual Real Rutland Feud on February 25, 2023. All proceeds from the event benefited CEDRR's Regional Marketing Initiative - Real Rutland.



# CEDRR's Drive-In Second Annual Meeting Movie



## DRIVE-IN CEDRR ANNUAL MEETING



Join us to celebrate CEDRR's first birthday!

The Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR) held its second annual meeting on Thursday, October 14 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was once again held drive-in style at the Vermont State Fairgrounds in Rutland. The event featured a pre-recorded video produced by Amanda Wheeler of Eightzero2 Productions, in celebration of CEDRR's first year since the Rutland Economic Development

Corporation and Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce merged. The annual meeting also highlighted Rutland County as a whole and the extraordinary people who work tirelessly to make our region the most collaborative, innovative, and friendly place in Vermont to live, work, play, and grow a business.

Rutland Regional Medical Center was named the Community Leaders of the Year. Laurie Mecier-Brochu, CEO/President

& Partner of Four Seasons Sotheby's International Realty, was awarded Business Leader of the Year. Marie Pavini MD FCCM FCCP, Founder and Chief Culture Change Catalyst of Healthy Design, was given the award for Innovator of the Year. The Volunteer of the Year award was presented to Bobby Poquette of Rutland.

Thank you to Heritage Family Credit Union for being a Premier Sponsor, Cape Air, GE-Aviation, and

Community Health Centers of the Rutland Region for being Signature Sponsors of the event as well as Killington Resort, Carpenter & Costin, Omya, Casella Waste Systems, Foley Services, VELCO, Allen Pools & Spas, Four Season Sotheby's International Realty, The Bank of Bennington, Rutland Regional Medical Center, People's United Bank, and A.M. Peisch & Company, LLP's for being Supporting Sponsors of the 2021 annual meeting.

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### Career Hub

The Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region's Career Hub features full-time jobs across Rutland County that provide a salary higher than the Vermont living wage.

[rutlandvermont.com/career-hub](http://rutlandvermont.com/career-hub)

# Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region Annual Meeting 2022

Monday, November 14, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

The Hub CoWorks

67 Merchants Row, Rutland Vermont

## Agenda:

- Meeting called to order and welcome – John Casella II, President
- Introduction of CEDRR Officers for 2022-2023 – Nicole Kesselring, Secretary
- Introduction of new members of the CEDRR Board – Shana Louiselle, Incoming President
- Introduction of CEDRR Staff – Chrispin White, Membership and Events Manager
- Awards Ceremony – Lyle Jepson, Executive Director
- Introduction of guest speakers – Lyle Jepson, Executive Director
- The Hub CoWorks Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
- Adjourn

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# CEDRR Committee Updates

## Business Development Committee

The Business Development Committee focuses on entrepreneurship and other business growth and development initiatives. The Committee looks for innovative ways to support and develop businesses and industry in the region.

The expertise of the Committee has been vital this year in preparation for the development and opening of The HUB CoWorks. The guidance and support of the Committee has been vital to the development of this exciting initiative and will continue to be crucial into the new year.

## Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is the decision-making body for our loan fund and approves action items that impact the organization financially. Our Treasurer chairs the Committee and provides guidance and oversight to staff in the preparation of our financial statements.

This year, the Committee had the responsibility of overseeing the asset management of an organization quickly expanding. Two years into the merger of Rutland Economic Development Corporation and the Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce, CEDRR has maximized the combined strength of the organizations while leveraging significant Local, State, and Federal dollars to implement a variety of initiatives.

For projects supporting the expansion of the Vermont Farmers Food Center, the Rutland Airport Business Park, and The HUB CoWorks, CEDRR has connected \$3.8 million in funding for Rutland County this year. Going into the new year, we will rely on the expertise of the Finance Committee as we deploy these dollars.

## Policy Committee

The Policy Committee monitors and weighs in on legislation that could impact the business community, with the belief that our Vermont families and citizens will benefit from growth and broadening of the tax base. We believe that population growth and business growth are co-dependent. We must attract new neighbors and we must create an environment that retains those who are already our neigh-

bors. This can occur because of specific actions that include supporting business growth and development, as well as actions that support families and the members of those families who bring with them the skill and energy powering our businesses.

Building upon our prior years' work, the Policy Committee continued to monitor an unusual budgeting process that saw the allocation of significant and historic federal dollars into our state. This allowed us to advocate for transformative programs for our region while keeping our business community informed. We have been working closely with Downs Rachlin Martin, who contract through the statewide Regional Development Corporations to provide lobbying services, and the Vermont Chamber of Commerce to help us monitor legislation that is important and impactful to the business community. These partnerships help us to be better advocates for our region.

This past year we saw the continuation of the Legislative Breakfast Series, a series of forums that are intended to be informative and timely regarding current and future legislative activity. We are grateful for the continuous support of our dedicated regional delegation.

## Events Committee

The Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR) events are back! CEDRR hosts several events per year, helping keep our business community members connected to one another. The events are a terrific way to learn, network, and celebrate with other CEDRR members and the residents of Rutland County. Several in-person events that returned in 2022 were:

**Legislative Breakfast** – Rutland County's opportunity to meet with local legislators and learn what changes will impact Rutland County businesses.

**CEDRR Mixers** – CEDRR Mixers create an opportunity for members and non-members to mingle and build business relationships in an informal, relaxed business setting. The mixers are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, in partnership with local business organizations, and attract professionals from many industries.

**Real Rutland Feud** – The Real Rutland Feud, held on April 30th, 2022, is based on

the popular TV game show "Family Feud". The event this year featured ten teams from local businesses and organizations that went head-to-head to see who would take home the winning trophy. This year's winner was Castleton University.

**Open Houses/Ribbon Cuttings** – A fantastic way to designate a business as open for business or spread awareness about your business and gain the attention of new customers

**Whoopie Pie Festival/Parade of Heroes** – This community event featured a green street challenge, magicians, jugglers, face painters and caricature artists, The Red Trousers Group, and fireworks, highlighted by the region's first annual Whoopie Pie Festival and a parade of essential-worker heroes. The largest whoopie pie in New England was created by Dream Maker Bakers of Killington and weighed in at 554 pounds.

### Upcoming events for 2023:

Real Rutland Feud – February 25th, 2023

CEDRR Business Show – Date to be determined

CEDRR Mixers – Second Tuesday of the month

Whoopie Pie Festival – mid-September

## Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee

The Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR) has actively engaged in diversity, equity, and inclusion self-education and strategic planning. The overarching goal is to continue to grow our region's population by actively supporting a welcoming culture. The committee agreed upon the terms being used and developed a statement of inclusion. The definitions and statement are noted below.

But what does this mean to our organization in terms of the actions we take? We have a variety of activities that will take place in the future, but one that has been recently important to us was a review of the skills and demographics of our current CEDRR Board membership. We engaged in a review of ourselves and learned that the makeup of our Board would benefit from increasing its diversity. Based upon

that, outreach took place to engage with the community, requesting nominees from all over the County. Twenty-one people were nominated, all of whom have skills and expertise that would benefit the CEDRR's mission. With three openings available, choices were made with the hope that those who were not chosen for Board membership will join a CEDRR committee, with the potential to become a Board member in the future. New members will be introduced at the CEDRR Annual Meeting. We sincerely thank everyone who engaged in the nomination process. We were honored by the community engagement that took place.

**Diversity** – Diversity encompasses an array of experiences including, but not limited to, age, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, disabilities, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and national origin. An appreciative awareness of diversity provides the foundation for the understanding that individuals are shaped by this array of experiences.

**Equity** – Equity seeks to ensure fair treatment, equality of opportunity, and fairness in access to information

and resources for all. We believe this is only possible in an environment built on respect and dignity.

**Inclusion** – Inclusion is building a culture of belonging by actively inviting the contribution and participation of all people. We believe every person's voice adds value, and we strive to create balance in the face of power differences. We believe that no one person can or should be called upon to represent an entire community.

**Statement of Inclusion** – The CEDRR Board recognizes that cultural diversity plays a key role in economic growth, as people from diverse backgrounds bring language skills, unique experiences, new ways of thinking, innovative ideas and creative solutions to difficult problems. Therefore, the CEDRR Board condemns racism and welcomes all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, or disability, and supports the protection of these classes. As an organization, we condemn discrimination in all of its forms and commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in the communities we serve."

## Marketing Committee Update

Over the last year, the Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR) Marketing Committee has been working through a transition, bringing all marketing efforts in-house. One focus has been on various Real Rutland campaigns to reach more people nationwide. This includes advertising the Real Rutland Weekend Getaway on social media, general Real Rutland social media advertisements, and ads in local publications like The Mountain Times and Explore Magazines. Analytics prove when CEDRR is running a campaign the hits on our website drastically increase and more people enter the Real Rutland Concierge Program.

Edits continue to be made on our CEDRR and Real Rutland web-pages to update information and make the sites more user-friendly.

The committee continues to work with the state of Vermont's Department of Tourism and Marketing to reach more people interested in relocating here.




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# CEDRR Recognizes the Value of Interns

Over the last few years, CEDRR has had the pleasure of hosting interns from Castleton University (CU), while encouraging other regional employers to consider acquiring an intern to advance their everyday business operations. CU students bring knowledge, creativity and a strong work ethic to any business/organization and they become an integral part of the Rutland County community. A recent list of CEDRR interns include:

## Hannah Williams

Hannah joined CEDRR in the fall of 2021 and worked specifically on our Career Hub posting jobs in Rutland County. She served as a vital resource to both local employers and job seekers. The Career Hub is also a great asset for those not from the area who may be considering a move to Rutland County.



Hannah Williams

## Luke McGee

Luke, a Regional Marketing intern, provided his photography skills to CEDRR's Real Rutland campaign. He had a list of projects that allowed him to generate new content for Real Rutland and capture a wide variety of cultural assets in the region.



Luke McGee

## Dan Forti

Dan, also a Regional Marketing intern, utilized his videography skills for Real Rutland. Dan reached out to Businesses and organizations to film footage highlighting events and activities throughout Rutland County.



Dan Forti

## Ryan Boeke

Ryan served as a Community Engagement intern with CEDRR. He was tasked with contacting county-wide landlords to oversee the CEDRR site Selection pages and worked with the Member Services & Events Manager on a variety of community outreach and engagement opportunities.



Ryan Boeke

## Will Buck

Will is CEDRR's current Regional Marketing intern. As a senior in the Media and Communication program at Castleton, Will has incorporated his love of music into highlighting the Arts Community in Rutland and other local events through video.



Will Buck

CEDRR remains committed to providing internship opportunities for Castleton University students and working with employers to understand the benefits of interns in the workplace.

## CEDRR and Stafford Technical Center Partner on Internship Program

The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) supports up-skilling and re-skilling opportunities for Vermont workers through workforce development activities aimed at strengthening and expanding the labor force in Vermont. The VDOL Internship Program promotes internships by providing grants to organizations who support or connect Vermont employers with student-interns from regional career technical education centers or postsecondary educational institutions. CEDRR and Stafford Technical Center (STC) applied for and received \$40,000 to support student stipends, equipment and travel.

Students from technical centers trend towards working locally, especially if early career connections are made with employers that are of high interest and high skill, leading to high paying jobs. The STC Workbased Learning Coordinator is aware of a large base of students with specific skill sets. CEDRR has a membership base of 350 employers. The CEDRR/STC partnership will match the occupation-specific needs of employers with the skill sets of the students

This is the second year that this local internship opportunity will be taking place. Up to 15 students will participate in economic sectors including healthcare, manufacturing, hospitality, childcare, and high skill trades (i.e., plumbing, electrical and construction.)

For more information email [Lyle@rutlandeconomy.com](mailto:Lyle@rutlandeconomy.com).

### Want to host a CEDRR Mixer?

The Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR) helps create the opportunity to network with others in the Rutland County business/non-profit community during its monthly mixers. CEDRR sponsors twelve mixers a year where you can enjoy great food, door prizes, a 50/50 raffle and a wonderful opportunity to engage with one another face-to-face.

CEDRR's Mixers feature a new location each month and it's a great way to build relationships and share information about your business/organization in a fun two-hour event. Mixers are open to all businesses/organizations and community members.

#### Questions? Want to host a mixer?

We will be assembling our 2023 calendar soon, so for more information, please contact Chrispin White at [chrispin@rutlandeconomy.com](mailto:chrispin@rutlandeconomy.com).



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# What is the Hub CoWorks?

The Hub CoWorks, located at 67 Merchants Row, Rutland, is a co-working facility that will also house StartUp Rutland, a business incubator.

The Hub CoWorks provides a variety of membership options for individuals who wish to rent a “hot” desk, private office and teleconference conference and classroom spaces. Amenities include comfortable common areas, private teleconference space, locker

storage space, and a future podcasting facility. Options are flexible with day and monthly rates that are designed to meet the needs of remote workers.

Support for the Hub CoWorks is a public-private partnership between MKF Properties and the Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR). For more information contact Lyle Jepson, Executive Director of CEDRR at [Lyle@rutlandeconomy.com](mailto:Lyle@rutlandeconomy.com).

# What is StartUp Rutland?

With \$1,492,687 provided by the Economic Development Administration Build to Scale Venture Challenge grant and matching funds, the Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR) will launch StartUp Rutland. StartUp Rutland is a tech start-up incubator intended to inspire a regional culture and community of tech innovation, create and implement a scalable technology support program, and develop a mentor and investor network providing tech entrepreneurs the human and financial capital needed to grow and scale their businesses.

Located in the Hub CoWorks, a newly renovated former Opera House and office complex on Merchants Row in Rutland, StartUp Rutland is a public-private partnership between CEDRR and MKF Properties and is joined by the City of Rutland, the State of Vermont, and Rutland Regional Medical Center as local partners

who provided funding for the community’s match portion of the grant. Other partners supporting this application include Castleton University, the Center for Women & Enterprise, the Vermont Small Business Development Center, Velco, Green Mountain Power, the MINT-Rutland’s Makerspace, NAACP-Rutland Chapter, USDA, Vermont Community Foundation, Evolve Rutland, Four Seasons Sotheby’s International Realty, and Rutland Regional Planning Commission.

The 2022 Build to Scale program awarded 51 grants to applicants from 31 states from a pool of 180 applicants. The grants represent a combined \$47 million in federal investment. Rutland was one of just eight rural applicants to receive the award this year.

For more information on coworking membership or participation in StartUp Rutland, contact Lyle Jepson, CEDRR Executive Director at [Lyle@rutlandeconomy.com](mailto:Lyle@rutlandeconomy.com).

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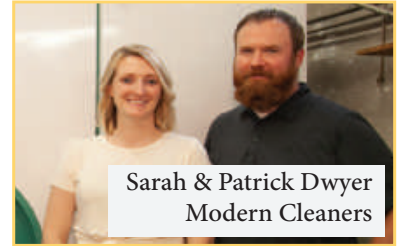
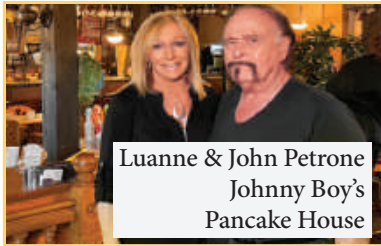
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# West Central Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. A CEDS is the result of a regionally-led planning process designed to build capacity, support local initiatives, and develop economic resiliency.

Since late 2020, CEDRR, along with planning and development partners serving West Central Vermont (Addison County, Chittenden County, Rutland County, Washington County, and part of Orange

County) have been working to develop a CEDS that meets US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) requirements.

Why are we doing this work? Adopting a CEDS helps set a strategic course for economic development efforts. An adopted CEDS can open opportunities for additional Federal funding for economic development and enables the creation of an Economic Development District, a multi-jurisdictional entity to help lead locally-based, regionally-driven

economic development planning, and project implementation processes. Public, private, and nonprofit sectors within the region contribute work to establish a strategic blueprint for regional collaboration and resource allocation.

Our CEDS will strengthen local partnerships and enable our region to meet current and anticipated economic challenges while creating new opportunities for our economies. We anticipate the completion of this project in early 2023. Find out more at [westcentralvt.org](http://westcentralvt.org).

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## CEDRR Launches Business Recovery Program in our Region

This year, The Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) of Vermont were part of a new Community Navigator Pilot Program (CNPP) that delivered technical assistance service contracts to aid Vermont business recovery.

This program was part of a national initiative through the Vermont Small Business Development Center (VtSBDC). Funding for the program came through the Small Business Administration and Vermont's COVID community development block grant program (CDBG-CV). U.S. Housing and

Urban Development's CDBG program provides federal funds, passed through the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD).

The CNPP used a "hub and spoke" model, with VtSBDC as the central hub, with the RDCs and eight Vermont spoke organizations creating impact on the ground. The Regional Development Corporations used this opportunity to relaunch the highly effective Restart Vermont Technical Assistance pandemic relief program to provide technical assistance service contracts for business recovery.

CNPP was designed to reduce barriers that all small businesses—including those owned by disadvantaged groups such as veterans, women, BIPOC business owners, and those from rural communities—often face in accessing critical support.

This work was supported with funding in part through a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration. Additional support is made possible in part by a grant from the State of Vermont, Vermont Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) CARES Act (CV).

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## CEDRR Revolving Loan Fund

To help fulfill CEDRR's mission to encourage and enhance business success in Rutland County, we provide businesses with fixed-rate loans through our Revolving Loan Fund program. To better serve our area businesses we made recent adjustments to the rates and lending limits of our program.

Loans through CEDRR's Revolving Loan Fund are now

available in amounts between \$5,000 and \$250,000. Interest rates can start at 5%, and members of CEDRR receive a 1% discount on the rate. Interest rates vary depending on the Wall Street Journal prime rate on the day the application is received, as well as the type of financing and the credit quality of the borrower. Terms will vary depending on the type of financing and typically range from three to

ten years.

The CEDRR loan program is made possible through a partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development and funds are available to finance up to 75% of project costs. CEDRR typically works with other lending and business development partners to get to "YES" on projects that might otherwise be stalled due to a lack of traditional funding.



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## Our Real Rutland Weekend Getaway Success

The Real Rutland Weekend Getaway was a giveaway contest hosted by the Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR) for the first time this year, which included a social media campaign reaching over 400,000 people from across the country. Almost 450 households signed up for their chance to spend a long weekend, Thursday through Sunday, in Rutland County with planned and paid-for activities. Households were required to connect with a CEDRR employee via zoom to explain why they are thinking about moving to Vermont and how this weekend getaway could help them make that final relocation decision. CEDRR randomly selected five households to host at the end of September. The households that accepted

our offer for a county-wide experience came in from California, Texas, North Carolina, and New York City. The main aim was to introduce people contemplating moving to the area to locals and help them narrow down which town they see themselves fitting into.

The four households met with a local realtor and members of the community. Two couples bundled up and went kayaking on the Chittenden Reservoir. Their trip began in the mist with 40-something-degree weather, but a rainbow peeked out behind the clouds, making this adventure rise to the top of one couple's favorite activities while they were here. All families took part in a county-wide scavenger hunt, which encouraged everyone to explore all towns, familiarizing themselves with the area. One family even made an offer on a

house in Pittsford.

Overall, the families had a wonderful time hiking, riding the gondola to the top of Killington, learning how to indoor rock climb, and treating their tastebuds at the Poultney Chili Cook-Off. This experience would not have been possible without the funding for the Real Rutland Marketing Initiative, provided by Rutland County residents, individual town budgets, and the business community. In 2016, the Real Rutland Regional Marketing Campaign was launched after identifying the need to increase our workforce and overall population in Rutland County to support business sustainability and growth. Since then, over 100 people have moved to the area by way of our Real Rutland Concierge Program. We hope to continue hosting the Weekend Getaway in the future.





# Real Rutland

## Real Rutland Recap and Concierge Continuation

As we conclude our sixth year of Real Rutland, our Regional Marketing Initiative, we continue to see success. Over 200 individuals have moved to over ten towns throughout Rutland County since the beginning of our Concierge Program.

Karly Haven has been hired as our new Concierge Coordinator. In her role, Haven connects virtually with people interested in relocating to Rutland County via the Concierge Program. This includes providing resources and learning about people's interests to best pair them with a Real Rutland Concierge Program volunteer. Haven lives in Rutland where she is originally from and attended Rutland High School before continuing her education out of state. She has been back in the county for sixteen years.

This summer, we launched the "Real Rutland Weekend Getaway Giveaway." Seven advertisements were placed across Facebook, Instagram, and Google, reaching over 400,000 people across the country. We targeted areas we commonly see people relocating here from including, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nevada, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. Almost 450 families applied for their chance at an almost all-inclusive long weekend in Rutland County. Through an interview process with about 30 families, four were randomly selected from California, New York, North Carolina, and Texas. The families enjoyed kayaking on the Chittenden Reservoir, indoor rock climbing at Green Mountain Rock Climbing Center, taking the gondola to the top of Killington Mountain, and exploring our area through a county-wide scavenger hunt. One family even placed an offer on a house in Pittsford while they were here! We plan to host the Real Rutland Weekend Getaway again next year.



# Update from The MINT - Rutland's Makerspace



Since fall of 2021, The MINT has seen quite a bit of change!

Much of that change is built upon the foundation of work that was done over the past 2 years: a strengthened board, new paid staff, expansion of programming, and facility upgrades. All of that with the support of community partnerships through CEDRR and beyond.

With over 14,000 square feet of solid cement, on which a dozen shops and hundreds of tools reside, The MINT is an impressive facility. But even more than a place, The MINT is people; creative people coming together to Make, Innovate, Network, and Tinker. We are youth and families, expert crafters, hobbyist and tradesfolk, teachers and students. The MINT is a living organism, ever-changing and adapting to what is needed and what is present. Each day, more folks are engaging with The MINT in ways that are generative and exciting.

Over the past year, the board of directors has gained new folks. We welcomed Stefania, Margaret, Chad, and Steph. As the board looked towards sustainability and growth, they made a unanimous decision to hire our first full time, paid Executive Director. Kim Griffin took the helm in July 2022 and has been tending to both the facility and the people of The MINT with vision, authenticity and care.

In the summer of 2021, The MINT launched the Boiler: Where STEAM happens. In 2022, thanks to Vermont Afterschool's Expanding Access Funding, we were able to increase our in-house offerings, travel to more libraries and community spaces, and hire summer staff! High school youth from the local robotics team, college youth who graduated from the robotics program, and a local STEAM-focused educator, all came on board to support our summer programming. Huge thanks to Giovanni, Mary, Alexis, Margo, Emilia, Bronson, Tristan, Jacob, Emelia, and Cymbre all rotating through a summer programming!

As with all living organisms, with growth comes decay and evolution. The summer of 2022 brought the departure of some of our staff and operations team: Bridget McCormick, Morgan Over, Lauren Olewnik, and Vander Gac all stepped back from their responsibilities at The MINT. We wish them each well and look forward to ways in which we can create together again in the future. We have held on to our long-time evangelist, Karen McCalla. Karen and family have been huge supporters of The MINT and we are thrilled that they are still connected through robotics programming, community partnerships, and as makers!

As for those community connections,

thanks to Morgan Over, we are strengthening our partnership with Vermont Works for Women (VWW). VWW's Rosie's Girls program for middle school youth was a huge success this summer. Trailblazers is running again this fall, a program in which women and gender-expansive folks learn skills and receive opportunities in the construction industry. We are building new relationships with local organizations such as the NAACP, Boys and Girls club, Parent Child Center, and the Rutland Youth Coalition, and Vermont Adult Learning.

Our biggest facility upgrade is a brand new paved parking lot! Anyone who has visited our location over the 6 years knows that, depending on the day, navigating our site sometimes necessitated waders! Huge shout out to the team at Casella Construction, Grace Excavating, and Wilk Paving for their work on our butter smooth parking lot! Thank you also to Trees Incorporated for their careful harvest of a very tall Cottonwood tree; the removal of which allowed for us to have a new retention pond! All of this expertly coordinated by the team at Enman Kesselring Consulting Engineers.

As I look ahead to the Future and the financial stability and growth of The MINT, I am excited to forge new relationships and cultivate the place and people of The MINT.



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