



Vergennes City Voice

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Michael H. Daniels, Mayor

Hello All. I hope that winter has been treating you well. I am happy to report that our city is in good financial shape under the watchful eye of our city manager Mel Hawley. As we move forward over the next year, it will get even busier than in the last three of my tenure. We really could use some helping hands to lighten our burden. Please feel free to contact me and see how to get involved.

My wife and I will host the third annual Dessert Social starting at 6:45p.m. until 7:15 p.m. on March 1st just prior to the City's Annual Meeting, which will start promptly at 7:30 P.M. Please bring a dessert to share and also a non-perishable item for the local

food shelf.

We are working on a new event, held at the Opera House in late April. It will be an "Indoor Sidewalk" sale where local merchants will be selling their merchandise. Please support this event, buy locally, and help "our" economy. In addition, alderperson Chris Collette is working with the organizers of the Farmer Market to expand the number of farmers. You do not have to be a farmer, if you have a garden and want to sell some of your extra product, think about joining the market. Please do not forget about our Community Garden. There is plenty of space if anyone would like to try out their green thumb. Everyone is ready to see the cold

go away and for summer to arrive. One of our first events after our wonderful Memorial Day parade will be the second annual Basin Bash. We are looking forward to a wonderful summer and last year we learned that we could have fun even if it does rain.

I know that this year especially is hard for some with the difficult economic times. The biggest part of our tax rate will be school taxes. The only point that I would like to make is "vote your heart but don't forget your wallet".

Vergennes Train Station Project – Finally on "Track" by Mel Hawley

It was about ten years ago when city resident Paul Vachon was the Executive Director of the Vergennes Partnership when he conceived the Vergennes Gateway projects. The Main Street Gateway included the Riverwalk project which resulted in the development of Settler's Park, construction of the walkway behind Benton Appraisers, with a third and final phase coming this year involving a new stairway and viewing area adjacent to the east side of the falls. At that time, there was a Northern Gateway concept as well and Paul came up with the idea of moving the Vergennes Train Station to the Ferrisburgh Park and Ride which would be renovated into a Welcome Center and local museum. Associated with this project includes the thought of creating a trail connecting this site to the Otter Creek basin by using the old railroad bed that once connected the basin to the Rutland and Burlington Rail Road system. The long-awaited Vergennes Train Station relocation project is finally in motion. A committee including Diane Lanpher, Ferrisburgh residents Chet Hawkins and Bob McNary, and Andy Mayer, Executive Director of Addison County Chamber of Commerce, are assisting me and VTrans project manager Wayne Davis in oversight of this project. The committee recently selected S2 Architecture as the firm to develop the detailed scope of work necessary to move the structure to the Ferrisburgh Park and Ride and rehabilitate the building for public use. This project is totally funded with state and federal grants. The total cost is not yet known but as Wayne Davis quips when VTrans is about to commence a project "If we are in for a dollar, we are in for a million." Steve Schenker, principal of S2 Architecture, is just beginning his effort in designing and coordinating construction of a foundation at the new site. Steve will also coordinate the actual moving of the building and work with the committee on the design of interior renovations. It is hoped that the building will be brought to its new location this summer.

Vergennes Community Food Shelf

by Mary Ann Castimore

The Vergennes Community Food Shelf is located at 30 South Water Street behind the Vergennes Congregational Church.

Currently about 250 different families come to the food shelf, most from the greater Vergennes area, but some from farther away.

We order our food from the Vermont Food Bank where our shopping dollars go the farthest. We currently get between 2 to 3 tons of food monthly which include some USDA commodities.

Our community business, schools, organizations, and individuals through food drives and donations of food or money support us. All monetary donations go directly toward buying food, as the Vergennes Congregational Church pays for the upkeep and utilities on the building. We are grateful for everything.

Volunteers run the food shelf from the area's churches rep-

resenting the Congregational, Episcopal, Christian Reformed and Catholic churches. These volunteers have a mission to end hunger in our town and do a wonderful job.

If you, or anyone you know is in need of food, we are open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-4, and Saturday morning from 8-10.

Did You Know?

Sheffield Farms Creamery

Sheffield Farms facility's main cinder block section was built in 1909 and the brick addition added in 1931. Sheffield Farms shipped milk to New York City. In July of 1950, as rail service deteriorated, the creamery became a Hood plant, as the milk run to Boston was shorter. It became Kennedy Brothers in July of 1959.

Sam Fishman Pool

by Joe Klopfenstein

Since 1967, the Sam Fishman Pool has been the place for Vergennes and area families to keep cool in the summertime. Since that time, the pool and surrounding real estate has been owned by the Vergennes Independent School District. The pool has been managed and beautifully maintained by volunteers and staff and is one of the jewels of the city.

This past year the Independent District has voted to dissolve and the city council has been in a conversation with board members about the fate of the pool. The council has been working with a committee of community members including the longtime pool financial manager and maintenance director to help guide us toward the best solution.

The council is working hard to make sure this valuable resource continues to be a safe, fun and financially viable place for the next generation of Vergennes residents.

Vergennes Partnership Is Back!!

Following some quiet years, the Vergennes Partnership is reorganized, reenergized and renewing its commitment to keeping Vergennes vital.

In the 1990's, Vergennes received "Downtown Designation" through the Vermont Downtown Program. Part of that designation requires that an official downtown revitalization organization exist. The Vergennes Partnership is that organization. Because of its designation, the City is eligible for a variety of grants including those that have helped to fund Main Street

sidewalk improvements. An additional benefit of designation is the ability for property owners and leaseholders to receive tax credits for historic rehabilitation, code upgrades, façade improvements, and elevator installation. Beyond its importance for making the City and property owners eligible for funding opportunities, the Vergennes Partnership exists to assist the city with streetscape and design projects, help promote business and events in downtown, and foster economic opportunities for existing and new businesses.

Recent public meetings brought out a range of Vergennes business owners, residents and property owners anxious to get involved in Partnership projects. Current projects include an updated walking-tour guidebook, an inventory of commercial space in downtown and organizing volunteers to assist with landscaping projects around the city.

If you would like information, email jack-son@vergennesspartnership.org or call 877-6737.

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Rabies

Rabies, a fatal viral disease of animals, has been present in Vermont since 1992. The disease is found mainly in wildlife, but domestic pets and farm animals are susceptible. In 2009, 66 animals submitted to the state public health laboratory tested positive for Rabies. 20 of these animals, or nearly 1/3 of the positive samples, were from Addison and Chittenden counties. Rabies vaccination

is important to protect both your animals and your family.

Rabies vaccines for animals are safe and effective and are required for dogs and cats in the state of Vermont. Rabies vaccination is required for dogs in order to register them in the City of Vergennes. Registration is due prior to April 1. Visit your veterinarian or check out the state's rabies website (<http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/rabies/Rabies.aspx>) for a list of rabies vaccination clinics in the area.

by Joe Klopfenstein

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Friends of the Vergennes Opera House Working to Install Sprinkler System

Last summer the Friends of the Vergennes Opera House (FVOH), the non-profit group that operates the Opera House, were informed by the State that the historic theater would need to have a sprinkler system. Since then the organization has worked to review bids,

apply for grants and plan fundraisers. With project costs between \$65,000 and \$70,000 they have already received funding from two sources – a Code Improvement Tax Credit and a Cultural Facilities Grant. These sources will assist the group in making another substantial invest-

ment in the City's Opera House. A fundraiser is planned for March 6 featuring music by local favorites, Panton Flats, a silent auction, cash bar and door prizes. For more information, visit www.vergennessoparahouse.org or call 877-6737.

Shoveling for the Elderly and Disabled

by Ivana Lawrence

A total of 15 students of Northlands Job Corps Academy volunteered this winter season to help the elderly community members remove snow from around their homes, thus enabling them to receive services such as Meals on Wheels, or simply go on with their daily routine without having to expose themselves to the risks that snow and ice bring along. This service was announced to the community through the City Voice and also the Addison County Independent who graciously accepted to publish the information several times.

The community was very thankful and appreciative of our services, especially since they were timely and completely free of charge. The student volunteers were delighted to be in a position to provide help. They took the job seriously and completed it with pride that community service gives us each time we contribute and reach out to help those in need. Four community members used our services several times. As the weather is improving, the requests are slowing down, however this service remains available to all of our community throughout the season.

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The City Voice-A Citywide Newsletter

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