

# Vermont Local Roads Program Legislative Report



## The Program:

We help municipal highway departments and town governments improve their road networks by providing training and hands-on assistance in a very accessible way that gets results.

## Three Levels of Training to Choose:

### Local Roads Workshops:

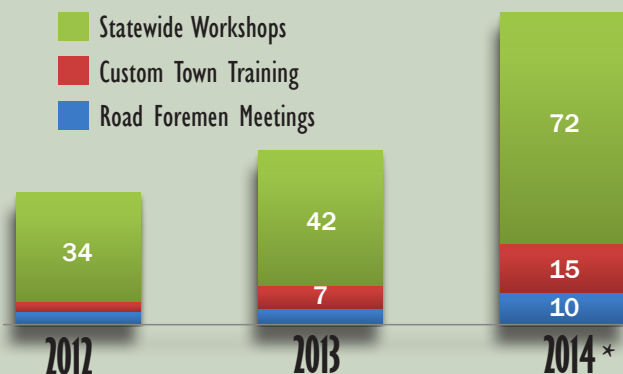
Large, publicized workshops held in multiple locations statewide.

### NEW Custom Town Trainings:

Free, on-demand trainings brought to towns that request a needed training topic. This ensures all training needs can be met.

### Road Foremen Meetings:

Topical & targeted topics embedded into meetings organized by Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs). These are active in all regions.



\*Projected, 72 workshops on calendar



A team of participants apply complete streets principles to a map of a Vermont municipality during one of VLR's Complete Streets 2014 workshops. The training was funded in partnership with AARP.

## Municipalities Attending Training



\*Projected, outreach is targeting towns that did not attend in 2012/13



From inside instruction to outside field work and demos, our workshops cover transportation maintenance and management from all angles.

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Vermont Local Roads

# Director's Message

## To: Vermont House of Representatives, Committee on Transportation

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the recent proposal from VTrans to move the LTAP center to the VTrans training center. Vermont Local Roads strongly opposes this action. The first formal notification I received regarding this proposal came Friday, Feb. 21 when I was asked to testify before the Committee. I was notified by a Senior VTrans Official earlier that week that there was no proposal on the table.



I hope it is clear in this report that the program and its staff have developed many new strategies to increase the availability of training and technical assistance to Vermont towns. Increasing the capacity for field assistance is an area I am especially proud of, because this boots on the ground assistance benefits towns the most. We have revamped our program by getting staff out of office chairs and into the field. The Director position I hold, which under a previous arrangement spent 80% of the time in the office and 20% in the field, is now doing the reverse and spending more time with the men and women who maintain, manage and govern our local roads.

The program has made a substantial investment in a new database system to manage program records, and refined all internal administrative processes to create an efficient and modern operation. This has reduced the need for office staff by over 50%. The reorganization of our office processes has allowed the program to shift a substantial number of staff hours to our core tasks of training, technical assistance and outreach. This increases the number of people we can serve each year. This substantial increase in workshops and field assistance is occurring without an increase in funding from our sponsors. More importantly we are, for the first time in many years, offering core workshops free of charge and providing active outreach to towns that have been unable to attend our workshops in the past. In addition to our internal efficiencies, we have been very effective at building relationships with others who provide financial and technical support to our program. We are sure that we can continue to grow our program deliverables in this manner for the foreseeable future. Our model and brand are sustainable and highly regarded among the people we serve.

Our program does not oppose any proposal that would help us continue to expand services to municipal governments. Our track record indicates that we embrace partnerships and policy changes that add value to the services we provide. We have and will continue to work with all Vermont State Agencies to transfer valuable information and training to towns. This will always be a part of our mission.

The important question before us is whether or not municipalities will benefit from this change. Will products be better? Will the personal level of service continue along the expectations we have established? Will the effort to reach every town be as strong? Who will be the one common resource and independent voice that ties the objectives of all Vermont Agencies into information transfer that towns can interpret?

These questions are better answered by the constituents that we all serve. I hope there will be time in this process to hear from them. They can provide the most objective answers to these questions. They are the ones that I am most concerned about.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Antone".

David Antone, Program Director



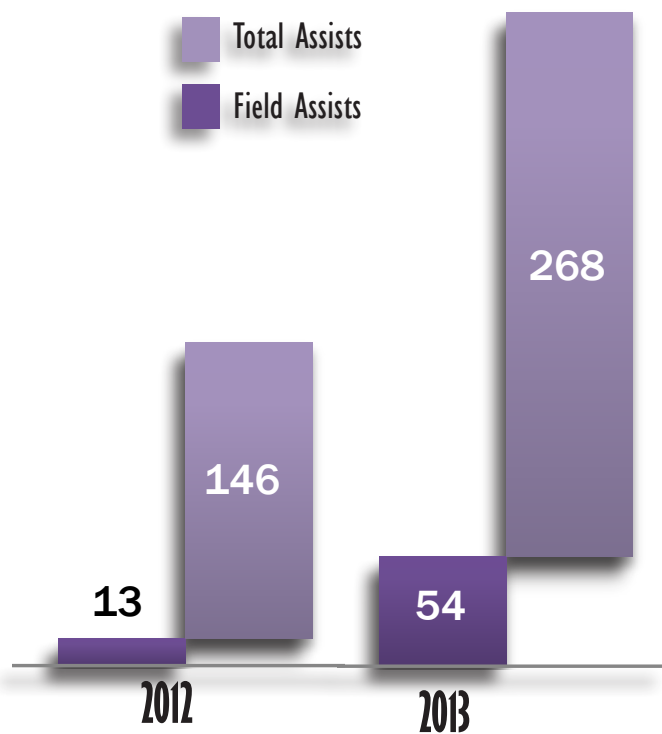
# Technical Assistance

Technical assistance puts training into practice. It follows the same objectives of many partner organizations including: VTrans, ANR, VOSHA, VLCT and Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs). VLR serves the role of an independent entity to fulfill municipal requests and reduces the burden placed on partners. We have made a concerted shift away from guidance behind desks to increasing our capacity of boots on the ground field assistance. We are now proactively reaching out to new Road Foremen, Selectboard members and Town Administrators to offer our services. When the call for assistance comes, we answer it.



Program Director David Antone surveys a ditch in Landgrove that is full of sediment. With the help of VLR, the small town in Bennington County has made substantial improvements to its 15 miles of local roads.

## Technical Assistance on the Rise



### VLR List Serve

Email system housed at St. Michael's College provides municipal stakeholders with crowd-source platform to answer questions. It has created a community of experts. *Over 160 towns are connected, up from 77 in 2011.*

## What Tech Assists Deliver To Towns

- Codes and standards application guidance
- Better backroads project identification in the field
- Storm water best management tools
- FEMA record keeping
- Management plans for gravel road networks
- Plow route analysis
- Developing strategies to resolve personnel issues
- Building capital plans
- Developing contracting & bid documents
- Pavement preservation tools and tips
- Proper road postings
- Hazardous waste management and municipal facility compliance
- This list expands from each call we receive, we help in any way we can.

## How VLR Provides Tech Assists

- Visiting highway garages
- Riding town roads with a local official
- Comprehensively documenting a trouble site and/or road network using photos and video with a tablet/laptop/dashboard camera. Each field assist has a deliverable.
- Attending and testifying at Selectboard meetings
- Research assistance
- Whatever a town requests next!

# NEW Initiatives: training and technical assistance

## NEW 2014 Workshops

- Complete Streets
- Show Me the \$! (transportation grant funding)
- Incident Command System (ICS) 101
- Custom flagger training on-demand
- Management Series
- Environmental Series (ANR instructed)
- Rivers and Roads (ANR instructed)
- Road Safety: Intersections and Curves
- Additional classes are listed on the program website

## Management Series

- Advanced Workzone Planning for Managers
- Stepping up to Supervisor
- Facility Management and Compliance for Highway
- Highway Budgeting
- Topical forums to facilitate idea sharing among towns

\*\*The Management Series replaces the Management Academy format offered by VLR in previous years\*\*

## Training Access

- Most trainings have been reduced from 6 to 4 hours due to participant feedback
- We are striving to make all essential trainings free. 2014 is the first year **environmental** and **safety** classes will be offered without charge.
- “Road Bucks” are now being given to towns to use to attend classes for free.
- We bring classes to all corners of the State and plan comprehensively for a year



Participants take part in a “read the road” exercise during a Road Safety 365 class held in Irasburg in 2013. This illustrates two major VLR objectives at play. 1) Provide additional safety focused classes that provide hands-on and thought provoking exercises to discuss strategies to make local transportation networks safer for the traveling public. 2) Bring training throughout the State, consistently. This class was held in the Northeast Kingdom (NEK). We strive to make sure each workshop that is held in multiple statewide locations is offered in the NEK and Southern Vermont regions among other locations in our State.



Through technical assistance, VLR is able to provide tablet training and loan throughout the state. Brent Smith, above, the Road Foreman for the Town of Groton, learns to use various tablet apps that can be utilized in his management role. The iPad loan program began earlier this year.

