

# 2017 Budget Brief



V E R M O N T   V E T E R A N S '   H O M E

*Fulfilling the Promise*

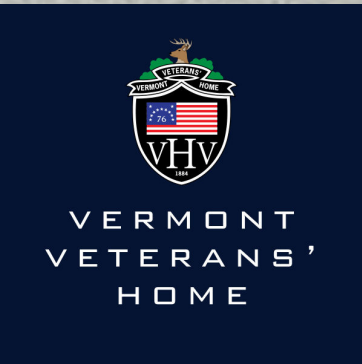
**An Agency of the State of Vermont**

# OUR HISTORY



- Incorporated by the VT Legislature by Act. No. 180 in the Acts of 1884
- In 1887 the property, conveyed to the Board of Trustees by deed of the Trenor W. Park; First “inmate” was admitted on May 18, 1887
  - Was a self contained working farm for Veterans
  - Governed by the Vermont Veterans’ Home Board of Trustees
  - Land Owned by The Home’s Board of Trustees

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# VVH TODAY



VERMONT  
VETERANS'  
HOME

- A Premier Residential and Healthcare Campus For Veterans, their Spouses/Widows, and Gold Star Parents
- 130 Bed Skilled Nursing Facility
- 8 Bed Domiciliary “The Dom”/Assisted Living
- 190 State Employees
- Services Provided
  - Short-Term Rehabilitation Physical, Occupational, Speech Therapy
  - Long Term Care
  - Internationally Recognized Memory Care Program
  - Hospice and Palliative Care
  - Respite Care
  - Outpatient Rehabilitation Services
  - Guest Room for family members



# Performance Measures

- PINNACLE monthly interview with Veterans, Members and/or family regarding care and services our results compared to other homes across the country 9 best in class awards
- Nursing Home Compare 5 star rating system of Centers for Medicare and Medicaid which compares VVH's performance to other nursing homes across the state



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# PINNACLE Performance Measures



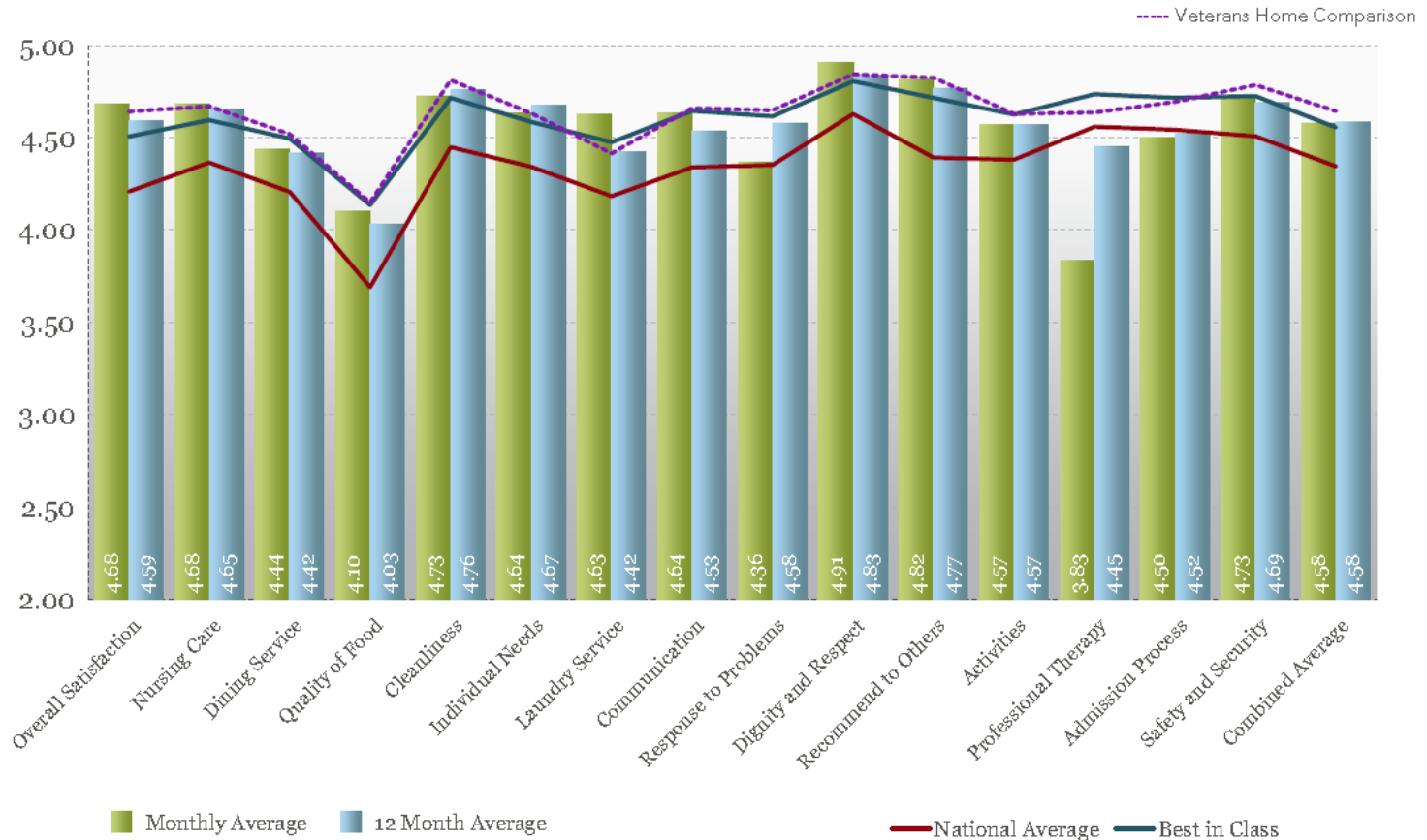
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HOME



## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION Trends and Comparisons

VERMONT VETERANS HOME

[www.pinnacleqi.com](http://www.pinnacleqi.com)



# Nursing Home Compare Performance Measures



**Medicare.gov** | Nursing Home Compare  
The Official U.S. Government Site for Medicare

[Nursing Home Compare Home](#) [About Nursing Home Compare](#) [About the data](#) [Resources](#) [Help](#)

Home → Nursing Home Results → Nursing Home Profile [Share](#)

[Print all information](#)

## Nursing home profile

Star rating summary	
Overall rating	 <b>Above Average</b>
Health inspection	 <b>Average</b>
Staffing	 <b>Much Above Average</b>
Quality measures	 <b>Average</b>

**Above Average**

In any business, this would be called a **“successful turnaround”**

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# PINNACLE Comments from the past year!



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- It's not like a nursing home. You have the dining rooms, plenty of things to do outdoors and fish pond. It's like a campus type of thing & not like a nursing home.
- The cleanliness is huge. For it being a facility that takes care of that number of people, especially those with dementia, the place never smells like urine or feces. The rooms are kept spotless.
- All of the activities there are wonderful. I was there last weekend & we were doing all kinds of things.
- The staff is professional all the way around and I like the friendliness of the staff.
- They answer me in a very welcoming way. I never feel that they're thinking, oh she is calling again, I never feel that way. I feel respected as his primary caregiver person who is trying to make his life as comfortable as it can be at this point.
- The staff is exceptional. He gets along with the staff. They joke back & forth which is remarkable because he has increasing dementia. He may not remember where he is but he still jokes around with them. They're very good about that.
- They explain things so you understand. They work with you & take time to talk to you.
- They have a Namaste room to chill them out. I've been massively impressed with everything going. The staff is extremely respectful. They keep me informed with everything going on with her med changes & anything like that. You can tell what the people who work there do which is important to me because I'm a nurse.
- I appreciate the level of care & love that they showed.
- The staff is incredibly dedicated. They go beyond the call of duty.
- They treat everybody like they're family.
- It has a home-like feeling.

# Performance Measures Continued



- **Deficiency Free State & VA !**
- Improved CMS overall Star Rating from 1 to 4
- **CMS 5 STAR RATED** for Staffing one of **four** in the state of Vermont as of January 20, 2016.

<http://medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare/results.html#state=VT&lat=0&lng=0>

- **Medicare/Medicaid Certified**
- **Presented Best Practices**
  - National Conference
  - VA
  - Conference Calls and Visits



Father's Day Car Show

- **College Internship Site**
  - SVC
  - SVMC
  - SUNY Albany
  - Southern VT Tech
  - Medical Residency
- **Local School to Work Site**

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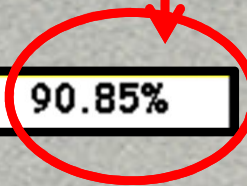
# Vermont Nursing Home Occupancy



Vermont Nursing Home Occupancy By County  
Total and Medicaid November 2015  
(Yellow highlight indicates occupancy below 90%; red font indicates occupancy below 75%)

Nursing Home by County	Licensed Capacity	VT Medicaid Days	VT Medicaid Occupancy	Total Days	Total Occupancy
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<b>Bennington</b>					
Bennington	100	1,353	<b>45.10%</b>	2,423	<b>80.77%</b>
Crescent Manor	90	1,682	<b>62.30%</b>	2,079	<b>77.00%</b>
Veterans Home	130	1,506	<b>38.62%</b>	3,543	<b>90.85%</b>
Centers For Living & Rehab	130	1,136	<b>29.13%</b>	2,576	<b>66.05%</b>
County Average (weigh ted)*	450		<b>42.05%</b>	10,621	<b>78.67%</b>



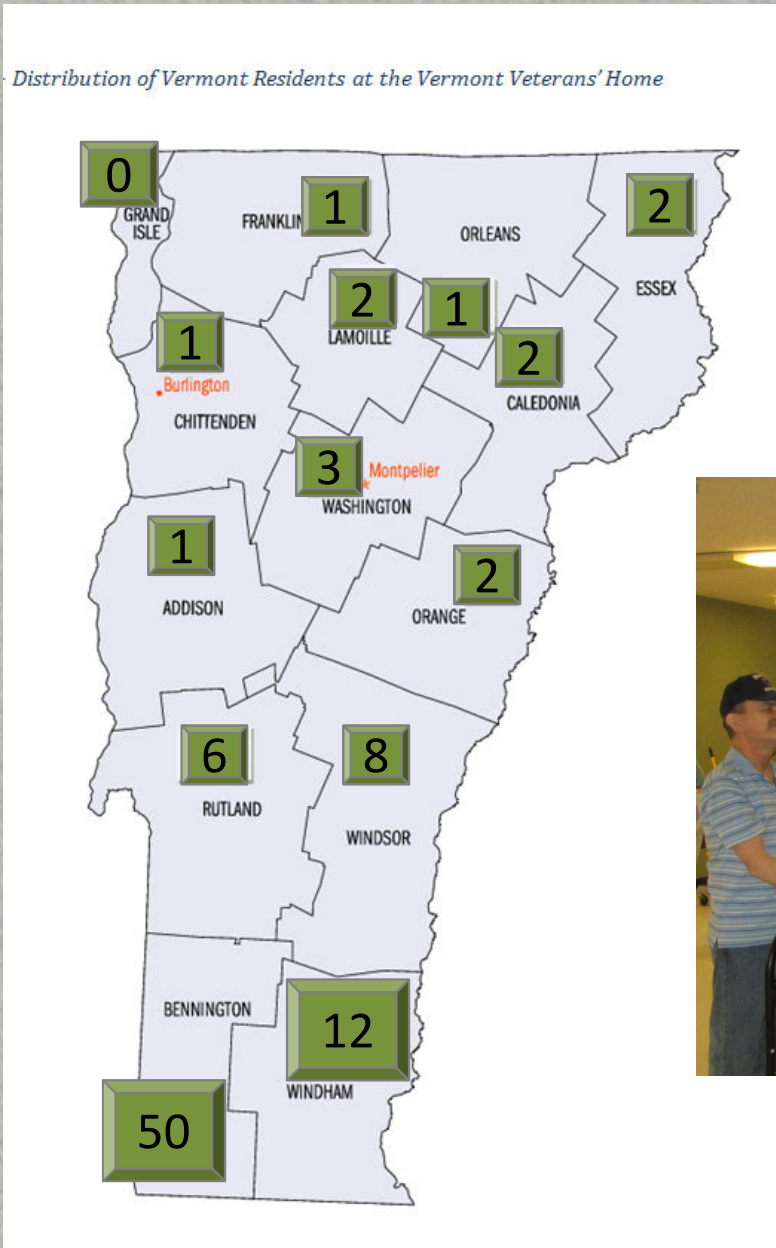
Veterans Home	130	1,506	<b>38.62%</b>	3,543	<b>90.85%</b>
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<b>State</b>	<b>Occupancy</b>	3,074	49,953	<b>54.17%</b>	77,686	<b>84.24%</b>
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[http://dail.vermont.gov/dail-publications/publications-monthly-reports/drs\\_occup\\_co](http://dail.vermont.gov/dail-publications/publications-monthly-reports/drs_occup_co)

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# Counties VVH Vermont Veterans Originate From



(Mid-January numbers)

## Challenges Continued

- FL-2
- NH-2
- CT-2
- SC-1
- NJ-1



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# Key Factors for Budget



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- 82.5% (\$18,461,022) of The Home's budget is fixed cost
    - 73.2% Salary Benefits \$16,362,664
    - 2.4% State Allocations \$543,588
    - 4.0% Utilities \$915,300
    - 2.9% Bed Tax \$639,470
  - 1.8% (\$410,986) of our budgetary funding is Global Commitment Funds
  - 26.5% (\$5,923,637) of our budgetary funding is General Funds
  - 71.7% (\$16,031,244) of our budgetary funding comes from Medicare, Medicaid, Private and VA Funds
  - The Home's Veterans:
    - Average Age 80
      - Youngest 46
      - Oldest 98
    - Males 100 Females 25
    - 102 Veterans, including 3 Women
    - Represent all branches of the Military
    - World War II 25
    - Korea 25
    - Vietnam 34
    - Gulf War 4
    - Peacetime 14
- This results in :
- Higher Acuity/Care Needs
  - Increase Need for 1 on 1

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# 2017 Challenges



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- Meeting The Home's Financial Goals
  - High percentage of budget fixed costs
    - Little room to cut expenses
    - Reimbursement does not cover actual costs
  - Cost saving measures have limited impact on the budget
    - Spending in line with average Daily Census
    - Continual contract review for cost savings
- Labor Costs
  - FY 15 Call out Rate 9.8%
    - 1,931.58 call outs
    - 15,452.64 hours (6,694.85 related to FMLA)
    - Equivalent to 7.42 FTEs annually (3.49 FTE FMLA)
  - Current FMLA use 23.97%
    - 47 of 196 staff members
- Recent Statewide Nursing Reclassification
  - unexpected expense of \$231,190 to our budget

# Budget Assumptions



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## Revenue

- Based on an average daily census (ADC) of 125
- Private Room \$328 Semi Private \$308 per day
- Vermont Medicaid Daily Rate of \$245
- Average Medicare Daily Rate \$465
- Service Connected VA Daily Rate \$401.36 (next slide)
- VA Stipend daily Rate \$104.43



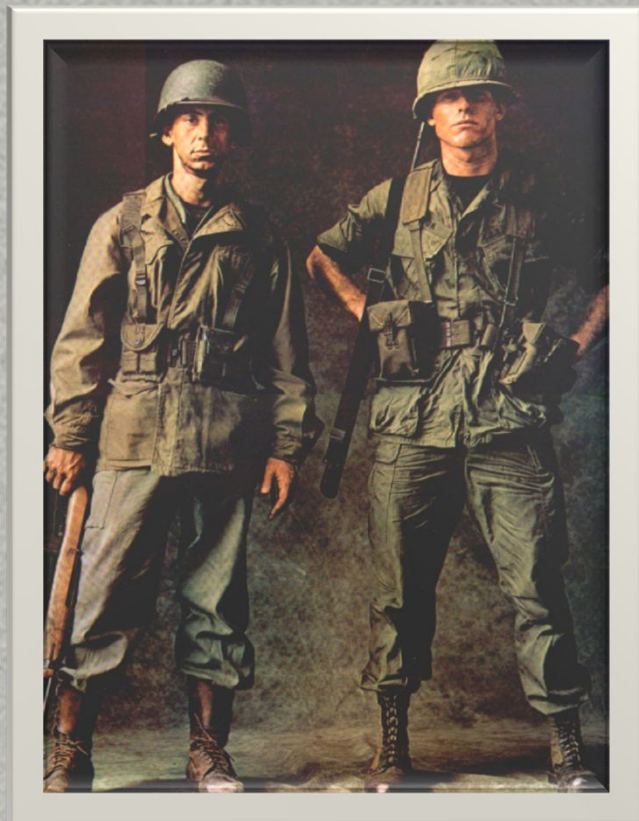
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# Service Connected Disability

For the VA to award a Service Connected Disability.....



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The disability had to  
originate



*While serving in the military*

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# Budget Assumptions



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## Revenue Challenges:

- Ensuring medical documentation reflects care and services provided to collect proper reimbursement.
- Collection of Private Pay Accounts, perception that care should be free.
- Ensuring Veterans and Members maintain their appropriate payor source.



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# Budget Assumptions



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- **Expense Challenges:**
- Limited ability to reduce costs
- 23.97% of staff has FMLA resulting in high call out rate, increased overtime, need to use agency staff
- Increase need for 1 to 1 supervision of Veterans based on their acuity and safety of others
- Costs associated with ongoing maintenance of the facility
- High Worker's Compensation Costs (\$1,168,786)





# Cost Cutting Measures



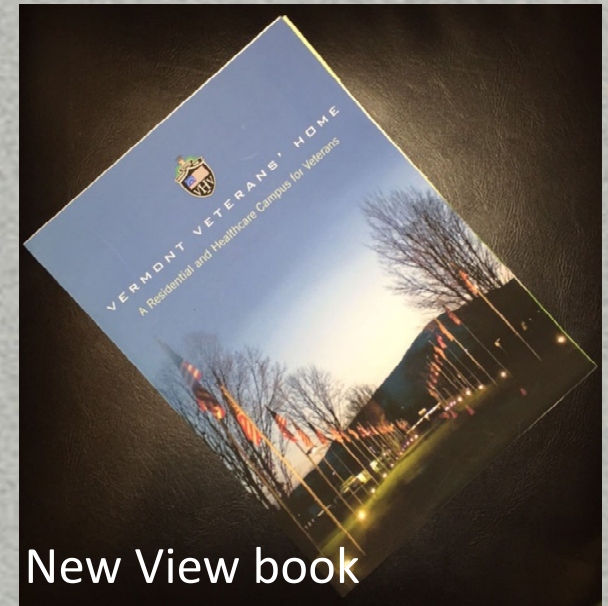
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- New contract rehabilitation company
- Ride sharing with community Veterans going to the VA.
- RFP for employee safety program evaluation.
- Used carry forward funds for capital projects
- Obtaining care and services through VA Provides versus community providers.
- Onsite storage of medical records.

# Increased exposure to the public



- Marketing
  - Image & Branding
  - Building relationships with discharge planners
- Hitting the Trail
- Use of Facilities
- Deer
- Public Service Announcements on Cable TV in VT, NY, & NH →
- Public Television PSA & Shows
- Press-improved public image
- Open Houses
- Weekly visits to Discharge Planners
- Monthly "Buzz Word" newsletter



New View book



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# Community Events



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*We have heightened our community outreach by hosting several Events on our Campus. These events have brought VVH tremendous Press, good will, and support from the community.*

**VALOR Program-** an educational opportunity open to the public and our Veterans. Local colleges & Experts have teamed up to present lessons and programs of interest at VVH. Williams, Southern Vermont, Bennington College, and NASA (Ret) have participated.

**Summer Concert Series-** concerts were held this past summer on our front lawn, Many from the local community and surrounding area attended. This is a tremendous gift to the community for their resolute support of VVH.

**Father's Day Car Show-** this annual event continues to grow in popularity as visitor's routinely attend from the four contiguous states.

**Pow Wow-** Locals and vacationers alike thoroughly enjoyed the Native American Pow Wow held our front property. The event was dedicated to the Veterans. Thousands attended and expressed their desire to attend....and vacation in the area next year!

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FY	(in millions)		State Funds	%
	Total	% change		
'93	\$ 7.739			
'94	\$ 8.092	4.6%	\$ 1.218	15.1%
'95	\$ 8.597	6.2%	\$ 1.183	13.8%
'96	\$ 8.903	3.6%	\$ 1.227	13.8%
'97	\$ 9.122	2.5%	\$ 0.927	10.2%
'98	\$ 9.398	3.0%	\$ 0.988	10.5%
'99	\$ 9.975	6.1%	\$ 1.007	10.1%
'00	\$ 10.491	5.2%	\$ 1.048	10.0%
'01	\$ 11.052	5.3%	\$ 1.085	9.8%
'02	\$ 11.541	4.4%	\$ 1.085	9.4%
'03	\$ 12.399	7.4%	\$ 1.072	8.6%
'04	\$ 13.034	5.1%	\$ 0.964	7.4%
'05	\$ 14.648	12.4%	\$ 0.969	6.6%
'06	\$ 15.962	9.0%	\$ 0.912	5.7%
'07	\$ 16.051	0.6%	\$ 0.913	5.7%
'08	\$ 16.426	2.3%	\$ 0.913	5.6%
'09	\$ 17.497	6.5%	\$ 0.881	5.0%
'09 BAA	\$ (1.090)			
'10	\$ 18.259	11.3%	\$ 0.837	4.6%
'11	\$ 19.058	4.4%	\$ 1.411	7.4%
'12	\$ 18.928	-0.7%	\$ 1.411	7.5%
'13	\$ 19.102	0.9%	\$ 1.411	7.4%
'14 (BAA)	\$ 21.445	12.3%	\$ 4.610	21.5%
'15 (BAA)	\$ 20.539	-4.2%	\$ 5.379	26.2%
'16	\$ 21.026	2.4%	\$ 5.894	28.0%

### Appropriations summary from Appropriations acts (as adjusted by Budget Adjustment)

(\*) Overall cap on positions lifted state wide for one year

(1): Endowment funds transferred to Treasurer  
 (2): Endowment funds transfer clarified; (3) cap removed for nursing positions (Sec.4, Act 145) 2000-2004.

Global Commitment funds (4): Therapeutic exercise pool study in "Waterfall"  
 G.C. funds; (5): Task force to recommend future by Jan. 07; (6) if GC unavailable then General Funds  
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 GC funds; (6) if GC unavailable, then General Funds; (7) Task Force for Long-term veterans' needs  
 GC funds; (6) if GC unavailable, then General Funds  
 GC funds are 411K - GF is 4.199 after Adjustment Act; (8) Sec. of Admin to review & report; (9) clean-up stat. language to permit d non-vets  
 GC funds are \$411K - GF is \$4.968M after BAA; (10) Sec. of Admin to review funding; (11) Mgt. employees exempt & removed AHS connect  
 GC funds are \$411; - GF is \$4.483M + one time \$1.0M; (12) Board has authority approve use of part-time & temps as needed.

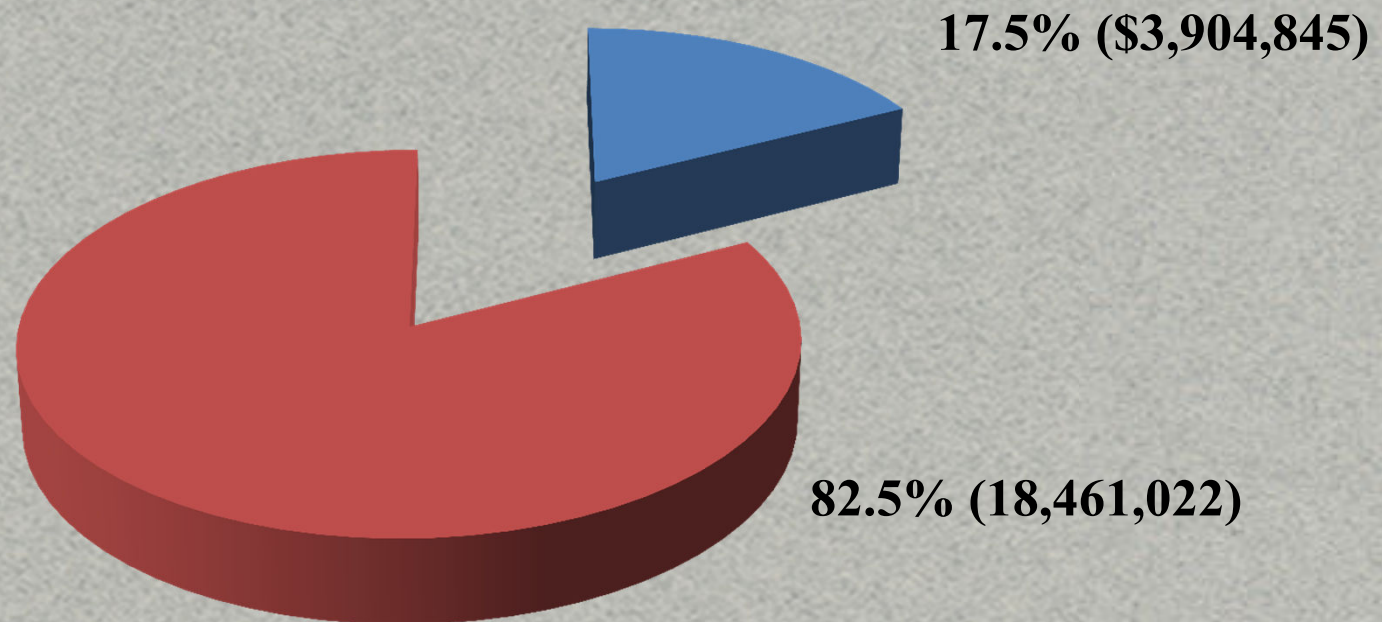
1912 General Funds appropriated \$6.2K for board to provide services  
 1955 General funds represented 56% of total \$233K

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# Vermont Veterans' Home Budget FY17 Cost Percentages



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■ Non-Salary

■ Salary, Benefits & Allocations

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# Vermont Veterans' Home Budget FY 17



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<u>Operating Expenses</u>		<u>% of Total</u>
Salaries	\$ 9,755,514	43.6%
Overtime	600,000	2.7%
Benefits	6,007,150	26.9%
<b>Sub Total Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 16,362,664</b>	<b>73.2%</b>
Medicaid Tax	\$ 639,470	2.9%
Utilities	915,300	4.1%
State Allocations	543,588	2.4%
<b>Sub Total Tax &amp; Allocations</b>	<b>\$ 2,098,358</b>	<b>9.4%</b>
<b>Total Salary, Benefits &amp; Allocations</b>	<b>\$ 18,461,022</b>	<b>82.5%</b>
<u>Non-Salary Expenses</u>		
Food	\$ 533,996	2.4%
Other Operating	3,370,850	15.1%
<b>Sub Total Non-Salary</b>	<b>\$ 3,904,845</b>	<b>17.5%</b>
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 22,365,867</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Gain (Loss) from Operations</b>	<b>\$ (6,334,623)</b>	

FIXED COSTS....NO  
Control over these  
82.5%

Minimal Control  
over 17.5 %

**Other Operating Expense Examples:** Drugs, Physician Fees, Contracted Rehab Service, Medical Supplies, Maintenance Supplies, Repairs, Advertising, Telephone, IT supplies and Audit.

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# Vermont Veterans' Home Budget FY 17 Cost of Care Deficit



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<b>Cost Per Day</b>	<b>\$ 461</b>
<b>Net Revenue Per Day</b>	<b>\$ 330</b>
<b>Gain (Loss) Per Day</b>	<b>\$ (131)</b>

26.8% Deficit

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# Vermont Veterans' Home Budget FY 17 Government Funding



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<u>Government Funding</u>		<u>% of Expense</u>
General Fund	\$ 5,923,637	26.5%
Global Commitment	410,986	1.8%
	\$ 6,334,623	28.3%



# 2015 Institution Summary Percentage of State Funds



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## Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital Department of Mental Health

**44% State Funds**

FY2016, 2015 Act 58  
2015 Act 58, Sec.B.314

Fund	Total Funds		Total State Funds	
	FY16	%	FY16	%
General Fund	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0.00%
Special Fund	\$ 428,068	2.12%	\$ -	0.00%
Global Commitment*	\$ 19,738,564	97.88%	\$ 8,876,432.23	100.00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 20,166,632</b>		<b>\$ 8,876,432.23</b>	

44% State Funds as a % of Total Funds

\*Note: Global Commitment Funds FMAP 44.97%GF.

## Woodside Rehabilitation

### Department of Children and Families

**57% State Funds**

2015 Act 58, Sec.B.328

Fund	Total Funds		Total State Funds	
	FY16	%	FY16	%
General Fund	\$ 913,411	19.03%	\$ 913,411.00	33.65%
Global Commitment*	\$ 3,788,780	78.95%	\$ 1,703,814.37	62.77%
Interdepartmental Transfers	\$ 97,000	2.02%	\$ 97,000.00	3.57%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 4,799,191</b>		<b>\$ 2,714,225.37</b>	

57% State Funds as a % of Total Funds

\*Note: Global Commitment Funds FMAP 44.97%GF.  
Interdepartmental transfer from Education.

## Middlesex Therapeutic Community Residence Department of Mental Health

**45% State Funds**

Department of Mental Health  
FY2016, 2015 Act 58  
2015 Act 58, Sec.B.314

Fund	Total Funds		Total State Funds	
	FY16	%	FY16	%
General Fund	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0.00%
Global Commitment*	\$ 2,686,218	100.00%	\$ 1,207,992.23	100.00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,686,218</b>		<b>\$ 1,207,992.23</b>	

45% State Funds as a % of Total Funds

\*Note: Global Commitment Funds FMAP 44.97%GF.

## Vermont Veterans' Home State of Vermont

**26% State Funds**

2015 Act 58, Sec.B.342

Fund	Total Funds		Total State Funds	
	FY16	%	FY16	%
General Fund	\$ 5,482,923	24.89%	\$ 5,482,923.00	97%
Special Fund	\$ 8,732,204	39.64%	\$ -	0%
Federal Funds	\$ 7,400,081	33.60%	\$ -	0%
Global Commitment*	\$ 410,986	1.87%	\$ 184,820.40	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 22,026,194</b>		<b>\$ 5,667,743.40</b>	

26% State Funds as a % of Total Funds

\*Note: Global Commitment Funds FMAP 44.97%GF., Federal Funds are Medicare and VA, Special Funds are VT & NY Medicaid/ Private pay. Additional \$1M one time GF.

## Correctional Institutions Department of Corrections

**97% State Funds**

2015 Act 58, Sec.B.335, B.336, B.337, B.338,  
B.339, B.340, B.341

Fund	Total Funds		Total State Funds	
	FY16	%	FY16	%
General Fund	\$ 142,051,545	91.48%	\$ 142,051,545	94.41%
Global Commitment*	\$ 5,387,869	3.47%	\$ 2,422,924.69	1.61%
Education Fund	\$ 3,554,425	2.29%	\$ 3,554,425.00	2.36%
Special Fund	\$ 1,370,892	0.88%	\$ -	0.00%
Federal Fund	\$ 470,962	0.30%	\$ -	0.00%
Interdepartmental Transfers	\$ 624,799	0.40%	\$ 624,799	0.42%
Internal Service Fund	\$ 1,816,195	1.17%	\$ 1,816,195	1.21%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 155,276,687</b>		<b>\$ 150,469,888.69</b>	

97% State Funds as a % of Total Funds

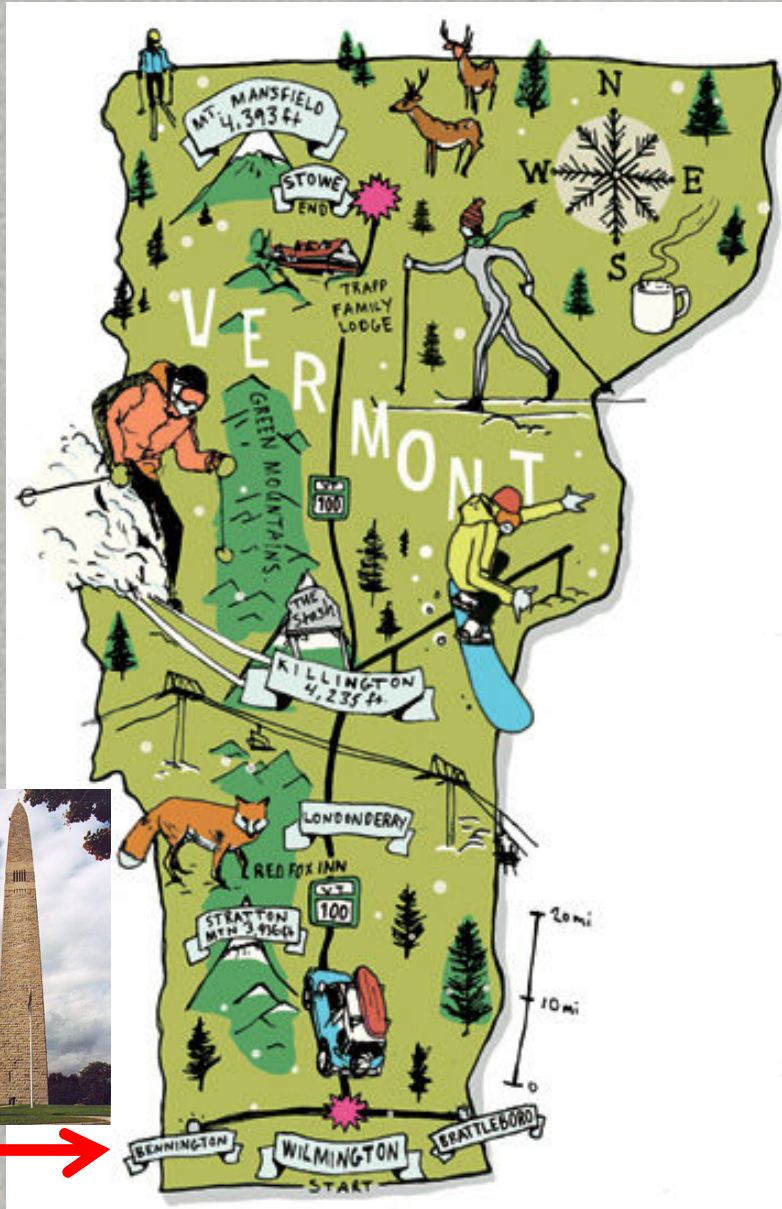
\*Note: Global Commitment Funds FMAP 44.97%GF. Facilities funded with GF, programs with other sources included (other funding sources). All Appros.

# Economic Impact

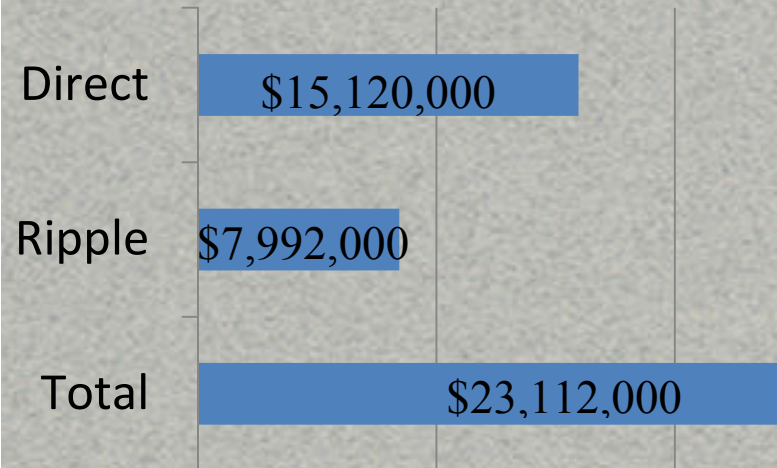
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## Impact on State Economy Salary & Benefits

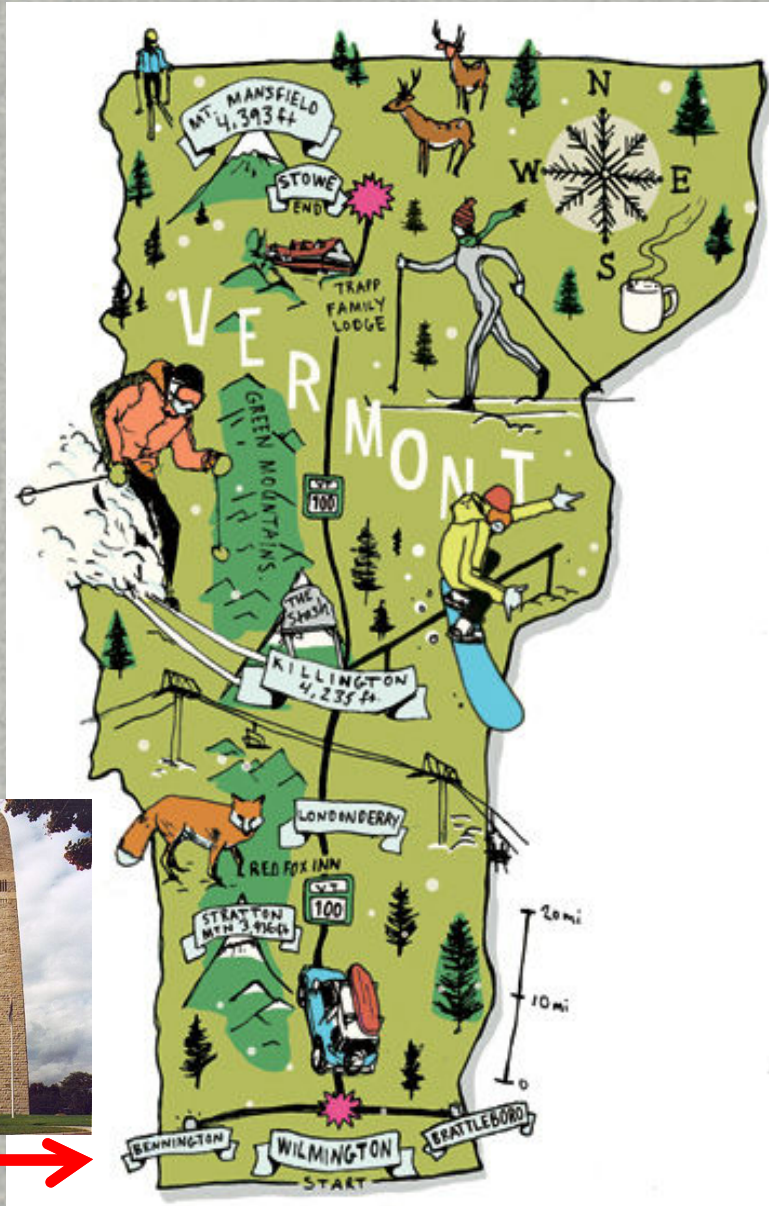
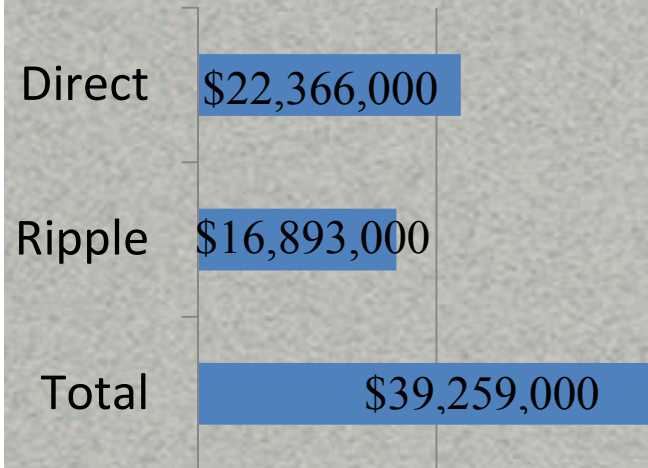


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# Economic Impact

## Bennington - The Gateway to Vermont

### Impact on State Economy Total Expenditures



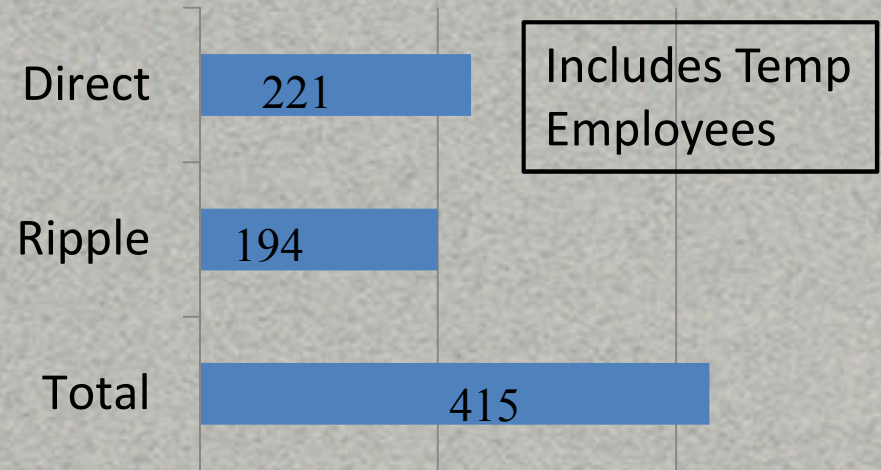
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# Economic Impact

## Bennington - The Gateway to Vermont

### Impact on State Economy Total Jobs



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# Vermont Issues Poll

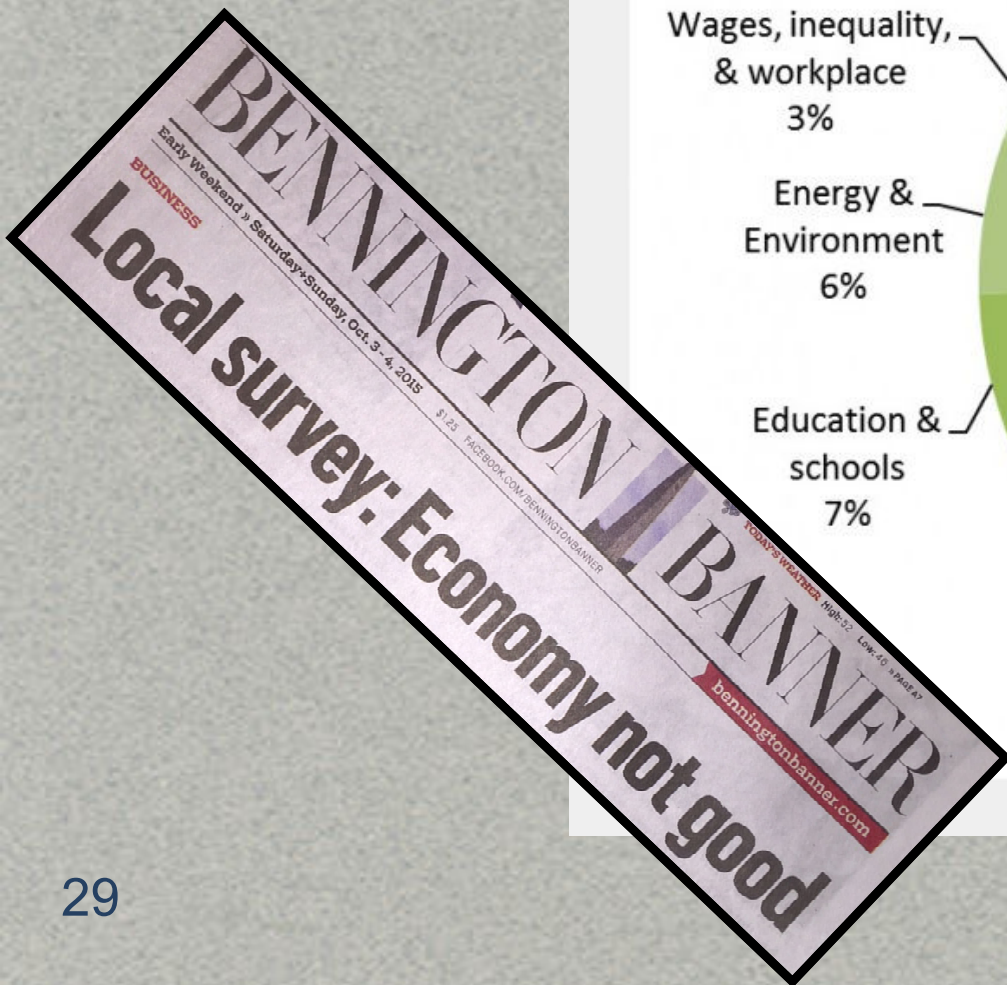
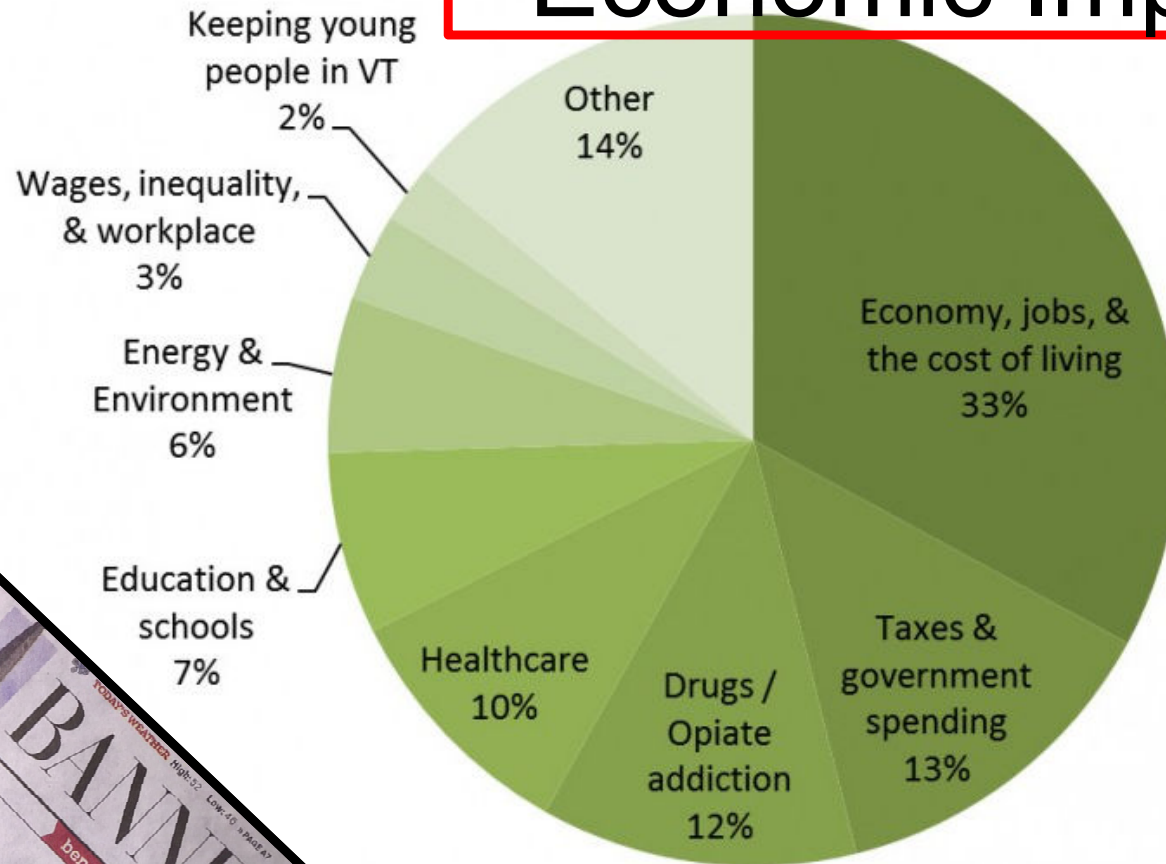
As is generally the case, jobs and the economy are seen as the most important problem facing the state of Vermont. The recent Castleton Poll found one-third of all respondents citing the economy as the most important issue facing the state. This is the issue most on Vermonter's minds. Figure 1 illustrates the range of responses to this open-ended question.



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Figure 1. Vermonters views on the most important issue facing their state

## Economic Impact



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# Economic Impact



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**WCAAX.com** BTV Current Conditions: **59°** Hi 59 / Low 47 5-Day Forecast

HOME NEWS WEATHER SPORTS HELP WANTED WILDLIFE WATCH JUMPON

## Energizer to lay off local workers

By Erin Mansfield

VTDigger

POSTED: 10/11/2015 10:14:32 PM EDT

6 COMMENTS

## Plasan to close Bennington plant

Posted: Feb 19, 2015 11:56 AM EST  
Updated: Feb 22, 2015 5:00 PM EST

By Eliza Larson [CONNECT](#)

**BENNINGTON >>** Energizer has confirmed that the company will lay off workers at the Bennington plant at an undisclosed time and use "external" resources to manufacture hearing aids.



Bennington Banner ALL ACCESS Smartphone Desktop Tablet Print ON

Longtime Bennington photo business prepares to close at end of March

DEREK CARSON, Staff Writer

Local information for your local market. **W**

Home Bennington Breaking News, Sports, Weather, Traffic Story

## Iron Works will close by May

NEAL P. GOSWAMI

In the Last several years, Bennington has lost Many high paying jobs

A few are:

- Plasan North America
- Plasan Carbon Composites
- Bennington Iron Works
- TE Connectivity
- ChemFab
- MACE
- Greenberg's Lumber
- Bennington Iron Works
- Fairdale Farms
- CB Sports
- Energizer Battery

**TE Connectivity to close North Bennington site; 36 jobs will end**

## Bennington lumber yard to close after 65 years

By KEITH WHITCOMB JR. / Bennington Banner

### TOP STORIES AROUND THE COUNTY

#### Garelick Farms, former Fairdale Farms, to close its doors

12:00AM / Wednesday, May 01, 2002

Print | Email

In yet another example of corporate consolidation affecting smaller towns, the former Fairdale Farms dairy plant in Bennington, Vt., will be closing at the end of June, officials announced April 19. Now called Garelick Farms of Vermont, the milk processing plant, which currently employs 125 workers, has long been a staple on the west side

# Economic Impact



## REPORT TACKLES SOUTHERN VERMONT'S ECONOMIC 'TROUBLE'

© DEC. 3, 2015, 8:39 PM BY MIKE FAHER 10 COMMENTS

**BRATTLEBORO** – A new economic study of Windham and Bennington counties begins with this succinct assessment: “Southern Vermont is in trouble.”

In Bennington there is a two year backlog of homes for sale because people want out, and no one wants to move in.

Our current business climate has put on the brakes.



### Report tackles Southern Vermont's economic 'trouble' | VTDigger

A new report on the Southern Vermont Economic Development Zone, created by the state Legislature earlier this year, features a long list of problems and a longer list of potential solutions.

[Read more...](#)

# Why is Our Veterans' Home Important?



VERMONT  
VETERANS'  
HOME

The Veteran's in your Vermont Veterans' Home have answered the call to defend and protect our great nation. These individuals have fought in historic battles overseas such as Tarawa, The Battle of the Bulge, Hue City, and Marjah. Today our Home has warriors from WW II to Desert Storm.

There is truly no peacetime in the military. You are either preparing for war or conducting it. Several of our Veterans have participated in Humanitarian Operations and actions during the Cold War. Events such as these include many unspeakable horrors which many inaccurately ascribe only to combat.

Vermont has a population that is approximately 8-10% Veteran. Most of these men and women volunteered to serve so others could remain home and carry on with their lives and families.

Of the individuals who have unselfishly served from the great State of Vermont, we at The Vermont Veterans' Home serve those with the greatest need.



*Fulfilling the Promise*



# Why is a Veterans' Home Important?



"The cost of honoring our Veterans can never equal the price already paid"

Daniel R. Landry

We have to honor and support our Vets in any way we can!

What they have done for us can never be paid for enough!

Mike Oltedal

*"The desire in helping veterans reflects a fitting gratitude for their service rendered and the sacrifices they shouldered".....*

*Joseph L. Pires*

The Vermont Veterans Home must be supported, fully funded and yes even be a line item on the annual State budget right up and until the lights go out in the Vermont State capital and the doors are locked because Vermont is broke and no longer exits. Stephen A. Leach

That is the mission embraced by the Vermont Veteran's Home and the basis of its motto -- "Fulfilling the Promise" — often repeated by all at the home who serve veterans tirelessly each and every day.

We don't have an option to do otherwise.

David Van de Water

*Fulfilling the Promise*



# Why is a Veterans' Home Important?



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Col. Guinee said it best “unless we take care of those that stepped forward to defend us in the past, don't expect future generations to do the same” **Jim White**

The Vermont Veterans Home should be considered a priority for the state.

We must, as residents of the state and citizens of this county find the compassion to support the ones who risked it all to protect the constitution. We should feel honored to support these brave men and women in their time of need.

**Dalton Blackwell**

The Vermont Veteran's home is a symbol of how the State has recognized early on in its existence, the need to recognize the importance and value the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and, Marines have brought honor and dignity to many generations of Vermont citizens and the great nation we are a part of.

Jane Laviletta



Your (our Vet home) mission acknowledges the tremendous sacrifices our Vermont Veterans, as well as their families have endured and recognizes them for their noble service to our nation. I know that when I visit our home it is most gratifying to see the wonderful environment that our residents have. Knowing that veterans live in an atmosphere that reflects dignity and respect reflects a true home for each of our Veterans. Shame on anyone who would not support our home. We shouldn't have this issue every budget year!! Shameful. **Joe Gilmond**

It's great to be surrounded by people who care!! It is one of the beautiful things of our democratic society to honor the service and dedication of our veterans with sincere care when they reach the end of their lives. Honor is and everyday term at the Vermont Veterans home just ask anyone who resides there. **Bruce E. Charbonneau**

*Fulfilling the Promise*

# Why is a Veterans' Home Important?



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Kathleen Praetorius  
PO Box 1266  
Manchester Center, Vermont 05255

November 9, 2015

Dear Ms. Jackson,

I read in THE BUZZ WORD you are looking to get feedback about the uniqueness of The Vermont Veterans' Home. My father was recently one of your residents. My mother and I are always talking about Dad and his time living there and we are constantly remembering the little and big things that so impressed us. We cringe to think about what Dad's final months would have been like if he had not been living at the home.

Prior to Dad's placement, the VVH was just an interesting building with pretty flags outside or an article in the paper to read. It took his residing there for us to see what an amazing place it is and all that it offers to those who have given so much for our country. Seeing the range of veterans gives one a new appreciation of those who have served in our military. When talking about Dad to others, we share our experiences and praise the care he was given in every way.

Enclosed you will find some the reasons we found the Veterans' Home such a special place. We hope the legislature sees the need and has the wisdom to fund the home to maintain its level of excellence. Our veterans have earned it.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Praetorius

# Why is a Veterans' Home Important?



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The Vermont Veteran's Home

A Special Place

My father was recently a resident at the home for 3 months and it changed our lives. Sadly Dad passed away at the end of June, but his last three months were filled with good times greatly outnumbering the difficult ones. The loving care he received helped him deal with the challenges he faced every day.

Dad was 91 years old, suffering from COPD and dementia. He was living at home with my mother. On a rainy day, Dad went out to get the mail. He fell and broke his hip socket in many places and his femur as well. Amazingly he made it through surgery and went to a local rehab facility. Dad was doing well, but in January he tried to walk unassisted and fell. There was a new femur break and 6 weeks of two person assist. Depression set in big time and the dementia ran wild. Dad lost a great deal of his ability to find words and his communication skills were limited. His frustration overwhelmed him. Dad also developed aspiration risk. Things were spinning out of control. We met frequently with the administration and felt his needs were not being met. They viewed him as a long term care patient and gave up on his therapies.

Dad wanted out of the rehab center and felt he was going to die if he stayed there. Spring was coming and we knew a change was needed. Dad, Mom and I had previously visited the Veterans' Home and so off the family went again to see Gary Yelle and discuss Dad's needs. Gary gave us hope; something we were in short supply of. We were impressed with all the services that could be offered, but more importantly had an overwhelming feeling of warmth, friendliness and kindness that flowed throughout the building. We loved the grounds and knew Dad's wish to see the summer had a chance of being fulfilled in this new setting.

Dad was placed in the dementia unit (Brandon), which was scary and upsetting for him, but turned out to be a blessing. The quality of his care by everyone was amazing. He was treated with dignity and respect and felt valued as a person again. The staff took time to talk with him and find out about his life. He had his identity and his dignity back. Constant assessment resulted in many services being started and Dad was able to set his own goals in some instances. The staff that supplied Dad with his therapies knew how to relate to a stubborn, independent person like Dad. They got the best out of him. In time he was talking again, walking with assistance, socializing, and enjoying the activities. He got to have a garden and enjoyed the beautiful spring with the sunshine of his face. Dad had some control over his life again.

During this entire time, Dad was not the only recipient of the Veterans' Home support. His family could not have gotten through everything without the kindness, reassurance, and guidance of Dr. Salazar, the nurses and the home's staff. Everyone made a difficult time less stressful.

Sadly, Dad passed away at the end of June. He had been taken to the hospital on a weekend due to recurring pneumonia. After heart wrenching discussion with doctors and Dad himself, it was decided

that Dad wanted to fight the illness with just his body. His only wish was to go back to his home and "his girls" – the Veteran's Home and his nurses.

Attached you will find some of the specific reasons why we found the Vermont Veterans' Home such a special place for Dad. You enabled us to make many fond new memories with him which we will cherish.

Kathleen Praetorius on behalf of the Praetorius Family

November 9, 2015

*Fulfilling the Promise*

# Why is a Veterans' Home Important?



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- The frequent and open communication between the staff and our family. My mother and I were kept apprised of any concerns and our input was sought to better understand Dad.
- The approach of redirection and talking to calm agitation rather than medication was something we greatly appreciated.
- The variety of activities offered encouraged Dad's socialization. They also provided us with many opportunities to join him in the experience. This built wonderful memories and kept him a part of our family life.
- The care that is taken in maintaining the building and grounds make it a pleasant place to spend time. Dad loved feeding the deer and fish and sitting in his wheelchair on the porch or patio/garden.
- The unlimited support of the family through what was a very difficult time. The staff always had time to answer our questions or hear our concerns. Dr. Salazar and the nurses prepared us as best as they could, for Dad's failing health and the decisions which would have to be made.
- The immediate follow through when a priest's visit was requested. Father Holden brought us great comfort.
- The most amazing memory is that the night before Dad died, many nurses came in before they left to say "good night" to him. He never felt alone and uncared for.
- The Veteran's Home remains a part of our family and always will. Visiting and talking with staff helps ease the loss.

## The Vermont Veterans' Home

- There is a real sense of community in which everyone watches out for and cares about each other and is treated with kindness and respect-residents and staff alike. As you walk the halls you can feel it.
- The professionalism of the staff in handling the difficult situations some residents present.
- The nursing staff treated delicate personal needs in such a way that the residents' dignity was always respected.
- The opportunity to be among peers and share the experience of being a veteran. For Dad, it provided an anchor on bad dementia days.
- The helpfulness of the admission office and the business staff in completing paperwork and taking care of financial details so that the family's time and energies could be focused on their loved one.
- The flexibility of the staff, so that family time was the priority. The unrestricted visiting hours made life more natural.
- The ratio of nursing staff to residents enabled Dad's needs to be met efficiently and quickly. In the previous facility there were times when the floor was understaffed resulting in long wait times.
- The range of services offered and the constant monitoring by the providers to reassess and modify goals. Dad was able to have input and express what he wanted and needed, as was his family.
- The immediate addressing of psychological crisis. When extreme depression hit, Dad was able to see the doctor, psychologist or social worker immediately. In the previous facility he had to wait 2 weeks to see a psychologist.





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Questions.....