

The Vermont Arts Council envisions a state where everyone has access to the arts and creativity in their life, education, and community.

the Arts,

Vermont Arts Council
Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
Vermont Historical Society

Slide One:


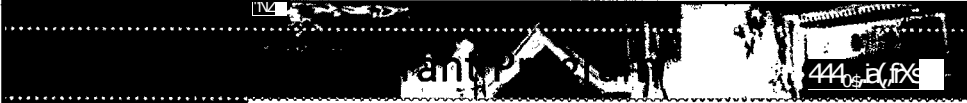
Good morning Madam Chair and members of the Committee,

It is our pleasure to be here this morning, and with me here today are my colleagues from the Council and a visitor from Rutland who will also be testifying in a few minutes.

(Introduce by name and title, if possible).

My hope is to do this presentation, let Bruce do his testimony, and then take questions from the committee. Of course, if you have a burning question, or anything on a slide is unclear, by all means, ask!

The Cultural Facilities Grant program is a critical component of the Council's overall vision statement you see here. Our mission is to advance and preserve the arts at the center of Vermont communities for the simple reason that if everyone has access to the arts in their lives, education, and community, Vermont will thrive economically, socially, and creatively. This is the essence of the creative economy; the ebb and flow of goods and services between the creative sector in a place, and the businesses and schools that both support it and are supported by it.



About the Program

Grants help Vermont nonprofit organizations and municipalities **enhance, create, or expand the capacity of an existing building to provide cultural activities for the public.**

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The Cultural Facilities grant program is administered by the Vermont Arts Council in collaboration with the Vermont Historical Society and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. (Cultural Facilities Coalition)

Grants range from a low of \$1,000 to a high \$30,000, the average grant is usually around \$10,000.

This year, in fact just two days ago, we celebrated 22 grantees (out of 30 that applied), representing 12 Vermont counties, who collectively were awarded \$8 short of \$233,000. The smallest grant was \$2,466 to support a modular stage system in the Salisbury Vt. Congregational Church. The largest was for \$27,000 to support the purchase of a new digital sound array system for the Paramount Theatre in Rutland about which you shall hear more shortly.

It should be pointed out that the US Constitution provides for a separation of church and state, however in the case of Salisbury (and other similarly situated church buildings used for cultural activities), we make sure there is plenty of evidence to prove that programs that are presented in those location are for all audiences, not just for members of that specific faith.



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What We Fund

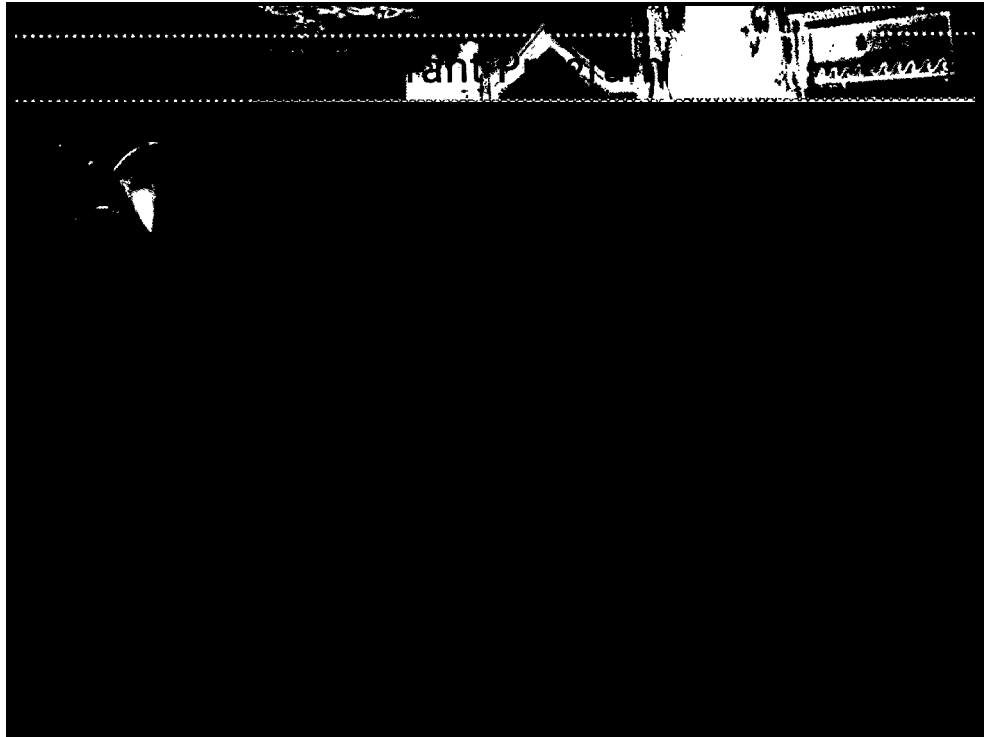
- ADA Accessibility Improvements

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Slide 3:

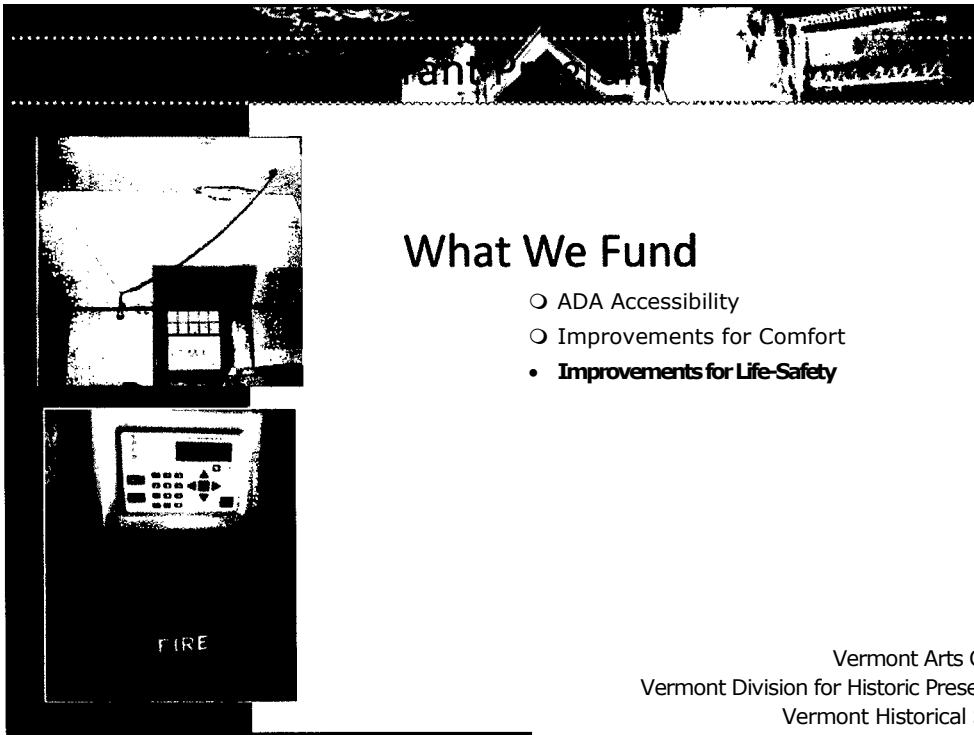
Most of what we fund can be described in four basic categories:

1) ADA --features such as lighted parking, ramps, elevators, lifts, assistive listening systems, and bathrooms.



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2) Comfort Projects -- such as upgrades to seating, heating, air conditioning, and plumbing (kitchens, water/sewer).



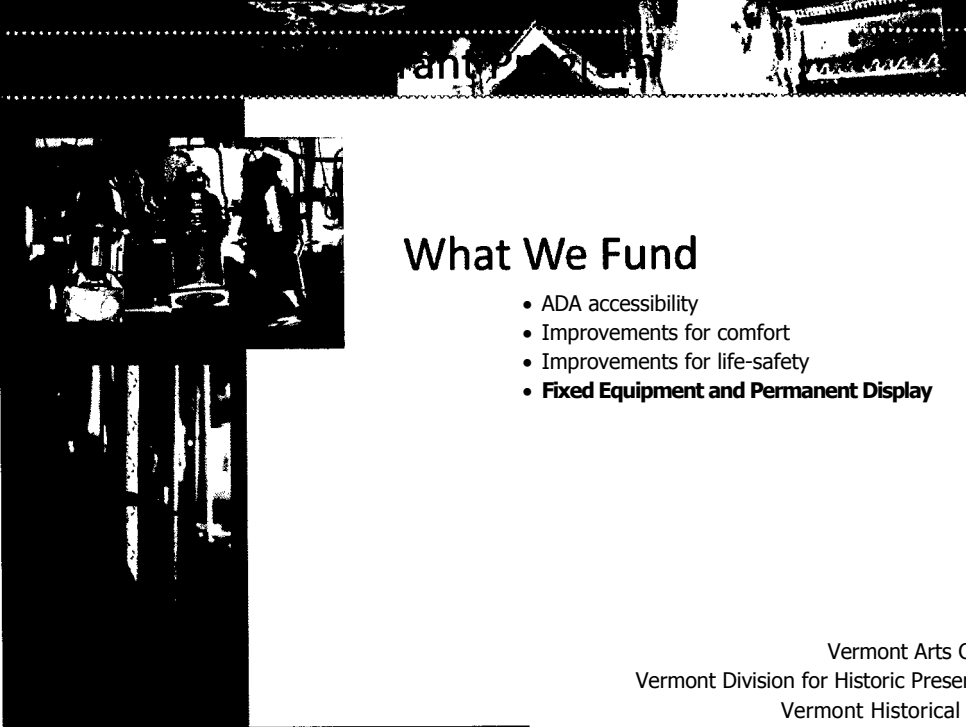
What We Fund

- ADA Accessibility
- Improvements for Comfort
- **Improvements for Life-Safety**

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3) Life-Safety Projects-- code improvements to core operating systems including fire safety, lighting, and electrical upgrades.



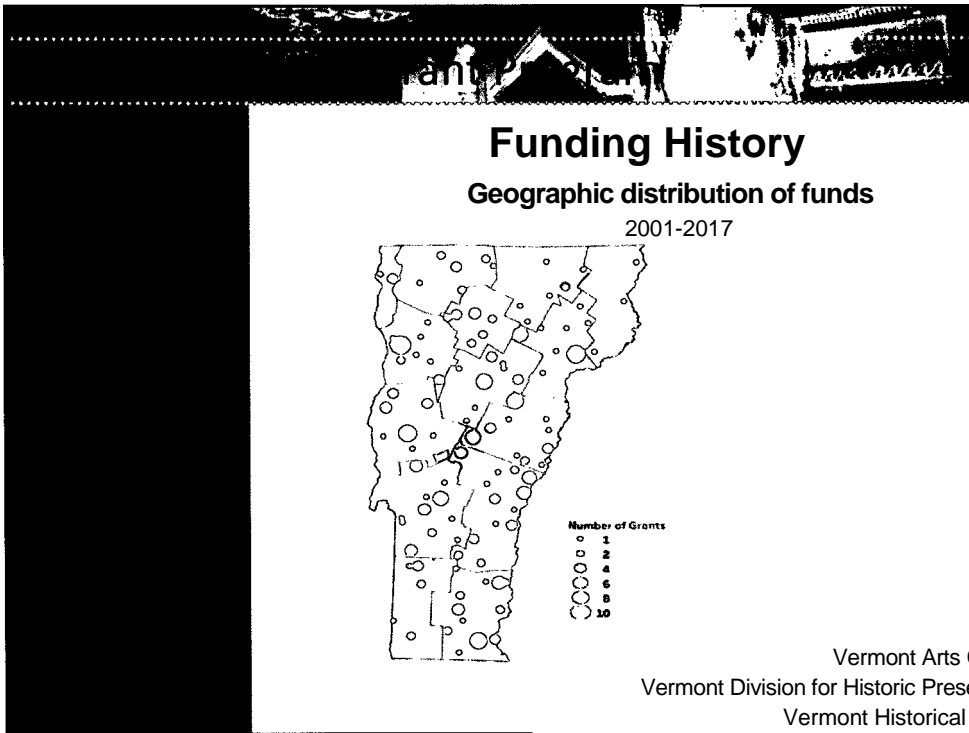
What We Fund

- ADA accessibility
- Improvements for comfort
- Improvements for life-safety
- **Fixed Equipment and Permanent Display**

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Slide 6:

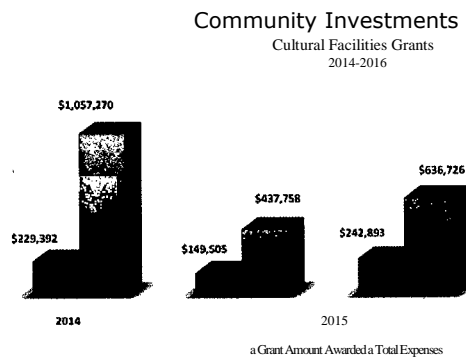
4) Fixed equipment purchases--such as theatrical sound and lighting systems, permanent display/exhibit cases, theatrical rigging and hydraulic lifts, and so on.



Slide 7:

Grants have been awarded in every county since the Arts Council began administering the program in 2001. As I mentioned earlier, grants this year reached venues in 12 of the 14 Vermont Counties., and this year is not an atypical year.

Impact: Program requires 1:1 community match but actual match averages closer to 3:1



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This program is a reimbursement program which helps for reporting and accountability purposes. One of its features is that grant awards require a 1:1 match, but you can see from this slide that, in practice, the match is much greater than 1:1.

Blue — total grants awarded — Red — Total expenses for the project.

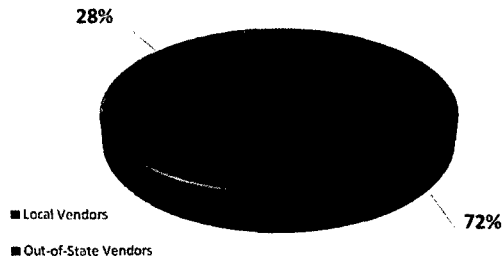
This average match speaks volumes about the program's economic impact in a place.

In extreme cases, grants are matched to a far greater extent, such as we saw in Lyndonville several years ago on a project to restore the original one-room Lyndon schoolhouse. The \$5,000 grant was leveraged 15:1 and at the celebration at the conclusion of the project, it was the only time in my life I ever saw Rep. Cola Hudson shed a tear.



Impact: Community investments provide work for local vendors and businesses.

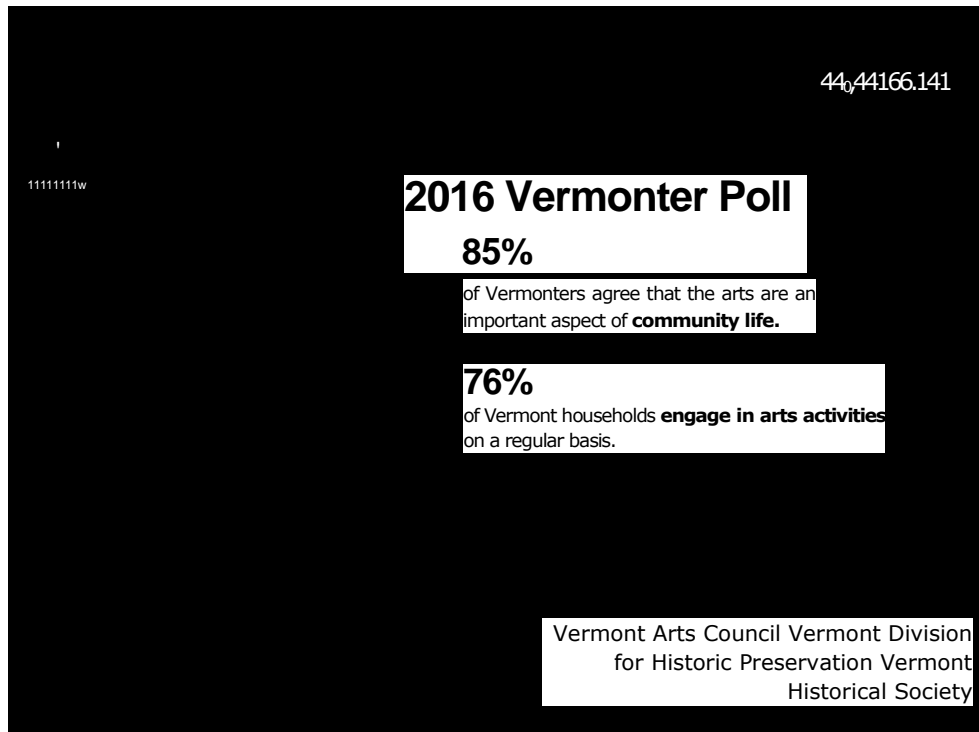
Approximate Local vs. Out-of-State Vendors
Cultural Facilities Grants
2014, 2016



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Slide 9:

But even more germane to impact is what the grant funds are actually used for. Our final reports have an enormous amount of data on this subject and it turns out that the majority of funds (72%) go directly into the community— local general contractors, electricians, plumbers, drywall specialists, and finished carpenters receive the bulk of the funds. A small portion occasionally goes to out-of-state vendors — typically when a specialized piece of equipment is needed that may not be available in VT.



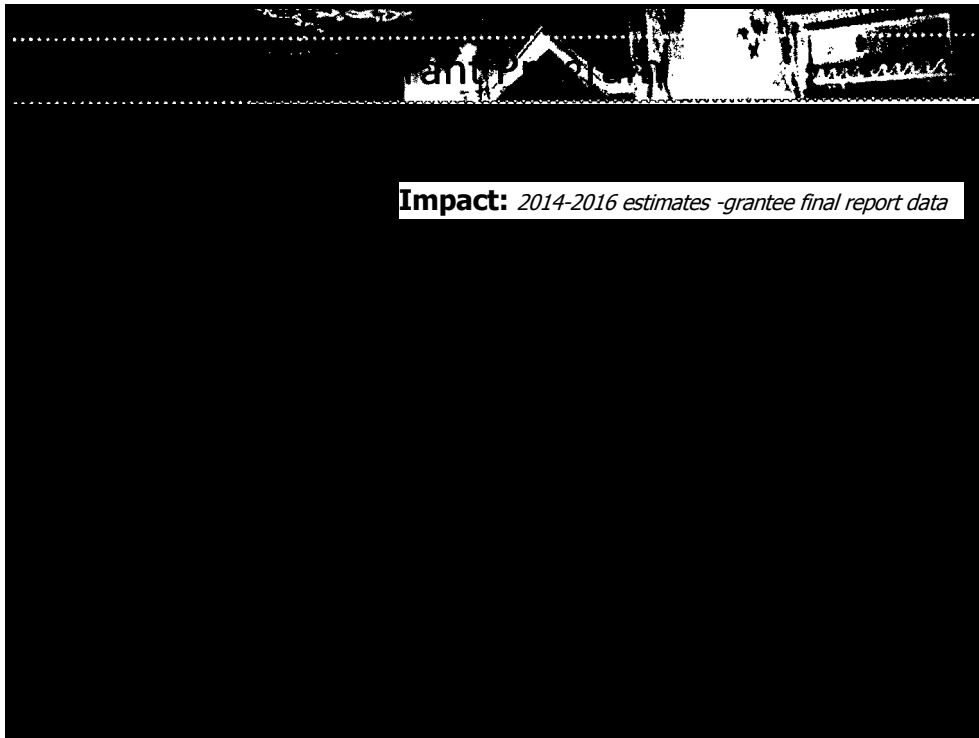
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So, in case, in the back of your minds, you are still asking the question, why should the state care about supporting its cultural venues, perhaps this will help. In addition to this information from last year's Vermonter Poll which speak to the degree to which Vermonters value the arts, there is also a practical value.

The art that happens in a large network of cultural facilities throughout the state attracts residents and visitors alike. Cultural Tourists typically spend more and stay longer than other types of U.S. travelers. 2014 research by the Tourism Industry (as reported by Americans for the Arts) tells us that the U.S. cultural traveler spends 60 percent more than domestic leisure travelers, or approximately \$1,319 per trip compared with \$820. The cultural traveler also takes more trips than general U.S. travelers: 3.6 vs. 3.4 trips annually.

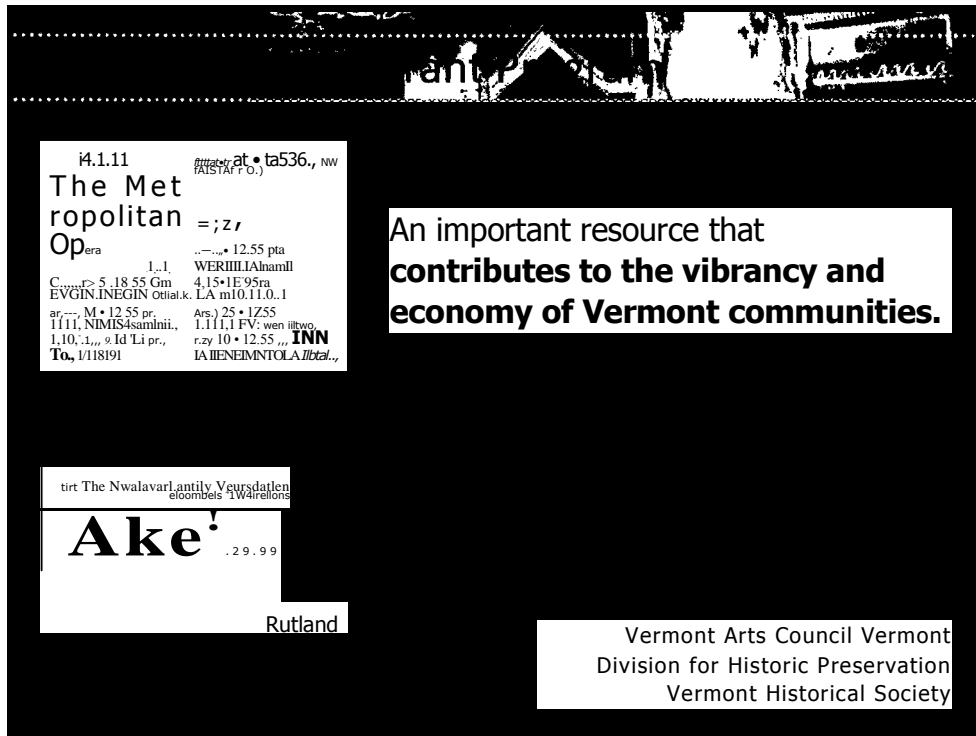
Studies conducted over the last five years here in Vermont show that all cultural facilities, the artists that perform in them, the administrators that oversee them, the money they spend locally on food, housing, such things as lumber and hardware, and the incidental expenses paid by audiences who attend these events contribute about \$14.5 million in tax revenue to state and municipal coffers.

That return is why this program is so important.



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Over the past three years, by our reckoning, more than 300,000 Vermonters and visitors have directly benefited from Cultural Facilities Grants in activities that have included performing arts events, fairs and festivals, arts and crafts classes and showcases, exhibitions, collections care, and so much more. In addition, nearly 5,000 artists have shared their talent and inspiration to audiences the length and breadth of Vermont.

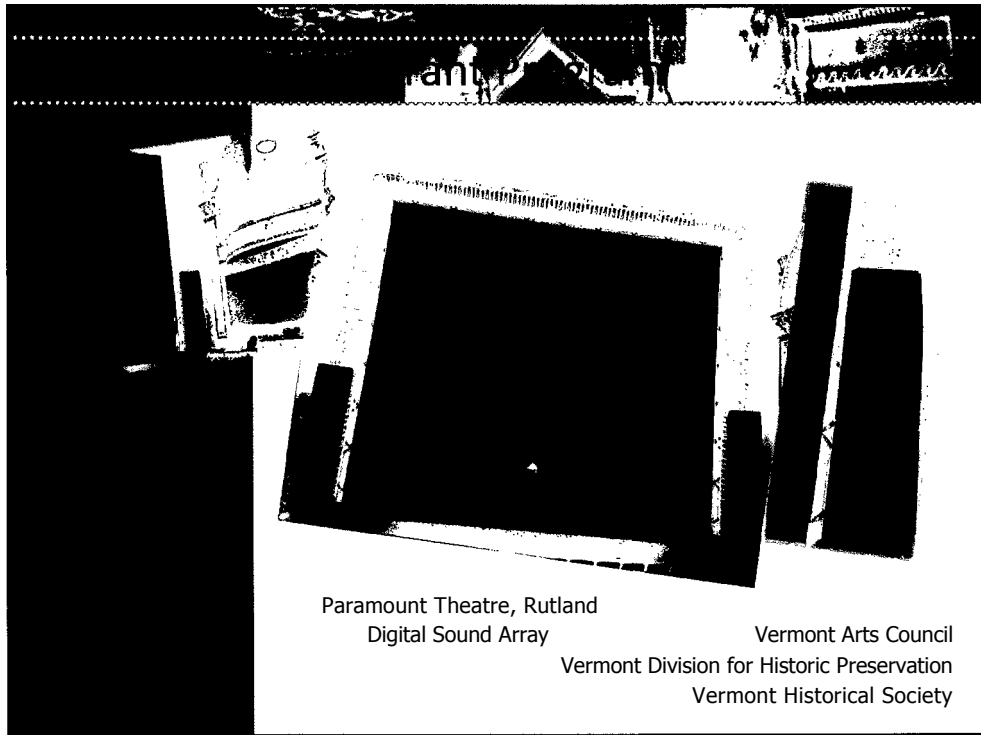


Slide 12:

And lest the point hasn't been stressed enough, we believe that the creative sector supported by these grants are key to the ongoing vibrancy and economic health and well-being of Vermont communities everywhere.

So, In closing, and on behalf of our partners at the Historical Society and the Division for Historic Preservation, I want to thank this committee and your counterparts in the Senate for your long-term and very valuable support for this program.

You may have noticed that the last couple of slides have featured images from reports submitted by the Paramount Theatre in Rutland. I now leave you with one last slide, also from the Paramount, and turn the microphone over to my good friend and colleague from the Paramount Theatre for his testimony.



Slide 13:

Mr. Bruce Bouchard, the executive director of the Paramount Theatre.

