VERMONT LOCAL ROADS

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

April 2018

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

The Program 1

Mission and Vision 1

Staff 1

Program Services 2

Workshops 2

Additional Workshops 3

Technical Assistance 3

Workshop Locations Map 4

Participating Town Map 6

Communications and Outreach 12

Roads Scholar Program 14

Partnerships 15

Additional Accomplishments 17

2017 Goals 17

LEGISLATIVE REPORT APRIL 2018

THE PROGRAM

The Vermont Local Roads program (VLR) provides assistance to municipal highway departments and town governments to improve their road networks by providing training, technical assistance, communication tools and information exchange.

MISSION AND VISION

Mission: To foster a safe, efficient, and environmentally sound surface transportation system by improving skills and increasing knowledge of the transportation workforce and decision makers.

Vision: Improve the quality and safety of the surface transportation system through collaborative partnerships, training, and information exchange.

FOUR FOCUS AREAS

- Every Day Counts (EDC)
- Infrastructure Management
- Safety
- Workforce Development

STAFF

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Todd, Holly & Stu

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PROGRAM SERVICES

WORKSHOPS

There were **102** workshop offerings provided during calendar year 2017, many of which were similar in nature to courses that have been offered by Vermont Local Roads in previous years.

Workshop examples:

- Game of Logging Level 1 & 2 (GOL)
- Game of Logging Storm Damage (GOL)
- Introduction to Grader
- Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA 10)
- Rivers & Roads Tier II
- Tractor Mower Operator Safety Training (TMOST)
- Trenching & Shoring
- Welding (Introduction & Advanced)
- Work Zone/Flagger

Vermont Local Roads also provided new programming.

New workshop examples:

- Introduction to Grader (Heavy Equipment)
- Pavement Management & Maintenance
- Roads Roundtable/Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP)
- Roadway Fundamentals
- Show Me the Money
- Welding (Introduction & Advanced)

Based on our outreach to the municipalities, several key training areas that will be offered in 2018.

Workshops such as:

- Beaver Management
- Capital Planning and Budget Development
- Culvert Installation
- Generational Differences
- Heavy Equipment (loader & excavator)
- Roadside Vegetation Management

LEGISLATIVE REPORT APRIL 2018

ADDITIONAL WORKSHOPS

Vermont Local Roads serves their customers need for training and will continually provide training upon request.

Vermont Local Roads works to provide workshops located around the state keeping the commute reasonable. Some courses will be held each year and moved around the state accordingly.

Workshops were held in regional locations around the state, utilizing almost exclusively municipal property.

Sample locations:

- Bethel
- Castleton
- Colchester
- Danville
- Dorset
- Elmore
- Groton
- Irasburg
- Lincoln
- Monkton
- Montgomery
- Rochester
- Ryegate
- Wardsboro
- Wolcott

The quality of our workshops is vitally important. Therefore, at least 1 VLR staff member is present at every workshop.

Attendance for calendar year 2017:

- **102** workshop sessions
- **30** different topics
- **1,265** participants (1,131 municipal employees and 134 VTrans & ANR employees)

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

VLR responded to **119** technical assistance requests via formal requests, email, telephone, listserv, and website.

Technical assistance topics include:

- Grant writing assistance
- Job estimates
- Maintenance of gravel roads
- Road and sign policies and standards
- Site reviews

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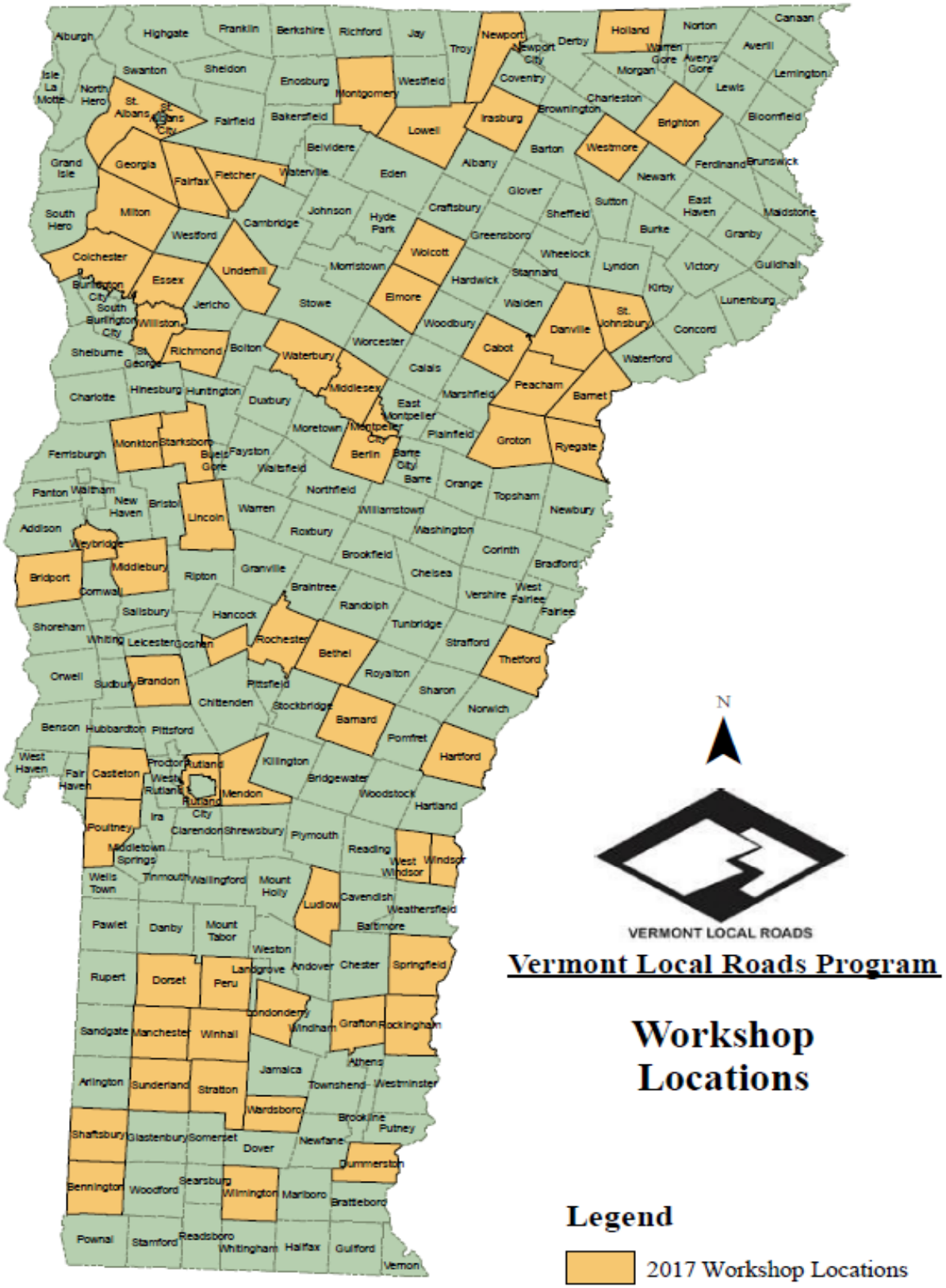

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Show Me the Money Workshop
St. Johnsbury - March 2017

OSHA 10 Roadway Safety Workshop
Groton – April 2017

Trenching & Shoring Workshop
Dummerston - June 2017

Roads Roundtable Workshop
Fairfax - June 2017

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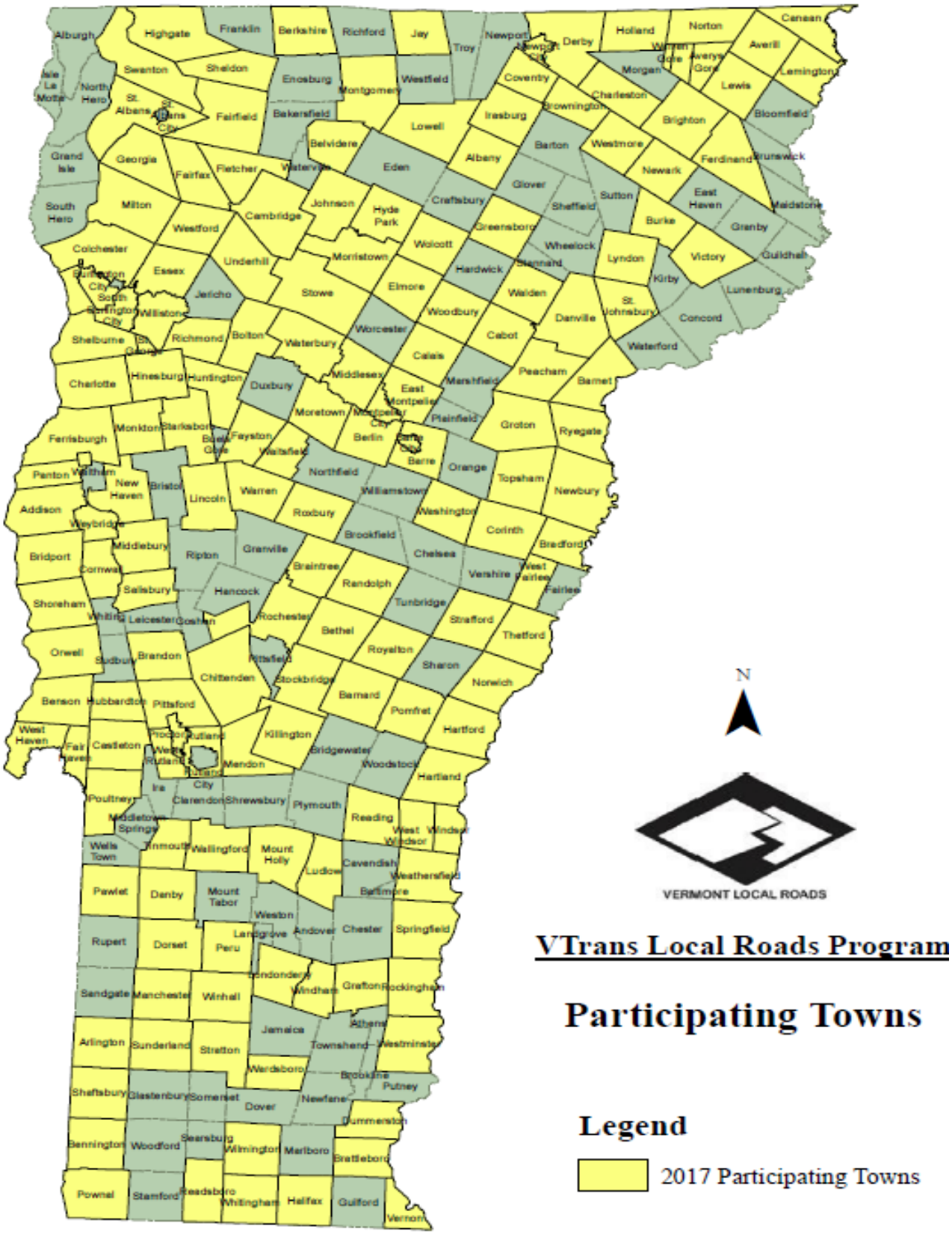


LEGISLATIVE REPORT APRIL 2018

Municipality	Sum of Class Hours	# of Attendees
Addison	34	6
Albany	43	6
Arlington	12	3
Barnard	85	13
Barnet	58	8
Barre City	120	14
Barre Town	19	3
Belvidere	5	1
Bennington	165	29
Benson	20	4
Berkshire	26	4
Berlin	10	2
Bethel	96	17
Bolton	10	2
Bradford	19	3
Braintree	6	1
Brandon	10	2
Brattleboro	161	25
Bridport	13	3
Brighton	20	4
Brownington	5	1
Burke	76	10
Burlington	22	4
Cabot	5	1
Calais	12	2
Cambridge	8	2
Canaan	26	4
Castleton	82	12
Charleston	40	6
Charlotte	8	2
Chittenden	58	13
Colchester	255	37
Corinth	15	3
Cornwall	27	7

LEGISLATIVE REPORT APRIL 2018

Municipality	Sum of Class Hours	# of Attendees
Coventry	10	2
Danby	5	1
Danville	75	8
Derby	11	2
Dorset	65	10
Dummerston	27	5
East Montpelier	41	5
Elmore	77	11
Essex Junction	5	1
Essex Town	168	27
Fair Haven	18	3
Fairfax	10	2
Fairfield	5	1
Fayston	5	1
Ferrisburgh	73	9
Fletcher	30	5
Georgia	50	7
Grafton	64	9
Greensboro	18	3
Groton	10	2
Halifax	70	11
Hartford	103	17
Hartland	5	1
Highgate	6	1
Hinesburg	31	7
Holland	74	11
Hubbardton	59	9
Huntington	18	3
Hyde Park	30	5
Irasburg	16	1
Jay	10	2
Johnson	88	14
Killington	21	2
Lemington	10	2

LEGISLATIVE REPORT APRIL 2018

Municipality	Sum of Class Hours	# of Attendees
Lincoln	24	5
Londonderry	6	1
Lowell	8	1
Ludlow Town	64	9
Lyndon	10	2
Manchester Town	9	2
Mendon	53	7
Middlebury	206	28
Middlesex	92	9
Milton	115	17
Monkton	22	5
Montgomery	36	4
Montpelier	307	43
Moretown	15	3
Morristown	12	2
Morrisville	10	1
Mt. Holly	32	2
New Haven	24	5
Newark	8	2
Newbury	15	3
Newport City	5	1
North Bennington	24	5
North Troy	5	1
Norton	5	1
Norwich	5	1
Orleans	12	2
Orwell	18	4
Panton	4	1
Pawlet	32	2
Peacham	8	1
Peru	40	6
Pittsford	21	2
Pomfret	33	6
Poultney Town	74	11

LEGISLATIVE REPORT APRIL 2018

Municipality	Sum of Class Hours	# of Attendees
Poultney Village	18	3
Pownal	38	8
Proctor	226	30
Randolph	70	13
Reading	10	2
Readsboro	6	1
Richmond	40	10
Rochester	54	8
Rockingham	40	6
Roxbury	38	6
Royalton	29	5
Rutland Town	12	2
Ryegate	110	18
Salisbury	21	2
Shaftsbury	100	18
Shelburne	45	8
Sheldon	4	1
Shoreham	45	7
South Burlington	124	19
Springfield	72	11
St. Albans Town	6	1
St. George	10	2
St. Johnsbury	142	26
Starksboro	46	8
Stockbridge	5	1
Stowe Town	186	20
Strafford	17	3
Stratton	10	2
Sunderland	67	9
Swanton Town	16	4
Swanton Village	6	1
Thetford	142	29
Tinmouth	45	7
Topsham	5	1

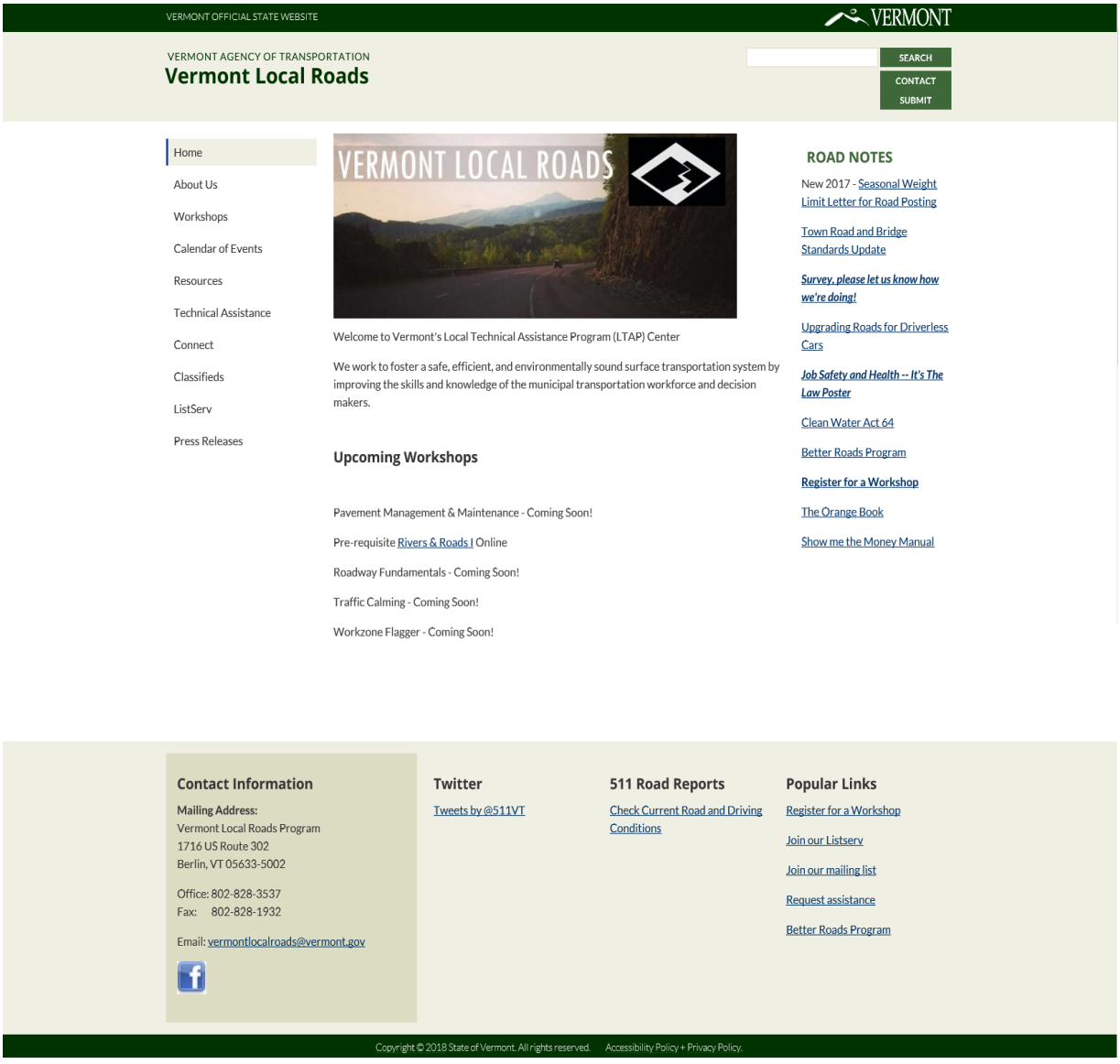
LEGISLATIVE REPORT APRIL 2018

Municipality	Sum of Class Hours	# of Attendees
Underhill	80	12
Unified Towns & Gore	58	5
Vergennes	80	10
Vernon	10	1
Victory	15	3
Waitsfield	15	3
Walden	6	1
Wallingford	10	2
Wardsboro	123	15
Warren	10	2
Washington	31	4
Waterbury Town	15	3
Weathersfield	83	13
West Fairlee	5	1
West Haven	5	1
West Rutland	59	7
West Windsor	105	18
Westford	73	10
Westminster	24	2
Westmore	19	5
Weybridge	12	2
Whitingham	12	2
Williston	106	22
Wilmington	10	2
Windham	32	4
Windsor	140	19
Winhall	98	11
Wolcott	43	7
Woodbury	15	3
Grand Total	**7332**	**1131**

LEGISLATIVE REPORT APRIL 2018

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

Website – The VLR website provides resources such as workshop description and schedule, contact information, Roads Scholar information, technical resources (such as Tailgate Talks), current road conditions, written material (such as newsletters and directory of officials), classifieds sections, listserv information and registration, as well as Facebook and other media outlets.



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Newsletter – We continue to produce newsletters periodically and have been exploring other distribution methods. The newsletter is also available electronically via the VLR website and distributed on our listserv.

SUMMER EDITION 2017

NEWSLETTER
Vermont Local Roads

VERMONT LOCAL ROADS

Inside this issue:

VLR Update 1
VLCT News 2
Recycled Asphalt Shingles (RAS) 3
Good Job Done! 4
Rivers & Roads Training 5
Rural Roads & Resilient ROWs 6
Workshop Update 7
Roads Scholar Program 8
Photo of the Month 9
NLTAPA Conference 10
Word Search 11

We're on the web www.localroads.vermont.gov

VLR Update
By Stu Johnson, VLR Branch Manager

Hi Folks,

So here goes. Another newsletter already. It's been a whirlwind these last few months. Let me just state a couple of obvious truisms here: For a small state, there is a lot of beautiful country out there and while it has been said you can't get theya from heya...you can, it's just not easy.

As we have hosted the five Roads Roundtables, the grader workshops, Foremen's meetings and other workshops in preparation for the rollout of the Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) next year, we continue to hear a common theme from those in attendance. "We are not the ones that need to hear this information, the Selectboard or Town Manager need to hear it". For the most part these guys have heard what we talk about, many are using the practices, techniques and information they learn about and share at these programs. Yet there are always more than a few that express frustration that they are not able to utilize this knowledge and experience because of limits or direction placed on them by supervisors. Where to buy gravel based on cost rather than quality, underfunding the gravel budget in general, not funding stabilization material (i.e.) chloride at an adequate level to save gravel and scraping, not providing for the hiring, rental or purchase of the appropriate equipment to do needed work effectively and efficiently.

Yeah sure, there's probably some sour grapes mixed into that whine. However, there are a several more truisms at play here. These folks are exposed to the daily hands-on reality of managing your roads. They know the basics and what's needed. They are exposed to the training and information to stay current with programs and initiatives that affect the town roads. Certainly there are some supervisors that are equally as well versed and more so. However there seem to be some that are hoping the MRGP will go away. They are mainly aware of it because of the $2000 price tag and not all of the detailed work that is required in the field.

So here's the good news. What will affect the road crews directly won't cost the towns much at all. Might even save them some if they're not too far behind already. We're talking about best management practices, BMPs...stuff they ought to be doing already. Primarily drainage related techniques (i.e.) ditches, road crown, shoulder maintenance, proper culvert sizing and installation. Proper grader operations are a big part of the BMPs. There may be some old school thinking out there still, but we're all working on them.

The use of marginal or poor quality sand and gravel should be scrutinized. Cheaper, low quality gravel and sand probably isn't saving you any money in the long run. We are working on ways for sieve analysis testing to be more available to towns to assess the quality of the products they are using.

The BMP design requirements of ditches pretty much eliminates the making of ditches with graders. This aspect of the MRGP/BMP might legitimize and inspire some discussions about co-purchasing or at least co-renting excavators among neighboring towns if individual towns can't justify it. This may be true for some other equipment (i.e.) compactors, leaf blowers, trailers, chloride applicators, hydro-seeders etc.

Okay so that last paragraph has some costs. Can we talk about efficiency, effectiveness and level of service? Every town needs to be efficient and effective and always striving to be more so. Every town has its own dynamic, be it because of geography, topography, sociology, geology, existing infrastructure and certainly economic capacity. Twenty miles of road versus 70, 80 or more, rural versus village, gravel/paved. It's why tandems are the only way to go in some towns, why some can own equipment and some can't. Better suited equipment and material may cost more up front but should maintain or raise the level of service by improving efficiency and effectiveness. Each town needs to wrestle with the value of that as it too is particular to each town.

Seeing as I'm on this rant and all warmed up...let me say that we hear pretty much the same thing when it comes to OSHA compliance, primarily in the shop but some aspects of field work. So I will admit openly that

Listserv – Subscribers have increased from **459 to 514** in calendar year 2017 with weekly activity on the site. The Listserv is the most efficient way to quickly inform municipalities of workshop opportunities, highlight municipal equipment for sale as well as state surplus equipment, and advertise municipal employment opportunities. It serves as a discussion forum for the subscribers to collaborate with each other. This service allows towns to communicate with each other as well as have open discussions and share or ask questions to other communities for their input on any particular town highway related subject. We also partner with the National Weather Service in Burlington to put out Hazardous Weather Alerts and updates.

Recent topics included:

- Cost of radar feedback sign
- Equipment for sale
- Graffiti removal
- Job opportunities
- Road Foreman Meeting notifications
- Road Maintenance Policy
- Weather updates
- Workshop announcements

LEGISLATIVE REPORT APRIL 2018

Roads Scholar Program – This program will continue with appropriate recognition given to scholars completing the various levels and categories.

L to R: Stu Johnson, Thomas Manning, Scott Smith, Floyd Sheesley and Dane McGrath

On June 9, 2017, Vermont Local Roads attended the Colchester 2025 - Turning our Vision into Reality Summit to present three Master Roads Scholar awards to staff from the Colchester Public Works. An appreciation award was given to Floyd Sheesley during the luncheon for his dedicated efforts and support of the Vermont Local Roads Stakeholder Group. Bios are below for the Colchester crew that received their Masters awards.

Tom grew up in Essex. He worked for the City of Winooski for several years before coming to work for the Town of Colchester. He is a 1-ton snow plow driver in the winter and works with the asphalt patching crew in the summer.

Scott has been with the Town of Colchester for over 30 years. He has been Crew Leader for the past 10 years and leads the most important programs such as snow removal, street sweeping and roadside mowing.

Dane grew up in Colchester. He is one of the main line plow drivers in the winter and operates the Street Sweeper and Line Stripping Equipment in the Spring/Summer months.

Partnerships

Establishing and maintaining partnerships are high priorities of VLR, FHWA, and NLTAPA. Below is a list of key partners:

National Local Technical Assistance Program Association (NLTAPA)

VLR staff will continue to look for opportunities to collaborate, learn and/or share best practices with their neighboring state LTAP centers. VLR staff participate in workgroups consisting of communications, safety and training resources.

2019 NLTAPA Conference will be held in Burlington, VT

Center for Local Aid Support (CLAS)

The Center provides national leadership and direction in the administration of the LTAP Centers to advance innovative practices in these communities.

The Center works collaboratively with a diverse mix of partners including LTAP Centers. The programs provided are designed to put good policies in place and provide models for other agencies, as well as inform the federal transportation discussion.

VLR staff will continue to work with CLAS providing feedback on the new reporting processes for the Program Assistance Report (PAR).

Regional Planning Commissions (RPC's) & Road Foreman Groups

- Collaborate with RPC staff on outreach assistance
- To organize road foremen meetings
- Provide agenda topics and attend the road foreman meetings
- Attend Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI) monthly meetings periodically

Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT)

- VLR communicates with VLCT to prevent duplicity of workshops and maintain open collaboration regularly
- VLCT is a member of the VLR Key Stakeholder group
- VLR will exhibit at the VLCT Municipal Town Fair and attend the Annual meeting
- Partner with VLCT on joint training for municipalities like the Municipal Road Management for Decision Makers workshop

LEGISLATIVE REPORT APRIL 2018

Better Roads Program (BR)

The relationship between VLR and BR continues to grow in the following areas:

- Increased communication between BR and VLR tech requests
- Publish BR information in VLR newsletter and listserv
- Provide training and best management practices at workshops
- VLR holds a seat on the Grant Selection Committee
- VLR is partnering with BR to help provide updated information on the grant process

VT Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

- VLR participated on the Act 64 required Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) "core", "foreman", and "technical" committees for the development of the permit
- VLR will continue to understand the changes in best management practices to meet new water quality standards for municipalities and incorporate them into trainings
- VLR will provide training and resources for DEC to municipalities

VT Municipal Highway Association (VMHA)

- VLR will participate in the Annual Field Day and Expo
- VLR will provide administrative assistance and publicity for the annual Field Day

Other partners include, but are not limited to:

- American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials (AASHTO)
- American Public Works Association (APWA)
- Associated General Contractors of Vermont (AGC)
- National Association of County Engineers (NACE)
- National Weather Service Burlington (NOAA)
- UVM Extension Service
- UVM Transportation Research Center (UVM UTC)
- VT Agency of Natural Resources (ANR)
- VT Emergency Management
- VT Occupational Safety & Health Administration
- VTrans Office of Highway Safety

LEGISLATIVE REPORT APRIL 2018

Key Stakeholder Group

VLR established a key stakeholder group which meets quarterly to gather feedback and validate the direction of the program.

This group consists of:

- 3 VLR staff members
- VTTC Program Manager
- 4 municipal members (Colchester, Groton, North Bennington & West Windsor)
- 1 VLCT member
- 1 BR member
- 1 RPC member

ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Held the 30th Annual Northeast Regional LTAP Meeting in May of 2017 with 29 attendees from the Northeast Region.
- More workshop sessions were brought directly to individual towns in their regional locations.
- VLR Circuit Rider has achieved his certification to instruct the OSHA 10 training which will create further cost savings for future workshops.
- VLR has developed reporting and certification within the Learning Management System (LMS) and went live October 1, 2017. The LMS provides more robust tools and a much more stable platform to store our information. If desired, a municipal employee can now have access to their own training records. This new system will allow significant improvements and data collection on training evaluations and in the future be leveraged for e-Learning capabilities including TC3 online training.

2018 GOALS

- Training will be provided to municipalities on the use of the Learning Management System.
- Continue to build and provide relevant curriculum to fill knowledge gaps in the municipal workforce.
- Continue to expand the heavy equipment training including loader & excavator.
- VLR will work with the foreman group leaders to provide training, discussion and networking.
- Collaborate with VT DEC on the Municipal Roads General Permit and provide workshops that pertain to the upcoming changes.
- Assist NLTAPA conference committee with preparations for the 2019 National Conference that will be held in Burlington, VT in July of 2019.