

Vermont Historical Society

Past Year Impact and Budget Commentary

Fiscal Year 2016 Areas of Service:

- VHS had 1,907 active memberships in FY16. VHS members are from throughout Vermont and across the country.
- Over 13,000 people visited the Vermont History Museum in Montpelier and the Vermont History Center in Barre, including over 5,250 students on field trips.
- Leahy Library staff served over 2,000 people onsite and through remote requests for information.
- Our online research resources were accessed over 90,000 times and our website saw 262,000 unique visitors.
- 1,580 students were served by our classroom lending kits in 99 classes.
- Over 10,000 people learned about Vermont heritage through VHS public programs and outreach events, including VT History Expo.
- VHS offers services to nearly 200 local historical societies and museums in Vermont through technical services, mentoring and consulting services, local history communications, workshops, educational materials, and an awards program that recognizes the important work being done at the local level by these community heritage organizations. This extension of service impacts untold number of individuals in almost every town in the State of Vermont.
- In the public trust, VHS houses, preserves, conserves, and exhibits in state-of-the-art facilities over 30,000 artifacts, 50,000 books, 20,000 maps and broadsides, 1,500 linear feet of manuscripts, and 30,000 photographs.
- VHS published a fascinating historical novel and continues to produce Vermont's only scholarly, peer-reviewed journal of historical research.

New Initiatives and Upcoming Programs:

- The Vermont History Museum has been renovated with the installation of Paul Sample's monumental canvas (50' long) depicting Vermont's history from 1609 to 1960. The mural and funds for installation and conservation came from National Life Group. This permanent installation will greet all visitors and orient them to Vermont's history. We are using this opportunity to upgrade the *Freedom and LIM!* exhibition with new information, more hands-on activities, and specific galleries focusing on exhibits created by local historical societies.
- Vermont in the 1970s exhibition and programming is currently ongoing and drawing many visitors with great reviews in both local and national press. Visitation to the VT History Center is up 200% over last year at this time.
- A unique partnership with local commercial television (local 22/local 44) provides weekly programming focusing on State historic markers throughout Vermont. This programming is

viewed weekly by 20,000 broadcast viewers (Nielson Statistics). Over 15,000 unique viewers per quarter watch the segments through our digital portal.

- Innovative programs and events targeting new audiences and new partners.

A Unique Collaboration:

- Chartered by the legislature in 1838, and thus the oldest cultural heritage organization in the state, VHS collects, preserves, and exhibits objects and documents related to Vermont's past (22 V.S.A., sections 281-285). The Vermont Historical Society is the only institution in Vermont that collects artifacts and documents that reflect the entire history of the state, every geographical area, and every chronological period, including the present.
- In the event of dissolution of VHS, management of its collection and related property will become the responsibility of the State (22 V.S.A., section 284).
- Employees of VHS are classified by the state classification system as if they were state employees and receive all general pay increases granted state employees (22 V.S.A., section 285).
- The State of Vermont provides access to the Vermont State Employee Retirement System to qualified employees of VHS, as well as group coverage for health, dental, and life insurance. The premium for this coverage is paid entirely by VHS and its employees. Annually VHS makes contributions totaling over 5115,000 to VSERS.
- VHS is both tenant and a landlord of the State of Vermont. An internal service fee is assessed annually to VHS for the area occupied by the Vermont History Museum in the Pavilion Building (set at \$284,061 for FY18). The State of Vermont pays a modest fee to cover operating expenses for the Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center at the Vermont History Center in Barre (\$11,500 for FY18).
- VHS provides secure, climate-controlled space and curatorial oversight for the state's collection of historic flags.
- VHS provides access to meeting rooms in both the Pavilion space and History Center without charge to state agencies. During FY16, the facilities were used by state agencies 51 times for over 400 hours and 1,300 state employees served.
- The Vermont History Center in Barre is also delegated for use by state agencies as an alternative worksite in the event of natural disaster or other emergency.
- VHS education staff work closely with State House staff to coordinate field trips that include a tour of the State House and Vermont History Museum. VHS participates in the State House Complex marketing campaign with the office of the state curator and VT Arts Council.
- Staff members of the Vermont Historical Society serve without compensation on various boards and commissions as well as working cooperatively with many state agencies.

Items of Note in the VHS budget

- As stated above, VHS employees are classified using the state employee classification system. Therefore base pay and pay increases are not completely at the discretion of VHS.