



The Preservation Trust of Vermont

Continuing Support for Vermont Communities Since 1980

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HISTORIC VERMONT

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something for publication please contact Meg Campbell, Editor.

meg@ptvermont.org

October 10, 2001

Dear Friends,

Most days I think I have the best job in Vermont. That's because I get to travel to every corner of our special state and visit with people who are passionate about their communities...their historic sites, village centers, downtowns, and town centers. The energy that comes out of these communities is very invigorating...sometimes overwhelming so. With the support of many generous donors, the Preservation Trust been able to help lots of these communities with significant financial support from our partnership with the Freeman Foundation, and technical support from our field service partnership with the National Trust.

All that said, I have been feeling a little gloomy lately-no doubt like lots of you. I don't really have the words to add anything significant to what others have already said about September 11th, but I do hope we will have the strength and conviction to understand that the world is a collection of places...small places and big places. This is the time for all of us to re-focus on our own communities and special places.

More than ever we need village stores like Buxton's Store in Orwell as community centers where people come together.

More than ever we need performing arts spaces like the Haskell Opera House in Derby Line, the Flynn Theater in Burlington, and the Paramount Theater in Rutland where people can share the experience and emotion of art.

More than ever we need our historic churches like Old West Church in Calais and town halls like Middlebury's where we can pray and also carry on a public dialogue about the future.

More than ever we need vibrant downtowns and town centers like Brattleboro and Brandon where we can connect with friends, fellow workers, and others that we

need to do business with.

More than ever we need libraries like the Aldrich Public Library in Barre and Newbury Library which provide us all, regardless of resources, an opportunity to learn about history and the current state of the world.

More than ever, this is a time to make sure these places endure. If you keep working, we will too.

Sincerely,

Paul Bruhn
Executive Director, Preservation Trust of Vermont

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OPPORTUNITIES

NOMINATIONS ACCEPTED FOR THE PRESERVATION TRUST OF VERMONT'S 2001 PRESERVATION AWARDS

The Preservation Trust of Vermont is now accepting nominations for its 2001 Preservation Awards. Awards are presented to the individuals and organizations who have made special contributions in preserving Vermont's historic architecture.

Since 1982, the Preservation Trust of Vermont has recognized outstanding contributions in the field of historic preservation. This year, because of the generosity of the Equinox Resort, all non-profit and community award recipients will receive a \$200 honorarium. Individuals will be able to have their honorarium donated to the historic preservation non-profit of their choice. The awards will be presented at the Preservation Trust's Annual Meeting in November.

Volunteers, professionals, municipalities, non-profit organizations, businesses and corporations, state agencies, building contractors, labor unions, media, schools and colleges, and governmental officials are examples of those who are eligible for the awards. Eligible activities include: preservation or adaptive use of an historic property; educational and public information materials and programs; building trades and professional training; programming at historic properties; financial support; and special encouragement and leadership in the preservation field.

The deadline for nominations is October 10, 2001. Please contact the Preservation Trust of Vermont for a Nomination Form: (802) 658-6647, 104 Church Street, Burlington, VT 05401. Email adam@ptvermont.org.

Preservation Trust Seeks Field Representative

Steve Libby, one of the Preservation Trust's two half-time field representatives, has taken an expanded teaching assignment at the University of Vermont so the Trust is looking for a replacement to work with Ann Cousins. The Field Service Program is a partnership of the Preservation Trust and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It was started as a pilot project funded largely by the Mellon Foundation and is now used as a model for other states. The job description is posted on our website <http://www.ptvermont.org>. We plan to interview applicants in mid-November.

Hildene Seeks Executive Director

Friends of Hildene, Inc., a nonprofit corporation, seeks its third Executive Director in 23 years. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Hildene, Robert Todd Lincoln's summer home, includes 412 acres, 21 structures, formal and informal gardens, and a network of walking and cross-country ski touring trails. We enjoy over forty thousand paid visitors through the Main House every season. The Executive Director, as CEO and CFO, reports to the Board of Trustees, supervises a staff of 11 full time employees, and serves a family of 325 volunteers. The successful candidate should have supervisory experience, sensitivity to historic preservation and conservation, and proven fund raising skills. Long hours and enthusiastic commitment to Hildene's mission a must. Please send resume and a handwritten letter describing in some detail interest in the position and include minimum compensation requirements. Mail to: Hildene Search Committee, P.O. Box 205, Manchester, VT 05254

Vermont Ski Museum seeks Executive Director

The Vermont Ski Museum opening in Stowe is currently searching for an Executive Director who would be responsible for the management of all activities of the Vermont Ski Museum.

Background and Skills: The Executive Director must be a seasoned manager with many years of successful experience in managing organizations and people. Particular emphasis will be placed on selecting a person who:

- Has worked successfully in a fast-moving, constantly changing environment;
- Is able to carry out a wide variety of disparate tasks simultaneously;
- Has a passion for skiing and its history;
- Is a strong financial manager with excellent personal computer skills;
- Works well with volunteers, management and customers in a variety of roles.

Education/Qualifications: The Executive Director should have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in business, history, museum management, or a related field. In addition, the position requires extensive experience and training in areas such as personal computers, personnel management, non-profit operations, and public speaking. The ideal candidate is a Vermont resident with a long-time love affair with the sport of skiing. Museum management experience would be helpful, but is not required.

Please send resume and cover letter to: Vermont Ski Museum, P.O. Box 1511, Stowe, VT 05672

Preservation Trust of Vermont Retreat

The season finale Preservation Trust retreat is scheduled for October 29-30 at the Grand Isle Lake House. The focus is community preservation projects, ranging from individual building rehabilitation for community use, to much broader town/village center revitalization and rural landscape/barn preservation.

The retreats last about 24 hours. Check-in at the Lake House is at 3:00 on Monday;

we'll start around 3:30 and finish by 2:00 on Tuesday. The agenda is for each group to present an approximately 15 minute case study about their project that frames a problem or issue they'd like group thinking about, and then open it up for discussion and cross-mentoring. Our hope is to build on collective experiences, successes and failures in order to bring new thinking and boost individual projects along their timeline.

Please let Ann Cousins ann@ptvermont.org know by October 16th if you are thinking of attending.

EVENTS

[Editor's note: Even though the following event has already happened, I have chosen to include the information in case you missed the meeting and would like to be part of upcoming discussions.]

Public Meeting Launches Study of Bellows Falls' Buildings **Thursday, October 4, Bellows Falls, VT**

"What do you know about Bellows Falls' old paper mills?" "What do you think is the best use for the former 'TLR' buildings?" These are among the questions that will be posed at a public meeting to mark the launch of a development study of an historic industrial site in Bellows Falls. The meeting will be held from 6-9 p.m. in the Woman's Club, in the basement of Rockingham Town Hall. The 'TLR' buildings are adjacent to the Adams Grist Mill, just off the Square down Mill Street behind the Town Crier office. The historic brick paper mill includes in its basement what appear to be original stone walls of the Bellows Falls Canal, constructed 1792-1802. The Town acquired the buildings for back taxes in the early 1990s. Many of its boarded up windows now offer an artist's humorous interpretation of the activities which formerly went on in the buildings.

The workshop-style meeting offers the community an opportunity to provide information about the buildings and meet the consultants recently hired by the Town of Rockingham to conduct the study. It will begin to lay the groundwork for the proposed development of the site as a Connecticut River Heritage Center. The Center could include:

- "Heritage tourism" – the interpretation of the site and building history
- Celebration of local history and pre-history of native peoples
- Natural history including the geology of the Connecticut River watershed
- Exhibits and training in industrial, Native American and underwater archeology
- The visual and performing arts
- Site and building amenities.
- Commercial use such as a conference center; artists' studios
- and related office space; theater and performance space.

The consultant team is led by Jill Michaels, a former Rockingham Development Director, now of Community Investments, Inc. The team includes Pi Smith and John Vansant of Smith and Vansant Architects; historic preservation consultant Lyssa Papazian, and David Raphael of LandWorks Landscape Architects and Planners. The team is assisted by Duncan Smith of Museum Design Associates; Sarah Rooker,

Director of the Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance; and Roberto Rodriguez, Director of Fort at No. 4. The project is overseen by Richard Ewald, Rockingham's historic preservation coordinator. The feasibility study is funded by a grant of \$39,000 from the Vermont Legislature.

For more information contact Richard Ewald at 463-3456 rbfprsrv@sover.net or Jill Michaels at jill_michaels@valley.net.

***2001 National Preservation Conference
October 16-20, 2001, Providence, RI***

More than 2500 preservationists from across the nation will convene in Providence this October for the National Preservation Conference, the premier preservation educational gathering in the United States.

This year's theme, Preserving the Spirit of Place, was inspired by the last speech delivered by Senator John Chafee before his untimely death. At the opening of the 2000 National Preservation Conference in Washington, Senator Chafee invoked the words of D. H. Lawrence: "Different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation, different polarity with different stars: call it what you like. But the spirit of place is a great reality."

Rhode Island beautifully illustrates the importance of Preserving the Spirit of Place. From the revitalization of Providence's urban neighborhoods to the magnificent mansions of Newport, from vigorous smart growth and land conservation initiatives to Main Street communities, the state offers dozens of opportunities to see how preservation builds better communities. The conference uses its opening and closing plenary sessions, more than 50 educational sessions, and more than 30 field sessions to explore the spirit of place, with the host communities providing living laboratories of preservation challenges and successes.

More information: <http://www.nthpconference.org/>

***"Preserving the Spirit of Place"
Thursday, October 25, 2001, Norwich, VT***

A Reading of Vermont Ghost Stories by Vermont Public Radio's Joe Citro presented by the Vermont Forum on Sprawl. 7-9 p.m., Tracy Hall, Norwich, Vermont. Refreshments to Follow. For more information, contact Sarah Judd at the Vermont Forum on Sprawl. Phone: 864-6310. Email: info@vtsprawl.org

***Did Mark Twain Really Sleep Here?
November 3, Windsor House, Windsor***

Learn to write about Historic Buildings and Gardens. Paula Panich, instructor. Paula is the editor and publisher of "Dirt: A gardening Journal." She has co-authored The Desert Southwest and Desert Southwest Gardens for Bantam Books. Her work has appeared in the NY Times, Washington Post, other publications. She served as editor of "Phoenix Home and Garden Magazine for five years. She will take a journalistic approach to writing about architecture and gardens in this. Students will dissect previously written articles, learn the differences in journalistic forms of writing, and sharpen the edges of their own writing. Sponsored by the Preservation Education Institute. \$80 for members and \$100 for others includes lunch. 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Contact HistWinInc@valley.net for more information.

Orton Family Foundation Fall Workshops for Planners

The Orton Family Foundation will present three new workshops this fall for citizen planners and professionals involved in community planning. The workshops will focus on Community Design, Community Investment, and "Orton Online," a Basic Planning Course Online. Partners participating in the presentation of these workshops include the Preservation Trust of Vermont, the Vermont Forum on

Sprawl, and The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

"Community Design: Incorporating Design Concepts and Practices into Community Planning"

Fridays, November 9 and 16, South Royalton

"Community Design: Incorporating Design Concepts and Practices into Community Planning" is a two-day workshop geared to understanding the dynamic between citizens and professional planners and to clarifying design concepts. Professional planners will work with workshop participants and will utilize actual Vermont case studies, exploring tools and successful ways in which to address specific design issues. Design concepts for building plans, site planning, open space planning, roads and the process that accomplishes these elements will be incorporated into the series. Sessions, endorsed by the Preservation Trust of Vermont, will be held on Fridays, November 9 and 16 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Vermont Law School, South Royalton House. The two-part workshop costs \$150.

"Community Investment: Helping to Produce Long-term, Smart Growth Results,"

Wednesday November 7 and 14, Randolph Center

The workshop, "Community Investment: Helping to Produce Long-term, Smart Growth Results," will draw on materials developed by the Vermont Forum on Sprawl and address the linkage between everyday and long-term public investment decisions in infrastructure and thoughtful community planning. It is specifically designed for selectboards, school boards, planning commissioners, public works commissioners, town managers and administrators, and interested citizens. Vermont case studies and examples from cities around the country will be discussed. Topics will include design of a local street network, Class 4 roads, investments that revitalize downtown areas, the future of town forests, and matching sewer and water line extensions with town growth plans. This two-part workshop will be held on Wednesdays, November 7 and 14, from 5 to 9 p.m. at Vermont Technical College, Old Dorm Lounge. The cost is \$150, including dinner.

"Orton Online: Basic Planning for Citizen Planners,"

Available by January 1, 2002 at <http://www.orton.org>

The third workshop, "Orton Online: Basic Planning for Citizen Planners," is an Internet course developed with The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy of Cambridge, Massachusetts. This online course, developed with experienced Vermont planners, includes Vermont-specific supplements to general planning information. It will be an ideal tool for members of planning commissions, zoning boards, selectboards, and interested citizens to educate themselves or brush up on planning principles. This new Internet site will enable users to determine their own learning path and pace, to choose topics and lessons in any order, and repeat lessons as often as needed. "Orton Online" will be available by January 1, 2002 at www.orton.org.

For further information or to register, please contact The Orton Family Foundation at (802) 773-6336 or online at <http://www.orton.org>, or contact Martha Perkins at 802-425-5761 or perkins@together.net.

Moldings the Building Blocks of Architecture, Martin Brandwein, AIA.

Saturday and Sunday, November 10 and 11, 2001, Windsor House, Windsor
Identification, design, and construction of classical architectural elements will be the subject of this workshop.

Architects, woodworkers, furniture makers, carpenters, and plasterers will particularly benefit from this workshop. Through slide illustrated lectures and drawing exercises, students will learn about molding profiles, terminology, significance, period characteristics, and function. Basic drawing skills are helpful, but not required. Contact HistWinInc@valley.net for more information.

The Age of Homespun in Vermont
November 17, Montpelier, VT

Cloth transformed the landscape of North America. That is the position of Pulitzer Prize winning historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich in her newest book, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth*. Ms. Ulrich will be talking about her new book and the research that she conducted for it at the Vermont Historical Society on Saturday, November 17 at 2 p.m. in the Pavilion Auditorium in Montpelier. Following the talk, she will answer questions and sign books. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich is the Philips Professor of Early American History at Harvard University. She won the Pulitzer Prize in history in 1991 for *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on her Diary, 1785-1812*. For more information, contact Amy Cunningham at (802) 828-5670. Email: acunningham@vhs.state.vt.us

COMMENTARY

Historic Bridges

By Tom Slayton, aired on Vermont Public Radio on Sept 27, 2001.

Why, in this age of computers, superhighways, electronic entertainments and the Internet, would half a town turn out to watch a covered bridge pulled slowly into place by a team of oxen? Why, for that matter, even bother with covered bridges, when a new concrete and steel bridge would be quicker to put up and stronger? The answer has something to do with tradition, something to do with beauty, and something to do with pure Vermont cussedness.

In Tunbridge, there was never a question about deserting their trusty old covered bridge. That's the Vermont cussedness part. (People in polite society call it stubbornness.) When the old bridge was wrecked by ice a couple of years ago, townspeople immediately began fund-raising and planning to build an exact replica. And they wanted to put their traditional bridge in place in a traditional way. I think the reason for that has something to do with what you might call creative inefficiency.

Now efficiency is usually a good thing. It's what everybody depends on to get things done promptly and cheaply: the newest designs, the quickest methods, the most contemporary technology: bingo! You've got a new improved bridge, built on-time and on-budget. But what all too often gets lost with such an approach is the beauty and appropriate style that tradition gives an old bridge -- a rural, slow-down and pay-attention bridge instead of a streamlined modern model that brushes the past aside and moves swiftly on. And by going for efficiency alone, you also lose the time-honed sense of place that old-fashioned bridges give to old rivers and old roads winding through old hills.

There's a second kind of efficiency -- call it creative inefficiency -- that preserves both beauty and a sense of place, by preserving tradition. You put a covered bridge across the First Branch of the White River because any other bridge wouldn't look

right. And you put it in with oxen because it's a chance to hone the older, slower, deeper skills involved in working with animals, pulleys and ropes -- and because, well darn it, because it's more fun!

Tradition leads to a functional kind of beauty, one employing wood beams and human handiwork. I feel more comfortable with things done in a slow way, on a human scale than with things done speedy-quick on a scale so big I can't really understand how people actually did the work.

It's not just covered bridges I'm talking about. The old iron truss bridges we have in Vermont are interesting too, and for the same reason -- they're infrastructure on an approachable scale. I can almost understand how they were bolted together and -- and this is a big part of it, I'm sure--I have been crossing such bridges ever since I was a kid. They're a part of my past, and even though they look industrial, they have a romance about them that appeals to me and gives them their own clunky bolted-together kind of beauty.

I grieved when they decided to take down the beautiful Arch Bridge at Bellows Falls some years ago simply because some federal official somewhere decided it was structurally unsound. It took round after round of dynamite to blast the grand old bridge off its supports, so how structurally unsound could it have been?

Traditional ways in Vermont, like traditional bridges, are a link to our past, and are therefore part of who we are today. The danger in honoring tradition is that we'll create a false, sentimentalized past, a nostalgic past that never existed except in our imagination.

But if we view the past with open eyes, recognize its flaws, and yet preserve the best of it, it can help inform the present with wisdom and beauty. They knew that down in Tunbridge; that's why they're still crossing the First Branch on a covered bridge.

PUBLICATIONS & RESOURCES

Tools for Preserving Barns

The New Hampshire Division of Historical (SHPO) is pleased and very proud to announce its new Internet portal, "Tools for Preserving Barns," at <http://www.state.nh.us/nhdhr/barn.html>. To accommodate the widest possible range of users, the format is simple and direct so that connections and downloads can be done quickly. The many links provide instant connections to a wide range of resources and programs for recognition, grants, tax incentives, and technical assistance. There is also a link to the order form for the new book, *Preserving Old Barns: Preventing the Loss of a Valuable Resource*, by John Porter & Francis Gilman, published by UNH Cooperative Extension with the assistance of the NH Preservation Alliance and the Division of Historical Resources.

Vermont National Register and State Register Forms on CD

The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation is in the process of placing all the National and State Register forms for the state on compact discs (CDs). Currently there are approximately 150 volumes of National Register nominations and 450 volumes of State Register forms. All information in these volumes, including maps, indexes, and photographs, will be included in the CDs. The register information on the CDs will be fully as usable as the paper files. The CDs should be available late this year or early next year.

To be placed on a mailing list for future information on availability and purchase,

contact Sue Jamele, National Register Specialist at the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, 828-3046 or sjamele@dca.state.vt.us

Preservation Links

Did you know that the Preservation Trust of Vermont maintains a list of over one hundred preservation-related web sites? Go to <http://www.ptvermont.org> and click on links, or go directly to: <http://www.ptvermont.org/related.htm>.

Featured Web Site: The Planners Web <http://www.plannersweb.com>

The PlannersWeb offers a number of resources that can help citizens interested in local planning and land use issues. The Sprawl Resource Guide is one of the most comprehensive online guides focusing on sprawl-related topics. It includes an annotated outline of problems caused by sprawl -- and approaches to controlling sprawl. Also on the PlannersWeb are detailed summaries of all articles published in the Planning Commissioners Journal over the past ten years. More than 150 of these articles can be immediately ordered and downloaded for a small fee. Of particular interest to preservationists are the many articles published in the Planning Commissioners Journal dealing with urban design topics. A downloadable summary of these articles can be obtained by going to:

<http://www.plannersweb.com/urbandesign.pdf> . Finally, on the lighter side, when visiting the PlannersWeb, try to solve three online "slider puzzles" of drawings by the talented illustrator, Paul Hoffman.

VERMONT

Windsor House Celebrated

More than 200 people gathered in Windsor, Vermont on Sunday, September 23rd to celebrate the saving of Windsor House 30 years ago and the founding of Historic Windsor, Inc., "It is a celebration for (Historic Windsor Inc.), and it is also a celebration of small-town America," Historic Windsor President Louise Hall said. "We can only preserve the memories of the heroes and heroines who saved the Windsor House." Among the speakers were founders Georgianna Brush and Joan Churchill. Music was provided by "Old Stuff" and Ben and Jerry's donated ice cream to go with the birthday cake. The event gave all an opportunity to pause and reflect on just how different Windsor would be today if Windsor House had been demolished. The building is home to 16 tenants today.

"Art and Science of Local Preservation" Training

Over 125 historic preservation commissioners in Vermont and New Hampshire attended the "Art and Science of Local Preservation" training at Windsor on September 7th. The two states, in cooperation with the Preservation Education Institute and the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, created new curriculum and training materials to help preservation commissions administer local preservation ordinances more effectively. Evaluations of the training were extremely positive, most requesting annual training for local preservation commissions. Please contact Chris Cochran ccochran@dca.state.vt.us if you would like copies of the training materials.

East Poultney, St. John's Church

Built in 1832, this symmetrical, clapboard church is constructed in the builder-designed tradition of the Gothic style. An interesting and unique architectural feature is the arched entrance centered within the pedimented entrance pavilion.

Above the entrance, the bell tower features a tracery screen. Several years ago members of St. John's raised funds to repair the roof and belfry. The church is continuing to raise funds for foundation, framing, and interior plaster repairs and exterior wood work repairs and painting. For more information contact PTV Field Representative Ann Cousins ann@ptvermont.org.

East Poultney, United Methodist Church

Located on the triangular green in East Poultney, this outstanding 1805 Federal style church is remarkably intact and features a Palladian window and open belfry, based on an Asher Benjamin design. The church is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the East Poultney Village Historic District. With the help of a Preservation Trust Grant from the Freeman Foundation, the church exterior was repainted in 2000. The church is now working on repairing the leaking bell tower. For more information contact PTV Field Representative Ann Cousins ann@ptvermont.org.

Franklin, Franklin United Church

Ten years ago, two Franklin churches united. The churches are very picturesque, sitting side-by-side in the center of Franklin, and form the northern boundary of a State Historic District. Like Morgan United Church, Franklin uses one building in the summer and one in the winter. They also own a parsonage, now vacant. The group is trying to decide what to do with all of their buildings and are in the process of assessing their needs and developing priorities for preservation. For more information contact PTV Field Representative Ann Cousins ann@ptvermont.org.

Halifax, Halifax Community Club

Formerly a church, the Halifax Community Club, c. 1844, is the oldest building in this small community. Located in the center of the village, the building is used for public suppers, senior area lunches, receptions, honorary events and an occasional square dance. The Community Club has done a commendable job at maintaining the building, and now is working on doing some window conservation, woodworking, and plaster restoration. For more information contact PTV Field Representative Ann Cousins ann@ptvermont.org.

Peacham, Bayley-Hazen Store

The Preservation Trust is working with a group of community members who are interested in re-opening the Bayley-Hazen store. They are in the process of creating a plan of action which will include creative fund raising strategies and local involvement. For more information contact PTV Field Representative Ann Cousins ann@ptvermont.org.

Putney, Putney Historical Society

The Putney Historical Society has decided to accept a gift from Basketville of the Thwing Grist Mill. They are currently exploring assessments of the building, figuring out how much a rehabilitation job will cost, and figuring out how to get a bridge for their project. For more information contact PTV Field Representative Ann Cousins ann@ptvermont.org.

Richmond, Richmond Free Library

Built as a church in 1880s and in the mid-1900s converted to a gymnasium for the Richmond school, the building sat empty from around 1980 until being converted to the Town Library in 1992. At the time the first floor was rehabilitated and the second floor moth-balled. The Library Board is currently raising \$400,000 to finish the second floor into the children's stacks and programming space, and a community meeting room. For more information contact PTV Field Representative Ann Cousins ann@ptvermont.org.

Shaftsbury, Robert Frost House

A local group headed by Carol Thompson is attempting to purchase and develop the

former Robert Frost Stone House into a research center. For more information contact PTV Field Representative Ann Cousins ann@ptvermont.org.

Waterford, Waterford Community Church

Waterford is a quintessential Connecticut River valley town that centers around the Community Church. Tourism is major element, with the Rabbit Run Inn across from the church. Membership in the Community Church is low (around 25 active members) but the broader community has long supported this church and it is well maintained. The current pastor and other community members are working to address needed repairs to the metal ceiling, trusses, rear wall and steeple. For more information contact PTV Field Representative Ann Cousins ann@ptvermont.org.

NATIONAL

More Towns Limit Store Size

The number of communities that prohibit large retail stores continues to grow. (For a visual depiction and overview of various retail store sizes, see [How Big is Big?](#)).

In order "to protect residents and visitors from the perils of regional, large format, mega-style commercial development," the town of Nags Head, North Carolina banned stores larger than 50,000 square feet in July. Among the perils cited in the new ordinance were increased traffic congestion, reduced air quality, increased noise, and loss of community character and identity.

The Town Commission unanimously supported the ordinance, although some commissioners had favored a lower limit of 20,000 square feet. Mayor George Farah told the newspaper that big-box stores "suck the economy right out of communities." Nags Head has no big box stores.

The city of Santa Fe, New Mexico also adopted a retail size cap last month. The ordinance limits retail stores throughout the city to no more than 150,000 square feet, a threshold that will keep out Wal-Mart's 200,000 square foot "supercenters," but still allow many big box retailers, such as Office Max and Home Depot, to build. Several council members unsuccessfully pressed for a lower threshold. Santa Fe is already home to a Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Sam's Club, and Target.

In addition to the cap, the ordinance sets design standards for stores over 30,000 square feet. It also requires that developments with a single tenant larger than 75,000 square feet set aside at least 25 percent of their total retail space for stores smaller than 30,000 square feet.

San Luis Obispo, California is also moving towards a size limit on retail development. In July, the Planning Commission voted 4-2 to prohibit stores larger than 110,000 square feet. The ordinance must be approved by the City Council before becoming law. In addition to limiting retail size, the ordinance would require that proposals for stores larger than 60,000 square feet obtain a special use permit. Approval would hinge on whether the developer can demonstrate that the store 1) will serve the community, 2) needs to be that large due to the type of business, 3) doesn't conflict with the scale of surrounding uses, and 4) adheres to new design standards.

In Arizona, the Coconino County Planning & Zoning Commission recently voted to bar stores over 80,000 square feet and require a conditional use permit for those over

25,000 square feet. The ordinance now goes to the County Board of Supervisors for final approval. Flagstaff, the largest city within Coconino County, is also examining the impact of big box retail stores.

-- Stacy Mitchell is a researcher with the New Rules Project (<http://www.newrules.org>) of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance. She is the author of *The Home Town Advantage: How to Defend Your Main Street Against Chain Stores and Why It Matters* (ILSR, 2000) and edits a bimonthly email newsletter (<http://www.newrules.org/hta/index.htm>) on efforts nationwide to keep chain stores out and protect locally owned businesses.

For more information about *Historic Vermont*, to subscribe or to unsubscribe to the email version, or to submit something for publication please contact Meg Campbell, Editor. meg@ptvermont.org

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