

Executive Director's Message

It is important to begin this issue of VLCT News by recognizing local officials retiring from their positions and welcoming all the newly elected officials to the vital world of local government. First, we at VLCT want to thank each of you for giving your time, skills, and energy to the critical work undertaken by municipal government all around Vermont. Many of you have served for several years – perhaps decades – and the state and your communities are better for it. We salute you and wish you well as you pursue other interests, or simply take a little time “off.”

To our newly elected colleagues, I look forward to meeting you in person over the coming months and sharing with you the numerous ways that VLCT is committed to working with you. Our monthly publication, VLCT News, is but one of the many resources in which we share important news and information with our members. In this issue, for example, you will find a comprehensive article from our Municipal Assistance Center detailing the post-town meeting process, as well as guidance about what to do should a town's Australian ballot budget be rejected by the voters. We work hard every month to deliver useful information in a timely and easy-to-understand manner. As you look through this issue and visit us online to read past issues (www.vlct.org/newsletters), I encourage you to let me know if there are topics that you would like to see covered in upcoming issues of VLCT News, or if there is an article about what is happening in your city or town that you would like to highlight.

When VLCT hosted the organization's annual Local Government Day on February 14, attendees were given a sticker to wear with the easy to remember tagline “Municipal Government – the Heart of Vermont.” It was a little play on words, since Local Government Day was held on Valentine's Day, however it also accurately captures the truth of just how essential local government is to Vermont and places appropriate focus on municipalities being special places to live, to work, and to visit. Whether you are new to municipal government or have been active in your town for years as an elected official or employee, know that your efforts are what keep the heart of Vermont beating strongly.

One topic that is of interest to many VLCT members is economic development, and we are excited to host our annual Economic Development Forum on Wednesday, March 27, at Burke Mountain Resort. Building on the success of last year's event that explored the relationship

between economic development and “placemaking,” this year’s forum will show attendees how to implement creative and sustainable economic development initiatives that drive results. The day will begin with a keynote address from Rebecca Sanborn-Stone, a principal with Community Workshop LLC, who was a popular presenter at last year’s forum. In her keynote, Rebecca will discuss the role of civic infrastructure in building strong communities. She has also authored an article in this issue of VLCT News on that subject to give you a glimpse of what she will cover at the forum. Rebecca is an engaging and knowledgeable speaker, and I hope you will come listen to her in Burke on March 27 (www.vlct.org/econforum).

Thank you all for your past, current, and ongoing dedication to strong, effective municipal government. I wish you continued success and remind you that all of us at VLCT are here whenever you need us. There are many talented individuals with significant municipal expertise who are only a phone call, email, or car ride away from your town or city office, so never hesitate to reach out to us.

Warm regards,

Maura Carroll
Executive Director, VLCT