Local Government Day

There were clear sidewalks, mild temperatures, and partly sunny skies for Local Government Day in the Legislature on February 15, 2012, and approximately 150 local officials from every corner of the state attended the event. Following welcoming comments from retiring Montpelier Mayor Mary Hooper and President of the Vermont Municipal Clerks’ and Treasurers’ Association Sandy Pinsonault, Disaster Recovery Officer Sue Minter updated attendees on the flood recovery process; VLCT Executive Director Steve Jeffrey discussed municipal education property taxes; and Deputy Director of

Clerking Class Heroes

Last month, Town Clerk Susie Haughwout described how she and a few dedicated co-workers saved Town records as Tropical Storm Irene inundated Wilmington. She attributed much of her success to preparation: “I can’t emphasize enough how years of attending training kicked in during the emergency. I had attended numerous sessions on records preservation, disaster preparedness, incident command and records management.”

Many Vermont municipal clerks and treasurers agree, and their training typically involves a slew of initials: VMCTA, IIMC, NEMCI&A (formerly NEMCI), CMC, MMC, CVC, and CVT.

Rutland City’s Return To Work Program

This article is the third in a series on employers setting up Return To Work (RTW) programs to help maintain an experienced workforce and manage workers’ comp costs. The first article, published in January 2012, introduced the concepts of these programs. The second, in the February issue, explained some details and included to-do lists for employers. This month features an interview with Hon. Chris Louis, Mayor of Rutland City, who instituted a program that has helped turned the fortunes of Rutland City’s workers’ comp experience.

Inside This Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town Fair 2012</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask The League</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Radio Funding</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisor and Consent</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACIF Equipment Grant</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Management Services</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trivia</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classifieds</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff News</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TOWN FAIR 2012
SAVE THE DATE!

The 2012 VLCT Town Fair will be held on Thursday, October 4, at the Robert E. Miller Exposition at the Champlain Valley Fairgrounds in Essex Junction.

We are soliciting for new training ideas! Is there a topic you would like to see included at Town Fair? Do you want to offer a training to our members? If so, please email Jessica Hill, Manager of Administrative Services, at jhill@vlct.org. You may also complete our Town Fair survey at www.vlct.org/events-news-blogs/town-fair/.

VERMONT STATE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK LOAN FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH VEDA

Jointly operated by VEDA and VTrans, the Vermont State Infrastructure Bank has low-interest loan funds available for transportation-related projects that enhance economic opportunity and help create jobs. Municipalities, RDCs, and certain private sector companies may qualify for financing to construct or reconstruct roads and bridges, make safety improvements such as highway signing and pavement marking, make operational improvements such as traffic control and signal systems, and construct rail freight and intermodal facilities.

LEARN MORE AT WWW.VEDA.ORG OR BY CALLING 802-828-5627.
At TD Bank, our Government Banking Team knows how demanding it is to run local, state and county municipalities. We have an experienced and dedicated team that specializes in municipal, educational, public utilities and county finance management. We offer:

- A Variety of Banking Products and Services
- Next-day Availability on Deposits
- Qualifying Accounts Earn Interest
- TD TreasuryDirect – Our Premier Online Banking Platform

**PUT THE POWER OF TD BANK TO WORK FOR YOU.**

TD Bank is focused on helping communities make the most of taxpayer dollars. For more information call 1-800-532-6654 to speak to a Government Banker in your area or visit [www.tdbank.com](http://www.tdbank.com).

**America’s Most Convenient Bank®**
Who does the town clerk report dog licensing fees to?

All owners of dogs (including wolf-hybrids) that are six months old or older must license them on or before April 1st every year. So, too, must any person who becomes an owner of a six-month old dog after April 1st or who owns a dog that become six months old after April 1st. 20 V.S.A. §§ 3581, 3582. The licensing fee is $4.00 for each neutered/spayed dog and $8.00 for each unneutered dog. These fees are adjusted upward or downward depending on the time filing for licensure, the number of dogs owned, and whether they are used for farming or breeding. A town may also have its own license fee surcharge of up to $10.00 to fund its rabies control program. In addition to these basic fees, fee surcharges, and special license fees, the State of Vermont also imposes a mandatory $1.00 and $3.00 fee per license to fund its rabies control and spay/neutering programs, respectively.

State law directs clerks receiving such fees to “pay the same into the municipal treasury, within sixty days of the receipt thereof, retaining to their own use $2.00 for each license or permit, and shall return therewith a sworn statement of the amount of moneys thus received and paid over by them.” 20 V.S.A. § 3588.

The funds not retained by the town clerk (if paid by fees) or the town are paid over to the state. Town clerks must report and forward the state’s share of the dog licensing fees to the State Treasurer. According to statute,

“The clerks shall forward the fees collected under this subsection to the state treasurer on or before the 15th day of May, September and January of each year, together with an accounting of the licenses sold.” 20 V.S.A. § 3581(f).

These fees must be reported to the state, which can be accomplished by filling out an electronic form at the State Treasurer’s website, www.vermonttreasurer.gov/sites/treasurer/files/pdf/accounting/AnimalLicenseFeeReturn.pdf. The completed form and fees due to the state are then sent to the State Treasurer’s office.

If a town waives the licensing fees for an impounded dog upon a showing of current vaccinations and financial hardship, the state does not receive its portion of the license fee. 20 V.S.A. § 3621(b).

For additional information about these reporting requirements, please contact the State Treasurer’s office at 802-828-2301.

VLCT’s attorneys can provide your municipality with legal assistance at highly competitive rates. Please call Abby Friedman for more information at 1-800-649-7915.

**Sample Projects:**
- Water & Sewer Ordinances
- Zoning Bylaws
- Municipal Charter Amendments
- Highway Ordinances

Garrett Baxter, Staff Attorney II
VLCT Municipal Assistance Center

**Are farm trucks exempt from weight limits on town highways? What about on roads posted during mud season?**

Yes and no. These issues are addressed in two separate Titles of Vermont law. Farm
trucks that do not exceed 60,000 pounds are exempt from local overweight permitting requirements, and farm tractors and trailers are exempt regardless of weight, as outlined in sections 1400 and 1400a of Title 23. V.S.A. § 370 (d) and (e). A town also may not accept compensation as permitted under V.S.A. § 1400a (c)(1) to reimburse for the “extra wear or maintenance” on a bridge or highway due to overweight farm trucks, tractors, and trailers. Definitions for these classifications of farm vehicles are found in V.S.A. § 4 (72), (68) and (69), respectively.

A town may also post restrictions on traveling its highways in mud season, a measure taken to prevent damage to town roads when they are in their most vulnerable condition. The Municipal Assistance Center believes that farm vehicles that are exempt from town highway weight limits as outlined in Title 23 are not exempt from restrictions posted for mud season as outlined in Title 19. A person who violates a town’s mud season rules is both guilty of a traffic offense and “shall be liable to the state or town in which the damage is done for all damages to the highway to be recovered in a civil action.” V.S.A. § 1110.

For more information on mud season rules or highway weight limits, search the League Resources page, http://www.vlct.org/league-resources/search-vlct-resources/.

Stephanie Smith, AICP, Senior Associate
VLCT Municipal Assistance Center

Which board appoints to fill a vacancy on the town school district board: the selectboard or the town district school board?

Since 2007, a vacancy on the town school district board is filled by a majority vote of the remaining town school district board members until an election at the annual or special meeting is held. 16 V.S.A. § 424 (a). However, a selectboard may have a role in filling a vacancy on a union school district board, also referred to in statute as a board of directors. If the member vacancy is in a town without a school board, the clerk must notify the selectboard and, within 30 days of the receipt of the notice, “the selectboard shall appoint a person who is otherwise eligible to serve as a director from that district to fill the vacancy until an election at a special or annual district meeting is held.” 16 V.S.A. § 706l.

Stephanie Smith, AICP, Senior Associate
VLCT Municipal Assistance Center

Mobile Radio Funding Opportunity

The Vermont Homeland Security Unit is seeking applications from local highway departments for mobile radios through the Homeland Security Grant Program (HS-GP). The focus for this funding will be to provide narrowband capable mobile radios to local highway departments currently using non-narrowband capable radios to enable interoperability with other highway departments and emergency dispatch services. Applications are due by Friday, April 13, 2012; award notifications will be made prior to Friday, June 1. For more information – including an HSGP application cover sheet, budget detail worksheet, and asset list – visit the Funding Programs page on the Vermont Homeland Security website, http://hsu.vermont.gov/funding/highway.

Upcoming Municipal Assistance Center Workshops

Planning and Zoning Forum II
April 11, Capitol Plaza, Montpelier

The Planning and Zoning Forum II offers participants a chance to discuss pressing issues in municipal planning and zoning with officials from across the state. The workshop will provide a dynamic mix of legal information, practical solutions, policy discussions, as well as many opportunities to ask questions and share experiences. AICP Certification Maintenance and Continuing Legal Education credits are being sought for this workshop.

Selectboard Institute II
Saturday, April 28, Lake Morey Resort

The Selectboard Institute provides Vermont selectboards with the skills they need to manage the affairs of their town. Delivered over the course of two Saturdays, the program will focus on the fundamentals of municipal governance and current issues facing selectboards. Topics will include reviews of the Open Meeting Law and responding to public records requests, how to reduce the risk of embezzlement, managing municipal highways, emergency preparedness, local law enforcement issues and options, land use roles and responsibilities and VLCT’s insurance offerings.

Save the Dates

May 8, Middlebury Inn, Middlebury
May 10, Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee
May 31, Capitol Plaza, Montpelier

June 7, Capitol Plaza, Montpelier
June 19, Capitol Plaza, Montpelier
June 27, Capitol Plaza, Montpelier

For registration and other information, please visit www.vlct.org/events-calendar/upcomingevents, call 800-649-7915, or email info@vlct.org.
VLCT Deputy Director of Risk Management Services Dave Sichel has held a variety of positions and met a plethora of needs in his 30 years of working in Vermont local government. Last month, he added a state-level function: serving on the General Advisory Committee to the Green Mountain Care Board (GMCB). The five-member board was appointed by Governor Shumlin last September in compliance with Act 48, “An Act Relating to a Universal and Unified Health System.” According to the act, “The board shall establish a consumer, patient, business, and healthcare professional advisory group to provide input and recommendations to the board.” In December, the board announced that it was accepting nominations for the committee, and, after some consideration, Sichel submitted his application.

“I will bring to the GMC Board the benefit of my experience with Vermont health care from a variety of perspectives including system user, employer health insurance purchaser, health insurance pool administrator, and health insurance underwriter,” he wrote in his application. He added that his work for the Health Trust has included negotiating rates and designing plans with health insurance carriers as well as managing costs by offering extensive wellness programs that help build a culture of health in the workplace and encourage smart and informed use of the healthcare system.

Last month, Sichel learned that he had been appointed to the advisory committee—one of 41 selected from more than 120 applicants. The GMCB has a wide mandate, and this committee represents a broad range of experience and interests: members include medical and mental health professionals, consumer and human rights advocates, insurance experts, representatives of professional organizations, owners of small and large businesses, hospital administrators, HR professionals, and private citizens. Despite their differences, these people have the shared goal of wanting to help solve Vermont’s health care challenges.

According to Steve Jeffrey, VLCT Executive Director, Sichel’s appointment will give local government a strong voice in the development of Green Mountain Care. “Health care insurance premiums comprise the second largest line item in many municipalities’ budget, behind only salaries,” Jeffrey said. “It is essential that we actively participate in the development of this initiative that could very well alter the role of the employer in the provision of health care coverage and have a dramatic impact on the property taxpayers of Vermont.”

On-site Workshops Let the VLCT MAC Staff Travel to You!

Since 2005, VLCT Municipal Assistance Center staff have been conducting customized on-site workshops in municipal offices across the state.

Each workshop costs $800, though VLCT PACIF members are eligible for a reduced rate of $400 for many of the topics listed below (except for land use). PACIF members may also be eligible for a PACIF scholarship, which can cover the cost of the training. Please call PACIF Loss Control at 800-649-7915, or visit www.vlct.org/rms/pacif/pacif-scholarships/ for more information on the program. In addition, MAC can develop custom workshops upon request. To discuss or schedule a workshop, please contact Abigail Friedman or call 800-649-7915.

On-site Workshop Program Offerings:

- Improving the Relationship Between Independent Officers and the Selectboard
- Roles and Responsibilities of Town Officers
- Conducting Effective Selectboard Meetings
- Conducting Effective Tax Appeal Grievances and Hearings
- A Field Guide to the Open Meeting Law and Executive Session
- How to Write a Good Hearing Decision
- The Role of the Manager and the Role of the Selectboard
- An Orientation to Local Government for New Selectboard Members
- How to Respond to a Public Records Request
- Developing and Managing the Town Budget
- Financial Management, Internal Controls, Fraud Risk Assessment
- Inter-local Agreements
- Municipal Charter Adoption and Amendment
- Many specific topics for local land use boards

Pick from these topics or develop your own!
PACIF Equipment Grant Brightens Bennington’s Checkpoints

Bennington police officers were warm and easy to see on a cold evening last December because they were wearing new high-tech jackets that their department bought with the help of a 2011 PACIF Equipment Grant. These jackets protect their wearers in many ways: they are highly visible both day and night, they are warm even with a high wind chill factor, and they are particularly resistant to bloodborne pathogens and five common crash scene chemicals.

The PACIF grant reimbursed the Bennington Police Department $5,000 toward the purchase of 24 of these jackets and 24 high-visibility reflective raincoats. Day and night, for conducting enforcement activities or routing traffic around construction or an accident, these garments are certainly keeping Vermonters safer.

MAC Municipal Consultants

MAC is pleased to offer the services of our expert municipal consultants. To learn more or discuss a possible project, contact Abby Friedman at 800-649-7915, extension 1926, or afriedman@vlct.org.

MAC’s consulting team consists of:

- **Bill Hall**
  Senior Municipal Finance Consultant

- **Doug Hoyt**
  Municipal Law Enforcement Consultant

- **Brendan Keleher**
  Municipal Management and Finance Consultant

To see the photos in color, please view the April newsletter on our website at www.vlct.org/assets/News/Newsletter/2012/vlctnews_2012-04.pdf.
A CERTAIN PERCENTAGE OF OUR LOAN DECISIONS STAY IN VERMONT.

At Merchants Bank, we keep 100% of our loan decisions here in Vermont. As a municipality you can rest assured that your loan will be reviewed by people who understand what it means to live and work in Vermont. We believe it’s a better way to do business. To learn how our proven, dedicated and experienced Government Banking Team can help you, contact us today.

AND START EXPERIENCING WHAT 100% FEELS LIKE.
Minimizing Unemployment Costs

This information is provided by TALX, the VLCT Unemployment Insurance (UI) Trust’s partner for claims administration. [©2010 by TALX Corporation. All rights reserved.]

Unemployment costs are one of the few employment-related costs that employers can control, and each unemployment claim that goes uncontested or is lost can directly affect your bottom line. Here are a few strategic approaches that may help you reduce your unemployment costs.

1. **Document, document, document!**
   Effective documentation is crucial. In the majority of cases involving discharge, documentation (meeting the burden of proof) is the only means an employer may have to back up the decision to terminate. Be sure to provide your policies and policy updates to all employees, and always get their sign-off.

2. **Compose effective written warnings.**
   A warning is an aspect of progressive discipline that ensures an employee understands what is expected of them. State unemployment agencies look for warnings to determine if misconduct is involved. Elements of a good written warning include the violation, expected action to improve, the consequences if the standard is not met, action plan and comments, and the signatures of employee, witness, and issuer.

3. **Hire wisely.**
   Practices such as performing detailed reference checks and thorough talent assessment before hire will alleviate problems down the road with turnover and its related costs.

4. **Track unemployment costs and budget appropriately.**
   Track claims, monitor potential liability, and review past history to forecast budgets for unemployment taxes. Be familiar with the base period and benefit year in your state and use tax information to ensure budgets are adequate. (UI Trust members, please note that the last part of this doesn't apply to you because your contribution to the Trust already accounts for these.)

5. **Know the difference between quits and discharges.**
   In a voluntary quit, the burden of proof is on the employee to show he or she had no choice but to quit. In a discharge, the employer must prove willful and intentional misconduct. In all cases, a claimant must be able, available, and actively seeking work.

6. **Be prepared for hearings.**
   Always try to arrange for direct, first-hand testimony to testify to the facts and events around an employee separation. Have all documents readily available during the hearing.

7. **When warranted, file an appeal.**
   An appeal is your request to the state to schedule a hearing because you believe the eligibility rules have not been properly applied. Be prepared to present facts and evidence.

8. **Weigh consequences of partial employment and independent contractors.**
   Under-employed employees, such as part-timers and those who are on-call, can collect benefits. For independent contractors, be prepared to prove they are not employees.

9. **Consider a reemployment strategy.**
   Helping transitioning employees find another job rapidly after a reduction, position elimination, or other separation can help control the duration of non-contestable claims – the claims that normally result in the longest duration and highest total benefit payout.

(continued on page 13)
PACIF PDs Receive Free Training Calendars

The Public Agency Training Council (PATC), PACIF’s partner for law enforcement related initiatives, created a unique wall calendar that has been provided to the police department of every PACIF member. Rather than a photo or a drawing above each month’s grid of days and weeks, these calendars have “roll call” trainings on the activities that PATC has identified as the 12 high-risk critical tasks of law enforcement. The trainings are short enough to be presented during a daily roll call, yet they contain crucial information about how law enforcement personnel should behave when conducting high-risk activities.

Each month’s lesson has three main parts: an overview of the issue with a discussion of the relevant policy and its guiding principles; one or two scenarios that illustrate an opportunity to apply the policy; and questions and answers explaining the appropriate response for each scenario. Some include additional information, such as a list of circumstances that can satisfy a particular criterion. Examples of the topics are Use of Force, Search and Seizure, High-Speed Pursuit, and Handling Evidence.

“Police departments can use this calendar to help them teach one topic every month, highlighting the most important concepts without interrupting their regular work schedules,” says Joe Damiata, Manager, Underwriting, Safety and Health Promotion of Risk Management Services at VLCT. “This won’t replace thorough training, but it will provide a minimum introduction or refresher to staff. We hope police departments across Vermont will take advantage of this convenient cheat sheet by devoting one day every month to that month’s topic.”

2011 Wellness Leader and HLR Results

Health Trust members that participated in the 2011 Wellness Leader and their employees who took advantage of the Trust’s Healthy Lifestyle Rewards (HLR) program won big again in 2011.

Fifty-nine municipalities participated in the sixth year of the Wellness Leader program, which the Health Trust organized to provide a financial incentive to employers that foster employee health and wellness in certain meaningful and fun ways. A total of $168,676 was distributed to the municipalities that successfully completed the 2011 Leader requirements.

Each municipality’s reward was proportional to its annual health insurance premium and reflected its level of success in the Leader program. The highest single 2011 reward was $21,447 to the Town of Essex; the four Health Trust members that received the highest score in their size category are the Town of Marshfield (91%), Addison County Solid Waste Management District (86%), the Windham Regional Planning Commission (79%), and the Town of Burke (79%).

The VLCT Health Trust developed the Healthy Lifestyle Rewards (HLR) program to encourage healthy behavior among people insured through the Trust. Covered employees and spouses could earn $50 to $200 by having a health screening, taking a health assessment, and participating in pedometer and weight management programs. In 2011, 600 people participated and received checks totaling $48,625.

In addition to their financial rewards, all HLR participants were entered in a drawing for one of two mini-getaways sponsored by CIGNA. The recent winners were Diane Wrinn, whose husband Eugene is Chief of Police for the Town of Brattleboro, and Keith Stone, who works on the road crew of the Town of Halifax. Diane and her husband have already enjoyed a spa weekend in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, but Keith has yet to choose where and when to use his prize.

2012 Wellness Initiatives

For 2012, Health Trust members will find that although some of the wellness programs they know and appreciate are being adapted in light of the Trust’s new multi-carrier approach, many of their tried-and-true resources will continue, and one or two new resources have come on board. Wellness is always a good investment for promoting employee health as well as organizational wellbeing and stability.

Here is a summary of what’s up wellness-wise for 2012:

• Initiatives that continue to be available to all Health Trust members are on-site health screenings and flu shot clinics, materials for the Pedometer and Keep It Off challenges, access to EAP (which includes coaching for personal improvement efforts), and wellness initiatives workshops to help municipal employees and officials promote wellness among staff and their families.

• Instead of receiving the HOPE Health newsletter at home four times a year, everyone covered through the Trust (employees, spouses, and retirees) now has 24/7/365 access to a website with a variety of resources and five different newsletters every month.

(continued on page 13)
What were the biggest challenges you encountered in creating Rutland’s RTW program, and how was each solved?

I was extremely reliant on the League’s advice and help. The main task was to meet with department heads to share the numbers that I had learned from Joe and Wade and to present VLCT’s proposal for improvement. I learned that each department had different reasons for using workers’ comp heavily. I listened carefully, realized that most of the reasons were mistaken beliefs that simply had to be changed, and got the department heads started in figuring out ways to overcome their perceived obstacles. Without any real push-back, all the department heads strategized.

City’s high workers’ comp cost was a problem worth tackling.

PACIF’s Loss Control division had identified Rutland City as paying one of the highest workers’ comp rates of all PACIF members. Wade [Masure, Loss Control Consultant for southern Vermont] and Joe [Damati, Manager, Safety and Health Promotion] approached me to try to help change that. They had hard data showing that our workers’ comp contribution was very high specifically because of the city’s claims history, and they pointed out that a single year’s claims can increase contributions for three or more years. Joe and Wade described a few ways to reduce future claims, including a Return To Work program.

At about the same time, I was approached by Dick Trono, who lives in Rutland City and works in Rutland Regional Medical Center’s Occupational Health program. In his work, Dick had noticed that city dollars were being spent on a high number of non-working employees. As a taxpayer, he sought me out to strongly suggest that Rutland implement a Return To Work policy.

When I started looking around at our municipal departments, it became apparent that we had a culture – among management and department heads as well as employees – of no desire to get injured individuals back to work quickly. In fact, there was a misplaced thought process that the municipality would save money by letting the workers’ comp policy make payments for salaried employees. The input I received from Dick, Joe, and Wade convinced me that Rutland City’s high workers’ comp cost was a problem worth tackling.
on how to turn the workers' comp situation around. They have really helped change our workplace culture to make our RTW program succeed.

Can you give us examples of some particular departments' perceived problems and successful solutions in creating the Return To Work program?

In Police/Public Safety, the old thought was that because every absence meant paying overtime to another employee to fill in, having an injured employee work modified duty just added another salary—and also compelled someone else to “make work” for the modified duty worker. Now, injured officers generally work in the front desk area to take care of walk-in traffic so the dispatcher can work without frequent interruptions. This has the added benefit of streamlining responses to both callers and walk-ins, thereby helping with public relations.

In the Fire Department, there tends to be very little light or modified duty work to do, and many of the firefighters are used to working nights. I initially supported having injured firefighters help the chief with paperwork during normal office hours, but the union objected to the potential change in working hours. Now, recovering employees work their regular shift in the firehouse as a 24-hour dispatcher. The bonus here is that it keeps overnight fire calls from always having to be forwarded to the Police Department dispatcher.

In the Department of Public Works, the old belief was that people who were eligible for workers’ comp were better kept away from other workers, due to the two misplaced perceptions that modified-duty employees make more problems for full-duty workers, and if modified duty is too easy, more people will seek it. The solution started with making it clear to all employees that modified duty is not a way to slack off. Now, injured workers have clearly defined tasks to accomplish within their permitted work time, so although they generally aren’t working with their regular crews, they are held accountable for the work they do. For example, someone who can’t lift anything heavy can be assigned to paint eight fire hydrants in an eight-hour shift. Another option is for DPW employees to work in the department’s administrative office in City Hall, such as taking phone calls phones or monitoring sewer and water accounts. In some cases, spending time at a desk seems to speed the employee’s return to outdoor work.

How does the money work? What part of the budget includes the cost of paying workers not to be on workers’ comp?

We didn’t try to expand departmental budgets to pay for workers transitioning back to full duty. Instead, we took the advice of Fred Satink [Satink, Loss Control Specialist] and created a new line item in the budget to pay for modified duty, using an amount based on VLCT’s empirical data. This way, it is easy to track how “expensive” our Return To Work program is, and we can easily compare what we spend on it to the gradual reduction in our workers’ comp contribution. If the budgeted amount is not all spent in a given year, it is rolled into surplus and returned to taxpayers as a lowered tax rate. The first year, we did have extra money there. This year, two injuries in the Police Department have required surgery, and even though these involve long recovery periods in which modified duty is not appropriate, we might spend the entire RTW budget. But we’ll keep funding the program this way because it works well for us.

What have you learned in this process that other municipal officials should know?

A few things occur to me.

• Cross-departmental work assignments haven’t been necessary in Rutland City. We were open to the idea, but it just didn’t end up being a good fit for us—and not only because of any union opposition. But this hasn’t caused any real problems, because each department is large enough and has done a great job of identifying and fulfilling modified-duty tasks for their own employees.

• The positive results reach farther than I had hoped. For one thing, we found that most of our eligible employees wanted to get back to work for their own well-being and their own sake, so this program is generally not a hard sell. In fact, for employees who are at all troublesome before their injury, an RTW program sometimes helps tip the scales one way or the other: the employee either gets on
**Return to Work**
*(continued from previous page)*

board and has a better attitude afterward, or declines the RTW offer and walks away from the job completely. Moreover, our aldermen were so impressed with the results of the program that they thanked our municipal employees on public access TV, which created good feelings all around. You can’t ask for better than that.

*Do you have any advice for PACIF members who are approached by Loss Control staff about Workers’ Comp issues?*

Yes: Listen to them. Their goal is for us to operate as efficiently as possible. The primary payoff [of a Return To Work program] is in lowered costs for the municipality, but it is a win-win all around: it helps both the bottom line of the municipality and the wellbeing of the workforce.

Interview conducted and edited by Ione L. Minot, Marketing Specialist
VLCT Risk Management Services

**Wellness Initiatives**
*(continued from page 10)*

- Wellness incentives for employees now vary by carrier: the Healthy Lifestyle Rewards program is being continued for members with Blue Cross/Blue Shield (BCBS) plans; MVP’s Wellstyle Rewards program pays covered people up to $300 for a wide variety of healthy activities; and employers with Cigna (limited to those with 50 or more employees) can work to win a $5,000 wellness grant from Cigna and allocate some of it to employee incentives.

- The Health Trust has discontinued Wellness Leader rewards for this year; however, we strongly encourage employers to continue the core activities of the Leader. These include enacting up-to-date safety- and wellness-oriented policies: operating a safety and health committee that get non-managers from all departments involved in identifying issues and implementing solutions; making it easy for employees to get health screenings, health assessments, and flu shots; and running annual exercise and weight control programs. 2011 Leader participants might want to direct their 2011 rewards into a fund for their 2012 program. The principles of the Wellness Leader are sound, and the Trust believes its members will find them to be worthwhile.

**Minimizing Costs**
*(continued from page 9)*

10. Use available resources to stay informed. Look to expert assistance for informational content, including blogs, e-seminars, and industry highlights.

TALX’s experience, expertise, and proven results help employers navigate the uncertainty of the unemployment insurance system. For additional information regarding this article or other proactive unemployment cost management techniques, visit the TALX corporate blog at http://blog.talx.com. As always, Kelley Avery at VLCT is ready to respond to questions posed via email (kavery@vlct.org) or phone (800-649-7915, ext. 1965).

---

**Green Mountain Pipeline Services Offers:**

**Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Services**
- TV Inspection (PACP Certified)
- Manhole Inspection (MACP Certified)
- Pipeline/Structure Cleaning
- Flow Isolation
- Smoke & Dye Testing

**Repair & Rehabilitation**
- Re-Lining with Cured-in-Place Liners of Mainlines and Laterals
- Spot Repairs with Cured-in-Place Liners of Mainlines
- Mainline-Lateral Interface Relining
- Testing & Sealing with Chemical Grout of Mainlines and Laterals
- Manhole Sealing with Chemical Grout or Cementicious Products
- Manhole Lining with Cementicious and/or Epoxy Liners
- Manhole Corbel Sealing & Rebuilding
- Manhole Frame & Cover Sealing, Resetting and Replacing

**We not only want to work with you today, but 20 years from now while making every day in between a partnership in success.**

**www.GreenMountainPipe.com**
CLERKING CLASS HEROES
(continued from page 1)

The CVC (Certified Vermont Clerk) and CVT (Certified Vermont Treasurer) are certification programs that the 76-year-old Vermont Municipal Clerks’ and Treasurers’ Association (VMCTA) offers to Vermont’s clerks and treasurers. The designation is awarded after a clerk or treasurer successfully attends training sessions in elections, vital statistics, recording and records management, municipal law, and more. The certifications need to be re-accredited every five years, a requirement that recognizes the need for continuing education.

Presently, 65 Vermont clerks have earned a CVC designation from VMCTA; more than half of them are also Certified Vermont Treasurers.

By contrast, only a dozen Vermont clerks have attained the designation of CMC (Certified Municipal Clerk). The CMC, and its big sister, the MMC (Master Municipal Clerk), are offered by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC), a professional, nonprofit association that promotes continuing education through college-based institutes and provides networking services to its members around the world. IIMC grants the CMC certification to clerks who have completed three years of attendance at a recognized institute (such as NEMCI&A, the New England Municipal Clerks’ Institute and Academy) and/or fulfilled other educational requirements. The MMC certification is granted to clerks who have completed IIMC’s Master Municipal Clerk’s Academy, a program with even more rigorous educational components. Unlike VMCTA, IIMC has no requirement to re-certify its graduates, since they sign a continuing education commitment letter.

Poultney Town Clerk and Treasurer Pattie McCoy began working towards her CMC certification in 1993 and received it in 1996; in 2005, she was awarded an MMC designation. “I am grateful my predecessor pushed me to seek these designations,” she says, “because “there is no college or university that

VERMONT’S CERTIFIED MUNICIPAL CLERKS

Doreen Aldrich, Rockingham
Deborah Beckett, Williston
Nicole Daigle, Derby
Colleen Haag, Shelburne
Sandra Harris, Vernon
Elizabeth Jenks, Winhall

Alison Kaiser, Stowe
Tammy Legacy, Roxbury
Pattie McCoy,* Poultney
Sandy Pinsonault, Dorset
Linda Spence,* Manchester
Georgette Wolf-Ludwig, Fairlee

*also MMC

Don’t dig yourself into trouble...

The Perfect Excavation:

- Pre-mark the location of intended excavation using white stakes, paint or flags.
- In MA, ME, NH and RI, notify Dig Safe® at least 72 business hours in advance.
- In Vermont, notify Dig Safe® at least 48 business hours in advance.
- Notify non-member facility owners.
- Maintain the marks placed by underground facility owners.
- Use caution and dig by hand when working within 18” of a marked facility.
- If a line is damaged, do not backfill. Notify the affected utility company immediately if the facility, its protective coating, or a tracer wire is damaged.
- Call 811 if the damaged facility poses a risk to public safety.
- Know your state’s excavation requirements. Go to digsafe.com for educational material and current laws.

Call 811 before you dig.
digsafe.com

Call Dig Safe®. It’s Smart, It’s Free, and It’s the Law.
Clerking Class Heroes
(continued from previous page)

teaches you how to become a municipal clerk.”

Manchester Town Clerk Linda Spen-
ce holds the only other MMC designation in Vermont. “Because of my affiliation with IIMC,” she says, “I now network with clerks from all over the United States and the world. IIMC is a wonderful entity that gives both professional and personal growth to its members along with many educational and networking opportunities.”

“It has been an empowering experience for every clerk who has ever graduated from the program,” she adds.

Patti Lewis, Fayston Town Clerk/Treasur-
er and Selectboard Assistant, is one of Ver-
mont’s two Directors to the NEMCI&A Board. (Dorset Town Clerk Sandy Pin-
sonault is the other). She calls the training
the institute offers nothing less than life changing. In 2007, she completed a three-year educational program through NEMCI&A. “Most of us who go through the NEMCI&A program then go for our Certified Municipal Clerk designation,” she says. “In 2014, my goal is to obtain that cer-
tification as well. Then, on to the MMC des-
gination.”

“The public speaking classes taken at
NEMCI&A were the best.” says Sandy Pin-
sonault. “I am now able, without too much fear, to stand in front of a large group of people and speak.” Other course topics at the institute include communication skills, management theory, inter-governmental rel-
ations, media relations and written commu-
nication, public speaking, and parliament-
ary procedure.

Alison Kaiser, Stowe Town Clerk and
VLCT Board member, graduated in 2011
from NEMCI&A, having also earned a
Clyde McGee Scholarship to return to the
academy. McGee, a professor of political sci-
ence at Trinity College, asked many thought-
provoking questions about how government
worked, and he and Kaiser often had long
debates about the education funding system.
“We’re told that you’ll get professional de-
velopment skills (there),” she says, “but you
don’t realize how valuable the skills you de-
velop will be.”

“It is a piece of the continuing educa-
tion puzzle” Kaiser adds. “When you have all those levels of certification, it’s further proof
to your taxpayers that you’re committed to learning. You can’t attend these programs
and hope to just skate through!”

“A lot of clerks in Vermont do not be-
long to our association,” says Sandy Pin-
sonault, referring to VMCTA, “and therefore
can’t receive the CVC designation. “We get
excuses of (a lack of) education funding, ‘my
selectboard won’t let me,’ or ‘I can’t close my office to attend.’ And in some cases, these are
towns that face problems because they aren’t
up to speed on changes in law” or the clerks
“have been doing the job for so long, they
don’t feel they need training.”

Thus, some clerks favor the idea of mak-
ing clerk training obligatory. In 2006, the
Vermont Municipal Land Records Commis-
sion — whose members included South Bur-
lington City Clerk/Treasurer Donna Kin-
ville, Marshfield Town Clerk/Treasurer Bob-
bi Brimblecombe, and Pattie McCoy — is-
sued a report to the Vermont Legislature that
recommended such a mandate. The prob-
lem the commission ran into was how to re-
quire the training when most clerks are elec-
ted. Because some towns didn’t want to pay
for the training, said Kinville, “we discussed
creating a training fund by collecting certain
fees, such as a fee from PTTRs (property tax transfer returns).” Or, if clerks had to re-
search land records online, they could charge
a fee for the service and then earmark a por-
tion of that fee to a training fund, thereby
eliminating any expense to the towns.

The commission’s follow-up report to the
legislature a year later noted other difficul-
ties with mandatory training. “Many municip-
alisities do not finance education for the clerks
and the clerk is made to pay for any training
out of his/her own pocket and pay for a person
to sit in their office to cover his/her hours or close
the office and not get paid the time that they
are training. Do we create an accreditation pro-
gram that does not charge for training (revenue
needed) or do you create a statute that mandates
every municipality pay for education of the clerk? Is this program just for clerks or all sup-
port staff in the clerk’s office?”

Talk to any of these Vermont’s town clerks
and treasurers and you’ll soon be convinced
of their dedication to continuing their pro-
fessional and personal growth, to raising
the standards of the municipal clerk profes-
sion and the level of administrative expertise
needed in the increasingly complex world of
municipal government, and to their lifetime
commitment to continuing their education.

David Gunn, Co-editor
VLCT News
Risk Management Services Dave Sichel gave his perspective on the current health insurance legislation. Local officials proceeded to the State House, where they met with Transportation, Ways & Means, and Government Operations committees, listened to legislative action on the floor of both the House and Senate, and, later in the day, had the option of touring the historic building with the State House Curator.

Some local officials testified about a range of issues that are under discussion in the State House, including education funding and state collection of the education property tax, lessons learned from Tropical Storm Irene and the spring floods, transportation funding in 2012 and 2013, handling public records and vital records requests, requirements for open meeting, and health care.

Over lunch at the Capitol Plaza, Lieutenant Governor Phil Scott thanked local officials for the help they provided and the hope they maintained in the wake of Tropical Storm Irene’s devastation last summer. He emphasized that recovery is a long road to negotiate, and lots of Vermonters are still struggling to get back to a normal way of life. He also thanked the governor for his response to the weather-related disasters and for his commitment to helping Vermonters rebuild.

VLCT Board member and Stowe Town Clerk Alison Kaiser wowed Local Government Day attendees by displaying a new street sign that meets the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards ordaining the size of lower case letters. The sign will be located next to Stowe’s historic covered bridge, after which the road is named.

We want to thank all of the local officials who made the trip to Montpelier to meet with their legislators in formal committees, over lunch, and in the hallways of the State House, and also thank the legislators for likewise taking the time to discuss matters with local officials.

If you attended Local Government Day, did you find the event worthwhile? Conflicting priorities conspired to lessen attendance from previous years. If you were not able to join us, please let us know why by emailing Administrative Services Manager Jessica Hill at jhill@vlct.org. We also welcome any suggestions you may have for future events.

Jessica Hill
Manager, Administrative Services, and
Karen Horn
Director, Public Policy and Advocacy

VLCT Senior Municipal Finance Consultant Bill Hall and Middlebury Town Manager Bill Finger discuss still other bills currently before the legislature (above left).

The always dynamic State House Curator David Schutz leads a tour of the capitol (left).

Burlington City Manager Sandy Miller, Montpelier City Manager Bill Fraser, and Burlington Deputy City Manager Bob Rusten take a break between legislative hearings (above right).

TRIVIA
Add a little Italian pastry to the mix and suddenly Trivia is crawling with correct answerers. Louise Luring, Jackie Higgins, Carol Hammond, Cheryl Barker, Roy Rogers, Roberta Dana, R.J. Burke, Shirley Twitchell, Laurie Emery, Judith Butson, and Bill Basso of Saxtons River, Williamstown, Vernon, Weston, Woodstock, Groton, East Haven, Londonderry, the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, the Northeastern Vermont Development Association, and Mount Tabor, respectively, knew that America gave birth to her first canal at Bellows Falls in 1802. (The canal’s nine locks gave rise to the village’s bagel and cream cheese industry, which still thrives today.)

The pastry in question, the cannoli, has nothing to do with this month’s query (except that I wish I had one now):

Vermont elected the nation’s first female lieutenant governor. Who was it and when was she elected? Here’s a hint: She was also the first woman to try (and win) a murder case in Vermont.

As always, email your answer to dgunn@vlct.org. About the time you get caught in your first Mud Season driving adventure of 2012, the exceptionally acceptable May issue will appear with the answers, no fooling.
Please visit the VLCT website www.vlct.org/marketplace/classifiedads/ to view more classified ads. You may also submit your ad via an email link on this page of the site.

**VLCT NEWS ADVERTISING POLICY**

The VLCT News welcomes classified advertisements from municipal entities, public agencies, businesses and individuals. This service is free for VLCT members (regular, contributing and associate); the non-member rate is $41 per ad.

Classified ads are generally limited to 150 words and run for one issue. These ads are also placed on the VLCT website for up to one month.

The VLCT News is published eleven times per year (the August and September issues are combined) and reaches readers during the first week of the month.

The deadline for submitting advertisements is the first Friday of the month prior to the issue date. Space is sometimes available for late additions; please feel free to check with the editor for availability.

For more information on placing classified ads in the VLCT News, contact classifieds@vlct.org. For details on display advertising, email vlctnews@vlct.org. Information on ad requirements may also be downloaded at www.vlct.org/events-news-blogs/newsletter-archive/advertising-information/.

HELP WANTED

**Finance Director.** The Town of Milton seeks a qualified person to fill the position of Finance Director. The Finance Director is primarily responsible for the professional administration of the Town’s financial operations. Other duties include: ensuring the financial strength and viability of the Town and assisting in its strategic development and planning by formulating sound financial policies; performing complex financial and accounting work for the Town, administering its operating budget, and overseeing its computerized accounting system; assisting in developing all budgets, overseeing spending, and maintaining the Town’s Journal; administering the business aspects of the Town, including grants and contracts; and assisting and making recommendations to the Town Manager on numerous issues that affect the business of the Town. This is an appointed full-time, “hands on” exempt position that serves as the department head and staff supervisor in the Finance Department. Pay range, $52,000 to $62,000 with benefits, based on qualifications and experience. An employment application is available at the Town Manager’s office or on the Town website, www.milton.govoffice2.com. A full job description is available at the Town Manager’s office, 43 Bombardier Road in Milton. To apply, complete a Town of Milton application and submit their resume to the Town Manager’s office. Equal Opportunity Employer. (3-06)

**Research and Information Assistant.** Are you interested in government, public service, or law? Do you want to learn more about Vermont’s cities and towns? VLCT seeks a part-time (22½ hrs/week) Research and Information Assistant for its Municipal Assistance Center (MAC). This entry-level, professional position provides administrative and research support to MAC’s legal, consulting, and education team. Further duties include coordinating and overseeing publication of key member surveys, assisting with personnel searches, editing web content, maintaining resource files, proofreading, and handling billing details. We seek a well-organized and diplomatic team player with excellent communication skills, strong attention to detail, and a stellar

(continued on page 19)
Peggy Gates (no relation to either Bill or “the world’s most trusted name in belts, hoses, and hydraulics”) is VLCT’s new Workers’ Compensation Claims Representative, and has worked in the insurance industry for 19 years. A seventh generation Vermonter, she collects trolls (Ed. note: In Scandinavian folklore, trolls are associated with particular landmarks formed when a troll is exposed to sunlight; according to Old Norse legend, trolls dwell in isolated mountains and rocks and collect royalties from sales of Hemingway’s memoir, “For Whom the Bell Trolls,”) and sings with the Barre-Tones, a barbershop-style women’s chorus. Peggy lives with her family (and trolls) in Waterbury.

Jim Carrien (and please, no more references to his former name of Carrien-Luggage) is the new Loss Control Trainee/Administrative Assistant for Risk Management Services. He is also VLCT’s third Jim, sometimes confounding Microsoft Outlook. After graduating from Stirling College in Craftsbury, Jim3 worked for the public school system, developing and implementing after-school programs for students of all ages. He also has a ten-year history of fire service and was recently promoted to Captain of the East Montpelier Volunteer Fire Department. An outdoors kind o’ guy, Jim3 enjoys hiking, fishing, hunting, gardening, and clashing with the occasional troll. Okay, now are we fully staffed?

David Gunn  
Co-editor, VLCT News
Classifieds
(continued from page 17)

Planning and Zoning Administrator. The City of St. Albans is seeking a Planning and Zoning Administrator to administer and enforce the City’s Land Development Regulations and assist with the City’s planning program and grant administration. A full job description is available at www.stalbansvt.com under Employment Opportunities. The hiring range is expected to be between $40,000 and $50,000. To apply, please send a resume and cover letter to p.strait@stalbansvt.com. Resume review begins Monday, April 2, 2012. EOE. (3-8)

Village Manager. The Village of Northfield, Vermont (pop. 2,101), seeks a highly responsible and collaborative village manager. Home to Norwich University, the oldest private military college in the United States, Northfield is located in the heart of Vermont’s Green Mountains, close to the state capital, Montpelier, and three hours from either Boston or Montreal. Northfield offers easy access to both idyllic rural and culturally diverse, cosmopolitan settings. The village was incorporated in 1855 and is the community’s commercial, industrial, and residential center. The manager reports to the board of trustees and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the village and municipal utilities for both Northfield Town and Village, which comprises, water, sewer, and electric. The village owns about $20 million in assets and combined expenditures for village services are about $6 million. The manager supervises 12 employees, administers an operating budget of several million dollars, and oversees all personnel, financial, public works, and community-relations matters. A detailed job description is available at www.northfield-vt.gov under “Current Notices.” This is a part-time position that may increase to full-time. Salary commensurate with experience and includes an excellent competitive benefits package. A Bachelor’s degree is required; Master’s in public administration or a related field is preferred. Previous experience in municipal government, managing electric, water, and sewer departments and enterprise funds and working with Vermont’s Public Service Board is preferred. Additional experience in government financial management is a plus. To apply, please send a cover letter, resume, and three references to Northfield Village Manager Search, c/o VLCT, 89 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602-2948, or email your application to municipal.recruitment@vlct.org with Northfield Village in the subject line. Resume review begins April 16, 2012. E.O.E. (3-09)

Request for Proposals

Auditor’s Services. The Town of Morris-town, Vermont, is accepting proposals for an audit of its financial statements for the fiscal year periods ending June 30, 2012, 2013, and 2014. Proposals should be submitted to the Selectboard, Town of Morrisstown, PO Box 748, Morrisville, VT 05661, by March 30, 2012. Please direct all questions regarding this RFP to Finance Director Carol Bradley (cbradley@morristownvt.org) or Tina Sweet, Assistant Finance Director, at 802-888-6374. The scope of services, qualifications and staffing, compensation, and general requirements are posted online at www.vlct.org/marketplace/classifiedads/auditor-s-services/. (2-16)

For Sale

1989 Vac-Con cleaning/flushing unit.
Ford chassis, 3-stage fan, 5-yard debris body, 2,000-gallon water. Chassis has 41,526 miles/4,539 hours; Vac-Con unit has 4,691 hours. Good condition overall; city unit. Asking $20,000. Call 802-655-6410 for more information. (2-22)
For more information about the following workshops or events, please call Jessica Hill, Manager, VLCT Administrative Services, at 800-649-7915, or email jhill@vlct.org. You may also visit www.vlct.org/events-news-blogs/event-calendar/ and select a workshop for more information or to register online. Please check back frequently for program updates. Final agendas and online registration are available six weeks prior to the event date. For non-VLCT events listed below, please contact the individuals directly. (The online registration option is available for VLCT workshops and events only.)

Selectboard Institute I
Saturday, March 31, Capitol Plaza, Montpelier
(Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center)

The Selectboard Institute provides Vermont selectboards with the skills they need to manage the affairs of their town. Delivered over the course of two Saturdays, the program will focus on the fundamentals of municipal governance and current issues facing selectboards. Topics will include reviews of the Open Meeting Law and responding to public records requests, how to reduce embezzlement risk, managing municipal highways, emergency preparedness, local law enforcement issues and options, land use roles and responsibilities and VLCT’s insurance offerings.

Selectboard Institute II
Saturday, April 28, Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee
(Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center)

See description under Selectboard Institute I.

Planning and Zoning Forum II
April 11, Capitol Plaza, Montpelier
(Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center)

This workshop includes discussion of best practices for land use officials, such as rules of procedure, decision making, application of conditional use review and variance criteria by the appropriate municipal panel, zoning enforcement, and a foray into common land use case law.

Conducting Effective Tax Appeals
May 8, Middlebury Inn, Middlebury
May 10, Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee
(Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center)

With the property tax under increasing pressure – and the subject of more and more attention – it is essential that the appeals process be properly administered. Come learn what your town can do to conduct effective property tax grievances and appeals.

Human Resources Management Workshop
May 31, Capitol Plaza, Montpelier
(Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center)

Both municipal managers and their staff will find this workshop indispensable as it covers the fundamentals of personnel administration in a municipal setting. It will focus on the major state and federal employment laws and cases affecting municipalities as employers, including emerging employment issues.

Visit our website www.vlct.org/events-news-blogs/event-calendar/ for the most up to date list of events.