

Vermont Council on Culture and Innovation

...Advancing Vermont's Creative Economy

Comments and Observations from the Fall Forums

In addition to specific recommendations (listed in a separate document), the forums and surveys yielded hundreds of comments and ideas for VCCI to ponder.

The first section includes comments that fit under the categories in the recommendations document. The second section consists of remarks that didn't match the current categories. These are listed under the specific questions we asked at the forums.

In all categories, subcategories are added where they suggested themselves. Where no subheading jumped out, blank lines separate groups of ideas.

* indicate relative interest in that comment.

Section 1

MARKETING

Tourism

- Cultural tourism brings longer stays and higher daily expenditures than average visitor.
- Berkshires overdeveloped, but culture is cash cow for them.
- Culture and business have a symbiotic relationship. Restaurants, many businesses, serve same customers.
- St. Albans downtown plan singled out arts as development tool (as do many others).
- Many legislators don't understand the value of tourism.
- Grants to Addison County and the NEK for cultural heritage guides. Need follow-up help to market Cultural Heritage Tourism.
- Cultural heritage is a huge opportunity for the NEK. We don't have an urban destination.
- See great opportunities to build small businesses related to forest products, crafts, arts, and cultural heritage of the NEK
- We can't print enough money to compete. Keep Vt honest, friendly, real, authentic.
- Success depends on cross border economy. Cross cultural should be seen as opportunity.
- Need event clearinghouse. Short season crams a ton of events and makes too much competition. I've been here seven years and didn't know about a lot of what's happening a few towns away.

- Bellows Falls piggybacked with the Green Mtn Flyer's distribution by putting an insert in GMF's newsletter. Worked very well.
- Need tourist dollars to operate successful gallery. Marketing help crucial.

Other Marketing

- Art greases the wheels and feeds business.
- State benefits from crafts—sell out of state and bring money back to hire more producers locally.
- The nature of arts institutions changes. Frog Hollow was essential to artisans in 1972, now there are many more marketing outlets.
- Utilitarian items sell fast, not much interest in buying fine arts. Tied to lack of exposure in schools. Paintings of nude people at art shows become embarrassment for families.
- Ducks Unlimited raise \$25,000 with limited edition prints. Culture is here, people willing to spend for what they like.
- Maple production is a big part of local history and important business.
- I hope the Vt Brand will recognize regional products. We plan to use Vt wool, add value in a NH facility, and sell around New England.

COMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORKING

Message

- What do you mean by culture? **
- Flynn and other arts activities fight sprawl by contributing to downtown's sense of place.
- Need strong business climate to support cultural community.
- Goodrich Corporation example of business needing to be creative and innovative in very tough economic climate of aerospace. Can't keep doing same old things. Need new way of thinking.
- Support can never match need.
- We can't print enough money to compete. Keep Vt honest, friendly, real, authentic.
- Most Vt nonprofit cultural organizations are financially tenuous and resources are inadequate to meet needs and highly competitive. Result is staff reductions, deferred maintenance, inability to replace obsolete technology, program constraints, etc.
- Cultural nonprofits are enormously resourceful, but most are on the financial edge of survival. Without increased state investment, jobs will disappear.
- Lack of state level investment in cultural sector. Fairbanks Museum works hard with earned income, business support, philanthropy and federal funds, but little state support available.
- Need infrastructure money to care for Opera House. Truck traffic damages building, lack of parking is safety issue.
- State should invest in old buildings, libraries, schools.

- The creative community is already here. Don't need major investment to bring it here, but needs help to be sustainable.
- Taxpayers are asked to underwrite extraction industries, then pay for clean-up. Art is low impact, cost effective way to create jobs and bring in money.
- Cultural jobs stay in community, don't go overseas.
- For culture to play big role in future, state also needs to support downtowns, keep natural resources and working landscape.
- Vt is first in nonprofits per capita, but only fifth of the six NE states in per capita income. Can't rely on private side to support efforts.
- Need to know past to know future. History matters.
- Be sure people know about dump rakes and other farm tools that are part of history. Kids don't know about a time when there was something to do besides 4 wheel through the back 40.
- The combined Abenaki/French/English history is what makes much of Vt what it is today.
- Keep our landscape open.
- Banning GMO's is an important cultural issue as a way to protect emerging organic farms.

Information campaign

- Lack of awareness by policy makers of the importance of the CE. They need better understanding.
- Enlightened leaders are needed to create enlightened policies. **
- Trouble finding local support for launching new cultural projects. Young people gone and leaders not interested.
- Small town leadership sometimes discourage innovation.
- Currently, no incentives for government to think or problem solve creatively. Mediocrity seeks mediocrity. Uninspired decisions take so much less physical and mental energy and it is safer to do nothing. Let Vermont's citizenry take pride and encourage the nation's population to accept that Vermont stands for cultural excellence.

Networking

- Need event clearinghouse. Short season crams a ton of events and makes too much competition. I've been here seven years and didn't know about a lot of what's happening a few towns away.
- Scheduling to avoid conflicts is difficult.
- Don't just ask how much money can we get out of this business. What is the true nature of the partnership and what does each one offer?

EDUCATION

- Arts reinforce learning in all subjects. **
 - Creativity is key.
 - Drama programs have been very successful in school statewide. Outlet for students not comfortable in classroom setting.
 - Have kids come home happy and excited after learning science through an art project.
 - Athletics often get much more money than theater and arts, yet if students are allowed creative outlets that are incredibly engaged. Exhibit healthy behaviors, responsibility, cooperation, working under stress. Arts are amazing teaching ground.
 - Athletics often gets much more money than arts. Also schedule conflicts are hard to avoid.
 - One element of “creative work” is decision making and choices. Historical inquiry and making art share a lot of this thinking.
 - Look at Waldorf schools for art based model.
 - I try to bring art into my classroom, but am not trained in it.
 - Businesses want employees who can think. Hewlett Packard uses theater games to get system people together to come up with new ideas.
 - Careers come from innovation. A Vt high school student who was a techie ended up a big mogul in the movie industry. An extremely talented photographer in high school went on to design groundbreaking software for IBM.
 - It's high time to begin challenging our outdated notions of what we're supposed to be teaching our children that will enable them to become economically self sufficient. N. Country Career Center would be interested in pursuing a program focused on creative industry. Discussion about including an Indian Museum, exhibit area for local guilds, and performance stage.
 - Job Corps in Vermont is not serving Vermonters, nor is Vergennes well served by the Job Corps. The property is a valuable resource ideally suited to a “high school for the arts.”
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- Current testing is product oriented, not process oriented.**
 - Federal and state mandates squeeze arts out of curriculum.
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- Arts education in danger due to budget restraints. **
 - Three strongest conductors at last year's all-state were all losing their jobs due to budget cuts.
 - Culture within a community is usually reflected in the school system.
 - Creative people are mobile. True for children as well. Private or home schooling will be trend if arts continue to get short shrift in public schools.
 - Hard to bring workers and their families here if schools don't provide what they want.
 - Cultural groups often supplement what's lacking in school.
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- Accompanied son on school trip from Derby to Shelburne Museum. Kids were well-prepared, got a lot out of it.
 - Bus costs for field trips are phenomenally high. * Private cars involve insurance and risk regarding supervision.

- Must start young and make it lifelong.
- Environment of town supplements schools. Book stores, galleries, etc. downtown expose youth to new ideas.

Are schools providing an adequate basis in local history and culture?

- No, but some great efforts (e.g. library youth program) could use a financial boost. *
- Compared to every school I knew as a kid, yes. Many kids can seize opportunities that others don't recognize.

Examples:

- Elwan Music Center at St. Mike's. Hosts Vt Mozart winter series and youth orchestra year-round. International artists are resource.
- Enosburg Opera House—did bring visiting artists into area schools but now no school money for artist fees. Instead, the OH bought new softball uniforms for the students.
- Lost Nation—intern partnership with Montpelier HS mutually beneficial
- Vt Stage Company—hosts Vt Young Playwright's project and festival. Been running 10 years and involves 20,000 students.
- Frog Hollow—over 9,000 students take Frog Hollow classes as supplement to public school, however may need to shut education program because there is no way to pay for it.
- Maritime Museum—works with Hannaford Career Center to teach boat building and make a fleet of rowing gigs for community and students to use and compete with.
- Middlebury College Arts Center—not just about M students. Draws from 30 miles north and south.
- Brandon Artists Guild—We involved all our schools in pigs and connected them back to the community. We also returned some of our profits to the schools for art supplies, etc.
- QEK—resident theater company at Haskell OH. Run apprenticeship program for 9-13 yr olds and 13-19 yr olds.
- North Country Union HS (Newport) includes creativity in mission statement, part of fabric of our schools. Have fine arts exchange program in NYC and Boston. Need to celebrate our own cultural diversity.
- Lowell Historical Society recreates “kitchen tunks” and offers mentoring between generations so kids learn history and celebrate it.
- Helen Day Art Center in Stowe—want to bring NEK students to HD and will provide bus fee. They want to find teachers willing to work with them to prepare kids for visit but it's hard to find people to connect with.
- Catamount Arts—offers school programs.
- Barre—
 - > Federal grant paid for Onion River Arts Council to provide after school arts programs for nine years. Money ran out and despite studies and popularity the city did not offer support to continue it.
 - > Third grade classes take annual walking tour of downtown to learn about OH, Library, etc.

- > Granite Museum got CDBG to develop stone arts school to train low to moderate income students for industry.
- > Studio Place Arts—grants provide programs for young people
 - Manchester Music Festival—try to pick up services schools don't provide. Have music academy and youth ensemble to broaden experience.
 - Woodstock—Pentangle arts education program successful but need to emphasize that we're reaching this age group. Children bring parents to shows like "Math through Magic."
 - Opera North—Outreach to 18 schools and districts, each one is different. Sometimes well received, others cut us off and rush kids back to class.
 - Oldcastle—a number of our HS theater students have worked with us and gone on to college and careers in the field. We expose them to the reality of theater experience and occupation.
 - Bennington Museum—8,000 kids a year. Recently shifted money away from programs to pay for busses so kids could keep coming.
 - Burr and Burton has a lot of arts activities.
 - Leland and Gray Asian studies program--Freeman Foundation helped fund. Students perform in China every two years.

FUNDING

Grants

- Public money pays big dividends.
- Small grants make big difference.
- Grants to arts very helpful.
- As a performer, grants help me develop work and tour in Vt.
- Cultural Facilities grants—small, but beneficial to transform old buildings into galleries, historical societies, etc.
- Humanities Council helps get speakers into small towns.
- The CETA program in the late 70s funded artists to work in Vt communities and led to projects like the Azarian woodcut alphabet for every school room, development support for Project GRACE and lots of other arts organizations.
- Historic preservation grants that allow old buildings to be used have been important.
- More money for grants. Island Pond received \$250,000 direct from the legislature, more than Historic Preservation received total.
- Hard for some schools to apply for funds to bring in artists. No designated applicant.

Examples of public investment making a difference:

- Enosburg Opera House—Impossible without government money. Results, now have \$75,000 budget being put back into local economy and cultural events that weren't available before.
- Highgate visitor center—local artists display their work for over 100,000 visitors.
- St. Albans—Maple festival gets funds.

- Burlington—Pine St. was industrial wasteland. City CEDO office has worked closely with developers to improve the area. Arts moved in. South End Art Hop drew 10,000 people and sold lots of art. Don't need to go to Santa Fe to buy art, it's in our community.
- Middlebury—multiple benefits from public funds.
- Vergennes—OH brought new eyeballs to town. Not just a place to drive through. Spun off retail and restaurants. AOT grant helped repair exterior damage caused by improper road construction, vibration, and pollution.
- Frog Hollow—designated state craft center in 1972 allowing national promotion, but no real financial support during formative stages.
- Danforth Pewterers—low interest loans from VEDA and SBA helped growth.
- Danville—AOT money for reconstruction of Rte. 2 included funding to engage artists with community to determine what they wanted. Bypass was resisted for 25 years. Artists engaged stakeholders to develop vision for how road could be improved and retain town's rural character.
- Island Pond—Train station, renovated by Community National Bank, created core for downtown revival. New foot bridge, library, welcome center, sidewalks all followed with funding from variety of sources.
- Derby Line—
 - > Take Charge program helped create summer concerts and more visitors. Universalist Church used Efficiency Vt to help find lighting and subsidize purchase.
 - > Haskell OH—was shut down but received a few hundred thousand from state that was critical to reopening.
- Irasburg—Grants to Warebrook Music Festival helped renovate Town Hall and create a multiple use town center. Added lighting, theater curtains, etc. Vt Arts Council provided our first grant and gave us great leverage.
- Newport—
 - > \$17 million state office building turned us back to our waterfront. Includes walking timeline starting with pre-history and including Abenaki community. Bank funded murals.
 - > New police barracks included artists on design team. Police said they wanted art that would reduce the stress most people are under when they are in that setting. Tried to bring outside beauty inside the space.
- Hardwick—Town House restoration project starting to change attitudes for the better.
- St. J Athenaeum—state grants and \$50,000 tax credit critical to major renovation and accessibility improvements.
- Barton—Trying to renovate the municipal building. Very depressed community, this center would be extremely important. More people here are in the business of going out of business than are in business.
- Brownington—Native American community received money to start drum group that now visits area schools. Abenakis exist throughout Vt, not just around Swanton.
- Barre—
 - > Historical Society not showing financial return yet, but there is great value in maintaining a sense of community by reusing a building so many residents

- attended for school. Could have been parking lot or left to decay. OH used cultural facilities grants for structural improvements.
- > SPA--helped put in air conditioning. Lots of others.
- > Stone artists received \$30,000 from Humanities Council after working on grant for four years. Put first major show into the Wood Art Gallery.
- > Labor Hall preservation.
- Montpelier—
- > Grants supported multi-media project highlighting the lives of immigrants in central Vt, built awareness and better interaction with residents. Partnership with Flynn, Onion River Arts, etc.
- > Arts coalition used Historic Preservation, National Endowment for the Arts, Vt Arts Council and city bond to fix up City Hall auditorium. Was cracked paint, sagging balcony, 2 broken basketball hoops. Went from being empty 95% of the time to in use 95% of the time.
- Bellows Falls—new Waypoint Center from Byways money. Incorporates town history, builds on preservation efforts. 100 year investment.

ENTREPRENEUR AND BUSINESS SUPPORTS FOR THE CE

Training and assistance

- Vt's agencies show a lack of interest in innovations that would promote the preservation of cultural heritage identities and an area's way of life. Yet these are often an area's most valuable human resource and potential attraction.
- Arts not a high priority for state government, despite their importance.
- State discourages innovation. Hard to start new enterprises.
- Local city administration in Burlington is generally unresponsive to our requests for direct support of creative young musicians. Local government restricts opportunities for venues to cultivate and present live performances; there is a strong social dynamic between the needs of the resident community, law enforcement, and entertainment. (from Big Heavy World Foundation)
- Instead of throwing federal and state dollars (which will surely happen) after this inevitable problem, why don't we instead utilize that energy to bolster our creative and cultural economies. Imagine what it might look like for our regional RDC's (Regional Economic Development Corporations) to be supporting those same incubation spaces for the development of creative and cultural commerce. Moreover, imagine what it might look like to sponsor community level workshops geared to help people re-learn how to think and sustain creatively.
- Often don't know where to start looking for resources available for cultural sector.
- Artists don't do paperwork well.
- Community revolving loan funds are limited to manufacturing. If you're not making widgets it's hard to get attention from state economic development.
- Microbiz Development Program—works with artisans. Their big obstacle is knowing how to market, finding targets for their products. Need more resources for getting out there.

- SBA is interested in job creation through growing self-employment. Many creative people want to stay here, but corporations can't provide the work. Layoffs are making accidental business owners who need skill training.
- Attracting entrepreneurs with a creative product or service. Beyond just bringing artists in to our community.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Standout communities have the ability to take isolated public funds and use it to leverage private support, volunteers, and local leaders.
- State can acknowledge on many levels great efforts and accomplishments.
- Arts play important role in civic engagement. The film "Here Today" about heroin in Vt has a value in helping engage people in new ways.
- Student art shows, also workshops and lectures help bring community members into library to mix.
- Cultural anchors create opportunities—partnerships, ongoing knowledge base, networking, umbrella for ideas.
- If one buys into the theory which suggests that when jobs fade, so do communities, then we need to take heed. The snowballing exodus of manufacturing jobs in Vermont is a creating a void of economic opportunity. It will continue to snowball. Reality is, it's become fiscally savvy for manufacturers to send the labor elsewhere. They're increasingly less concerned with community stability, and more concerned with profitability. You can't blame them given that competition is increasingly challenging, and borrowing guidelines have become increasingly stringent.
- Lack of affordable housing prevents start-ups.

Section 2

The remarks above may have been in response to any of our questions. These remaining comments are listed as responses to specific forum questions.

WHERE DO BUSINESS AND CULTURE INTERSECT?

NOTE: Some of these responses are in other categories.

- Major intersection between arts and biz is financial. *
- Symbiotic relationship. Restaurants, many businesses, serve same customers.
- The arts community rents space and the landlords pay taxes.
- Intersects every moment. All who produce culture are entrepreneurs. We sell stuff, attract audiences, pay for halls, supplies, etc.
- Painting, architectural landscaping, sign builders, etc.
- B+ card company—Burlington

- Farmer's markets bring them together. Performances, local vendors, great for selling my art and wooden utensils to locals and visitors.
- Local food products sold in stores throughout New England.
- Maple production is a big part of local history and important business.
- Every artist runs their own small business, either at home or through a storefront.
- Business and culture aren't separate. *
- When Flynn is lit, downtown is packed, but the business community doesn't contribute what they should.
- Art in window during Women's Work month caught eyes and brought people into the shops. Art greases the wheels and feeds business.
- Interacts through historic preservation. In buildings we see and use all the time.
- Along the Canadian border, settlement, development, economics, and tourism are dependent on cultural exchange.
- Downtown setting is stage set for all that goes on. Every day, the street is performance arts within that set.
- Downtown **
- Sponsorship of cultural events.***
- Let's develop woodworking and manufacturing using Vt woods. We have trained workers and tools. Great use of our natural resources and craftsmanship.

Concerns

- In Vt over 2,000 nonprofit organizations. Community can't support them all. Many are in danger of failing.
- Nonprofits are their own worst enemy. Some feel entitled. Need to think smart and be part of biz community.
- Local artists, like farmers, in precarious position.
- CPA firm that audits nonprofits sees how lack of grants are hurting the past few years.
- Young musicians struggling to gain recognition within the industry and their reliance on promoters and presenters to help them get exposure.
- One concern is that cultural identity can create a tourist town, not for locals. (Berkshires)

Examples:

NORTHEAST KINGDOM

- Orleans County Fair—very cultural with horse pulling, etc. Culture of rural community and history with businesses right alongside.
- St. Johnsbury—major interaction between Fairbanks Museum, St. J Athanaeum, St. J Academy, Lyndon Institute, Lyndon State College. All have corporate sponsors and interact with their employees and guests who benefit from and are able to enjoy the cultural offerings. Local businesses also use the large meeting spaces for training. These cultural venues are businesses.
- Kingdom Historical Magazine—distribute 5,000 copies to 38 states.
- Derby Line—

- > “Take Charge” events committee is working to organize events with assistance of Community National Bank and other area business.
- > Haskell Opera House—gives Canadians another reason to come across the border. They don’t always go to Sherbrooke. Eat, shop, and spend money here.
- > Orleans Historical Society—we get support directly from business community and we bring business to community through grants etc to buy supplies, hire builders.
- Brownington--Clan of the Hawk pow-wow—craft fair, people from as far as CA and abroad.

NORTH CHAMPLAIN VALLEY

- Franklin County--Summer sounds concert series held throughout the area. Hospital supports it because it makes St. Albans a more attractive place to live and easier for them to attract employees. Town taxes also helps fund it.
- Enosburg Falls Opera House—rehab of 107 year old building.
- Burlington—South End, old buildings, factories, fixed up and arts businesses moved in.
- When there is a concert in the UVM Recital Hall or the Flynn or St. Mike’s summer stock, we’re (Windjammer Restaurant) busy. It’s because of what’s going on.

N. CENTRAL

- Montpelier—
 - > Over 150 local businesses support First Night.
 - > First Night employs 200 performers. Onion River Arts runs 150 events a year. Businesses underwrite everything. Municipal funding too. Small restaurant owner reports she was busiest during cultural events and it meant her survival.
 - > Lost Nation Theatre, City provides space in City Hall, 75 small business supporters, dividends to city, arts groups led bond vote to improve City Hall Auditorium, now used constantly. Spurred similar efforts in other communities.
- Barre—
 - > Art part of Barre’s economy since turn of century. Italian, Spanish, others came to work in granite industry. Some pursue funerary and fine arts at the same time. Now show work at Studio Place Arts, began with contemporary shows in the sheds. Granite industry also creates satellite industries and businesses which are major arts supporters.
 - > Studio Place Arts saved a lovely 3 story Victorian that could have become a parking lot. Instead it’s active studios, education center, galleries. Presents shows of local artists as well as major shows with national calls. Bring in a lot of people to learn, love, and buy art. High dollar space creates high dollar sales. Provide a lot of employment opportunities, pay teachers fair wages.
 - > Opera House brings 24,000 people through the doors who eat, shop, spend a night. People call and say we’re thinking of coming next weekend, what have you got? What else should we do while there? OH employs two people, pays property taxes, buys from local vendors. Took years for city to recognize value of having it functioning.

- > Granite Museum—8 years ago business sector began asking what is the future of Barre? Decided they need a place that celebrates our culture and history.

SOUTH CHAMPLAIN VALLEY

- Brandon—“Really Pig Show” put together summer 2003 by Brandon Artists Guild. BAG started as cooperative gallery in 1999, grew to offering classes and public education. Artists asked to dress up vacant building next to bank and it grew into gallery with local Chamber money and organizational support. Pig Show started with 40 pigs on parade in May and 3,000 local people came out. Gave much greater visibility to artists guild. Auctioned on e-bay and grossed over \$100,000 for guild and community. Event turned Brandon around. Half of downtown was revitalized this summer. New restored storefronts, whole atmosphere changed.
- Vergennes—
 - > Opera House not just arts center, but community center. Basin Block purchased by 20 local investors willing to take the plunge. They believe in community, not just making us a tourist destination. Look for blend of needs. When we think creatively, we accomplish worlds, when we sat on our asses for 20 years nothing happened. OH has great impact on the way we think of ourselves.
 - > Lake Champlain Maritime Museum—started by divers interested in shipwreck history. Spun off historic underwater parks. Discovery of gunboat in the Lake brought national attention and visitors. Launching the Lake’s first canal schooner in 100 years to be cultural ambassador for Vt.
 - > Basin Harbor Club—Invite about 20 selected artists to stay in June as guests each year since 1986. The resulting work is purchased by guests and many patrons have developed long term relationships with artists. Wonderful way to showcase Vt artists to guests. Also have lecture series of Vt authors in summer. Talk up idea at international conferences.
- Bristol—Art on Main staying afloat and breaking even thanks to local resident support, not just tourists.

SOUTHWEST

- Northshire History Center—provides grounds for Farmers Market. Underscores importance of farm tradition. Also have children’s history garden on site.
- Pawlet—
 - > Sitting at Mac’s General Store and seeing bitching dairy farmers while tourists come in and buy cheese. Food and agriculture traditions cross with commerce.
 - > Art on the Green, my own storefront, the local restaurant and general store.
- Manchester—
 - > Northshire Books hosts author series, sells event tickets. Brings business in.
 - > Destination Manchester was started to bring more tourists in. It includes profit and nonprofit partners and has led to Boston Globe, NY Times stories. Get business to locate here by making it attractive. A lot of people relocate to Manchester area for cultural life, and business community recognized cultural places could be magnet for area. DM began looking at how arts are marketed. Manchester Arts Partnership program begun.

- Weston Playhouse—drew over 25,000 admissions in 2002. Have 100 employees. Transition to becoming a destination, not just a vacation add on.
- N. Bennington—Vt Arts Exchange is mixed use incubator for tenants of various sizes including crafts, sculptors, artists. Bennington College students or faculty rent short-term space to finish projects.
- Oldcastle Theater—55% of our audience comes from the capital district (Albany, NY) and eat locally before or after the show.
- Abacus Automation, Cone Optical, and Global Z are three Bennington Cty businesses that take tremendous creativity.

SOUTHEAST

- Brattleboro—Resurgence of gallery/studio space. Making effort with merchants to draw people into town. Creates circle that supports events and brings customers.
- Springfield—VAULT project is restoring 1907 bank as community center. Adds spirit to downtown.
- Woodstock—Pentangle Arts Council and chamber intersect creatively all the time and provide key to marketing. Pentangle is also a creative business.
- Bellows Falls—
 - > Una’s restaurant brings in musicians for after dinner. Fills a desperate need for people to be connected. Serves as ambassador. Visitors come in looking for place to resettle. At least four families have moved in this way.
 - > Booksellers—once a month poetry reading and ongoing gallery space, author visits, children’s events, writing workshops.
 - > Farmers Market bring people to visit and live. Offers furniture, food from many countries, paintings, crafts, etc.
 - > Annie moved from San Francisco recently after finding RAMP’s web site. Has started local pr firm.
 - > 31 new apartments bring people downtown. Exner Block is cornerstone, things keep rolling from there. Other communities look at BF for inspiration.
 - > The Chrona Company moved from incubator space in Brattleboro 2 ½ years ago with 52 jobs, now 68 and growing. Employees at first reluctant but liked what they saw. None of us were trained in what we now do. Several other high tech companies here too.
 - > Concert weekends fill bed and breakfasts.
 - > Third Friday art walk, summer entertainment series, Old Home Days arts show.

ARE THERE EXISTING POLICIES THAT ENCOURAGE OR DISCOURAGE INNOVATIVE IDEAS OR YOUR CREATIVE EFFORTS?

NOTE: Most of these answers are in other categories.

- Vt’s refusal to officially recognize the Abenaki. Its attitude toward the “marginal, rural, and underemployed” in the NEK, and its indifference to the Franco-American contributions to our economy and society.
- Affordable housing is key to keeping artisans in Vermont.

- There are a lot of creative workers here, but lack of telecommunications is a big obstacle.
- Keep roads and infrastructure safe. Sad to see rails to trails instead of corridors to city markets.
- Insurance policies kill creativity, innovation and trust.

WHAT RESULTS HAVE YOU SEEN FROM ANY INVESTMENTS THE STATE HAS MADE IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF YOUR COMMUNITY?

NOTE: Most of these comments are under FUNDING.

Seen no return

- Spent \$15 million to upgrade corridor from Albany to Manchester, but still no train.
- Haven't seen much result. *

WHAT ROLE DO YOU SEE FOR CULTURE AND INNOVATIVE BUSINESS IN YOUR COMMUNITY'S FUTURE?

NOTE: Many of these comments are in other categories.

- Culture and innovative business very important to economic future. **** (and spiritual well-being.)
- Need value added component here to prevent job loss. Need to tap creative potential.
- Has to be shift in competition between agriculture, environment, and culture.
- We hear too much about “kids need to leave our area to make it.” Instill pride in the area.
- A former publisher, now potter, said she moved here because it's independent, quiet, beautiful, with fewer distractions. Wants to see it stay that way.

Efforts under way

- Trying to establish Tranquil Gardens in N. Troy. Botanical gardens, cultural education, etc.
- Group trying to save Eagle Square at the old Stanley plant in Shaftsbury (?).
- Trying to get performance space built in Williamsville school to get out of gym. Also to bring in local and touring groups.
- Brattelboro—Hopes Latchis Theater complex will be anchor for arts downtown. Also education space.
- Springfield downtown can't focus on traditional manufacturing any more.
- Shelburne-A Center for the Arts including theatre and craft, supported by the community.
- I'd like to see a community center that houses a heritage society, exhibit space, town history collections, conference/meeting room, artist and craft studios, small auditorium, senior's center, and a gift shop. A cultural mini-mall or one-stop-shop cultural and community center.

- Like to see an indoor facility like Heritage NH. A cultural center for the NEK with artisan gallery nearby.

GENERAL

- I'm not so interested in the arts and humanities side of "creativity". My question would be: what would attract or keep the business of a creative engineer, scientist, manufacturer, software writer, etc. in Vermont? 1) not being taxed and regulated to death 2) not being forced to pay exorbitant health care and energy prices 3) association with similar creative and productive people (not artists and musicians)