

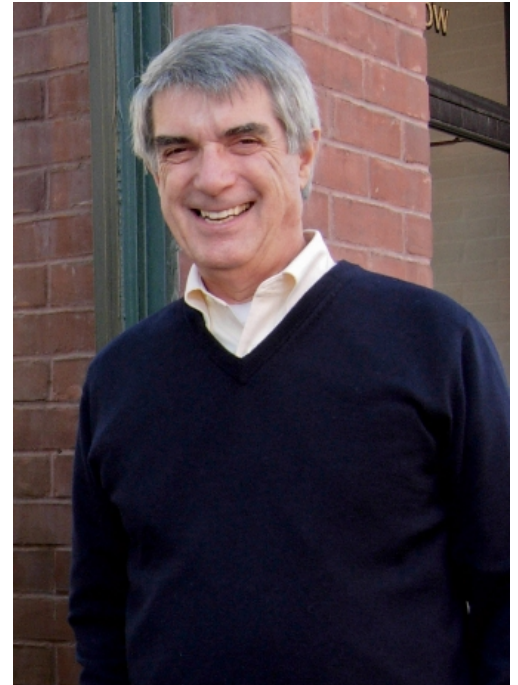
# NEWSLETTER

## COMMISSION MOURNS LOSS OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mark Blucher, who joined the Rutland Regional Planning Commission in 1972 and served as Executive Director since 1983, passed away at his home, surrounded by his family, on Tuesday, January 17, 2012.

In 2006, *Business People Vermont* profiled Mark's many decades of work in the Rutland Region: "A 34-year firsthand perspective on one region is a tremendous tool to bring to the planning process. That's exactly what Mark Blucher, Executive Director of the Rutland Regional Planning Commission since 1983, is able to contribute."

Mark served on numerous boards and committees of professional planning organizations over the years, and was a key player on the planning scene in Vermont and beyond. One of his favorite quotes was "quietly, quietly making noise" and that is what he did. His dedication to effective and cooperative planning statewide and his untiring efforts to improve the education and training opportunities for local land use officials and planners was formally recognized in 2005 when he was named Professional Planner of the Year by the Northern New England chapter of the American Planning Association and the Vermont Planners Association. He is remembered by people around the Region and the State for his efforts to build a better community.



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### Local Emergency Planning Committee Wins National Award

The Region's Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) won a 2011 Innovation Award for its series of tabletop exercises in partnership with schools, businesses, and first responders. Awarded by the National Association of Development Organizations, the honor recognizes programs and policies that strengthen local governments, communities and economies through regional cooperation and program delivery.

The LEPC, created to address hazardous material reporting, has evolved into a forum of disaster preparedness and emergency planning with a broad scope and consistent outreach. Since 2005, the LEPC has conducted more than 30 "mini" tabletop exercises throughout the Region. These workshops fill a critical need to introduce community leaders before an emergency happens and to develop a plan of action. Typical participants include town government officials, road foremen, firefighters and police officers, school leaders, and industrial facility managers—individuals who would never otherwise meet to contemplate potential disasters.

The tabletops take the form of hour-long discussions focused on a specific, plausible, and dangerous scenario.

(Continued on page 2) **Award**

Find us on the web at  
[www.rutlandrpc.org](http://www.rutlandrpc.org)

**RRPC -  
COMMISSIONERS**

- Benson - Tom Bartholomew
- Brandon - David Atherton
- Castleton - Frank Giannini
- Chittenden - Carolyn Schwalbe
- Clarendon - Carol Geery
- Danby - Annette Smith
- Fair Haven - Bonnie Rosati
- Hubbardton - Robert Gibbs
- Ira - Tim Martin
- Killington - David Rosenblum
- Mendon - Larry Courcelle
- Middletown Springs - John Arsenault
- Mount Holly - Annette Lynch  
*(At-Large)*
- Mount Tabor -  
Pawlet - Eric Mach
- Pittsford - Trish Lewis
- Poultney - Tracy Carris
- Proctor - Susan Feenick
- Rutland City - Charles Romeo
- Rutland Town - Fred Nicholson  
*(Chair)*
- Shrewsbury - Mark Goodwin  
*(Vice-Chair)*

- Sudbury -
- Tinmouth - Robert Lloyd
- Wallingford - John West
- Wells - Rebecca Dittmeier
- West Haven - Christopher Hoyt  
*(Secretary/Treasurer)*
- West Rutland - Denis Lincoln

**Area-Wide Citizen Interest Members:**

- Natural Resources -
- Housing/Low Inc -
- Regional Libraries - Paula Baker

**Ex-Officio Members:**

- REDC - Jamie Stewart
- RRCC - Tom Donahue
- RRTC - Minga Dana
- WIB - Larry Sudlow

**RRPC STAFF**

- Acting Director - Susan Schreiberman
- Finance Administrator - Judy Holcomb
- Senior GIS Technician - Mary Trombley
- GIS Manager - Steve Schild
- Senior Planner - Edward Bove
- Planner - Philip Picotte

**Four Towns Apply for Hazard Mitigation Funds**

After a natural disaster, FEMA provides more than just funds to help repair homes and rebuild roads. Mitigation funds—totaling 15% of disaster assistance – are granted to the state to make infrastructure stronger for the next storm and to move residents out of harms way. Effective mitigation projects mean less damage in the future.

In the Rutland Region, four towns submitted hazard mitigation grant applications in February 2012. Brandon, Clarendon, and Danby applied to purchase residences that were destroyed by Tropical Storm Irene. In Clarendon and Danby, both homes were located outside mapped flood hazard zones but sat above streams that eroded their banks. If successful in the competitive selection process, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program will allow each town to purchase the property and remove all buildings and debris. Once cleaned-up, each parcel will be free from development forever. This ensures that rivers can rise and even change course—without imperiling people or structures. It also eliminates the need for future FEMA individual assistance to residents.

The Town of Pawlet applied for a different kind of mitigation grant. Pawlet will enlarge culverts that flood every spring and during heavy rainstorms. Betts Bridge Road is an important bypass for emergency vehicles when other roads are flooded, and hydrology studies completed by VTrans revealed larger culverts are needed to handle high-flow events and prevent road damage. By completing these mitigation projects, Pawlet will dramatically reduce the cost of future storms.

**Hazardous Materials Study Assesses New Threat from Ethanol**

From propane to sulfuric acid, a wide range of hazardous chemicals travel the Region’s roads and railways every day. A new threat was added to the Region’s rail system in 2010: ethanol. Increasingly used as a gasoline additive, ethanol is derived from corn and is similar to moonshine. (But don’t drink it!) En route from the Midwest to Rhode Island, Vermont Rail System carries 40-car trains up to twice a week through the Region. Because it easily mixes with water, fighting an ethanol fire requires special foam and techniques.

On behalf of the Local Emergency Planning Committee, the Rutland Regional Planning Commission completed a study assessing the new threat from ethanol, and identified ways to prepare for an ethanol incident. Of 18 fire departments surveyed, 5 have the alcohol-resistant foam needed to put out a fire. The State

*(Continued on page 5)* **Materials**



**Award** *(Continued from page 1)*

The atmosphere is kept informal yet serious; there are no wrong answers, and every organization is encouraged to offer its perspective. Exercise wrap-up is short and highlights action items. Exercises have included workplace violence, school shootings, propane truck collisions, train derailments, water contamination, dam failures, to name a few.

Tabletop scenarios serve as valuable exercises for volunteer responders and emphasize transferable skills and community partnerships. The NADO award recognizes the LEPC, and the RRPC, for creating a cost-effective and reproducible emergency preparedness tool.

**Suggestions? Comments?**

Contact the RRPC  
Newsletter Editor at  
[mtrombley@rutlandrpc.org](mailto:mtrombley@rutlandrpc.org)

## Transportation Enhancement Grants

Three towns in the Rutland Region were successful in securing FY12 funding.

- East Poultney - \$230,000 for pedestrian improvements.
- Rutland City - \$126,000 for Segment 2 of Rutland Creek Path.
- Chittenden - \$300,000 for a shared use path along Chittenden Road.

Transportation Enhancements (TE) are awarded for 12 categories offering communities the opportunity to expand transportation choices. Activities such as safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities, scenic routes, beautification, historic restoration and other investments increase opportunities for economic activity, recreation, accessibility, and safety for everyone beyond traditional highway programs.



Construction on Rutland Creek Path is getting closer. Advertisement for bids will be in March as VTrans has signed off on the final construction bid documents. Clearing and grubbing work by Stafford Technical School's forestry students behind Northwest Primary School and the City Water Department has given the project a head start.

Segment 2 – from State Street to West Street – received funding this fall/winter so construction bid documents will be developed this summer to keep the path growing.

## Rutland Region Transportation Council's (RRTC) Annual Project Prioritization

As part of the annual transportation project prioritization process, the RRTC and municipalities examined and ranked the Region's list of VTrans transportation projects, based on regional project criteria. Eighty percent (80%) of the decision making process at VTrans is based on engineering criteria and other technical factors, and twenty (20%) is based on input from the Region. For more information contact Susan at extension 204 or [susan@rutlandrpc.org](mailto:susan@rutlandrpc.org).

## Developments Along the Stone Valley Byway

### Expansion

The Town of Hubbardton is interested in joining the Stone Valley Byway. After amending the Corridor Management Plan to include Hubbardton's information, The VT Byways Council will hold a public hearing and following that, a recommendation to the Transportation Board is made and they hold a public hearing to determine the designation.

### Interpretive panels

Design work is complete and construction will occur this spring/summer on 7 interpretive panels, one per town. These (see prototype to the right) will be fabricated from donated slabs of marble or slate, depending on the town, and will contain specific information about each town.

### Podcasts

Audio/Video podcasts are under development. Travelers will be able to download these from the website [www.stonevalleybyway.com](http://www.stonevalleybyway.com) or that of other partners like the Chambers and learn about a variety of subjects ranging from general stores, or Historic Villages along the Byway to flora and fauna, and enrich their experience.



The great thing about being a planner is that no matter where you travel, there is almost always evidence of land development patterns to study and compare. For most travelers, land settlement patterns and architecture are often what is remembered from a trip. The built environment invokes sensations which can influence one's opinion of a place. Planners are lucky as not only do we get to enjoy the excitement of experiencing a new place, but also we can study what in the urban form is causing these emotions. For us, the world is one big textbook and we become better planners simply by traveling, and using what we like or dislike about places to influence our work back home.

The most influential thing I have learned about land use planning in Lima, Peru is that there's hardly any! This is an example of the type of city that is created when the government leaves most land development to the private sector. Lima (pop. 10 million) is divided into approximately 25 districts, each of which is its own municipality and has its own set of rules and regulations. Of the few I have become familiar with, I have not come across any type of land use document or plan. Most of the publicly funded projects are in the transportation arena and focus on public transit and vehicular flow, as the streets are over-crowded with cars, bicycles and pedestrians. For example, the Municipality of Lima has just completed an elevated electric train system with four routes. More are planned and there has even been talk of a subway, however, residents are skeptical as it took nearly 20 years to complete the small electric train system.

The private development side is where all the action is. It appears to be a "development at all costs" free-for-all, especially with the lack of land use regulations and the fact that Peru is booming with an annual GDP growth of approximately 7.5% projected for 2012, based on Peru's mineral, agricultural and ocean resources. There are construction sites and cranes everywhere. The block I live on has four active construction sites and development usually consists of demolition of residential structures dating from the 1930-50s and replacement with a 7-15 story condo/apartment building. This gives an idea of the escalating land values due to the economic boom. Our area (Miraflores) has changed drastically from when I was young. What once was a single-family residential area is now packed with condo buildings and more modern shopping centers. However, the corner bodegas and fruit vendors are still present, so the feeling of the area has not changed much.

The economic boom of the last 10-15 years has also fueled a population migration from the mountain and jungle regions of Peru to the city. This has caused significant development on the outskirts of town in what we call shantytowns or 'pueblos juvenes' (young towns). Without land use regulations, these areas are formed through an invasion process, where residents squat on the land and over time gain title. These towns initially



*Squatters occupy the land and acquire title over time...*



*Residents leave room for future services such as roads & sewerage...*



*Structures become more durable and the community increases density...*

(Continued on page 5) **PERU**

Post-Tropical Storm Irene

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps

Local officials contemplating post-Irene cleanup can hire Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) crews for debris removal, site restoration, fish and wildlife habitat reclamation, and other labor-intensive work. An added bonus is summer employment and job training for local youth. For information about hiring a VYCC crew to work on projects in your town, contact Keegan Tierney at 802-434-3969 ext. 141.

Mitigation Measures for Roads

All towns affected by Irene are reminded that they should always request hazard mitigation (also known as 406 mitigation) in project worksheets for permanent repairs (Category C) being funded by FEMA Public Assistance money. It is easy to skip this step in the hurry to rebuild, but this is an important opportunity to rebuild in a more robust way to avoid future damages. If an applicant’s FEMA Project Specialist states that no Section 406 is eligible, they should request assistance from the FEMA Public Assistance Coordinator (PAC) and a FEMA hazard mitigation specialist.

For questions, contact Philip at extension 205 or ppicotte@rutlandrpc.org.

Peru (Continued from page 4)

have no public services; over years, as the city expands its service network of roads and sewers, the areas are consumed and become functioning parts of the city. While there is no formal land use planning in these areas, the residents organize their houses (which start as shacks and then are upgraded with acquired materials such as brick and glass) in a manner that follows the contour of the land and leaves room for the expected future services such as roads, sewers and remarkably, even parks and green spaces. It is truly an organic growth model which accommodates high densities, and incredibly, the settlement patterns resemble those of many Medieval European villages. Ed Bove will return to the RRPC in June.



Services continue to arrive as the city’s infrastructure service areas consume the community...



Structures are upgraded over time with materials such as glass, wood and paint...

Materials (Continued from page 2)

Hazardous Materials Response Team is working with Vermont Rail System to purchase additional foam. In addition, the Local Emergency Planning Committee and Rutland Regional Planning Commission have organized specialized training on fighting ethanol fires and on railroad incident response.

For a copy of the report, contact Philip at extension 205 or ppicotte@rutlandrpc.org.

# NEWSLETTER

## 2012 RRPC MEETING SCHEDULE

All meetings held at RRPC offices

### MARCH

20th RRPC Committees & Commission meetings,  
5:00 & 7:00

22nd Transportation Council, 6:30 pm

### APRIL

17th RRPC Committees & Commission meetings,  
5:00 or 5:30 & 7:00

26th Transportation Council, 6:30 pm

### MAY

15th RRPC Committees & Commission meetings,  
5:00 or 5:30 & 7:00

24th Transportation Council, 6:30 pm

### JUNE

19th RRPC Committees & Commission meetings,  
5:00 or 5:30 & 7:00

28th Transportation Council, 6:30 pm

## ODDS & ENDS

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### MARCH

14th **Regional Energy Update Meeting for Local Energy Committees.** NeighborWorks (110 Marble St, West Rutland)

29th **Vermont Organics Recycling Summit (VORS)** Vermont Technical College, Randolph, VT  
For details, contact [www.compostingvermont.org](http://www.compostingvermont.org).

#### APRIL

4th **Safe Routes to School Walk/Bike Smart Training**  
For details, contact Susan at [susan@rutlandrpc.org](mailto:susan@rutlandrpc.org).

11th **VLCT Planning & Zoning Forum** Capitol Plaza Hotel, Montpelier, VT. For details, contact [www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org).

18th **Town Officers' Education Conference.** Holiday Inn, Rutland, VT.

#### MAY

May 14 -18 **Way to Go! Commuter Challenge.**  
Sign up at [www.WayToGoVT.org](http://www.WayToGoVT.org)

Like us online at [Facebook.com/RutlandRPC](https://www.facebook.com/RutlandRPC)



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