



The e-Vermont Community Broadband Project has a core goal of increasing rural communities' ability to use broadband resources in achieving a variety of local objectives. The project combines services of core partners with projects designed by each community to either enhance partner services or introduce something completely new. The intent is for all projects to be completed by spring of 2012.

The following overview provides a list of the principal projects planned for Bridgewater in 2011-2012. The project list was developed through Bridgewater's application to e-Vermont, input of a local steering committee, input from the public during a forum held in Bridgewater in April, 2011, and conversations between e-Vermont partners and local representatives. These projects will yield significant advancements in:

- Civic engagement and town government
- Community level communications and participation in Bridgewater events
- Digital literacy for all residents
- Business development
- Education at the elementary school level
- Public access to high speed Internet

This document establishes major objectives for the e-Vermont service year and assigns project leaders for implementation of each component. This overview, communications & marketing materials, and other materials relevant to the work of implementing e-Vermont projects will be available (and updated) at [www.e4vt.org](http://www.e4vt.org). At this site, readers can also find stories about e-Vermont communities, partners, and recommended online resources. All e-Vermont communities are also encouraged to follow progress on Facebook (e-Vermont) and Twitter (@evermont).

The overall e-Vermont contact for Bridgewater projects is Community Director Phil Petty

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It is never too late to get involved and we welcome any additional volunteers.

### **Core e-Vermont Projects**

- I. Build Community Connections through Front Porch Forum
- II. Provide Business Training and Consultation Services
- III. Design, Launch and Maintain Town Website
- IV. Take Advantage of 21st Century Educational Opportunities
- V. Enhance Library Services in Bridgewater
- VI. Promote Digital Literacy for All Bridgewater Residents

### **Additional Bridgewater Priorities**

- VII. Increase Internet Access by Creating a Bridgewater Wi-Fi Hotspot(s)
- VIII. Digitize Bridgewater Historical Documents and Showcase Them on the Web
- IX. Develop an Online Bridgewater Businesses and Services Directory
- X. Support the Collaboration between the Bridgewater Village School and Shackleton Thomas via “The Naked Table Project”

## **I. BUILD COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS THROUGH FRONT PORCH FORUM**

As of May 18, 2011 the Bridgewater Front Porch Forum (FPF) has 50 subscribers out of 430 households. Several unique opportunities to promote FPF in Bridgewater come to mind. VTel is a telephone service provider in town. It might be possible to include a FPF subscription invitation inside VTel bill envelopes sent to Bridgewater customers. This outreach could also help expand VTel’s Internet service base since their Wireless Open World (WOW) stimulus project will significantly expand broadband coverage around town. Bridgewater is also one of several Vermont towns celebrating their 250<sup>th</sup> Town Charter Anniversary in 2011. Bridgewater could use this event as another way to promote their neighbor to neighbor forum. The e-Vermont Community Director will work with the steering committee to build FPF applications specific to the community.

To get in on the action, simply visit the “Join” section of <http://frontporchforum.com>

## II. PROVIDE BUSINESS TRAINING AND CONSULTATION SERVICES

Through e-Vermont, the VT Small Business Development Center (VtSBDC) offers several core services to local businesses. Two workshops are presented in each community, addressing basic-to-intermediate Internet skills. Bridgewater will select the preferred workshops from the menu provided in the Partners section at [www.e4vt.org](http://www.e4vt.org). These workshops are complemented with one-on-one business advising, which builds from the strong general business assistance programs already in place at VtSBDC. The e-Vermont Business Advisor can assist businesses with website development and redesign, establishment of e-commerce online storefronts, social media marketing strategies, professional networking and other needs based on each individual business' situation. The e-Vermont Business Advisor's work is supported by the larger VtSBDC organization. Businesses with needs that extend beyond use of online tools will be referred into the larger program, where appropriate.

Other, collective projects – such as the proposed business and service directory (see later) – will be designed jointly with the e-Vermont Community Director and VtSBDC advisor.

To learn more, visit <http://vtrural.org/programs/e-vermont/partners/VtSBDC>

## III. UPGRADE AND MAINTAIN MUNICIPAL WEBSITE

The Snelling Center for Government is one of eight partners in the e-Vermont Community Broadband Project, specifically working with town officials to develop an “open government experience” at the town level for all their citizens. This includes training officials about best practices for town websites, providing access to resources and funding, plus consultation on options that will enhance the town's online information offerings. The Snelling Center will provide one-on-one assistance with town government representatives to revise and update existing sites, including adding new functionalities, or develop entirely new sites. This conceptual work is neutral in regards to platforms used to build the site; examples of several commonly used options are provided. A WordPress template is available from the Snelling Center for Government if a town prefers this option for website design.

Transitioning from paper systems to use of online forms, e-commerce and compliance with State of Vermont rules for public information access is interpreted by many town administrations as overburdening an already overtasked staff. Among the goals to be accomplished for this project will be assisting town staff and officials to integrate delivery of online services into daily work schedules and job expectations efficiently.

Bridgewater does not currently maintain a municipal website. The Snelling Center will work with representatives of town government and the public to develop a comprehensive list of changes they would like to see made to the town's use of online resources.

More information about all aspects of municipal website development can be found online at: [evermont.wordpress.com](http://evermont.wordpress.com)

#### IV. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF 21ST CENTURY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Bridgewater Village School (BVS) strives to prepare their students with the skills necessary to be successful in the Internet-connected economy. As a participant in the e-Vermont Community Broadband Project, BVS will be working with Digital Wish (DW) to provide select 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> classrooms with the kind of technology-rich education that will help them excel in the global economy.

e-Vermont is bringing Digital Wish's one-computer-per-child program to BVS this fall. Their services include the donation of up to 50 netbooks to ensure that every child in the participating classes have access to their own computer, technical support for these computers, intensive teacher training, curriculum development, and innovative community connections using the most up-to-date technology. This classroom modernization project is expected to have long lasting impacts for all classes in the school, and will extend into the community with peer mentorship programs and community projects.

Digital Wish has a goal of building models and best practices for teachers to integrate 1:1 computing initiatives into the classroom. To learn about Digital Wish and their work, visit their School Modernization Initiative site at: <http://schoolmodernizationinitiative.wordpress.com/>. This site is being continuously updated throughout the e-Vermont project. A welcome packet of detailed information is available under the "Resources" tab.

#### V. ENHANCE LIBRARY SERVICES IN BRIDGEWATER

Public libraries are charged with meeting the informational needs of their communities and serving as a front line in addressing the "digital divide," or the disparity in

technological access that various segments of the population experience. Bridgewater's Public Library was disbanded in April of 2001. Bridgewater residents are currently served by the Norman Williams Library in Woodstock, based on a per capita subscription charge; or residents may use the Sherburne Town Library for free.

The Bridgewater Village School library, located in the recently renovated municipal offices building, adjacent to the school, has incorporated most of the public library's collection into its own holdings.

There may be opportunities to increase utilization of the BVS library to serve the community in different ways. Presently, the library is only open to BVS students and their teachers during school hours. Suggestions for expanded utilization of the BVS library space include creation of a "public computer hub" (access, training, tech mentors) and increasing the hours the BVS Library is open. Liability issues are a known concern of Bridgewater town officials.

Lacking a public library may preclude Bridgewater's participation in the Vermont Department of Libraries eVT mini-grant program.

To learn more, visit <http://vtrural.org/programs/e-vermont/partners/vtdol>

## VI. PROMOTE DIGITAL LITERACY FOR ALL BRIDGEWATER RESIDENTS

The Vermont State Colleges (VSC) provide basic skills training for using the Internet. Bridgewater can host three workshops led by VSC staff; the menu of workshops is available from the Partners page at [e4vt.org](http://e4vt.org). Bridgewater steering committee members will help with logistics and outreach to be sure that residents who aren't currently online know about this opportunity. As part of the overall e-Vermont project, VSC is also presenting webinars and teaching materials that cover critical topic areas in Internet use, and the Snelling Center for Government will present regional workshops to build online skills. The steering committee will help get word out about these opportunities in addition to the workshops.

Identifying the best location for basic skills Internet training in Bridgewater is a challenge. BVS is appropriately wired, but using small netbook screens for older adults may be ill-advised. Partnering with Digital Wish in a couple of "special workshops" for kids participating in the DW program, their parents and the community have been proposed. One workshop would combine Internet Safety with a chance for children to

demonstrate what they have learned in the DW program to their parents, guardians or guests. Another idea is to target Bridgewater residents, especially seniors, who have little computing and Internet experience. These individuals could come to BVS to connect with students for a Basic Internet Skills workshop. Presentation-style workshops in collaboration with the Bridgewater Historical Society, possibly on how to bring local history online or about online genealogy research, have also been mentioned.

VSC staff is also available to train community members who work with computer beginners to ensure that there is ongoing assistance for learning these new skills after workshops have ended. As part of the overall e-Vermont project, VSC is presenting webinars and teaching materials that cover critical topic areas in Internet use. The steering committee will help get word out about these opportunities.

Learn more at <http://vtrural.org/programs/e-vermont/partners/vsc>

## VII. INCREASE INTERNET ACCESS BY CREATING BRIDGEWATER WI-FI HOTSPOT(S)

A common theme, across several e-Vermont communities, is to develop greater public access to the web. In some communities this service is best provided by institutions like public libraries. In other communities, especially those with distinct, vibrant downtowns, there is strong interest in creating public access Wi-Fi zones in the business district.

Currently, only the Bridgewater Village School maintains an open wireless network in town. The municipal building, next door to BVS, is thinking about providing public Wi-Fi. Across the road from the school and municipal building, a couple of tenants in the Bridgewater Mill, Ramuntos Pizza and the Bridgewater Sustainable Earth Foundation (Thrift Store, Weaving Studio, Bookstore and Community Center) are also interested in providing patrons free, open access to the Internet.

To learn more, contact Phil Petty, e-Vermont Community Director, [phil@vtrural.org](mailto:phil@vtrural.org)  
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## VIII. DIGITIZE BRIDGEWATER HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS AND SHOWCASE THEM ON THE WEB

One of the centerpiece projects in Bridgewater's e-Vermont application is collaboration between the Bridgewater Village School and the Bridgewater Historical Society. In this project the Bridgewater Village School 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders will partner with the Bridgewater Historical Society to digitize important historical documents and make them easily accessible on the web. In particular, students will begin this process by digitally archiving historic photographs of local historic buildings. BVS' existing partnership with the Marsh-Billing-Rockefeller National Historic Park will provide students continued access to valuable experts who can provide advice about archival procedures and technology.

The second and third phases of this project are to digitize and catalogue the Society's landscape photographs and create a complete and accessible index for the main book of local history entitled Bridgewater Vermont 1779-1976.

This project coincides with Bridgewater's celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of their town charter. Bridgewater's Historical Society is helping Bridgewater plan their community celebration of this event that is scheduled in early August.

The Bridgewater Historical Society has over 150 members. The organization meets in the historic Red Brick School in Bridgewater Village along US Route 4. Access to the Internet and development of a Bridgewater Historical Society website are essential components of this project.

To learn more, contact Phil Petty, e-Vermont Community Director, [phil@vtrural.org](mailto:phil@vtrural.org)  
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## IX. DEVELOP A BRIDGEWATER ONLINE BUSINESS AND SERVICES DIRECTORY

Communication and marketing is a big challenge for Bridgewater's businesses, artisans and service providers. Their challenge stems from a geographically divided town where many of its businesses have not yet developed a web presence. The Bridgewater steering committee, recognizing their residents' diverse needs, talents and skills, seeks to create an online business directory or Bridgewater "yellow pages". Their goal is to provide a community resource that informs full-time and part-time residents of the various services available locally and to help promote and market businesses in the local economy.

Bridgewater would also like to explore how they might incorporate consumer comments into their online directory.

To learn more, contact Phil Petty, e-Vermont Community Director, [phil@vtrural.org](mailto:phil@vtrural.org)  
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## X. SUPPORT THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN BRIDGEWATER VILLAGE SCHOOL AND SHACKLETON THOMAS VIA “THE NAKED TABLE PROJECT”

Shackleton Thomas, one of the anchor occupants of Bridgewater’s historic woolen mill, produces handcrafted furniture and pottery. The business’ proprietor, Charles Shackleton, has started a program called “The Naked Table Project”. This project involves people in the process of making their own table out of locally harvested, sustainably grown sugar maple. During the project, people participate in every aspect of the production process from harvesting and milling the wood to applying the final layers of finish.

As part of Bridgewater’s e-Vermont participation, Charles Shackleton has invited Bridgewater Village School’s 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders to take part in their own “Naked Table Project”. Through this partnership, BVS students will develop many crucial 21<sup>st</sup> century skills as well as make valuable connections in their community. The project is currently in motion, including a public student blog that is highlighting each part of the process through narratives, photographs and student produced documentaries.

Bridgewater Village School would like to see this valuable school-community partnership continue.

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