



**Preservation Trust of Vermont:
Where We Worked in 2009**

- Field Service Projects in Partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation**
 - Robert Sincerbeaux Fund Grants**
 - Barn Assessment Grants in Partnership with the Burlington Free Press**
 - Preservation Grants in Partnership with the Freeman Foundation**
 - Village Revitalization Grants in Partnership with Senator Patrick Leahy**
 - Downtown and Village Center Work**
 - Big Box Activity**
 - Community Supported Enterprises**
 - Easement Program**
- All symbols without numbers represent one project; multiple projects are indicated by the number.*



Preservation Trust of Vermont
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Preservation Trust of Vermont Highlights from 2009

When the Preservation Trust was starting up 30 years ago, one of the key guiding principles was that we would focus whatever energy, expertise, and resources we had on helping local organizations and communities save and use their historic places. We didn't desire to build a big organization with lots of staff, and we didn't want to take charge of every building project or community revitalization effort. We wanted to help build local capacity to do this important work of saving Vermont's essential character.

Sometimes things actually work out just as they were planned. Over these past 30 years we've helped communities save more than a thousand buildings and put them into productive use. Just this past year, our five full and part-time staff worked on 352 projects in 155 different communities. We provide technical assistance, training opportunities, encouragement, funding, and occasionally a little nudge. But in the end, we depend upon local passion and commitment for success.

Community Supported Enterprises

Community Supported Enterprise is one way that local groups can help to define their downtowns and village centers. Village stores, restaurants, bakeries, taverns, and bookstores are the kinds of gathering places that help to strengthen the sense of community. But there are places where these services are threatened, particularly when there's a transfer of ownership that leads to expensive debt servicing. Community Supported Enterprises allow residents to invest in neighborhood businesses and protect the services that are essential to them.

Putney is one example of a town where we have played a major role through Community Supported Enterprises. It is a community that has had to face incredible adversity and challenge. In the span of a little over a month they lost two important businesses. The local bookstore closed, and then a fire closed the Putney General Store for the first time in 200 years. The community was devastated, and the loss of these businesses meant that the entire village center struggled. The Preservation Trust worked with a group of Putney residents and raised the funds necessary to help open a community-supported bookstore.

When the General Store's owners were unable to rebuild after the first fire, we purchased an option on the property in hopes that the Historical Society would purchase it and rebuild. They did, and we've worked as partners ever since. We have since provided technical assistance, seed funds, fundraising support, and a major grant in partnership with Senator Leahy through our Village Revitalization Program. And then, just as the building shell was completed and a new slate roof installed, a second fire on November 1, 2009 reduced the building to ash. Fortunately Putney residents are all about perseverance. They have great passion for their sense of community and their village center and they are determined they are not going to lose it. They have committed to rebuilding their General Store, and we are committed to continuing to support their efforts.

In Summary:

- This past year we worked in eight towns on nine **Community Supported Enterprises**.
- We provided **Field Service** support to 249 historic preservation projects in 141 different towns. The Field Service Program is a partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Here are a few examples:
 - In Derby Line we worked with Village Trustees and citizens to oppose WESCO Oil Company’s permit to demolish two downtown buildings to build a Champlain Farms gas station/convenience store.
 - In Addison, we worked through the Public Advisory Committee and a “Friends” group to try to save the Lake Champlain Bridge. When structural flaws made it impossible, we refocused our efforts to recommend a design that honored its setting, minimized impact on resources, added bicycle and pedestrian amenities, and would be easy to maintain.
 - In Readsboro, we worked with Readsboro Hometown Redevelopment to help them acquire and rehabilitate a key downtown building, the Bullock Block.
 - Statewide, we provided technical assistance to 35 barn-owners. We worked with 58 churches, meetinghouses, and synagogues; 22 libraries; 22 historical societies and museums; 30 town halls and community centers; and 12 arts organizations. Each building or revitalization initiative has a story about why that particular project meant so much to that community. In all cases, the headline is not about saving a building—rather it’s about people using places for the betterment of their community or for personal or collective enrichment.
- As part of the Field Service Program, we awarded 51 **Robert Sincerbeaux Fund** matching grants to local groups to hire consultants for specialized technical assistance including building condition assessments, engineering studies, and fundraising consultation. These grants offer a tool for moving projects along their timeline. A number of architects, contractors and consultants fulfill these grants at a greatly reduced fee as a community service for nonprofit organizations.

Athens Brick Meeting House
Barnard General Store
Bellows Falls Strategic Planning
Belvidere One Room Schoolhouse
Bethel Lympus Church
Bondville Church
Braintree Historical
Society/Meetinghouse
Brookline Benevolence Society/Church
Burlington, Church Street Marketplace
Plaques
Burlington, Phi Gamma Delta
Calais Town Hall
Calais, Old West Church
Castleton House Energy Audit
Certified Local Government Training
Craftsbury Academy
Derby Line, Haskell Free Library

East Corinth, Sugar Maple Preschool
Enosburg Opera House Energy Audit
Friends of Ferrisburgh
Gayesville Community Church
Greensboro, Circus Smirkus House & Barns
Greensboro, Highland Lodge
Groton, Cilley House
Guilford, Friends of Algiers Village - Store
Guilford Covered Bridge
Hardwick, Jeudevine Mem. Library Energy Audit
Hartford Library
Jericho Center Community Center
Lincoln, Burnham Hall Committee
Manchester Center, Northshire Day School
Middlebury Memorial Baptist Church
Montgomery Historical Society - Pratt Hall
Montpelier, Green Mt. Cemetery Chapel
Montpelier, Bethany UCC

Peacham Historical Society
Perkinsville, Gethsemane Church
Poultney Historical Society - St. John's
Putney Historical Society - Pierce Hall
Putney Historical Society - UCC
Readsboro Hometown Redevelopment, Inc.
Richmond, OneRichmond
Richmond Town Municipal Building
Rochester Public Library
Rockingham Free Public Library
Springfield, Miller Art Center

St. Johnsbury, Main Street Fire
Thetford Com. Center Window Workshop
Vermont Barn Census
Vermont Council on Rural Development -
Future of Vermont
Vermont Housing and Conservation Board
Vermont Natural Resources Council
West Brattleboro Association
West Fairlee Community Development Com.
West Glover Church

- We provided stewardship visits to 56 properties as part of our **Easement Program**.
- In partnership with Senator Leahy, the **Village Revitalization Initiative** awarded \$675,000 to six community development and historic preservation projects.
 - Poultney, Green Mountain College, Bentley Hall
 - Putney General Store
 - Randolph, Chandler Center for the Arts
 - Readsboro Bullock Block
 - Richmond Round Church
 - Shoreham, Newton Academy
- Our partnership with the **Freeman Foundation** enabled us to award twelve **Preservation Grants** totaling \$472,000. Descriptions of all of the grants are on our web site, but here are a few representative projects. It is hard to overstate how important each project is to its community.
 - In St. Johnsbury, a grant helped to conserve and weatherize windows at the Athenaeum. Another grant to Gilman Housing in partnership with Umbrella, a local non-profit organization, helped to convert a downtown historic building into eight new transitional housing units and a shelter for women and children who are victims of domestic abuse.
 - A grant to the Orleans County Fairgrounds helped to pay for structural repairs to two barns and the 1867 grandstand.
 - The Greensboro Bend Church received a grant that helped to fix drainage problems, jack the church, replace sills, and install new footings, floor joists and a basement floor. A big part of this story was the local fundraising effort, donated materials, and volunteer labor that went into the project. The basement is used for senior and community meals, meetings, and church functions.

Addison, DAR Mansion
Craftsbury Academy
Greensboro United Methodist Church
Greensboro Historical Society
Lyndon Center, Upright Steeple Society
Lyndonville, Cobleigh Library

Newport, St. Marks Church
Readsboro, Bullock Building
St. Johnsbury, Fairbanks Museum
St. Johnsbury, 1867 Building
St. Johnsbury, Athenaeum
Washington, United Universalist Church

- In partnership with the Burlington Free Press, we awarded nine **Barn Grants**.

Charlotte, Lutchko Barn
 Dummerston, Goodband Barn
 Fairlee, Wright Barn
 North Thetford, Berry-Bernard Barn
 Peacham, Ide Barn

Pomfret, Chiofee Barn
 South Hero, Bergeron Barn
 South Hero, Alsop Barns
 South Londonderry, Ziegler Barn

- We spent a lot of 2009 in the Statehouse supporting funding for the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board; and, with Smart Growth Vermont, lobbying for tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic buildings in our downtowns and village centers. We were successful in encouraging the Legislature to increase Designated Downtown and Village Center tax credits by \$100,000, bringing the total to \$1.7 million. This year, tax credits were awarded to 15 projects and leveraged nearly \$20 million of construction activity.

Our Current Challenges

- One challenge that we face is an increased demand for services in tough economic times. We have been fortunate and thankful for the generosity of individuals who continue to support our work. This allows us to work with local groups, to encourage continued fundraising and phasing projects, sometimes over a longer period of time. We have an incredibly talented group of preservation contractors and architects in Vermont. A disappointment in 2009 and hope for 2010 is that more stimulus funding will be targeted for rehabilitation projects. Rehabilitation work has more emphasis on labor and less on new materials—it is a great way to direct economic resources where they are most needed and with real community benefit.
- Our work on sprawl and big box development continues. Vermont’s downtowns are fragile. We believe that downtowns need to serve the entire community with goods and services for all socio-economic levels. To that end, our position from the beginning has been to encourage big-box developers to locate in our downtowns and to do so at a scale that does not crush local business. In St. Albans, we developed plans for locating a 75,000 square foot Walmart downtown, where it would enhance the downtown and bring pedestrian traffic to neighboring businesses.
- Sustainability and energy retrofits for historic buildings are not well understood. Well-meaning, but inappropriate insulation and weatherization treatments are threatening the fabric of historic buildings. Of particular consequence is the replacement of historic windows. Interestingly, studies have shown that reusing historic windows and adding storm windows can be a better energy saver and is definitely a greener solution than adding off-the-shelf replacement windows.