

# **TOWN OF VERNON, CONNECTICUT**



## **2009-2010 ANNUAL TOWN REPORT**

# 2009-2010

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## THE MAYOR'S MESSAGE

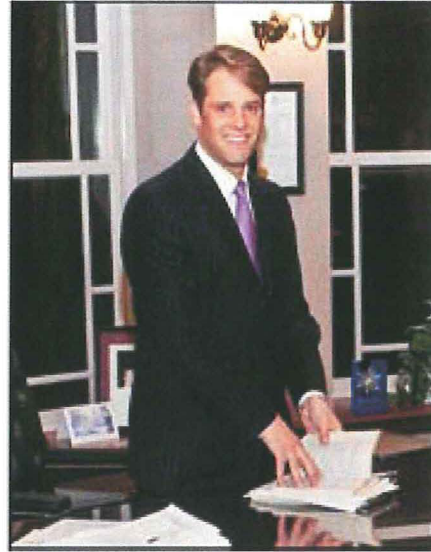
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Town of Vernon  
14 Park Place  
Vernon, Connecticut

Dear Citizens,

It is my honor and privilege to present to you the Annual Town Report for the Town of Vernon's Fiscal Year 2009-2010. This report affords me the opportunity to share with you a year of departmental activities, as well as many of the town's accomplishments.

This year, we have accomplished many things, including further investment in more efficient programs and areas such as infrastructure and technology. These investments will help to provide the same, if not better services at lower costs and greater efficiency. However, while we have taken many steps to increase our ability to provide services, we have not had a year completely free from hardship.



In April, we lost a very popular and well-known member of the community, my grandfather, former Mayor Frank J. McCoy. Mayor McCoy served two terms with the Vernon Town Council and four terms as Mayor (1969 – 1975, 1977 – 1979). To this day, he remains the only Mayor to be elected to three consecutive terms. He will be remembered for his life-long dedication to the town, the formation of the Vernon Midget Football League and the Vernon Orioles baseball team. Mayor McCoy will truly be missed by all of Vernon's citizens young and old.

Following in my grandfather's footsteps I have tried to support youth activities through establishing the "Mayor's Challenge Program" in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Department. This year's winner was Lake Street School. Each month the elementary schools rotate physical challenges for our youth helping to keep them physically fit. We also celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our local Explorer Post, sponsored by our own Police Department.

These last few years with our strained economy, times have not been easy for families or government. However, this year, as in past years, we have managed to continue providing programs and services in a variety of ways. We have taken a variety of cost reducing measures, including an investment in new technologies that will allow for quicker and more efficient delivery of services.

We created a technology committee made up of citizens, business leaders, Board of Education Staff and Municipal staff to formulate strategies on a New Era of Digital Governance. As part of the New Era of Digital Governance plan we set in motion an administrative management plan that will create digital institutional memory and management system that will last from administration to administration with an unbiased history similar to that found in municipal land records. Additionally, these investments have made it possible for citizens to interact with my administration and departments unlike ever before.

This increased connection has allowed for increase transparency and information transmission. In Vernon we are fully embracing the concept of E-Government.

One of these investments included the purchase of QALERT a Citizen Request System, software that allows for the enhancement of citizen services through the management of content and citizen's requests. Having the use of this system will allow citizens and taxpayers to be better served, as their requests are quickly and more efficiently acknowledged and resolved. Also improving government efficiency and reducing taxpayer costs is SMARTSEARCH, a comprehensive document management system that allows government employees to quickly store, sort and retrieve important documents. The Town Council joined my administration in embracing technology by implementing IPAD use at all of their meetings saving taxpayers over \$36,000 in copying, printing and supply costs. These projects had an extraordinary impact on the way we do business.

Other technical advancements included an investment in optical fiber structure which will reduce the cost of hardware for operations by linking the municipal buildings and school buildings. We also developed and implemented interactive software that will allow for businesses to access tax declaration forms online. There are many other initiatives too numerous to mention.

My administration has also continued improving equipment so that the town can continue to provide high quality and effective services. Over the past fiscal year, we installed four-deicing control systems and two waste oil furnaces for the department of Public Works. We also improved our ability to deliver refuse and recycling services through an investment in new automated recycling and refuse trucks and 4,000 new containers for both refuse and recycling. The new recycling bins are saving the taxpayers money every day. Public Works also invested in a back-up refuse truck, a used automated side-loading truck and a compactor presently located at the transfer station. This program has reduced tipping fees and increased revenue to the town from recycling.

Supporting Public Safety has always been a priority and this year is no exception. We purchased Fire Extraction Equipment and made repairs to a 1994 Aerial Ladder Truck still serving our citizens.

The municipal bond rating remained strong, which permitted lower borrowing costs for the Town when notes were converted to municipal bonds and sold to pay for the 2004-2005 Bridge, Road and School building projects. This strong bond rating was very important due to the increase in yearly payments at the time of conversion of the notes to bonding debt to pay for those projects. This was a 30% increase that came due for those projects. One of the major reasons that Vernon's bond rating remained strong over and above our strong fiscal management, were the reforms in pension, reforms in municipal union contract that removed unfunded future liabilities that existed since the early 1980's. Those reforms were achieved through very difficult contract negotiations. Those reforms removed wasteful and excessive accumulations of unearned personal days that uncontrollably spike pensions at retirement, removed increases in wages that occurred without regard to achievement or merit, and removed unreasonable unaffordable benefit packages for employees and converted future employee pension plans to retirement plans similar to the private sector 401k plans. The rating agencies were pleased with these thoughtful long term approaches that insure fiscal stability through illumination of unpredictable future retirement and employment costs.

Since I was first elected to serve as Mayor in 2007, the goal was that Vernon citizens would have better schools, safer streets and lower taxes, those major objectives of my administration were achieved through savings, reducing government waste and investment in cost reduction programs. This year,

Governor Rell acknowledged this objective by choosing me, along with five other Mayors from across Connecticut to serve on a bipartisan panel to identify local savings and recommend mandate relief to help close our state's budget shortfall. The panel concluded with a position paper and recommendations to Governor Rell outlining changes to assist municipalities and the State of Connecticut with the budget woes. This process, coupled with the Governor's Mitigation Plan led to my recommendation of a spending freeze on all departments. Additionally, I directed all departments to look for cost cutting measures now and in future budgets.

We developed a road map to reduce municipal regulations which cause unfunded mandates that Vernon taxpayer and municipal taxpayers around the State are required to pay. The Department Heads and I developed a targeted list 103 regulations that cause unfunded mandates. We were very active through our governmental relations firm or lobby firm with a proposal that would reduce those unfunded cost through reduction in municipal regulations which will reduce municipal costs to Vernon by \$500,000 on a yearly basis. Our plan came in handy due to the State Legislature's failure to pass a budget which resulted in a deficit mitigation plan mid-year which would reduce municipal aid or funding by nearly 3%.

The year 2009-2010 also produced a few personnel changes. In August, Terry Hjarne, became the new Collector of Revenue. Terry was previously the Assistant Collector of Revenue and in November, Robert Kleinhans became the new Director of the Department of Public Works. Both are proving their value to all the residents of Vernon through cost savings in their departments along with fresh eyes to view old programs and breath new life into them.

To help lessen the burden on citizens, we extended the Elderly Freeze Property tax relief program and the Elderly and Disabled property tax relief program through September 30, 2011. Programs like these are important to support our most needy residents.

Additionally, through my direction, the Town Council adopted an Ordinance establishing an Energy Improvement District (EID) and EID Board, two times was a charm. It is expected that the board will meet regularly and establish more effective and reliable ways to improve the town and community's energy usage. We met our yearly goal of a 5% reduction in fuel (gas and diesel) usage. Yet another way our initiatives will save tax dollars now and in the future.

Other cost saving measures taken this year include new web hosting through our Data Processing Department, as well as grant awards to help offset projects costs and subsidize projects. Two examples in a list of many grants is the \$1.5 million dollar grant to renovate the old "Kindergarten" Building – soon to be the new home of the Vernon Community Arts Center and of course we can't forget the \$90,000 grant to continue the historic renovation of our Memorial Building. Each year it becomes more and more difficult to fund projects like these with limited tax dollars and grants assist us with needed projects that can't be funded by local dollars.

My administration has also made public safety, economic development and infrastructure projects a priority, including the reconstruction of failing bridges that existed for 20 years or more and deterioration roads. We utilized our CDBG funding in the amount of \$500,000.00 to help Vernon continue reconstruction of Prospect Street. Spring Street Bridge and River Street Bridge are due to be completed in July and April of next year, respectively. Additionally, Hatch Hill Road should be completed in October and a variety of other projects are on schedule to begin over the next few years.

In my budget message I shared our goals for this year and I believe we reached them through programs, projects and balancing needs with wants. Our budget placed services to our citizens over salaries, we did negotiate good contracts that keep present and future costs down. Our priorities were not just talked about in a message they were implemented in a very concrete way, making our citizen's ability to afford to live in Town, a priority.

In closing, I would like to thank the many volunteers who serve on our community's many boards, commissions, and committees. These individuals devote many hours each month to their assignments and we are lucky to have them. Volunteers are the foundation of any organization, and through their efforts we enjoy a strong community spirit and a rich sense of community.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Mayor.

Respectfully,



Jason L. McCoy, Esq.  
Mayor, Town of Vernon



# Vernon Town Council 2009-2010



**Seated left to right:** Council Member Marie Herbst, Council Member Judy Hany, Town Administrator John Ward, Council Member James Krupienski, Council Member Bill Campbell, and Council Member Harry Thomas.

**Standing left to right:** Council Member Pauline Schaefer, Council Member Mark Etre, Council Member Daniel Anderson, Deputy Mayor Brian Motola, Mayor Jason L. McCoy, Council Member Sean O'Shea, Council Member Daniel Champagne, and Council Member Michael Winkler.



# ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

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## TOWN ASSESSOR

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### DEPARTMENT HEAD:

David Wheeler, CCMA II, CRA, Town Assessor  
Christine Clarke, CCMA I, Deputy Assessor

### LOCATION OF DEPARTMENT:

Town Hall Annex – 8 Park Place, 1st Floor

### RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES:

The town assessor has the sole responsibility of preparing an annual grand list consisting of Real Estate, Personal Property, Motor Vehicles, Tax Exempt Properties and applying various exemptions in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes and Local Ordinances. Assessor records are updated annually as changes occur to real estate as a result of building permit inspections, new construction and or discovery. Tax maps are updated to reflect lot splits or combining of parcels.

All Connecticut towns are mandated to perform revaluations every five year to reflect market conditions and redistribute value between property classes based on sales, cost and income. The next scheduled revaluation in Vernon is October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011. Recently, property data mailers were sent out to property owners to verify our data and to correct any discrepancies. Property inspectors are going through neighborhoods, street by street viewing property condition and quality of construction. All sales are inspected as this is the basis for modeling residential property values based on location, style, size, amenities and condition. Currently are 10,300 parcels which include 281 tax exempt properties. We now offer online filing of personal property declarations every fall and the ability to display property records via any computer terminal. Our online GIS system allows views of every parcel including site details.

Personal property refers to any property used or associated with a business operating in Vernon. Currently there are over 1,340 active accounts. Motor vehicles are also apart of the annual grand list and are taxed based on value derived from NADA pricing manuals. There are more than 25,000 registered motor vehicles.

The assessor's responsibility also includes administering various exemptions and tax credits for such programs as Elderly, Veterans and Disabled property owners. All programs are designed to provide some form of tax relief to those most in need or on fixed incomes. The function of the assessor and staff are governed by Connecticut General Statutes and appraisal practices with the daily operations reported to administration. Monthly reports are mandated by the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) for the State of Connecticut. Statistical data from those reports are the basis for various state grant and revenue reimbursements and pilot programs.

In many ways, think of the assessor's office as a central database of information for real estate, motor vehicles and personal property. Property record cards are available for all properties along with tax maps and property sales data.

**2009 Grand List Summary:  
M-13 Report filed with O.P.M.**

|                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Real Estate Assessments:       | 1,673,775,280        |
| Personal Property Assessments: | 81,908,270           |
| Motor Vehicle Assessments:     | <u>157,389,438</u>   |
| Gross Grand List:              | 1,913,072,988        |
| Less Exemptions:               | <u>18,434,184</u>    |
| Net Taxable Grand List:        | <b>1,894,638,804</b> |

| <b>2008 Grand List</b> | <b>2009 Grand List</b> | <b>Net Change</b> | <b>Percent Change</b> |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1,890,699,111          | 1,894,638,804          | \$3,939,693       | 0.21%                 |

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## COLLECTOR OF REVENUE

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**Department Head:**

Terry Hjarne, C.C.M.C. Collector of Revenue

**Location of Department:**

Town Hall Annex - 8 Park Place, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

**Responsibilities and Duties:** Property taxes are the major source of funds for the Town, accounting for roughly two thirds of the Town's revenue. The Collector organizes and coordinates the collection activities of the Town. State Statutes, Town Charter, and Town Ordinances dictate the procedures to be followed for the billing and collection of Town taxes. The Collector is responsible for collecting the highest percentage of taxes available to meet budgetary requirements.

Each year the Collector receives authorization from the Town Council to have tax bills prepared from the Town's Grand List of owner's of real estate, personal property, and motor vehicles. Legal notices are posted, as required by law, to advise taxpayers of the due dates and final dates of payment before penalty charges apply.

The Collector has the responsibility for maintaining accurate records of all transactions, accounting for all monies collected, and submitting all revenue to the Town Treasurer. Reports are submitted on a regular basis to both the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management as well as to the Town Clerk's Office as dictated by state statute.

Duties of the Revenue Collection Department are many and varied. In addition to accepting tax payments and issuing receipts, the department issues permits and punch cards for the Transfer Station, takes payments for parking tickets and infractions, and accepts sewer user payments.



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## DATA PROCESSING

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### **DEPARTMENT HEAD:**

Art Beirn, Director Data Processing

### **LOCATION OF DEPARTMENT:**

Town Hall Annex – 5 Park Street, 2nd Floor

### **RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES:**

The Data Processing Department is responsible for the Town-wide telecommunications infrastructure, data centers and software applications for Public Safety, Town Operations and the Board of Education. This includes all hardware, software, mobile devices, networking for the town, day to day work orders, emergency support, planning, implementation and maintenance of long-term growth & protection, applications, and storage.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE:**

The current infrastructure consists of an optical fiber switched campus comprised of the Town Hall, Senior Center, Building Dept./Fire Marshal, Annex and BOE. Two additional high speed (10GB) switched optical fiber links have been engineered and implemented. One switched fiber link extends from the Annex – Data Center to the Police Department building which supports the Public Safety (Police, Fire, EMS and Emergency Mgt.) campus. The second switched fiber link extends from the Annex – Data Center to Rockville High School connecting the schools to the BOE. Additionally, a separate switched fiber link from the Ward Street Police Outstation to the Public Safety campus is in place.

Thirteen remote sites (all Firehouses, Parks & Recreation, Cemetery, Social Services, Public Works, Water Pollution, EMS, Youth Services, and Annex-Backup) are connected back to the Annex – Data Center via Comcast VPN to VPN cable connections with SonicWall firewalls on each end to protect the integrity of the transmissions.

Secured wireless access is available in the Town Hall and BOE. Secured wireless access points are available on all three floors of the Town Hall. Secured wireless access points are also available on all three floors of the BOE.

The Rockville Downtown Association (RDA), supported by D.P., sponsors unsecured wireless access on Main Street which is available for all merchants across from Central Park, as well as all Rockville visitors within one hundred-fifty feet of the downtown area.

Bluetooth is set up for handhelds and laptops

## **DATA PROCESSING SERVICES**

### **DATA CENTERS:**

There are three data centers supporting Vernon's enterprise. The main data center is in the Annex (2<sup>nd</sup> floor). This data center has been virtualized (30 servers) and we are experiencing a 40% to 60% savings in power. The second data center, also a virtualized

(10 servers) data center, is in the P.D. and is designed to support the Public Safety (Police, Fire, EMS and Emergency Mgt.) campus. The third data center is being virtualized (16 servers) and is located in Rockville High School. The RHS data center is supported by the school's I.T. Director and staff. Due to the common optical fiber infrastructure (Town & BOE), this is a coordinated effort with D.P. and the schools.

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## FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

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### **Department Head:**

James M. Luddecke, Finance Officer and Treasurer  
Frank J. Zitkus, Controller

### **Department Location:**

Town Hall Memorial Building, Second Floor

### **Responsibilities and Duties**

The mission of the Finance Department is to institute and promote comprehensive financial management designed for the coordination, control, analysis and planning dedicated to the provisions of community services. Inherent in this resolve is the theory that "good" government can be defined by accountability, equity, and efficiency in the management of financial resources for the public benefit. To further this resolve is the adherence to legal, moral, and professional standards of conduct in the fulfillment of our responsibilities.

The financial statements are presented in two types of disclosure. The first, Government-Wide Financial Statements, capture the activities of the Town as a whole entity, utilizing an accrual accounting system, similar to those used in private sector companies. The second type, Fund Financial Statements, unlike the whole entity approach, utilizes a modified basis of accounting for governmental activities through separate fund and account group entities, each with its own balance sheet. Thus, from an accounting and financial management viewpoint, a governmental unit under this type of disclosure is a combination of several distinctly different fiscal and accounting entities, functioning independently of the other funds and account groups. The financial exhibits and schedules presenting both types of disclosure will be found on the final pages of this report.

The Finance Department of the Town is responsible for establishing and maintaining an internal control structure designed to ensure that the assets of the Town are protected from loss, theft, or misuse, and to ensure that adequate accounting data are compiled to allow for the preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. The internal control structure is designed to provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that these objectives are met. The concept of reasonable assurance recognizes that:

- the cost of control should not exceed the benefits likely to be derived and;
- the valuation of costs and benefits requires estimates and judgments by management.

All internal control structure evaluations occur within the above framework. We believe that the Town's internal control structure adequately safeguards assets and provides reasonable assurance for the proper recording of financial transactions and for compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

In addition, the Finance Department is responsible for the following: To provide supporting documents and to assist in the preparation of the annual budget and; to establish budgetary controls to ensure compliance with the legal provisions embodied in the annual appropriated budget for the General Fund and other adopted budgets. Project-length financial plans are maintained for the Special Revenue Funds and Capital Project Funds.

Also, the Finance Department prepares the *Comprehensive Annual Financial Report*; coordinates the cash flow and investment of all Town funds; prepares the official statement for bond and note issues; manages debt service activity and structure; and manages and allocates resources for the capital improvement program; administers the pension fund, insurance and benefit programs, and purchasing programs; directs financial improvements to departments as necessary and; oversees activities in Tax Collection and Assessments.

### **Independent Audit**

The Town Charter requires an annual audit of the books of account, financial records, and transactions of all administrative departments of the Town by independent certified public accountants selected by the Town Council. This requirement has been complied with and the auditors' report has been included in the report.

### **Awards**

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the Town of Vernon for its *Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)* for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2009. The Certificate of Achievement is a prestigious national award recognizing conformance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government reports. In order to be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, the Town of Vernon published an easily readable and efficiently organized *CAFR*, whose contents conform to program standards. The *CAFR* must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements.

A Certificate of Achievement is valid for a period of one year only. Vernon has received a Certificate of Achievement for the last fifteen consecutive years. We believe that our current report continues to meet the Certificate of Achievement Program's requirements and we have submitted it to the GFOA to determine its eligibility for another certificate.



***General Fund Revenues and Other Financing Sources***

| Revenue Sources                            | June 30, 2010 |               | June 30, 2009 |               | Increase (Decrease)<br>from 2008 |         |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------------|---------|
|  | Amount        | % of<br>Total | Amount        | % of<br>Total | Amount                           | %       |
|  |               |               |               |               |                                  |         |
| Property taxes                             | \$ 54,241,727 | 70.14%        | \$ 52,186,924 | 68.28%        | \$ 2,054,803                     | 3.94%   |
| Intergovernmental                          | 20,352,445    | 26.32%        | 21,194,696    | 27.73%        | (842,251)                        | -3.97%  |
| Charges for services                       | 1,561,369     | 2.02%         | 1,421,907     | 1.86%         | 139,462                          | 9.81%   |
| Interest on investments                    | 42,113        | 0.05%         | 199,312       | 0.26%         | (157,199)                        | -78.87% |
| Licenses and permits                       | 441,648       | 0.57%         | 406,025       | 0.53%         | 35,623                           | 8.77%   |
| Gifts and contributions                    | -             | 0.00%         | -             | 0.00%         | -                                |         |
| Other revenues                             | 452,974       | 0.59%         | 440,074       | 0.58%         | 12,900                           | 2.93%   |
| Total Revenues                             | 77,092,276    | 99.69%        | 75,848,938    | 99.25%        | 1,243,338                        | 1.64%   |
| Other Financing Sources:                   |               |               |               |               |                                  |         |
| Transfers in                               | 241,856       | 0.31%         | 576,876       | 0.75%         | (335,020)                        | -58.07% |
| Total Revenues and Other Financing Sources | \$ 77,334,132 | 100.00%       | \$ 76,425,814 | 100.00%       | \$ 908,318                       | 1.19%   |

***General Fund Expenditures and Other Financing Uses***

| Function                                    | June 30, 2010 |               | June 30, 2009 |               | Increase (Decrease)<br>from 2008 |         |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------------|---------|
|   | Amount        | % of<br>Total | Amount        | % of<br>Total | Amount                           | %       |
|   |               |               |               |               |                                  |         |
| General government                          | \$ 3,003,175  | 3.91%         | \$ 3,026,387  | 3.98%         | \$ (23,212)                      | -0.77%  |
| Community development                       | 222,003       | 0.29%         | 217,126       | 0.29%         | 4,877                            | 2.25%   |
| Public Safety                               | 7,698,462     | 10.02%        | 7,381,590     | 9.71%         | 316,872                          | 4.29%   |
| Maintenance and Development                 | 5,451,295     | 7.10%         | 5,681,841     | 7.47%         | (230,546)                        | -4.06%  |
| Human Services                              | 923,368       | 1.20%         | 899,092       | 1.18%         | 24,276                           | 2.70%   |
| Parks, recreation, and culture              | 1,338,415     | 1.74%         | 1,305,429     | 1.72%         | 32,986                           | 2.53%   |
| Town wide                                   | 6,138,804     | 7.99%         | 6,167,528     | 8.11%         | (28,724)                         | -0.47%  |
| Education                                   | 45,779,713    | 59.60%        | 45,808,219    | 60.24%        | (28,506)                         | -0.06%  |
| Capital Outlay                              | 264,740       | 0.34%         | 117,423       | 0.15%         | 147,317                          | 125.46% |
| Debt Service                                | 3,091,374     | 4.02%         | 3,254,029     | 4.28%         | (162,655)                        | -5.00%  |
| Total Expenditures                          | 73,911,349    | 96.22%        | 73,858,664    | 97.12%        | 52,685                           | 0.07%   |
| Other Financing Uses:                       |               |               |               |               |                                  |         |
| Transfers out                               | 2,901,723     | 3.78%         | 2,187,322     | 2.88%         | 714,401                          | 32.66%  |
| Total Expenditures and Other Financing Uses | \$ 76,813,072 | 100.00%       | \$ 76,045,986 | 100.00%       | \$ 767,086                       | 1.01%   |

## **Local Economy and Major Initiatives**

### ***Local Economy***

The Town of Vernon is a residential community of 18.6 square miles located 14 miles east of Hartford on Interstate 84 in north central Connecticut. Interstate 84, traverses the Town, having four interchanges within the Town's borders, and connects with I-90, I-384, I-91 and I-291, which provide convenient highway access to all areas of Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York. Additional accessibility is provided by U.S. Route 44 and State Routes 30, 31, 74, and 83. National and international air service is provided by Bradley International Airport, which is only thirty minutes from Vernon. The well-situated access provided by Interstate 84 within the Greater Hartford area has contributed to Vernon's development as a residential suburban community and a regional commercial center for neighboring towns.

The economic base for Connecticut, as well as for Vernon, has had an overall change from that of manufacturing to retail commerce and professional services. Of the top fifteen firms in Vernon, 91.8% are employed in services while only 8.2% are employed in manufacturing and printing. Approximately 41.4% of this employment is with non-profit and public organizations. The largest Vernon employer is the Town of Vernon, which has 835 employees. The second largest employer is Rockville General Hospital with 559 employees, followed by Visiting Nurse and Health Services with 458 employees, Ticket Network with 260, Price Chopper with 250, the State of Connecticut with 227, New England Mechanical Services with 200 employees, Stop and Shop with 184 employees, Fox Hill Nursing and Rehabilitation with 180 and Vernon Manor with 178.

In Vernon, the number of individuals employed by the top ten companies increased by 136 or 4.2% during the past year. Some of the decreases in employment included (9) for the Town of Vernon, (26) at Rockville General Hospital, (28) at New England Mechanical, (22) at Stop & Shop, (16) at Fox Hill and (17) for Vernon Manor. Increases in employment included 110 at Visiting Nurse and Health Services, 59 for Ticket Network, 54 for Price Chopper and 31 at the State of Connecticut.

Vernon's population for the year ended June 30, 2010, was 30,182 compared with 29,839 on June 30, 2009, an increase of 343 or 1.15%. This increase of 343 residents follows an increase in population of 219 or 0.73% during the previous one-year period.

Approximately 82% of Vernon's labor force is employed outside the town. On a regional basis, our residents' income is derived from major insurance firms, defense industries, financial institutions and capital goods producers. The town's unemployment rate at June 30, 2010 was 8.4%, an increase of 1.1% from June 30, 2009 unemployment rate of 7.3%. In recent history, the unemployment rate was 5.5% in 2008, 4.3% in 2007, 4.2% in 2006, and 4.9% in 2005. The increase in the unemployment rate is influenced by the recent downturn in the overall economy, however, Vernon's unemployment rate compares favorably to that of the State of Connecticut, 8.8%, and for the nation, 9.6%. The Town of Vernon generally shares the same economic health as the State of Connecticut and the Hartford region, therefore experiencing the

economic effect of a slowdown in the financial and insurance sector; and business investment in new construction. Looking forward, a continuation of policies directed to enhance the financial sector, generally are not labor driven. In addition, a decline in federal stimulus funding to the state and municipalities raises concern about the future employment trend. Locally, the composure of our community's resources indicates that any unemployment increase in the near future will be modest.

Vernon completed a town wide revaluation of property as of October 1, 2006, which was effective for the 2007-08 fiscal year. Our tax base for the October 1, 2009 grand list grew by .21%, inclusive of a .13% increase in the real estate portion.

Property taxes have been supported by strong collection rates, averaging 98.2 % over the past ten years. The number of building permits increased from 1,466 to 1,850, and the value of those permits increased from \$21,322,371 to \$23,378,948.

The 2010-2011 operating budget was approved by the Town Council and sent to the annual Town Meeting for adoption. The budget was instead petitioned to a referendum vote, held on May 11, 2010, and the voters adopted the budget. The mil rate increased by 1.60 mils, from 28.42 to 30.02. We will continue to provide the voters with information to make knowledgeable decisions, as we have a responsibility to educate our residents on the programs and services presently provided, as well as those proposed.

The local economic base serves the region as a commercial, governmental, legal, and medical center. Local employment in manufacturing has been replaced by employment in these service areas. This shift is revealed in the additions to the tax base as planned development and new construction are related to retail commerce and professional services.

In October 2008, the Planning and Zoning Commission adopted zoning regulations for a comprehensive multi-family development zone. It is anticipated that once market conditions improve with a boost in lending, applications will be submitted to rezone certain areas in town for developments of this type.

The economic areas for new development are downtown Rockville, Vernon Circle, Lafayette Square, the I-84 corridor, and the Gerber Farm area.

### **Rockville Section:**

The former Rockville mills section has made a transition from being primarily an industrial and commercial center to being a professional and governmental center. It is the site of local government, education, and State of Connecticut administrative offices and courthouses. The initial development of downtown Rockville occurred over one hundred years ago, creating its distinctive Victorian urban character and invaluable architecture. However, this also creates the need for reinvestment and modernization. In addition to improvements to municipal and state buildings, the following recent advancements have been made.

The Town of Vernon has actively supported the redevelopment of the Village Street area adjacent to Rockville General Hospital in supporting the Vernon Nonprofit

Housing Corporation's (VNHC) rehabilitation of eleven structures on the street, by providing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to assist first time home buyers. The houses controlled by VNHC have received environmental remediation and new roofs. The VNHC has renovated and sold 4 units on Village Street, is currently renovating 7 others and has erected an additional 3 units on vacant lots. To further this effort to reinforce the neighborhood rehabilitation activities, Village and Orchard Streets have recently been reconstructed.

The Rockville Public Library at 52 Union Street received approval in April 2009 for a new addition to the existing facility. In August 2009, a special permit was issued to convert an existing vacant residential property to a professional medical office at 94 Union St. This work has been completed and has made a significant visual improvement to this property. At One Ellington Avenue, an existing abandoned mansion with guesthouse is being converted to apartment buildings. The guesthouse has been renovated and restoration of the Main House is anticipated to occur in the near future. This property had been for sale for a lengthy period of time.

In October 2010, the Vernon Planning and Zoning Commission revised an adaptive re-use zoning regulation originally developed for conversion of obsolete mill buildings and made it applicable to any structure in Rockville built no later than 1910 and containing a minimum of 5,000 square feet. This amendment will allow old buildings that have outlived their original uses to be returned to economically viable uses.

#### **Vernon Circle / Route 30 – Hartford Turnpike / Route 83 – Talcottville Road:**

The Vernon Circle area continues to make a positive adjustment to the regional shopping center development in the Buckland Hills section of Manchester, and Evergreen Park in South Windsor, just one highway exit west on I-84. The Tri-City Plaza has a very successful retail mix of value-oriented stores.

The K-Mart Plaza, located on Pitkin Road and Route 30, and the Goodyear Tire Plaza, 378 Kelly Road, although both experience transition phases of businesses closing and new businesses opening, remain enduring and attractive developments in promising locations. Dunkin Donuts, and the Sunoco and Citgo service stations, all on Talcottville Road, as well as Johnnie's Mobil on West Street, have all been recently renovated.

In the Talcottville section of Vernon, 167 Hartford Turnpike, a Volkswagen dealership has been constructed. The Colony Banquet Hall and Restaurant closed in December 2007. Presently, plans have been approved for a 120-room Marriot Spring Hill Suite Hotel in place of the Colony Restaurant. Completion of the recent development has strengthened the Vernon Circle area overall. There is a clear pattern that as the vacancies in Vernon Circle become occupied, the available space on the periphery is being filled and is becoming more attractive for extended development. In addition an enhancement project was initiated along Main Street and Elm Hill Road in the historic section of Talcottville. Improvements underway include the development of a walking trail with informational signage, period lighting, the construction of an information center Kiosk, selective plantings, and entrance signage to the area. The project is 100% funded by the two federal grants.

The State of Connecticut continued the reconstruction and safety improvements along a section of Route 83 (Talcottville Road). This project extends from the I-84 off ramp, northerly to Pitkin Street and provides for improved operations and safety, by the addition of a center landscaped median, lane additions and traffic signal additions and modifications. This project, 100% funded by the State, supports and enhances the commercial and retail developments in the area.

Also on Route 83, three vacant parcels at 360 Talcottville Road were combined into two parcels to construct the 16,000 square foot Aldi's Supermarket. Additional development on the site was approved including an 8,400 square foot day care facility and a 4,000 square foot retail building, to establish the "The Shoppes at Vernon Valley". The 35-acre parcel located at 243 Talcottville Road sold for \$3,400,000. Zoned for commercial use, this parcel will be developed by Boston / Manchester II, LLC; however, for the present, the parcel has been classified, for assessment purposes, as Open Space land in the 2009 grand list. Additional development was also approved along Hockanum Boulevard including a new 12,000 square foot industrial building and support structures.

The new owners of the former Heartland Plaza at 425 Talcottville Road continue restoration improvements and are making a remarkable visual change to the property. This highly visible and long time vacant and blighted commercial structure is undergoing a vibrant and aesthetically pleasing overhaul. The property will soon be a lively commercial destination along Route 83.

A new gas station / convenience store is currently under construction at 229 Talcottville Road, the site of an existing gas station, with attached repair areas. This new facility will include new underground gas storage tanks that will provide improved environmental protections. The new owners of the former Gottier Furniture Store at 48 Windsor Avenue received approval in May 2009 for an outdoor lawn and garden merchandise display for their newly opened "Lots & More" store. A new 8,372 square foot Liquor Store is currently under construction at 482 Talcottville Road. A spring 2011 completion is anticipated.

### **Lafayette Square:**

The Lafayette Square commercial area has been experiencing steady development. The 28,000 square foot complex at 10 Hyde Avenue, known as 30 Lafayette Square, was purchased and the new owners rejuvenated the property, both interior and exterior, inclusive of architectural improvements to the building façade. In June 2010, the owners received approval to add a building containing a 1,800 square foot restaurant and a 2,800 square foot area of retail space within the plaza. The building is under construction and will open early in 2011. Two proposals for assisted living elderly facilities of approximately 100 units each have been approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC), but no action has occurred. At 75 Hyde Avenue, construction is ongoing for the 76 private condominiums for the new Bridlewood development. As part of this approval, the developer has offered to construct sidewalks from the new development along Route 30 to the Northeast School to safely accommodate school children.



### **I-84 Corridor:**

The I-84 corridor offers potential for office park development around the Exit #66 interchange and retail development around the Exit #67 interchange. A proposal to replace the New England Sportplex athletic fields with a 132,973 square foot Home Depot and Garden Center was advanced by a negotiated agreement with the Planning and Zoning Commission. The agreement stipulates a smaller building and parking lot; sewer hookup; the widening of the road; and environmental concessions. Although Home Depot has abandoned its plan to build on this site, the approval will stand with the anticipated court ruling upholding the negotiated settlement. The site may then be marketed with the approval plan in place. The Town is considering a Tax Increment Financing District that would bring water and sewer lines up to the sites.

On the north side of Exit 67, the Planning and Zoning Commission eliminated a setback requirement within the mixed-use zone that substantially expands the buildable area within the zone.

The industrial park off Exit 66 continues to undergo development. A bulk propane distribution facility was approved late in 2009, and its construction is expected to occur in 2011. A small addition was approved in 2010 for a vacant building in the park, recently purchased for the relocation of a business from a neighboring town.

### **Gerber Farm:**

With co-investments from the Town of Vernon, a bridge and access road for the new Hockanum Boulevard was constructed. The bridge and road provides access to the approximately 275-acre Gerber Farm area for development. The PZC adopted the area as a Mixed Use Development (MUD) district. This allows for mixed-use development based upon a comprehensive plan and an economic fiscal impact analysis that demonstrates net positive tax revenue for the Town. The developer constructed a 424-luxury rental unit complex, the Mansions at Hockanum Crossing, and three industrial buildings amounting to 64,000 square feet. Subsequently, the construction of Mansion 2 occurred, a 270 luxury apartment complex. The rental project total assessment is estimated at \$42,130,000.

### **Mill Properties:**

Industrial development has proven to be the most difficult economic challenge for municipalities in Connecticut as manufacturers leave the state and available employment declines. The decline of industry in Vernon relates to the lack of industrial land and the obsolescence of existing facilities, as well as to the general diminishing of manufacturing employment. With only 8.3% of the town zoned for commercial and industrial use, the town is aggressively pursuing the availability of large parcels of land for industrial development while facing the additional task of addressing the redevelopment of older mill properties.

The crafting of a new stimulus package in Washington D.C., will be most effective with a concentration of public infrastructure, local and state aid, and a philosophy of "bottom to top" recovery. The seriousness of a well-planned economic recovery

package, with prudent regulatory controls, inclusive of stabilizing energy prices, food, and health care costs, in conjunction with the Federal Reserve Quantitative Easing policy, is essential to long-term financial health. If the federal government responds accordingly, then cautious optimism of a strengthened economy, with modest improvements in unemployment and GDP gains at the end of the next twelve months can be realized. The creation of jobs through clean energy, infrastructure, small business capital, technology, nanotechnology, infrastructure investment, and local and state aid, needs to be packaged in a multi-year plan to accomplish steady progress. For three decades, the erosion of federal domestic spending has placed a serious burden on the budgets of state and municipal governments, and the spending pressures of global terrorist security and military operations, has exacerbated the situation. Further domestic reductions to fund federal tax decreases and the new found effort to tame the growth in the deficit, will most likely be counter-productive. The continuation of stimulus funding is an opportunity to reverse that trend.

For the Town of Vernon, successful and continued pursuit of the economic development cited in this section enables the town to take advantage of any gradual business expansion and demand for developmental sites, thus greeting the future with a tax base strengthened by those objectives.

### ***Major Initiatives***

#### **General Government:**

The town completed extensive renovations to the third floor of the Town Hall last fiscal year at a cost of \$1,864,873. These improvements included an expanded Town Council Chambers and administrative office. Funding was primarily supported by three state grants. The Town was awarded a \$50,000 Community Investment Act state grant to fund renovations to its second floor finance office and mezzanine. A \$90,000 designation of available Town Capital Nonrecurring funds for these renovations was also approved. Also, \$24,690 was authorized to replace the roof at the Town Hall Annex building utilizing state LOCIP grant funds.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements to town facilities continued, and will proceed with available funds of \$102,272. There were renovations to the Town Clerk's office vault. For the future, there is an allocation of \$19,745 for current modifications; and \$190,000 is available major improvements to increase storage space by expanding the vault.

A \$60,000 appropriation to provide for the acquisition and development of a Geographical Information System (GIS) has been completed and complemented by a \$23,000 recent appropriation to purchase compatible equipment. The Town Council also authorized an appropriation of \$200,000 from available Town Capital Nonrecurring funds to fund an optical fiber infrastructure project that was completed shortly after year-end.

## **Community Development:**

In its continue effort to support and initiate interest in economic development in town, \$90,881 was appropriated to the Economic Development special revenue fund during the year to finance an update to the town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), provide funding to its Downtown Association and for targeted advertising. Annual appropriations to this Fund commenced in 1999 and have funded several property reuse studies, retail façade improvements and the most recent POCD.

The Town received a \$125,000 state grant to conduct an engineering and architectural feasibility study to determine the most effective building improvements Amerbelle Mill, a local industrial employer. In addition, the town secured an additional \$196,000 federal grant to complement these improvements with funding for a roof replacement and additional building improvements. The \$125,000 project was completed last year and the \$196,000 project was recently completed.

The Town has received state grants totaling \$1,200,000 to provide funding for selective site demolition and environmental remediation at the currently vacant Roosevelt Mill located at 215 East Main Street. These grant funds were preceded by a prior year receipt of federal Brownfield cleanup funds utilized for a site evaluation and remediation project recently completed. It is envisioned that the property will be redeveloped for future mixed use. To facilitate this project, the Town established the RMRP Corporation, a separate non-profit entity, to which property liens were assigned, and in turn, Loom City Lofts, a developer secured the liens and obtained title to the property. This work was initiated in January of 2010 and is anticipated to be completed in December of 2010.

The Town was awarded a \$20,000 state grant to fund a feasibility study of the Citizens Block. The town-owned Citizens Block is a primarily vacant commercial and mixed use 1879 building, adjacent to the 1867 senior center building, located next to Town Hall. This study, requiring the use of \$17,303 of Economic Development Funds was completed during the fiscal year.

The Town is in the seventh year of a new housing rehabilitation grant / loan program that utilizes funds derived from former programs that produced loan program income. Participants that meet income requirements are eligible for projects involving owner occupied housing. A total of \$4,694 was expended this past fiscal year, with \$307,471 as the available balance. In May 2006, \$250,000 of this available program income was designated by the Town Council for home ownership activities in the Village Street neighborhood. Of the \$250,000 designation, \$7,265 was expended to date, leaving \$242,735 unexpended. On June 1, 2010, the Town Council reclassified this unexpended designation to fund phase III reconstruction improvements to Prospect Street.

The Town Council approved funding totaling \$182,050 for the demolition of certain foreclosed, blighted or fire damaged properties at Ward, Lawrence and High Streets, due primarily to public safety concerns; in addition to assisting the properties return to a collectable tax status.

### **Public Safety:**

The fire department's 161 members, the largest volunteer force in the state, enable the town to apply the savings from personnel costs to equipment needs. Although the members are not employees, the Town has recognized their commitment to protecting the lives and property of our residents, and has established a Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP). This is a non-qualified employer retirement plan that commenced on January 1, 2000. To attain normal retirement, a minimum of ten years of credited service is required, with maximum credited service of thirty years. Since inception, the Town has made its employer contribution to an investment fund set up exclusively for this program as follows:

| <b>Year</b>       | <b>Employer<br/>Contribution</b> |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2000 through 2007 | \$720,791                        |
| December 31, 2008 | \$83,206                         |
| December 31, 2009 | \$120,129                        |

Roof replacement and bathroom renovations at the Hartford Turnpike company #1 fire station were recently completed at a cost of \$35,535. The fire department also utilized an additional appropriation of \$45,000 for "jaws of life" and related equipment. This equipment has already proven invaluable in recent emergency rescues.

The Town has recently received several federal grants totaling \$149,309 for two police department vehicles, digital video equipment and in-car laptops and cameras; as well as partial grant funding for a hybrid vehicle purchased in the prior year. The Town was also recently awarded a \$300,000 COPS Tech grant to fund a digital Police radio system. In addition, Emergency Management has fully expended a federally funded equipment grants totaling \$17,500.

For the animal control facility, there is a remaining allocation of \$15,410 from a prior year \$58,000 appropriation to enclose the dog runs and expand the shelter; as well as a \$48,100 appropriation to construct an incinerator and \$17,000 for animal control shelter caging.

Recent prior year completed public safety projects include town funding for a police department evidence room and photo lab, replacement of its emergency generator and installation of digital time clocks. Recent prior year grants have funded firefighter and ambulance equipment, fire station improvements and emergency management equipment.

### **Maintenance and Development:**

On November 2, 2004 voters approved a public improvement bond authorization, and since then the Town has issued three general obligation bonds: \$10,300,000 on

February 15, 2007, \$5,000,000 on February 1, 2008 and \$720,000 on February 12, 2009. Bond anticipation notes of \$740,000 were issued on February 3, 2010, and matured June 15, 2010. A new note of \$740,000 was issued on June 15, 2010, and will be permanently financed in January 2011. The authorizations / expenditures are as follows:

| Project                                     | Amount Authorized    | Expended Current Year | Expended Cumulative  |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Roads; sidewalks; and bridge reconstruction | \$ 19,103,000        | \$ 1,268,919          | \$ 15,934,613        |
| Improvements to waste treatment plant       | 1,295,000            | -                     | -                    |
| Improvements to sewer system                | 1,211,000            | -                     | 1,055,536            |
| Issuance costs                              |                      | 8,301                 | 155,946              |
| Accrued note interest                       |                      | 14,398                | 704,910              |
| <b>Total:</b>                               | <b>\$ 21,609,000</b> | <b>\$ 1,291,618</b>   | <b>\$ 17,851,005</b> |

The roadway improvements include the reconstruction / repaving of 22 town roads, replacement of sidewalks, installation of a storm drainage system at the Bolton Lake shores and the renovation of three (3) bridges at Dart Hill Road, West Main Street and Bolton Road. Sidewalks have been constructed at Peterson Road at a cost of \$165,583. The sewer improvement projects have been completed and consist of relining a critical sewer line on Route 30; sewer repairs at twenty (20) various roads; and the replacement of the Dart Hill pump station equipment. The upgrade of the waste treatment plant, to meet or surpass designated nitrogen limits, is in the early stages of design and has yet to commence. As of the winter of 2010, the roadway improvement program is 95% complete. To address the rising pavement costs, the Town continues to apply for offsetting grants, and has been awarded a \$500,000 DECD CDBG grant to upgrade High Street and two \$500,000 DECD CDBG grants to upgrade Prospect Street. The efforts from the Vernon Department of Public Works to complete several road projects, has saved the Town considerable costs.

In addition to the roadway improvement expenditures incurred by the Public Bond Improvements Fund above, the town's Town Aid Road special revenue fund expended \$160,784 during the year, including \$36,127 for paving of Phoenix Street and Dobson Road. In the Town's Capital Nonrecurring Expenditure Fund, current year roadway improvement authorizations totaled \$941,000. Of this amount, \$141,000 will be funded by a state LOCIP grant and \$800,000 will be funded by an additional appropriation approved at fiscal year-end. The State of Connecticut also provided most of the funding for roadway and sidewalk improvements on a portion of Vernon Avenue; the project was completed in the summer of 2009.

Construction work, funded by federal and state grants, continued for the **River Street and Spring Street Bridges**. A \$1,950,000, 80% federal / 20% state grant, funded the replacement of the Spring Street Bridge that has just been completed at an approximate cost of \$1.9 million. The \$2,220,000 River Street Bridge reconstruction project, funded by an 80% federal / 20% state grant, commenced in the Fall of 2009, and has just been completed at a cost of approximately \$1.5 million.



The **Bolton Road Bridge** reconstruction, completed at \$986,754, was partially grant funded, while funding of \$1,182,000 for the replacement of the **Phoenix Street Bridge** was approved by referendum vote in November 2008. Of this amount, \$44,000 of local funding is available, and it is anticipated that a \$1,251,000, 10% state and 80% federal grant will fund the remainder, avoiding the need to issue debt. Redesign costs of \$24,464 for this bridge were incurred during the year, with reconstruction anticipated for 2011.

The Vernon Avenue Bridge was completed during 2010, with final design costs of \$144,227 and construction costs of \$1,256,886. The project was funded by two 80% reimbursable federal grants, with local funds required for the 20% match.

Design costs, estimated at \$240,000, for the **West Main Street Bridge** are 80% federally funded and 20% locally funded through the Public Bond Improvements Fund. \$83,267 has been expended to date. The reconstruction costs are estimated at \$2,160,000; there is an 80% federal grant, and the \$845,000 authorization included in the Public Bond Improvements Fund for design and reconstruction costs will cover the local portion. Construction is anticipated for 2012.

The estimated cost for the replacement of the **Main Street Bridge** over the Tankerhoosen River is \$3,247,000. Funding for the replacement will be by an 80% federal grant, with the remaining 20% locally funded. Local funds currently appropriated total \$250,000, with the remaining sources for the local appropriation to be identified, as a November 2008 referendum to authorize such funding was unsuccessful.

During the fiscal year several appropriations funded the purchase of new refuse and recycling tote containers for the Town's newly implemented automated refuse and single stream recycling program. Available funds in the Town Capital Nonrecurring Fund were utilized to fund the \$279,000 purchase of refuse tote containers; and the \$170,740 purchase of recycling tote containers. These costs are to be reimbursed to the Fund from the General Fund in ensuing fiscal years. In addition, a federal grant was obtained to fund the \$108,756 purchase of additional recycling containers. To support this new program, the Town Council re-designated \$100,000 of available funds in the Town Capital Nonrecurring Fund to fund the purchase of two used automated side-loading refuse / recycling trucks; and authorized the use of Town Capital Nonrecurring Funds to fund the \$214,839 purchase of a new automated side-loading refuse truck. An additional re-designation of \$60,000 was used to construct a new transfer station compactor to handle the additional recyclable collections.

Also during the fiscal year, \$90,036 was expended for eleven GPS chemical control units for use in snow / ice removal. There are several appropriations available in the Town Capital Nonrecurring Fund including \$25,000 for sidewalk renovations and \$40,000 for design of the Dart Hill Road bridge reconstruction project.

The Town continues to address major *rolling stock* demands in an effort to replace equipment and vehicles that have met their useful life. Besides being better equipped to serve the residents of Vernon, a favorable result of this effort is the reduction to overall maintenance budgets for the subsequent year. In fiscal year 2009-2010, the

Town purchased an Animal Control vehicle (\$19,898), a used back hoe for Parks and Recreation (\$44,725), three police cruisers (\$67,500); a used fire department vehicle (\$2,495); a fire department trailer (\$3,633); and a trailer for park and recreation (\$3,789). Also an appropriation of \$27,700 is available for a new Public Works pickup truck. Also, debt service payments of \$207,114 and \$386,535, respectively, were made to prepay the entire balance of lease payments for the acquisition of three (3) new dump trucks and one (1) refuse packer; and for a sweeper, vac-all and a recycling truck. The cost of these items was incorporated into lease purchase agreements of \$476,280 and \$470,000, respectively.

The ambulance services account is in the Special Revenue Fund and a reserve to periodically replace each of the three ambulances is maintained. Reserves, accumulated over the past several years, were used to fund the replacement of all three ambulances. The current reserve balance in the Fund is \$40,000.

**Bolton Lakes Wastewater Disposal:** The Town of Vernon and the neighboring Town of Bolton entered into a consent order with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP) on October 14, 1999, requiring the towns to take the necessary steps to address wastewater disposal alternatives for the Bolton Lakes area. The design and construction costs of a sewer system are estimated to be \$21,959,000, with 29% or \$6,368,000 attributable to Vernon and the remainder to Bolton. Federal and state grants are estimated to offset approximately 52% of the costs, reducing Vernon's share to \$3,066,750, prior to the levy of assessments. Voters in both towns approved a special referendum held on September 27, 2005, regarding ordinances that guarantee funding for the project. Plans and funding applications are now complete. Construction, which is to be phased in over a five-year period to maximize grant-funding sources, commenced in the Bolton area in the spring of 2009, and continued during the current year. Project work is not anticipated to commence in Vernon until 2012.

### **Parks and Recreation:**

Recreation programs remain very popular with our residents as demand and participation increases. The town has 570 acres dedicated to recreation, which consist of 23 parks, 35 miles of trails, two pools, two beaches on lakes providing swimming, a camp, boat launch, picnic areas, and fishing and ice skating. Additionally, the Town has a teen center, numerous playgrounds, baseball and softball diamonds, soccer fields, and tennis and basketball courts. The department is also responsible for maintaining the athletic fields throughout the public school system, which includes a lighted football field and track.

Improvements to Rockville Central Park were recently completed at a cost of \$715,112. The project was funded by federal and state grants. In addition, a \$90,800 federal grant to fund design enhancements in the Talcottville section of town was completed, as did park improvements at Valley Falls Park. Renovations to Horowitz Pool were completed at a cumulative cost of \$61,233 to date. A \$300,000 state Contingency Needs grant to fund renovations at the Community Arts Center commenced last fiscal year with cumulative design costs incurred of \$68,968. An additional \$1,500,000 state

Urban Act grant was recently awarded for construction renovations to the Arts Center. The state also granted the Town a \$283,000 grant to fund restoration of the Vernon Historical Society Grange that was completed during the year. Work continued on the Rockville Downtown and Train Depot and Mill rails-to-trails projects, which are funded by two federal grants totaling \$51,870. Three tree grants totaling \$6,368 were received during the fiscal year to fund replacement of historic trees at Talcott and Henry Parks. The Town Council approved \$4,800 from the Downstream Fund to finance a Baseline Aquatic Study of the Dobsonville, Talcottville, Valley Falls and Eckers Ponds and Walkers Reservoir; and an additional \$6,000 was approved to fund an invasive aquatic weeds treatment at Lower Bolton Lake and neighboring water bodies. Recent prior years' park improvements include replacement of restrooms at Valley Falls Park, renovations to Valley Falls Barn, trail improvements, improvements at Talcott Park, and sandblasting, painting and replacing the filter system at the Community Pool. In FY 2011, the Parks Department expended \$11,400 for new refuse and recycling receptacles.

### Education:

On March 29, 2005, voters approved three referenda questions for the renovations to school buildings and facilities and since then the Town has issued three school bonds: \$2,515,000 on February 15, 2007; \$16,040,000 on February 1, 2008; and \$10,155,000 on February 12, 2009. Bond anticipation notes of \$2,970,000 were issued on February 3, 2010, and matured June 15, 2010. A new note of \$2,970,000 was issued on June 15, 2010, and will be permanently financed in January, 2011. The authorizations and expenditures are as follows:

| Project  | Amount Authorized    | Expended Current Year | Expended Cumulative  |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Rockville High School - Additions &amp; renovations</b> | <b>\$ 34,657,000</b> | <b>\$ 1,171,833</b>   | <b>\$ 28,247,857</b> |
| <b>Vernon Center Middle School - Renovations</b>           | <b>11,519,000</b>    | <b>30,391</b>         | <b>10,727,053</b>    |
| Center Road School   | 4,420,600            | 2,724,935             | 4,245,802            |
| Lake Street School   | 5,828,800            | 23,442                | 4,953,588            |
| Maple Street School  | 3,743,200            | 1,897,026             | 2,626,236            |
| Northeast School   | 3,556,000            | 1,718,964             | 2,921,312            |
| Skinner Road School  | 4,597,400            | 21,831                | 4,007,687            |
| <b>Total Elementary Schools - Additions and renovation</b> | <b>22,146,000</b>    | <b>6,386,198</b>      | <b>18,754,625</b>    |
| Issuance costs   |                      | 35,297                | 254,466              |
| Accrued note interest                                      |                      | 28,502                | 1,014,030            |
| <b>Total:</b>  | <b>\$ 68,322,000</b> | <b>\$ 7,652,221</b>   | <b>\$ 58,998,031</b> |

A school building commission that was formed as of December 6, 2005, has oversight of the projects, and works closely with the architect, a construction management firm, and the administration. The recorded state progress payment reimbursements received as of June 30, 2010, is \$23,776,223.

In addition to the school bond improvement authorization, a \$333,000 prior year appropriation in the Education Capital Nonrecurring Expenditure Fund to repair and repaint the Board of Education administration building continued during the year and is nearly completed. Project costs to date are \$272,878. A year-end transfer of \$394,000 from the fiscal year 2009/10 education operating budget to the Education Capital Nonrecurring Fund provides current available resources in this Fund for future education projects totaling \$527,779. The Town Capital Nonrecurring Fund provided \$39,625 to fund the recently completed Lake Street School ADA playscape project.

### **Long-Term Financial Planning**

The Town did not issue any long-term debt during the fiscal year, but intends to permanently finance \$6,270,000 of short-term outstanding debt in January 2011. This is intended to be the final general obligation bond issue to fund and complete the remaining public and school bond improvement projects, which commenced in fiscal year 2005. The Town Council authorized the prepayment of three capital leases by utilizing \$701,298 of available funds in the Town Capital Nonrecurring Fund.

We will continue to revise the six-year capital improvement plan to address community demands, understanding that the budgetary constraints imposed by varied economic factors requires the diligent pursuit of grants and alternative resources to fund capital needs.

### **Relevant Financial Policies**

The Town's financial policies have been applied consistently with the prior year and had no notable current year effect on the financial statements. There were no developments at the State level that impacted the current year financial statements.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

This annual report consists of a series of financial statements. The statement of net assets and the statement of activities (Exhibits A and B, respectively) provide information about the activities of the Town as a whole and present a longer-term view of the Town's finances. Fund financial statements are presented in Exhibits C to J. For governmental activities, these statements tell how these services were financed in the short-term as well as what remains for future spending. Fund financial statements also report the Town's operations in more detail than the government-wide statements by providing information about the Town's most significant funds. The remaining statements provide financial information about activities for which the Town acts solely as a trustee or agent for the benefit of those outside of the government.

### ***Government-Wide Financial Statements***

The analysis of the Town as a whole begins with Exhibit A and B, found in the Basic Financial Statements section of this report. The statement of net assets and the statement of activities report information about the Town as a whole and about its

activities for the current period. These statements include all assets and liabilities using the accrual basis of accounting, which is similar to the accounting used by most private-sector companies. All of the current year's revenues and expenses are taken into account regardless of when cash is received or paid.

These two statements report the Town's net assets and changes in them. The Town's net assets, the difference between assets and liabilities, are one way to measure the Town's financial health, or financial position. Over time, increases or decreases in the Town's net assets are one indicator of whether its financial health is improving or deteriorating. The reader needs to consider other non-financial factors, however, such as changes in the Town's property tax base and the condition of the Town's capital assets, to assess the overall health of the Town.

In the statement of net assets and the statement of activities, we divide the Town into two types of activities:

- *Governmental activities* — Most of the Town's basic services are reported here, including education, public safety, maintenance and development of streets and buildings, sanitation, human services, recreation, public improvements, community planning and development, and general administration. Property taxes, charges for services, and state and federal grants finance most of these activities.
- *Business - type activities* — The Town charges a fee to customers to help it cover all or most of the cost of certain services it provides. The Town's operation of the wastewater treatment facility and rentals at Center 375 are reported here.

### ***Fund Financial Statements***

The fund financial statements begin with Exhibit C and provide detailed information about the most significant funds — not the Town as a whole. Some funds are required to be established by Charter. However, the Town Council establishes many other funds to help control and manage financial activities for particular purposes (like the Ambulance Services Fund, Sewer Assessments Fund, and Cemetery Operations) or to show that it is meeting legal responsibilities for using funds for those purposes, and other money (like grants received for education from the State and Federal governments and accounted for in the Special Revenue Fund). The Town's funds are divided into three categories; governmental, proprietary and fiduciary.

- *Governmental funds (Exhibits C, D and E)* — Most of the Town's basic services are reported in governmental funds, which focus on how money flows into and out of those funds and the balances left at year-end that are available for spending. These funds are reported using an accounting method called modified accrual accounting, which measures cash and all other financial assets that can readily be converted to cash. The governmental fund statements provide a detailed short-term view of the Town's general government operations and the basic services it provides. Governmental fund information helps you determine whether there are more or fewer financial resources that can be spent in the near future to finance the Town's programs. The relationship (or differences) between governmental activities (reported in the statement of net

assets and the statement of activities) and governmental funds is described in a reconciliation at the bottom of the fund financial statements.

- *Proprietary funds (Exhibits F, G and H)* — When the Town charges customers for the services it provides, whether to outside customers or to other units of the Town, these services are generally reported in proprietary funds. Proprietary funds are reported in the same way that all activities are reported in the statement of net assets and the statement of activities. In fact, the Town's enterprise funds (a component of proprietary funds) are the same as the business-type activities reported in the government-wide statements, but provide more detail and additional information, such as cash flows, for proprietary funds. Internal service funds (the other component of proprietary funds) are used to report activities that provide supplies and services for the Town's other programs and activities — such as the Town's Data Processing Internal Service Fund.
- *Fiduciary funds (Exhibits I and J)* — The Town is the trustee, or fiduciary, for its employees' pension plans. It is also responsible for other assets that, because of a trust arrangement, can be used only for the trust beneficiaries. All of the Town's fiduciary activities are reported in separate statements of fiduciary net assets and changes in fiduciary net assets. These activities are excluded from the Town's other financial statements because the Town cannot use these assets to finance its operations. The Town is responsible for ensuring that the assets reported in these funds are used for their intended purposes.

### ***Supplementary Schedules***

The schedules that follow the exhibits provide additional detail of revenue and expenditures for the General Fund.

## **CONTACTING THE TOWN'S FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

The financial section of the annual report is designed to provide citizens, taxpayers, customers, investors, and creditors with a general overview of the Town's finances and to show the Town's accountability for the money it receives. If you have questions about this section or need additional financial information, contact the Finance Department, Town of Vernon, 14 Park Place, Vernon, Connecticut, 06066.

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## TOWN CLERK/REGISTRAR OF VITAL STATISTICS

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**DEPARTMENT HEAD:**

Bernice K. Dixon, CCTC; CMC Town Clerk

**DEPARTMENT LOCATION:**

Town Hall Memorial Building, First Floor, Room 2

**RESPONSIBILITIES, DUTIES AND ANNUAL SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:**

Over the years, The Town Clerk's is a direct link between the residents of the community and their government. The Clerk is responsible for the entire recorded history of the town and its people in his or her care. The Mayor, Town Council, Town Administrator, all Town departments and residents/taxpayers are serviced without exception.

Connecticut State Statutes and the Town Charter govern the duties and responsibilities of the Office of the Town Clerk/Registrar of Vital Statistics. The Town Clerk's Office recorded and processed 5,907 land record documents pertaining to real estate, including 716 property transfers, from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010. These records encompass 58 volumes and approximately 20,300 pages. In addition, 108 maps, 67 veterans' discharges, 416 notary related transactions, 88 trade names, and 38 liquor permits were filed, recorded and processed. There were 500 sporting licenses, 2003 dog licenses, and 3 kennel licenses issued. The office is actively involved in the preparation and the conducting of all elections, primaries, and referenda of which there were 2. Campaign finance reports are also filed with and maintained by the Town Clerk's Office.

The Town Clerk in Vernon is, by virtue of the State Statutes, also the Registrar of Vital Statistics. In this capacity during this fiscal year, this office issued and/or received from other towns 635 births, 220 marriages, 0 Civil Unions, 345 deaths, 285 burial permits, 88 cremation permits, and 0 disinterment permits. This office also issued 3756 certified copies of birth, marriage and death records.

**SERVICES OFFERED:**

- Absentee Ballot Issuance
- Dog License Issuance
- Election Preparation
- Land and Map Recordation
- Marriage/Civil Union License Issuance
- Notary Public Services/Registration/Certification
- Schedule of Regular Meeting Date Filings
- Sporting License Issuance
- State Conveyance Tax Return Processing
- Trade Name Registration
- Liquor Permit Registration
- Veteran Registration
- Certified Copies of Vital (Birth, Marriage, Civil Union, Death) Records
- Voter Registration/Identification Cards



**RECORDS MAINTAINED AND INDEXED FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION:**

- Burial Book/Sexton's Returns
- Election/Referendum Statistics
- Elected and Appointed Officials Data
- Land and Map Records
- Liquor Permits
- Minutes and Agendas of Town Meetings
- Town Code of Ordinances
- Trade Name/DBA Records
- Veteran Discharge Records
- Vital Statistics Indexes
- Writs and Claim Notification

**REPOSITORY OF:** Miscellaneous Agreements and Contracts, Annual Reports, Budgets, Campaign Finance Filings, and Other Miscellaneous Correspondence, Minutes and Information.

# EDUCATION

**Superintendent:** Richard J. Paskiewicz

**Assistant Superintendent:** Deborah Murasso

**Members of Board of Education:**

Anne Fischer, Chairperson; Dean Houle, Vice Chairperson;  
George Apel; Laura Bush; David Kemp; Susan Norlie-Hesnan; Kyle Percy, Vicky Rispoli;  
Paul Stansel

**Responsibilities and Duties:** The authority, the duties and the responsibilities of the Board have been established by the Connecticut statutes, federal laws, and the town charter. The Board of Education scheduled regular meetings on the second and fourth Mondays of each month with the exception of July, when it did not meet, and August and December when it met only once. In addition, Board committees met throughout the year to deal with budget, policy, facilities, and negotiations.

**School Data:**

The following is a list of the five elementary schools and in parenthesis is the October 1, 2009 enrollment for each school:

- Center Road School (490)
- Lake Street School (314)
- Maple Street School (325)
- Northeast School (281)
- Skinner Road School (352)

All elementary schools contain grades Preschool -5. In addition, Center Road School also has a system- wide preschool program for students with special needs.

There are two schools that enroll students in grades 6-12.

- Vernon Center Middle School (802) accommodates students in grades 6-8.
- Rockville High School (1139) accommodates students in grades 9-12.

The total enrollment for the district was 3703. The total budget for the 2009-2010 school year was \$45,835,932.

**Student Achievement**

As a result of local testing policies and state and federal mandates, Vernon students in grades 3 through 8 and grade 10 participated in a demanding scope of testing experiences. The careful, accurate analysis of test results provided the basis for the improvement of teaching and learning. *School Instructional Plans (SIP)* and the *District Improvement Plan (DIP)* documented the specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely (*SMART*) goals that became the focus of targeted actions to maximize achievement for all students and to minimize achievement disparities for subgroups of students. During the 2009-2010 school year, the following trends were reflected in district testing:

**...On the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT):** With baseline data established in 2006 with the first administration of the CMT Fourth Generation, evidence of incremental and significant growth was demonstrated in a comparison of student achievement from 2006 to 2010. Of the twenty (20) data points compared for percent of students at/above proficient, there is evidence of district wide improvement in 11 (or 55%) of them.

|                | Mathematics           |      | Reading               |      | Writing               |      |
|----------------|-----------------------|------|-----------------------|------|-----------------------|------|
|                | % at/above proficient |      | % at/above proficient |      | % at/above proficient |      |
|                | 2006                  | 2010 | 2006                  | 2010 | 2006                  | 2010 |
| <b>Grade 3</b> | 85.6                  | 79.9 | 79.0                  | 64.7 | 82.3                  | 75.0 |
| <b>Grade 4</b> | 81.4                  | 81.4 | 74.8                  | 62.6 | 85.6                  | 88.4 |
| <b>Grade 5</b> | 79.1                  | 87.8 | 75.9                  | 73.9 | 86.2                  | 88.9 |
| <b>Grade 6</b> | 78.3                  | 85.7 | 70.0                  | 87.9 | 83.3                  | 84.3 |
| <b>Grade 7</b> | 78.7                  | 82.5 | 79.9                  | 80.7 | 78.9                  | 71.1 |
| <b>Grade 8</b> | 79.7                  | 86.1 | 71.0                  | 79.6 | 80.3                  | 75.2 |

**...On the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT):** In three of the four areas tested on the grade 10 CAPT, the percent of Vernon students scoring at/above proficient level exceeded the District Reference Group (DRG) averages; in two of the four areas tested, the percent of students scoring at/above proficient exceeded the State averages.

***Percent of Students At / Above Proficient***

|               | Mathematics | Science | Reading | Writing |
|---------------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Vernon</b> | 77.9        | 84.7    | 83.7    | 82.6    |
| <b>DRG G</b>  | 77.4        | 83.2    | 83.1    | 86.7    |
| <b>State</b>  | 78.8        | 81.5    | 82.9    | 86.2    |

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**...On the Federal No Child Left Behind – Adequate Yearly Progress Report:**

According to federal legislation, approximately 8 in 10 of all students and subgroups of 40 or more students (economically disadvantaged, minority, students with disabilities, and English language learners) are required to achieve the proficiency targets of *No Child Left Behind*. Based on these higher academic content standards, four Vernon schools achieved AYP. Lake Street School met the ambitious targets where approximately 8 in 10 students scored at/above proficient in reading and math. And Center Road School, Maple Street School, and Rockville High School achieved AYP through the “Safe Harbor” provision by reducing by 10% the percent of students who achieved at/below basic from 2009 to 2010. Three Vernon schools (NES, SRS, VCMS) and the District did not achieve AYP.

**AYP Status for 2009-10 (based on the spring 2010 administration of the CMT/CAPT)**

| School                      | AYP Status             |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Lake Street School          | Achieved               |
| Maple Street School         | Achieved "Safe Harbor" |
| Center Road School          | Achieved "Safe Harbor" |
| Rockville High School       | Achieved "Safe Harbor" |
| Northeast School            | Not Achieved           |
| Skinner Road School         | Not Achieved           |
| Vernon Center Middle School | Not Achieved           |
| District                    | Not Achieved           |

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### **Professional Development**

To ensure that Vernon educators are provided with high quality, rigorous professional development experiences linked to advancing student learning, the Vernon Public Schools planned and implemented a variety of meaningful and relevant inservice activities to address individual and department needs; to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices; and to achieve the SMART goals of our *District Improvement Plan*. What follows is a summary of the professional development activities provided during the 2009-10 school year:

#### ***\* Staff/Professional Development Days***

A combination of activities that supported the SMART goals of *School Instructional Plans* and the *District Improvement Plan* were planned and facilitated by members of Vernon's administrative team on the four scheduled staff/professional development days as outlined on the 2009-10 school calendar: September 3-4, 2009, November 3, 2009, and January 19, 2010. Topics included *Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI)*, *Standard-Based Curriculum Development*, *Common Formative Assessment*, *Using Technology to Improve Teaching and Learning*, and *Training in the Implementation of a K-5 Reading/Language Arts Anthology Program*.

#### ***\* Teacher Induction Series***

Supporting new teachers in the critical induction years and through the transition from the *BEST (Beginning Educator Support Training)* to the *TEAM (Teacher Educator And Mentoring)* Program was the focus of a series of after school support sessions provided for first and second year teachers. The purpose of these sessions was

- to keep new teachers informed of the requirements and professional responsibilities they have toward certification;
- to share updates from the Connecticut State Department of Education TEAM Program;
- to share and discuss the SMART goals of Vernon's District Improvement Plan;
- to guide new teachers through Vernon's Teacher Evaluation and Professional Growth Plan;
- to discuss elements of effective teaching, classroom management, cooperative learning, lesson mastery, positive expectations, and differentiated instruction; and
- to provide new teachers a forum to network with their colleagues.

#### ***\* Administrator Evaluation and Professional Development***

Training in *Sexual Harassment* and *Progressive Discipline* was provided to the members of Vernon's administrative team.

**\* *Leadership and Learning Center***

To support the goals of our *District Improvement Plan*, we partnered with the *Leadership and Learning Center* to provide high quality professional development in the "*practices of improving schools*." And on *October 27-28, 2009*, fifty members of our staff participated in training to refine their skills in the implementation of *Data Driven Decision Making/Data Teams*.

**\* *Embedded Professional Development – Data Teams***

All staff participated in monthly meetings to practice and implement the data team protocol: identifying a skill or competency giving the greatest number of students difficulty; discussing ways to more effectively teach to that area of weakness; selecting a strategy or solution that they believe has the greatest potential for impact; and committing as a team to experimenting with the new strategy, assessing its impact, and being ready to report back on student results at the next meeting.

***Curriculum Development***

To continue the process of aligning local curriculum with state frameworks and of identifying a limited set of learning objectives for each grade and for each subject (the "Safety Net" curriculum), Vernon educators participated in summer work to develop new or revised curriculum for the following courses: *Business Law and Management*, *Graphics Arts I and II*, *Electronics*, *Gr.6-8 Language Arts Curriculum Mapping*, and *Spanish/French IVB*.

**Visual Arts:**

Vernon Art students in Grades 5, 8 and Rockville High School improved their achievement in art vocabulary knowledge from 33% to 77%.

The Rockville Public Library continued to confirm its commitment to the arts and community by hosting an extensive student art exhibit and reception during March, which is Youth Art Month. The Vernon Board of Education continues to expand its permanent Art collection of student works, which can be viewed in its meeting chambers.

The new collection of Vernon's student art work at the Rockville Juvenile Courthouse has promoted students' visual arts achievements and has been a very successful collaboration of The Vernon Art Department and the Rockville Juvenile Courthouse.

Twelve middle and high school students received awards from the Connecticut Scholastic Art Awards program. Over 1500 pieces of student artwork were submitted to this juried, statewide visual arts competition, while only 350 were selected.

Rockville High School enrolled 41% of its students in Visual Arts classes. The sustained enrollment demonstrates students' continued interest in gaining knowledge and skills in the visual arts.

The Connecticut Association of Schools presented arts awards to Grade 5 students from each Vernon elementary school and a senior from Rockville High School. These

students were selected as recipients based on their leadership, outstanding performance and abilities in the visual arts.

41% of Rockville High School students were enrolled in Art classes over the course of this school year and achieved successes in a variety of ways. A successful *Empty Bowls* project raised over \$500 donated to Rockville's Soup Kitchen. The collaborative project created and originated from the Art & Family and Consumer Science departments led students to cook and serve soups from bowls created by RHS students and staff. Senior, Nathan Ouellette, was selected as the designer and artist for the RHS 2010 Graduation cover. Senior, Kevin Anton was selected as the designer and artist for RHS 2010 - 11 student handbook cover.

Twenty-five Rockville High School Art students participated in 4 workshops at the invitation of the University of Hartford Art School during the course of the school year. The full day studio and gallery opportunities were provided by the Savings Bank of Manchester Foundation grant to the Art School.

Vernon Art staff worked with the Connecticut State Department of Education to participate in the Department of Education's *ArtMusica* summer professional development institute.

The Vernon Education Foundation assisted in funding the "Portrait Showcase" at VCMS through their grant funding program. Visual arts, Technology Education and Administrative staff created and implemented this project with students to make life size self-portraits out of wood, and they now hang on the walls of VCMS. The project exemplifies the power of the visual arts to transform a community in a most positive way.

The Center Road School PTO funded an Artist-in-residence workshop for 100 Grade 5 students this past fall. The artist, David Johnson, taught students about the value of keeping a visual journal and led them through a printmaking technique process and creations. The students' work was exhibited at Center Road's Fine Arts Night in May.

### **Music:**

The Rockville High School Music Department performed three concerts involving the symphony band, jazz band, choir, pops ensemble and various soloists. The marching band hosted the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Festival of Bands. They also participated in 6 home football games, 8 competitions and other civic events. Additionally, they performed in the Hartford Veteran's Day Parade, from which they were honored with best high school band in the parade, and the Vernon Memorial Day Parade.

Ten RHS band and chorus members were selected from auditions to participate in the Eastern Region High School Music Festival. A chorus student was accepted from auditions to perform in the All-State Chorus. The addition of the Rockville High School new auditorium has provided the program with an outstanding performance and audience space. A concert was held in March that included the musical instrumental and vocal performing groups from throughout the district. The RHS chorus invited members of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade chorus from each elementary school and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade chorus from VCMS to join in the performance of two songs. Additionally, Grade 8 band members joined the RHS band in the performance of one number. The band concluded their year at the Adult Education and RHS graduation ceremonies. Throughout the year

many chorus members were heard performing the National Anthem at school events and community events.

Four VCMS students were selected from auditions to participate in the Eastern Region Middle School Music Festival. VCMS marching band and color guard students collaborated with the RHS marching band to learn marching band techniques, and both participated in the Memorial Day parade. Many VCMS students performed in the Ensembles Concert, the Select Chorus, the Flute Choir, the Jazz Band, and the Endangered Instrument Ensemble, *Dino Beasts*. Instrumentalists also performed at the annual Art Exhibit "Opening night" for students and families at the Rockville Library. Spring concerts were held in May & June with performances by VCMS bands and choruses.

Each of the five elementary schools held Winter Concerts and Fine Arts Nights in May. The concerts highlighted various features and performances from the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade chorus and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade band. The Fine Arts Nights are planned in collaboration with Art staff who present extensive student Art exhibits throughout each of the buildings.

Music and Art staffs have worked together this year to highlight Vernon's Fine Arts Program and communicate the value of students' arts education, learning and experiences to the community.

**CENTER ROAD SCHOOL:** Mrs. Mary Jo Myslinski, (*Retired January 22, 2010*)/Jocelyn Poglitsch, Principal

Center Road School enjoyed a productive and successful 2009-2010 school year with a continued emphasis on student achievement. Staff continued to work hard to improve academic achievement through professional development, the implementation of our School Instructional Plans, and the practices of Data Driven Decision Making/Data Teams. The collaboration of regular education, special education, and reading teachers is an integral part of the DDDM/Data Team model at Center Road School. Through this process, we are building a repertoire of successful teaching strategies and monitoring student progress closely. Our teachers strive to implement our standards based curricula with fidelity. Reading was especially challenging this year because we rolled out our new program, Treasures. Teachers as well as students learned a lot. On an ongoing basis, teachers assess their students and use the information to make instructional decisions that help the children achieve our academic goals. We continued to learn about and refine the implementation of Connecticut's Response to Intervention model, Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI), which helped us become even better at supporting children's needs. Our Mastery Test results and our ongoing data reflect that our efforts are successful. This year, we once again met the "No Child Left Behind" AYP guidelines.

Several programs and practices continued to support student learning on a daily basis. This year the district implemented the use of Universal Screenings. During the fall, winter, and spring, students in grades K-5 were assessed in literacy and math. The results provided us with information about students that were at risk and offered the teachers an opportunity to intervene. Programs such as Great Leaps and Lexia are an example of the programs used to support our intervention efforts. During the months of March, April, and May, students in grades 1-5 needing extra support in math were offered the opportunity to participate in an after-school Math Academy. Classroom

teachers worked with small groups of students twice a week for 45 minutes to provide extra practice with math facts and problem solving. Additionally, the use of paraprofessionals at all grade levels allowed us to work with individuals and small groups to meet students' needs. Center Road School also offered learning opportunities that go beyond the curriculum. These included Vernon Reads, Math Olympiads, Invention Convention, and accelerated reader.

Extracurricular activities continued to round out the children's school experience. They had the opportunity to participate in Safety Patrol, Service Club, Roadrunners Jogging Club, Writers Club, the school newspaper, the yearbook, chorus, and band. In addition, several fifth grade students participated in the CAS sponsored Leadership Conference and Marine Science Day. After school, several intramural activities including soccer, basketball, and softball were offered to fourth and fifth grade boys and girls.

Our character education/behavior improvement program, "Be the Best That You Can Be", remained an important component of Center Road's educational experience. In addition to regular morning meetings in all classrooms, we had school wide meetings monthly that introduced the character trait of the month, emphasized community service, and highlighted student accomplishments. Our psychologist and social worker continued to present lessons on conflict/resolution, anti-bullying, and team building through the use of a program called Second Step. Our low elements course and equipment, made possible by the Greater Hartford Jaycees through a grant, was used throughout the year as our low elements curriculum was implemented. Our Community Mentor Program continued to provide mentors who helped build self esteem and strong character. All of these activities supported and enhanced our "Be The Best That You Can Be" program.

Parental involvement continued to be an integral component of Center Road's success. The Center Road School PTO actively supported our students and teachers in a number of different ways. They sponsored several cultural programs, supplemented the cost of field trips for each grade level, hosted evening activities for families such as the Ice Cream Social and the Scholastic Book Fair, maintained an ongoing reading program for students, conducted fundraisers, and coordinated countless hours of volunteers for classrooms and the library. In addition, parents also helped with the annual review of our Parental Involvement Policy. Rockville Bank, our business partner, promoted parental involvement by providing each family with a calendar magnet, to keep handy on their refrigerators that highlighted the school's events. Part of the strength of Center Road School comes from the valued support and involvement of our parents. Thanks to a dedicated hardworking staff committed to the overall well-being of its students, children who practiced responsibility and cooperation, and parents who stayed involved, Center Road School had a successful 2009-2010 school year.

#### **LAKE STREET SCHOOL - Mr. Robert Testa, Principal**

The Lake Street School learning community completed a successful year with a continued emphasis on academic and social growth. The following are highlights from the 2009-2010 school year:



Lake Street School successfully completed year 1 of the School-wide Positive Behavior Support Training Series. Our Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Team attended professional learning opportunities throughout the school year. As a result, we revised our mission statement, *At Lake Street School, we are a community of learners that treat each other with respect, take responsibility for our own learning, cooperate with others and strive for a safe and positive school for all*, defined our school expectations, (**Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Cooperative, Be Safe**), developed lesson plans, established our "Pride" point system, created a behavior matrix, and a roll out plan for staff, students, and families to be implemented at the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year.

An emphasis on student learning continued to be the primary target of all instructional practices. All staff members were involved in the following goals:

1. Deepen our district's understanding of SRBI.(Scientific Research Based Interventions)
2. Strengthen Core Instruction and Tier I Interventions.
3. Implement Universal Screenings in K-6 for Math and Reading

The implementation of research-based effective teaching strategies and interventions impacted student learning. All teachers closely monitored student learning. The weekly progress monitoring probes proved to be highly effective. Close monitoring of student learning allowed us to adjust instruction to best meet the needs of our learners. The collection and analyzing of student performance data drove our instructional practices. This approach to teaching and learning benefited student growth in the areas of literacy and mathematical reasoning.

The Lake Street School community proved to be active throughout the entire year. Monthly school wide morning meetings led by our grade 5 "Student Leaders" enhanced our school community. School wide community service projects benefited local agencies and Vernon families in need.

The school/family partnership remained an integral part of our learning community. The PTO actively supported students and teachers in a number of different ways. The PTO's education committee continued to enrich classroom learning by providing curricular based assembly programs throughout the year. The PTO also supported literacy at LSS by providing monthly "Read at Home" calendars and incentives for completing independent reading. "Family Fun Nights" were enjoyed by all community members. Parent volunteers assisted within our classrooms helping all children experience success. We are grateful of the many significant contributions that have been made as a result of the strong school/family partnership.

#### **MAPLE STREET SCHOOL - Dr. Lois Possell, Principal**

During the 2009-2010 school year, Maple Street School continued to strive to meet all of the academic and social needs of its students. This included a mix of both continued practices and new programs and activities.

Maple Street School created new ways to highlight the principles of a Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) school. Revolving around four main expectations - **Be safe,**

Everyone cares, Always respectful, Responsible – student behavior was closely monitored. A new check-in, check-out system and refined behavioral interventions helped support students. At the same time, whole-school reward days and other daily, weekly, and monthly incentives were added to highlight the positive behavior of our students.

Academically, Maple Street School looked to build on the strong performance of its students in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade on the mathematics portion of the 2009 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT). For the 2010 administration, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) was attained in mathematics, while Maple Street students continued to perform well in writing. Many new systems were put in place to help improve students' reading performance, including universal screenings, progress monitoring, new interventions, and implementation of the district's new reading series. Maple Street School attained AYP in reading via the Safe Harbor provision

Maple Street School continued to provide other opportunities for student growth including a school musical for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, after-school reading tutoring for second grade students, and extended kindergarten programming. Volunteers from the Vernon Reads Program, which paired senior citizens with first grade students, continued to work with students to support their reading achievement.

Maple Street School will continue to search for innovative ways to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of a very diverse population.

**NORTHEAST SCHOOL** - Mrs. Melissa DeLoreto, Principal (*Resigned January 1, 2010*)/Mr. Michael DeBellis – Acting Principal

The 2009-2010 school year was productive, successful and focused on student achievement. The school continued its traditions of student academic success, character development and a "family-friendly" environment. Our "Kids Under Construction" organizational structure continues to guide programs and policies. Its three major components SOAR (See Our Amazing Readers), Enrichment and Pride and Spirit were active throughout the year. Our motto was "Get Wild About Reading" using a jungle theme. Emphasis on reading did not stop with the SOAR program. Northeast School had three extremely successful family reading nights. Families enjoyed the evening by reading, being read to, learning reading strategies and then capping it off with a pizza dinner. All families leave the night with books to add to their home libraries. Early reading success was emphasized through Early Intervention for problem readers, sustained silent reading, matching individual reading abilities to appropriate books, and involvement with Vernon Reads, a program in which Vernon seniors volunteered after school hours to assist struggling readers.

Our Pride and Spirit component remained active as we had monthly "Spirit Days" so students had a chance to show off their school pride. Last year some of our "Spirit Day" themes included; Crazy Hair Day, Dress-up Day, Hat Day, and School Color Day. To add enrichment into the students' year Northeast School continued to have a school-wide science fair that included over 80 entries! We also offered a three week enrichment program for third, fourth, and fifth graders classed TLC, where students had to sign-up for various enrichment activities.

This past year the staff at Northeast School began training in Positive Behavior Support (PBIS). Eight staff members attended 6 days of training in this exciting system to improve the climate of the school. The entire staff was continuously updated, and full implementation of this program will begin in the 2010-2011 school year.

In keeping with our tradition of strong family involvement, many “whole school community” activities were conducted jointly with our PTO this year. Open House welcomed parents to the school and provided an overview of curriculum. The Ice Cream Social gave families the opportunity to gather with each other and staff in an informal setting. Our Family Dance gave everyone a chance to show off their “moves” on the dance floor. The Pizza Night/Science Fair involved voluntary presentations by more than 85 students. The Holiday Program included songs from various cultures and nations. Northeast School’s annual Fun Fair allowed students and parents the opportunity to play games, win prizes and even dunk their teachers and principal.

#### **SKINNER ROAD SCHOOL – Mr. Matthew Wlodarczyk, Principal**

Over the years, Skinner Road School had demonstrated improvement in reading, writing and math in all grades assessed on the CMT. This has been done by the hard work of the teachers and support staff members who have focused their instructional strategies and measured their effectiveness through the DDDM/DT model. During the 2009 administration of the CMTs, Skinner Road School achieved safe harbor by reducing the number of children at or below basic by 10% and good progress at an additional indicator (writing).

The Vernon Public Schools responded to the CT response to intervention mandate described as Scientifically Research Based Interventions. Universal screening of all students 3 times per year in reading and mathematics was implemented and the results were interpreted. Also, a new reading/language arts program was adopted across the entire district in the 2009-2010 school year. Standards-based curricular units and common assessments in reading/language arts are being created during the 2010-2011 school year.

During the 2009-2010 school year, more time was spent in grade level (rather than Vertical teams) to assist teachers with implementation of SRBI and the new reading program. Teachers in K-2 teachers work with their students in anticipation of and preparation for the CMT. Data is disaggregated and analyzed based on subgroups and instruction is adjusted accordingly. Special education services are provided in the regular education classroom unless a specific need cannot be addressed there. Students are benefiting by the team teaching model and effective use of resources. In the areas assessed for AYP the school continued to outperform in Grade 3 (math and writing), Grade 5 (writing), and have showed continuous growth in Grade 4 (math, reading, and writing) and Grade 5 (math). On our School Instructional Plan continues to set high standards for all students with a targeted emphasis at our free and reduced population.

During the 2010-2011 school year, we have begun the process of “Instructional Rounds” to focus our work, providing coherence and continuous improvement in instruction through ongoing analyses and learning. We continue working together to make instructional improvements and are ready to meet the challenges ahead of us.

Skinner Road School has participated in two inter district grant opportunities exposing our students to students from other towns. Additionally, the school houses the English as a Second Language program for half of the town. This program serves to increase the cultural diversity of the student population. The school also has an economically diverse population. Financial assistance for educational opportunities such as field trips and after school programs is given as needed. Staff and PTO have supported numerous students with scholarships to attend summer camps. During the November, December, and February holiday breaks, food, clothing and gifts are donated and distributed to many families in need.

Students have equal access to wonderful learning experiences regardless of their racial, ethnic or economic status. During the 2009-2010 school year there was a continued emphasis on physical activity. All students in the school have been invited to participate in the "Walk-to-School" days which have had tremendous participation. This "Walk-to-School" provides high visibility of our diverse school community, and an opportunity to enjoy the beauty of our surroundings. Students and staff feel a real sense of camaraderie when beginning their day with a walk to school!

The Skinner Road School PTO was successful in their efforts of making major improvements in the landscape around the school - installing new gardens and removing old plantings. The community is filled with many very dedicated parents who support the academic success and social and emotional growth of the students!

**VERNON CENTER MIDDLE SCHOOL** - Dr. Beth Katz, Principal  
Mr. James Harrison, Assistant Principal  
Mr. Jason Magao, Assistant Principal

We began the school year with the knowledge that we made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) through the Safe Harbor Provision of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). We made significant growth with all of our subgroup populations in reading and math. As a school, we achieved the target goals in reading and math. Our goal this year was to maintain our AYP status.

The many pieces of CALI, **Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative** began to fall into place. As we explored the requirements of SRBI (**Scientific Research-Based Interventions**), we realized the importance of effective Tier I Core Instruction. The curriculum needs to be built on priority standards that guide instruction for each grade level. All students need to demonstrate proficiency in the standards or else receive additional support. Instructional techniques need to support various learning modalities and provide differentiated instruction. The data teams changed focus this year after they met with the consultant who provided technical assistance. Data teams developed curriculum-based common formative assessments. That was probably one of the most significant shifts this year. Data teams moved from measuring CMT-based skills to measuring curriculum-based standards. As a school, we are learning to administer reading and math screens, to triangulate data, and to provide interventions based on the data. Terms associated with progress monitoring - trend line, aim line, etc. now have meaning. Tier II interventions were provided during the school day as well as in after school tutorials.

Vernon Center Middle School also embraced the behavior side of SRBI through PBS (**Positive Behavior Support**). Our focus this year was on Tier I instruction and

recognition. We identified our core values (SOAR – Safety, Organization, Achievement, Respect and Responsibility), taught them explicitly to the students, provided recognition when appropriate, and retraining when necessary. There were weekly recognitions, quarterly activities, the CMT incentives, EG recognitions, Breakfast of Champions, etc. We took what we have always done, reinforced the values, and added more recognitions.

### **Grade 6 Highlights**

Highlights from this year included the annual VCMS geography bee which was held in early January and won by a sixth grade student. That student qualified, and competed in the Connecticut State Geographic Bee held at Central Connecticut State University.

Our students gained cultural awareness when they attended a performance called *Liberty Belles*, which was performed by Anne Pasquale retelling the stories of female immigrants from Russia, Italy, China, and Latin America.

Our students and staff in partnership with the Earth Foundation sold Rainforest tee shirts in an effort to save land in the Amazon rainforest.

One of our 6<sup>th</sup> grade Math Olympiads was our team high scorer as well as placing in the top 2% of all Math Olympiads, nationwide.

### **Grade 7 Highlights**

The seventh grade students cultivated silkworms to enhance their studies of East Asia. In Social Studies classes students also participated in activities to model how people from different countries carried food, water and supplies.

Students were able to travel back in time when they participated in a Greek mythology day in which they role played and learned through hands on activities.

Our seventh grade students worked with their math teacher on making a quilt made out of different shapes and designs using both art and math concepts.

### **Grade 8 Highlights**

Twelve of our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were members of the Math Counts program this year. The program consisted of teaching mathematics above the eighth grade level, practicing math problems in both team and individual settings, practicing competition problems in timed sessions, and doing hands on activities for fun. The team sent 11 students to the Hartford Chapter Math Counts Competition at the University of Hartford on Saturday, February 13, 2010. This was the largest representation that VCMS has ever sent to this regional competition. The VCMS team came in 9<sup>th</sup> out of 25 teams, and we had one 8<sup>th</sup> grade student who placed in the top 25% of the 188 students in the competition

The VCMS and RHS algebra teachers met throughout the school year to collaborate and solidify the College Algebra 1 curriculum. They gave the same mid-year and final exam to allow the VCMS students to experience what exams will be like when they get to the high school.

Two of our 8<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts teachers along with our district grant coordinator wrote a grant to improve the department's use of technology. They were awarded the

\$100,000 grant which has allowed us to install 13 interactive white boards and provide three mobile computer carts with mini-notebooks for our students.

### **Art**

The art department has had a very active school year. In September students continued to participate in the art installation of Pinwheels for Peace. All nine of our first-sixth classes participated by creating a pinwheel that represented their ideas about "peace" in our world.

The annual Vernon Public Schools art show, held in March at the Edith Peck Room of the Rockville Public Library, was a great success this year. Two-dimensional and three-dimensional work created by more than 75 students in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades were represented in this annual event.

In May, ten students were selected to participate in a field trip to the University of Hartford's "Arts in the Middle" arts conference. They were exposed to college level art studios and instructors. The workshops included everything from figure drawing, Aboriginal paintings, mixed media painting, pen and ink drawing, as well as landscape painting and tin can sculpture. The group thoroughly enjoyed this adventure.

Sherri Nevins, in collaboration with Steve Sylvestre and Jim Harrison, wrote and received a grant from the Vernon Education Foundation this year to support a project titled "Portrait Showcase". The selected art extension students used their time this year to recreate themselves - making life size self-portraits out of wood. Some of the portraits were realistic representations while other moved into the realm of abstract art. Each portrait was created to pair up with a 16" x 22" wooden frame that would later have the ability of showcasing student artwork. In the end, we have permanently installed 22 finished portraits with 20 finished frames on the brick walls in the main hallways of VCMS.

### **Math and Reading Tutorial**

Students were selected to participate in enrichment activities to enhance their academic ability in the areas of math and reading. These students were placed in groups of 3-5 and one teacher worked with each group twice a week for 16 weeks. Their progress on assessments was charted, and we used this data to indicate success and/or further weaknesses that need to be addressed.

### **Bermuda Workshop**

Vernon students have participated in an intensive, one week science trip to the Bermuda Biological Station for 41 years. This represents the longest continuously-run program and the youngest group that uses the world-renowned scientific facility. Students continued with the work and observation of Whalebone Bay, which started over 13 years ago. Along with various snorkeling and organism projects, for the fifth year in a row the group had the opportunity to participate in a project at Cooper's Island.

### **Above and Beyond After School Program**

The Above and Beyond Program had another successful year providing an extended day program with both learning and enrichment opportunities for 44 students in



grades 6-8. The program was designed to support the students' academic and social needs, while also supporting the needs of working parents.

### **School to Career**

The School to Career activities in the class included lectures, small group discussions, games, videos, computer research, and volunteer guest speakers. A Career Day was held in June for the grade seven class. From a list of thirty-two careers, each student selected four presentations to attend. They learned about a "day in the life" of each career. The theme of this day was goal setting for the future.

### **Music**

Two instrumentalists and two vocalists auditioned and performed in the Eastern Region Middle School Music Festival in February at Fitch High School in Groton. The Flute Choir performed at the annual art show at the Rockville Library and The Marching Band and Color Guard performed in the Memorial Day Parade.

### **ESL**

During the 2009-2010 school year, the English as a Second Language Program at Vernon Center Middle School provided support for students who speak five different native languages. Those languages include the following: French, Korean, Urdu, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The variety of cultures and languages created a diverse environment where friendships were fostered between students from very different heritages.

### **Library**

The library acquired over three hundred and eighty-nine new books and eleven new videos. Over six thousand books were circulated along with over fourteen thousand visitors throughout the school year. Three hundred and twenty-eight non-reading classes and over two thousand individual students utilized the library for academic and computer research.

### **Relay for Life**

Team VCMS participated in The Relay for Life of South Windsor/Rockville at South Windsor High School. This event helped to raise money for the American Cancer Society.

### **Student Council**

The student council once again took on many community service projects this year including VCMS Supports Our Troops, the annual food drive, 42 Thanksgiving turkey baskets, and Coats For Kids' campaign. Students collected personal care items and sent them over to our troops in the Middle East, collected food for the Cornerstone Soup Kitchen, stuffed baskets including turkeys for families in need, and also collected coats for local families who could not afford them. They treated the staff to breakfast and also hosted school dances.

**ROCKVILLE HIGH SCHOOL – Mr. Eric Baim, Principal**  
Dr. Susan Andrews, Assistant Principal  
Mr. Michael Maltese, Assistant Principal

The following are highlights from the 2009-2010 school year at Rockville High School:

Rockville High School renovation project is almost complete. The roofing project will commence this summer and some much needed cosmetic work will be done as well.

Our new credit recovery and reinstatement program – NovaNET has been very successful with helping students recover “lost” credit.

Data team meetings continued throughout the year to support student learning and to strengthen and enrich the curriculum.

Staff members, in conjunction with the students from the National Honor Society, donated over 200 new teddy bears and numerous toys to the Tri-Town Christmas Party during the December holidays.

The following curriculum highlights were noted in 2009-2010:

#### **Agricultural Education**

Seven students attended the National FFA convention in Indianapolis. In February the first annual “SAEP” Fair was a big success with sixty upperclassmen designing and presenting a tri-fold display board with information about their SAEP for the freshmen. Over 275 1<sup>st</sup> graders attended the annual Open House.

#### **Athletics, Physical Education and Health**

Grade 10 student physical fitness scores improved from 39% to 45%. The RHS Athletic Department received their CIAC Athletic Program Evaluation report. The department has been working on the commendations and recommendations with the creation of the Athletic Advisory Committee. On May 6 Sarah Panzau visited RHS to give a presentation to approximately 900 students, parents, and community members. Her topic centered on making good decisions, no drinking and driving, no underage drinking, and respecting parents.

#### **Business and Computer Science**

The department successfully implemented its first wireless laptop lab. Students were recognized by the Connecticut Society of CPA’s for their continued success in the College Accounting course. Several female students attended a field trip sponsored by Microsoft with a focus on exposing them to the business and computer science careers with a corporate giant. The department also continued its professional development by participating in a SMARTBOARD workshop.

#### **English**

Many students were recognized and received awards in several state and national writing contests. Four RHS students were finalists for the Sunken Garden Poetry Fresh Voices competition. One senior was the Connecticut winner for the Team Poetry Slam

competition. He now moves on to the national competition in Los Angeles. Two English teachers have become certified to teach ECE courses which students have signed up for. Several staff members attended the MCC college Bridge Program session. This program helps students become "college ready" and allows them to take the Accuplacer here at RHS at no cost to them. Several staff members also became certified to teach the new "Read 180" program. This program is a continuation from the middle school and provides support for struggling readers.

### **Family and Consumer Sciences**

The department coordinated another successful community based Nursery School program for thirty seven preschool aged children. Our "Fashion Trends" curriculum was updated in the standards based methods. Catering was provided by students to various venues including: School to Business breakfast, Ag Ed luncheon, Taste of Languages, and the High Honor breakfast.

### **Mathematics**

The two data teams within Math (Algebra 1 & Geometry) had a focus on strengthening skills in content that was supported for both the CAPT and the SAT. Quarterly assessments were given and data was collected. Both teams showed areas of improvement but those areas still in need will be a foundation for next year's teams. The Math Team participated in the Capital Area Math League competitions with favorable results and an increase in membership. Students also competed in the American Mathematics Competition where we had one student score the highest for the second consecutive year.

### **REACH Program**

Students from the REACH program attended Lincoln Technical Institute where they heard from faculty and took a tour of the facility. Students also went to an elementary school in East Hartford to read to the students. Students in REACH took an alternative style of classes within RHS. They took their normal English, Study Skills and Social Studies. In the afternoon, students worked on recovering lost credits from past school years. To date most students were successful in recovering or reinstating credits they lost.

### **School Counseling**

The department is strategizing new ways of collecting and analyzing data that has true meaning. Even though there was no success with achieving the goal, improvement was made. Once again there was a successful Open House, Financial Planning, College Planning, and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Orientation nights. Underclassmen and Senior Awards ceremonies were also successful and over \$255,000 was presented to seniors for scholarships. Developmental Guidance lessons were implemented this past school year. The hope is to fully implement the program next year. Staff attended professional development including: Boy's Group training and a Business Mentorship Program training.

### **Science**

Data teams: all teams achieved success with their SMART goals as well as with their mini SMART goals. Once again a team of students went to Bermuda interned at the Aquarium, Museum, and Zoo. The physics lab was upgraded this year with much success. ECE courses were offered in Physics and Environmental Science. They were met with much success and will continue next year.

### **Social Studies**

The department once again held successful mock elections. Students voted and practiced on the voting machines. Technology was incorporated in most US History classes with a focus on historical newspapers and fictional civilizations. The newly redesigned Law and Order class was successful this year. Students who took (and passed) the year long course will be awarded 3 credits for MCC if they choose to attend MCC. One US History class interviewed local residents for a "Living History" project. Students compiled information and made presentations and graphics to display what they discovered.

### **Special Education**

The Special Education Department continued to support an inclusive setting by offering extensive co-teaching assignments. A Special Education teacher was assigned to each freshman academy, offering input throughout the year. The department is in the process of expanding the transition services that are available to students with the goal of assisting each student in developing a portfolio prior to graduation. Special Education teachers successfully implemented Behavioral Intervention Plans throughout the school year when necessary – training was provided by the state. Staff also became more comfortable with the use of IEP Direct – our program with writing IEP's electronically.

### **Technology Education**

All 5 ongoing SMART goals were met this year by June. Through Sykes funding this year, the department was able to upgrade and purchase equipment such as: HD lighting, lighting, microphones, a professional camera, radial arm saw, hovercraft kit, \$10,000 for computer repair materials and resources, and A+ software.

### **World Languages**

The Discover Languages Committee presented the community event, "Taste of Languages 2010" on February 24<sup>th</sup> at Rockville High School. The annual International tea welcomed our exchange students as well as our ESL students. Two staff members have been certified to teach ECE in French and Spanish. Both classes plan to run next school year.

# HUMAN SERVICES

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## VERNON HOUSING AUTHORITY

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### **Board of Commissioners:**

|               |                            |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| Chairman      | - Mr. Peter Olson          |
| Vice Chairman | - Mr. J. Michael O'Neil    |
| Commissioner  | - Mrs. Mary Lou Menard     |
| Commissioner  | - Mrs. Karen Roy-Guglielmi |
| Commissioner  | - Mr. Walter Edwards       |

**Executive Director:** Jeffrey S. Arn, PHM

**Main Office Location:** 21 Court Streets

**Leasing & Housing Choice Voucher Offices:** 114 Franklin Street

**Responsibilities and Duties:** The Housing Authority owns and operates 322 units of housing for seniors, frail elderly, disabled individuals and families in the Town of Vernon. The Housing Authority also administers 280 Housing Choice Vouchers within the Town. Additionally the agency administers 800 Federal Housing Choice Vouchers, State Rental Assistance Payments and Temporary Rental Assistance Payments through our State of Connecticut Department of Social Services Programs. Therefore, at year end the Vernon Housing Authority was providing rental assistance and housing to nearly 1,402 families in and around the Town of Vernon.

### **Town of Vernon Housing Authority Owned Rental Properties:**

#### **Federally Funded & Subsidized Developments**

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Franklin Park West</b> , 114 Franklin Park West, Built 1964 | - 64 Elderly Units |
| <b>Court Towers</b> , 21 Court Street, Built 1970              | - 72 Elderly Units |
| <b>Scattered Sites</b> , Seven Properties                      | - 9 Family Units   |
| <b>Franklin Park East</b> , Franklin Street, Built 1963        | - 40 Elderly Units |
| <b>Windermere Court</b> , 29 Windermere Avenue, Built 1970     | - 20 Elderly Units |

#### **State Funded Developments**

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| <b>Grove Court</b> , 55 Grove Street, Built 1968            | - 25 Elderly Units |
| <b>Grove Street Extension</b> , 55 Grove Street, Built 1977 | - 29 Elderly Units |

#### **State Funded Congregate Facility**

**Francis J. Pitkat Congregate Center**, 80 Franklin St. 43 Frail Elderly Units

**Summary of Activities:** The Authority has undergone a major transformation of two of its developments. As part of the federal stimulus package the Vernon Housing Authority was able to convert Franklin Park East and Windermere Court from unfunded State properties to subsidized federal properties. This was a rare opportunity provided in the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act which the Authority was able to utilize to bring more funds into the agency. This will also be an



additional benefit to the Town of Vernon as it will increase the amount of payment in lieu of taxes that the Housing Authority will be able to pay the Town starting in 2011.

As part of the federalization of Franklin Park East and Windermere Court stimulus money was used to replace doors and windows at Franklin Park East and replace doors, windows and vinyl siding at Windermere Court.

The Authority performed two other major projects with our regular capital funding. These projects included a sewer and site improvement project at Franklin Park West as well as the replacement of windows and façade renovations at Court Towers.

In addition to the aforementioned items the Housing Authority placed a renewed emphasis on filling vacant units in 2010. This year has seen the several of our developments become fully occupied including; The Francis Pitkat Center, Franklin Park West, Franklin Park East and Windermere Court. The occupancy rates at Grove Court and Court Towers also improved in 2010.

The Authority's Board of Commissioners would like to thank Town Officials and Employees for their cooperation during the past year.

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## **NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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### **Offices:**

**Enfield:** 31 North Main Street, P. O. Box 1222, Enfield, CT 06083 (860) 745-0383 FAX 745-3188

**Vernon:** 375 Hartford Turnpike, Room 120, Vernon, CT 06066 (860) 872-1501 FAX 872-1531

**Windham:** Town Hall, 979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226 (860) 465-3033 FAX 465-3032

**Stafford:** Town Hall, 1 Main Street, Stafford Springs, CT 06076 (860) 684-5609 FAX 684-1768

The North Central District Health Department provides Vernon with full-time health department services and is on call seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day for emergencies.

The Department is governed by a Board of Directors (Board of Health) in accordance with the General Statutes of Connecticut. Currently, Dr. Allen Caudullo, Dan Anderson and David Skoczulek, serve as representatives to the Board. The Health Department is staffed by a Director of Public Health, a Chief of Environmental Services (both registered sanitarians), a Health Educator, nine sanitarians and a support staff of 2.5 clerical workers and a part-time bookkeeper. The Department has a Medical Advisor and contracts for auditing and legal services.

### **THE PRIMARY MISSION**

The primary mission of the NCDHD is disease prevention, surveillance and health promotion in the district's population. The District is responsible for programs in a number of areas including:

- § Preventing epidemics and outbreaks of diseases; undertaking epidemiological investigations, follow-up and working to prevent the spread of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, sexually transmitted diseases and the like.
- § Inspection of restaurants, other food service establishments and facilities and

- the epidemiological investigations follow-up and prevention of the spread of food borne diseases.
- \$ Safety inspections of schools, convalescent homes and other institutions.
- \$ Water quality testing of bathing areas.
- \$ Review, testing and approval of new septic systems, as well as the review and approval of plans for system repairs and/or expansion.
- \$ Provision of laboratory testing of drinking water, paint samples for lead, blood, stool and other samples such as insects and birds as may be necessary in the investigation of outbreaks and illnesses.
- \$ Investigation of complaints in regard to public health hazards, nuisances, rodent or insect control.
- \$ Inspection of housing units in response to physician=s positive lead blood tests in children.
- \$ The provision and support of health education and prevention programs.
- \$ Monitoring the health status of the population.
- \$ Assistance to the Department of Environmental Protection upon request for help in collection of samples or for follow-up or investigation of specific problems.
- \$ Development and exercising plans for emergency response and mass dispensing of medications, anti-virals, and/or vaccines in response to natural and/or man made outbreaks.

## HIGHLIGHTS

The director continues to review all communicable disease reports from labs, physicians and hospitals pertaining to residents of Vernon and follows up on any cases that need to be followed to stop any potential transmission. Vernon is served out of the Vernon office at 375 Hartford Turnpike, Room 120. Our main headquarters are in Enfield at 31 North Main Street.

In 2009-2010, North Central District Health Department offered Health Education programs open to residents of our District. These programs, held in towns throughout the North Central District, included 13 exercise programs, six Nutrition and Weight Management Programs, and the Open Airways Asthma Program.

Exercise programs at North Central District Health Department are very successful in attracting older participants who would probably not consider joining a gym. Most participants are exercising two to three times a week, while some participants exercise more frequently by choosing to participate in more than one exercise class each session.

The 13 exercise programs included: five A.C.T.I.V.E. Classes (Activity Class To Improve Vitality in Everyone), one Intermediate Tai Chi Class, one Yoga Class, one Yoga/Pilates Class, one Relaxation Yoga with Pilates Class, Beginning and Intermediate Line Dancing, and two Splashin = Action classes (water fitness).

Nutrition and Weight Management Programs were offered for residents 18 years and older. Programs were taught by a Registered Dietitian and were four or six weeks in length, meeting once a week for two hours. These programs focused on nutrition, behavior modification, exercise demonstration, recipes, fat, fiber, calcium and sodium information, along with a supermarket tour to learn about foods and their labels. The

six week program also included a cholesterol screening and a one-on-one hour consultation with the Registered Dietitian.

Open Airways - the Regional Asthma Coalition, which we are a part of, received a grant to train school nurses in the Open Airways Asthma Program. This program consists of six lessons that teach children what causes asthma episodes and how to manage them. Two school nurses from Vernon were trained in the Open Airways Program.

All Health Education programs are open to residents in our member towns.

The BT section of the NCDHD has been, and will continue to be, active with work orientated toward preparing for local emergencies. Currently, this month's focus is on State reporting to include after action Reporting, Training Plans, Progress Reports and equipment and ancillary stockpiling. The main focus of the After Action Reporting will be an improvement plan for those areas of concern when we participated in the H1N1 campaign. Actively engaging and adjusting those downfalls found during real world events or practice drills will be key to the progress of all emergency plans.

In June, the State will visit NCDHD and go through most plans in the BT section. Numerous sections will be rated such as: security plans for mass dispensing sites, volunteer lists and how often they are updated, training requirements for volunteers and staff, equipment storage, meetings and coordination with local stakeholders and also the Mass Dispensing Plan for Areas 34 and 35 which NCDHD is the lead for. Past drills and exercises will be reviewed and included in the report which is referred to as the Technical Assistance Review or TAR. Last year we increased our overall score by 25% and this year it is estimated to be much higher.

During the H1N1 campaign, NCDHD played a large role in coordinating with community stakeholders, volunteers and State departments to address the health and inoculation of local citizens through clinics. Clinics had been held in numerous locations throughout Vernon and while at the same time, if residents could not attend, they had the opportunity to go to another clinic held in one of our surrounding towns. Advertising through our NCDHD website, local newspapers, school letters and other methods had been utilized to try and reach the largest population possible. Vernon had clinics throughout the campaign which accommodated residents in the Vernon area. The number inoculated for Vernon was approximately 600 and does not include those residents who attended any of the clinics in surrounding towns within our District. This number represents the community coming together during a time of potential catastrophe and working diligently for that one purpose.

## **SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES ACTIVITY**

A review of the environmental services activity report for 2009-2010 indicates that the economic downturn has affected the housing industry throughout the Health District, including Vernon, while plans reviewed and permits issued in Vernon were similar to last year's numbers.

Day Care Facilities located in older buildings are now required to do a comprehensive lead inspection to identify potential sources of lead. Subsequent mitigation or

abatement of the source is required with follow-up inspections. NCDHD inspects eleven day care facilities for annual safety and environmental health issues.

Barber Shops, Beauty & Nail Salons - The Health District enacted Barber Shop, Beauty Salon and Nail Salon Regulations pursuant to state statutes to license and inspect these salon facilities. In Vernon, 37 salons were inspected and licensed this past year.

Staff personnel have also reviewed plans for new Asalons® in the District to ensure compliance with the regulations and licensing requirements.

Each year, 16 public swimming pools are inspected and the pools are licensed; and, four Hotel/Motel facilities are inspected and licensed.

The District inspects complaints related to housing, trash, rodents and insects, sewage and water quality, and the food service industry (restaurants, etc.).

One of the district's main functions in Vernon is the licensing and inspection of food service facilities providing protection against food borne illness to the public. 107 facilities plus 8 public and parochial schools were licensed during this period with 221 inspections conducted. 13 plans and their related inspections were submitted for review for new or renovations to existing food service facilities.

During the past year, we received 64 temporary event permit applications. Each temporary event application received by our office is evaluated by a staff inspector. Depending on the complexity of the proposed food service, our department will inspect evening and weekend events as needed.

The Health District is responsible for conducting follow-up interviews and on some occasions, follow-up inspections related to possible food borne illness. The food borne alerts form (single cases) and the enteric disease interview form (confirmed cases) are both confidential and are submitted to the State Health Department for review.

In addition to routine food service inspections, well water supply reviews for food service and other related food service inspections, we respond to and investigate food related complaints and possible food borne illness reports received by the department. The department also responds to, and provides follow-up to, certain food recalls.

The water quality (bacteria levels) at Valley Falls Park, Camp New Hoca and New Hoca Park (Bolton Lake) are monitored by our Department. Water samples taken at the beach are sent to the State Health Department Laboratory for testing. The water samples again have tested satisfactory for swimming.

The inspections and investigations are listed on the following pages. It should be noted that raw numbers are no indication of time spent or the relative complexity of inspections; therefore a comparison is only possible in the most general sense.

**North Central District Health Department  
Vernon Year End Report  
2009-2010**

|                                       | 2008-<br>2009 | 2009-<br>2010 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Soil Tests (Total)                    | 7             | 4             |
| New                                   | 1             | 3             |
| Repair                                | 6             | 1             |
| Septic Permits                        |               |               |
| New                                   | 2             | 4             |
| Repair                                | 5             | 6             |
| Septic Inspections                    | 21            | 36            |
| Well Permits                          | 8             | 10            |
| Additions Reviews<br>(on well/septic) | 52            | 67            |
| Plans Reviewed                        |               |               |
| Subdivisions (Total Lots)             | 2/4           | 0             |
| New Plot Plans                        | 10            | 7             |
| Repairs                               | -             | 6             |
| Wells Only                            | 2             | 4             |
| Well Water Test Reviews               | 8             | 10            |
| Permits to Discharge                  | 2             | 8             |
| Food Licenses Issued                  | 118           | 115           |
| Temporary Food Permits                | 58            | 64            |
| Food Service Inspections              | 255           | 221           |
| Plans Reviewed for Food               | 17            | 13            |
| Food Orders Issued                    | 58            | 32            |
| Complaints (Total)                    | 160           | 169           |
| Garbage & Refuse                      | 35            | 21            |
| Housing                               | 60            | 79            |
| Rodents & Insects                     | 16            | 28            |
| Sewage Overflow                       | 18            | 12            |
| Water Quality                         | 1             | 0             |
| Food Complaints                       | 22            | 15            |
| Salon Complaints                      | -             | 2             |
| Food Related Illness                  | -             | 5             |
| Complaints                            | 4             | 7             |
| Miscellaneous                         |               |               |
| Complaint Orders Sent                 | 33            | 13            |

Vernon Inspections  
July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010

| Type of Inspection   | Numbers                                |
|--|--|
| Swimming Pools   | 16                                     |
| Hotel/Motel  | 4                                      |
| Day Cares  | 11                                     |
| Schools  | 8 schools (public & parochial)         |
| Salons   | 37                                     |
| Bathing Beach Sampling<br>Valley Falls Park<br>Camp New Hoca &<br>New Hoca Park  | approximately<br>70 samples per season |
| Lead<br><10ug/dL = 15<br>10-14 ug/dL = 1<br>15-19 ug/dL = 0 (starting 2009 - housing inspection required)<br>20+ ug/dL = 1 (housing inspection required) |  |



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## SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER

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**DEPARTMENT HEAD:**

Penny Rand, Director

**LOCATION OF DEPARTMENT:**

26 Park Place

**STAFF:**

The Vernon Senior Center is staffed with a Director, Assistant Director, Secretary/Receptionist, Building Assistant, Senior Bus Driver, and Senior Car Driver. All of the staff is part-time.

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

The Senior Center is committed to assisting Vernon seniors by providing programs that meet their needs and address their concerns including:

- opportunities for socialization, recreation, and learning
- fitness and health programs and services
- transportation
- entertainment and trips
- opportunities for volunteering and helping others
- assistance with applications for services
- information/referral to other agencies for services

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Card games - pinochle, double pinochle, set back and cribbage.
- Mah Jongg, shuffleboard, and pool. Tournaments are also held for each of these activities.
- One day and multi-day trips
- Knitting and crocheting
- Line Dance
- Senior Chorus
- Bingo
- Games - dominos, scrabble and chess
- Men's Golf League

**INSTRUCTION/CLASSES:**

- Driver safety
- Tai Chi
- Mah Jongg
- Line Dance
- Painting
- Colored pencil drawing
- Yoga
- Exercise
- Pool
- Dominos
- Chess

**SERVICES:**

- Transportation
  - The senior bus provides transportation for shopping, "Out to Lunch" trips, and other trips/events.
  - The senior car provides rides to medical appointments that are out of town.
- Health/Wellness Programs
  - Blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol and hearing screenings, foot care and flu shots.
- The State Municipal Agent for the Elderly

- The agent assists seniors in filling out the applications for various state/local benefits and living wills.
- AARP Income Tax preparation assistance
- Library

#### **INFORMATION/PRESENTATIONS:**

- Presentations on issues of interest/concern to seniors
- Written material – flyers and brochures

#### **REFERRALS TO OTHER AGENCIES:**

The Center has been designated by the North Central Area Agency on Aging as a “Community Focal Point” for seniors. If the Center does not provide a particular service that a senior needs, a referral is made to another agency for assistance.

#### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:**

The Center’s staff and seniors work with other local groups in an effort to establish the Senior Center as an integral part of the community.

The Center participates in town events such as Halloween Happenings and Dickens’ Day.

The Center’s staff coordinates with other Town of Vernon departments and local agencies providing services to seniors to insure that there is not a duplication of effort and identifying where services may be lacking. The Center is also a member of the Vernon Community Network.

The Senior Center provides opportunities for seniors to share their time and talents to reach out to the community and help others by:

- Assisting with blood drives and flu clinics.
- Assisting with Income Tax filings.

Each year, the seniors are invited by the Rockville Exchange Club to a great picnic, with bingo and entertainment, at Henry Park.

#### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:**

Volunteers are very important to the daily functioning of the Center. They serve in various ways, e.g. office support, activity leaders, and instructors. The Event Committee is very active in providing very special events that include luncheons and entertainment.

A Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon is held each year at the Center in recognition of their caring efforts.

#### **ADVISORY BOARD:**

The members of the Senior Center Advisory Board are appointed by the Mayor and meet once a month at the Center to discuss concerns or items of interest to the seniors. They act as “ambassadors” for the seniors and provide the Director with information and suggestions on various senior issues and the Center’s programs.

They organize fundraising events and decide how the proceeds of the fundraisers are to be spent to benefit the activities and programs of the Center.

**CONCLUSION:**

The needs and expectations of seniors are constantly changing. In addition to gathering information from the seniors, the Center's staff works with local and state agencies dealing with senior issues. New programs and activities are developed on an ongoing basis as needs are identified.

The Senior Center is a valuable resource that the Town of Vernon provides to the seniors, their caregivers, and the community as a whole. The facility itself is beautiful and spacious and provides a warm, caring atmosphere. Everyone is welcome to stop by the Center any day, Monday through Thursday, from 9:00 A.M. to 2:30 P.M., and Friday, from 9:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. for a "tour" of the Center and to learn more about the activities and programs.

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## SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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**DEPARTMENT HEAD:**

Paula Claydon

**LOCATION OF DEPARTMENT:**

375 Hartford Turnpike, Room 117

**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:**

The Vernon Department of Social Services is a multi-service agency, which provides a variety of social service programs for its residents. The following is a summary of these programs:

**Assistant Municipal Agent for the Elderly** - The Department provides information about community resources & assists the elderly with applications for various benefit programs. Also, the Department offers health insurance counseling for seniors through the CHOICES program. 326 residents served.

**Case Management & Crisis Intervention** - The Department provides both short term and long term case management services, which include crisis intervention, benefit counseling, advocacy, information, and referral. 372 family & individual cases served.

**Emergency Assistance** - Through the Salvation Army and the Non-GA Account, the Department provides limited emergency assistance to needy residents who do not qualify for other programs or assistance. 85 family & individual cases served.

**Employment Services** - The Department provides individualized employment services and career counseling plus assists in applying for available resources to address other needs. 3 residents served.

**Energy Assistance** - The Department completes Energy Assistance applications for those residents seeking the CEAP, SAFA and CHAP heating assistance programs. 773 applications taken.

**Fuel Bank** - The Department administers the Tri-Town Fuel Bank and Operation Fuel, providing emergency fuel or utility assistance to residents in crisis. 107 families assisted.

**Housing Rehabilitation** - The Department oversees this program, which provides low income property owners with a deferred loan to address an urgent housing rehabilitation need.

**Information & Referral** - The Department provides information and referral for residents seeking social services. 1494 information and referrals provided.

**Renter's Rebate** - The Department is an intake site for disabled & elderly residents who apply for the State Renters Tax Relief Program. The Department also takes the applications for homebound residents. 666 residents served.



**Seasonal/Special Programs** – The Department provides a variety of seasonal & special programs. Seasonal programs include Back to School Clothes, Toys for Tots, Boots& Shoes Program and Foodshare's Surplus Food. Special Programs include community baby shower, educational workshops & informational sessions. 456 family & individual cases served.

**Summer Camp Programs** – The Department in conjunction with the Parks & Recreation Department certifies low-income families for reduced summer recreational fees. The Department also sponsors camperships to Camp ConnRI, The Salvation Army Camp. 116 children served.

**Utility Arrearage Forgiveness Program** - The Department assists residents in applying for the Northeast Utilities and/or the Yankee Gas Arrearage Forgiveness Programs. The Department offers budget counseling to residents experiencing difficulty in budgeting. 175 residents served.

**Volunteer Income Tax Assistance** – The Department served as a VITA site filing income tax return for low income residents. 93 residents served.

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## YOUTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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### DEPARTMENT HEAD:

Alan M. Slobodien

### LOCATION OF DEPARTMENT:

9 Elm Street

### MISSION STATEMENT:

The Vernon Youth Services Bureau (YSB) is a community based agency dedicated to providing education, information and referral, prevention, intervention, and crisis services which promote the health and well being of youth and families in Vernon.

The YSB has the charge of coordinating the continuum of youth services within Vernon per §10-19m of the Connecticut General Statutes, "*Youth Service Bureau means an agency operated directly by one or more municipalities or a private agency designated to act as an agent of one or more municipalities for the purpose of evaluation, planning, coordination and implementation of prevention, intervention and treatment services for delinquent, pre-delinquent, pregnant, parenting and troubled youth, and for the provision of opportunities for youth to develop positively and to function as responsible members of their communities.*" These functions include: Management and Administration, Needs Assessment, Community Resource Development, and Community Involvement and Advocacy. In addition, the YSB provides direct service programs such as the Truancy Intervention Program, After School and Summer Programs, Youth Employment, Summer Nutrition and Peer Advocate Programs. Through developing a network of strong cooperative working relationships, the YSB takes the lead in positive youth development initiatives and works closely with other service providers that include non-profit agencies, town departments, and the Vernon Public Schools.

The YSB provided individual services through its Truancy Intervention, After School, Summer Fun and Peer Advocate Programs to 150 youths.

The Youth Services Bureau provides the following core program components:

- Youth and Family Advocacy Services
- Peer Advocate Program
- Crisis Intervention Services
- Truancy Intervention Program
- After-School & Summer Programs
- Information & Referral Services
- Community Planning Projects
- Summer Nutrition Program
- Youth Employment Programs

**Key partners include:**

- |                                     |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| ▪ Vernon Public Schools             | ▪ ECHN Family Resource Center                | ▪ Capital Region Workforce Development Board |
| ▪ Indian Valley YMCA                | ▪ Vernon School Readiness Collaborative      | ▪ CT Youth Services Association              |
| ▪ Hockanum Valley Community Council | ▪ Vernon Drug and Alcohol Prevention Council | ▪ Vernon Community Network                   |
| ▪ Union Congregational Church       | ▪ Rockville Hospital                         | ▪ Vernon Citizens Alliance                   |
| ▪ Vernon Police                     | ▪ State Department of Education              |  |
| ▪ Vernon Social Services            | ▪ ERASE                                      |  |
| ▪ KIDSAFE CT                        | ▪ Local Service Organizations                |  |
| ▪ PTOs                              |  |  |
| ▪ Superior Court, Juvenile Matters  |  |  |
| ▪ Parks and Recreation Department   |  |  |

**Funding Secured via YSB Grant Writing**

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. State Department of Education - YSB Grant         | \$23,080        |
| 2. State Department of Education - Enhancement Grant | \$ 6,200        |
| 3. Local Prevention Council Grant                    | \$ 4,245        |
| 4. School Readiness Grant                            | \$107,000       |
| 5. Hartford Foundation Grant - Community Planning    | \$16,800        |
| 6. Early Childhood Discovery Grant                   | <u>\$27,000</u> |

|              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| <b>Total</b> | <b>\$184,325</b> |
|--------------|------------------|



# MAINTENANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

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## BUILDING DEPARTMENT

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### Mission Statement

*Provide solution oriented services to the community thorough the application of professional skills, adopted plans, and standards which facilitate the growth of the local economy and enhance the quality of life and preserve the natural environment for current and future generations.*

**Department Head:** B. Peter Hobbs, Building Official  
**Department Location:** 55 West Main Street

### Responsibilities and Duties:

Enforcement of the State Building Code, Town Zoning Regulations and other Town Ordinances.

### Summary of Activities:

The Building Department and Fire Marshal's office, at the request of the State Fire Marshal's office, presented 5 programs to approximately 500 other local Building and Fire Officials highlighting Vernon's efforts to combine the two offices.

A total of 1850 permits were issued between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010 with an estimated construction cost of \$23,378,948.13. Of this, 31 were issued for single family dwellings with an estimated construction cost of \$4,088,507.00. **Total building permit fees collected: \$373,399.62**

Of the total permit fees collected, any co fees or zoning review fees (for permit approval purposes) are included and obtained with the payment of the initial building permit application.

The Zoning Enforcement Officer has indicated that for the period July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010, a total of 18 Zoning Board of Appeals Applications were received and a total of \$4,140.00 was collected; 11 zoning compliance letters have been prepared and a total of \$275.00 was collected; 17 citations were issued however no fees were collected. **Total zoning fees collected: \$4,415.00**

### Inspections:

Approximately 529 inspections are performed each month, and an estimated 6,343 inspections were performed for the fiscal year (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010).

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## ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

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**DEPARTMENT HEAD:**

Terry D. McCarthy, P.E.  
Town Engineer

**LOCATION OF DEPARTMENT:**

Town Hall Memorial Building 1<sup>st</sup> floor Room 5

The mission of the Engineering Department is to provide accessible, dependable and timely professional and technical services to all municipal departments, agencies, commissions, businesses and residents. To operate a professional office with well trained staff and modern equipment capable of being self sufficient, flexible and adjustable to meet the challenge of the ever changing needs of the municipality in a cost effective manner.

**RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES:**

- Issuing Road excavation and driveway permits
- Providing field inspections of sanitary sewer installations
- Providing review of on going erosion and sedimentation control installations
- Providing staff support to the Inland Wetlands Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission
- Providing detailed technical reviews of site plan and subdivision plan submissions to the Inland Wetlands Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission
- Providing final site inspections on site development and subdivision construction
- Providing review, oversight and coordination with on going infrastructure improvements within the Town
- Provide timely assistance as necessary to Town Residents and Businesses.

From June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009 to July 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 the engineering department issued a total of 117 driveway and roadway cut permits resulting in \$8,150 of revenue to the Town. In addition the engineering department performed inspections on 56 sanitary sewer installations.

Significant infrastructure improvements on going within the Town include:

- Bolton Road Reconstruction- Construction activities were completed in the fall of 2009 as part of the Roadway Bond Program. The first section was completed by VMS Construction Company. The remainder was completed primarily by the Town's Department of Public Works. Included in the first section was the replacement of the Bolton Road Bridge over the Tankerhoosen River by the Pond View Construction Company.

- The Reconstruction of Vernon Avenue from South Street to Hartford Turnpike (Route 30). This project was designed by in Town's Engineering Department. Construction activities were inspected by the Connecticut Department of Transportation. Generally, the construction cost was funded 100% by the State.
- A \$500,000 grant was received from the State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development through the Small Cities CDBG program to support funding for the reconstruction of approximately 1,700 feet of High Street. The balances of the costs were provided through the Town's Public Road Bond. The Town's Department of Public Works provided services for the reconstruction of the existing one way section of High Street from Court Street to Cedar Street.
- The renovation of Central Park was completed with 100% State Funding.
- The Reconstruction of Center Road from Route 30 to Regan Road was completed with Public Road Bond funding.
- The Vernon Avenue Bridge was completed on schedule with a ribbon cutting held on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The project was funded with 80% State funds and 20% Town funds.
- Construction of the replacement of the Spring Street Bridge over the Hockanum River was completed in July of 2010. The construction of the replacement of the River Street Bridge over the Hockanum River was initiated in late 2009 and is anticipated to be completed in the fall of 2010. Both bridges are funded 100% by State and Federal Funds.

Upcoming infrastructure projects with the Town include:

- Replacement of the West Main Street Bridge over the Hockanum River. Design on this project is on going. Funding is 80% State. The Town's share of 20% is provided in the Town's Road Bond Program.
- Phoenix Street Bridge over the Tankerhoosen River. The design and permitting processes for this bridge have been reinitiated with the advertisement for construction bids anticipated for the fall of 2010.
- Main Street Bridge over the Tankerhoosen River in Talcottville. The State has approved 80% funding for the design and construction associated with the replacement of the Main Street Bridge. It is anticipated that the Town will solicit design proposals from engineering firms in the fall of 2010.
- Historic Talcottville Improvements. This project is being funded through a \$500,000 grant from the State and a \$136,000 grant from the federal government. Construction was initiated on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010.
- Roadway Bond Projects will continue throughout the fall of 2009 into the 2010 construction season. Roadways will include Phases 1 and 2 of Prospect Street,



Gaynor Place, Ironwood Drive and Hatch Hill Road. Grants were received by the Town from the Department of Economic and Community Development to supplement funding on the Reconstruction of Phase 1 and 2 of Prospect Street and an additional grant is currently being pursued for Phase 3 which is expected to go to construction in the spring of 2011. Both Ironwood Drive and Hatch Hill Road will be reconstructed by the Town's Department of Public Works.

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## **PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

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**DEPARTMENT STAFF:** Bruce W. Dinnie, Director  
Stephen E. Krajewski, Assistant Director

**LOCATION OF DEPARTMENT:**

Lottie Fisk Building at Henry Park, 120 South Street;  
Teen Center at Center 375 Hartford Turnpike

The Parks and Recreation Department has taken great strides to make your experience a positive one. One of those strides is to give you the option to register on-line.

The Vernon Parks and Recreation now offers on-line registration and accepts credit card payments! All of the programs, activities and events are at your finger tips and available to view at your convenience. Visit the website at [www.vernon-ct.gov](http://www.vernon-ct.gov) and explore the Parks and Recreation Department's page to view the many new and exciting programs. Simply click on the toggle titled "Register On-line", create an account and you will be all set.

Another excellent service we offer is the REK after-school program. REK stands for Recreation and Education for Kids. This program is offered at Maple Street School, Skinner Road School and Center Road School. Some of the activities are homework time, fitness, nutrition, sports, arts and crafts and other fun activities. A snack is provided daily. Our prices are extremely affordable. Come join the fun!!

### **RENTALS**

**TEEN CENTER RENTAL:** Looking for a place to have your child's birthday party? Need to hold a community meeting? Look no further than the Vernon Teen Center! Available to individual and community groups, the Teen Center will be sure to accommodate all your needs.

**POOL PARTIES:** Make a big splash at your next party. Community Pool and Horowitz Pool are now available for pool parties during the summer months.

**NEWHOCA LODGE RENTAL:** Newhoca Lodge is set on a gorgeous camp ground on Middle Bolton Lake. This is the perfect spot to hold a family reunion, baby shower, birthday party and much more.

**PICNIC AREAS FOR RESERVATION:** The Town's picnic groves are available for rent. Picnic groves are located at the following locations:

- **Valley Falls Park:** Located on Valley Falls Road, Valley Falls Parks contains picnic areas out in the field and one pavilion.
- **Henry Park:** Located at 120 South Street, Henry Park has three picnic grove areas.
- **Newhoca Park Pavilion:** Located on Grier Road, Newhoca Park has a pavilion that is great for all occasions.
- **Other Picnic Areas:** Fox Hill Tower, Church St. Rails to Trails, Dart Hill Park, Walker's Reservoir, Saxony Mill Park, Phoenix Street.

This Department has expanded programs for children and adults, offered new and exciting trips and has improved the traditional programs such as Summer Camps, Swim Lessons and Summer Highlights.

Our Department is very proud of the Special Events that are offered throughout the year for all ages. These events draw thousands of people each and every year.

As for our Maintenance crew, they continue to excel in making our Parks and Facilities the pride of Vernon. Besides all the baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse, and football fields that are maintained, they are responsible for all the Parks in Vernon such as Valley Falls, Henry Park, Community Field, Newhoca Park, Camp Newhoca and all of the school grounds.

The Teen Center attracts many teens (approximately 450) with its new ideas, programs, dances and special events. This is a place 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders don't want to miss!

The Fox Hill Tower, located in Henry Park, which is open from May to November, continues to draw thousands of people to observe the beauty of this unique structure.

Remember, Parks and Recreation, where the benefits are endless...

The Parks and Recreation Department extend a sincere thank you to all volunteers and instructors of our many programs.

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## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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**DEPARTMENT HEAD:**

Leonard K. Tundermann, AICP, Town Planner

**LOCATION OF DEPARTMENT:**

Memorial Building, 14 Park Place, First Floor

**RESPONSIBILITIES & DUTIES:**

The Planning Department works to enhance property values and preserve natural and historic resources in balance with the development of a strong economic base and the furtherance of sound planning principals. The Planning Department performs duties and meets its responsibilities in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes and the Vernon Code of Ordinances and Regulations. This includes the preparation and updates of the Vernon Plan of Conservation and Development and assisting the various land use and development commissions to adopt plans, policies, regulations, and pursue programs that promote sound long-range development the general welfare and safety of the community. The Department also plays an active role in promoting economic development through its liaisons with various economic development organizations and assisting local and prospective businesses meet location and building needs. Planning staff provide administrative and professional services to the Planning & Zoning Commission, Inland Wetlands Commission, Design Review Commission, Local Historic Properties Commission, Economic Development Commission, and Conservation Commission. The Department works closely with the Engineering and Building Departments and the Fire Marshal to ensure that development plans comply with regulations and codes, and works closely with the Zoning Enforcement Officer to ensure that the Zoning Regulations are enforced. The Planning Department manages a public help desk that provides guidance regarding land use and development policies, regulations, and procedures; provides pre-development assistance; and responds to requests for information. The Planning Department is also the lead agency for the 2010 U.S. Census.

**Applications processed during 2009-10:**

|                                       |           |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Planning and Zoning Commission</b> | <b>29</b> |
| <b>Minor Modifications</b>            | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Inland Wetlands Commission</b>     | <b>12</b> |



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## PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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**Department Head:** Robert J. Kleinhans, Director

**Department Location:** 375 Hartford Turnpike

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

The Public Works Department provides the residents of Vernon with a wide range of services of which the demand grows each year due to steady residential and commercial development.

The Director oversees the Public Works Department with a Lead Foreman, two Road Foremen, a Refuse & Recycling Supervisor and a Vehicle & Equipment Supervisor who supervise 37 employees. An Administrative Secretary, an Administrative Clerk and a Clerk Dispatcher staff the Public Works Office.

The maintenance and repair of approximately 125 miles of town-owned roads, the maintenance and repair of all storm sewers on town-owned roads and rights-of-way, refuse and recycling collection, all traffic line painting and street sign maintenance, snow and ice removal, bridge inspection and maintenance, and the general maintenance of 21 town-owned buildings and properties are just a few of the many priorities for which the Public Works Department is responsible.

One of the three foremen also serves as the Town Tree Warden and oversees problems that involve town-owned trees in addition to supervising the trimming, care and removal of trees throughout our town. New trees are planted each year.

The Public Works Department also provides several special services for the residents such as the year round scheduled bulky waste pickup, the spring sweeping program, and fall leaf collection. Another service that most residents are unaware of is that the Public Works Department is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for all department related emergencies such as blocked storm sewers, flooding during rain storms, road related problems and assisting the Police and Fire Departments during their emergencies.

The Hotline (860-870-3506) and the website give residents up-to-date information on services provided by the department.

Last year the Public Works Department handled over 25,000 phone calls including emergencies, educating the public about our programs, and addressing resident concerns.

As a community service, the Public Works Department plays an active role in assisting various local organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and various beautification programs, school groups and social groups.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**Building and Grounds:** The principal function is to provide for the maintenance, repair and operational expenditures of town buildings and grounds. Upgrading and maintaining public buildings to make them both functional and attractive is the primary goal of the Public Works Department. There are two maintainers for all building repairs and maintenance and one custodian located at the Town Hall.

Major projects undertaken in FY 2009-2010 were as follows:

1. **Center 375** - roof replaced.
2. **Police Department** - tile floor removed and replaced with new carpeting.
3. **Senior Center** - new floor and scraper rug installed in kitchen.
4. **Town Hall & Public Works** - new electronic door security system installed.
5. **Public Works** - new carpeting installed.
6. **All town buildings** switched over to energy-efficient lighting.

### **Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance:**

The Public Works Department maintains all department equipment along with equipment from the Parks & Recreation Department, Engineering Department, Building Department, Tax Assessor, Fire Department, Fire Marshall, Police Department and Senior Center in the vehicle maintenance facility located at 383 Hartford Turnpike. In this facility, four mechanics and one part-time employee perform all major vehicle rebuilding and preventive maintenance on 225 major vehicles as well as 290 smaller machines such as asphalt rollers, leaf machines, snow blowers, pumps and mowers.

The department's four mechanics perform such tasks as welding, total engine and transmission rebuilding, scheduled preventive maintenance on all equipment, and complete equipment restoration and overhaul. They are responsible for the maintenance of all emergency generators that are located in several Town buildings.

The following equipment was purchased in FY 2009-2010:

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Town Hall - AV equipment for Town Council chambers     | \$21,450      |
| 2. Transfer Station - compactor                           | \$60,000      |
| 3. Animal Control - van                                   | \$19,900      |
| 4. Volvo backhoe BL70                                     | \$44,725      |
| 5. New/used Freightliner Condors - automatic side loaders | \$47,555/each |
| 6. Recycle carts - 5,000                                  | \$270,000     |

**Bridges:** All bridges are inspected during the year and Public Works handles any problems that arise including inspections before and after heavy rain to remove any debris that will restrict the flow of water, repair any undermining or washouts caused by heavy rains and inspection of all railings, fences or guard rails for damage and painting.

**Sweeping:** A total of 725 cubic yards of sand was recovered. In addition, the Public Works Department is currently in the process of trying different anti-icing products and has reduced the amount of sand being used in an effort to reduce the amount of sediment deposited into catch basins that degrade our streams and wetlands.

**Drainage:** The Public Works employees cleaned a total of 780 catch basins were cleaned, removing approximately 280 tons of sediment. As part of the cleaning process, each structure was evaluated and documented to determine whether it needed to be repaired or replaced.

**Road Work:** Total reconstruction of Bolton Road to improve drainage and road surface was completed.

**Trees:** A total of 35 trees were removed by DPW and private contractors on town-owned property that were either hazardous or obstructing sight lines and 40 trees were removed for the Bolton Road reconstruction. A total of 48 trees received pruning and trimming and 6 trees were planted at various locations. Several weeks of trimming of damaged branches caused from winter storms were necessary to prevent injury to pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

**Snow:** The winter of FY 2009-2010 produced 13 storm events. Implementation of new computerized winter chemical application systems was installed in the trucks. A total of 2,200 tons of salt and 30,784 gallons of liquid calcium chloride were used to keep the roads safe for vehicle use.

All town-owned streets, school parking areas and playgrounds, town-owned parking areas, town buildings and town-owned sidewalks were cleared of snow and ice and treated using the department's 15 trucks and three front end loaders.

**Leaf Collection:** The Public Works Department spent a total of 32 days collecting 20,188 cubic yards of leaves on town-owned streets. A total of \$130,653 for labor and fuel was spent for this service.

**Refuse and Recycling:** The Vernon Transfer Station continues to offer Vernon residents an affordable disposal options for most unwanted household items. A total of 1,686 tons of bulky waste was received in FY 2009-2010. Metal items discarded equaled 275 tons including 266 appliances containing Freon gas which was safely removed before disposal. Four trailer loads totaling approximately 1,400 tires were recycled. Residents also recycled 187 lead acid batteries. There were 1,160 gallons of waste oil and 100 gallons of antifreeze received at the facility for recycling.

The brush disposal program in Vernon is true recycling - 6500 cubic yards of incoming brush were processed into a mulch product which in turn was offered back to residents free of charge. The Christmas tree curbside collection and tree drop-off yielded 2500 trees which were also processed into mulch. A mulch delivery program was instituted in March 2010. From March 1, 2010 through June 30, 2010, 57 deliveries were made generating additional revenue of \$4,140.

Other programs offered to residents include the free drop-off of electronics and metal items at various times throughout the year. Electronic recycling continues to increase. In 2009-2010, 33 tons of electronics were safely removed from the waste stream and recycled.

Improvements to the Transfer Station facility included the installation of an additional bulky waste ramp and a crusher/compactor for bulky waste. This unit is working well and continues to decrease the number of container hauls required to dispose of bulky waste. Less container hauls require less funding for the hauling contract in the budget.

The Town's hazardous waste program saw 183 carloads of household hazardous waste brought to the CREOC facility in Manchester.

The weekly scheduled bulk pick-up program for bulky waste and metal generated \$11,575 in additional revenue. A total of 238 collections were scheduled.

Total tonnage collected of plastics, tin and paper products including cardboard was 1,926 tons in FY 2009-2010.

Automated recycling using wheeled carts was introduced to approximately 5,000 residential homes in June 2010. Single stream tonnage was up 24% or 40 tons from average for the month of June as a result.

# PUBLIC SAFETY

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## ANIMAL CONTROL DEPARTMENT

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**DEPARTMENT HEAD:**

Craig P. Segar, Animal Control Officer

**LOCATION OF DEPARTMENT:**

The Animal Control Facility is located at 100 Windsorville Road adjacent to the Water Pollution Control Facility.

**RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES:**

The officers within the Animal Control Department enforce state laws and Town Ordinances pertaining to animals. This department also responds to complaints involving sick wildlife. Current law requires that all dogs and cats over three months of age be immunized against rabies. The chances of you coming into contact with a rabid animal (raccoon, skunk, fox, and bat) are not that great, but the chances of your pet dog or cat coming into contact are much greater. It is imperative that you keep your pet's rabies shots up to date so that the threat of rabies exposure to you, your family, and your pet will be greatly diminished. Before a dog can be licensed, a valid rabies certificate must be shown to the Town Clerk.

**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:**

During the fiscal year 2009-2010, the Animal Control Department responded to 1304 complaints. Of these complaints, 71 involved raccoons, 319 involved cats, 746 involved dogs, and 168 involved other animals. We impounded 191 cats/kittens and 131 dogs/puppies. Of the cats/kittens/dogs/puppies that we handled during this fiscal year, 83 were redeemed back to their owners; 145 were adopted by new owners, 48 were found deceased, and 55 were euthanized. This department tested 26 animals for rabies and 4 tested positive for the disease.

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## FIRE DEPARTMENT

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**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** William Call, Fire Chief

**LOCATIONS OF STATIONS:**

Vernon Center Station, 720 Hartford Turnpike  
Dobsonville Station, Birch Road  
Talcottville Station, 100 Hartford Turnpike  
John Ashe Station, 25 Nye Street  
Fitton Station, Prospect Street  
Public Safety Building, 280 West Street



## **RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES:**

The Town of Vernon Fire Department is a volunteer service agency that provides Fire, Rescue, Hazardous Materials and Basic Life Support Transport Emergency Medical Services to the community. The department provides those services utilizing six stations and approximately 212 members. There are 150 firefighters, 11 special service members, 40 ambulance members, and 8 auxiliary members.

The department operates 6 engines, 2 heavy rescues, 2 aerial trucks, 1 mobile air unit, 3 ambulances, 1 command unit and 1 pickup with trailer.

We also operate a special hazards vehicle and decontamination unit by the State of Connecticut, and operate 2 ATV units that are firefighting and EMS transport equipped. This year the Parks Department donated a single seat ATV unit that will be used for supervisor recon duties. In 2009 - 2010 the Fire Department's budget was approximately \$1,091,794 of which approximately \$615,000.00 went directly to the Connecticut Water Company for the use and maintenance of all fire hydrants in the community.

The Vernon Ambulance is a division of the Fire Department. They are charged with providing Basic Life Support transport service for the community. Service is provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service utilizes two state-certified ambulances that are available at the Public Safety Building. A third state-certified ambulance is available as a back-up at the Vernon Center Station on Hartford Turnpike. In 2009, the ambulance division's budget was approximately \$1,158,192.00 income generated from billing for services were expected to be approximately \$1,200,000.00 for the same period.

The ambulance has been the busiest entity of the Department in that 86% of all calls are for EMS service. On most days, the ambulance is staffed full-time from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and a second ambulance is staffed from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. These crews are paid hourly (non-benefited) for their time. Nights and weekends are covered with at least one ambulance fully staffed, and crews are also paid an hourly wage for their time. There are no full-time employees, and only the two supervisors are considered part-time Town employees.

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## **FIRE MARSHAL**

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**Department Head:** Raymond A. Walker Jr., Fire Marshal  
**Department Location:** 55 West Main Street

### **Responsibilities and Duties:**

The Fire Marshal is responsible for the inspection of buildings, the determination of the cause and origin of fires, the review of plans related to new construction and renovation of existing buildings. The Fire Marshal also participates in the delivery of public education programs and in the review and coordination (to assure public safety) of large community events.



### **Summary of Activities:**

During the Fiscal Year 2009-2010, the office conducted 763 inspections, investigated 50 fires, and reviewed plans for a number of projects including multi-family residential, commercial, high hazard industrial facilities, and public facilities.

As examples of public education and community outreach, the office visited school and businesses with programs for students and staff, participated in the October 2009 Town Wide Safety Day, and inspected several carnivals and the annual July in the Sky Fireworks.

In order to accomplish these tasks, several tools/methods are used, including a sharing of resources with the Building Department, the use of enhanced software linking all those departments handling land use and development issues, a mutual aid agreement with South Windsor to help assure that both communities have a 24/7 coverage for Fire Marshal services, and the use of 3 members of the Vernon Fire Department who are certified and appointed as Deputy Fire Marshals.

The Fire Marshal's office and the Building Department, at the request of the State Fire Marshal's office, presented 5 programs to approximately 500 other local Building and Fire Officials highlighting Vernon's efforts to combine the two offices.

### **Future Goals:**

In the Fiscal Year 2010-2011, additional emphasis will be placed on public education and fire prevention and the newly adopted State Wide Fire Prevention Code will go into effect. The new Fire Prevention Code is expected to improve the Town's ability to enforce fire and life safety regulations and offer alternative enforcement means such as fines, citations, and immediate orders to comply.

In order to facilitate implementation of the Fire Prevention Code and to assure a continuity of follow-up and coordination with the Building Department, both the Fire Marshal and the Building Department's administrative secretary, Debra Sterling, have participated in State provided training.

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## POLICE DEPARTMENT

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### **DEPARTMENT HEADS:**

James Kenny, Chief of Police  
Stephen Clark, Captain of Police

### **LOCATION OF DEPARTMENT:**

725 Hartford Turnpike

### **RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES:**

The Police Department for the Town of Vernon is charged with the mission of the preservation of the peace and the protection of the citizens and their property. We are tasked with the detection and investigation of criminal activity, apprehension of offenders, resolution of conflict and to assist those in need or cannot care for themselves.

### **SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:**

Fiscal year 2009-2010 saw the retirements of long time Vernon Police Officers. Officers Ahlquist (20 years of Service), Tranter (20 years of service) and Sergeant Kevin Fleming (30 years of service) left the department. In June of 2010, Officer David Hatheway was promoted to the rank of Sergeant and was assigned to the midnight shift.

In November of 2009, the department investigated a murder -suicide at a local residence. The homeowner's estranged husband shot her and then turned the gun on himself prior to police arrival. Officers were able to remove two children from the residence without injury.

The department continued it's participation in the Metro Traffic Task Force by conducting DWI and Seat Belt enforcement patrols and road blocks paid by federal and state grants monies. In addition to the traffic enforcement aspect of the Task Force, one department member is participating in the Task Force accident reconstruction squad. This is a multi-department squad of on call accident re-constructionists who have advanced accident investigation training and specialized equipment and are able to respond to members towns to assist in the investigation of serious injury and fatality motor vehicle accidents.

The department has continued its participation in the Capitol Region Emergency Service Team (CREST). This team is a multi-jurisdiction special weapons and tactics (SWAT) team made up of officers from 10 communities that have received advanced training to handle high risk warrant service and deal with hostage situations. The CREST Team is one of eight teams in the capitol region that received monies for equipment under homeland security grant funding. Four members of the department participate as team members with Captain Clark being assigned as assistant team leader.

The police department continued its participation as a member of the East Central Narcotics Task Force. The task force, composed of officers from Glastonbury, South

Windsor, Manchester and Vernon, are tasked with the long term investigation of narcotic activity in the member communities. ECN maintains close relationships with the State Police Statewide Narcotics Task Force and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). During the fiscal year ECN conducted a lengthy investigation into narcotic trafficking in the Rockville area of town which resulted in multiple charges against seven individuals and the seizure of a large quantity of crack cocaine, marijuana and cash. ECN also participated in a controlled delivery of a very large quantity of marijuana. The ensuing investigation resulted in the seizure of 1.4 million dollars in assets.

The department again hosted the Citizen's Police Academy during the fiscal year. Town citizens attend a twelve week program free of charge where they are exposed to various topics in police work. The citizens attended classes in search and seizure laws, history of the police department, accident investigation, patrol tactics and criminal investigation. Participating citizens are then invited to ride a shift with patrol officers so they can see first hand what their police are dealing with during their shifts.

### **PLANNING AND TRAINING:**

The Vernon Police Department devoted over 10,000 hrs to training during the year. Five new officers and one new dispatcher were hired and completed all or part of their basic training and supervised field training programs. New Officers complete a Basic Recruit Training Program of over 800 hrs at the Connecticut Police Academy. After graduation they must complete a Supervised Field Training Program of over 560 hrs. During the Supervised Training Program, officers receive one-on-one training and supervision from specially trained Field Training Officers. Recruit Officers work through four phases of increasingly difficult and challenging fieldwork and are subject to daily evaluations. All new officers must successfully complete this demanding program in order to receive their Connecticut Police Officer Certificate. Renewal of this certificate through mandatory in-service training is required for all officers, every three years. New dispatchers must complete state mandated training in Emergency Telecommunication, Emergency Medical Dispatch and Connecticut On-Line Law Enforcement Communications System as well as a similar Training Program.

The police department conducts in-service training to maintain police officer certification and to meet various state and federal training mandates. Vernon participates in the Capitol Region In-Service Training Program, in which officers receive training required for recertification by the Police Officer Standard and Training Council (POSTC). Training subjects include officer safety, use of force, domestic violence, sexual violence, legal updates, bigotry and bias crimes, civil liability, juvenile law, gangs, human relations, and other subjects. All officers from the Chief of Police down take part in the department in-house training program consisting of four additional training days spaced throughout the year. This year training included firearms classroom and range training, baton and OC, blood borne pathogens- TB, Hazards material and meth lab awareness, handcuffing-arrest and control tactics, Taser, vehicle pursuit, breaching tools and the new ballistic shield. All officers received training in Immediate Action-Rapid Deployment tactics for active violence incidents. The officers then participated in simulated drills where they responded to an active violence scenario with live role players. Officers were armed with FX Simunition weapons, breaching tools and first aid supplies. During the scenario officers encountered

different threats and obstacles and had to apply their training and experience to resolve the incident. This training requires officers to make use of force decisions and to apply force against live role players under realistic conditions. All Officers trained and qualified with their pistol, H&K G36 patrol rifle, X26 Taser, Stinger Spike system tire deflation system. Additional training is required to maintain certification in the Intoxilyzer, Medical Response Technician or Emergency Medical Technician and the COLLECT system.

15 Officers are certified as instructors through the Police Officer Standard and Training Council. Subject areas include use of force, firearms, patrol rifle, impact munitions, shooting decisions, tactical use of weapons, arrest and control, handcuffing, OC spray, Baton, medical response technician, building searches, hazardous material, radar-laser, weapons of mass destruction, vehicle stops, personal protection equipment, and Taser. Some officers hold certification through equipment manufacturers and private training companies.

Officers attend free training classes at the Connecticut Police Academy and other locations in subjects including interview and interrogation, driving while intoxicated, sexual assault investigation, drug interdiction, crime scene investigation, critical incident management, undercover drug investigation, instructor development, field training officer, basic and special weapons and tactics, computer forensic.

The Police Department pays for training in specialized areas and to maintain various advanced instructor certifications. Employees receive training in homicide investigation, child abuse, emergency response to terrorism, crisis negotiation, traffic crash reconstruction, blood borne pathogens and tuberculosis, Taser, Simunition, train-the-trainer and internal affairs investigations, leadership and other subjects.

Additional hours are devoted to maintaining and training the department's two canine teams. The dogs and handlers train monthly with other canine teams in the area and recertify yearly. The on-duty canine teams are available to assist other departments as needed.

The department continues to cooperate with other area police departments by contributing officers and resources to regional teams. The department has a commander, three tactical officers and two negotiators on the Capitol Region Emergency Service Team (CREST). One officer is assigned to the Metro Traffic Service Team, and one officer is assigned to East Central Narcotic Task Force. The officers are on-call and require training to maintain their proficiency

### **DETECTIVE DIVISION:**

During the last fiscal year, the detective division was commanded by Lieutenant John Kelley. The detective division currently has one sergeant and five detectives assigned to it. In addition, one officer assigned to the East Central Narcotics Task Force and one evidence technician report to the detective division commander.

The detective division investigated/assisted with 219 cases in fiscal year 2009-2010. The detective division has a clearance rate of 85%. In addition to criminal complaints, detectives completed 32 background investigations. As a result, five police officers

and one dispatcher were hired. Detectives provided assistance to the patrol division by processing crime scenes and interviewing witnesses and suspects. Detectives worked closely with the States Attorneys Office as well as other state and federal agencies. The following is a breakdown of investigations conducted during the fiscal year.

| <u>Crime Type</u>                | <u>New Cases</u> |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Assaults                         | 6                |
| Assist Other Agency              | 17               |
| Bad Checks                       | 6                |
| Burglary                         | 47               |
| Child Abuse                      | 3                |
| Criminal Mischief                | 4                |
| Fire/Arson                       | 12               |
| Fraud                            | 18               |
| Harassment                       | 2                |
| Identity Theft                   | 3                |
| Larceny                          | 24               |
| Missing Persons                  | 2                |
| Narcotics                        | 7                |
| Robbery                          | 5                |
| Sex Assault                      | 17               |
| Sex Offender Registry Violations | 6                |
| Suspicious Situations            | 14               |
| Unlawful Discharge of Firearm    | 1                |
| Untimely Deaths                  | 5                |
| Violation of Protective Order    | 1                |
| Weapon Violations                | 7                |
| Writ Services                    | 12               |

#### **PATROL DIVISION:**

The patrol division continues to try and maintain adequate staffing to replace officers who have left due to retirement or resignation. Officer vacancies take approximately twelve months to fill with new hires due to the length of the academy and field training mandated by the State of Connecticut. The Patrol Division is staffed by 2 Lieutenants, 6 Sergeants and 26 officers.

During the calendar year 2009 the patrol division responded to 18,872 calls for service.

For many years the Vernon Police Department reported crimes to the U.S. Dept of Justice and Connecticut State Police using the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR). This system is a summary count of crimes. Part 1 crimes are Murder, Rape, Robbery, Assault, Burglary, Larceny, Motor Vehicle Theft and Arson. Part 2 crimes are all other crimes.

In March of 2003 the Vernon Police Department began reporting crimes to the U.S. Department of Justice and the Connecticut State Police using a system called the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). This system collects specific data

on each crime and reports the data to the U.S. Department of Justice. The Dept. of Justice uses the data to create an annual statistical analysis of crime in the United States. The designation of Part 1 and Part 2 are not used in NIBRS. There are now 22 major categories and many subcategories in what are called Group A Offenses and 11 categories in what are called Group B Offenses.

Because of the change in the method of reporting beginning in 2003 you will see a significant change in the numbers for burglary and larceny. This change is caused by the way the incidents are counted. The numbers used in the UCR Part 1 table for the years 1999 through 2004 were taken from the statistics found on the State Police Crimes Analysis web site. The statistics for 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 are based on data supplied by the State Police Crimes Analysis Unit.

Table of UCR Part 1 crimes.

| Year | Murder | Forcible Rape | Robbery | Aggravated Assault | Burglary | Larceny | MV Theft | Arson |
|------|--------|---------------|---------|--------------------|----------|---------|----------|-------|
| 1999 |        | 1             | 14      | 14                 | 119      | 524     | 58       | 1     |
| 2000 |        | 1             | 17      | 9                  | 128      | 638     | 53       | 1     |
| 2001 |        | 1             | 32      | 19                 | 110      | 635     | 41       | 1     |
| 2002 |        | 0             | 17      | 23                 | 108      | 634     | 46       | 1     |
| 2003 |        | 3             | 14      | 20                 | 121      | 369     | 49       | 2     |
| 2004 |        | 7             | 14      | 13                 | 55       | 256     | 55       | 4     |
| 2005 |        | 12            | 14      | 20                 | 81       | 242     | 63       | 8     |
| 2006 |        | 5             | 13      | 33                 | 77       | 184     | 60       | 3     |
| 2007 | 2      | 4             | 19      | 36                 | 85       | 213     | 36       | 5     |
| 2008 | 0      | 5             | 10      | 13                 | 68       | 235     | 27       | 1     |
| 2009 | 1      | 5             | 9       | 17                 | 105      | 244     | 27       | 7     |

During the calendar year 2009 the Vernon Police Department made a total of 962 criminal arrests. The following is a breakdown of the arrests by charge category:

|                           |    |                            |     |                           |     |
|---------------------------|----|----------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| <b>Forcible Rape</b>      | 1  | <b>Forcible Fondling</b>   | 2   | <b>Statutory Rape</b>     | 1   |
| <b>Robbery</b>            | 10 | <b>Aggravated Assault</b>  | 5   | <b>Simple Assault</b>     | 32  |
| <b>Intimidation</b>       | 2  | <b>Arson</b>               | 6   | <b>Burglary</b>           | 13  |
| <b>Shoplifting</b>        | 38 | <b>Theft from Bldg.</b>    | 4   | <b>Theft from Vehicle</b> | 4   |
| <b>All other larceny</b>  | 12 | <b>Forgery</b>             | 8   | <b>False Pretense</b>     | 1   |
| <b>Impersonation</b>      | 2  | <b>Credit Card Fraud</b>   | 1   | <b>Embezzlement</b>       | 1   |
| <b>Vandalism</b>          | 6  | <b>Narcotic Violations</b> | 213 | <b>Drug Equipment</b>     | 16  |
| <b>Weapons Violations</b> | 5  | <b>Bad Checks</b>          | 3   | <b>Disorderly Conduct</b> | 329 |
| <b>Driving Under Inf.</b> | 48 | <b>Family Offenses</b>     | 33  | <b>Liquor Law Vio.</b>    | 4   |
| <b>Trespassing</b>        | 19 | <b>All other Offenses</b>  | 139 |                           |     |

During the calendar year 2009, the Vernon Police Department continued to work toward safer streets for the motorists by vigorously enforcing motor vehicle statutes. Officers issued 6674 citations for motor vehicle violations. The following is a breakdown of citations issued:

|                        |      |                         |      |
|------------------------|------|-------------------------|------|
| <b>Infractions</b>     | 1567 | <b>Summons</b>          | 1245 |
| <b>Parking Tickets</b> | 554  | <b>Written Warnings</b> | 3308 |



The patrol division is directly supported by a dedicated staff of 9 civilian dispatchers. The police dispatchers handle both routine complaints and 911 emergency calls phoned into the dispatch center. The dispatchers deal with walk in complaints, handle requests for information and utilize both state and national data bases for information to further department goals.

#### **RECORDS DIVISION:**

The Records Division is currently staffed by three records clerks with a full time records supervisor. The records division is responsible for filing more than 12,000 cases, data entry into the records management system, preparing court transmittals, preparing weekly payroll for the department's 65 members, processing pistol, solicitor, raffle, pawn and precious metal permits. The records division has the additional responsibility for overseeing billing false alarm fines, filing and maintaining motor vehicle violation records, billing for private duty, sending notices for unpaid parking tickets and responding to all requests for the production of records under the Freedom of Information Act.

The following fees were collected by the Records Division during the year:

|                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Report Fees           | \$2258.85           |
| Pistol Permits        | \$6370.00           |
| Weapon sale permit    | \$600.00            |
| Raffle Permits        | \$90.00             |
| Solicitor Permits     | \$350.00            |
| Alarm Fines           | \$1270.00           |
| Outside Work          | \$181,995.28        |
| Precious Metal Permit | \$40.00             |
| Pawn Permits          | \$100.00            |
| <u>Fingerprinting</u> | <u>\$3230.00</u>    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>          | <b>\$196,304.13</b> |

#### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:**

The Vernon Police Department has continued to upgrade its information technology backbone through the use of new hardware and implementation of fiber optic technology as part of the Town of Vernon's long term technology upgrade program. The Police Department has replaced its numerous old servers with a new larger server based on Virtual Machine (VMware) technology. This VMware allows for future expansion as well as disaster recovery as a mirror image of data is stored on the town's similar server. The police department's servers act as a back up for the town's data processing information.

During the past year the police department has begun to receive the new equipment for the enhanced 911 system provided by the State of Connecticut. This equipment, funded by 911 funds, will provide for the expected future development of the next generation 911 system which is expected to incorporate GPS based location technology for callers, texting and improved integration with surrounding communities. The department is participating in the statewide notification system provided by Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. This technology allows for emergency notifications to the citizens by trained staff for town, state or national emergencies. To date, four of the nine dispatchers have received certification

in its use and training is planned for the remaining five dispatchers. Town residents may opt in using the State of Connecticut web site to have additional devices sent notifications in the event of an emergency.

The department is beginning the deployment of digital video/audio recorders which will be mounted in each patrol vehicle. The camera systems, which were paid for by federal grant monies, will enable officers to document citizen contact for prosecution purposes and to reduce citizen complaints against officers.

### **SPECIAL PROGRAMS:**

#### **East Central Narcotics Task Force**

The department is continuing its membership in the East Central Narcotics Task Force (ECNTF). The officer assigned by the department is a member of the four town task force with the mission of long term narcotic investigations in Manchester, Vernon, Glastonbury and South Windsor. Members of ECNTF are cross sworn in each community and actively cooperate with members of the Vernon Police Department detective division. The Vernon Police Department withdrew from the Statewide Narcotics Task Force and rejoined the East Central Narcotics Task Force in February 2009. Since rejoining ECNTF, the Vernon officer has been responsible for 127 cases, a 217% increase from the case load in 2005. The number of arrests by the Vernon officer has increased 252% since 2005 and the number of search warrants conducted in Vernon has increased by 300% from 2005.

#### **Activity for Vernon Officer**

|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Total cases           | 127 |
| Total arrests         | 116 |
| Total search warrants | 40  |

#### **School Resource Officer-Rockville High School**

The full time assignment of a Vernon Police Officer to the Rockville High School began in 1994 and a partnership between the Vernon Board of Education and Police Department continues through today. Currently Officer Earl Middleton is the officer assigned to the high school.

The position of school resource officer has evolved into an integral part of the education process at the high school. The SRO works with administrators, staff and students as part of the day to day operations at the school. The SRO provides law enforcement; law related education and law related counseling to both staff and students as part of their daily routine. The SRO works with school administration and department staff to implement a canine drug search of the school twice a year to help reinforce the Board of Education's drug free school policy. The following is a breakdown of the SRO duties for the year:

|                                     |     |                                  |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----|
| Calls for service                   | 162 | Informal classroom presentations | 58  |
| Calls involving Talcottville School | 16  | Faculty assists                  | 365 |
| Criminal investigations             | 133 | Student assists                  | 540 |
| Arrests                             | 59  | Parent Conferences               | 73  |
| Special presentations given         | 59  |                                  |     |