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February 2020



Economic Conference Wrap Up

The Vermont Economic Conference was held on Thursday, January 23rd at the Doubletree by Hilton in Burlington. Over 300 attendees heard about the 2020 economic forecast from speakers that included Mat Barewicz from the Vermont Department of Labor, Gus Faucher from PNC Financial, and a keynote by the former premier of Canada, Jean Charest who was introduced by former Vermont Governor Jim Douglas. The event was covered by local news organization, [GNAT](#), and [Forbes](#).

Increasing Workforce Participation Is #1 Issue

For the past four years, the Vermont Chamber has been leading the effort to increase workforce participation as the lack of people to fill open jobs has been identified as the number one issue for our members. This is true regardless of employer size, geographical location, or industry. Vermont needs more people in the workforce.



Our research and education foundation, [the Vermont Futures Project](#), identified that Vermont needs 11,000 new workers each year. With that as our goal, we have worked to get Vermonters off the sidelines and into the workforce by supporting criminal justice reform, helping employers hire people in recovery, encouraging mature workers to remain in the workforce, and supporting the workforce training programs currently funded by the State. Additionally, we are working to attract more people to consider Vermont as a place to live and work. We have secured \$250,000 for marketing, and have supported the remote worker and the Stay to Stay programs. Chamber member, Pomerleau Real Estate, produced an [infographic](#) that summarizes this work.



Paid Leave Override Attempt Fails

Despite full-court pressure by House leadership and other allies, the attempt to override Governor Scott's veto of [H.107](#), the paid family leave bill, failed to reach the 100 votes required for a two-thirds majority needed to override a gubernatorial veto. If passed, H.107 would have mandated a \$29.7 million payroll tax.

In December 2019, Governor Scott's administration announced the advancement of an [optional leave program](#) created through executive action. The Governor's plan offers six weeks of leave at 60% wage replacement, using the state employee workforce as the predominate risk pool. The Vermont Chamber is supportive of this optional paid leave program, as it offers employers and employees alike the freedom to choose whether they wish to participate in the benefit.

Investing in Vermont Tourism

Efforts continue at the State House to secure an additional \$500,000 for Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing's (VDTM) destination marketing efforts. Vermont has decreased its investment in tourism promotion by 6% over the last 5 years.



If we do not invest in Vermont tourism, the voice of our small businesses and rural communities will be muted. Vermont will be left behind while other destinations

grow. The additional investment will allow VTDM to reach more potential visitors by increasing geographic target areas and extending the length of seasonal campaigns. With greater reach, VDTM will be able to better serve, promote, and engage sector organizations and local communities.

Individuals and businesses can join the Vermont Chamber in urging the Legislature to invest in Vermont tourism by [signing the petition](#) to show support of the increased investment.

[Sign the Petition](#)



Advertise in the Vermont Vacation Guide

"I am planning a trip to New England this coming October and will be travelling through Vermont. I requested the travel guide to help with advance planning. I just wanted to compliment you on your publication, it arrived in the post today and having looked through it, I am super excited by the Vermont aspect of our road trip and only hope we have enough time to see everything which I now know you have on offer." – United Kingdom Visitor

Participate in the Vermont Chamber's marketing program by advertising your business in the Vermont Vacation Guide and on the [VermontVacation.com Stay & Play](#) directory. Take advantage of this marketing program and the opportunity to reach 80 million people within a day's drive of Vermont.

Contact [Marc Plouffe](#) or [Megan Bullard](#) to reserve your space.

Hire A Vet Medallion Award Program

The U.S. Department of Labor's 2020 HIRE Vets Medallion Award Program is the only federal-level veteran's employment award that recognizes employers for their investments in recruiting, employing, and retaining our nation's veterans. The award is based on a number of criteria, including veteran hiring and retention, leadership programming, dedicated human resources, and tuition assistance programs. Award recipients receive a certificate and digital images of the medallion to use as part their promotional efforts.



The application period is open through April 30, 2020. For more information, visit www.HireVets.gov or email [Mark Audy](#).



USS Vermont Commissioning Events

Free tickets are now available for the USS Vermont Commissioning events in April. The USS Vermont Commissioning Ceremony will be on Saturday, April 18 at 10 am at the Naval Submarine Base in New London, Groton, CT. [Tickets are required](#). There will also be a USS VERMONT (SSN 792) Crew & Vermonters picnic. RSVP by emailing

ssm9950@yahoo.com.

Dementia Friendly Vermont Sector Survey

In 2019, the Governor's Commission on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD) decided to explore the goal of making Vermont more "dementia friendly," using the Dementia Friendly America initiative as a strategy to improve existing services and supports, expand community access to information, education and engagement for Vermonters with Alzheimer's or dementia and their families, and ensure all Vermont communities from businesses to libraries to parks and police are inclusive of our neighbors with cognitive decline.



Please take this [short survey](#) by February 29th to help the Commission determine the strengths, gaps, and readiness across our Vermont communities for this effort.



Workplaces for All Resources

The Vermont Commission on Women announced new resources available for businesses and workers from the [Workplaces](#)

[For All](#) public education program to make workers, employers, and all Vermonters aware of laws that apply to them, where to find information, strategies for prevention, and ways to address sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

The Workplaces For All campaign is a result of legislation which allocated funds to the Vermont Commission on Women (VCW), in consultation with the Vermont Attorney General's office and the Vermont Human Rights Commission, to inform and assist workers, employers, and members of the public in preventing and addressing sexual harassment and workplace discrimination.

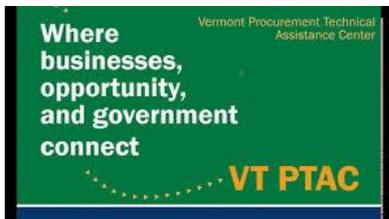
Best Places to Work Announced

At an awards dinner in January, the Vermont Chamber and *Vermont Business Magazine* announced the top 51 Best Places to Work in Vermont 2020. The awards program was created in 2006 and is presented in partnership with the Society for Human Resource Management, Vermont State Council, (SHRM) and the Vermont Department of Commerce and Community Development, and Best Companies Group.



The Best Places to Work in Vermont list is organized into three categories, Small Businesses (15-99 employees), Medium Businesses (100-249 employees) and Large Businesses (250+ employees). The final rankings for each category will be announced at a special awards presentation on March 30, 2020 at the DoubleTree Hotel in So Burlington from 5:00 pm thru 7:30 pm.

For more information on the Best Places to Work in Vermont program, visit BestPlacesToWorkinVT.com.



VTPTAC Events and Workshops

The Vermont Procurement and Technical Assistance Center has announced its workshops and events for February and March. These include Understanding the System for Award Management, Resiliency for Defense Contractors, and an Intro to PTAC. Workshops are held throughout the state. Visit their [website](#) for details and full list of events.

Workforce & Talent Summit Proposals Due

Presentation proposals for the Vermont Workforce & Talent Summit are due **Friday, February 14th**.

A partnership between the Vermont Department of Labor, Advance Vermont, and the Vermont Futures Project, the Workforce & Talent Summit is a day-long conference on May 28th focused on promoting the long-term economic health of our state and providing opportunity for Vermonters.



The 60-minute seminars will provide attendees with solutions to workforce challenges and information about ongoing opportunities. Conference coordinators are looking for informative, relevant, engaging, and interactive presentation proposals. [Submit a presentation proposal by 5pm on February 14.](#)



Hospitality Awards Nominations

The Vermont Chamber of Commerce presents their annual Hospitality Awards at the [37th Annual Vermont Tourism Summit](#), held at the Killington Grand Resort Hotel. This summit draws one of the largest gatherings of tourism professionals in the state including owners, managers, and employees of the many businesses connecting to this important segment of the Vermont economy. Nominate an exceptional [innkeeper](#), [restaurateur](#), [chef](#), or [tourism partner](#) that is a leader in Vermont's tourism industry. [View the 2019 award recipients.](#)

Nominate an Outstanding Business for DCD Awards

The Vermont Chamber and *Vermont Business Magazine* are soliciting nominations for the 30th annual Deane C. Davis Outstanding Business of the Year Award.



The Deane C. Davis Outstanding Business of the Year Award is awarded to a Vermont business with outstanding accomplishments in 2019, a history of success, and a uniquely Vermont brand. [Deadline for nominations is March 6.](#)



Join the Vermont Chamber Team

We are seeking candidates for a Membership and Engagement Manager. Learn about the [Membership Manager](#) position and send a resume and cover letter to jobs@vtchamber.com.

Member Spotlight



[LEDdynamics, Inc.](#) is a provider of solid state lighting technology that is green, energy efficient, and represents the future of lighting. Based in Randolph, LEDdynamics is committed to quality job creation and the prosperity of the local community. In June 2019, LEDdynamics moved operations into a new bespoke facility built with the assistance of the Vermont Economic Development Corporation, the Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation, Peoples United Bank, and the town of Randolph, VT.

Welcome New Chamber Members

This month we welcome:

[Rolled Alloys](#)
[TW Metals](#)
[Altek Electronics, Inc.](#)
[General Composites Inc.](#)
[Edco Engineering Inc.](#)
[Simtech, Inc.](#)

Chamber members are listed on the [Vermont Chamber Directory](#) online, which gets 55,000 unique views a year.

#LetsGrowVT

[Norwich University names Colonel Mark Anarumo as 24th President](#)

[Richards Group Named One of the 2020 Best Places to Work in Vermont](#)

[NSA Industries Expands, Changes Name To Momentum Manufacturing Group](#)

This section features news about growing Vermont companies.
Email news@vtchamber.com with your good news.

In Other News

[Governor Vetoes Minimum Wage Increase](#)

[Federal Community Planning Grants Help Welcome New Americans](#)

[Workers' Comp Insurance Rates Increase](#)

[Auction of Hermitage Assets Planned For March](#)

[Welch Bill Would Boost Federal Funding For Vermont Trails](#)

Save the Date

Vermont Workforce & Talent Summit - May 28
Manufacturing Summit - Sept. 3

Want great exposure for your business? Sponsoring the statewide Vermont Chamber newsletter is an affordable and effective way to reach your target customers. Email news@vtchamber.com for pricing and more information.

