



Commerce Connection

Business Is Good

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March 2020



Business Resources for COVID-19 Outbreak

Vermont health and commerce officials are urging all employers to review [updated guidelines](#) issued by the Vermont Department of Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to help businesses plan and respond to this growing public health risk.

At the [Vermont Department of Health COVID-19 website](#) businesses can find Vermont's response and plans to COVID-19 including up-to-the-minute information, FAQs, business guidance, and other resources.

You can find additional resources for employers including workplace tips on the [U.S. Chamber of Commerce Coronavirus page](#).

State Minimum Wage to Increase in 2021

The legislature **successfully overrode Governor Scott's veto of the minimum wage increase bill**, which will cost employers \$121 million by 2022 and result in suppressed economic growth, according to the Joint Fiscal Office. With this new change in law, on January 1, 2021, the State's minimum wage will increase to \$11.75 an hour, and will increase to \$12.55 an hour in 2022. In subsequent years, the minimum wage will increase by five percent, or the percentage increase of the Consumer Price Index, whichever is less.



During summer visits to business members around the state, the Vermont Chamber consistently heard from employers searching for workers to fill positions that pay \$15 an hour or more. So it is difficult to understand the reasoning behind prioritizing wage increases that will impart negative impacts, predominately on small and rural businesses, rather than focusing on solutions to Vermont's workforce shortages. **Find out how your legislator voted on S.23.**

If you have any questions about increases to the minimum wage, please contact **Charles Martin**.

Vermont Chamber Attends Aviation Summit

The Vermont Chamber participated in the 2020 Aviation Summit in Washington D.C., representing Vermont's \$2 billion aerospace manufacturing and civil aviation industry. Hosted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the annual summit brings together industry leaders, such as American Airlines, Airbus, Boeing, and Collins Aerospace, to discuss the state of the industry, as well as emerging trends like the impact of the COVID-19 on commercial aviation, electric flight, and the engines of the future. The Vermont Chamber also met with the Office of U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy and provided updates on efforts to build the Vermont-Québec Aerospace Trade Corridor now officially extended to Connecticut.



For more information, please contact **Chris Carrigan**.



Register for the Vermont Tourism Summit

The **Vermont Tourism Summit** is one of the largest gatherings of tourism professionals in the state. The 37th Annual Vermont Tourism Summit will be held at the Killington Grand Resort on **April 15-16th**. This year's summit offers robust programming to educate and inspire the tourism industry. **Register to attend.**

Exhibit at the 2020 Manufacturing Summit

There are only 8 exhibit booths left so don't wait any longer to [register for your exhibit space](#) at the 2020 [Manufacturing Supply Chain Summit](#) to be held on **September 3rd** at our new venue: the [DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel and Conference Center](#) in South Burlington.



Exhibitor investment is \$900 and includes electricity, carpeting, and access to the OEMs, as well as B2B supply chain meetings with buyers, suppliers, and partners. To join us, [please review exhibitor criteria](#), and select a booth location on the [new floor plan](#). [Sponsorship opportunities](#) are also available.

Please contact [Chris Carrigan](#) at 802-223-0904 with questions.



Vermont Futures Project Releases YP Report

The Vermont Futures Project released its [Young Professionals Report](#) after hosting a series of forums across the state that engaged and empowered Young Professionals (YPs), ages 22-40, to voice their thoughts and desires for their economic future and the state's long term prosperity. Many YPs choose to make Vermont their permanent home because of access to nature and outdoor amenities, local food systems, safe communities, and the state's entrepreneurial spirit. However, these YPs identified some limits to their ability to move into the "next chapter" of their lives because of the realities of salaries to living expenses ratios, what is being called as the [Young Professional Opportunity Gap](#).

These YPs offered several recommendations to turn challenges into long-term opportunities for economic development, community building, and state resiliency for a hopeful future. To that end, The Vermont Futures Project is:

- Creating a YP Advisory Group representing all regions of Vermont
- Engaging the business and community leaders to take actionable steps addressing this cohort
- Educating state and local government officials on the cost of living challenges for this cohort

Contact [Lori Smith](#) with questions.

Seven-Month Business Course Available for Vermont Entrepreneurs



The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is seeking 20 entrepreneurs throughout Vermont to participate in a free business course starting in April. [Emerging Leaders](#) is

a free executive-level training program for established business owners poised for growth. Over the course of seven months at Vermont Technical College's (VTC) Williston campus, each participating entrepreneur will learn ways to improve their business and create a 3-year strategic growth plan to build a sustainable business of size and scale.

The deadline to register is **March 20th**. Contact emergingleaders@sba.gov for details.



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 30th**. For more information, visit HireVets.gov or email [Mark Audy](mailto:Mark.Audy@DOL.gov).

Support Women in the Workplace

Equal Pay is a hot topic in the business world these days. Organizations wishing to show their support for closing the gender wage and opportunity gap now have an easy way to do so, by signing on to the [Vermont Equal Pay Compact](#), a program managed by the Vermont Commission on Women. The Compact is a voluntary online pledge that costs nothing, and doesn't require you to share any information.



Compact signers are listed on VCW's website with links to their business websites, recognized on social media, and are sent a decal to publicly display their strong commitment to ending the gender wage gap in Vermont. A [simple form](#) on the VCW website is all that is required to sign up. Please consider joining the 180+ Vermont companies currently participating, including some of our top utilities, manufacturers, and educational institutions.



Attend Best Places to Work Awards Presentation

In January, The Vermont Chamber and *Vermont Business Magazine* announced the top 51 Best Places to Work in Vermont 2020. 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 30th** at the DoubleTree Hotel in South Burlington from 5:00pm - 7:30pm.

[Register](#) for the Best Places to Work in Vermont Awards Ceremony.

Promote Your Business to Visitors

The Vermont Tourism Marketing Program communicates your message via the Vermont Vacation Guide and on the [VermontVacation.com Stay & Play](#) directory. Take advantage of this program to promote your business to the 80 million people that live within a day's drive of Vermont.



[Learn more](#) about the Vermont Tourism Marketing Program, or contact [Marc Plouffe](#) or [Megan Bullard](#) for additional information.



Member Spotlight

This month's Member Spotlight is [The Chandler Center for the Arts](#) which presents Che Apalache on **April 11th** at 7:30pm. Nominated for a 2019 Grammy, [Che Apalache](#) rocked the red carpet with one of the dreamers whose story inspired their song. Che Apalache is a 4-man string band based in Buenos Aires with members from Argentina, Mexico, and the U.S. The group's founder, Joe Troop, is a multi-instrumentalist, singer-songwriter, and composer from North Carolina who moved to Argentina in 2010. While carving out a niche in the Buenos Aires music scene, Joe taught bluegrass and old-time music for a living. His most dedicated students were Pau Barjau (banjo), Franco Martino (guitar), and Martin Bobrik (mandolin). The four quickly became picking buddies and in 2013 decided to take their group on tour. [Buy tickets](#) or [learn more](#).

Welcome New Chamber Members

This month we welcome:

[Econolodge Brattleboro](#)

Intelleges
Maplecroft Bed & Breakfast
Accurate Brazing
Aero Gear
Mi-Box of Vermont
Whitcraft
Aquest Corp

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

#LetsGrowVT

Lawson's Finest Named Vermont Small Business Persons of the Year

VTP Supports Heritage Aviation Certifications and Apprenticeships

Cigna and OneCare Vermont Partner to Reduce Isolation for Older Vermonters

Dealer.com Celebrates Environmental Benchmark

UVM and Global Foundries Establish Education Partnership

Davis & Hodgdon and Center for Women and Enterprise Launch Partnership

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

In Other News

Governor Orders Activation of State Emergency Operations Center

Tourism Is Economic Development

Student Loan Repayment Would Direct \$20K for New Workers in Opportunity Zones

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Receives Support from Northern Vermont Towns

Save the Date

Vermont Workforce & Talent Summit - May 28 (Register)
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.

