

**2014**

WASHINGTON-CHITTENDEN  
WATERBURY, BOLTON, HUNTINGTON & BUELS GORE

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**REMEMBER TO VOTE ON AUGUST 26 & NOVEMBER 4!**

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**Rep. Tom Stevens & Rep. Rebecca Ellis**



# **END OF SESSION REPORT**

## **A YEAR OF PROGRESS**

*Two years ago, we were celebrating the confirmation by the Shumlin Administration that the State of Vermont would indeed be returning to the Waterbury Complex. It had been a difficult year, and in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene, we worked with many people within the administration, and with you, to make it happen. Now, we have witnessed the demolition of much of the complex, including the old state hospital, and we have witnessed the ceremonial groundbreaking. Waterbury's recovery continues in a way that makes us all proud, and now with the sounds of construction in the background, we are closer to having nearly 1,000 state workers return than we are to the flood. What a turnaround.*

*This report details some of the highlights of the 2013-14 biennium, and will focus on the work we did from our own committees, as well as the whole. Between health insurance, climate change, economic justice and education issues, we have been working full tilt. We appreciate your input to our decisions, and we look forward to seeing you this summer and fall. As always, please contact us with your concerns.*

*-Tom & Rebecca*

### **Useful Contact Information**

Waterbury Works: The Vermont Agency of Transportation's Website for updated road construction in the Waterbury and Bolton area: [http://watp.vtransprojects.vermont.gov/construction\\_updates/](http://watp.vtransprojects.vermont.gov/construction_updates/)

Vermont Health Connect: Find the Right Health Insurance Plan for You and Your Family:  
<https://portal.healthconnect.vermont.gov/VTHBELand/welcome.action>

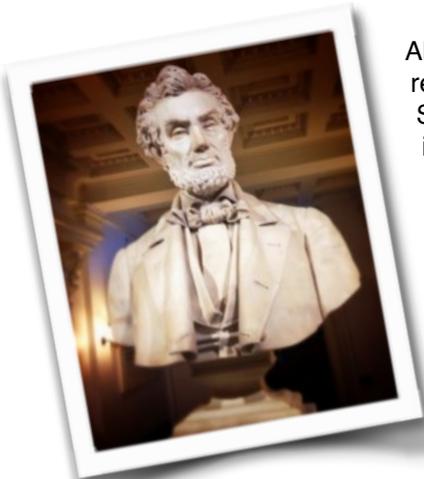
Town of Waterbury: [www.waterburyvt.com](http://www.waterburyvt.com)

Town of Huntington: [www.huntingtonvt.org](http://www.huntingtonvt.org)

Town of Bolton: [www.boltonvt.com](http://www.boltonvt.com)

Vermont Information: 211

## INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS



*Bust of Abraham Lincoln in the Vermont State House*

Along with the reconstruction of the State Office Complex in downtown Waterbury, there are a number of **projects that will create some short term discomfort and yield long term solutions** to some of the infrastructure issues that have plagued our area for over 30 years.

Between these projects and the State Office Complex, **we estimate that nearly \$200 million in federal, state and local money will be invested in our district.**

1. **State Office Complex:** Renovation of the central core buildings has started. The state is sponsoring monthly public tours of the State Office Complex on the first Saturday of the month. These tours will give us an opportunity to see the progress of the largest building project in state history. When completed in late 2015, it will be a truly special place and will allow the state to serve its citizens in a manner that is appropriate, comfortable and environmentally sound. The Vermont Arts Council has chosen local artist Sarah Lee Terrat to provide public art in the main atrium. As of June 1, 2014, the project continued to be on schedule and on budget.

2. **Route 2 to Bolton:** This project is a massive rebuild. The whole of Route 2 to Bolton will be rebuilt or scraped and paved, and guardrails have been improved. This important alternative route to I-89 needed this work desperately and will make the road safer for both vehicles and bicyclists.
3. **Waterbury Village Wastewater Treatment Plant:** This project has taken nearly ten years to come to fruition. A large portion of the project is paid by state funding, and removes nearly all of the phosphorus from our wastewater prior to its entry into the Winooski. The system is new, but not experimental, and while it will add to the overhead costs of the plant, it will help protect the Lake Champlain watershed.
4. **Route 2 & Route 100 Roundabout:** This long-awaited project should get underway this summer. With an exception for construction of needed improvements to the water and sewer, this project is paid with federal funds. As this area grows, so grows the traffic around Exit 10. the Agency of Transportation is also installing a set of traffic lights at the northbound exit of I-89.
5. **Waterbury Road Projects:** Between the new complex, the roundabout and the Main Street project, the village will have had a near complete infrastructure facelift, which will bring economic benefits to us all. Stowe Street will also see improvements to the road, sidewalks and culverts.

Please follow the progress of these projects in the Waterbury Record, Front Porch Forum, or the Agency of Transportation website.



*Huntingtonians receiving a facilities grant from the Vermont Arts Council for their Town Hall renovations.*



*Retired Town Clerk Deb La Riviere accepting her award at Bolton Town Meeting via Skype.*



*American Legion Post 59 Commander Richard Gray, with his wife Rani, visiting the State House.*



*Governor Shumlin, Governor Dean and others breaking ground at the new Winooski River Crossing on the Long Trail in Bolton.*

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## EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM CROSSROADS



*Huntingdon Town Clerk Heidi Raebt at the Richmond 4th of July Parade*

**THIS** biennium introduced us to education finance and governance issues that we really hadn't faced prior to redistricting. Our experience reinforced the reality that **education financing and reform are among the most difficult issues we face in the state**, and that instituting change in either area will require deeper thought and action than we were able to do this year.

During the 2013-14 biennium, the Legislature worked to provide better access to pre-K and college education. Vermont received \$37 million in federal money to support early childhood education programs to help give Vermont kids a strong start. **We are guaranteeing that all low-income students have access to a free and nutritious school lunch.** We launch a **flexible pathways program** so secondary school students can learn and train for careers they want. We expanded our **dual enrollment program**, which allows Vermont public school students to complete a full year of college during their senior year at no cost, and passed the **Vermont Strong Scholars program**

that may pay up to another year of college level tuition for those who study, graduate and stay in Vermont.

Bolton and Huntington will be voting this November on whether to become members of a modified regional educational district. The Chittenden East Supervisory Union has issued its final report and it is available to read at [www.cesu.k12.vt.us](http://www.cesu.k12.vt.us). The report contains recommendations made by the majority of the volunteer board, as well as a minority report opposing merger under its current proposal. They have posted information at <https://sites.google.com/site/vermontredworkcom/issues>. We know the community members who engaged in this process did excellent work, and we would urge you to read it prior to the vote.

## ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

**WE** are constantly working on reducing our waste stream, and this year we worked with the battery manufacturers to create a program of **recycling alkaline batteries**. Starting in 2016, consumers will be able to drop off single-use batteries at a variety of locations including solid waste facilities, municipal buildings and participating retailers. The program will help keep the **10 million batteries sold in Vermont each year out of our landfills** and allow for the more efficient recovery of steel, zinc, and other materials compared to mining them. This first-in-the-nation program is a win for the environment, a win for the battery manufacturers, and a win for our solid waste districts.

We also increased our very successful **net metering program**.

Vermont's net metering bill, enacted in 1998, allows electric customers to get credit for power they produce at home. The program really took off three years ago, when the Legislature approved a 20-cent solar net metering rate. The success of the solar net metering program caused some utilities to hit a net-metering cap sooner than expected, which in turn prevented utilities in some parts of the state from accepting customers who wanted to net meter. **Our work this year expanded this program**, and will be available for a larger number of Vermonters at a time when acquiring solar for the home is easier than ever.



*The Waterbury Rotary joining with Mailman Tony and Kia Commo for their annual Thanksgiving Food Drive.*

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**Rep. Tom Stevens**

**Clerk, General, Housing & Military Affairs**

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## OUR CONTACTS

**Please feel free to contact us  
with questions anytime...**

**Rep. Rebecca Ellis**

**Vice Chair, Natural Resources and Energy**

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**HEALTH INSURANCE UPDATE**

There is no question the rollout of Vermont Health Connect was not what we expected or wanted. And there is no question that problems with the technological infrastructure remain. The Governor asked his Secretary of Commerce, Lawrence Miller, to move over to the health care division to try to straighten out the issues. As of June 1, his first day as the official “czar,” he had already been working on the problems since late January. Problems remain in the implementation of the software, and while we expect many of them to be fixed prior to the next enrollment season in the fall, not all of them will be.

Problems aside, the outcome of Vermont Health Connect — a way for Vermonters to buy private health insurance with full knowledge of the benefit plans and costs — has been highly successful. In the great majority of cases, people are either paying less for equitable insurance or are eligible to buy insurance for an affordable cost for the first time. To be sure, not everyone has seen an immediate price differential, but many have. And, as a result of the Affordable Care Act, children can remain on their parents insurance until they are 26, and individuals cannot be denied insurance coverage because of existing conditions. These two clauses

alone have provided solace to many families.

As for our proposed move to universal or single payer health care, the administration has been committed to provide their plan to pay for the plan by replacing premiums for “taxes.” We remain vigilant — we have always said that if a plan cannot be developed that provides the relief we expect from a reformed payment system, then we cannot move ahead. The 2015-16 biennium is important to the development of a universal system that will work for everyone.

**MINIMUM WAGE**

In the closing days of the biennium, we raised the minimum wage from \$8.73 (which increases by the cost of living annually) to \$10.50 over four years. There were many discussions about minimum wage versus a livable wage, but in the end, our best information and research allowed us to consider the minimum wage. It was shown that an increase to \$10.10 would have negligible negative effects on the economy if implemented in one year, and the \$10.50 over four years would have less. By putting extra money into the hands of the poorest working Vermonters, we will help them in their struggle to pull themselves out of poverty and reliance on state and federal programs, while giving a boost to the local merchants, where most of these folks will shop.

**LONG TRAIL BRIDGE IN BOLTON**

We attended the groundbreaking for the long-awaited bridge across the Winooski River in Bolton. One hundred years in the making, all the pieces finally came together and the Green Mountain Club was able to start the project. The groundbreaking was attended by Gov. Shumlin, Gov. Howard Dean and Sen. Mazza, all of whom were integral to providing both the initial and final state funding. This bridge will shorten the trails in this area by approximately seven miles. The frames of the bridge are up, and construction is expect to be completed by November 2014.

**CELL COVERAGE IN HUNTINGTON**

The Vermont Telecommunications Authority has announced the expansion of their ongoing project with CoverageCo. and it finally includes the “Target Corridor” in Huntington. We have been advocating for Huntington since 2009 for this project, and between stimulus funds and commitments from the administration, as well as an improvement in localized technology, we are nearly there. The Target Corridor runs on Main Road in Huntington south of about the town offices to Buels Gore and then continues on Rt. 17 through Starksboro to Bristol. The installations will be the low-power, pole-mounted units about every mile or so, like CoverageCo. has already deployed in Vermont. We expect installations to commence this summer, but we don’t expect the project to be completed until the middle of next year. (There is some work to implement additional 9-1-1 requirements across the whole network which may take some months, in addition to time spent on engineering and installation of the individual cell sites.) CoverageCo. operates a “roaming-only” network, providing network access to other cellular carriers instead of its own retail customers. At this point Verizon and Sprint are among the carriers roaming on CoverageCo. AT&T has not signed up so far, but the network is technically able to accommodate them if they choose to do so.

**PRIMARY DAY IS AUGUST 26, 7 AM TO 7 PM (POLLS OPEN 6:30 AM IN HUNTINGTON)**

**EARLY VOTING HAS BEGUN. REQUEST YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT NOW!**

**WATERBURY: Waterbury Fire Station (Primary) Thatcher Brook Primary School (General)**

**HUNTINGTON/BUELS GORE: Brewster-Pierce Memorial School**

**BOLTON: Smilie Memorial School**

**\*General Election November 4, 7 AM TO 7 PM (POLLS OPEN 6:30 AM IN HUNTINGTON)\***