

Recreate. Relax. Repeat.

Burke Vermont



BURKE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - 2019 - THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2019 Current Board of Directors: *Chris Andrews (term up for 3 year renewal)*, Michelle Cleveland (completing 1 of 3 yr term), John Kascenska (completing 2 of 3 yr term), Linda Lotti (completing 2 of 3 yr term), Jim O'Reilly (completing 1 of 3 yr term), Tammy Wagner (completing 1 of 3 yr term), *Gail Weed (term expired)*

Current Officers: John Kascenska, President; Chris Andrews, VP; Linda Lotti, Treasurer; Michelle Cleveland, Secretary

MEMBERSHIP – We currently have 322 members with the list growing steadily each month.

MISSION STATEMENT

The object of the Burke Area Chamber of Commerce, Inc. shall be to promote the economic, civic and social welfare of the people of Burke and vicinity. The Burke Area Chamber of Commerce, Inc. is organized to advance the general welfare and prosperity of the Burke area so that its citizens and all areas of its economic community shall prosper. Promotion shall be provided and particular attention and emphasis shall be given to the interests of the area.

GEOGRAPHIC AREA

As the BURKE AREA Chamber of Commerce, our geographic area includes Burke, VT and other towns within a 40 mile radius of Burke. We also welcome members from other areas who have an interest in the Burke Area and the objectives of the Chamber as stated in our bylaws.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Chamber Financials – We are on track with our budget projections for the year and are financially stable.
- **IRS non-profit status – It's back!** We received word from the IRS in March that our non-profit 501c6 status was reinstated back to the date of revocation.
- **Collaboration with One Burke.** We have increased involvement with One Burke to assist them as they work on community needs including village infrastructure improvements in West Burke, Trails & Transportation needs and Education Facilities. We encourage you to visit the One Burke facebook page to learn more about projects, accomplishments and task force meeting dates.
- In June, we received word from the USDA that the **Burke Chamber/Kingdom Trails Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) was approved!** The grant is to partially fund a **Network & Welcome Center Feasibility Study to determine traffic, parking and other needs in East Burke Village.** The Chamber is the fiscal agent for the grant with Kingdom Trails completing the work outlined in the grant. They have recently hired SE Group of Burlington, VT to begin work on the study. The ultimate goal is to use the study results to improve the traffic, parking and safety issues in East Burke Village.
- The Chamber is responsible for the **free WiFi** (The Burke Connection) available in East Burke village. We are working with Mosedale Integrated Solutions to upgrade equipment and improve the connection.
- The Chamber is a sponsor of the free **Burke Mountain Shuttle** service offered on summer weekends.

COMMITTEES (*any members interested in being involved, can contact the BOD member heading the committee*)

- Lodging (Jim)
- Business to Business Opportunities (Jim & Linda)
- Marketing (Jim, John & Chris)
- Education (Linda & John)
- Events (Tammy & Michelle)
- Beautification (Tammy)

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BUSINESS TO BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED IN 2019

- **Business After Hours** was created last year as a networking opportunity for members and a way to showcase local businesses. In July, BAH was held at the Inn at Mountain View Farm. All members were invited. Marilyn & John were wonderful hosts and took us on a tour of the farm and gardens. Michelle Corey, animal caretaker, introduced us to the horses, donkeys, goats and other critters that call the farm home.
- Linda, John and other board members have been actively involved with the **NEK Regional Marketing Group** which initiated the GetNEKed campaign this year. The goal is to encourage folks to visit the region and share their experiences via social media. The Chamber has been providing info about Burke Area events and attractions to the campaign as well as assisting to promote the website, getnekedvt.com.

MARKETING INITIATIVES COMPLETED AND IN PROGRESS

- **E-newsletters** are sent on the first of each month and include info for residents and visitors such as monthly events, lodging, local deals and other area news.
- The chamber website, **BurkeVermont.com** is regularly updated with events, listings, area news and more. The site receives an average of 50,000 visitors per year. Website visits are up about 15% from last year.
- Regular posts are made to **facebook** and we have over **4,300 followers/likes**.
- The Chamber puts together a **printed list of weekly events**. The list is emailed to all chamber members each week, is posted on facebook and also posted at select locations in Burke/Lyndonville.
- **Print advertisements**: 2018/2019 VT Winter Vacation Guide (2 page coop ad), Listing in 2019 VT Summer and Winter Vacation Guides, Snowmobile VT (2 page coop ad, Dec 2019 issue)
- **Online ad campaigns**: Vermont.com (annual campaign), VisitNewEngland.com (winter 2018/2019)

(All print and online ads direct readers/viewers to the Chamber website, BurkeVermont.com, where they can learn about area offerings and member businesses. Coop ads consist of a general chamber ad for the area as well as individual ads from participating businesses)

EVENTS

- March – **Annual Community Dinner** to benefit the Burke Senior Meal Site. This year, with assistance from the Senior Meal Site staff, we hosted a 'Thanksgiving in March' dinner with turkey and all the fixings. \$746 was raised for the Burke Senior Meal Site.
- June – The Chamber participated in **NEMBAfest** at Kingdom Trails and had vendor space to represent the area offerings and local businesses. Many area businesses sponsored the event through the Chamber and were promoted alongside the 3 day mountain biking event which saw thousands of visitors per day!
- September – **The 32nd Annual Burke Fall Festival** was a great success despite some afternoon rain. Attendance was about 1,500 people. This year had over 80 vendors. Over 50 local businesses sponsored the event. The Fall Festival was also chosen as **VT Chamber of Commerce Top Ten Fall Event for 2020!** This means that next year, we can promote it as a Top Ten Event and get increased promotion from the VT Chamber.
- October – For the 2nd year, we hosted **The Gloaming** featuring Halloween activities throughout East Burke Village including trick or treating at businesses, haunted trails at East Burke School, storytelling, a costume contest, jack-o-lantern contest, face painting, mask making, cookie decorating and more. Lots of families came out to enjoy the festivities and there were definitely more people than last year.
- December – **Santa will make his annual visit to West Burke on December 15th from 11am-1pm**. This is always a popular event with at least 100 families coming to enjoy cookies, wagon rides and more at Mike's Gas. The **Annual Christmas Tree Lighting & Holiday Party** will be the same day from 2-5pm at the Burke Mtn Club/Library. The winners of the tree contest will be chosen with each receiving \$100 to a charity of their choice. Both events are free. We just ask that you bring donations for the local food shelf.

BEAUTIFICATION

- The **kiosk on the green** was updated this year and includes a general map of the area.
- **THE CHRISTMAS TREES!!!!!!** Of Course!!! These will be lighting up the green until mid-January.

All members are welcome to contact the Chamber or any Board Member with ideas, questions, concerns or to keep us informed about your business so that we can promote your news and events.

Thank You for your continued membership and support!