

PRESS RELEASE

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Northeast Kingdom Creative Economy Study Provides Insights and Actions

Montpelier – The Vermont Creative Network and the Vermont Arts Council released results of a six-month study that examined and documented the creative assets in the Northeast Kingdom (NEK). The outcome of the study is an action plan to support and expand those assets to bolster the economy throughout the region.

“The NEK has a wealth of cultural assets with significant untapped potential,” commented Jody Fried, Catamount Arts executive director and chair of the Vermont Creative Network steering team. “We know we can harness the energies of organizations and individuals throughout the region to benefit the economy and improve the quality of life for all our residents.”

Building on a Legacy of Creativity: Understanding and Expanding the Creative Economy of the Northeast Kingdom reports that the creative sector represents 9.4 percent of all the jobs in the NEK. Another important finding is that the concentration of creative industries is 31 percent higher in the NEK than the rest of the country.

“We are very excited to share this study, which presents solid evidence that the creative sector is a substantial economic driver in the NEK,” said Vermont Arts Council Executive Director Karen Mittelman. “The study proposes a detailed action plan to boost the viability and impact of that sector, and there is strong leadership in the NEK that is already moving the plan forward.”

Key elements of the action plan include:

- establishing a creative entrepreneurial and business development system
- increasing economic synergy between the region’s creative and outdoor tourism/recreation industries
- strengthening the brand and marketing of the Northeast Kingdom
- nurturing, attracting, and retaining creative talent
- expand opportunities for learning and collaboration

Vermont Creative Network and Vermont Arts Council leaders intend to use the results of the study as a model to develop a statewide creative sector study and action plan that will begin this year.

Building on a Legacy of Creativity: Understanding and Expanding the Creative Economy of the Northeast Kingdom was prepared for the Vermont Arts Council and the Vermont Creative Network by a team of consultants working through Community Roots, LLC. The team consisted of Michael Kane, Michael Kane Consulting; Stuart Rosenfeld, formerly with RTS, Inc.; Melissa Levy, Community Roots; Julia Dixon; and Stephen Michon, formerly with FutureWorks. A twenty-five person local advisory team provided feedback and guidance. The work was supported by grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Vermont Community Foundation and informed by the participation of more than one hundred artists and community leaders.

[Read the report executive summary.](#)

[Access full report](#) (on Creative Network site).

About the Vermont Creative Network

The Vermont Creative Network (VCN) is a broad collective of organizations, businesses, and individuals working to advance Vermont's creative sector. Established by the Vermont Legislature in 2016 with support from the Vermont Community Foundation, this network of statewide creatives, economic and community development professionals, and nonprofit leaders has identified the need for comprehensive analysis of and action plan for the creative economy in Vermont. www.vermontcreativenetwork.org.

About the Vermont Arts Council

The Vermont Arts Council envisions a Vermont where all people have access to the arts and creativity in their lives, education, and communities. Engagement with the arts transforms individuals, connects us more deeply to each other, energizes the economy, and sustains the vibrant cultural landscape that makes Vermont a great place to live. Since 1965, the Council has been the state's primary provider of funding, advocacy, and information for the arts in Vermont. www.vermontartscouncil.org.

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