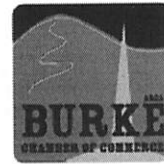


Recreate. Relax. Repeat.

Burke Vermont



BURKE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - 2020 - THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2020 Board of Directors: Chris Andrews (completing 1 of 3 yr term), Michelle Cleveland (completing 2 of 3 yr term), *Lilias Ide (New board member to be voted in for 3 year term)*, Linda Lotti (term up for 3 year renewal), Jim O'Reilly (completing 2 of 3 yr term), Tammy Wagner (completing 2 of 3 yr term),

Current Officers: Linda Lotti, Interim President and Treasurer; Chris Andrews, VP; Michelle Cleveland, Secretary

MEMBERSHIP – We currently have 314 members

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.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

- Well.....the pandemic.....This year was challenging to say the least and it will continue to be so for a while. We've been limited as a Chamber with what we can do for events, marketing, etc., but we have done our best to keep our members informed of updates from the State of Vermont as well as provide information about resources and funding available to assist businesses. Through our website, enews, social media and other outlets, we've been keeping the community as well as potential visitors up to date on travel restrictions, State mandates such as wearing masks, changes to business operations, events, etc. Like every other business, we have adapted our message to encourage safety and respect for the health of the community while still encouraging people to support local businesses whether it be by ordering products online, purchasing take-out food, engaging in outdoor recreation, participating in virtual opportunities, etc.
- **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU – OUR MEMBERS! At any time, you can email the Chamber or a board member with questions, concerns, ideas, news to share, etc.**
- **Chamber Financials** –Due to the pandemic, we did make some adjustments to our budget to make up for lost revenue from events. Some members did not renew for 2020, but we did have a steady amount of new members. We still have a lot of members (310) compared to other chambers in the area. We are in good shape financially.
- **Collaboration with One Burke.** We have been actively involved with One Burke to assist them as they work on community needs including village infrastructure improvements in West and East Burke as well as Trails & Transportation needs. The West Burke Village Revitalization Project has gained lots of momentum this year and identified much potential for development and possible new businesses in West Burke. We encourage you to visit the One Burke facebook page to learn more about projects and accomplishments.
- The **Burke Chamber/Kingdom Trails Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) from the USDA** has been extended until 2021. 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. SE Group of Burlington, VT has been working on the project including gathering input from the community and KT users via surveys, a public forum, and other communications.. The ultimate goal is to use the study results to improve the traffic, parking and safety issues in East Burke Village. Updates are available on the KT website.
- The Chamber is responsible for the **free WiFi (The Burke Connection)** available in East Burke village. This year, we hired Mosedale Integrated Solutions to upgrade equipment and improve the connection. That project was completed this Spring.

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 & Chris)
- Education (Linda)
- Events (Tammy & Michelle)
- Beautification (Tammy)

BUSINESS TO BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED IN 2020

- We continue to be involved with the **NEK Regional Marketing Group** which initiated the GetNEKed campaign last year to encourage folks to visit the region and share their experiences via social media. We provide info about Burke Area events and attractions to the campaign as well as assist to promote the website, getnekedvt.com.

MARKETING INITIATIVES COMPLETED AND IN PROGRESS

- Due to the pandemic and travel restrictions, we focused our advertising efforts on encouraging fellow Vermonters to explore their own backyard and visit the Burke Area. We have also been regularly sharing links to info from the State of VT regarding COVID-19 and cross state travel information.
- **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.
- 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 a print edition is posted at select locations in Burke/Lyndonville.
- **Print advertisements:** Print publications we normally participate in such as the VT Chamber Winter Guide did not happen this year due to lack of advertisers because of the pandemic. We are currently advertising the region in a digital Stay & Play guide put together by the VT Chamber. We also had a two page coop ad in the 2019/2020 Snowmobile VT early winter edition. Along with the NEK Regional Marketing Group and 6 other NEK Chambers, we participated in a one page ad in *Seven Days Staytripper* which was geared to Vermonters.
- **Online ad campaigns:** Vermont.com (annual campaign)

(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

- Well....again....the pandemic....We were unable to host signature events this year including Halloween festivities, Christmas events, and of course, the Fall Festival.
- June – WE DID host a scaled back **Strawberry ‘Festival’** in West Burke which featured shortcake to go and a pizza truck. The event was much appreciated and folks were happy to have something to do and be able to socialize a bit in a safe way.
- September – in collaboration with One Burke, we hosted a **Community Gathering and Pig Roast** in West Burke which was well attended. One Burke provided updates on projects and gathered a lot of feedback from the community about their ideas for West Burke Revitalization.
- December – The **Christmas Tree display/contest** on the green in the village will be up for the holiday season and beyond.. Winners of the tree contest will be announced via facebook in mid-December. Five winners each receive \$100 to a charity of their choice.

Our HOPE is for a better 2021 for all of us. A vaccine, a return to normalcy, a burning of the masks....Next year we hope to be able to host an actual Strawberry Festival with music & dancing, have the biggest and best Fall Festival ever, raise tons of money for the Burke Senior Meal Site at our Community Dinner, see kids out trick or treating, and see our local economy come back stronger than ever. In the meantime, we continue to do our best to adapt, send the right message, provide support to our local businesses, and always act in the best interest of the community.

Thank You for your continued membership and support!