

Recreate. Relax. Repeat.

Burke Vermont



BURKE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - 2021 - THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2021 Board of Directors: Chris Andrews (completing 2nd of 3 yr term), *Michelle Cleveland (term up for 3 year renewal)*, Linda Lotti (term completed, not renewing for 2022), Jim O'Reilly (term completed, not renewing for 2022), *Todd Vendituoli (new board member to be voted in for 3 year term)*, *Tammy Wagner (term up for 3 year renewal)*

Jennifer Palmieri is to be voted onto 2022 board for 3 year term

Current Officers: Todd Vendituoli, President; Chris Andrews, VP; Michelle Cleveland, Secretary; Linda Lotti, Treasurer

MEMBERSHIP – We currently have 300 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

- **This year was certainly better than 2020 with a return of some degree of normalcy to our daily lives.** The lessening of travel restrictions was a vital part in improving our local tourism economy and we look forward to welcoming back Canadian visitors. With the pandemic and new variants causing concern and caution, this year was still challenging. It also presented new obstacles for businesses including a labor shortage. We've been limited as a Chamber with what we can do for events, but we have done our best to keep the community and visitors up to date with what's going on and share news from area businesses. We are certainly impressed with how well local businesses have adapted to changing restrictions and have stepped up to ensure safe working environments and a safe experience for consumers.
- **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 2021, but we did have a steady number of new members. We still have a lot of members (300) 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 Final Report from Fairweather Consulting titled: *Vision & Economic Development Strategic Plan for West Burke Village* was recently completed and available to read at www.burkevermont.com/listing/One-Burke. We encourage you to also 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** was completed in 2021. The Network Feasibility Study is done and available to review at www.kingdomtrails.org
- We are currently pursuing a new grant opportunity as a collaborative effort with the Northern Forest Center and other local Chambers of Commerce. The VT Agency of Commerce & Community Development '**Tourism and Economic Recovery Marketing Grant**' was recently submitted and, if approved, will provide funding for the development of shared marketing assets/activities to promote the region. We expect to hear if the grant is approved sometime this December.
- The Chamber is also responsible for the **free WiFi** (The Burke Connection) available in East Burke village.

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.
- Regular posts are made to **facebook** and we have over **4,300 followers/likes**.
- New this year is our **Instagram** page which has almost 400 followers - [instagram.com/burkevetchamber](https://www.instagram.com/burkevetchamber)
- The Chamber puts together a **printed list of weekly events**. The list is emailed to all chamber members each week and posted on facebook and Instagram. A print edition is posted at select locations in Burke/Lyndonville.
- **Print advertisements:** We are currently advertising the region in a digital and printed Stay & Play guide put together by the VT Chamber of Commerce. We will have a two-page coop ad in the 2021/2022 Snowmobile VT early winter edition.
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- **Online ad campaigns:** Vermont.com (annual campaign) – We receive 100-200 website referrals each month from this 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

- June – We hosted the **Strawberry Festival in West Burke** which featured two food trucks, live music and, of course, strawberry shortcake. The event was much appreciated and we estimate attendance at about 350 people.
- September – We did decide to cancel the Burke Fall Festival out of an abundance of caution regarding COVID and concerns regarding the health & safety of the community including children who, at the time, were ineligible to be vaccinated.
- December – The **Christmas Tree display/contest** on the green in the village will be up for the holiday season. Five winners each receive \$100 to a charity of their choice. We will host a **Tree Lighting & Holiday Party on the green at the Burke Mountain Club on December 12th**. Winners of the tree contest will be announced at the event. We decided not to host a Santa visit to West Burke due to the very young age of the children who attend and the close, indoor quarters.

We are thankful for the high percentage of community members who have been vaccinated and have kept safety, even when inconvenient, at the forefront of decisions. We look forward to a better 2022 and wish all of you good health and prosperity as we all continue to navigate living and working through the pandemic. The Chamber will 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!