



COLD HOLLOW TO CANADA



Culverts like the one seen above in Monkton are used as amphibian crossing tunnel.

Culvert design crucial for wildlife

By BRIDGET BUTLER
Cold Hollow to Canada Program Director

ST. ALBANS — When I was a kid, I spent a lot of time under the road I lived on. There were two spots on our rural road where the kids in the neighborhood would meet up on summer days; The Big Creek or The Little Creek. Both these creeks passed under our roadway through cement box culverts. The Little Creek culvert was so small that you had to duck to pass through as we snuck from one side to the other barely getting our feet wet in the shallow water. The Big Creek culvert, however, was wide and tall. Big enough that we could stand up underneath it. Here, we definitely needed our boots to span the creek as it passed through and then tumbled over a concrete ledge to continue it's way out through the farms fields.

We used the culverts as a meeting spot, and, as a way to travel secretly from one side to another as we

sought for salamanders and crayfish. I remember tracking muddy raccoon and opossum footprints through the mud at the Big Creek culvert, and watching minnows dart back and forth in the water where the concrete had been undermined at its edge. Now I look at culverts with a more informed adult perspective, but I still maintain my childhood sense of adventure through my work with the WildPaths Project.

Since April, WildPaths volunteers have been helping to ground truth modeling done by Vermont Fish & Wildlife about wildlife connectivity hotspots. These are places where prime animal habitat is bisected by a road, putting drivers and animals at risk of collision. Each report that comes in from a volunteer notes whether there was a bridge or culvert near the spot where an observation was made. While a culvert can be a connection point for a habitat that has been split by a road, some culverts are

► CULVERTS on page 10A

Loans offered to Burke, Jay Peak subcontractors

By ANNE GALLOWAY
VTDigger.org

Two lending agencies are offering a special loan program for the building subcontractors who have not been paid for work at Jay Peak and Burke Mountain ski areas.

About \$4.6 million is owed to subcontractors that worked at the two resorts, according to documents filed with the U.S. District Court of Southern Florida.

Vermont Economic Development Authority and the Northern Community Investment Corporation have teamed up to give subcontractors access to working capital for up to a six year period, according to a press release. Loans are available immediately. The first year is interest only at a rate of 4 percent. The maximum amount that can be borrowed is \$500,000.

The Jay/Burke Contractor Assistance Loan Program is funded through VEDA's small business loan program. No state funding will be used.

Jon Freeman, president of NCIC, says the two lenders will consider the needs of each business on a case-by-case basis. "We support the situation," Freeman said. "The main thing is to keep employment levels up and get businesses through this challenging time."

Freeman said NCIC and VEDA will look at the financial history, collateral and future prospects for the businesses. "Naturally, businesses don't want to take on debt if it's not needed," Freeman said. "If they do, we're here to help."

A federal court judge has



The Jay Hotel and waterpark entrance are seen in this April, 2016 Messenger file photo

approved a motion to protect the lien rights of 18 subcontractors who worked on the Stateside condos at Jay Peak and 28 subcontractors who completed construction at Burke Hotel. DEW Construction was the general contractor for the Stateside project and PeakCM was the general contractor for the Burke Hotel.

One of the contractors is owed nearly \$800,000. The rest of the unpaid invoices are under \$500,000, and most are between \$20,000 and \$200,000.

DEW and Stateside subs walked off the job last summer for lack of payment, and the subcontractors at Burke have gone without pay for more than six months.

They won't be repaid anytime soon. The Securities and Exchange Commission has charged Ariel Quiros and Bill Stenger, the developers of the two resorts, with misusing \$200 million in EB-5 immigrant investor funds. The state also

has a lawsuit pending, and the matter is under criminal investigation by the Vermont U.S. Attorney.

Payments for the contractors are now tied up in federal court proceedings and the SEC receivership, which could take several years to resolve.

Pat Moulton, the secretary of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, came up with the idea of an emergency loan program and asked Jo Bradley, president of VEDA, if they could figure out a partnership to support unpaid subcontractors. Many of the companies are in "tough shape" and "\$500,000 is a lot of money to carry."

"My hope is that these subs who are owed as much as \$500,000 to \$800,000 will get working capital to assist with cash flow until such time as the receiver can figure out the full liquidation of assets and those with liens can be paid in full," Moulton said.

"This is borrowing, and that's not ideal, but it will hopefully ease the cash flow burden until they are paid," Moulton said.

VERMONT IN BRIEF

Jay Peak opens aerial tram after inspection

JAY (AP) — A Vermont ski resort's iconic aerial tram has reopened for the summer.

Jay Peak's aerial tram started operating Saturday after passing a recent multi-day safety inspection and evacuation drill. It will run seven days a week.

A hairline crack had been found in one of the arms holding the cabins to the cable on the last day of inspection. That part has since been replaced.

The resort was ordered to close until it could complete repairs. It recently signed a \$5 million contract with a lift manufacturer to upgrade the tram's electrical systems. The installation will begin next spring.

The money for the upgrades wasn't immediately available following allegations from the Securities and Exchange Commission accusing the resort's owner and CEO of misusing millions raised through an EB-5 program.

Chittenden Co. officials push for new housing units

SOUTH BURLINGTON (AP) — Community leaders in Vermont's most populous county are hoping to alleviate a housing shortage by helping to build 3,500 homes in the area over the next five years.

The "Building Homes Together" campaign was announced on Monday in South Burlington. The community leaders are promising to work together to bring about the construction of the homes.

Charlie Baker of

the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission says building more homes is fundamental to improving the economy.

The idea is to concentrate new housing in downtown centers near schools, public transit services, shopping centers and major employers.

Baker says building 700 housing units a year that are within financial reach of low- and middle-income workers will help rectify the housing imbalance.

Okemo Mountain penalized over EB-5 project

LUDLOW (AP) — Statements made in a financial prospectus to investors have brought regulatory penalties against a foreign investor-funded project at the base of Okemo Mountain Resort.

The state Department of Financial Regulation has stripped the "SouthFace Village at Okemo" project of its ability to solicit new investors.

The suspension is pending the creation of new disclosures that more accurately reflect the project's risks. The developers declined comment.

Commerce Secretary Patricia Moulton said the suspension can be a relatively normal action for other EB-5 projects. The EB-5 federal program allows foreign investors to obtain U.S. visas if they pledge a minimum \$500,000 investment in job-creating projects.

The more than \$200 million at Okemo project is billed as "the first four-season luxury home community" in more than a decade.

Town to pay for police at meetings

VICTORY (AP) — A Vermont sheriff's department has ended a long-standing arrangement with a town to have law enforcement cover selectboard and town meetings at no charge.

The Essex County Sheriff's Department sent the town of Victory a notice advising them that they will be charging an hourly rate starting this spring.

The department offered a \$35 per hour rate and

a two-hour minimum for meeting coverage in Victory. Records show the Victory selectboard is in favor of paying the department to be at meetings.

Essex County Sheriff Trevor Colby said earlier this year he has been sending an officer to meetings using public safety funds the department uses for patrolling anywhere in the county.

Billing for patrols in the town is done at the county level.'

Cub Cadet
WELCOME TO STRONGSVILLE

ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING YOU SET YOUR DECK HEIGHT TO.
THE XT ENDURO SERIES

 XT1 LAWN TRACTOR Premium foot-operated hydrostatic transmission, 18-25 HP ¹¹ Cub Cadet-certified Kohler [®] engines. STARTING AT: \$1,499⁹⁹	 XT2 LAWN TRACTOR Exclusive Performance Package including more powerful Cub Cadet-certified Kohler [®] Smart-Choke [®] engines. STARTING AT: \$1,799⁹⁹	 XT3 GARDEN TRACTOR Automotive-style beltless drive shaft and powerful engines to handle the toughest tasks. STARTING AT: \$3,799⁹⁹ <small>Includes 48" deck</small>
---	---	--

THE INDUSTRY'S STRONGEST WARRANTY[™]
UNLIMITED HOURS, 5-YEAR CHASSIS AND FRONT AXLE, 3-YEAR POWERTRAIN.

FOR FULL PRODUCT SPECS **Cub Cadet** VISIT CUBCADET.COM

YOUR INDEPENDENT CUB CADET DEALER—EXPERT SERVICE. LOCALLY OWNED.
THE ADVICE, SERVICE, SELECTION AND SUPPORT YOU NEED TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOU.

7 Nancy Drive
Milton, Vermont 05468
802-893-4326
www.miltonrentalandsales.com

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF LIMITED TIME 0% FINANCING

(1) Offer Subject to Credit Approval. Some Restrictions Apply. See Store Associate for Details.
* Product Price — Actual retail prices are set by dealer and may vary. Taxes, freight, setup and handling charges may be additional and may vary. Models subject to limited availability. Specifications and programs are subject to change without notice. Images may not reflect dealer inventory and/or unit specifications.
** Limited warranty — 5-year chassis and front axle, unlimited hours, 3-year and 4-year powertrain (engine and transmission) unlimited hours. Normal wear parts 30 days. For full warranty details, visit cubcadet.com or see your local dealer.
† Built using the highest quality components sourced locally and globally.
†† As rated by Kohler, all power levels are rated at 3600 RPM per SAE J1940 gross.
© 2016 Cub Cadet XT_ENDURO_SERIES_Q

EXCEPTIONAL FINANCING OFFERS AVAILABLE

VALOR ON CALL

HONORING STEVE LAPIERRE

The St. Albans Messenger wants to publish community stories and photos of firefighter Steve Lapierre for our Valor on Call supplement in July. If you have something to share, please submit your words or photos to michelle@samessenger.com by Friday, July 8th.