



Futures Forward

Securing Vermont's Economic Future

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[Let us know](#) if you have thoughts or questions about the following articles.

Vermont Chamber Economic Conference 2018 Recap

During the Vermont Chamber's Economic Conference on January 5, over 300 attendees heard from **Art Woolf**, **Phil Daniels**, and **Matt Thornhill** about the past, present and future of Vermont's economy. Inclement weather prevented **Gus Faucher** of PNC Bank from attending.



During the event, **Bill Shouldice** also provided an [update on the Vermont Futures Project](#), including highlights and trends from our 2018 data update.

We invite you to view each presentation:

- [Art Woolf - Vermont's Economy in 2018](#)
 - [Phil Daniels \(presenting for Michael Dolega\) - The Global & Financial Outlook.](#)
 - [Matt Thornhill - Institute for Tomorrow](#)
 - [Gus Faucher - National Economic Outlook](#)
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Chad T. Ahern joins Vermont Futures Project

The [Vermont Futures Project](#), a data-driven initiative to secure Vermont's economic future, welcomes Chad T. Ahern to further the educational outreach and research efforts of Vermont's future. Chad will work to expand data on the Economic Dashboard and create recommendations to effect change to meet growth targets and help develop a plan for future progress.

Statewide Workforce Forums Recap

A heartfelt **thank you** to all those who attended one of our 14 Workforce Forums conducted in concert with the Vermont Chamber of Commerce. Over the 2017 fall and winter, Betsy Bishop and Ashley Romeo-Boles of the Vermont Chamber gathered feedback on our Workforce & Talent data sets and answers to the question “Why Vermont?”

[Summaries](#) from each event are posted on the Vermont Futures Project site.



Two key findings from these events:

- There exists a strong agreement that the Vermont Futures Project’s data accurately reflects Vermont’s workforce reality.
- In an intriguing twist, responses to “Why Vermont” centered around “quality of life,” community and facets of Vermont’s outdoors, and far outpaced those related to jobs, business environment or workplaces.

Work is now underway to incorporate many of the offered ideas into a plan for the future, including recommendations for government and business.



Governor Scott Pursues Two Futures Project Recommendations

In his State of the State Address and 2018 Budget Address, Governor Scott outlined action plans to address two ideas that started with the Vermont Futures Project:

- The Vermont Futures Project previously encouraged state agencies to look at ways to better market Vermont in order to attract new workers to the state. **Gov. Scott and his team recently initiated a \$3.2 million, state-of-the-art targeted marketing campaign** to identify and

attract people who already have ties to Vermont, including those who were born here, went to college here or once lived here.

- Create a public-private partnership that uses a recruiter to place out-of-state workers with our small businesses, particularly those businesses that cannot afford a full-time recruitment operation.

Impact of Vermont Futures Project Data

We are pleased to recognize other initiatives utilizing Vermont Futures Project data to guide their work, and promote shared goals:



- Lyle Jepson and Mary Cohen of the **Rutland Regional Marketing Initiative** report, *"The Vermont Futures Project has been instrumental in informing us about the dire need to attract people to our region. It is because of this important data that we have formalized a plan to address the declining population. To do this we launched our [RealRutland](#) marketing initiative."*



- The **Vermont Legislature** relied upon our data in their work on last year's [Economic Development Bill addressing housing and workforce \(S.135\)](#) and this year's effort to create an [Older Vermonters Act working group \(H.608\)](#).

- The **Agency of Commerce and Community Development** highlighted the Vermont Futures Project's data dashboard in the [State's Economic Development Marketing Plan \(pg. 55\)](#).



- Jane Campbell, the Executive Director of **Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility** said, *"The Vermont Futures Project provides critical benchmarks for Vermont's workforce supply gap. Without sound data to compare against, analysis of VBSR's workforce development initiatives and programs is without context. VBSR supports the work of the Vermont Futures Project to develop and monitor metrics as we work toward sustainable economic growth for the state and prosperity for all Vermonters."*



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

- Executive Director of the **Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund**, Ellen Kahler, cited Vermont Futures Project data in a recent [Burlington Free Press op-ed](#) (also available through [VSJB's newsfeed](#)) highlighting how the lack of Vermont workers is impacting our food networks. Ellen also offered her endorsement of our work during the Vermont Chamber's Economic Conference, stating, *"By diving deep into hard data and then ground truthing that data with hundreds of business owners and economic development professionals, the Vermont Futures Project has helped to focus our collective attention on the magnitude and urgency of our current labor force development challenge. Grounding public*

policy discussions in good data is so important. And their dashboard will help us to visually monitor our progress over time."



[Amanda Dagg O'Brien and Laura Pierce](#) highlighted Vermont Futures Project data in their [opening remarks](#) for the [2017 Vermont Young Professionals Summit](#) back in September.

Amanda commented, "Our goal with this year's Summit is to help build even more momentum around initiatives that will help young professionals thrive in Vermont today, as well as foster sustainable economic growth for Vermont tomorrow. One group that we wanted to draw your attention to is the Vermont Futures Project. With rigor and enthusiasm they have worked to highlight and quantify the demographic challenges Vermont faces. They estimate 10,000 new workers will be needed annually to maintain economic growth in the state. They have also set ambitious targets to help plan for a sustainable and prosperous future---such as growing the number of mid-sized businesses by 25% and getting Vermont to the Top 10 for median household income. Our hope is that events like today will serve as one step towards achieving those targets, by sending you back to your personal and professional communities with actionable strategies to help reach these goals."



We'd like to **thank our many supporters**. We would not be able to continue our work without your investment.

Interested in supporting our work? Contact [Lori Smith](#), Business Development Partner.

[Let us know](#) if you have thoughts or questions about any of these articles.

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