

Organization: Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce

Location: Brattleboro Retreat – 1 Anna Marsh Ln.

Date: November 30, 2017

Time: 7:30-9:00 am (7:45 – 8:45 Presentation)

Presentation Takeaways

The Vermont Chamber of Commerce and the Vermont Futures Project presented data on the workforce challenges experienced by Vermont employers and showed the attendees that about 11,000 more people are needed in the workforce.

Why Vermont?:

Attendees were asked “Why Vermont?” as they entered the room and were instructed to write their answers on post-it notes. When answering this question, Brattleboro attendees fell into three general categories: Quality of Life, Opportunity, and Community.

Specific notes: Best job offer; Career opportunities; As a young professional there are many opportunities to lead; Of all the places I could live I chose VT. The people... the beauty... the hope... the possibilities; We can all make a difference; Engaged, willing to accept people's differences; A great place which fosters a work/life balance... so important; Because there are many jobs and a fantastic lifestyle. Have your cake and eat it too; Community and entrepreneurship; The overall openness, independence, spirit of entrepreneurship and beauty; Followed a relationship and happy to be here; Born here; I was born here and never left' 'Cause you're N.H.'s twin; Close to N.H.; Brattleboro; Why not?; Why not VT? Best place to live!; Quality of Life; Quality of Life; Quality of Life; Way of Life; Hiking, canoeing, walking...open spaces and mountains; Community, sense of togetherness, the people; Community and values; great sense of community; Community, beautiful surroundings; Vermont brand; Because Vermont is a special place; Unique; Beauty, strong values, we lead the nation; and No better place in the world to raise a family.

While the presentation was geared more towards legislative issues, the attendees made the following recommendations to solve the workforce gap:

- Create a relocation concierge/specialist/ambassador to walk individuals through the process of relocating to Vermont because often Vermont is hard to navigate for individuals relocating and does not aid in retaining these individuals.
 - The Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) created a task force to understand challenges of recruiting individuals to the area and will be issuing a draft report next week – we should replicate this process throughout the state.

- The Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce sends out relocation kits to individuals who contact their website.
- Replicate the United Way's efforts where they send out Windham county welcome packets to each community member to inform them of various events occurring in the area and to introduce them and allow them access to the variety of businesses in the community.
- Each town should set a goal of attracting one family each month and make sure to assist both spouses in their job search.
- Incorporate other job search engines into the state's Think Vermont website so that people who are unfamiliar with the search engines that the DOL offers, they can use more commonly known avenues such as craigslist, indeed, linkedin, and others.
- Employers should make a greater effort to respond to applicants of their job postings as often there is a need to respond quickly as often these applicants are not solely looking in Vermont for their job and may well go wherever the first employer is that contacts them. We need to improve our process to be more responsive to job applicants, especially those residing out of state.
- The Independent Contractor process needs to be improved to enable more flexibility with individuals to participate as an independent contractor and to enable an employer not to have to pay employee benefits and various insurance costs when they want to have their business parking lot plowed, or in other situations where it does not make sense to hire them as employees.