

8TH ANNUAL
SOUTHERN VERMONT ECONOMY SUMMIT

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8TH ANNUAL
SOUTHERN VERMONT ECONOMY SUMMIT

ADAPT
AND
THRIVE



MAY 20, 2025 | MOUNT SNOW RESORT | VERMONT

ADAPT AND THRIVE

HOSTED BY



These organizations are equal opportunity employers. Funding for the Summit was made possible in part by the USDA Rural Community Development Initiative and by the State of Vermont through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development's annual Regional Development Corporation investment.

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To access video, photos, and presentations from today's event visit sovermontzone.com/summit starting in June, or contact **Meg Staloff** at mstaloff@brattleborodevelopment.com



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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

SCHEDULE	SUMMIT OPENING	LOCATION
8:00 - 9:00 AM	Registration and Breakfast	Somerset Ballroom
9:00 - 9:15 AM	Summit Opening and Welcome	Somerset Ballroom
9:15 - 9:45 AM	Keynote: The Rising Storm: Demographics and the Need for Adaptation	Somerset Ballroom
9:45 - 10:15 AM	Plenary Panel: Adapting to Demographic Trends in Southern Vermont	Somerset Ballroom

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS		
10:30 - 11:45 AM	What Will People Do All Day? Possibilities and Predictions About the Future of Work	Somerset Ballroom
	Your Local Economy: What is it? Do You Shape it, or Does it Shape You?	Deerfield South
	Rural Business Transitions: Successes and Creative Pathways to Acquisition and Cooperative Ownership	Deerfield North
	Becoming an “Employer of Choice” on a Limited Budget	Raponda West
	Building Towards, Not Away: Community Approaches to Climate Adaptation	Raponda South


12:00 - 12:20 PM	Emerging Leaders Awards	Somerset Ballroom
12:30 - 1:30 PM	Emerging Leaders Lunch and Networking	Somerset Ballroom

MID-AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS		
1:40 - 2:55 PM	Fostering Effective Multigenerational Teams in the Workplace and Community	Harriman’s Restaurant
	A More Diversified Approach to Tourism: Building Resilience for the Sector and Our Communities	Deerfield South
	Coordinating Efforts for a Thriving Southern VT Economy	Deerfield North
	Community Engagement for Positive Change: Fostering Meaningful Conversations to Create Stronger Plans and Better Buy-in for Housing, Infrastructure, and Community Development	Raponda West
	Rural Data for Small Businesses and Community Projects: Real-World Applications for Market Research, Grant Writing, and Advocacy	Raponda South

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS *continued*

LATE AFTERNOON SESSIONS: Taking Action from Today		
3:10 - 4:00 PM	Business Transitions Networking Opportunity	Grand Summit Ballroom
	Capacity for Your Community Project: TA Providers Roundtable	Harriman’s Restaurant
	Beige Book Breakout: Regional Economic Update with the Boston Fed	Deerfield South
	Encouraging (Housing) Developments in Southern VT	Deerfield North
	Change Management: Guided Discussion	Raponda West
	Supporting Our Region’s Rising Workforce: From Young Professionals to Remote Workers to Newcomers	Raponda South
4:00 - 4:30 PM	Federal Delegation Update	Somerset Ballroom
4:30 - 5:00 PM	Closing Reception	Somerset Ballroom

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



JOSH WRIGHT

EVP of Growth, Public Sector | Lightcast

Josh Wright is EVP of Growth at Lightcast, a leading provider of labor market data and insights. He leads strategy, partnerships, and thought leadership for the company’s public sector division. He previously served as EVP and GM of the economic and workforce development division at Lightcast, where he led his team through the merger of Emsi and Burning Glass Technologies in 2021 and the acquisitions of Gazelle.ai and eIMPACT in 2023. Wright is a former journalist who started at Emsi in 2008. He graduated from the University of Idaho with bachelor’s degrees in journalism and history.

To view all Speakers, please visit the link below:
sovermontzone.com/2025-summit-speakers or download the Whova App!

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M denotes moderator



KEYNOTE:
The Rising Storm: Demographics and the Need for Adaptation

🕒 9:15 AM
📍 Somerset Ballroom
👤 Josh Wright

Keynote Speaker Josh Wright of Lightcast (formerly Emsi Burning Glass), a global leader in labor market analytics, will present findings from the recent report, The Rising Storm: Building A Future-Ready Workforce to Withstand the Looming Labor Shortage. This report helps us situate Vermont’s ongoing experience of demographic and workforce trends in a national context and provides insight into trends and solutions that will help us adapt ahead of the next bands of this demographic ‘perfect storm.’



PANEL:
Federal Delegation Update

🕒 4:00 PM
📍 Somerset Ballroom

At the start of the closing reception, representatives from Vermont’s Federal Delegation will give a brief update from Washington and be available to answer questions.

SPECIAL EVENTS



PLENARY PANEL:
Adapting to Demographic Trends in Southern Vermont

🕒 9:45 AM
📍 Somerset Ballroom
👤 M Josh Wright; Speakers: Mel Baiser, Bob Thibault, Imogene Drakes, PhD, FACHE, Rebecca Jones, MD

Leaders from the construction, healthcare, and education sectors in Southern Vermont are already experiencing the effects of what is now recognized as a national trend. Panelists will react to the findings of the Lightcast “Rising Storm” report, and share how these key employment sectors are adapting to the unprecedented disruption in the labor market.

The Summit Plenary Sessions are sponsored by **MSK Engineers**



RECEPTION:
Closing Reception

🕒 4:30 PM
📍 Somerset Ballroom

Close out the day with some time to connect!

Closing reception is sponsored by **Weston and Sampson Engineers**.

F denotes facilitator



AWARDS:
2024 Emerging Leaders Awards

🕒 12:00 PM
📍 Somerset Ballroom

The Future is already here! Join us to celebrate these Southern Vermont leaders under 40.

You can read more about the 2024 Emerging Leaders at SoVermontZone.com/emerging-leaders

Our Emerging Leaders awards ceremony (and the opportunity for these leaders to attend the Summit) is sponsored by **Community College of Vermont** and the **Vermont Community Foundation**.

The awards were produced and sponsored by the **Shires Young Professionals** and the **Southern VT Young Professionals** groups.

The lunch following the Emerging Leaders awards is sponsored by the **Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development**.

M denotes moderator

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

F denotes facilitator



PANEL:
What Will People Do All Day? Possibilities and Predictions About the Future of Work

🕒 10:30 AM
📍 Somerset Ballroom - Front
👤 M Josh Wright; Christy Betit, Janette Bombardier, Brian Maggiotto, Elizabeth Steinman, Jim Trimarchi

How are demographic trends and new technology changing the professional and industrial landscape? Hear from insiders in health care, finance, manufacturing, and the service sector as they share current trends that are shaking up their fields and speculate on what work in their industry might look like in 20 years.

Session sponsored by **The Richards Group**



PANEL:
Your Local Economy: What is it? Do You Shape it, or Does it Shape You?

🕒 10:30 AM
📍 Deerfield South
👤 M Adam Grinold; David Bradbury, Kevin Chu, Mike Pieciak, Arthur Woolf

Explore forces that shape and define rural economies, key components of Southern Vermont’s economy, and the leverage points for change. We’ll dive into what makes economic development possible and what factors drive change and adaptation. Whether you are a business owner, a town official, or an interested citizen, the panelists will help you understand how these levers affect our economy, and how local leaders can foster capital investment and entrepreneurial ecosystems to build local economies.

Session sponsored by **M&T Bank**



PANEL:
Becoming an “Employer of Choice” on a Limited Budget

🕒 10:30 AM
📍 Raponda West
👤 M Jennifer Stromsten; Mel Baiser, Imogene Drakes, PhD, FACHE, Matt Harrington, Elle Parker

Attracting and retaining talented staff is not just about salary. Find out what employees want, expect, and need at work, and how employers of ALL sizes can meet those needs.

Session sponsored by the **Better Business Bureau of New England**

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PANEL:

Rural Business Transitions: Successes and Creative Pathways to Acquisition and Cooperative Ownership

🕒 10:30 AM

📍 Deerfield North

👤 M Annie Winkler; F Dani Delaini;
Ian Kozak, Vikas Mangipudi, Kim Wallace

Rural businesses face unique challenges in transitioning ownership, often lacking access to potential buyers. This panel explores innovative solutions, focusing on cooperatives and creative financing strategies. We'll delve into successful and emerging business transitions with representative examples, including a recently converted worker-owned cooperative, a business that will share its experiences after transitioning to employee ownership in 2022, and more.

This discussion highlights the crucial role of cooperative models and alternative financing in preserving rural businesses. The panel coincides with the announcement of a 2024 Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) awarded to the BDCC and VEOC. This grant, coupled with emerging partnerships like the Windham Business Support Coalition, will bolster efforts to provide technical assistance, increase business transition awareness, and foster collaboration among local and regional business support organizations. Join us to learn how these resources and strategies can empower rural business owners and ensure their legacies continue.

Session sponsored by
Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA)



PANEL:

Building Towards, Not Away: Community Approaches to Climate Adaptation

🕒 10:30 AM

📍 Raponda South

👤 M Meg Staloff; Seth Jensen,
Joie Zhang, Stephanie Smith

Given the new reality of climate impacts, shifting from disaster response and recovery to a mode that helps our communities build long-term vision for resilience is key for lasting vitality. This panel will explore examples of community-based adaptation where communities have decided how to build towards the future, not just against the past.

Session sponsored by Efficiency Vermont

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WORKSHOP:

Fostering Effective Multigenerational Teams in the Workplace and Community

🕒 1:40 PM

📍 Harriman's Restaurant

👤 F Sarah Blizzard, EdD

Different generations bring different approaches, assumptions, and communication styles to their workplace and to civic engagement. In this interactive and engaging workshop, we'll dive into what that looks like and discuss how these differences can enrich your work rather than get in the way of progress.

Session sponsored by
Merritt & Merritt Law



PANEL:

A More Diversified Approach to Tourism: Building Resilience for the Sector and Our Communities

🕒 1:40 PM

📍 Deerfield South

👤 M Lisa Chase; Kristen Carrese,
Heather Pelham, Kristin Sullivan

In this panel, we'll explore how thinking holistically about the many facets of the tourism economy in Vermont (agritourism, cultural tourism/events as well as outdoor rec) can strengthen this sector, which employs 10% of Vermont's workforce. We'll also talk about ways that local tourism assets and associated businesses add more than just dollars to the local economy, and look at trends and tools that communities, organizations, and businesses can tap into to strengthen their operations and maximize community benefit.

Session sponsored by M&T Bank



PANEL:

Coordinating Efforts for a Thriving Southern VT Economy

🕒 1:40 PM

📍 Deerfield North

👤 M Gary Fox, M Laura Sibilia;
Shannon Barsotti, Dominic
Cloud, Steven John, Zak Hale,
Ann Manwaring

Explore your role in building a thriving region. Learn how defining regional goals through the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) has helped Southern Vermont channel diverse individual or local efforts in the same direction for maximum impact on redevelopment and broadband. Through case studies, we'll investigate how actively engaging multiple partners from the public and private sector has been integral to achieving economic and community development goals in the City of St. Albans, as well as in Southern Vermont.

Session sponsored by
Stevens Associates/
M&S Development

M denotes moderator

MID AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

F denotes facilitator



PANEL:

Community Engagement for Positive Change: Fostering Meaningful Conversations to Create Stronger Plans and Better Buy-in for Housing, Infrastructure, and Community Development

🕒 1:40 PM

📍 Raponda West

👤 M Martha Cornwall; Camille Barchers, Katie Buckley, Anne Rider, Samantha Page, Sue Westa

When change is necessary, how does a community get to a shared understanding of what needs to happen? And how can leaders ensure they are hearing from all sides in order to uncover hidden insights and potential pitfalls, while also shaping plans for the widest benefit? Hear fascinating examples from housing, infrastructure, and beyond, and walk away with practical tools for engaging your community in meaningful conversations.

Session sponsored by the
Vermont Community Loan Fund



DISCUSSION

Rural Data for Small Businesses and Community Projects: Real-World Applications for Market Research, Grant Writing, and Advocacy

🕒 1:40 PM

📍 Raponda South

👤 M Emma Spett; Michael Moser, Mariya Shcheglovitova, Per Smith

Feasibility studies, grant applications, and market research — these all take data! How can you find the data you need, and does the available data tell the whole story? Bring your data needs and questions to this discussion led by some local data experts.

THE SUMMIT IS JUST ONE PART OF THE WORK WE DO!

Visit SoVermontZone.com to learn more about the SoVermont Zone, the partnerships it represents, and the Southern VT Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).



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LATE AFTERNOON SESSIONS

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NETWORK:

Business Transitions Networking Opportunity

🕒 3:10 PM

📍 Grand Summit Ballroom - Front

👤 F Danielle Delaini

In this low-pressure session, make meaningful connections—no matter where you are on your business journey! Regional programs can support current owners with exit planning, help future entrepreneurs take over businesses, and provide pathways to capital and financing to make rural business transitions possible.



ROUNDTABLE:

Encouraging Developments in Housing

🕒 3:10 PM

📍 Deerfield North

👤 F Emma Spett; Chris Campany

Learn about the new Vermont Liveability Index website and hear about other encouraging local, regional, and statewide developments around creating more housing (pun intended)!

All late afternoon session sponsored by
UVM | Leahy Institute



ROUNDTABLE:

Capacity for Your Community Project: TA Providers

🕒 3:10 PM

📍 Harriman's Restaurant

Does your community project suffer from a lack of capacity? You are not alone — and there is help to be had! Connect to the many providers who have programs designed to add capacity to help community projects move forward.



GUIDED DISCUSSION:

Change Management

🕒 3:10 PM

📍 Raponda West

👤 F Sage Ruth

Change is inevitable — how we navigate it makes all the difference. In this session, we'll start with a quick refresher on key Change Management principles, then open the floor for group conversation. Share your experiences with change: how did it unfold, and what might have made it smoother? Come ready to reflect, learn, and exchange ideas.



BREAKOUT

Beige Book Breakout: Regional Economic Update with the Boston Fed

🕒 3:10 PM

📍 Deerfield South

👤 Jeff Thompson

Jeff, VP of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and director of the NEPPC, will share insights on economic conditions in the region and then will discuss the Federal Reserve's Beige Book, which provides a snapshot of current economic conditions and helps guide the Fed's monetary policy decisions. Participants will have the opportunity to share anecdotal economic information back with the Fed.



ROUNDTABLE:

Supporting Our Region's Rising Workforce: From Young Professionals to Remote Workers to Newcomers

🕒 3:10 PM

📍 Raponda South

👤 F Beth Sturgeon; Luis Lascari

As the average age of our population increases, communities are looking for ways to invite, welcome, and support newcomers and younger community members. How are these folks connecting to each other and their communities? And are we providing the resources they need to build their careers and their future in Southern Vermont?