



**ADAPT
AND
THRIVE**



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

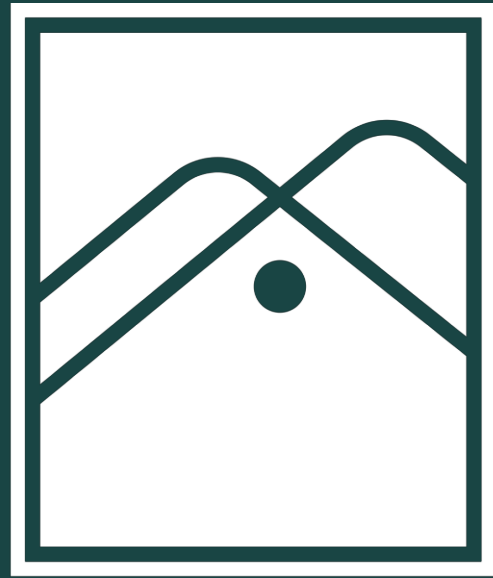
Sponsored by: **M&T Bank**

Moderator:

- Lisa Chase, University of Vermont Extension

Speakers:

- Heather Pelham, Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing
- Kristin Sullivan, Retreat Farm
- Kristen Carrese, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets



RETREAT FARM

Kristin Sullivan - Executive Director



Introduction to Retreat Farm

Historical Farm

Cultural Landscape

21st c. History

Recent Programs & Initiatives

- Farm animals
- Food Truck Roundup
- Partner programs (e.g., concerts, puppetry)
- Community Food Project
- Hiking trails, Forest Playground
- After-school program, classes
- North Barn & Retreat Farm Market



Building the Model



- 501(c)3 in 2015
- Mission: Connect people to the land and to one-another
- Responsiveness to Community
- Building businesses to support the nonprofit
 - North Barn
 - Retreat Farm Market
- Revisiting priorities and purpose
 - Who is (are) our audience(s)?
 - What should our impact be?

Who's visiting?

- 73,000 - 90,000 visitors/yr (2021-2024)
- 41,000 unique visitors in 2024
- 42% from VT (77% total from VT, MA, NH) in 2024
- Food Truck Roundup:
 - 300-2,000/wk
 - 25% from Brattleboro in '24
 - 39% under \$50k household in '24
 - All 50 states, at least 6 countries



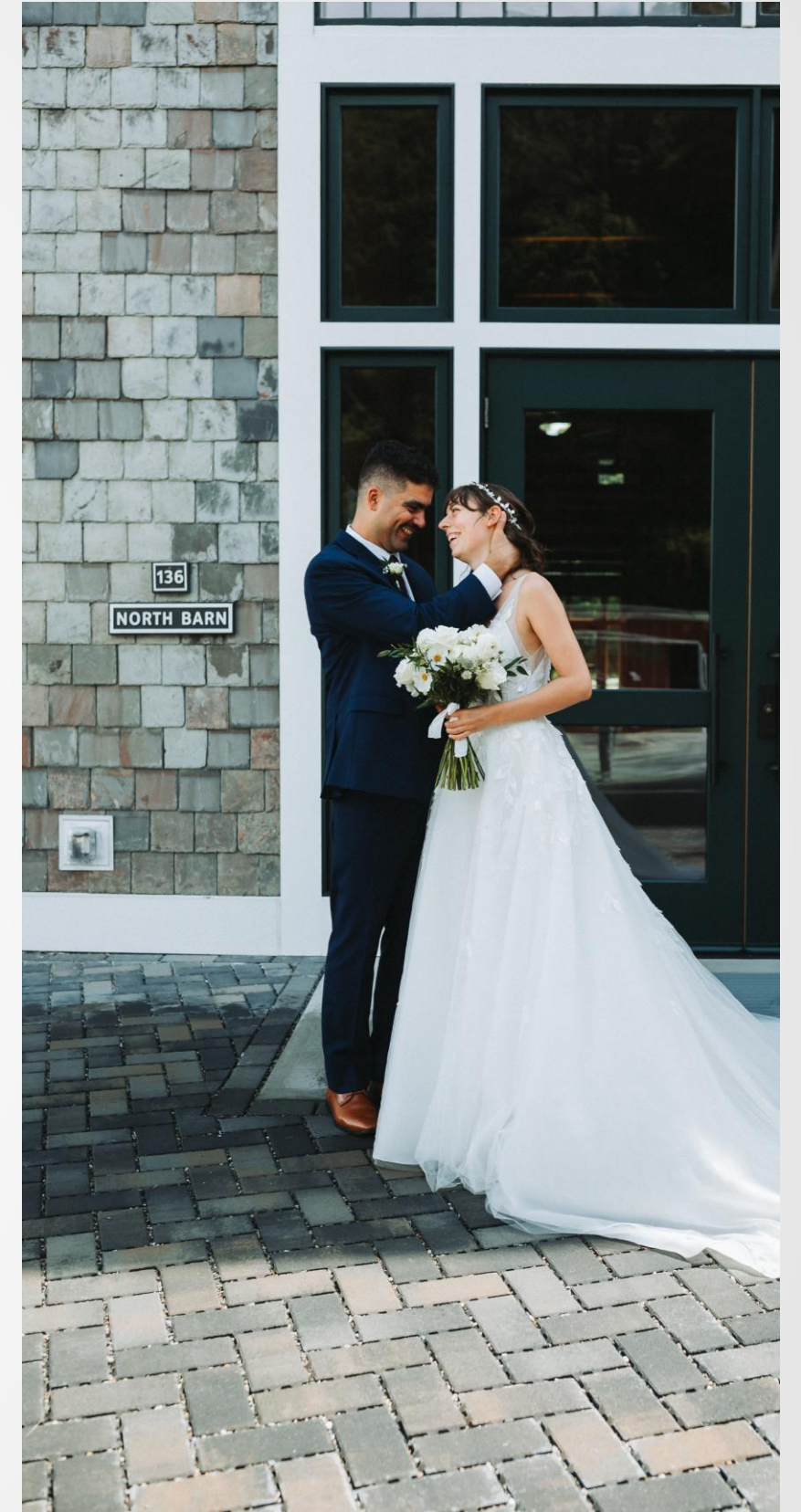
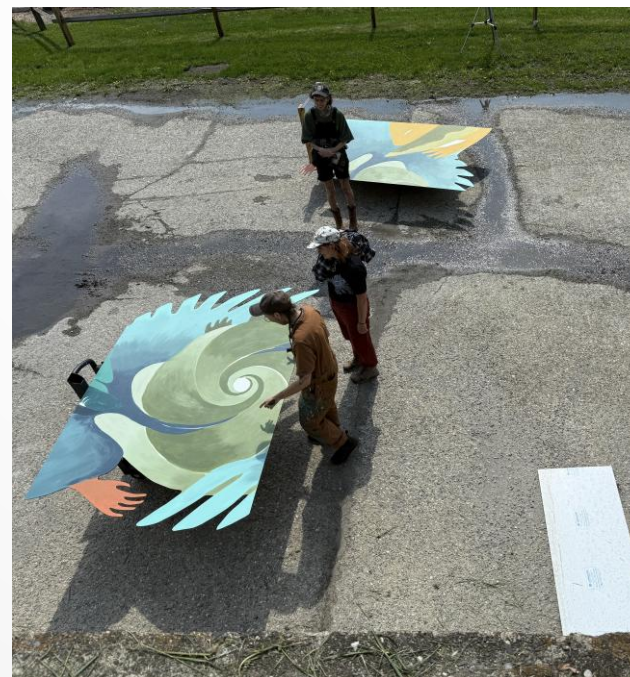
What's working?

- Strong local engagement with trails and animals; sense of ownership
- Seen as a “third place”
- Popular public programs
- Strong partnerships



Challenges

- Financial sustainability: A public park without public funding
- Mission clarity
- Local vs. tourist experience
- The monster of possibility (and taking on too much)
- Navigating the *now*



Takeaways

- Shared clarity of purpose is essential, even if adaptable
- Keep in mind: seasonality of tourism, value to locals
- The “Tuesday afternoon visitor” experience is important
- “Put the matches back”
- We’re still learning...

Come visit!
details at retreatfarm.org

Food Truck Roundup

Twice-monthly Open Barn

Music Under the Stars

The Ramble (bike ride)

Trails, animals, and more!





Questions?

Thank you!

Kristin Sullivan

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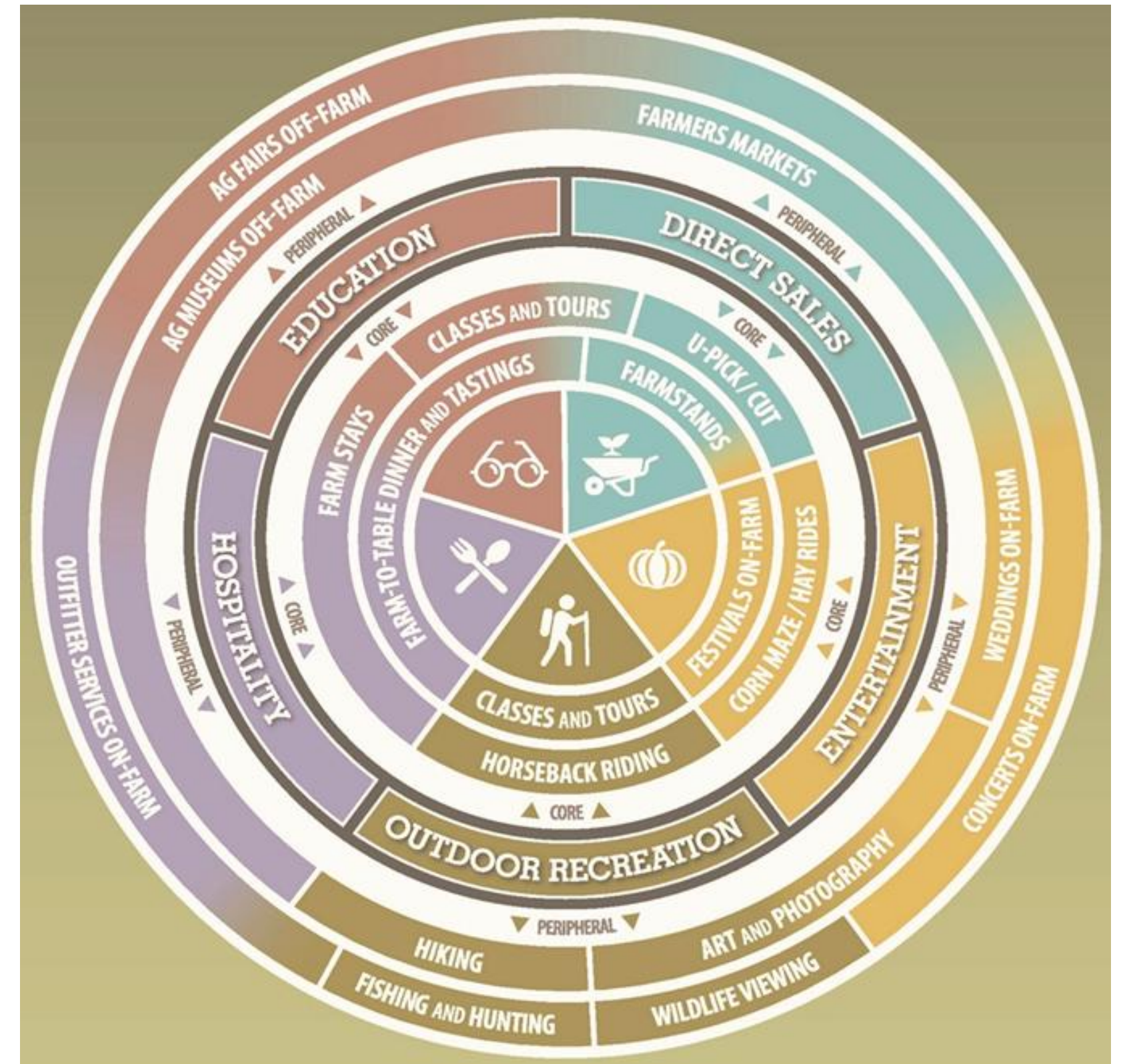


Agritourism - A More Diversified Approach to Tourism

KRISTEN CARRESE
MARKETING & EXPORT LEAD
VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD
& MARKETS

What is Agritourism?

- On-farm experiences and product sales closely tied to agriculture such as harvest festivals, farm stays, pick-your-own opportunities, farm dinners, workshops, summer camps, farm stands, and much more.
- Farm-related experiences such as farmers' markets and agricultural fairs
- Culinary experiences that support Vermont agriculture such as farm-to-table events
- Categories of agritourism include hospitality, education, direct sales, entertainment, and outdoor recreation.



Source: [Agritourism: Toward a Conceptual Framework for Industry Analysis | Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development](#)

Why is it so important?

- A “critical force multiplier” – Governor’s Commission on the Future of Agriculture 2022 Report
- Helps farms be more profitable and resilient
- Supports rural vitality
- Draws tourist to the state
- Increases agricultural literacy
- Influences local food purchasing

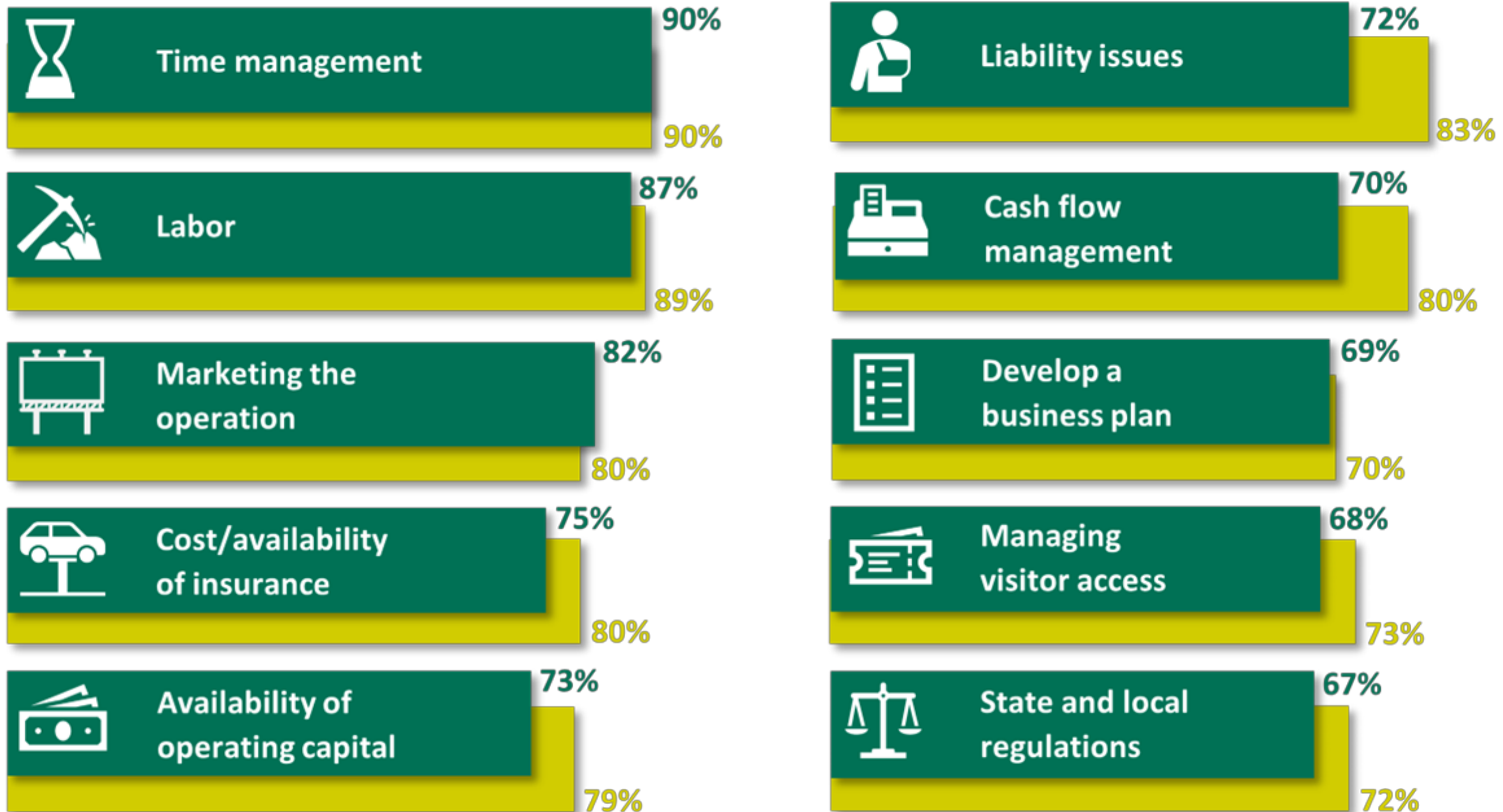


Agritourism Trends

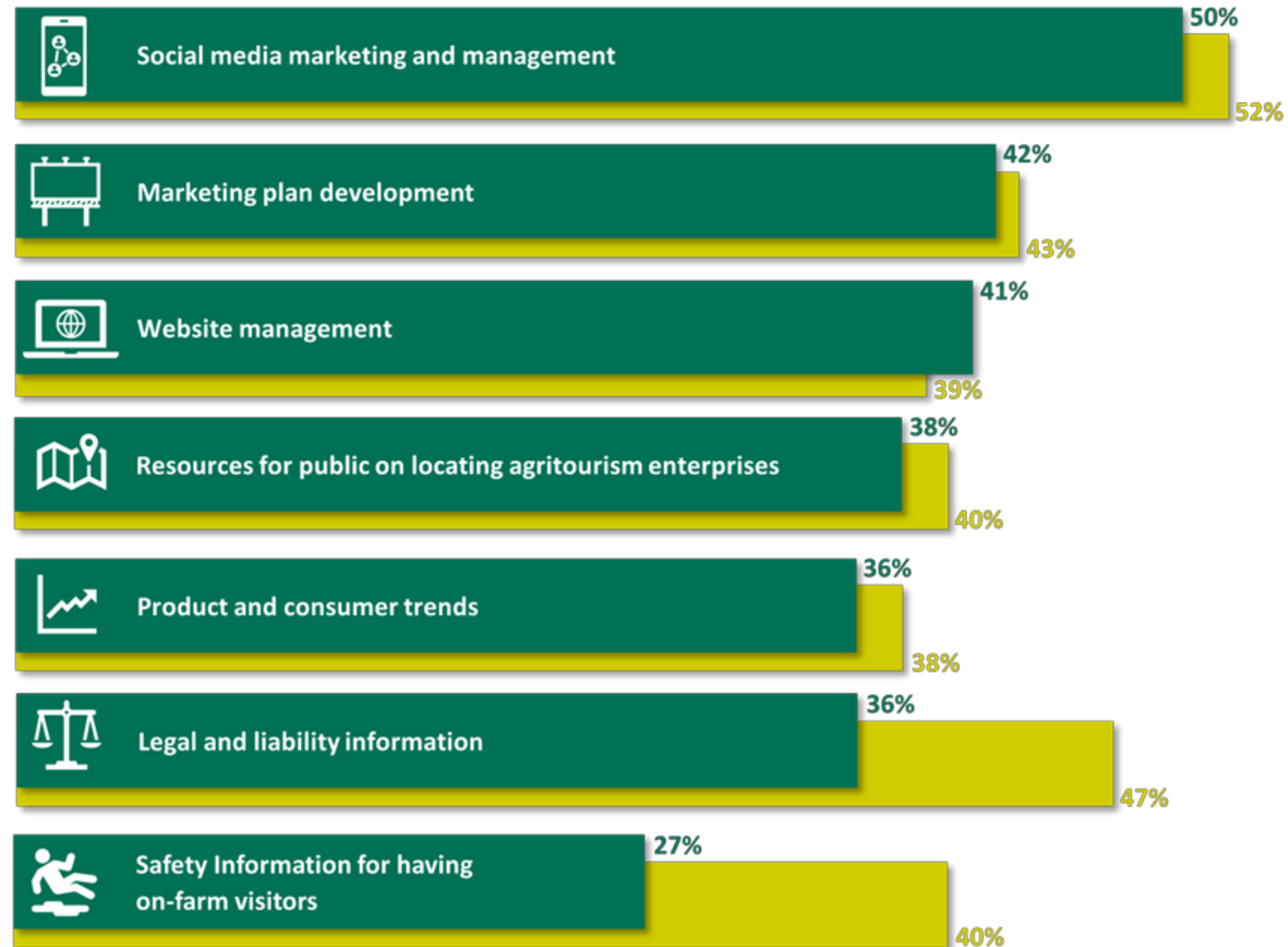
- Projected global compound annual growth rate of 12.4% between 2021 and 2027
- Survey of visitors to Vermont in 2014:
 - 35% visited farms or farmers markets
 - > 50% intended to buy Vermont products
 - 39% participated in food and drink experiences



Key Challenges



Key Needs



Source: [Agritourism Survey Results | Vermont Tourism Research Center | The University of Vermont](#)

Agritourism Support in Vermont: Statewide Events and Marketing Campaigns



Agritourism Support in Vermont: Agritourism Collaborative Resources

Is agritourism right for you?

Farm tours, tastings, dinners-in-the-field, farm stays, workshops, festivals and 'pick-your-own' are just a few examples of agritourism.

Decide if it's a fit for your farm.

GET STARTED!

RESOURCE HUB



AGRITOURISM GUIDES



Best Practices in Agritourism Video Series ▾

Value Added Producer Grant Recipients ▾

Guide to Navigating Vermont's Agritourism Regulations

Looking to develop an agritourism business? Start here by using the checklists to help you navigate the regulations, permits and licenses required for different scenarios and find points of contact for questions and additional help.

Make sure to check out the

REGULATORY CHECKLIST
(PDF)

What agritourism activity/business are you looking to pursue?

FARMSTAYS



ON-FARM EVENTS
weddings, farm dinners, concerts



FOOD TRUCK / FOOD STAND



STORE OR MARKET



SUMMER CAMP



FARMSTAND / PICK-YOUR-OWN



Agritourism Support in Vermont: Marketing & Agritourism Blog



Revisiting the International Workshop on Agritourism

This week marks one year since we had the exciting honor of hosting the International Workshop on Agritourism (IWA) here in Vermont. While there is an international conference on agritourism every other year, it is unlikely to be held in the states again for quite some time.

However, there are many continuing opportunities to learn and connect through this global network of agritourism professionals. Check out this week's blog to learn more and see how you can get involved!

[Read the full blog!](#)



Exciting Ways to Engage Visitors on Your Farm this Fall

Just as the growing season begins to wind down and we enjoy the season's bounty, the leaves turn red, orange, and purple and visitors flock to our state to experience its natural beauty. Many visitors to Vermont are eager for experiences that allow them to reconnect with nature and learn about our agricultural heritage.

Offering authentic on-farm experiences in the fall is a great way to spread the word about your farm and products, bring in additional revenue, and create memorable experiences for folks from near and far. This week on the blog, we share some fun fall agritourism ideas that will help you make the most of this colorful season!



Ensuring Visitor Safety on Your Farm

When hosting visitors on your farm, it's crucial to prioritize safety to ensure a memorable and risk-free adventure for all involved.

This week on the blog, we dive into essential safety measures that every agritourism operation should implement.

[Read the full blog!](#)



Agritourism For Maple Producers

In recent years, the demand for authentic on-farm experiences has surged, offering maple producers a golden opportunity to diversify revenue and expand the public's knowledge of maple through agritourism.

There are many ways maple producers can engage visitors, including offering tours, tastings, and demonstrations, trails through the sugarbush, hosting special events, showcasing sustainable maple production, and opening a farm store.

If you're a maple producer thinking about inviting visitors onto your farm, check out this week's blog for more ideas and links to additional resources to help you get started!



Hosting Memorable On-Farm Events

From concerts, to markets, to farm-to-table dinners, hosting events on your farm can be a rewarding experience.

However, before you embark on this endeavor, there are several important factors to consider. This week on the blog, we're walking you through the key considerations, from logistical aspects to regulatory requirements, for successfully hosting events on your farm.

[Read the full blog](#)

Agritourism Support in Vermont: Legislation



Act 31



Act 143, Act 181



SEEK & SAVOR *Vermont*

FARM ADVENTURES AWAIT!





Vermont

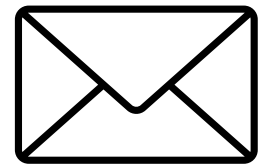


Marketing Your Agritourism Operation -

- A Marketing Toolkit specifically designed to support Agritourism
- The platforms and “need to knows” most relevant to agritourism businesses
- Support integration into Seek & Savor campaign and beyond



Questions?



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Vermont Ag Bulletin
bit.ly/agdevnews



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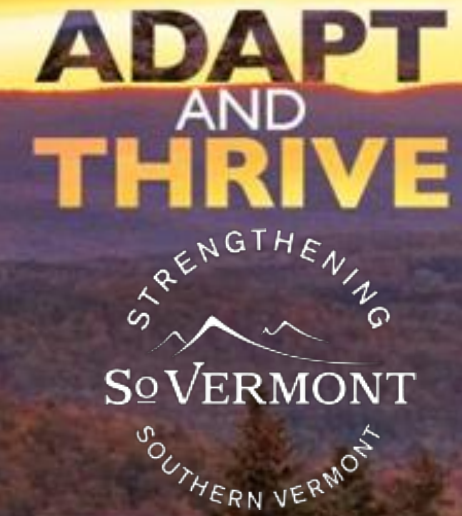
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UP NEXT:



- Late-Afternoon Sessions 3:10 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
 - Business Transitions Networking Opportunity (Grand Summit Ballroom - Front)
 - Capacity for Your Community Project: TA Providers Roundtable (Harriman's Restaurant)
 - Beige Book Breakout: Regional Economic Update with the Boston Fed (Deerfield South)
 - Encouraging Developments in Housing (Deerfield North)
 - Change Management: Roundtable Discussion (Raconda West)
 - Supporting Our Region's Rising Workforce: From Young Professionals to Remote Workers to Newcomers (Raconda South)
- Federal Delegation Update (Somerset Ballroom) 4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Closing Reception (Somerset Ballroom) 4:30 p.m.