

*Working Together
for Vermont*

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Commissioner's Message

Patricia Moulton Powden, Commissioner

ANNUAL VERMONT WOMEN'S ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY CONFERENCE TO FOCUS ON "CREATIVE ECONOMY"

October 28th Conference Reaches Its 10th Straight Year

Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), in partnership with the Vermont Department of Labor, the Vermont Commission on Women and other sponsors, will host Vermont's 10th annual Women's Economic Opportunity Conference on October 28 at Vermont Technical College in Randolph Center. The conference is free and open to all Vermonters interested in attending. The doors at Judd Gymnasium open at 8 for registration, exhibits and coffee; the conference will officially begin at 9 am.

"Year by year we've seen the numbers of both women *and* men attending this conference continue to grow," said Leahy. "From personal growth to financial planning and starting your own business, to learning how to relax, the Women's Economic Opportunity Conference offers something for every Vermonter. Marcelle and I hope everyone will join us as the conference turns ten years old."

This year's conference will focus on Vermont's creative economy, featuring a keynote address from Vermont artist Sabra Field. Field received a B.A. from Middlebury College and an M.A.T. degree from Wesleyan University, where she studied printmaking. She has lived in Vermont since 1969, when she opened a studio to publish her hand-pulled wood block prints. In 2000, Field was named a "Living Treasure" by the Shelburne Crafts School.

In today's ever-shifting economy, more attention is being given to the phenomenon known as the creative economy. A report published in 2004 by the Vermont Council on Culture and Innovation makes specific recommendations for how to grow the state's creative economy as a vital and complementary part of the state's economy as a whole. Four broad areas listed below encompass the detailed recommendations: Support the growth of creative enterprises; promote and document the

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The Edge

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL DISABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

By Jim Dorsey, Vermont's Lead Disability Program Navigator

Congress enacted Public Law 176 in 1945 establishing October as the month to recognize the contributions Americans with disabilities are making in the workplace. This year's theme, Americans with Disabilities: Ready for the Global Workforce, was announced by United States Department of Labor Elaine L. Chao in May 2006.

In support of this national event, the Vermont Department of Labor's Disability Program Navigator Initiative, in cooperation with the Governor's Committee on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities, will be conducting an Employer Breakfast Forum. The breakfast forum will be held in Brattleboro, Vermont on Friday, October 13th, 2006 and the keynote speaker will be our new Vermont Department of Labor Commissioner, Patricia Moulton Powden.

Employers in the Brattleboro area were sent a survey to

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Commissioner's Message –

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roles that creativity, culture, and innovation play in Vermont's economic future; invest in communities so they may build on their past while adapting for a vibrant future; and develop Vermont's creative economy through community-based planning and improved collaboration. The report observes that strengthening the creative sector will take a long-term commitment, however will result in attracting and retaining young people, a key concern to planners.

Senator Leahy's conference will offer workshops in five different strands, with presentations covering Demystifying Business Taxes, Leveraging the Vermont Brand, Negotiating with Ease, Invoking the Muse, Follow Your Bliss and Make a Living Too, to identify just a few. Additionally, there will be "Stress Busters"—including Relaxing in the Kitchen, Aromatherapy for Stress, and Meditation among others.

Free child care will be available during the conference. Those interested in attending can register online at www.vtsbdc.org, or by visiting Leahy's website at www.leahy.senate.gov.

Please join the Vermont Department of Labor as we

Contact VDOL

If your address has changed or to discontinue your subscription, please email: sredpath@labor.state.vt.us

celebrate the 10th year of this innovative conference.

senator_leahy@leahy.senate.gov

<http://leahy.senate.gov/>



The Edge - (continued from front page)

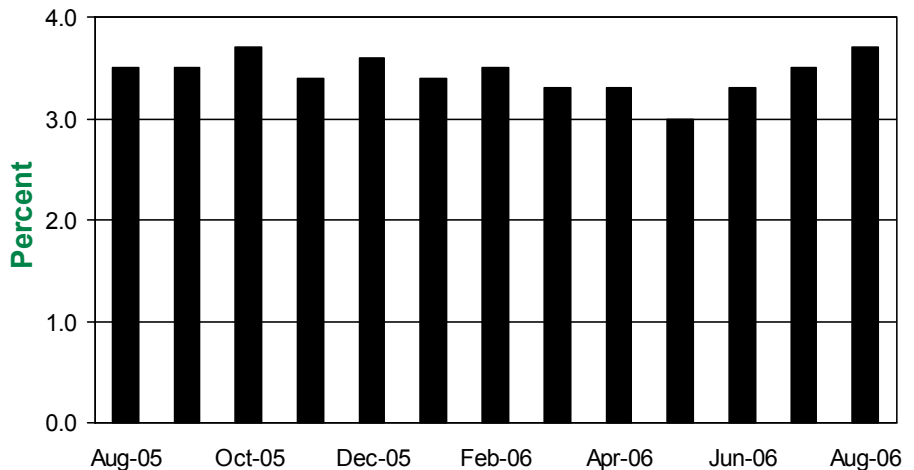
complete asking what workforce disability topics they would like to have addressed at the forum. Based on the results of the survey, breakout sessions have been set up to provide up-to-date information to both employers and advocates.

The above forum will address disability-related employment policy as well as practices affecting the employment of people with disabilities. People with disabilities have disproportionately high unemployment rates compared to non-disabled individuals. Far too many people with disabilities are not in the workforce, not because they do not want to work or don't have the skills to work.

According to the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), by the year 2014, 36 million people are expected to leave their jobs and will need to be replaced. Another source reports that between 2010 and 2030 the workforce will shrink by 10 percent. Employers can meet such challenges by hiring people with disabilities.

Hopefully employing persons with disabilities will be a focal point not only in October, but all year long. To borrow a phrase used by the Office of Disability Employment Policy, "Our vision is a world in which people with disabilities have unlimited employment opportunities."

Vermont Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate



Vermont Unemployment Estimates Statewide *(Seasonally Adjusted)*

| | Aug. '06 | July '06 | Aug. '05 | Changes from: | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|----------|
| | | | | July '06 | Aug. '05 |
| TOTAL LABOR FORCE¹ | 364,200 | 363,000 | 356,400 | 1,200 | 7,800 |
| EMPLOYED | 350,800 | 350,300 | 343,900 | 500 | 6,900 |
| UNEMPLOYED | 13,400 | 12,700 | 12,500 | 700 | 900 |
| RATE (%) | 3.7 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 0.2 | 0.2 |

¹Includes proprietors, professionals, and unpaid family workers.

Labor Market Areas By Residence *(Not Seasonally Adjusted)*

| AREA | Total Labor Force | Number Employed | Number Unemployed | Aug-06 Rate (%) | July-06 Rate (%) | Aug-05 Rate (%) |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Barre-Montpelier | 30,150 | 29,150 | 1,000 | 3.3 | 3.6 | 3.0 |
| Bennington | 12,700 | 12,250 | 450 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 3.1 |
| Bradford | 5,350 | 5,200 | 150 | 2.9 | 3.1 | 2.8 |
| Brattleboro | 25,000 | 24,150 | 800 | 3.2 | 3.4 | 3.0 |
| Burlington-South Burlington | 117,250 | 113,800 | 3,450 | 3.0 | 3.1 | 2.8 |
| Hartford | 20,400 | 20,000 | 400 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 1.9 |
| Manchester | 12,750 | 12,350 | 350 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 2.6 |
| Middlebury | 18,150 | 17,600 | 550 | 2.9 | 3.1 | 2.7 |
| Morristown-Stowe | 21,350 | 20,800 | 600 | 2.7 | 3.0 | 2.6 |
| Newport | 14,600 | 14,000 | 600 | 4.0 | 3.8 | 3.4 |
| Randolph | 8,200 | 7,900 | 300 | 3.7 | 3.6 | 3.0 |
| Rutland | 29,950 | 28,850 | 1,100 | 3.6 | 3.8 | 3.2 |
| Springfield | 12,200 | 11,800 | 450 | 3.6 | 4.0 | 3.4 |
| St. Johnsbury | 15,250 | 14,750 | 500 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 2.9 |
| Swanton-Enosburg | 14,650 | 14,100 | 550 | 3.7 | 3.9 | 3.3 |
| Warren-Waitsfield | 4,400 | 4,300 | 100 | 2.6 | 2.5 | 2.4 |
| Woodstock | 3,850 | 3,750 | 100 | 2.1 | 2.4 | 2.1 |
| Vermont Total | 368,650 | 357,200 | 11,450 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 2.8 |

AREAS FROM ADJOINING STATES INCLUDING VERMONT TOWNS *(Not Seasonally Adjusted)*

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------|--------|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| Colebrook, NH-VT | 3,750 | 3,650 | 150 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 3.5 |
| Lebanon, NH-VT | 47,600 | 46,550 | 1,050 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.1 |
| Littleton, NH-VT | 16,150 | 15,700 | 450 | 2.9 | 3.1 | 3.0 |
| North Adams, MA-VT | 17,150 | 16,350 | 800 | 4.7 | 4.6 | 4.4 |

Monthly estimates are preliminary and subject to revision. Detail may not add to totals due to rounding.

Vermont Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment in Thousands

| BY NAICS | Prelim. | Revised | Revised | Changes From: | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| | Aug. '06 | July '06 | Aug. '05 | July '06 | Aug. '05 |
| Total - All Industries | 308.3 | 308.2 | 305.3 | 0.1 | 3.0 |
| Private Industries | 255.0 | 255.2 | 252.2 | -0.2 | 2.8 |
| Construction | 18.0 | 17.9 | 17.1 | 0.1 | 0.9 |
| Manufacturing | 36.5 | 36.5 | 36.7 | 0.0 | -0.2 |
| Trade, Transportation & Utilities | 59.3 | 59.7 | 59.3 | -0.4 | 0.0 |
| Retail Trade * | 40.7 | 40.8 | 40.4 | -0.1 | 0.3 |
| Financial Activities | 13.3 | 13.3 | 13.2 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Professional & Business Services | 22.2 | 22.4 | 21.7 | -0.2 | 0.5 |
| Education & Health Care | 55.4 | 55.2 | 54.3 | 0.2 | 1.1 |
| Private Ed. Services* | 12.4 | 12.3 | 12.5 | 0.1 | -0.1 |
| Health Care & Social Assistance* | 42.8 | 42.7 | 41.8 | 0.1 | 1.0 |
| Leisure & Hospitality | 33.1 | 33.5 | 33.0 | -0.4 | 0.1 |
| Other Services | 9.9 | 9.9 | 10.0 | 0.0 | -0.1 |
| Total Government | 53.3 | 53.0 | 53.1 | 0.3 | 0.2 |

*These estimates are not endorsed by the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics.

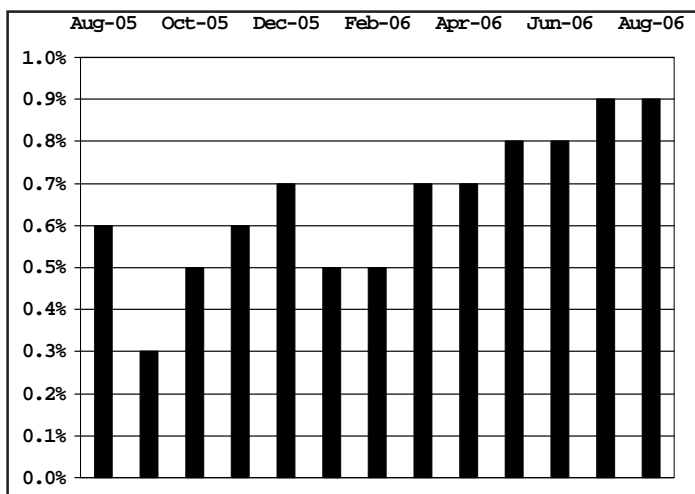
Note: Total - All Industries estimate is seasonally adjusted independently.

All seasonal adjustment performed with X12-ARIMA. Seasonal factors available from VDOL/LMI on request.

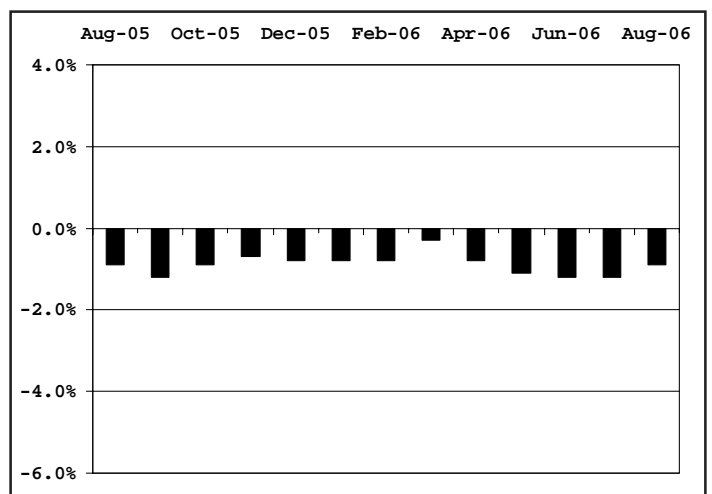
Produced by the Vermont Department of Labor in cooperation with the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, unless otherwise noted.

Vermont Annual Job Growth Not Seasonally Adjusted Data

All Industries



Manufacturing



Nonfarm Employment In Vermont *(Not Seasonally Adjusted)*

Compiled by the Vermont Department of Labor in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

| INDUSTRY BY NAICS | Prelim. | Revised | Revised | Changes From: | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Aug. '06 | July '06 | Aug. '05 | July '06 | Aug. '05 |
| TOTAL NONFARM | 303,450 | 303,100 | 300,700 | 350 | 2,750 |
| TOTAL PRIVATE | 259,500 | 259,100 | 256,750 | 400 | 2,750 |
| GOODS PRODUCING | 57,400 | 57,150 | 56,950 | 250 | 450 |
| MANUFACTURING | 36,750 | 36,600 | 37,100 | 150 | -350 |
| Durable Goods | 26,400 | 26,350 | 26,500 | 50 | -100 |
| Computer & Electrical Equipment Mfg. | 9,300 | 9,300 | 9,200 | 0 | 100 |
| Fabricated Metal Products Mfg. | 3,100 | 3,100 | 2,950 | 0 | 150 |
| Machinery Mfg. | 3,050 | 3,050 | 3,000 | 0 | 50 |
| Transportation Equipment Mfg. | 2,350 | 2,400 | 2,400 | -50 | -50 |
| Furniture & Related Product Mfg. | 1,950 | 1,950 | 2,150 | 0 | -200 |
| Non-Durable Goods | 10,350 | 10,250 | 10,600 | 100 | -250 |
| Food Mfg. | 3,750 | 3,750 | 3,900 | 0 | -150 |
| CONSTRUCTION | 19,800 | 19,700 | 18,950 | 100 | 850 |
| NATURAL RESOURCES & MINING | 850 | 850 | 900 | 0 | -50 |
| SERVICE-PROVIDING | 246,050 | 245,950 | 243,750 | 100 | 2,300 |
| TRADE, TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES | 59,800 | 59,800 | 59,250 | 0 | 550 |
| Wholesale Trade | 10,300 | 10,250 | 10,200 | 50 | 100 |
| Retail Trade | 40,950 | 40,950 | 40,650 | 0 | 300 |
| Food & Beverage Stores | 9,750 | 9,700 | 9,650 | 50 | 100 |
| General Merchandise Store | 2,750 | 2,750 | 2,900 | 0 | -150 |
| Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities | 8,550 | 8,600 | 8,400 | -50 | 150 |
| Utilities | 1,750 | 1,750 | 1,750 | 0 | 0 |
| Transportation & Warehousing | 6,800 | 6,850 | 6,650 | -50 | 150 |
| INFORMATION | 6,300 | 6,350 | 6,250 | -50 | 50 |
| FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES | 13,450 | 13,450 | 13,450 | 0 | 0 |
| Finance & Insurance | 10,050 | 10,050 | 10,050 | 0 | 0 |
| Real Estate, Rental & Leasing | 3,400 | 3,400 | 3,400 | 0 | 0 |
| PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES | 22,900 | 22,850 | 22,300 | 50 | 600 |
| Professional, Scientific and Technical | 13,000 | 13,050 | 12,700 | -50 | 300 |
| Administrative, Support and Waste | 9,550 | 9,550 | 9,300 | 0 | 250 |
| EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH SERVICES | 54,200 | 54,300 | 53,350 | -100 | 850 |
| Educational Services | 11,250 | 11,300 | 11,300 | -50 | -50 |
| College, Universities and Professional | 6,250 | 6,050 | 6,400 | 200 | -150 |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 42,950 | 43,000 | 42,050 | -50 | 900 |
| Ambulatory Health Care Services | 15,900 | 15,850 | 15,750 | 50 | 150 |
| Hospitals | 10,900 | 10,900 | 10,650 | 0 | 250 |
| Nursing and Residential Care Facilities | 6,800 | 6,850 | 6,850 | -50 | -50 |
| LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY | 35,300 | 35,000 | 35,100 | 300 | 200 |
| Arts, Entertainment and Recreation | 4,800 | 4,750 | 4,750 | 50 | 50 |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 30,500 | 30,250 | 30,350 | 250 | 150 |
| Accommodations | 11,100 | 10,850 | 11,050 | 250 | 50 |
| Hotel & Motels | 8,850 | 8,850 | 8,800 | 0 | 50 |
| Food Services and Drinking Places | 19,400 | 19,400 | 19,300 | 0 | 100 |
| OTHER SERVICES | 10,150 | 10,200 | 10,100 | -50 | 50 |
| GOVERNMENT | 43,950 | 44,000 | 43,950 | -50 | 0 |
| Federal Government | 6,000 | 6,050 | 6,100 | -50 | -100 |
| State Government Education | 6,400 | 6,350 | 6,300 | 50 | 100 |
| Local Government Education | 13,850 | 13,900 | 13,800 | -50 | 50 |
| Other State Government | 9,750 | 9,850 | 9,650 | -100 | 100 |
| Other Local Government | 7,950 | 7,850 | 8,100 | 100 | -150 |



What's New in Unemployment Insurance?

By Valerie Rickert, Director, Unemployment Insurance & Wages

Internet Based Contributions Quarterly Report Applications...

During the recent months, the Unemployment Insurance Division has been diligently working on the Internet based C-101 Quarterly Wage and Tax Report application. We are excited about this application and the ease of reporting it will provide employers who elect to use it. Here are some of the application features:

- Names and social security numbers reported on the prior report will be available for current quarter reporting
- Automatic calculation of excess wages
- Automatic calculation of amounts due
- Option for electronic payment of amounts due
- Download for wage reporting

We expect to begin testing the system in mid-November, with selective electronic reporting for the fourth quarter of 2006 filing. If your company is interested in testing this application, please send your e-mail address to: blafrancis@labor.state.vt.us, with "Request Internet Quarterly Reporting notification" in the SUBJECT line and we will contact you when it's ready.

The Internet based C-101 Quarterly Wage and Tax Report application will be available for all employers to submit their first quarter 2007 reports that will be due in April of 2007. Once the application is ready for use, we will be sending notification and instructions to ALL employers providing covered employment.

Current unemployment compensation law contains a provision to require

employers with 25 or more employees to file quarterly reports by electronic media. As such, in conjunction with the launching of Internet C-101 Quarterly Wage and Tax Reporting application, there will be an effort to encourage employers meeting the employee threshold to utilize the internet application or to submit their wage data by magnetic media, which is already available. Further information on magnetic media reporting can be obtained in the "Business - Unemployment Tax and Benefit Information" section of our website or by calling our Magnetic Media Specialist at 802-828-4253. History has already proven that filing mandatory reports electronically expedites the processing and dramatically reduces data entry errors, thereby improving the integrity of the wages potentially used in future unemployment claims.

Other Unemployment Insurance Internet Applications...

On the horizon we also expect to have other web applications and services available for employers, which include but are not limited to: respond to requests for separation information when an individual has filed for unemployment benefits; submit address or power of attorney changes; and the ability to access your employer account information, such as any outstanding requests, reports, or money due the department.

Currently available on our website at www.labor.vermont.gov is our New Hire Reporting application. This application is QUICK and EASY. Using this application saves you and the department time and money, with greater accuracy in reporting. If you are not already using this TROUBLEFREE method of reporting New Hires, please review the information available in the "Business - Unemployment Tax and Benefit Information" section of our website. Information on this method of reporting can also be obtained by calling our Magnetic Media Specialist at 802-828-4253.

New Hire Cross Match Program - Unemployment Insurance Integrity initiative...

Over the past two months the Department of Labor has been using the New Hire reported data and cross matching it against the Unemployment Insurance benefit payment file. This effort will assist in reducing overpaid benefits. Historically, our wage record cross match has been our primary method of detecting inappropriate benefit payments. Although this method is effective in detecting overpaid benefits, it is extremely labor intensive for

What's New in Unemployment Insurance? - continued

both employers and departmental staff. Utilizing reports of New Hire will enable the department to detect possible overpayments within two to three weeks of the improper payment being made, which we expect will dramatically reduce the amount of overpaid benefits and the time taken to determine the overpayment. While the wage cross match program will not be eliminated, we expect these types of audits will be significantly decreased, with the New Hire cross match program becoming our primary method of detecting inappropriate filing.

New Hire Reporting...

When submitting a report of New Hire, accurately reporting the "start date", which is the actual date the employee began working, is critical for detecting potential inappropriate filing for this method of auditing. During our testing period, the biggest problem encountered has been inaccurate or omitted first dates of employment. This date is VITAL in detecting potential cases of inappropriate filing. An employee who is re-hired or has returned to work following a layoff or absence only needs to be reported as New Hire if they are filling out a new W4. In such cases, please report the date the employee began working again, not the original first date of employment. If you have questions about reporting the "start date" or cross match initiative, please don't hesitate to contact our Program Integrity Chief at 802-828-4209.

Health Care Contribution reporting is coming...

This past legislative season Act 191 of 2006, An Act Relating to Health Care Affordability for Vermonters, became law. This act charged the Department of Labor with the responsibility of collecting employer health care premium contributions beginning with the second

quarter of 2007. The employer's health care premium contribution is intended to provide a partial source of funding for the Catamount Health plan. The payment of a premium contribution on behalf of an uncovered employee *does not necessarily entitle that uncovered employee* to enrollment in the Catamount Health plan. Enrollment in the plan will be the responsibility of the uninsured individual, and will be subject to income caps and additional individual contributions. The enrollment part of the program will be coordinated by the Agency of Human Services.

We have drafted proposed rules for administration and collection of the employer's health care premium contributions. A copy of the draft rule can be obtained on our website at www.labor.vermont.gov in our "Info Center – Opportunities for Public Comment" section or by calling 802-828-4390. Public hearings for the rules have also been scheduled during the month of October. A listing of where the public hearings will be held is also available on our website or by calling 802-828-4390.

Briefly, the act will require employers to pay a quarterly \$91.25 contribution on the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees in excess of 8, who are not offered health care coverage by the employer, as well as those who decline coverage and are otherwise uninsured. Reporting and collection of the health care contribution will be done in conjunction with the current quarterly unemployment tax contribution reporting.

Once the rules have been finalized, further information about this mandatory reporting will be made available through mailings and posting on our website.

VDOL Announces Grants

\$375,000 in grants will be distributed through the Workforce Education and Training Fund, which works to improve the quality of Vermont's work force. Applications will be accepted until the funds are exhausted.

The grants, which are given in categories above and below \$10,000, give Vermont businesses the opportunity to address critical need for skilled workers, in addition to providing Vermonters job security and increased earning potential.

**Information, application material and details:
www.labor.vermont.gov
Additional help: Contact Lori Camp at
802-828-4301 or lcamp@labor.state.vt.us**



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Announcements

Workers' Compensation Boot Camp & Advanced Boot Camp

10/4 1:00 – 4:00pm Williston; 10/10 Rutland, 9:00am ; 10/18/06, 9:00am – noon St. Johnsbury; 12/6 Williston 9-noon, **Advanced Boot Camp**. Please register on line @ www.vtsbdc.org (training tab).

Studies by the US Department of Transportation indicate that driver inattention may be the largest contributing factor in traffic crashes. Pay attention, slow down, and buckle up! At 55 miles per hour, a vehicle travels the length of a football field in less than four seconds! That is less time than it takes to change the radio station settings or insert a CD! Slow down, buckle up, and pay attention.

Vermont Safety & Health Council – SAFETY EXPO: Facility Fire Safety

October 24, 8:45am – 4:00 pm, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Montpelier

Topics include: Building & Life Safety Code; Fire Prevention- What You Can Do; Home Fire Safety, and more.

To register or for more information e-mail landrock@verizon.net

Equal Opportunity is the Law - The State of Vermont is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Applications from women, individuals with disabilities, and people from diverse cultural backgrounds are encouraged. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. 711 (TTY/Relay Service) or 802-828-4203 TDD (Vermont Department of Labor).