

# Broadband Pole Inventory Begins

*WEC and CVFiber collaboration, first stage of rollout, to be completed by end of 2021*

**C**VFiber, one of three Communications Union Districts (CUDs) in WEC's territory and a partner in broadband rollout, launched a pole inventory project in August. Over three phases, the project will collect data on utility poles throughout CVFiber member towns in preparation for building infrastructure to support fiber. WEC members are likely to see workers and vehicles with CVFiber.net signs assessing poles through the rest of 2021.

Approximately 12,100 poles in CVFiber's service area are WEC poles, according to CVFiber representative and finance committee chair Ray Pelletier. The first phase, currently underway, inventories poles in the towns of Calais, East Montpelier, Middlesex, Moretown, and Worcester. The second phase, encompassing seven towns (yet to be named) launches later this month, and the final phase (five towns, yet to be named) later this fall.

Three companies will complete the pole inventory: The Apex Group, Eustis Cable Enterprises, and Tilson Technology Management. The data collected by these contractors, said

*If funding, materials, and labor come through as planned, CVFiber's plan is to halve the number of households with substandard internet in its district by the end of 2022. That would require hanging about 300 miles of fiber. Another 300 miles in 2023 would make affordable high speed internet available to 80 percent of those underserved today. By 2024, internet would reach 95 percent of those who lack it now.*

Pelletier, is valuable for CVFiber in terms of system design, preparation, and construction. It's also a useful, up to the minute inventory for WEC. "We're collecting over 50 pieces of information and a photo for each pole. How tall is the pole, how old is the pole, what's already attached to the pole, will it possibly need replacing?" he listed. All pole inventory work will be funded through state grants.

### Each leg of the relay

The process is strategically designed to be sequential and as efficient as possible. Imagine a relay, in

which a runner completes a lap and passes the baton to a second runner. The second runner is ready to go—not tying her shoes—when the first runner comes around the bend.

In the same way, CVFiber plans to have its pole inventory completed and a contract for high level design in place by the time construction funding—by way of a low interest loan through WEC's lender Rural Utilities Service—comes through.

The high level design work

*continued on page 7*



*At the Grassroots Center in Marshfield, youth climate justice leaders and mentors took a break from harvesting garlic in order to form a human pyramid. Youth leader Eliana Moorhead took Co-op Currents on a tour of the vegetable and herb farm on WEC's lines, and talked about learning farming and having fun at the intersection of agriculture, racial justice, and climate change. Story, p. 6.*

## Governor Appoints GM Patty Richards to Chair Vermont Community Broadband Board

**I**n July, Governor Phil Scott announced the appointment of WEC General Manager Patty Richards to serve as Chair of the newly established Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCCB).

"I am honored and excited to serve the state in this important role," said Richards. "This critical infrastructure will open doors and invite opportunity for not only economic prosperity but also education, health care, and community connections. Fiber is an

essential service, just like electricity, and everyone in our state should have access to high speed internet. The work we do through the VCBB will help deploy fiber with goals of transparency, accountability, and immediacy."

The VCBB was created through Act 71, an act relating to accelerated community broadband deployment, to assist and accelerate community efforts to achieve universal access to reliable, high-speed broadband service. The VCBB will be

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### Washington Electric Cooperative

East Montpelier, VT 05651

### Inside

**Funds for past-due bills:** If you're behind on your bill, Vermont's VCAAP II program can help pay it down. Details on p. 2 and 5.

**Where is broadband rollout happening?** Stay up to date on [wec.coop/broadband](http://wec.coop/broadband): p. 8.

**More on the shift to driving an EV:** Read Monique Hayden's letter. P. 8.



*It's Capital Credits season! Current members will see a credit on your November bills. And check to see if you know anyone on pp. 4-5: they're entitled to a refund, too.*

Karolina Grabowska from Pixels

**President's and General Manager's Message**

# Relief Efforts

*Grants to pay utility bills offered again, capital credit refunds on November bills, and broadband pole inventory begins*

**More VCAAP grants available for COVID-related arrearages**

**Patty:** The Department of Public Service [DPS], our regulators, has announced a second round of funds available to help those members who are late on their electric bills due to COVID related hardship. I encourage members with outstanding bills, if you have been impacted by the pandemic in any way, go ahead and apply for VCAAP funds. The Department is generous with allocating funds for those who are past due. It helps us lower our outstanding balance of unpaid bills. Our arrears are typically \$80,000 to \$90,000, and to date, they are running \$250,000.

**Steve:** This should be a concern for all members. It's important to work with

our members whose ability to work and pay their utility bills have been impacted by the pandemic. All should also recognize WEC has fixed costs. We have to pay for the power and the upkeep of the infrastructure and the salaries of our employees who keep it all working. We're a not for profit and we have no rainy day funds. Any time we can't collect revenue, it's other members who have to pick up the slack.

I'm glad the DPS has made additional money available for members and Vermonters who need this, and I hope those who could really benefit the most have the ability to access these funds.

**Patty:** It's online for those with internet, and you can also call in. WEC Member Services staff can help

you navigate the steps and the DPS will walk people through the process as well. Our Member Services team is making calls to people who are 60 days late on their bills. We are doing our best to get the word out.

**Steve:** The bigger a problem gets, the harder it is sometimes to deal with it. It's important for a cooperative like WEC to help our members find pathways out of this. We are hit like the rest of the state, and we're here to help. No one wants to be in this position, but help is available.

**Patty:** We're extending bill payment plans over more than a year. Depending on the circumstances, we might go beyond two years. The DPS and PUC [Public Utility Commission] announced the moratorium ended July 15. We are not rushing out to disconnect anybody, but the disconnects will begin eventually. Anyone with a payment plan with us will avoid disconnect. Reach out to us to access VCAAP funding or to set up a payment plan. We'll work with you to figure out what you need. The worst thing you can do is not call us back, because that will result in a disconnect.

**Patty appointed chair of state Broadband board**

**Steve:** Governor Scott appointed Patty to chair the Vermont Community Broadband Board. I'm happy Patty's received this recognition. All of us wish her well and hope this board is effective in facilitating rural broadband once and for all! With Patty's experience leading our rural Co-op and the rural broadband effort at WEC, she's a good fit for this board. I hope the board serves the state well, and I expect it will.

**Patty:** I'm really honored to be on this board and to be chairing it. Our first task is to discuss planning and what our rollout steps will look like. Christine Hallquist is the executive director, and she'll have staff available to facilitate disbursement of funds once the Broadband Board approves grants. Our goal is to get funds out quickly and to successfully bring high speed, reliable, high quality service to those underserved in the state. It's a really big initiative, and I take it seriously. I can't wait to dive in and get going.

**Broadband update**

**Patty:** We're applying for a major loan with our lender, RUS [Rural Utilities Service]. We applied with CVFiber for a grant from the DPS and signed the contract documents in late July for a \$200,000 grant to initiate a high level design study.

**Steve:** WEC is continuing with the process to partner with other not for profit Communication Union Districts [CUDs] as a way of providing access to broadband to our members with the least risk to them as electric ratepayers. WEC will apply for a loan to fund a construction work plan related to putting up a fiber optic communication network through most of our service territory.

In the July Board meeting, the WEC Board of Directors authorized the final preparation and submission of the application for the first phase of this loan. The network has the dual purpose to work with CUDs in our service territory to provide broadband to all our members, and to improve WEC internal communication infrastructure to provide more efficient and reliable electric service over the next decades with the potential for useful rate designs and management of customer usage.

We're looking for the best path forward toward those dual goals—for our members without adequate internet to have access to it if they choose, and to continue to upgrade WEC's electric system for the 21st century of new technology, new weather patterns, and evolving expectations of many of our members. I like to think of it as win-win, but it's not without significant effort to plan, design, and carry out effectively.



## Co-op Currents

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WEC is part of the alliance working to advance and support the principles of cooperatives in Vermont.

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*The Board of Directors' regularly scheduled meetings are on the last Wednesday of each month, in the evening. Members are welcome to attend. Members who wish to discuss a matter with the Board should contact the president through WEC's office. Meeting dates and times are subject to change. For information about times and/or agenda, or to receive a copy of the minutes of past meetings, contact Administrative Assistant Rosie Casciero, at 224-2322, or visit [wec.coop/board-of-directors](http://wec.coop/board-of-directors).*

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**Got something to say?**

Letter to the editor, comment, or a story tip? Drop us a line at [currents@wec.coop](mailto:currents@wec.coop) or Washington Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 8, East Montpelier, VT 05651, Attn: Co-op Currents.



We're trying to look at obstacles as they come up and find our best way around them.

It's a challenge, but worthwhile, because the benefits for our members will be huge. And it's part of our duty as a cooperative to recognize our members have needs not being met by private entities. In the same spirit as providing electric power when the investor owned utilities were not willing or ready to provide it to this area of Vermont, we take that same attitude about facilitating the provision of broadband with other partners, because we recognize it's a necessity for life in the 21st century for most of us.



*It's another big year for us to return \$770,000. It's the same amount we returned last year, and it's the second largest distribution of capital credits ever.*

— Patty Richards

### Capital credits coming in November

**Patty:** It is a function of cooperatives that we give back excess funds we collect from our membership that we don't need to pay bills or cover our lender ratios. In November, members will see bill credits, and former members no longer on our lines will receive checks. The Board authorized returning \$770,000 in credits in 2021. This will be distributed to members who were on our lines in 1996, 1997, and 2020, plus 2013 contributions in aid of

its business back to the members. Members provide the amount needed to run the operation, and what isn't used in a given year can be returned those selfsame members.

I think when people get this refund, they should think of it as, 'this is what being a member of a community is all about.' It's not about profit. We collectively use what we need, and return what is the members' back to the members.

**Patty:** Speaking of community, I'll put in my annual plug for the

construction. It's another big year for us to return \$770,000. It's the same amount we returned last year, and it's the second largest distribution of capital credits ever.

**Steve:** I think it's important to recognize that the amount you're credited depends on how much electricity you purchased that year. By a simple division per account it's about \$60, which may not seem like a lot. But does any other utility return funds year over year, other than cooperatives? It's really symbolic of what a cooperative does: it collects the money it's required to by its lending agencies, but returns what is not used to operate

Community Fund. Every year, as we redistribute capital credits, we'll ask in advance for folks to donate their credits to the Community Fund. This fund gives grants to small nonprofits in our service area. These are the homegrown, small local groups that help us support central Vermont citizens and WEC members in terms of food access, health care, education, and other fundamental basic services. We are really proud of our Community Fund and we hope more folks who are able to do so will donate their credits to the Fund this year.

### Fall events canceled

**Patty:** Every September we usually host an open house at our landfill gas-to-energy plant at Coventry, to complement the open house Casella hosts at the landfill. Casella decided not to do an open house this year due to pandemic concerns, and we decided to follow suit. In 2019 we had 400 people come through our plant, which is indoors with some enclosed spaces. We want to be able to safely welcome a lot of people to this event. The pandemic isn't over, and it just feels wise to wait.

**Steve:** For the same reasons, Patty has suggested we not have our usual October community meeting. We don't yet know how dangerous these variant



*It's important to work with our members whose ability to work and pay their utility bills have been impacted by the pandemic... Any time we can't collect revenue, it's other members who have to pick up the slack.*

— Steve Knowlton


resurgences are going to be, and in the interest of prudence and safety we will look forward to gathering with members in person at a future time.

### Time to weatherize

**Patty:** It's cooler in the mornings now. It's time to think about tightening up as cold temps will inevitably come our way.

We have incentives available through our Button Up program. These are a win win. When members use these incentives you get financial help to pay for new appliances, and your more efficient home or your new EV helps WEC meet regulation requirements. Efficiency Vermont has lots of incentives available, too.

Reach out to Member Services and they'll direct you.

**Steve:** I'm proud of WEC for continually recognizing and promoting the need to insulate your home as the best way to lower your energy costs. Our mission is to provide members with electricity, but that said, we recognize the best and usually the cheapest energy is the energy you don't have to use. We always encourage people to do what they can to insulate so you don't need to use as much propane, electric heaters, and the like, if you don't have to. And your house is more comfortable and usually healthier if it is well insulated. 

### Richards

*continued from page 1*

responsible for awarding grants and assisting the Communication Union Districts (CUDs) in their planning, development, and implementation of broadband projects.

Gov. Scott also appointed Dan Nelson, VP of Technology at VELCO, to the board. "Patty and Dan bring a vast amount of knowledge and experience to the Board and their commitment to the cause will be very beneficial to this effort," said Gov. Scott. "Connecting more Vermonters with broadband is critical to our work to grow the

economy and workforce in all fourteen counties, and increasing economic equity from region to region. I'm very pleased to have such a talented team help lead this important initiative."

Previously, Gov. Scott appointed Christine Hallquist, who until 2018 led WEC's sister cooperative VEC, to serve as Executive Director of VCB. Other board members include Holly Groschner, appointed by Speaker of the House Jill Kronowski; Brian Otley, appointed by the Vermont Senate Committee on Committees; and Rep. Laura Sibilgia, appointed by the Vermont Communications Union Districts Association.

## Is Your WEC Bill Past Due? State Grants Available Again To Pay Utility Bills

The state is offering VCAAP II (Vermont Arrearage Assistance Program, part 2) funding to Vermonters who are behind on utility bills as a result of COVID-19 related hardship. Help is available for renters, homeowners, and businesses who are 30 or more days past due.

To apply:

- Visit [publicservice.vermont.gov](http://publicservice.vermont.gov)
- Contact the Department of Public Service at [psd.consumer@vermont.gov](mailto:psd.consumer@vermont.gov)
- Or call 1-800-622-4496
- You can also call WEC's Member Services team for application support and to create a payment plan that works for you: 802-223-5245 or 1-800-932-5245

## ENERGY COACH SAYS:

### Your First Stop Resource For All Your Energy Questions

Sometimes it can be hard to know where to start.

Whether you're...

- Shopping for an EV and not sure how to charge it,
- Trying to figure out which gadgets in your home are power hogs,
- Deciding whether to invest in weatherization or a heat pump to reduce your heating fuel,
- Or hunting for deals on an e-bike or e-mower,

Start by contacting the Energy Coach. You'll learn what incentives WEC offers and where to go to get answers, devices, and additional incentives. [energycoach@wec.coop](mailto:energycoach@wec.coop).



## What's your internet story?

As WEC works to make high speed internet available to all members, *Co-op Currents* is looking for stories from members about the role broadband—or the lack of it—plays in their lives. Drop us a line at [currents@wec.coop](mailto:currents@wec.coop).

# For Second Year in a Row, WEC Returns \$770,000 to Members

*Co-op seeks former members owed refunds*

In 2020, WEC returned \$770,000, the largest amount in its history, to its current and former members. In 2021, the Co-op Board voted to return the same sum. Unlike for-profit utilities, whose excess revenue goes to enrich shareholders, cooperatives return that money to their members. The way WEC does this is to credit current members' November electric bill, and mail a check to former members.

This year, the Board will refund eligible members on the Co-op's lines in years 1996, 1997, and 2020, plus 2013 contributions in aid of construction. Individual refunds may be reduced by any uncollectable or delinquent amounts owed to the Co-op, and no early retirements will be made to the estates of deceased members. Current members will see their refunds appear as a credit on their November 2021 bills.

Former members are entitled to receive refunds as well. In order to be eligible, former members must have a minimum \$20 capital credit distribution, and must submit an authorization form to the Co-op.

Earlier this summer WEC mailed out Capital Credit Patronage Refund Authorizations former members. Listed below are the names of people or accounts whose authorizations were returned as undeliverable. If you know any person on this list or their rightful heirs, please have the former member or beneficiary contact Washington Electric Cooperative directly: 802-223-5245.

## Co-op Community Fund

Approximately 14 percent of WEC members currently choose to donate their refunds to WEC's Community Fund. Any current or former member may direct their refund to the Community Fund as a one-time gift or in perpetuity.

The Community Fund supports small not for profits serving Central Vermont communities. The people served by these organizations are often WEC members. The full recipient list is in the July 2021 issue of *Co-op Currents*. A report on 2021 Community Fund activities will be published in *Co-op Currents* in 2022. To donate your capital credits, please visit [wec.coop/community-fund-donations](http://wec.coop/community-fund-donations). Thank you!

Robert Abare	John Bedell	Ellen Burnham	Arthur Colella	Mara Derosier	Robert Farnham	Beauty	Mary Hart
Steven Adams	Phillip Beede	James Burns	Jason Colf	Sarah Desantis	Slade Farnham	Norman Goddard	Leann Hart
Earle Adams	Craig Behnke	Ralph Bushey	Donald Collins	Judith D'este	Sonja Farnham	Marion Godfrey	Ray Hartson
Adelphia Cable/Berlin	Deborah Beier	Patty Bushway	Norbert Collins	James Diebold	Robert Fassett	Brian Godfrey	Peter Haskins
Donald Ahearn	Alden Belcher	Donald Buska	Estate	William Dilts	Jason Felch	Brunhilde Goettsche	Marguerite Hatch
Kenneth Aiken	Bell Atlantic	Donna Butler	Eric Colson	Dayton Dix	Lou Feldvary	Kari Gokey	Margaret Hatch
Joseph Albarelli	Martin Belval	Timothy Butler	George Coltey	Evelyn Dixon	Ernest Fenner	Joseph Gonsalves	Ralph Hatch
Scott Alexander	Rebekah Bencanaan	Mary Buttitta	Nat Conard	Kyle Dodson	David Ferch	Dean Gonyaw	Lynn Hathaway
Barbara Allard	Richard Benoit	Jean Button	Susanne Conklin	Frederick Dolan III	Joan Fiarkoski,	Jeff Gonyon	Glenn Hawkes
Chester Allen	Laurie Bergeron	William Butts	Dorothy Connolly	Robert Donnelly	Estate	Esther Goodall	Wanda Hawkins
Charlotte Allen	Daniel Bergeron	William Buxton	Susan Constant	George Doody	Michael Filippone	Deanna Goodrich	Sherrill Hawkins
Chester Allen	Sandra Berna	Donna Cabot	Joseph Converse	Michael Dorfman	James Finley	David Goodrich	Terri Hay
Charles Allen	Judy Bernier	Mary Cady	Katherine Conway	Michael Douglas	Michael Fishbach	Margaret Goodwin	Larry Haynes
Gregory Altman	Alan Berry	Robin Cahill	Christopher Cook	Blanche Dowd	Stephen Fisher	Edward Gorchinski	Elizabeth Hayslett
American Tel & Tel	E Bertolini	James Caldwell	Kara Coombs-Miller	Harry Downey	Robert Fisher	Alexis Gordon	Shawn Hayward
Co.	Peter Betts	Albert Camara	Jon Cooper	Virginia Doyle	Beatrice Fitch	Ruby Gosland	Peter Hazelton
Jason Amidon	Rachael Beuchler	William Cameron	Robert Cosker Estate	Betty Doyle	Andrew Flagg	Jeffrey Gould	Robert Healey
Roland Anderson	Paule Bezaire	Norman Camire	Andrew Costagliola	John Doyle	Arlene Flanders	Robert Gove	Parker Heath
Evelyn Andrews	Brenda Bianchi	Nanci Camp	Cettina Costagliola	Heather Doyle	William Fletcher	Patricia Govoni	Donald Heath
Walter Antczak	Margaret Biggar	William Canfield	Marsha Cota	Kelly Draper	Edwin Finley	Robert Grab	Richard Heath Estate
Vivian Appell	John Billings	Victor Cano	Janet Cota	L Leonard Drew	Gordon Flood	Alan Graham	David Heft
Richard Archer	Michael Binaghi	Frank Capone	Donald Cota	Dennis Drew	Nola Foley	Heather Grandfield	Lucille Heft
Timothy Armstrong	Gale Birutta	Paul Carpenter	David Coughlin	Wayne Drinkwater	Fernand Fontaine	Donna Grant	William Hein
Walter Arndt	Timothy Bissell	Jared Carrier	Kathryn Coulter	John Driscoll	Food & Water Inc	Albert Grasson	Clif Helbert
William Ashe	Gregory Blair	Leslie Carrig	B Anne Countryman	Peter Driscoll	Lawrence Fortin	Edward Gravel	Margaret Helburn
Atlantic Cellular	Richard Blair	Brian Carten	Laurent Couture	John Drury	David Foster	Debra Gray	Gary Henderson
Unicel Atlantic	Ralph Blakslee	Monique Cartier	Merle Covey	Lance Dubois	James Foster	James Gray	Robert Henning
Cellular	Walter Blanchard	April Caspari	Buddy Covey	Robert Dubuque	Kip Foster	Bernard Gray	Fred Henrikson,
Stanley Atwood	William Blau	Michael Cassani	Cynthia Coxon	Susan Ducharme	James Foster	Jane Greaves	Revocable Trust
Janet Aubut	James Blau	John Caton	Dacia Coy	Andre Ducharme	Kenneth Foster,	Margaret Green	Tom Henry
Ernest Audino	David Blitzer	Daniel Cavanaugh	Rebecca Cragin	Theresa Duchesney	Estate	Raymond Green	Bernard Henry
Thomas Ausfeld	Helen Bodnar	Phyllis S. Caver,	Pamela Craig	Michael Dudley	Donna Frado	Eileen Greenan	Julie Herbert
Deborah Austin	Thomas Bolduc	Estate of	Robert Crow	Karen Dugener	James Francke	Leo Greenberg	Anna Herbert
Robert Averill	Oscar Bolin	Learning Co Center	John Crawford	Rita Duggan	Elizabeth Frank	Glenn Gregoire	Sylvia Herman
Brian Avery	William Bolton	School	Ashley Creighton	Rose Dukette	Larry Frappier	Paul Grier	James Herrick
Luke Avery	Robert Booth	Alison Cepickas,	James Crisante	Donnie Duling	Scott Fraser	Valdah Griffin	Cynthia Herriott
Katherine Avery	Patricia Bordonaro	Estate	Greg Crocker	Bernard Dunbar	Ronnie Freeman	Bridget Griffin	Thomas Herzig
Patrick Ayer	Richard Bourdeau	Brian Chadwick	Scott Crowell	Pamela Dunbar	Beverly French	Trinidad Griffith	Marilyn Heskett
James Back	Sandra Boutin	Brian Chafin	Jeanne Crowley	Agnes Dunbar Estate	Stella French	Jesse Griffith	Gregory Hetzler
Rachael Bacon	Brett Bowen	Brent Chaloux	Deborah Crown	Brandi Dunn	Ronald French	Mariann Grimm	Adam Heuslein
Samuel Bair, Estate of	Sterle Bowen	Claire Chaloux	Irene Crowther	Jane Dunn Estate	Leonard Freund	Roger Griswold	Thomas Hickey
Mary Baird	William Bowin	Roger Chamberlin	Emilio Cubeiro	Susan Dunsmore	Howard Friedman	Earl Grohs	Donna Hickory
Barbara Baird	Barbara Bowley	Jay Chamberlin	Raymond Currier	Roxanne Dupont	Jesse Friedman	Sallie Grossman	Penny Hidy
Kevin Baker	John Bowne	Karen Chandor	Craig Curschmann	Amy Durand	William Frost	Henry Grossman	Robert Hierons
Gail Baker	Donald Bragg	Dorothy Chapin	Robert Curtiss	Mitch Durocher	Helen Frost	Donald Guadagnoli	Amy Higgins
Dave Baldwin	Robert Braun	Theodore Chartier	Estelle Cyr	Kimberly Dusseault	Everett Fullam	Giovanni Guarcello	Camellia Hill
Lorraine Baldwin,	Patrick Breen	Candis Chase	Frances Czajkowski	David Dutra	Gail Fuller	Christian Guggemos	Fred Hill
Estate of	Geraldine Breymayer	Janet Chateauvert	Arlen Dahline	Joanna Dwinell	Stephanie Fuller	Donald Guilmette	Rodney Hill
Nancy Ball	Vera Bricket (Estate)	Raymond Cholewa	Phyllis Dailey	Shirley Eastman	Lawrence Furber	Estate	Joseph Hill
Tim Ball	Karen Brigham	Sueann Christie	Laura Dale	David Eastman	Edward Gadapee	George Gumbrell	Susan Hilton
Joann Bandy Rooney	Cynthia Brigham	James Churchill	Robert Daly	Eastview Water Co.	Susan Gaelic	Stuart Guy	James Hiner
Joy Barberi	Marshall Brigham	Debra Ciesluk,	John Dames	c/o Deane	George Gagnon	Edward Habeck	Henry Hinton
Coy Barfield	Donald Brochu	Susan Siop	William Danforth	Hedges	Dorius Galipeau	Jeff Hackmann	Lisa Hiscox
Robert Barnes	Heidi Broe	David Clancy	K Daniels	Russell Eaton	Ruth Gallagher	Nina Haddad	Harry Hoblin
Duane Barnett	Kimberly Broe	Harry Clark	Rebecca Daniels	Elizabeth Edgerton	Florentio Garcia	Thomas Haggett	Clara Hodgdon
Brent Barney	Ruth Brolin	Danny Clark	Andra Daunhauer	Robert Edmonds	Ross Gardner	Michelle Hagman	Peter Hodgson
Jenny Barnhart	Charlotte Bromfield	Daniel Clark	June Davenport	Doris Edson	Traci Garneau	Raymond Hall	Heather Hoehl
Rita Barrett	Glenn Brooke	Lyndon J. / Alicia M.	Nick Davidson	Nancy Lee Edson	Gregory Garone	Kristin Hall	Marion Hoffman
Michael Barrows	Robert Brooks	Clark	Dave Davies	Theresa Edson	Nancy Garrett	Jeremy Halper	David Hoffman
Daniel Barry	Kristen Brosnahan	Catherine Clark	Alice Davignon	Barbara Edwards	Edmund Garron	Robert Halpin	J Kent Holden
Douglas Barry	James Brown	Elizabeth Clark	Kathryn Davis	Kenneth Edwards	Peter Garrow	Michael Hambro	Jessica Hollyer
Dena Barson	Margaret Brown	Peter Clark	Phyllis Davis	Janice Ehly	Julie Gauthier	Frances Hamelin	Patrick Holman
Robert Bartlett	David Brown	Robert Clark	Walter Davis	Herb Einwiller Estate	David Gazaway	Borden Hance	June Holmes
Timothy Bartlett	Leticia Brown	Rodney Clarke	Lloyd Davis	Allan Eldred	Kevin Geiger	May Hanks	Donna Holmes
Bess Bates	Julia Brown	Martha Clelia	Kimberly Davis	Laura Eldridge	Rolland Gerhart	Robert Hanley	Raymond Holmstrom
Jacqueline Batten	Kendall Bruleigh	Stacie Clemens	Joseph Davis	Milton Elkin	Louise Gilbert	Winifred Hansen	Tim Holst
Robert Battles	Matthew Bryant	Michael Cloutier	James Davis Estate	Agnes Emerson	Cheryl Gilbert	Lisa Hanson	Lloyd Hook
Katy Bauer	Bryant & Dailey	Katherine Coburn	Dwight Deaquair	Russell Emerson	Richard Gilbert	Christine Hardy	Curtis Hooper
Megan Baxter	Stephanie Buck	Shaylyn Coburn	Jonathan Decker	Angel Emerson	Scott Giles	Angela Hardy	Marilyn Horton
Kenneth Bayley	John Buckley	George Coffey	Frank Defelice	Evelyn Engborg	Jonathan Gill	Mary Harney	Sarah Hotchkiss
Kenneth Bean	Thomas Buell	Barry Coffin	Frank Deforge	Jane & M Entriken	Mae Gillander	Diane Harriman	Alex Hotchkiss
William Bean	Jerome Burdett	Tabor Cofrin	Kenneth Degrasse	Susan Erbe	Peter Gilleney	Fredrick Harris	Elliot Houghton
Charles Beane	Seila Burgielwicz	David & Gertrude	George Delaney	Cody Erwin	Kathleen Gilman	Susan Harris	Estate
John Beardsley	Francis Burke	Cohen	Maurice Delisle	Brian Estes	Michael Giroux	Amy Hart	William Houston
Rhonda Beardsworth	Amy Burke	Roger Colbeth	Andrew Delorenzo	Gregory Evans	Benjamin Glidden	John Hart	Eric Houston
Darrell Becker	Robert Burnell	Bernard Colbeth	Arthur Demers	Melissa Fair	Kermit Glines	Lillian Hart	Cindi Hovey
Minnie Beckler	Candis Burnett	Estate	Caroline Depalo	Lawrence Fairbrother	Gloria's Salon of	Mark Hart	Gail Howell



Samantha Hoyt Thomas Huestis Anna Huffman J Norman Hughes Dwight Hull Dana Hunt Judy Huntington Ruth Hutchins Tammy Hutchins Wendy Hutchins Richard A Herbert Indian Joe Court Christina Isham Robert Jackson Stanley Jackson Stuart Jackson Peter Jamele Jeffrey James Melissa Janes Barbara Jarvis Jauhola Estate Jeffery Jeannette Sandra Jenkins John Jenkins Amy Jenner Sarah Jerome Adelaid Jewell Marilyn Jewell Joanne Jewett Vinnie Johnson Robin Johnson Jeffrey Johnson Gregory Johnson Tish Johnson Pauline Johnson Walfred Johnson Harold Johnson John Johnson Kenneth Johnston Marie Jones Warren Jones Deborah Jones Allison Jones Corey Jones Todd Jones Dean Jones David Jones Laura Jorstad Bruce Joslyn Malcom Joslyn Karl Jurentkuff Helene Jurkiewicz Marjorie Justice Peter Kaminski John Katz Roy Kaufman Joshua Keels James Keene Gail Keith James Keith Meghan Keith-Hynes Leslie Kelley Amber Kelley Mary Ellen Kelton Douglas Kemis Marcia Kemp Marie Kenefick Lisa Kent Fray Keyser Omar Khan James Kiefer Allen Kimball Pamela Kinder William Kindestin Tammy King Pamela Kinney Scott Kirkpatrick Lee Kitchen Christine Kjiar Christine Klaine Andrew Kline Douglas Klinefelter Leo Knapp Deborah Knowlton Violet Koepl Arlene Kohl Lawrence Kokoszka Donald Kramer John Krause Jr Estate Philip Krone Estate Keith Kuegel Cindy Kurutza Laurie Labarthe Joseph Labbie Hughes Labrie Robert Lacasse H John Lackey Joan Laclair J Everet Ladd Diane Lafaille Bertha Lafogg Robert Lagerstedt Russell Lahart Frank Laing Luciano Lalli Gordon Lambert Rr Lamoille Valley Michael Lamp Roger Lamson Anita Landa	Lorraine Landers Joshua Landis Jonathan Lange Wilfred Langevin David Langford Melissa Langmaid Robert Langone Alan Laperle Sandy L Laperle Tammy Laperle Margaret Lapierre Jessica Laporte Annie Larivee Estate Glen Larkham Phyllis Larrabee Reginald Laundry Frank Lawrence John Leahey Janice Lebron Ghislain Leclerc Paula Leeper Kevin Lefevre John Leggett Jonathan Leibold Juliette Lemay William Lemieux Deborah Leno Sterra Leno II Lilli Lenz Milford Leonard Carolyn Leshure Robert Lessig Rosanna Lester Pat Lesure Corinne Levarn Norton Lewis Wenbo Li Kim Lilley Alona Litwack Julian Locke Norman Locke Eugene Long Charles Lord Marian Lord Sandy Lord Michael Lori William Loring Ann Lovald Lisa Lovelette William Loving Neil Lowell Carol Lowell Paul Lowney James Lubas Patricia Lucas Hilda Lucas Donald Lumbr Robert Luongo Lylehaven III Vincent Lyn Douglas Lynch Catherine Lyndes Richard Lyons James Lyons Michael Macarilla Gloria Macaulay David Macdougall Ronald Macie Roger Mack Diane Mackay Stephen Mackay Stephen Mackenzie Craig Maclellan Wallace Macnow Edgar Magoon Jerrold Magoon Lori Magoon Robert Magoon Patricia Mahon Alyson Mahony Amanda Males R Mallary Joseph Manavola Jessica Manchester Jim Mangene Albert Mangino Thomas Mangum Kelly Manning Waters Maple Corner Bryan Marble Robin Marciello Marion Mark David Markwood William Marone Alma Marrier Christine Marsh Douglas Marsh Catherine Martin Herbert Martin Robert Martin Mary Martin Estate David Mascoveta Ralph Mashburn Victor Masi Kelly Mason Carroll Mason Terry Maxfield Maxham Warehousing Co Frances Mayer Christy Mayes	Mark Maytum James Mazzonna Ronald Mazzucca Mark Mcallister George Mccarthy Joseph Mccarthy Jane Mccristal Maurice Mccracken Kevin Mccue Marilyn Mccullough John Mccullough Larry Mcenany Stephen Mcfarland Meghan Mcgeary Sheila Mcgovern John Mcgrath Nicole Mcgrath Frederick Mcguire Jean Mcdintosh Robert Mckay Lurlene Mclam Michael Mclane Thomas Mcmahon Joyne Mcphee Charles Meeks C Padma Meier Travis Melkonian Donnie Melvin Katherine Menard Tara Mendes Robert Merritt Sarah Merritt Barry Merritt Merritt Sugarhouse Richard Messer Priscilla Messier Loan Metlife Home Robin Miller Melanie Mills-Brown Richard Minard Robert Miner Austin Minor Elizabeth Miskolczi Richard Missner Lanny Molleur Lorraine Monmaney Kenneth Monte Frank Montgomery Montpelier Rotary Scholarship David Moody Dwight Moody Eleanor Mooney Pearl Moore Michael Moore Helen Moore Mavis Moore Roger Morey David Morin Grace Moroch Anita Morreale, Estate Of Kenneth Morris Antonia Morris June Morrison David Morrison Ceylan Morse Linda Morse Lucille Morse Patricia Morse Jessie Moses Scott Moses Richard Moses (Estate) Jane Moz Barbara Mraz Ramiz Mujkanovic Jeremiah Mullen Estate Patrick Mullikin Ellen Munger Harold Murphy James Murphy Marie Murphy David Murray Nancy Murray Robert Murray Madhavan Nair James Napoli Rhoda Neader Carroll Nelson Joyce Newton Nichols Trust Kevin Nielsen Etsuro Nishiyachi Gregory Noble Lorenzo Noel Maryann Nolan Shawn Norman Philip Norman Northland Tel Co Of Vt Jack Northrup Cadrina Noyes Martin Nunn-Hudson Michael Nutter Jason Nye Sandra O' Brien Kelly O' Meara Kimberly O'brien Richard O'brien	David O'brien David O'donnell Nelson Olmstead Jennifer Omelianoff William Oren Deborah Ormsby Frank Orner David O'rouke Ronald Ortoli David Ostrom Arthur Ouellette Mario Ouellette Brenda Overstrom Wade Owens Edmund Pacetti Joseph Pacini Alberta Pacini David Pagani Carwin Page Howard Page Jay Paige William Paine Richard Palisoul Marilyn Palmer Fonda Papineau Jeffrey Paquette Stacy Paquette Todd Paquette Heather Paquin Marion Parauka Robert Parent Michelle Parker Isobel Parker Lyman Parker Jennifer Parker Michele Parnick Kenneth Parrot Joel Parry Christopher Parsons Kenneth Paton Christopher Patton Luke Paul Harry Paul Levi Pearce Logan Pearl Philip Peatman Mark Peck Samuel Peck Brandy Peck Laura Peduzzi Norman Peduzzi John Pegues Micheal Pelletier Tracie Penny Timothy Perkins Renee Perras Linda Perry Courtlan Perry Marybeth Perry Russell Persons C/O Barnett Banks Trust Persons D Douglas Petell Sonia Lee Peters George Peterson Susan Peterson Mary Pettibone Anka Petty Ben Pierce Walter Pierce Gregory Pierce Francis Pike Emily Pike William Pilbin Betty Plante Cheryl Plaster Helen Plattner Victor Polewsky Nyna Polumbaum Todd Poole Arthur Pope David Poplawski Ute Porcello Ruth Potter Yana Poulson Therese Powell Wilfred Powers Patricia Prechtl Carl Preston William Provencher Elizabeth Pulsifer Kathleen Purcell Dale Pushee Anders Pytte John Quagliano Annette Quesnel Carl Rabstejnec James Randall Jamie Randles Sikander Rashid Heinz Rathmann Mary Rawson Raymond Raynor William Reed Barbara Reed Brenda Reese Darien Regan William Reid Tomasa Remele Theresa Remick Sheila Renaudette	Resource Of Comm Living Peter Revers Stacey Rheau Kevin Rice Timothy Rice Albert Rice Alfred Richard Estate Elizabeth Richardson Raymond Richer William Richmond Ryan Ricker William Ricker Douglas Riddel John Rider Clifford Riggs Francis Riley Thomas Riley Beverly Ripley Don Robar David Robb Jeff Roberts Kelly Roberts Ella Robertson Walter Robertson Dale Robertson Jeremy Robinson Bonnie Robtoy Michael Rock Mary Rode Joyce Rogers Alona Rogers John Roggensack Robert Rondelli Arthur Ronner Mark Rossi Harriet Rossi Douglas Rossi Boyd Rossignol Donna Rossiter Alfred Rouelle Estate Stanley Rounds Norbert Rousse Robert Roux Danielle Roy Jody Roy Kristy Roya Tina Ruth Shirley Rutledge Erla Ryan Charles Ryerson Scott Sainsbury Suzanne Sales Mary Sallerson Edward Salomaa Beth Sanborn Peter Sangermano Loretta Santos Jason Sanville Jennifer Sarazin Monica Saunders Catherine Savioli Edward Sawyer Estate Peter Schetter Norman Schibuk Margaret Schiffert Steve Schlipf Frank Schlosser Rodney Schneider Eleanor Schneider Russell Schuck Esther Schumaker Eric Schwartz Lucille Schwarz Kenneth J Scott Lynn Sellyei Cecilia Setien Helen Severinghaus Diane Sevigny Greg Sewell Lori Shatney Steven Shearer Patricia Shedd	Connie Shepard Francis Shepard Patricia Sherman Charles Sherman Anne Shields David Shipman Betty Shor Sheri Shumway John Shuttle Brent Sicely Kenneth Sikora Jane Simard Rick Simmons Tasha Simmons Isabelle Simpson Peter Sinclair Joanne Sinon Benjamin Sklarski Megan Slack Christopher Slade Sherry Smecker Jonie Smith Stuart Smith Karl Smith Philip Smith Barry Smith Kenneth Smith Barbara Smith George Smith Richard Smith Benjamin Smith Sarah Smith Trevor Smolen Marvin Snyder Allison Snyder William Snyder Steven Somers Mary Sorensen Jose Sousa William Spearance Fred Spencer Carolyn Spencer Michael Spinelli Steven Spitzer June Spooner Howard Spooner Sylvia Spooner Forrest Spooner Estate Terry Spoonire Raph Spoor Jeffrey Squires Marcia St Cyr Victor St Germain Ivy Stark Anita Stark William H Starr, Estate of Cynthia Steed Nancy Stein Gretchen Stein Angeline Stender Richard Stephens Alan Stephens Harvey Stetson Mae Stevens Candace Stewart Nicholas Stewart Lewis Stiles Ella Stillwell Speer Arline Stocking Ronald Stoeckel Harvey Stone Carla Straight Gerard Stratthaus Robert Stratton Alvin Strayhorn Donald Suarez William Sugarman C Theresa Sullivan Robert Sullivan William Sullivan Ethel Sweeney Clyde Sweetser	Mark Sweezy Rosalind Swift Randall Swift Helen Symons Alfred Szulc Thomas Tafuto Hallie Tamez Roger Taplin John Tassie Marilyn Taylor David Taylor Maurice Teitelbaum Amy Terrien Chaya Thanhauser Mary Thayer David Therrien Georgette Thibeault Timothy Thibodeau Roger Thivierge Kathleen Thomas John Thomas Judson Thomas Alison Thomas David Taylor Constance Thompson Robert Thompson Philip Thorne Andrew Thurston Diana Thurston Pamela Thurston Germaine Tibbetts David Tidhar Patricia Tierney Scott Tighe Shirley Tillotson, Estate Paul Tober Marion & William Toohey Edith Tousignant Susan Towle Bruce Towle Charles Tracy Thomas Treece Tracie Trepanier Aldis Trombley Joanne Trombly Clove Tsingle Dwayne Tucker James Tullar Lisa Turner Daniel Unverzagt Martin Upmal Estate Lisa Upson Charles Vaczy Edith Vail Michael Vandenburg Brenda Vangordon Claire Vasquez Nathan Vasseur Roberta Veech Perry Veillette Joanne Vermette Vermont Sports Apparel I Steven Veves Carole Victory Janine Vitkauskas Marion Vitti Frank Volpini Howard Wagner H Paul Wakefield Frances Walbridge Gerald Walbridge Jacqueline Walker Marlene Wallace Christopher Walsh Deborah & Arnold M. Walsh Ronald Ward Warsley Estate Randall Wasley Mark Waters Wayne Watker	Timothy Watkins Wendy Watson Bryant Watson Barbara Watts Michael Webster Lori Webster Daniel Webster Stephen Weiss Daniel Weiss Stanley Welch Patrick Welch Allison Welch Randy Welch Raymond Welch, Admin. Dwight Weller Gary Wells Bert Wendel Kevin West Ronny Westcott Dean Westover Daniel Wetmore Herbert Wheeler Gerald Wheeler Richard Wheeler Lucy Wheeler Helen Wheeler, Estate Leona Wheeler, Estate of Fred Whitcomb Frank White Heidi White Thomas Whiteley Keith Whitemore David Wild David Wild Christopher Wilder Delene Willey Gwen Williams Steven Williams David Williamson Kendall Willis Virginia Willis Thomas Wilson Richard Wilson Cindy Wilson Nicole Wilson Otto Winhold Steven Winkler Heidi Winter John Wires Janet Wiseley Warren Wiseman Hugh Witham Estate Henry Witzzenberger Joseph Wnukowski Guenter Wolf Gary Wollman Gregory Wood Susan Wood Harriet Wood Stanley Woodard Gordon Woodbury David Woodbury Joanne Woodward Nancy Wright Florence Wright Dianne Wyeth Karen Wynkoop Bartlett Yates James York Marcia Young Jackie Young Wayne Young Roland Young Judy Young Thomas Zaremski Victor Zdon Mark Zedick Nancy Zeno Nikolajs Znamenskis
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## Capital Credits = your money, refunded. A pocket guide

- For-profit businesses are designed to make more money than they need to break even. Those revenues are profits. When not-for-profit cooperatives have excess revenues, those are called margins.
- As a member of the Co-op, you are a part owner. That means that the Co-op's margins belong to you, proportional to how much electricity you purchased.
- The Board decides how much money it can afford to return to the membership every year. If you are a current member, that money shows up as a credit on your November bill.
- If you move off WEC's lines, keep your address and phone up to date. WEC will continue to send a refund authorization form for you to complete.
- Whether you're a current or former member, you can donate your refund to WEC's Community Fund: [wec.coop/community-fund-donations](http://wec.coop/community-fund-donations).



# In Marshfield, Youth Farmers Lead Climate Justice Movement

Show up at the Grassroots Collective farm on a summer Thursday and ask for a picture, and the assembled team of high schoolers, agroecology mentors, and volunteers won't just smile for the camera while harvesting garlic and turning compost. They'll stop what they're doing to form a human pyramid.

What could be a better metaphor? They're working together to make something bigger than themselves, and judging by the laughter, they're having a pretty good time doing it.

The Grassroots Collective in Marshfield is a "collective of collectives," as organizer Henry Harris put it, a home base for building networks and structures of mutual support for people active in racial justice, climate justice, and regenerative agriculture.

The way folks linked to the Collective see it, these concepts are inextricably linked, and regenerative agriculture is the way through. "This is about tangible solutions to the climate crisis," Harris explained. Regenerative agriculture is a way of farming to reverse climate change by rebuilding healthy soil and waterways, using organic practices and methods like no tilling and rotational grazing. The Collective works to bring farmland access and ownership to racial groups systemically shut out of land ownership, supporting multiracial community building in rural Vermont while expanding farming practices that enrich the earth and provide healthy food to communities in need. These systems need to be developed now, said Harris, in order to mitigate or prevent deepening inequities as floods, droughts, and wildfires displace populations and increase competition for resources.

The Collective's abundant land on a former dairy farm on WEC's lines in Marshfield is a good lab. "We're creating cooperative opportunities," said Harris: while many people know a lot about regenerative agriculture, he said, they don't have the land to put it into practice. Sharing resources and experience allows folks to practice on an expanding scale.

## Tour with youth leader Eliana Moorhead

Here, people born after the turn of the millennium, who are lifelong witnesses to Earth's warming climate, have equal voice and agency. They may find their way to Marshfield through the annual Uprise! art and activism summer camp, by interning through the WWOOF (Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms) network, through high school workshops led by mentors in the Collective, or as volunteers or paid workers growing and harvesting food within the overlapping Northstar Collective.

At the farm, youth leaders caught up with each other before agroecology mentor and herbalist Mollie Wills demonstrated how to harvest garlic. A small group discussed an Uprise! Camp exercise that involves climbing a tree by patiently scotching up a system of knotted ropes.

Now 18, Eliana Moorhead was one of 10 original youth members who farmed the land and were paid for their work. As the Northstar Collective, named for Harriet Tubman's guiding light and principle, they grow food crops and medicinal herbs for local marginalized communities, using farming as a tool to build antiracism and food security. Moorhead said she likes how the project centers leaders who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and she likes that the food they grow goes to all kinds of people in need.

The initiative was originally funded through ShiftMeals, a food and economic security program sparked by the pandemic and led by WEC Board member Jean Hamilton and local restaurant chain The Skinny Pancake. That seed support was important, observed Moorhead, but the results—healthy, organic food distribution to Migrant Justice farmworkers, Abenaki tribal members, food shelves, and others—were the work of the Northstar Collective. "We did the whole process of planting, harvesting, and delivering," she said.

On a tour of the farm, Moorhead talked about watching a collective form in real time. As the first 10 youth learned about regenerative farming, put their new skills to use, made decisions together, learned from mistakes, and celebrated gangbusters harvests, they taught new volunteers who showed up at the farm. Soon, the youth were each leading a team of volunteers. And as those volunteers learned, they gained



Eliana Moorhead in the greenhouse under construction. As a member of the Northstar Collective, she and other youth leaders learned to farm using regenerative agriculture practices. They partnered with Migrant Justice, the Abenaki Land Link Project, and others to share produce and address racial justice through building food security.

the skills to support new volunteers. "It's just passing the knowledge on to each other," she said. When no one is in charge, "it's less hierarchical and more fun that way."

Next to an old dairy barn, in a field with a new grant-funded greenhouse under construction, Moorhead points to lush salad veggies. "This was literally a field of sod with glacial boulders we had to dig out," she said. "This used to be a dairy farm. It wasn't equipped to be a vegetable farm, so we had to do a big switcheroo." Now, the Northstar Collective is growing indigenous varieties of squash and corn for the Abenaki Land Link project: the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk-

Abenaki Nation provides seeds, and all produce is delivered to Abenaki citizens in return.

Migrant Justice is also an important partner — especially because, said Moorhead, "they're farmworkers, and we are, too." In her description of the partnership, community building at every step is as important as the food. "Loading up the truck with my friends, driving up to [the Migrant Justice office in] Burlington, putting food in their fridge, asking how they're doing," she said. Migrant Justice delivers the produce on regular visits to migrant farmworkers on dairy farms, she said, and farmworker families put in special requests. "One woman loved making kale smoothies, so we'd drop off four bags of kale just for her. It's a way of getting to know people indirectly," she said.

Moorhead graduated from Montpelier High School this spring, and is taking a gap year before attending Oberlin College in 2022. Her plan is to farm in New Mexico, in an area where First Nation Puebla leaders are organizing for water justice. Farming and activism, she pointed out, are inextricable for her now.

Each taken on its own, racial justice, climate catastrophe, and agricultural food systems are huge, complex, and daunting issues. Understanding how they intersect, she said, "is both sad, and it's amazing." Amazing, she said, because she's discovered she can work in spaces that positively—and urgently—move the needle on all of these at the same time. "Now I understand what my priorities are. This

*continued on page 7*

## Definition please!

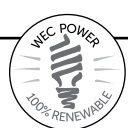
- **BIPOC:** Acronym for Black, Indigenous, or People of Color.
- **WWOOF:** Acronym for Worldwide Opportunities On Organic Farms volunteer network. [wwof.net](http://wwof.net)
- **Regenerative agriculture:** Farming methods that prioritize building soil health.
- **Climate justice:** Equity for populations disproportionately and adversely affected by climate change.
- **Agroecology:** Ecological principles applied to agriculture.

**A note:** Different groups may define concepts differently. The definitions here are written to be as simple as possible. In addition

to interviews, *Co-op Currents* found these references useful: Vermont Natural Resources Council ([vnrc.org](http://vnrc.org)), VTrans ([vtrans.vermont.gov](http://vtrans.vermont.gov)), VPIRG ([vpirg.org](http://vpirg.org)), and for defining agroecology, Berkeley Food Institute ([food.berkeley.edu](http://food.berkeley.edu)).

## Learn more:

**Grassroots Center:** [grassrootscenter.net](http://grassrootscenter.net)  
**Abenaki Land Link Project:** [abenakitribe.org](http://abenakitribe.org), [nofavt.org/blog/abenaki-land-link-project](http://nofavt.org/blog/abenaki-land-link-project)  
**Migrant Justice:** [migrantjustice.net](http://migrantjustice.net)  
**ShiftMeals:** [shiftmeals.org](http://shiftmeals.org)  
**EarthWalk:** [earthwalkvermont.org](http://earthwalkvermont.org)  
**Vermont Land Trust:** [vlt.org](http://vlt.org)



**Broadband**

*continued from page 1*

already has grant funding secured, said Pelletier. It's based on WEC's service area, and Pelletier described it as a network "that extends from CVFiber to ECFiber through NEK Broadband. These three CUDs cover about 900 miles. About 500 is CVFiber territory," he explained, demonstrating the efficiency of working in partnership with multiple CUDs.

Another component to the project preconstruction activities is "make-ready" work, which Pelletier described as actually making space on each pole to hang fiber cable. In addition, some pole work must be done: pole replacement, erecting midspan poles in areas with long gaps between poles.

And then, construction can begin.


**The construction process**

With all the preconstruction work happening now, WEC and CVFiber plan to be ready to build out fiber, and begin connecting subscribers, as soon as possible. "As soon as the fiber starts getting on the poles, we'll start lighting those poles," pledged Pelletier. While the work up through construction is sequential, he said, it isn't as though all the fiber needs to be hung before a switch is flipped, bringing internet to all subscribers at once. Instead, "parallel to the construction, just lagging by a bit, is the ability to bring subscribers online." In addition, he pointed out, WEC members who choose to subscribe to CVFiber high speed internet will later also be connected with digital meters using fiber for communication to and from WEC.

While CVFiber hopes for speedy construction, much of that speed is contingent on RUS funding coming through and the availability of materials and contact labor. "There's such a demand nationwide, since the federal government is pumping billions of dollars into rural electrification," he said. To shore against these shortages, Pelletier said, groups are discussing consortiums to buy supplies at bulk or even statewide levels. And, he said, the industry is hungry for people trained to construct fiber, and folks can access scholarships and grants to get the training that qualifies them for these jobs that pay well.

But if funding, materials, and labor come through as planned, CVFiber's plan is to halve the number of households with substandard internet

in its district by the end of 2022. That would require hanging about 300 miles of fiber. Another 300 miles in 2023 would make affordable high speed internet available to 80 percent of those underserved today. By 2024, internet would reach 95 percent of those who lack it now.

The folks served through this construction are largely WEC members, said Pelletier. "Anyplace without a cable is underserved, which basically describes the ratepayers of WEC," he said. "Our interests are significantly aligned in doing this as efficiently, cost effectively, and quickly as possible. What WEC did in the 1930s and 1940s, that's us. We're delivering the internet to rural customers." 



# Button Up 2021 Incentives for WEC Members

## Thermal Incentives

### Weatherization



**WEC**

- Weatherization improvements to building shell: \$600 for Home Performance with Energy Star contractor

**Efficiency Vermont**

- Receive 50% of project costs back, up to \$1,000.
- WEC member households may be eligible for 50% of project costs, up to \$3,000; see eligibility, here: <https://www.efficiencyvermont.com/rebates/list/home-performance-with-energy-star>

### Heat Pump Incentives

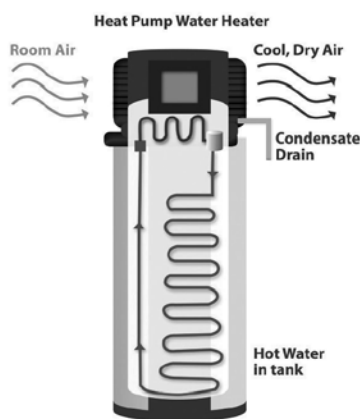
**WEC & EVT 2021 Heat Pump (HP) Incentives<sup>1</sup>**

*A qualifying house meets or exceeds minimum thermal standards (VT Residential Energy Code)*

	Point of purchase discount <sup>2</sup>	WEC bonus incentive <sup>3,4</sup>
<b>Ductless - ≤2 tons</b>	\$350	\$250
<b>Ductless - &gt;2 tons</b>	\$450	\$250
<b>Ducted - ≤2 tons</b>	\$1,000	\$250
<b>Ducted - &gt;2-&lt;4 tons</b>	\$1,500	\$250
<b>Ducted - ≥4 tons</b>	\$2,000	\$250

**Air to water (A2W) heat pump**      \$1,000/ton

**Ground source heat pump**      Coming in 2021



- 1 Qualified by Efficiency Vermont
- 2 Point of purchase discount applied; provided by Efficiency Vermont
- 3 HP installed in building meeting/exceeding thermal standards (VT residential energy code)
- 4 Contact WEC for eligibility for bonus incentive

**Heat Pump Water Heater (Hybrid) Incentives<sup>1</sup>**

	Point of purchase discount <sup>2</sup>	WEC bonus incentive <sup>4</sup>
<b>Replacing conventional electric hot water</b>	Up to \$600	-
<b>Replacing fossil-fired hot water system</b>	Up to \$600	\$250

*WEC encourages members considering purchase of HPWH to select unit with CTA-2045 communication port, to enable future participation in a Co-op load management program*

**Youth Farmers**

*continued from page 6*

work is beneficial for the rest of the world."

**"Useful in our community"**

Back at the farmhouse by the harvested garlic field, Henry Harris drank coffee and checked in with Moorhead and others as a farm dog trotted by carrying a freshly killed groundhog. Recently injured, Harris sat on a knee scooter, sporting a pink cast covered in names and messages. Harris ran through several projects and partnerships associated with the Grassroots Collective, all operating at the intersections of racial justice, climate justice, and agriculture. Moorhead talked about a recent trip to visit Ange Gibbons, founder of EarthWalk, and learn from her about rotational grazing and tincture making. "It's nice to have here as a home base and go out and learn," from other farmers, she said. She also liked seeing connections between different initiatives—for example, between summer camp and a project to expand BIPOC land ownership in communities throughout Vermont.

In the meantime, there are physical projects underway: with Vermont Land Trust funding, the Collective is reconstructing the old dairy barn's milk house in order to have a space to make value-added food products and to host conferences. "It's a hyper-local little food hub here," said Harris.

And that's the point. While the issues the Collective addresses are massive and global, the entire concept of grassroots organizing is about face to face interactions. Everyone on the farm was unrushed and having fun. Taking a break from harvest to build a human pyramid with friends. Learning from experience in the fields, learning from each other, allowing room for mistakes, welcoming new volunteers and friends. "We're really trying to get established to be used and useful in our community," Harris said. "We're chipping away at it. Stop by! Mostly, we want to make friends." 

## Pellet Stoves, Furnaces, and Boilers Incentives



**WEC**

- \$250 for either a qualifying pellet stove or a wood stove. Stoves must be installed by qualified installer.
- Pellet furnace: \$1,000
- Pellet boiler: \$1,000

**Efficiency Vermont\***

- Pellet stove: \$200 when installed by qualified contractor
- Pellet furnace or boiler: up to \$6,000

*Note: Incentives of over \$600 or more require a completed W-9 form. See <https://www.washingtonelectric.coop/energy-coach-home/>*

\*Offers subject to change. See [EfficiencyVermont.com](https://www.efficiencyvermont.com) for current details.

802.224.2329 • [energycoach@wec.coop](mailto:energycoach@wec.coop)



Members Write

# When Switching to an EV, Be Prepared for a Few Surprises

**T**hank you for the article on EV charging [June 2021]. When I bought my used EV about a year ago Bill Powell and Dan Weston were enormously helpful in assisting me through the process. Like many other utilities, WEC provided a charger at no cost, plus a rebate that mostly covered the cost of the installation. I thought I knew what I was jumping into but there were still some surprises.

First, many of the rebates only apply to new vehicles. It's also important to note the new-car-only federal tax credit is only as helpful as your tax liability and the any-EV WEC rebate is taxable and reportable as income. The process to obtain and install the charger, by design, lagged behind the purchase by a couple of months, necessitating the use of public charging in the interim. For these reasons I recommend purchase during the spring or summer so your home charger can be in place in time for colder weather.

The next surprise was the public charging network. Without using public chargers your range is essentially half the stated range, since you still have to return home to recharge. I found

there are multiple networks for public charging and each has its own unique pricing structure, access, etc. Some are free, some charge for parking but not for energy, some just the opposite, and some charge for everything. Many public chargers rely on wifi to initiate the charging session.

Then I needed to learn to plan my trips and anticipate my need to charge. Since meaningful charging can take 2-4 hours or more, it's a lot different than stopping by the gas station for a few minutes and getting right back on the road. Public chargers are not always convenient to your destination — or anything; this can be tricky depending on weather and purpose.

Finally, winter. My range plummeted by half and the recommendation is to keep the car plugged in, for battery conditioning and optimal battery life, whenever the temperature dropped below freezing; pretty much all the time throughout the winter. With range cut in half by temperature and reduced half again by home charging, you can travel out only about a quarter of the stated range. This is not insurmountable but can be challenging. And, the cost

to keep my battery cozy doubled my electric bill. While electric pricing is less volatile than gas, it was still a shock.

Overall I like my EV. I like that charging on the WEC system means I'm charging green. As a primary vehicle, however, my EV is undeniably limited.

— Monique Hayden

*Thanks to Monique Hayden, a current member from Williamstown and former member of the Board of Directors, for writing in.*

## From Bill Powell, the Energy Coach:


The range anxiety Monique cites is legitimate, and varies with each EV driver's primary purpose (eg: commuting) and the way they drive. Range anxiety is a concern for some EV drivers, but not all. Range anxiety is decreasing as battery capacity is increasing, as is the distribution of public charging equipment.

Defining efficiency as miles per kilowatt hour consumed, EV mileage is a straightforward indicator reflecting the driving behavior of the EV owner.

The more carefully you drive, the higher your mileage per kWh.

For example, the Chevrolet Bolt claims 259 miles of range for its 66 kWh battery. 259 divided by 66 is 3.9 miles per kWh consumed. My Bolt average is 5.1 miles per kWh, or 31 percent higher than the manufacturer's estimate. That's high in part because my daily use — commuting to the WEC office and local travel — avoids highways.

I haven't had much winter experience, but it is a fact the mileage per kWh drops as the cabin comfort energy use increases (heating or cooling). Then, if the EV is parked outside in winter, it draws more to keep the high voltage battery "warm" and fully charged.

Like Monique, as a fellow EV driver, I find the pros of driving an electric vehicle outweigh the cons. But it's a new technology for many of us, and requires a shift in habits and expectations. I appreciate any member who chimes in in the pages of *Co-op Currents* to further expand on the EV driving experience. 

## Visit [wec.coop/broadband](http://wec.coop/broadband) for updates

- *Is pole inventory happening in my town?*
  - *Which CUD will bring broadband access to my neighborhood?*
  - *How can I stay up to date on this process?*
- Wec.coop/broadband will keep WEC members informed about where pole inventory and other broadband rollout

work is happening, who is doing the work, and how to connect with the Communication Union District (CUD) in your service area.

- You can also visit these CUD websites:
- CVFiber: [cvfiber.net](http://cvfiber.net)
  - ECFiber: [ecfiber.net](http://ecfiber.net)
  - NEK Broadband: [nekbroadband.net](http://nekbroadband.net)

## Broadband

Washington Electric Cooperative is participating in a state-wide initiative to bring fiber optic internet (commonly referred to as 'fiber') to as many communities in our territory as possible. We are currently partnering with three Communications Union Districts (CUDs) to deploy fiber. WEC's involvement is simple. We provide the infrastructure CUDs use to deploy fiber.

WEC is not an internet service provider (ISP), even though we are assisting in bringing fiber to rural Vermont. We're still your local electrical co-op, helping the community in any way we can.

As this project grows, our members will be able to find information on WEC's progress and involvement right here on this page. So, make sure to check back every once in a while!

### What is a Communications Union District (CUD)?

A "Communications Union District, allow[s] two or more towns to bond together as a municipal entity for a means of building communication infrastructure together." These are state-sanctioned, municipally-structured non-profit telecom entities whose mission is to provide affordable high-speed internet service to under-served residents and business in rural Vermont.



Map of WEC territory.

### Find your local CUD

Select the dropdown menu for your county to view list of towns served by WEC and their CUDs.

- ▶ Caledonia County
- ▶ Orange County
- ▶ Orleans County
- ▶ Washington County

### Our Partners in Bringing Broadband Internet to You!

#### CVFiber

- Visit CVFiber
- Jeremy Hansen, Chair

#### ECFiber

- Visit ECFiber
- F.X. Flinn, Chair

#### NEK Broadband

- Visit NEK Broadband
- Evan Carlson, Chair
- Kristen Fountain, Vice Chair



### A word from CVFiber's Chair Jeremy Hansen...

You may be seeing this sign on your road soon. If you do, that means CVFiber crews are out surveying utility poles in your area as the first step towards bringing the opportunity for fiber optic internet service to your home or business. Ask one of the workers for a brochure and feel free to look us up at [cvfiber.net](http://cvfiber.net) or contact the Project manager at [cvfiber.pm@cvfiber.net](mailto:cvfiber.pm@cvfiber.net) or 802-552-3088.

## Where's WEC?

Where are tree crews trimming WEC's roadside rights of way? For the most up to date information, visit [wec.coop](http://wec.coop) and click Right-Of-Way Notices.

- **Barre:** Mitchell and Plainfield
- **Corinth:** Thurston Hollow, Turkey Hill, and VT RTE 25
- **Orange & Barre Town:** Reservoir, Cutler Corner, Bisson, and George
- **Plainfield:** Fassett, Lower, and VT RTE 14S
- **Topsham:** Batten, Beckwith Street, Bruleigh, Captains Walk, Crossroad, Gendron, Gustine, Main Street, Maplewood, North Pleasant, Park Street, Perini, Pleasant Street, Powder Spring, Ridge Street, Spooner, VT RTE 25, Waits River Valley, Watson Hill, Willey Hill, and Zion



WEC's new forestry head mulcher is at work in its rights of way. It easily cuts through brush and small trees, pulverizing stumps to prevent regrowth. If you see it, stand back.

