

## **WAITSFIELD ENERGY COMMITTEE**

### **2010 Annual Report**

The Town of Waitsfield's Energy Committee, with the support of the Selectboard, Town staff and others, continued efforts in 2010 to address weatherization, fuel efficiency and other energy concerns in Waitsfield's municipal buildings.

Last spring, the Town was awarded \$63,000 in two separate Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) applications to the state's Clean Energy Development Fund, which distributed more than \$5.8 million to Vermont towns and cities, including our valley neighbors of Fayston, Moretown, and Warren. The Mad River Valley Planning District's work to coordinate application efforts was extremely helpful to these successful pursuits.

The larger award of \$50,000 has enabled a number of important improvements to the General Wait House, the Town Garage and the Waitsfield-Fayston Fire Department building. The work to utilize this funding began last fall and is near complete. Improvements include significant insulation upgrades to the Wait House attic, cellar and windows, new high-efficiency boilers at both the Fire House and Wait House, and new oil- and wood-fired furnaces at the Town Garage--which will again enable the road crew to reduce their fossil-fuel use and heating costs with locally-harvested cordwood culled from their seasonal maintenance projects.

While the EECBG funding was obviously the driver of these efforts, Energy Committee member Charlie Hosford also provided dozens of critical hours of his personal time to prepare the buildings to receive these improvements, and Town Administrator Valerie Capels dutifully tracked and fulfilled the highly detailed paperwork required to satisfy federal oversight of the funds. Waitsfield resident Stan Ward also deserves much credit for implementing a document-sharing environment in which the applications were developed and refined, and for his work on the application contents, as well.

The second block of EECBG funding was acquired to assist the development of a program by which Waitsfield homeowners could receive funding for domestic energy-efficiency measures in the form of a low-cost loan to be repaid over time as an annual supplement to their

property tax bill. This program, referred to initially as a Clean Energy Assessment District (CEAD), has been known more recently as a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program and is a strategy being pursued in towns and cities nationwide.

In Vermont, development of a PACE program has been led by the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC) and is being coordinated statewide with numerous other towns that either won similar grant funding from EECBG or otherwise expressed interest in pursuing this financial model and opportunity for electric, heating fuel, CO2 and dollar savings. Unfortunately, complications related to the national mortgage industry's recent troubles -- and certain policies of mortgage giants Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae -- have slowed progress for PACE, though negotiations do continue. Energy Committee member Brian Shupe has served the PACE effort as Waitsfield's dedicated and insightful representative. More information is available on the VEIC website at: [www.veic.org/resourcelibrary/PACE.aspx](http://www.veic.org/resourcelibrary/PACE.aspx)

Through the summer months the Energy Committee focused its efforts on several opportunities to install municipal photovoltaic (PV) electricity-generating panels. Committee members evaluated the resource potential (solar exposure) of several available project sites and also cautiously debated the various impacts to the potential host parcels and their visual surroundings. Working in a very limited timeframe, the Energy Committee, assisted by members of the Budget Task Force, performed detailed cost-benefit studies of several formal proposals.

The project did not go forward due to the cap having been reached on critical project rebates and subsequent changes to the proposed power purchase agreement. While disappointed by the outcome, the Energy Committee gained valuable knowledge about how the Town could approach future solar PV opportunities. The Energy Committee continues to believe that renewable energy options should be considered for the Town's municipal facilities.

Dennis Derryberry, Energy Coordinator

Committee Members: Sal Spinoso, Paul Hartshorn, Charlie Hosford,  
Brian Shupe