



August Chamber Corner
By Marji Graf, Executive Director
Okemo Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce

We had a very busy July in the Okemo Valley. Congratulations to the Ludlow Merchants Association for organizing a great 4th of July fireworks show!! I'm sure the 13th Annual State Zucchini Festival on August 14th will be just as successful!

In Ludlow, I sit on the steering committee of the e-Vermont initiative. This grant was obtained by Jill Tofferi of the Fletcher Memorial Library. The e-Vermont Community Broadband Project is a two-year initiative to help rural Vermont towns take full advantage of the Internet to create jobs, drive school innovation, provide social services, and increase civic involvement. Ludlow has a community forum on <http://frontporchforum.com>. Please sign up. There will be a Town meeting on August 10th at 7pm to explain this initiative.

In Chester, I sit on the steering committee of ChesterUnited whose mission is to help the Town of Chester make itself a destination, in the summer of 2011, due to the reconstruction of two bridges on Route 103. Focus groups have been completed and we're looking forward to seeing the results.

For the Towns of Weston, Ludlow and Plymouth (as well as Towns to the North and South of us) we are making Route 100 a scenic byway. The National Byway Program recognizes and supports outstanding roads. It provides resources to help manage the intrinsic qualities within the boarder Byway corridor to be treasured and shared. The program is about recognition, not regulation. 12 of us on the byway council met on July 9th including 3 regional development corporations. Our goal is to receive our byway designation this year and apply for funding next year. Our byway will consist of Route 100, Route 100A and Route 103 to connect with Scenic Route 131.

Watch for our 2011 "Taste for Every Season" dining calendar from the Okemo Valley this Fall.

Welcome the following new businesses into our Okemo Valley region: Brewfest Beverage Company in Ludlow, Country on the Common in Chester, and Vermont Institute of Contemporary Arts in Chester.

Here are more upcoming member-to-member driven events: Please support each others' town events.

August 14

Zucchini Festival in Ludlow

September 10-12

Mini Cooper Scavenger Hunt throughout the Okemo Valley

September 15th

1pm OVRCC Golf Tournament at Okemo Valley Golf Club

September 22

Okemo Valley Business Showcase at Fletcher Farm School-Ludlow 5:30-7:30pm

September 27-October 2

The Big Buzz Chainsaw Carving Festival - Chester

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SPECIAL PROGRAM:

You are invited to come to our mixer on August 11 from 5:30-7:30pm at the NEW President Calvin Coolidge Museum and Education Center. Christine Werneke, Chief Marketing Officer from the State of Vermont, the Department of Tourism and Marketing, and the Vermont Ski Areas Association collaborated on research to study the perception of Vermont and how these perceptions affect decision making for choosing a vacation. The goals were to: 1. Understand Vermont's unique strength and areas of opportunity. 2. Identify the attitudes, needs and behaviors of our customers and 3. Determine the triggers for selecting a vacation destination. The research shows we are on target with our visuals in both our regional guidebook and website, also on target with our marketing efforts in Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York. Christine will be sharing these results with us. We welcome surrounding areas to join us.

Be sure to watch our program, *Okemo Valley, Your Place In Vermont* on tv and www.lpctv.org. Our guest this month is Laura Tuttle-Williams and Patrice Johnsen of Calm Moments Spa Services.

SAVE THE DATE: Our Chamber Golf Tournament is scheduled for Wednesday, September 15th with a tee off at 1p. Call Mary Knight 228-7870 or Mark Verespy 228-7797.