



# VECAN

VERMONT ENERGY & CLIMATE  
ACTION NETWORK  
MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER

---

Missed a previous month's newsletter? Check them all out in our [newsletter archive!](#)

## **Get Involved**

[Events](#)

[Join or Start an Energy Committee](#)

[Find & Connect with Other Energy Committees](#)

---

## **Connect**

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Website](#)

Dear {{Salutation or 'Local Energy Leaders'}},

Thank you all for your continued commitment to doing your part on climate! It's a huge team effort to advance the action we so desperately need to ensure a sustainable and equitable energy future. There is a TON happening – and we want to be sure it is on your radar.

Below, find information about upcoming educational and networking events, funding opportunities, news, and more that we hope will support your critical efforts – our essential collective efforts – to do all we can to chart a cleaner, more healthy, and more equitable energy future.

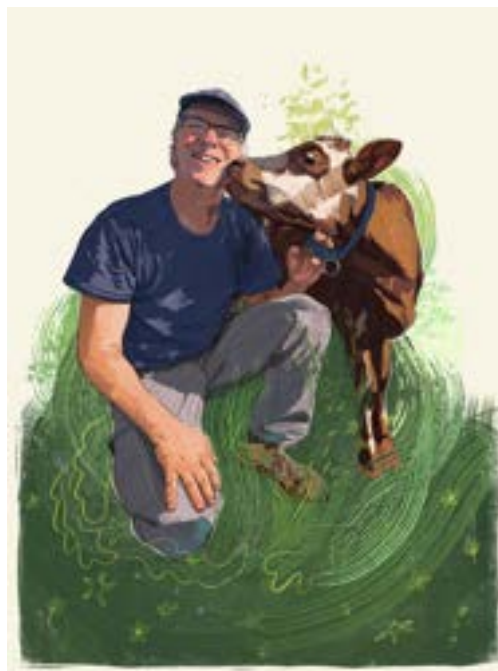
---

## **IN-PERSON EVENTS**

All events can be found on the VECAN Events Calendar at <http://vecan.net/events>

**Northfield Community Members Invited to Share Ideas for the Future - March 21** - All members of the Northfield Community are invited to come together for a free community dinner and the opportunity to be an active participant in developing new ideas for Northfield's future. [Learn more here.](#)

**Energize Upper Valley Fair - April 1, 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM, LISTEN Center Dining Hall, White River Junction** - Do you want to save money on energy bills? Join this FREE event to hear from home energy efficiency renovators such as COVER Home Repair, solar developers like SameSun, local green financing from SEVCA and Efficiency Vermont, and other local exhibitors. Learn about cheap renewable energy, green jobs training, weatherization, and energy security in Vermont and New Hampshire. If you have any particular comments or questions you want answered at the fair, feel free to share them in [this survey](#).



**Climate Farmer Art Show Opening - April 1, 5:00 - 7:00 PM** - BALE (Building a Local Economy) and Vital Communities invite you to the opening of Climate Farmer Stories, a multimedia show celebrating Upper Valley farmers who are actively working to mitigate and prepare for a changing climate. The show combines portraits made by Vermont and New Hampshire artists with climate and soil health educational content and audio interviews. Learn from farmers in the Upper Valley how they are drawing down carbon, bolstering biodiversity and resilience to extreme weather, and building our food security in the face of climate change. The exhibit will remain on display at BALE Commons through April. [Learn more here.](#)

**Waterbury LEAP Energy Fair - April 15, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM, Crossett Brook Middle School, Duxbury** - Is it time to weatherize your drafty house? Are you interested in energy-efficient heat pumps, electric vehicles, or solar power for your home or business? Mark your calendars and join us at the 2023 LEAP Energy Fair. Tour 75 exhibits and talk to experts about heat pumps, weatherization, solar power, energy audits, electric vehicles, efficient wood heat, and more. Attend breakout sessions on topics of special interest. This family-friendly event includes a free show by

Marko the Magician, free ice cream, free electronics recycling, children's activities, and local food and refreshments while you learn how to shrink energy bills and save money. [Learn more here.](#)



## VIRTUAL EVENTS

**Vermont Community Geothermal Alliance Webinar Series: Thermal Energy Networks for Vermont** - Tune into the [Thermal Energy Networks for Vermont](#) series to learn from leaders in the rapidly growing world of thermal energy exchange on the opportunities and benefits of adding thermal energy networks to our clean energy solutions.

- **Putting Thermal Networks to Work: Achieving Climate Goals and Policy Solutions - Monday, March 20th at noon** - Hosted by Energy Action Network - [Learn more and register to attend here.](#)
- **The Benefits and Business of Thermal Energy Networks - Tuesday, April 4th at noon** - Hosted by Renewable Energy Vermont - [Learn more and register to attend here.](#)



**How Will Climate Change Impact Our Forests? - March 22, noon - 1:00 PM** - Join Vital Communities for two half-hour presentations from forester and UVM professor Anthony D'Amato and forest ecophysiologicalist and Extension Assistant Professor of Forestry at UVM Ali Kosiba. Kosiba will discuss the expected impact of climate change on forests. D'Amato will discuss his research on adaptation strategies to climate change. [Register to attend here.](#)

**VTrans Wants to Hear from You! - March 23, 12:00 PM & 6:00 PM** - VTrans invites you to share your transportation experiences as the agency considers the most cost-effective and equitable programs and strategies to reduce transportation carbon emissions. Zoom links will be posted the week of the meeting on the project website [here.](#)

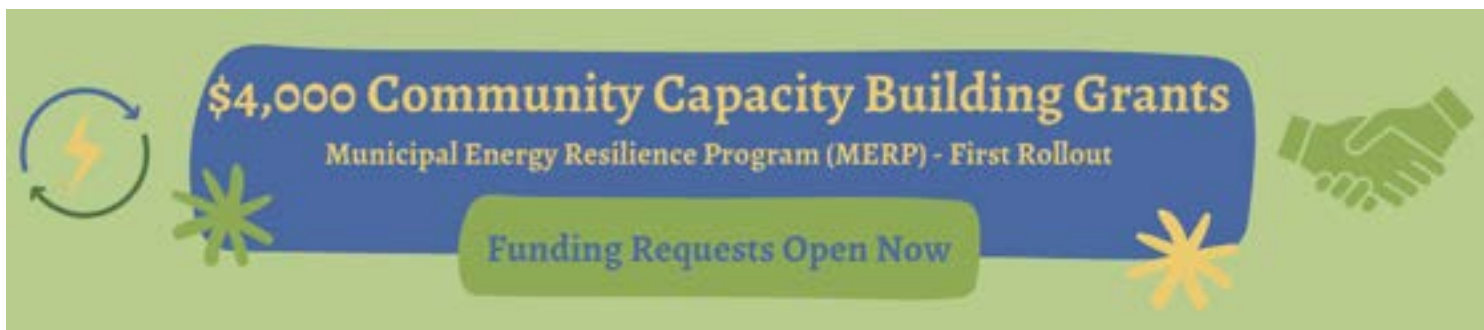


**Vermont Community Leadership Network (VCLN) Workshop: Who Can Help? Federal Funding Assistance and Support - March 24, 10:00 - 11:30 AM** - Many Vermont communities are aware of the plethora of new state and federal funding opportunities. New and existing resources are available to help community leaders access this funding. Hear from a panel of providers about the support they offer and how communities can benefit from their services. [Register to attend here.](#)

---

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

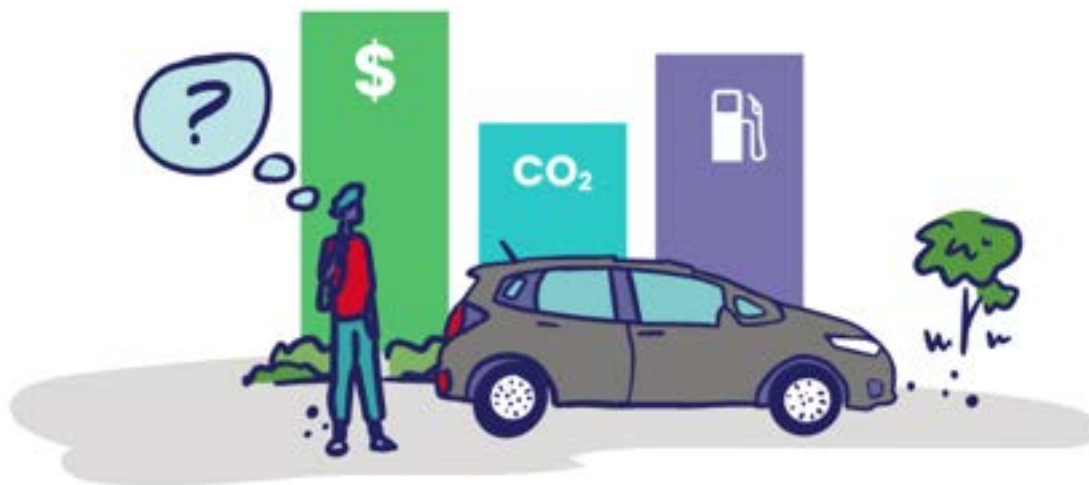
**Rural Energy for America Program: Renewable Energy Systems & Energy Efficiency Improvement Guaranteed Loans & Grants - Deadline: March 31** - The program provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements. Agricultural producers may also apply for new energy-efficient equipment and new system loans for agricultural production and processing. [Learn more here.](#)



**Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) Community Capacity Building Mini-Grants Now Open** - The first of three MERP grant opportunities is now available! [Find out more and apply today](#) for the Community Capacity Building Mini-Grants. Free building energy assessments and energy resilience project grants of up to \$500,000 per municipality will be launched soon. Communities may use the \$4,000 mini-grant to build capacity at the local level and develop strategies to make communities more energy efficient and resilient. For example, funds may be used to hire a consultant to identify candidate municipally owned buildings in need of energy efficiency improvements and provide grant application assistance for free energy resilience assessments (to be announced soon). [Learn more here](#), [read the FAQ here](#), and [apply here](#). Please contact your local [Regional Planning Commission \(RPC\)](#) for additional assistance. As part of this program, RPCs received funding to provide application and technical assistance along with program outreach and education.

## UPDATES & OPPORTUNITIES

**What's Your Car Costing You?** - As the price of things like home heating and groceries continue to rise, more and more Vermonters are taking a careful look at their spending to find opportunities to save. One costly area that's easy to overlook is your car, which accounts for up to 27% of the average household budget. With monthly payments, insurance, gas or charging, and maintenance—the cost of car ownership really adds up, even if you don't drive very often. But do you know your true total? Find out with CarShare Vermont's free, easy-to-use online calculator. This helpful tool will ask you about what kind of car you drive, how old it is, and some of your driving habits and expenses to come up with a customized total car cost. [Ready to get started? Calculate your costs.](#)



**Upper Valley EV Charging Map Needs Your Input** - A collaboration between the City of [Lebanon Energy Advisory Committee: Electric Vehicle Subcommittee](#), the Towns of [Hanover, NH](#),

and [Hartford, VT](#), and the [Upper Valley/Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission](#) created an interactive map where you can add a proposed EV charging location. [Learn more here.](#)

**Free Heat Pump Training - March 30-April 5** - Energy Works is offering a free Heat Pump Installation course. Participants can earn up to \$1,000 for completing the course and will have opportunities to speak with employers and participate in job shadows. Stipends for transportation and childcare are available. For more information, contact Jeff Nerney: [jnerney@vtadultlearning.org](mailto:jnerney@vtadultlearning.org) (802)779-0057. [Learn more here.](#)



**Last Chance to Claim Your FREE Energy Saving Kit** - Efficiency Vermont is making a big push to get FREE Energy Savings Kits into as many homes as possible before lighting incentives end on July 1st. Help them reach their goal by sharing the order page with your communities and stay tuned for updates as we near July 1. Here is some language to share, if you're able: *Have you gotten your free Energy Saving Kit from Efficiency Vermont? Get 10 LED lightbulbs, 2 faucet aerators, a water-saving showerhead – valued at \$47– delivered free to your door. Order yours today at [www.encyvermont.com/Kits](http://www.encyvermont.com/Kits).*

**Heat Pump Cleaning Service** - Fresh Air Solutions is a family-owned business that cleans heat pumps and mini splits to improve and maintain indoor air quality, temperature regulation, and efficiency. [Learn more here.](#)

**Affordable Heat Advances Senate on a 19-10 Vote** - In a monumental step forward for climate action, the Vermont Senate voted 19-10 to advance [S.5, the Affordable Heat Act](#). The establishment of a clean heat standard to reduce high-cost, price-volatile fossil fuels for heating would be the biggest pollution-reduction ever enacted in Vermont, if it moves forward. Legislators have worked hard to make important equity and climate-accountability improvements to the policy, despite unprecedented efforts by the fossil fuel industry to stay tethered to dirty, imported fossil fuels. Thank you to everyone who called, emailed, and reached out to their Senators asking for their support of the bill. Progress! If [your Senator voted to advance this bill](#), please thank them. And stay tuned and engaged as the House takes up the bill in the coming weeks.

**Vermont's Greenest Building Award - Now Open For Submissions - Deadline: March 31** - Hosted by the Vermont Green Building Network, Vermont's Greenest Building Awards recognize exemplary residential and commercial buildings that excel in green building strategies - including

water, health, transportation, and affordability - and meet the highest standard of demonstrated energy performance. [Learn more here.](#)



## NEWS & OP-EDS OF NOTE

***VT Digger: Shank & Peek: Key posts in local government can help to tackle climate change*** - “Relying on traditional climate policies alone — zoning, regulation and tax incentives — will be insufficient. We need to think and act outside the governance box, bringing on board the roles needed to get serious about the social and intersectional complements to this work.” Michael Shank of the Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance and Julia Peek of the Urban Sustainability Directors Network examine human infrastructure that towns can invest in to build capacity for taking on climate change at the local level. Based on what cities around the world are doing, they recommend five positions for Vermont cities and towns: Environmental Justice or Climate Justice Director, Chief Heat Officer, Community Engagement and Mobilization Team, Green New Dealer, and Climate Budgeter. [Read the full article here.](#)

***Rutland Herald: Dailey/Groveman: Watershed protection*** - “VNRC is calling for improvements to wetland protections in Vermont. Specifically, we urge the Legislature to enact a bill that will ensure any impacts to wetlands from development are restored and the significant loss of wetlands Vermont has experienced over decades, is reversed. Protecting riparian areas, river corridors and wetlands — as called for in the Climate Action Plan — is a crucial first step toward making Vermont resilient in the face of climate change.” [Read the full article here.](#)



***Energy News Network: Vermont gas utility sees geothermal as a part of its carbon-cutting portfolio*** - “Vermont Gas Systems is seeking possible sites for its first networked geothermal

project, in which multiple buildings would be connected to a system that provides emission-free heating and cooling via underground pipes.” [Read the full article here.](#)

**VT Digger: Kati Gallagher: Smart-growth housing is a critical climate solution** - “As our land use laws continue to exacerbate deepening inequalities, our dependence on polluting vehicles, and the fragmentation of our farms and forests, we must work together to pursue a Vermont that is welcoming, vibrant, and socially and environmentally resilient. This legislative session, we have a unique opportunity to do just that. By enabling housing development in our downtowns and village centers (where we’ve invested in public infrastructure like water services, sidewalks and transit), we can reduce zoning-enforced sprawl and support compact, walkable, mixed-use town centers with improved housing choice and more equitable communities.” [Read the full article here.](#)



**VT Digger: Sen. Anne Watson: How the Affordable Heat Act works** - “Vermonters who heat with fossil fuels are at the mercy of the fossil fuel industry and global forces beyond our control. For many Vermonters, this feels like a terrifying roller coaster of prices, and people are looking for the exit. During the same timeframe, the cost to heat with heat pumps stayed flat and was significantly cheaper than heating with fossil fuels. Through this bill, every heat pump or pellet stove installation, weatherization retrofit, or biofuel gallon that reduces carbon emissions creates a “clean heat credit.” Fuel sellers will be required to subsidize those activities by purchasing credits. Some fuel dealers are already starting to provide that work themselves (for example, installing heat pumps), and this bill will directly encourage that workforce transition. What does that mean for you? Heat pumps will be cheaper. Weatherization will be cheaper. And there will be more workforce to get it done faster.” [Read the full article here.](#)

---

### About Us

VECAN is a network of statewide Vermont organizations helping communities statewide to reduce energy costs and climate impacts through conservation, increased energy efficiency and conversion to renewable energy sources.

VECAN’s mission is to start, support and strengthen town energy committees.



### **Share**

We are always looking for great stories of local action for our blog, social media and as helpful resources for our network! Please consider sending along anything you or others have accomplished or are working on by emailing [sbayer@vnrc.org](mailto:sbayer@vnrc.org).

### **Event to Share?**

If you have an upcoming climate action opportunity, update or event you want others to know about, you can submit it to be included in the calendar. [Check it out here!](#)

### **Committee Changes?**

Help us keep our network up to date! Email changes in committee leadership or contact info to [sbayer@vnrc.org](mailto:sbayer@vnrc.org).



{{Disclaimer}}

Vermont Natural Resources Council

11 Baldwin Street

Montpelier, VT 05602

United States

(Unsubscribing is not supported in previews)