

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY RESOURCE GROUP 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

SERG formed in 2002 to help homeowners and towns reduce the amount of energy they consume, avoid the hardship caused by ever-rising energy prices and reduce their impact on climate change. In these difficult financial times, SERG understands that we need to pull together and work as a community to help turn challenges into opportunities. Here are a few of the important projects we accomplished this year to create a more sustainable region.

Thetford Center Community Center Weatherization – SERG’s completion of a year-long volunteer-assisted weatherization project of the Thetford Center Community Center was a huge success, with fifty-nine community volunteers contributing over 500 hours of labor to retrofit and weatherize the building. In addition to projected energy savings of over 70%, we eliminated dampness in the basement, repaired a crumbling foundation and greatly increased building comfort. SERG will continue to monitor actual use to verify these savings, with hopes that it will serve as a model for other community building retrofit efforts. Our sincere thanks to the many volunteers, the Thetford Center Community Association, the Thetford Energy Committee, The Preservation Trust of Vermont and project funders (Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, New England Grassroots Environment Fund and Ben & Jerry’s Community Action Team, as well as individual and local business donors) for their generous support that made this project possible.

UV HEAT – SERG launched our exciting new Upper Valley Home Energy Action Team, more (UV HEAT) initiative with project partners, COVER Home Repair and the Upper Valley Housing Coalition, to coordinate and increase home weatherization activities in the region. UV HEAT’s goal is to help homeowners throughout the region cut their energy use and spending by 30 percent or more by weatherizing their homes. Our new website www.uvheat.org, provides a one-stop-shop for all the information and resources to get your home weatherized in the Upper Valley. Through UV HEAT we organized a training for new Building Performance Institute (BPI) contractors and formed a network of certified BPI contractors in the Upper Valley. We will be leading a series of weatherization workshops this fall. Our thanks to the High Meadows Fund, NH Charitable Foundation, Mascoma Savings Bank Foundation, Upper Valley United Way, the Cashdan/Stein Great Grandmother Fund and Landmann Family Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation, Ledyard National Bank and groSolar for their help in launching UV-HEAT.

Button Up Energy-Saving Workshops – In 2008 SERG helped create the hugely successful Button Up Vermont Home Energy Saving Workshops, which has been presented more than 180 times throughout Vermont. Last year, SERG worked with Clean Air – Cool Planet to expand and bring this program to New Hampshire. We will once again be leading a series of workshops for the public and business employees this fall and winter. Check www.SERG-info.org or contact SERG for a workshop schedule.

SERG Residential Energy Audits and Assessment Services – SERG provided Home Performance with ENERGY STAR assessments, including blower door tests, infrared scans, combustion efficiency tests, and health and safety checks, on 18 Upper Valley homes. Requests for our energy audits have begun to pick up as the economy recovers and the UV HEAT initiative helps promote the message.

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Town Energy Committees – SERG was created in 2002 with a mission to develop and consult with town energy committees. The model we developed was so successful that today there are more than 90 town energy committees in each of Vermont and New Hampshire. In Vermont, we are networking and providing programs and resources to energy committees through the Vermont Energy & Climate Action Network (VECAN). Our goal is to have an energy committee or initiative in every Vermont town by 2012. VECAN is hosting its third annual day-long statewide conference of energy committees Dec. 4th, 2010 at the Lake Morey Inn, Fairlee. Our 2002 annual VECAN meeting was attended by more than 250 community energy organizers. More information about VECAN and the annual conference is available at: www.vecan.net. In New Hampshire, SERG has been networking with energy committees through the NH Local Energy Committee Working Group. SERG also organizes twice annual meetings of energy committee representatives from throughout the Upper Valley to share information updates and to discuss collaborative regional projects. In May we organized our annual Upper Valley Energy Committee Roundtable attended by 60 representatives from 22 town energy committees, 3 towns hoping to form energy committees, 3 regional planning commissions, 2 state representatives and several energy-related nonprofits and for-profit service providers.

Municipal Energy Assistance Program – SERG worked with Clean Air – Cool Planet, Vital Communities, Sustainable Development & Energy Systems Group and Jeffrey H. Taylor & Associates to provide municipal energy inventories and audits to six communities (Lebanon, Enfield, Cornish, New London, Grafton and Danbury) throughout the Upper Valley region of New Hampshire, as part of a larger program to 48 communities across the state. We will help these towns look at funding options for these municipal retrofits in the coming year.

Norwich District Heat and Power Project – SERG and our interns, Alden Adolph and Mitch Kewer, worked with the Norwich Energy Committee and consultant Gary Phetteplace to conduct a study to determine the interest in and technical feasibility of developing a renewably generated heat and power district for the town of Norwich, Vermont.

SERG Energy Alliance – SERG maintains a list of Energy Alliance businesses who offer discounts on energy efficiency and renewable energy products and services, such as wood stoves, solar hot water and PV systems and weatherization supplies, to those who make a tax-deductible contribution of \$50 or more to SERG. You can view the complete list of Energy Alliance business partners and the discounts they offer at www.serg-info.org/energy-alliance.

Public Education and Policy – SERG continues to educate the public through public forums and workshops, compact fluorescent bulb sales, letters to the editor and regular outreach to our database of over 1,800. We continue to work with town energy committees, individuals, state agencies and other organizations to support and promote energy conservation, efficiency and renewal initiatives.

SERG Board –

- Jeff Bernstein, President and Managing Director of the law firm BCK Law, P.C.
- Alan Berolzheimer, SERG Secretary/Treasurer, historian, editor and chair of the Norwich Energy Committee
- Bruce 'Buff' McLaughry, Chief Operating Officer of the Real Estate firm, Lang McLaughry Spera
- Jeff Wolfe, SERG Vice-President, CEO of the renewable company, groSolar
- Bob Walker, SERG Executive Director and Board President

*For more information on SERG and our programs, contact
802-785-4126, SERG@valley.net or www.SERG-info.org.*