

BFDDA Projects

The BFDDA is devoted to the continuing revitalization of downtown Bellows Falls, the historic commercial center of the town of Rockingham. Founded in November 1999, the BFDDA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that works in collaboration with the Vermont Downtown Program, the Town of Rockingham, and the Village of Bellows Falls.

Past Projects

As soon as it was formed, the BFDDA turned its attention to the Howard Block; an historic three-story brick building that had suffered a fire in 1996 and was vacant and boarded up. In 2001, the BFDDA purchased the property and conveyed it to a partnership of affordable housing non-profit organizations that carried out a complete \$3 million renovation of the building. The Howard Block has come back to life with four first-floor commercial spaces and 13 apartments on two upper floors.

Since then, the BFDDA has been active on a number of fronts. The organization has:

- Created a logo.
- Created a Work Plan to guide its activities.
- Created, printed and distributed two brochures promoting dining, lodging, and shopping in the downtown at no cost to the businesses in the brochure.
- Published a newsletter about downtown improvements.
- Distributed shopping carts with the BFDDA logo in support of downtown shopping.
- Created the annual Holiday Extravaganza December shopping promotion in collaboration with other community groups.
- Created the 3rd Friday Gallery Walk, now conducted by Village Square Booksellers and the Great Falls Regional Chamber of Commerce.
- Launched an annual Greenup Day in the downtown area.
- Cooperated with the Rockingham Planning Commission to establish design review guidelines for building alterations and new construction in the downtown.

Present and Ongoing Projects

- Works to revitalize Rockingham's historic commercial center on behalf of the entire community.
- Keeps up the positive "buzz" about Bellows Falls on a statewide and regional basis.
- Coordinates revitalization activities with the Vermont Downtown Program.
- Works to assure continuing State "designated downtown" status.
- Promotes tax credits for building improvements and other benefits for downtown property owners within the "designated downtown" area.
- Collaborates with the Town in the oversight of the Bellows Falls Waypoint Welcome Center, part of the Connecticut River Scenic Byway.
- Collaborates with the Town of Rockingham, the Village of Bellows Falls, and other community organizations in development efforts.
- Participates in the Vermont Downtown Network and advocates on a statewide basis for legislation favorable to downtowns.