

End of the Pipeline

No discussion of Rural economics or sustainable rural communities would be complete without recognizing that we are rural because we are at the end of the pipeline.

(Will Stevens)

Home grown economy and utilizing local talent.

What do we have?

- Environmental Research – UVM
- Environmental Policy – Middlebury College
- Environmental Law – Vermont Law School
- Agriculture Education – Vermont Technical College
- We do not have are community colleges.
- We do have 16 Career and Technical Centers

We also have:

- We are home to an incredible number of “Green” start up companies.
- We are experiencing a revival in “New Farmers” starting farming for the very first time.
- Programs like “Farm to Plate”, farmers markets, and food coops have generated an incredible interest in how food is grown and what we eat.
- Recently, energy has become a hot topic. Solar, Wind, Geothermal, Conservation.

Agriculture Work Force Training Crisis

- Traditionally trained Agriculture teachers were retiring.
- Few colleges and University were training replacement teachers.
- Enrollments in Traditional Agriculture Education Courses were plummeting.
- Students that did enroll were not academically prepared to meet the rigorous science and math skills required for these new industries.

What are we doing to change

- We began to hire teachers outside of agriculture.
- We began to develop programs of study that are modularized to attract more students into specific areas. Our new program of study for Renewable Energy would consist of 4 modules. Solar, Geothermal, Wind, Conservation.
- These would new programs of study will be taught by various teachers and not just one teacher teaching a variety of content.
- We began working to increase Rigor in all Programs.
Ex. Math Science Partnership to support Agriculture Science
- We began thinking of our programs of study working as systems and not as individual teachers teaching what they know.
- Dual or concurrent enrollment for all classes. Motivator and not end all.
- Dr. Cummings got it right. Credentialing as opposed to Degrees Merit Badges

Needs to be done

- Need to identify the academic, technical, and 21 Century skills needed for each Merit Badge.
- Need to develop valid and reliable assessments for each of the Merit Badge.
- Need to continuously reflect, research, adapt and change as industries change.
- Need to offer more opportunities for the adults of our community to have access to continuing education both for credit and for credentials.
