Summit on the Economy:  
Moving the North Country Economy Forward

Summary Report
March 17, 2016

This project is funded by USDA Rural Development. 
UNH Cooperative Extension is working in partnership with 
North Country Council and the Town of Colebrook

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Acknowledgements

Citizens for a Vibrant Economy is a committee of regional leaders who have been working together since early 2015 to move the North Country economy forward. Working with UNH Cooperative Extension, the committee has reviewed economic data, defined the components of a vibrant and resilient economy and completed thirty interviews with community leaders. All of this work resulted in identifying a range of topics, ideas, opportunities and concerns which have been organized into four major themes of workforce, business, Canadian market and visitors and regional identity and collaboration. The committee planned and organized the Summit on the Economy.

Committee members include: Becky Merrow, Camilla Jane Stewart - Town of Colebrook; Dana Bartlett, Colebrook Kiwanis Club; Harry Brown, Concerned Citizen; Jonathan Brown - Indian Stream Health Center; Sue Collins, Greg Placy, Ray Gorman - Colebrook Selectboard; Wayne Frizzell, Mike Daley, Steve Ellis, Jamie Sayen, Bridget Freudengerber, Britni White - North Country Chamber of Commerce; Karen Ladd - The News and Sentinel; Larry Rappaport - Coös Delegation; Jim Tibbetts - NH Charitable Foundation; Lisa Whitaker - Granite Bank; Ginette White - Colebrook Academy; Benoit Lamontagne - Dept. Resources & Economic Development; Roland Proulx - Log Haven Restaurant; John Strickland - Brooks Chevrolet/ Aime’s Primitive Place; CDDA; Elias Rella & Dakota Fogg - CA Grads; Sandy Young - NH Trails Bureau; Mike Scala - Coös Economic Development Corporation; Richard Sargent - Pittsburg Economic Development

Thank you to North Country Chamber of Commerce for playing a lead role in organizing the Summit on the Economy and Colebrook Elementary School for hosting the Summit.

Thank you to Bridget and Phil Freudengerber for a delicious local and homemade lunch.

Thank you to Gloria Bruce from the Northeast Kingdom Travel and Tourism Association for sharing your knowledge and experience for the benefit of the North Country.

Thank you to those who facilitated the Summit: North Country Council – Glenn Coppelman and Kevin McKinnon. UNH Cooperative Extension – Brendan Prusik, Sharon Cowen, Molly Donovan, Casey Hancock, Geoffreyy Sewake, Sarah Smith, Sue Cagle, Andre Garron, Chris Keeley and Jim Frohn.

Thank you to all who participated in the Summit on the Economy. The hard work and dedication of those in the community made this day a success.

Thank you to the following sponsors and partners
- North Country Chamber of Commerce
- North Country Council
- University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension
- Town of Colebrook
- USDA Rural Development
- Tillotson North Country Foundation
Background

Vision: Citizens for a Vibrant Economy came together in 2015 to better understand the opportunities to improve the regional economy. The redevelopment of the Balsams Resort was a topic of great interest but the committee wanted to focus their effort beyond one development plan. The committee worked together to determine a vision for their regional economy which includes the following components: leadership, civic pride, cooperation, low taxes, small businesses, a safe and clean place to live, arts and entertainment, housing, agricultural base, diverse economic base, whole health, entrepreneurial spirit, tourism and recreation and consideration of transportation, infrastructure and energy needs.

Community Interviews: Following the development of the vision, the committee wanted to solicit more information and community reaction to the vision. Committee members developed a set of questions and completed thirty interviews with community leaders throughout the region. The community leaders were in support of the vision and the challenges. Key finding with the interviews:

- A vibrant and resilient economy is characterized by diversity of businesses and jobs. Businesses are locally owned.
- Local assets include friendly, welcoming community; beautiful natural resources; good education system; infrastructure; healthcare; and strong leadership.
- Opportunities include outdoor recreation, tourism and The Balsams.
- Retaining and attracting young people is very important.

Meeting with Burke, VT and Northeast Kingdom VT officials: A joint meeting of leaders and economic development stakeholders from the North Country region and Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom was held in Burke, Vermont in early 2016. USDA Rural Development and UNH Cooperative Extension organized the meeting with the purpose of giving North Country leaders an opportunity to learn from the experiences of Burke, which is undergoing an expansion of Q Burke Mountain Resort. The participants heard that to share in the benefits of resort tourism, community, business and economic leaders must plan ahead, establish a common vision and support policies and investments that minimize negative impacts and capitalize on economic opportunities.

Summit on the Economy: The Summit on the Economy was held on February 20, 2016 at the Colebrook Elementary School. The purpose was to share the Citizens for a Vibrant Economy vision, previous work, findings from community interviews, and the message learned at the Burke, VT visit, generate ideas to strengthen the economy and organize volunteers to act on the ideas. The North Country Chamber of Commerce took the lead in publicizing the summit. 71 participants, including 53 from local communities and 18 partners representing the business community, local leaders, elected officials and the regional community were in attendance.
Key Findings

- Community leaders and participants are willing to work together to act on the opportunities and address the challenges of the North Country economy. Participant’s willingness to listen, learn and participate has moved the discussion from many ideas of action to a collective interconnected voice of positive change.

- Community members are willing to lead the effort and volunteer their time on Action Groups. 28 community members and 14 partners have signed up to participate on the Action Groups – more than half of the Summit participants.

- The community feels strongly about the work ethic of the people in the region and the value of the natural resources.

- Natural resources are an important asset which should be protected and used wisely as an economic resource.

- A great number of ideas and opportunities were generated. Some are easy to accomplish and others will need resources and time. There is an acknowledgement that change will be hard.

- Workforce needs are varied, complex and in need of resources. Education at all ages is seen as a key component in preparing the workforce for the future. The community is looking for educational institutions to partner in this effort.

Ideas to Action

Action Groups Initiated: The goal of the Summit was to move the community to action. Following the group work on values, concerns, opportunities and resources, four Action Groups were agreed upon:

1. Workforce
2. Community Branding
3. Canadian Markets
4. Preparing for Change

The next step is for each Action Group to meet to work on the opportunities identified. The Action Groups will consider the values and concerns, prioritize opportunities and identify resources. A joint meeting of Action Groups and Citizens for a Vibrant Economy will be held on April 7, 2016 to assess progress, look for synergies, talk about resources and plan to move forward.

“Change is a process not an event”
Gloria Bruce, Executive Director, Northeast Kingdom Travel and Tourism speaking at the Summit on the Economy.
## Action Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workforce</th>
<th>Convener: Lisa Whitaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Michelle &amp; Clay Hinds</td>
<td>Colebrook Country Club &amp; Motel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Neal Brown</td>
<td>Retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Raymond Gorman</td>
<td>Town of Colebrook</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Michelle Moren-Grey</td>
<td>North Country Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Ann Nygard</td>
<td>Lyndon State College</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Becky Merrow</td>
<td>Town of Colebrook</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. John White</td>
<td>Parsons Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Brian Bresnahan</td>
<td>Office of Congresswoman Ann McLane Kuster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Thad Gulbrandsen</td>
<td>Plymouth State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Lisa Whitaker</td>
<td>Granite Bank</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Branding</th>
<th>Convener: Jonathan Brown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bob Baker</td>
<td>Alan Robert Baker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Maura Adams</td>
<td>Northern Forest Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cathy Conway</td>
<td>NCIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Linda White</td>
<td>Parsons Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Corrine Rober</td>
<td>Bear Rock Adventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Jamie Sayen</td>
<td>NCCOC</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Francine Rancourt</td>
<td>RE/MAX Northern Edge Realty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Dana Bartlett</td>
<td>Mohawk Falls</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Britni White</td>
<td>North Country Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Stuart Sinclair Weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Julie Moran</td>
<td>North Country Farmer's Coop</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Haze Smith</td>
<td>Pride Builders, LLC</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Kitty Kerner</td>
<td>WinterGreens Farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Gail Fisher</td>
<td>retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Lori Morann</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canadian Markets</th>
<th>Convener: Kevin McKinnon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. John Lanier</td>
<td>Self employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thad Gulbrandsen</td>
<td>Plymouth State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mike Scala</td>
<td>Coös Economic Development Corp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Chuck Henderson</td>
<td>Office of United States Senator Jeanne Shaheen</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Monique Petrofsky</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Kevin McKinnon</td>
<td>North Country Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Donald M. Dickson</td>
<td>Colebrook Kiwanis Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Benoit Lamontagne</td>
<td>State of NH</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparing for Change</th>
<th>Convener: Dick Harris</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Jim Tibbetts</td>
<td>Borders Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bill Schomburg</td>
<td>Northern Forest Canoe Trail; Coos Trail Assoc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Clayton Macdonald</td>
<td>Town of Stratford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Dick Harris</td>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Carol Pires</td>
<td>Moose Muck Coffee House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ed Brisson</td>
<td>Dixville Capital LLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Karen Ladd</td>
<td>The News and Sentinel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Themes
Citizens for a Vibrant Economy, working with UNH Cooperative Extension, reviewed economic data, defined the components of a vibrant and resilient economy and completed thirty interviews with community leaders. All of this work resulted in identifying a range of topics, ideas, opportunities and concerns which have been organized into four major themes of workforce, business, Canadian market and visitors and regional identity and collaboration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional Identity and Collaboration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Common regional name should be identified, communicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working together as a region on the economy is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workforce</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trained and skilled workforce for existing employers and The Balsams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Livable wages and benefits for employees is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interest and opportunity for mentorship programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create connections with high schools and links to businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expand business opportunities for existing businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify new business opportunities in the region in general and to connect with The Balsams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify entrepreneurs and their needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The natural resource based tourism economy is very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canadian Market and Visitors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attracting the Canadian market is important to local business and is enhanced by The Balsams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Efforts to attract must be deliberate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consider marketing, signage, translation of materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Business opportunities to sell goods and services to Canadian market</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summit participants selected a theme and worked in small groups to discuss the theme. The focus of the discussion was on the values, concerns, opportunities and resources for the theme. A summary follows.
## Summary

### Values

Summary of values as presented by each theme group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>What is valued about the North Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional Identity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ![Handshake Icon](handshake.png) | • Natural world and humans as a community  
• Accessibility to recreation  
• Heritage and environment  
• History  
• Sense of place  
• Landscape  
• Strong work ethic  |
| **Workforce** |  |
| ![Businessman Icon](businessman.png) | • Good work ethics  
• Trainable employees  
• Communication  
• Mutual respect – employees/employers  
• Positive attitude  
• Critical thinking skills  
• Have in Community that fosters & supports these values  |
| **Business** |  |
| ![Store Icon](store.png) | • Natural Resources  
• Community, people, friendliness, dependability  
• Small business  
• Each town is unique, regional diversity  
• Organizations  
• Opportunity for youth  
• High quality health care  
• Workforce  
• Feeling safe  |
| **Canadian Market** |  |
| ![Canadian Flag Icon](canadian_flag.png) | • Canadian Market  
• Cultural connection & history  
• Geographic closeness  
• Natural resources (wood products)  
• Love of outdoors similarity  |
### Concerns
Summary of concerns as presented by each theme group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Concerns about the North Country Economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Regional Identity and Collaboration** | • Climate Change  
• Impact of global economic forces upon rural communities  
• Northern Pass  
• Environmental degradation  
• Lack of collaboration, communication  
• Lack of common sense of identity |
| **Workforce**                | • Where does next workforce come from?  
• Previous skills not readily transferrable  
• If we wait until H.S. to train for skills – too late. Start in middle school  
• Drug & alcohol issues – how to address  
• Teaching trade skills  
• Brain drain – retraining youth |
| **Business**                 | • Depletion of resources/open space  
• Taxes  
• Workforce (lack of)  
• Impact of growth  
• Affordable housing  
• Drugs  
• Not ready for change  
• Not ready to control growth  
• Lack of trades education  
• Internet Access  
• Regulatory changes |
| **Canadian Market**          | • Cultural history  
• Border crossing (atmosphere)  
• Communication  
• Lack of French materials (signs, menus, etc.) |
### Ideas and Opportunities
Summary of ideas and opportunities presented by theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Ideas and Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Regional Identity and Collaboration** | • Building a brand for the region based on core community values and inventory of current and potential assets  
• Food and energy from local resources (SOHL)  
• Increase in consumer accessibility to trails, business, activities/recreation  
• Build a collaborative network |
| **Workforce**                | • Training programs for H.S. trades  
• Use experienced professionals in community to train  
• Shift mentality from job to career  
• Create entrepreneur environment |
| **Business**                 | • Focus on positive  
• Asset inventory  
• Responsible zoning  
• Build on hospital resources  
• Build brand  
• Build on work of chamber  
• Inventory business opportunities  
• Housing  
• Higher education  
• Tap talents of residents  
• Local food & businesses |
| **Canadian Market**         | • Training & cultural respect for frontline staff  
• Building language & cultural understanding in school system  
• Canadian tours  
• Welcoming borders in partnership with them  
• Welcome Center bilingual staff & better scenic by-way marketing |
### Resources We Have

Summary of resources presented by theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Resources We Have</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Regional Identity and Collaboration** | • Local human capital  
• History  
• Community of human and natural world  
• Lots of potential funding stream – state, regional, federal  
• Engaging political leaders  
• Wood, water, sun, wind – all energy sources |
| **Workforce**                | • Recruit vets  
• Local professionals  
• School (H.S. M.S. CC), colleges  
• Collaboration efforts  
• State  
• Lyndon State |
| **Business**                 | • People  
• Healthcare  
• Chamber  
• Recreation facilities  
• Economic Development groups & Organizations  
• Elected officials  
• NH Grand  
• Funders  
• Volunteers |
| **Canadian Market**          | • Gas prices  
• Liquor prices  
• ATVs, snowmobiles  
• Regional partners  
• Existing network  
• Cross border exchange  
• Cheap postage  
• Hang Canadian flag |
## Resources We Need
Summary of needed resources presented by theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Resources we need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional Identity</strong></td>
<td>• Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Collaboration</td>
<td>• Political leadership and will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Technology – cell and internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Good energy policy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Jobs around energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workforce</strong></td>
<td>• Culture change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Community commit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Follow-up Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Be business friendly – help entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mentorships (e.g. trades)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business</strong></td>
<td>• Training &amp; Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Branding expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• $$$$$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Marketing Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drug abuse help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canadian Market</strong></td>
<td>• Media resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cell &amp; broadband</td>
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Regional Identity and Collaboration

Some of the components of this theme are: Importance of natural resources; a number of regional names; natural resource based industry; regional collaboration is important; natural resources based recreation; friendly people; importance of local goods and services; towns working together; schools; attitude; regional marketing and citizens working together.

Values

- Master plan reflects what we value – heritage, environment
- Fresh air, peaceful, beautiful place
- Farmlands and products from farms (out your backdoor)
- Accessibility to outdoor recreation
- One of the most forested regions in the country
- Good for quality of life and carbon sequestration
- Free and open access to forests- great asset
- Dark skies- you can see the stars – also valuable for local ecology
- Great hospital
- Natural resources, common sense, peace of mind
- Scenic Landscapes
- Strong sense of community- people are friendly
- Safe for youth
- Local and small business – lots of activity, not as many chains
- Challenges are a gift- keep us awake
- Rich history of Balsams, Colebrook, and entire region

Concerns

- Climate change
- Northern Pass- Canaan will be devastated- Great North Woods will be affected- no longer a good view
- Impact of global economy on rural communities
- Northern Pass has united community
- How can we market to get tourists here?
- North Country Recreation center depends on grants and donations to exist, how can tourists help support?
- Not enough collaboration between non-profits and businesses- businesses could help sustain non-profits
- Poor collaboration among regional planning boards – VT/NH collaboration
- Need for listening and working together to get beneficial outcomes
- Lack of support from the state
Opportunities

- Integrate trails (ATV, hiking, snowmobile, canoe), resources, assets to increase accessibility for tourists communication amongst all- snowmobilers, hikers, coordination between non-motorized and motorized
- Businesses should consider when tourists are here and when their stores should be open
- More to do on Colebrook Main Street
- Provide events/ happenings in town
- Movie theatre
- Promoting tourism based on core community values: history, culture, ecology, recreation
- Increase in communication between recreation center and & other groups- ATV clubs, hikers, hotels, etc.
- SOHL- Sustainable organic to area healthy/ hand crafted local living
- Foodie destination – opportunities for emphasis on local food/agriculture
- Inventory strengths and work together on common vision
- Large perspective- think about what makes region truly unique and can be marketed everywhere, globally, create unique product
- Utilize youth as asset and natural resources to let North Country shine
- Modern wood heat- broader scale to transform energy economy
- Need cell service and internet
- Working remotely and need to be connected
- Opportunity to bring people to area as long as we have infrastructure they need
- Balsams provides opportunity to bring tourists to area
- Unique product- maple syrup could be opportunity for farm to table
- Local foods can be affordable for community
- Collaboration with agriculture and land owners creating bonds between people to create opportunities
- Sweet Tree Maple Syrup (largest) producer in world- ships primarily to Japan – could be asset for tourism
- Lack of cell service could be an asset- good way for tourists to disconnect
- North Country as a unique product – what is community as a product
- Uniting communities as “we the people”
- Winery
Regional Identity and Collaboration (cont’d)

Resources We Have

- History - historic homes
- Natural world and humans as community and need to protect both of these
- Funding streams: North Country Council, USDA RD, lots of organizations willing to direct funds to the region
- Engaging political leaders
- Abundance of wood, water, wind, sun, all energy. Could go off grid and have more sustainable community

Resources We Need

- Youth
- Political leadership and will
- Technology - cell and internet (bi-state)
- Good energy policy
- Jobs around energy - efficiency, audits, retrofitting
Workforce

Some of the components of this theme: workforce training and development; worker recruitment; wages; benefits; health issues of workers; seasonal employment; mentoring; apprenticeship; education levels; skill building in high school; loss of younger population; aging workforce; importance of natural resources to quality of life; employment for spouses; stability of jobs; taxes; cost of living; advancement opportunities; competition for workers.

Values

- Good work ethics
- Good moral ethics
- Loyal employees if paid fairly and like job, employees will work a long time
- Loyalty ethic
- Decent education
- Employer should follow same guidelines – goes both ways, respect, for workers, as well as employers
- Employees take initiative
- Self-respect
- Common sense
- Front line employees who can think on their feet
- Ability to communicate both ways
- Training program for employees to understand what is expected
- Employees paid for training
- Employees have to “sell” the area
- Employees need to be made aware of need to “sell” area / training/ empowered/have confidence to “sell” area
- Right attitude so employee is trainable
- Employee respected and given responsibility to “sell” area
- Make employees feel valued and appreciated
- Develop sense of partnership between employer or manager/employee
- Want a career not job
- Large employers have more resources/ incentives/ benefits to offer employees
- Small business understand risk of business employees (don’t have resources for incentives)
- Employees need to understand they need to help makes business successful.
- Training for employees to convey/ educate what’s needed for employees to contribute/ expectations for running small business
- Employee base- have high unemployment rate but can’t find employees
- Need training for “soft” skills
- Training – NH employment securities work ready program through community college
- Skills being taught through high school (how to dress, etc.)
- Training to motivate employees- mentorship
- Training to instill value of community in others
Concerns

- Where’s the next workforce coming from?
- Lifelong industry jobs (ex. Paper mill) disappeared
- Skills not transferable to other jobs
- Couldn’t make those transitions to new skills (ex. Manufacturing, to computer based)
- New workforce coming in has new set of skills but older make emotional/ skill transition
- Skill transition
- Lacking skills/education/ motivation
- Drugs and alcohol – people can’t pass drug tests, background checks, can’t find employees
- Employees on drugs
- Recovery- find a niche for those skills
- Branded – un-brand ourselves from employees with drug and alcohol problems or low income
- Powers that be- Manchester etc. sending folks up here because of cheaper cost of living
- Age of entitlement- not teaching work ethics
- Fear- still need trades, plumbers, etc. need focus on infrastructure not just tourist professionals

Opportunities and Ideas

- Training programs- high school for trades
- School to work program for kids to get real world experience in businesses
- Schools have hospitality program
- Large organization w/ resources to train employers on expectations
- WREN
- Unemployment Securities use existing programs right now
- Community help with training 18-24 year olds not in skill to support small business
- Pool resources to use experiences members of community (ex. Coaching employees, customer service) to teach train
- Incentives for people to come to training classes (ex. Certificate program that would be transferable between employers)
- Hospitality skills- teach- community college
- College credit
- Connect with Mountain View Grand/ Balsams
- White Mountain Community College expand program to include HS students
- Associate degrees leave area to attend 4 year college
- Make career pathways more local
- Employment securities does workshops
- Resume building, interviewing, return to work
- Training for younger work force
- Improving activities for youth- to keep them here (vibrancy)
- Recruit Vets
- Use Balsams for training programs when reopen
Opportunities and Ideas (cont’d)

- Shift mentality from it’s a job to it’s a career more from entry level to higher level
- Branding here is a career path
- Create entrepreneurial environment so kids come back with their skills
- If you don’t hit kids with what they can do by 8th grade it’s a lost opportunity
- 5th -8th grade entrepreneurship program camp
- Develop business plan and pitch area businesses judge
- Focused initiatives on career exploration
- Connect middle school kids with hands on opportunities with area business owners
- Make drug and alcohol programs available
- Create an environment in which kids don’t think drugs are cool things to do
- Increase resources/beds for drug recovery and treatment centers/ drug courts
- STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) Education
- STEAM education – (science, technology, engineering, art, math) project based education with arts

Resources We Have

- Professionals already in area to help train (customer service, etc.)

Resources We Need

- School funding
- Collaboration to make funding available among business, schools, colleges, etc.
- Staying involved (people who have identified concerns)
- Community Commitment
- Culture change
- AA
- Mentorship programs
- Be business friendly to help entrepreneurs
- Start businesses
- Incubator physical space (WREN space in Berlin)
- Mentorship with trades and ag combined with school program
- State
Some of the components of this theme are: business retention, business expansion, recruitment, entrepreneurship, small business development, manufacturing, natural resource based business, diversity of businesses, local businesses with local jobs, businesses willing to change, business location, workforce, tourism, taxes, energy related businesses, creative economy, quality of life, funding, education, downtowns, outdoor recreation, agritourism, farming, succession planning, family businesses.

**Values**

- Pristine Land
- Grow what we have
- Small business
- Community
- Interconnectedness of people
- Each town is unique
- Workforce that feels respected
- Finding good jobs with good wages
- Regional diversity
- Sharing of resources
- Resiliency of people and determination and spirit
- Collaboration
- Organization in Coös County
- Opportunity for youth
- Good education
- Ability to define success
- Access to resources and organizations
- High quality and affordable healthcare
- Land and natural resources
- Friendliness of people/dependability/care for each other
- Feel safe

**Concerns**

- Depletion of resources
- Taxes
- Loss of population
- Where will workforce come from?
- Influx of new folk because of growth
- Impact on schools and infrastructure
- Availability of affordable housing
- Drugs/crime
- Retention of identity
- Not ready for change
- Protection of residents from change
- Not ready to control growth/rapid growth
- Kids don’t have something to come back to
- Push back too hard on change
- Lack of trades education
- Developing small business and ag base
- Internet access and affordability
- Overdevelopment of farmland
- Lack of protected/preserved land
- Infrastructure to support growth
- Regulatory changes
Ideas and Opportunities

- Strength based approach- focus on positive
- Conduct an asset inventory
- Responsible zoning
- ID resources to preserve including green space
- Build upon hospital resources including health center
- Grow collaboration between schools
- Be proactive about demographic changes
- Build network for capital for small business
- Get public involved
- Continue building on brand and activities (ATV, etc.)
- Build on work of chamber and local food movement
- Get local businesses to collaborate more
- Inventory opportunities for entrepreneurs and present to public
- Create system to incubate/launch/ foster business
- Housing construction and sales
- Get feedback from other communities
- Continue to see higher education opportunities expand
- Use teleconference capacity
- Elected officials to keep rest area open year round
- Be practical and realistic
- Tap the talent of local residents
- Talk positively about community and its resources
- Get more people engaged in process
- Help farms RE: Agro-tourism
- Inventory support resources and consolidate
- Make better connection between business and farms (restaurants)
- Educate the public on values and brand
- Define the brand
- Buy local- support local business- educate the public

Resources We Have

- Quality of life
- Landscape
- People
- Hospital/EMS/fire/health center
- Recreation Center
- Pool
- Chamber of Commerce
- Economic Development groups (local and regional)
- NCC/NCIC/CEDC/UCVCC/PSU(Center for Rural Partnerships)
- Local boards and elected officials
- Legislators
- Clubs (ATV, snowmobile, arts, etc.)
- Higher education
- NH Grand program to launch from
- Banks/ funders
- USDA-RD
- Volunteers
- Coös County Planning Board
Resources We Need

- Training and education
- Branding expertise
- Planning expertise
- $$$
- Govt. support
- Community leadership and new folks into leadership
- Strong communication plan and expertise
- Marketing Communication plan
- Communication to public
- Informed and engaged public
- People to mentor workers in trades
- Local training for trades
- Help with heroin and drug abuse problem
Canadian Market and Visitors

Some components of this theme are: Proximity to Canada; marketing goods and services; attracting visitors; need for materials written in French; regional identity; understanding the Canadian market; training for staff to welcome visitors.

Values

- Canadian customers- overlooked
- The Balsams? opportunity
- Cross Cultural-familial geographic
- Exchange rate
- Promotion of the French language; on business shift and in classrooms speaking French
- Canadian interests match regional assets
- Welcoming French speakers

Concerns

- The relationship with Canadians is not bad but some stigma may still exist
- Border crossing into the US
- Actual and precleared
- Canadians value outdoor activities
- Canadian businesses know little about NH but know a lot about the surrounding states.
- Population centers in Canada are geographically close
- Communication between Canadian markets & region is a challenge

Ideas and Opportunities

- Promote more direct connections on a regular basis
- Schools, media, business, arts
- Wood markets: other natural resources
- Improve on relationships can grow markets
- Sherbrook – Quatocook market is very strong
- Work more with VT organizations and business within the region
- Canadian businesses have English subtitles on their business – we should have French
- Get beyond the Paris/Quebec French differences
- Get beyond expectation for Canadians to speak English
- It can start with a few phrases
- Training program - Online
  - Train frontline person in French & politeness
  - Needs business outreach and collaboration
  - Consistent and persistent
  - Button “I know a little French”
  - Subtitles in businesses
Opportunities and Ideas (cont’d)

- Gas stations
- Restaurants
- Rest stops
- Businesses
- School system from (pre-HS) needs more French education

- Canadian tour
- Can start elementary school trips
- Cultural exchange
- Cultural sensitivity for customs officers
- French fluent at the border
- Scenic byway signage and marketing

Resources We Have

- Gas prices
- Cheaper postage
- ATVs, snowmobiles
- Can hang Canadian flag
- Cheap Booze
- Regional partners (may not have $ but has connections to facilitate moving forward)

- Regional
- State
- Federal
- Canadian workforce exists in region (loggers)
- Existing network for cross border exchange, need to share

Resources We Need

None listed.
# Summit on the Economy: Moving the North Country Economy Forward

## Agenda
February 20, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wayne Frizzell, President, North Country Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Gloria Bruce, Executive Director</td>
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<td>Northeast Kingdom Travel and Tourism Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Group Discussion</td>
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<td>What have you heard and how is it related to the North Country and the four themes of workforce, business, Canadian market and regional identity and collaboration?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Discussion on Themes: Select a theme and move to small group.</td>
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<td>What are the values, concerns, opportunities, resources relating to this theme?</td>
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<td>Select top three opportunities.</td>
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<td>12:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>12:50</td>
<td>Report out on opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>Meet in Action Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30</td>
<td>Adjourn</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Citizens for a Vibrant Economy** are regional leaders who have been working together over the past year to move the North Country economy forward. Working with UNH Cooperative Extension, the committee has reviewed economic data, defined the components of a vibrant economy and completed 30 interviews with community leaders. All of this work resulted in identifying four major themes to address:

- Workforce
- Business
- Canadian Market and Visitors
- Regional Identity

Thank you to the following sponsors: ♦ North Country Chamber of Commerce ♦ North Country Council ♦ Tillotson North Country Foundation ♦ Town of Colebrook ♦ University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension and ♦ USDA Rural Development
Summit on the Economy
Ideas to Action:
Moving the North Country Economy Forward

When:
February 20, 2016
8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Where:
Colebrook Elementary
School – cafeteria

Details:
• Lunch will be provided.
• No cost to attend.
• All are welcome!
RSVP to 603-237-8939 by
February 16th or register
online at
northcountrychamber.org

Facilitated by:

Proudly presented by Citizens for a Vibrant Economy:
Regional leaders working together for a vibrant and resilient economy.

Keynote Speaker:

Gloria Bruce
Executive Director
Northeast Kingdom
Travel & Tourism
Association (of Vermont)

Supported by:

• Tillotson North
  Country Foundation
• USDA Rural
  Development
• North Country
  Chamber of Commerce
• Town of Colebrook
• North Country Council

Please join us to discuss how the region can capitalize on
business and other economic opportunities posed by the
anticipated Balsams redevelopment and the region’s
natural assets. We will look at economic opportunities,
our assets and our challenges, ending the day with a
plan for action.

Topics to be explored:
⇒ Workforce development and training
⇒ New businesses and entrepreneurship
⇒ Canadian market
⇒ Regional collaboration and marketing

See more about Community Visioning at: http://www.colebrook-nh.com/
## Participants

1. Bob Baker  
   Alan Robert Baker  
2. Steve Baillargeon  
   Bear Rock Adventures  
3. Corrine Rober  
   Bear Rock Adventures  
4. Jim Tibbetts  
   Borders Development Corporation  
5. Emmy Katz  
   Bruce Katz, D.D.S.  
6. Susan Gosselin  
   Canaan Historical Society; Canaan Library  
7. Clayton Hinds  
   Colebrook Country Club & Motel  
8. Michelle Hinds  
   Colebrook Country Club & Motel  
9. Donald Dickson  
   Colebrook Kiwanis Club  
10. Bernie Carrier  
    Colebrook Plumbing & Heating  
11. Michael Scala  
    Coös Economic Development Corp.  
12. Bridget Freudenberger  
    Coös Outdoor Recreation Events, Inc.  
13. Ed Brisson  
    Dixville Capital LLC  
14. Wayne Frizzell  
    Granite Bank  
15. Lisa Whitaker  
    Granite Bank  
    Indian Stream Health Center  
17. Dr. John Fothergill  
    Indian Stream Health Center  
18. Graham Rae  
    Indian Stream Health Center  
19. Ann Nygard  
    Lyndon State College  
20. Craig Washburn  
    Metallak ATV Club  
21. Dana Bartlett  
    Mohawk Falls  
22. Carol Pires  
    Moose Muck Coffee House  
23. Jamie Sayen  
    NCCOC  
24. Cathy Conway  
    NCIC  
25. Steven L Mason  
    NEKTI Consulting  
26. Patricia M Sears  
    NEKTI Consulting  
27. George N. Copadis  
    New Hampshire Employment Security  
28. Chris Jensen  
    NHPR  
29. Barry Normandeau  
    Normandeau Trucking, Inc  
30. Britni White  
    North Country Chamber of Commerce  
31. Michelle Morin-Grey  
    North Country Council  
32. Barbara Robinson  
    North Country Council  
33. Julie Moran  
    North Country Farmer's Coop  
34. Beverly White  
    North Country Marketplace & Salvage  
35. Phil Freudenberger  
    North Country Muscular Therapy  
36. Gloria Bruce  
    Northeast Kingdom Travel & Tourism Association  
37. Bill Schomburg  
    Northern Forest Canoe Trail; Cohos Trail Assoc.  
38. Maura Adams  
    Northern Forest Center  
39. Chuck Henderson  
    Office of United States Senator Jeanne Shaheen  
40. Linda White  
    Parsons Street
### Participants (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation/Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>John White</td>
<td>Parsons Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Thaddeus Guldbrandsen</td>
<td>Plymouth State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Rick Johnsen</td>
<td>Poore Farm</td>
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<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Haze Smith</td>
<td>Pride Builders, LLC</td>
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<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Francine Rancourt</td>
<td>RE/MAX Northern Edge Realty</td>
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<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Neal Brown</td>
<td>Retired</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>Ray Dubreuil</td>
<td>Retired</td>
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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Gail Fisher</td>
<td>Retired</td>
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<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Richard Harris</td>
<td>Self</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>John Lanier</td>
<td>Self employed</td>
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<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Benoit Lamontagne</td>
<td>State of NH</td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Hasen Burns</td>
<td>Stewartstown Selectman</td>
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<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Karen Ladd</td>
<td>The News and Sentinel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Katherine Betts</td>
<td>TotalScope Marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Diana Rancourt</td>
<td>Town of Canaan</td>
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<td>56</td>
<td>David Brooks</td>
<td>Town of Colebrook</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>Suzanne Collins</td>
<td>Town of Colebrook</td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>Ray Gorman</td>
<td>Town of Colebrook</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>Becky Merrow</td>
<td>Town of Colebrook</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>Clayton Macdonald</td>
<td>Town of Stratford</td>
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<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Christine Charman</td>
<td>Upper Connecticut Valley Community Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Ben Doyle</td>
<td>USDA Rural Development</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>Janice Daniels</td>
<td>USDA/RD</td>
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<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Kitty Kerner</td>
<td>WinterGreens Farm</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>Irene Bean</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>Brian Bresnahan</td>
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<td>67</td>
<td>Fred King</td>
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<td>68</td>
<td>Mary-Jo Landry</td>
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<td>69</td>
<td>Greg Noyes</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>Stuart Weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Jeff Woodburn</td>
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