



# Summit on the Economy: Moving the North Country Economy Forward

## Summary Report

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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 Freudenberger, 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 Freudenberger 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, Geoffrey 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.

**Vision:  
A Vibrant and  
Resilient Great North Woods  
Economy**

**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.

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

## 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.

## Action Groups

<b>Workforce</b>		<b>Convener: Lisa Whitaker</b>
1.	Michelle & Clay Hinds	Colebrook Country Club & Motel
2.	Neal Brown	Retired
3.	Raymond Gorman	Town of Colebrook
4.	Michelle Moren-Grey	North Country Council
5.	Ann Nygard	Lyndon State College
6.	Becky Merrow	Town of Colebrook
7.	John White	Parsons Street
8.	Brian Bresnahan	Office of Congresswoman Ann McLane Kuster
9.	Thad Guldbrandsen	Plymouth State University
10.	Lisa Whitaker	Granite Bank
<b>Community Branding</b>		<b>Convener: Jonathan Brown</b>
1.	Bob Baker	Alan Robert Baker
2.	Maura Adams	Northern Forest Center
3.	Cathy Conway	NCIC
4.	Jonathan W. Brown	Indian Stream Health Center
5.	Linda White	Parsons Street
6.	Corrine Rober	Bear Rock Adventures
7.	Jamie Sayen	NCCOC
8.	Francine Rancourt	RE/MAX Northern Edge Realty
9.	Dana Bartlett	Mohawk Falls
10.	Beverly White	North Country Marketplace & Salvage
11.	Britni White	North Country Chamber of Commerce
12.	Stuart Sinclair Weeks	
13.	Julie Moran	North Country Farmer's Coop
14.	Julie Moran	North Country Farmer's Coop
15.	Haze Smith	Pride Builders, LLC
16.	Kitty Kerner	WinterGreens Farm
17.	Gail Fisher	retired
18.	Lori Morann	
<b>Canadian Markets</b>		<b>Convener: Kevin McKinnon</b>
1.	John Lanier	Self employed
2.	Thad Guldbrandsen	Plymouth State University
3.	Mike Scala	Coös Economic Development Corp.
4.	Chuck Henderson	Office of United States Senator Jeanne Shaheen
5.	Monique Petrofsky	
6.	Kevin McKinnon	North Country Council
7.	Donald M. Dickson	Colebrook Kiwanis Club
8.	Benoit Lamontagne	State of NH
9.	Barbara Robinson	North Country Council
<b>Preparing for Change</b>		<b>Convener: Dick Harris</b>
1.	Jim Tibbetts	Borders Development Corporation
2.	Bill Schomburg	Northern Forest Canoe Trail; Coos Trail Assoc.
3.	Clayton Macdonald	Town of Stratford
4.	Dick Harris	Self
5.	Carol Pires	Moose Muck Coffee House
6.	Ed Brisson	Dixville Capital LLC
7.	Karen Ladd	The News and Sentinel

## 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.

### Themes

#### Regional Identity and Collaboration

- Common regional name should be identified, communicated
- Working together as a region on the economy is important

#### Workforce

- Trained and skilled workforce for existing employers and The Balsams
- Livable wages and benefits for employees is important
- Interest and opportunity for mentorship programs
- Create connections with high schools and links to businesses

#### Business

- Expand business opportunities for existing businesses
- Identify new business opportunities in the region in general and to connect with The Balsams
- Identify entrepreneurs and their needs
- The natural resource based tourism economy is very important

#### Canadian Market and Visitors

- Attracting the Canadian market is important to local business and is enhanced by The Balsams
- Efforts to attract must be deliberate
- Consider marketing, signage, translation of materials
- Business opportunities to sell goods and services to Canadian market

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

Theme	What is valued about the North Country
<b>Regional Identity</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural world and humans as a community</li> <li>• Accessibility to recreation</li> <li>• Heritage and environment</li> <li>• History</li> <li>• Sense of place</li> <li>• Landscape</li> <li>• Strong work ethic</li> </ul>
<b>Workforce</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good work ethics</li> <li>• Trainable employees</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Mutual respect – employees/employers</li> <li>• Positive attitude</li> <li>• Critical thinking skills</li> <li>• Have in Community that fosters &amp; supports these values</li> </ul>
<b>Business</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Resources</li> <li>• Community, people, friendliness, dependability</li> <li>• Small business</li> <li>• Each town is unique, regional diversity</li> <li>• Organizations</li> <li>• Opportunity for youth</li> <li>• High quality health care</li> <li>• Workforce</li> <li>• Feeling safe</li> </ul>
<b>Canadian Market</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canadian Market</li> <li>• Cultural connection &amp; history</li> <li>• Geographic closeness</li> <li>• Natural resources (wood products)</li> <li>• Love of outdoors similarity</li> </ul>

## Concerns

Summary of concerns as presented by each theme group

Theme	Concerns about the North Country Economy
<b>Regional Identity and Collaboration</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change</li> <li>• Impact of global economic forces upon rural communities</li> <li>• Northern Pass</li> <li>• Environmental degradation</li> <li>• Lack of collaboration, communication</li> <li>• Lack of common sense of identity</li> </ul>
<b>Workforce</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where does next workforce come from?</li> <li>• Previous skills not readily transferrable</li> <li>• If we wait until H.S. to train for skills – too late. Start in middle school</li> <li>• Drug &amp; alcohol issues – how to address</li> <li>• Teaching trade skills</li> <li>• Brain drain – retraining youth</li> </ul>
<b>Business</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depletion of resources/open space</li> <li>• Taxes</li> <li>• Workforce (lack of)</li> <li>• Impact of growth</li> <li>• Affordable housing</li> <li>• Drugs</li> <li>• Not ready for change</li> <li>• Not ready to control growth</li> <li>• Lack of trades education</li> <li>• Internet Access</li> <li>• Regulatory changes</li> </ul>
<b>Canadian Market</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural history</li> <li>• Border crossing (atmosphere)</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Lack of French materials (signs, menus, etc.)</li> </ul>

## Ideas and Opportunities

Summary of ideas and opportunities presented by theme

Theme	Ideas and Opportunities
<b>Regional Identity and Collaboration</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building a brand for the region based on core community values and inventory of current and potential assets</li> <li>• Food and energy from local resources (SOHL)</li> <li>• Increase in consumer accessibility to trails, business, activities/recreation</li> <li>• Build a collaborative network</li> </ul>
<b>Workforce</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training programs for H.S. trades</li> <li>• Use experienced professionals in community to train</li> <li>• Shift mentality from job to career</li> <li>• Create entrepreneur environment</li> </ul>
<b>Business</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on positive</li> <li>• Asset inventory</li> <li>• Responsible zoning</li> <li>• Build on hospital resources</li> <li>• Build brand</li> <li>• Build on work of chamber</li> <li>• Inventory business opportunities</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Higher education</li> <li>• Tap talents of residents</li> <li>• Local food &amp; businesses</li> </ul>
<b>Canadian Market</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training &amp; cultural respect for frontline staff</li> <li>• Building language &amp; cultural understanding in school system</li> <li>• Canadian tours</li> <li>• Welcoming borders in partnership with them</li> <li>• Welcome Center bilingual staff &amp; better scenic by-way marketing</li> </ul>

## Resources We Have

Summary of resources presented by theme

Theme	Resources We Have
<b>Regional Identity and Collaboration</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local human capital</li> <li>• History</li> <li>• Community of human and natural world</li> <li>• Lots of potential funding stream – state, regional, federal</li> <li>• Engaging political leaders</li> <li>• Wood, water, sun, wind – all energy sources</li> </ul>
<b>Workforce</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit vets</li> <li>• Local professionals</li> <li>• School (H.S. M.S. CC), colleges</li> <li>• Collaboration efforts</li> <li>• State</li> <li>• Lyndon State</li> </ul>
<b>Business</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People</li> <li>• Healthcare</li> <li>• Chamber</li> <li>• Recreation facilities</li> <li>• Economic Development groups &amp; Organizations</li> <li>• Elected officials</li> <li>• NH Grand</li> <li>• Funders</li> <li>• Volunteers</li> </ul>
<b>Canadian Market</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas prices</li> <li>• Liquor prices</li> <li>• ATVs, snowmobiles</li> <li>• Regional partners</li> <li>• Existing network</li> <li>• Cross border exchange</li> <li>• Cheap postage</li> <li>• Hang Canadian flag</li> </ul>

## Resources We Need

Summary of needed resources presented by theme

Theme	Resources we need
<b>Regional Identity and Collaboration</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth</li> <li>• Political leadership and will</li> <li>• Technology – cell and internet</li> <li>• Good energy policy</li> <li>• Jobs around energy</li> </ul>
<b>Workforce</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture change</li> <li>• Community commit</li> <li>• Follow-up Action</li> <li>• Be business friendly – help entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Mentorships (e.g. trades)</li> </ul>
<b>Business</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training &amp; Education</li> <li>• Branding expertise</li> <li>• \$\$\$\$\$</li> <li>• Marketing Plan</li> <li>• Drug abuse help</li> </ul>
<b>Canadian Market</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media resources</li> <li>• Cell &amp; broadband</li> </ul>

# 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

### 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

## Workforce (cont'd)

### 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 8<sup>th</sup> grade it's a lost opportunity
- 5<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> 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



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

- 8:30 Welcome and Introductions  
Wayne Frizzell, President, North Country Chamber of Commerce
- 9:00 Gloria Bruce, Executive Director  
Northeast Kingdom Travel and Tourism Association
- 10:00 Group Discussion  
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?
- 10:30 Discussion on Themes: Select a theme and move to small group.  
What are the values, concerns, opportunities, resources relating to this theme?  
Select top three opportunities.
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:50 Report out on opportunities
- 1:30 Meet in Action Groups
- 2:30 Adjourn

**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](http://northcountrychamber.org)

### Facilitated by:



University of  
New Hampshire  
Cooperative Extension

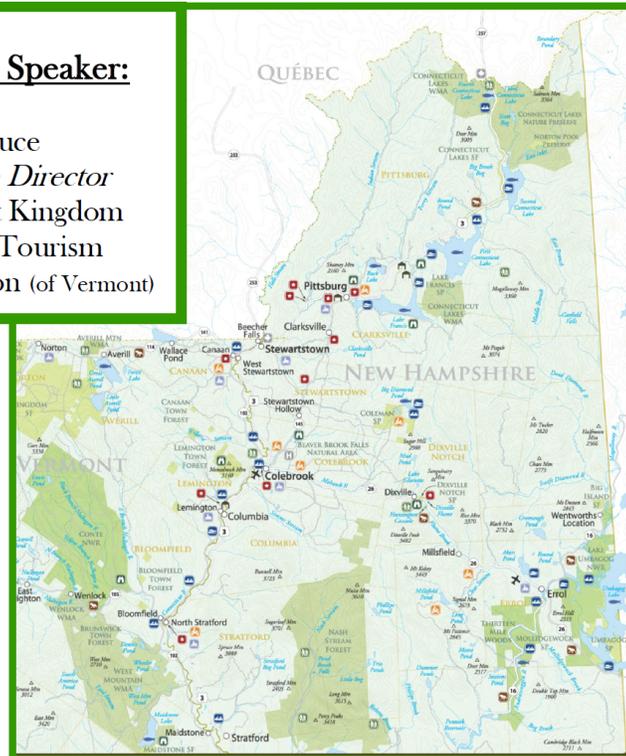
### Supported by:

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

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)



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
16. Jonathan	Brown	Indian Stream Health Center
17. Dr. John	Fothergill	Indian Stream Health Center
18. Graham	Rae	Indian Stream Health Center
19. Ann	Nygaard	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)

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