

HUNTINGTON REVOLVING LOAN FUND

At long last, the Huntington Revolving Loan Fund (HRLF) is open for business! The HRLF evolved from Vermont Community Development Program grants and loans for the Fuller House Renovation Project where the Huntington Post Office now resides. As the Fuller House loans are paid back by the developer, these monies become available to the community through the HRLF. Low interest loans are now available to Huntington individuals with low to moderate incomes for local business projects and residential improvements.

The Huntington Revolving Loan Fund Committee was formed in 2003 and went about trying to learn the ABC's of loan administration and credit evaluation. At that time, one half of the repayments by the developer went into the HRLF and the other half went back to the state. Through resignations and members leaving Huntington, the committee dwindled to two members and ultimately became dormant. One of the caveats of the fund was that if none of the funds were loaned out by June of 2006, all monies that had accumulated would revert back to the state and the fund would be dissolved.

The committee was reassembled in January of 2006 to try to rescue the fund, but found that learning all that would be necessary to successfully administer loans and market the program in six months would be an enormous challenge. The committee looked for guidance from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs which oversees all revolving loan funds throughout Vermont and was directed to a Barre based organization known as Community Capital of Vermont (CCV). Community Capital is a non profit loan fund that stewards its own revolving loan fund for micro and small businesses around the state as well as revolving loan fund pools from various towns around the state, now including Huntington. The assets are assigned to CCV through a renewable three-year agreement. The committee met with Emily Kaminsky, the CCV fund manager, and began to discuss the possibility of having CCV administer Huntington's fund.

The committee found that CCV could not only administer Huntington's fund (including processing applications, performing credit checks, handling collections, providing recommendations to the Huntington committee and also providing technical assistance to borrowers), but the June 2006 sunset date would be eliminated and 100% of the developer's repayments would go to the HRLF as opposed to just half! It was also arranged that Huntington's pool of money would only be made available to local residents. Community Capital will administer the business loans and has sub-contracted with Champlain Housing Trust to administer the home improvement loans.

As part of its policies and procedures, the Fund's statement of purpose reads "The Huntington Revolving Loan Fund provides financial resources through a fair, consistent, and competitive process for commercial, community and residential improvement projects that directly benefit local low and moderate income persons". In cooperation with Community Capital of Vermont and the Champlain Housing Trust, loans of up to \$5000 can now be approved for business or residential needs. It is hoped that as the pool of available money grows, the loan cap may also be raised. For further information, contact any of the committee members (listed under Appointed Town Officials in this Annual Report) or contact the town office.