



BLCP CONNECTIONS

An E-newsletter to keep you connected to the Burlington Livable Community Project.

August 18, 2008

CarShare Vermont Launches in September

Bringing a car share program to Burlington was a recommendation made by the Burlington Livable Community Project as an innovative way to improve mobility for older residents and reduce demand for parking. Car sharing is a way to cut down or eliminate cars in your household and save on the cost of owning and maintaining a car. Research shows that every car share vehicle put on the road replaces 7 to 20 privately owned vehicles.

In September, CarShare Vermont will start in Burlington with energy efficient cars parked at six locations <http://www.carsharevt.org/potential-locations>. The goal is to expand into more neighborhoods as the program grows. Burlington resident and car share expert Annie Bourdon is running the program. Her credentials are impressive as she helped start the car-share movement with a successful program in San Francisco.

By joining the program you can reserve a car anytime to run errands, drive to work or meetings, go skiing or hiking, or visit out of town friends. Two packages are available. Share-a-Lot is \$15/month and an additional hourly rate of \$4.95 and 25 cents per mile is added for each trip. Share-a-Little has no monthly fee, but a higher hourly rate of \$6.95 and 25 cents per mile. Gas and insurance are free and there is no monthly minimum driving requirement. Reservations are required to use the cars and can be made 24/7 online or over the phone. For more information or to sign up go to www.carsharevt.org.

Hot Tips for Home Heating

With fuel prices soaring, Burlington residents are getting increasingly worried about how they are going to heat their homes this winter. Vermont Gas is a regulated company so prices may not be as volatile as other fuels and customers have the option of managing their costs with annual payment plans. Those who heat with other fuels are going to feel the squeeze as cash up front is required for most fuel deliveries and prices are almost double from last year. What can you do to prepare? Here are programs and community resources available to help get you through the winter.

Seasonal fuel assistance helps to pay part of home heating bills for eligible Vermonters with a monthly net income of \$1,084 per month for a single person; \$1,459 per month for a couple and higher for larger households. Home owners and renters can apply. You can apply from now through the last day of February, 2009, but we recommend you apply by

August 31st. Applications received after that may get a smaller benefit and payment will come later. Call 1-800-479-6151 for an application or log on to www.dcf.vermont.gov/services.

Crisis fuel assistance and WARMTH are programs to help those who get into an emergency situation during the winter months. Crisis fuel is a state program with a larger pot of money. Monthly income eligibility limits are \$1,301 for a single person; \$1,751 for a couple; and higher for larger households. WARMTH is a program supported by donations from customers of 15 participating utilities (including Burlington Electric). It has less money to divvy up, but income eligibility is higher at \$1,734 for a single person; \$2,334 for a couple; and higher for larger households. Help applying for these programs is available by calling the Senior Helpline at 1-800-642-5119 or go to http://dcf.vermont.gov/esd/fuel_assistance/crisis_assistance.

Weatherization and energy efficiency programs are available through a variety of sources. Vermont Gas' Energy Extender program includes a variety of efficiency services: http://www.vermontgas.com/efficiency_programs/res_programs.html. Burlington Electric will do free home energy audits for any customer in their territory. Call John Lincoln at 865-7362 to schedule an appointment. Check out their home energy tips at <http://www.burlingtonelectric.com/index.htm>. Efficiency Vermont has a number of programs and resources for the homeowner <http://www.encyvermont.com/pages/Residential/>. A state weatherization program is available to help eligible Vermonters make their home more energy efficient. For more information on the program and how to apply go to <http://dcf.vermont.gov/oeo/weatherization>.

AARP will be working with state and federal leaders to make sure enough resources are available to those who need fuel assistance. Personal stories are one of the most compelling ways to influence policy makers. If you have a personal story to share on this issue please email it to us at vt@aarp.org.

Win a \$100 Gas Card

AARP Vermont is entering new subscribers to BLCP Connections in monthly prize drawings. Winners so far have been: Suki Rubin, \$100 gift certificate to the Flynn Theater; Roger Cole, dinner cruise on the Spirit of Ethan Allen; and Sandy Milens, dinner for two at the Scuffer Restaurant. This month's prize is a \$100 gas card. Help us spread the word and forward this message to your friends. To subscribe go to www.blcp.org and click "Sign Up for Email Updates." The deadline for this month's drawing is August 26th.

Help Survey the Burlington Bike Path

Local Motion is looking for volunteers to help do a trail survey of the Burlington Bike Path on August 21 (rain date August 26) and Saturday, August 23 (rain date August 24). Data will be collected on where people are coming from to use the trail, how many people are using the trail and for what purpose, and the total economic impact of the trail. Information gathered will help build a case for increased economic investment into the

bike path. Volunteers will be stationed at key sites along the bike path and will gather basic data, such as number in group, age, type of activity, etc. If you are interested in volunteering, contact David Jacobowitz at davidjacobowitz00v@gmail.com or Chapin Spencer at chapin@localmotion.org.

Looking for a Walking Group?

Walking is great exercise and going with others can help you stick with a routine. Neighborhood walking groups help us get to know each other and create a sense of community. The Vermont Department of Health is offering to assist residents connect and form neighborhood walking groups. If you are interested in leading or joining a group contact Nina Dahlstedt Buss at 951-1238 or nbuss@vdh.state.vt.us.