



For immediate release:  
Contact: Mary Margaret Sloan, Executive Director  
marymargaret@vitalcommunities.org  
802.291.9100 x101  
www.vitalcommunities.org

### **Vital Communities to Administer Community Discussion Lists**

**White River Junction, VT** - Vital Communities has announced that it will be assuming the administration and oversight of ValleyNet's town and other community discussion lists (<http://lists.valley.net/lists/lists>), often referred to as "listservs." It has convened an advisory board of current listserv administrators and local industry experts to manage the lists program. Vital Communities will maintain the lists as they function today and explore new opportunities to foster the creation of online communities in the Upper Valley.

Since 2004, when ValleyNet took over the Thetford listserv, the free discussion lists have steadily grown to over 20 towns. Recent growth has been even more dramatic, with the number of subscribers almost tripling in the past eighteen months to over 16,000.

Stan Williams, the current list coordinator and a member of the boards of both ValleyNet and Vital Communities, noted, "The lists are the last legacy service of the old ValleyNet. Our sole focus is now the construction and operation of ECFiber, and the ValleyNet board has made the decision to transfer the lists to an organization with more resources to provide the care and feeding they deserve."

"Vital Communities is excited to continue and expand the lists as one place where virtual communities can be created," said Mary Margaret Sloan, executive director of Vital Communities. "I am very impressed with the role the lists have played in fostering a sense of community by disseminating important information, efficiently linking buyers and sellers, and keeping residents connected and engaged with their neighbors and towns. I am confident they will continue to do so."

List posts most often relate to local purchases and sales, functioning as a sort of town "Craigslist." Town administrators also use lists as an additional means of posting agendas or minutes, and they offer a forum for local news, non-profit events, and occasional small business postings. They have served an occasional safety function in their communities, and after Tropical Storm Irene, many of the lists served a critical function in coordinating volunteer efforts.

Town lists are locally administered, so their rules require that posts come from citizens and relate to town-specific issues. In response to a need for a forum addressing items of interest to the entire Upper Valley, a region-wide list was launched that now has over 3,000 subscribers. For more information, go to [www.vitalcommunities.org/discussionlists.htm](http://www.vitalcommunities.org/discussionlists.htm).

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**Vital Communities**, a nonprofit organization based in White River Junction, VT, brings together citizens, organizations, and municipalities to take on issues where an independent voice and regional approach are essential. Working together, we make our region a better place to live, work and play.

Founded in October 1994, **ValleyNet's** mission has been to provide and facilitate community-based information resources for the Upper Valley. Its largest impacts have been the provision of the first local dial-up service, its provision of free listservs to over 20 towns and 16,000 subscribers, and most recently, its support for ECFiber ([www.ecfiber.net](http://www.ecfiber.net)), which is striving to bring universal, community owned broadband fiber optic connection to each resident in its 24 Vermont member towns.