

PRESS RELEASE
North Chittenden Grange Hall Receives Grant



Dave Sargent, Chairman of the Chittenden Board of Selectmen, receives an award of \$15,000 from Governor Douglas at the 2008 Cultural Facilities Grant awards ceremony held on January 11 at the State House in Montpelier. Also shown are Alexander Aldrich of the Vermont Arts Council and Karen Webster, chair of Chittenden's Historic Buildings Preservation Committee. The award to Chittenden is to support the installation of electrical wiring, security and emergency lighting and for the purchase and installation of an accessibility lift in the North Chittenden Grange Hall.

(NOTE TO EDITORS: NEXT PARAGRAPH NECESSARY FOR GRANT OBLIGATIONS; PLEASE DO NOT CUT)

More than \$200,000 was awarded for the Cultural Facilities Grant program. The State of Vermont funds the program through an annual appropriation in the Capital Budget. The Vermont Arts Council administers the grant, in conjunction with the Vermont Historical Society, the Vermont Museum & Gallery Alliance, and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, all working together as the Vermont Cultural Facilities Coalition. Now in its 19th year, the purpose of this grant program is to assist Vermont nonprofit organizations and municipalities to enhance, create or expand the capacity of existing Vermont buildings to enable citizens of all ages and abilities to enjoy more cultural events while increasing their participation in the heritage of their communities. Freeman Foundation and the Cerf Community Fund grants, both through Preservation Trust of Vermont, are also supporting this project.



The North Chittenden Grange Hall was constructed in 1833 to be a Congregational Church. It became a Grange Hall by the early 1880s, and was purchased by the Town of Chittenden in 1906 for use as a Town Hall. Despite early renovations, many original features remain.

An effort to restore the building for community use began in 1995. As the project gathered momentum, more people became involved. Members of the Chittenden Historical Society joined the effort, and a Historic Buildings Preservation Committee was formed under the Board of Selectmen in 2000. Soon the committee realized that to become a vital community resource, the project needed to expand to use of the lower level and to include bathroom facilities and lift for accessibility. Many hours were spent in planning the space. In 2006, Phase I to install the septic field, drill the well and move the road to its original place was completed.

Phase II, now in progress, is addressing structural issues: leveling the sagging floor and adding an engineered iron beam system of support, replacing the rotted corner beam, constructing the addition to house the bathrooms and lift, replacing the windows to their original tall height, blocking in lower level wooden exterior and raising the exterior grade, and adding a stairway between floors.

Phase III will involve interior renovation and construction, such as adding electricity and the accessibility lift. A small catering kitchen is planned for the lower level. Although much work needs to be done before the Grange Hall will be ready for use, the committee is looking forward to the building's active use by the community for cultural, social and recreational purposes.

Donations are welcome. For more information, contact Bob Muzzy or Karen Webster.