

Forum at high school today on Vermont's economic future

By **DAN BUSTARD**
Staff Writer

The commission charged with developing a long range economic development plan for the state of Vermont wants to hear from you.

Charged by the Springfield Legislature to craft an economic vision looking ahead five, 10 and 15 years, the commission on the Future of Economic Development will hold its first of six summer forums in Springfield Thursday.

The Snelling Center's Glenn McRae provides support for the commission and said the goals of the forums are to generate comments on what makes the economy work, what barriers to success exist and how to shape the economy at the state level.

To date, McRae said the commission has learned about regional differences in Vermont's economy, heard about the challenges faced by eastern communities neighboring sales tax free New Hampshire and the slowing economy.

"There is a lot of uncertainty" about the economy, concerns also being raised with the Council on the Future of Vermont forums, he said.

The forum begins at 5:30 p.m. in the Springfield High School cafeteria.

Six sessions have been held in the spring, with forums scheduled for the 12 economic development regions in Vermont.

Before the forum, the 14-member commission will meet with separately with businesses and "economic development stakeholder assistance organizations" to further bolster their comment gathering efforts.

Springfield Regional Development Corp

Executive Director Bob Flint said it is important for the commission to hear from a variety of people other than economic development officials.

"They hear from people like me all the time," Flint said. "From what I understand, the forums in the spring were successful. This is the first forum in the summer. Hopefully it will be successful, too."

Questions the commission will ask include:

- What makes you optimistic about the future for your job, your business or the local economy in general?

- What concerns do you have about the future of jobs, economic opportunity and business activity in your region?

- What are the best opportunities for new jobs and business in the region?

- What are the major concerns of workers and community members related to economic security and future opportunities?

- Are there specific types of businesses, employers and employees who represent the future for the region?

- What is the most important public investment or program for the region that would help stimulate and grow opportunities here?

- Which programs are already doing a good job to support job creation and economic opportunity and should be kept and reinforced?

- What is the biggest barrier to economic development, good jobs and future opportunities for you and your children?

- What do local businesses, employers and employees need most to succeed?

- What are you willing to do to help insure a bright future for the Vermont economy?

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Forum on economic opportunity, jobs in southern Windsor County

On Thursday July 1, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., the Commission on the Future of Economic Development will host a Regional Economic Development Forum at a public meeting at the Springfield High School Cafeteria, 303 South St., organized in cooperation with the Springfield Regional Development Corporation.

The Commission on the Future of Economic Development www.snellingcenter.org/cfed was created by the Legislature to develop a long-range strategic plan and recommendations for public policy initiatives to facilitate economic development, job creation and retention, and a strong, sustainable economy for Vermont and Vermonters.

The volunteer citizen commission is seeking ideas and recommendations from a broad spectrum of individuals and businesses throughout the state to help build and prioritize public policies, plans and investments to increase economic opportunity for all Vermonters. As part of this process members of the Commission will be visiting all regions of the state to meet with workers, businesses, educators, public and private sector agencies and organizations involved in local and regional economic development and the public. This is the first of six summer meetings, an earlier set was held around the state this spring.

The central question that commissioners will be looking to answer is: What actions can and should the state of Vermont take that will enhance economic opportunity, remove barriers

Forum schedule

WHEN: 5:30 to 7:30pm, July 10.

WHERE: Springfield High School Cafeteria, 303 South St.

WHAT: Meet members of Vermont's Commission on the Future of Economic Development and provide your input.

MORE INFORMATION: www.snellingcenter.org/cfed/

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Commission is seeking input on specific strategies to create jobs and opportunities for you and your children, for entrepreneurs and businesses and employers of all sizes in our communities.

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- What concerns do you have about the future of jobs, economic opportunity and business activity in your region?

- What are the best opportunities for new jobs and business in the region?

- What are the major concerns of workers and community members related to economic security and future opportunities?

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to economic development, and create a climate that will allow the Vermont economy to grow in a sustainable way that improves the opportunity for and quality of life of every Vermonter? The hope is that a wide range of our citizens will offer up their experience and ideas to the Commission.

CFED is seeking your ideas and specific suggestions on what the state's role and priorities should be in the next five, 10 or 20 years. The