

Montpelier Notes, An occasional email for Pownal and Woodford residents. If you would prefer not to receive these notes please reply to botzow@sover.net and I'll remove you from the list. If you would like to be added please let me know. I do not give your email address to others. --Bill Botzow

April 7, 2013

Hello all,

The highlight of my week was the Skills USA Awards Banquet on Thursday night. Every year all the technical centers in Vermont gather in Burlington for competitions and networking. Southwest Vermont Career Development Center always sends a strong team and they come away with their share of medals. This year I was especially happy to be at the awards banquet to see three of our Pownal students win medals. Mariah Armstrong won gold as a member of the Health Knowledge Bowl Team. SVCDC has won gold in this in competition every year I have attended the banquet! Marissa Faller won gold as a member of the Video Production team. Ben Gelheiser won two bronzes, one in technical drafting and another in gorilla communications. All of these competitions require teamwork as well as technical skills. As you may have seen in the paper, this last week was career week in our area and every day in the paper there was a column written by one of our local manufacturing businesses titled "We Make Cool Stuff". Even better we have cool kids doing cool stuff. Congratulations to our young students and their teachers.

At Town Meeting time many of you participated in Sen. Bill Doyle's Annual Town Meeting Day Survey. While this is an unscientific poll often based on small numbers in each town, it gives a good picture of public opinion on a number of issues. Statewide, 13,998 people in 163 towns participated. In Pownal 75 people participated and in Woodford 15. The results below are in percentages and you will see that by in large results in our towns are similar to statewide results.

1. Should Vermont Continue its efforts to close Vermont Yankee?

Yes	Vermont 46%	Pownal 56%	Woodford 47%
No	Vermont 41%	Pownal 26%	Woodford 27%

Not Sure	Vermont 13%	Pownal 18%	Woodford 26%
----------	-------------	------------	--------------

2. Should drivers be prohibited from using cell phones while driving?

Yes	Vermont 76%	Pownal 72%	Woodford 73%
-----	-------------	------------	--------------

No	Vermont 17%	Pownal 16%	Woodford 27%
----	-------------	------------	--------------

Not Sure	Vermont 7%	Pownal 12%	Woodford 0%
----------	------------	------------	-------------

3. Should Vermont decriminalize the use of small amounts of marijuana?

Yes	Vermont 61%	Pownal 68%	Woodford 100%
-----	-------------	------------	---------------

No	Vermont 31%	Pownal 28%	Woodford 0%
----	-------------	------------	-------------

Not Sure	Vermont 8%	Pownal 11%	Woodford 0%
----------	------------	------------	-------------

4. Should a three year moratorium be placed on the construction of wind turbines on Vermont ridgelines?

Yes	Vermont 35%	Pownal 16%	Woodford 20%
-----	-------------	------------	--------------

No	Vermont 52%	Pownal 62%	Woodford 60%
----	-------------	------------	--------------

Not Sure	Vermont 13%	Pownal 22%	Woodford 20%
----------	-------------	------------	--------------

5. Do you believe Vermont's bottle law should be expanded to include all bottled beverages?

Yes	Vermont 76%	Pownal 78%	Woodford 87%
-----	-------------	------------	--------------

No	Vermont 19%	Pownal 9%	Woodford 7%
----	-------------	-----------	-------------

Not Sure	Vermont 15%	Pownal 13%	Woodford 6%
----------	-------------	------------	-------------

6. Should the gas tax be increased to pay for roads and bridges?

Yes	Vermont 33%	Pownal 33%	Woodford 14%
-----	-------------	------------	--------------

No	Vermont 56%	Pownal 53%	Woodford 73%
Not Sure	Vermont 11%	Pownal 11%	Woodford 13%

7. Should sugar sweetened beverages be taxed?

Yes	Vermont 46%	Pownal 41%	Woodford 53%
No	Vermont 47%	Pownal 48%	Woodford 47%
Not Sure	Vermont 7%	Pownal 11%	Woodford 0%

8. Should we reduce the Vermont prison population through the use of alternatives for nonviolent offenders?

Yes	Vermont 69%	Pownal 70%	Woodford 87%
No	Vermont 18%	Pownal 18%	Woodford 13%
Not Sure	Vermont 13%	Pownal 12%	Woodford 0%

9. Do you believe that locally grown food is an important part of Vermont's economic future?

Yes	Vermont 90%	Pownal 92%	Woodford 93%
No	Vermont 5%	Pownal 4%	Woodford 7%
Not Sure	Vermont 5%	Pownal 4%	Woodford 0%

10. Should Vermont trained law enforcement personnel be permitted to use tasers?

Yes	Vermont 56%	Pownal 50%	Woodford 47%
No	Vermont 25%	Pownal 25%	Woodford 40%
Not Sure	Vermont 19%	Pownal 25%	Woodford 13%

11. Do you believe growing hemp would be an asset to Vermont's economy?

Yes	Vermont 51%	Pownal 61%	Woodford 66%
No	Vermont 27%	Pownal 13%	Woodford 7%
Not Sure	Vermont 12%	Pownal 26%	Woodford 27%

12. Are statewide cell service and broadband important to the future of Vermont's economy?

Yes	Vermont 89%	Pownal 91%	Woodford 66%
No	Vermont 5%	Pownal 4%	Woodford 20%
Not Sure	Vermont 6%	Pownal 5%	Woodford 14%

13. Should natural gas be an important part of Vermont's economy?

Yes	Vermont 59%	Pownal 54%	Woodford 47%
No	Vermont 17%	Pownal 18%	Woodford 20%
Not Sure	Vermont 24%	Pownal 28%	Woodford 33%

14. Do you think that Governor Peter Shumlin is doing a good job?

Yes	Vermont 42%	Pownal 54%	Woodford 40%
No	Vermont 33%	Pownal 18%	Woodford 13%
Not Sure	Vermont 25%	Pownal 28%	Woodford 47%

A number of bills passed the House this week. Here's my weekly report on what we covered. Three of the measures are bills my Commerce Committee recommended and all three passed on unanimous voice votes.

H. 169 An act relating to relieving employers' experience-rating records

The Commerce Committee forwarded this bill to the full House after learning that many businesses that had to lay off workers because of Tropical Storm Irene were facing large increases in their unemployment insurance charges. The bill puts in place policy consistent with federal law that allows adjustments to be made in federally declared disaster areas. The committee was careful in crafting the law not to impact Vermont's work to reestablish solvency in the Trust Fund post recession.

H. 474 An act relating to amending the membership and charge of the Government Accountability Committee

This bill streamlines the Government Accountability Committee the legislature created three years ago to better focus its work on improving state government by recommending "mechanisms for state government to be more forward-thinking, strategic, and responsive to the long-term needs of Vermonters." The Government Accountability Committee is a special committee composed of Senators and Representatives and it meets monthly.

H. 531 An act relating to Building 617 in Essex

The Government Operations Committee recommended that this building be sold as it has been unused by the state for a long time and the resources could be better used elsewhere.

H. 50 An act relating to the sale, transfer, or importation of pets

For many years proposals have been coming to the legislature on how to best regulate pet dealers. Last summer a study committee was established to review the various issues and make recommendations to the legislature. H.50 is the result of that process. Animal issues can often be contentious and controversial, but this bill was not as representatives of all the stakeholders had been involved in its writing. Here's the definition of a pet dealer.

“ ‘Pet dealer’ means any person who sells or exchanges or who offers to sell or exchange cats, dogs, or wolf-hybrids, or any combination thereof, from three or more litters of cats, dogs, or wolf-hybrids in any

12-month period. This definition shall not apply to pet shops, animal shelters, or rescue organizations as those terms are defined in section 3901 of this title.”

The bill covers feral animals, pet dealer permitting, inspecting pet dealers, restitution for certain sales, and similar matters.

Here's a link to the bill. <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/2014/bills/House/H-050.pdf>

H. 101 An act relating to the clarification of provisions regarding the posting of land and access to land and water for hunting, fishing, and trapping

The legislature sets policies as necessary when recommended by the Fish and Wildlife Board.

Here's a link to the bill where you can see the bill as introduced and by the end of the week changes made in the committee and House review process.

<http://www.leg.state.vt.us/database/status/summary.cfm?Bill=H.0101&Session=2014>

The bill clarifies posting of land and allows the Commissioner to designate a day for fishing without a license for ice fishing as well as one for open water. It sets policy for use of firearms near highways, as well as policy for the Board to follow if it permits antlerless deer or moose hunting. It also sets policy for therapeutic group fishing licenses. The bill allows use of crossbows for hunting, bans wild boar from game preserves as they may easily escape and become a nuisance, bans feeding black bears, clarifies policy on taking bear doing damage to property, allows carrying a hand gun when bow and arrow hunting or training a field dog (but not for hunting purposes), and other measures.

H. 297 An act relating to duties and functions of the Department of Public Service

This Commerce bill makes adjustments to state energy plans, allows the Department to participate in federal proceedings and most important makes sure all providers contribute fairly to the Universal Service Fund which covers 911 emergency services. For a number of years some wireless carriers have not contributed to this essential service.

H. 533 An act relating to capital construction and state bonding

One of the three annual spending bills, this year's capital bill passed on a 135 to 0 vote. The Institutions committee worked hard to make sure we could go ahead with the needed state hospital and with plans to rebuild state office buildings post Irene flooding. Of local interest, it continues to cover interest for the state share of the Pownal wastewater project and makes a sizable payment on the remaining principal. It also deals with the mold issue at the Vermont Veteran's home and continues to pay off outstanding school construction obligations. The bill also starts a ten-year capital program plan covering construction requests and major maintenance and calls for clear criteria for infrastructure investment.

H. 395 An act relating to the establishment of the Vermont Clean Energy Loan Fund

This Commerce bill creates at the Vermont Economic Development Authority a clean energy loan fund that will help stimulate Vermont's emerging clean energy, renewable energy and efficiency improvements sector. It brings together several loan funds at VEDA and gives them

greater flexibility in strategically targeting investments. It also increases the amount of capital available for loans by utilizing funds from the State Treasury as a credit reserve. This allows VEDA to borrow at a better rate. Also private banks will contribute to the effort by making capital available for lending in this area as more loans with suitable underwriting controls will be partially backed up by VEDA.

S. 144 An act relating to the St. Albans state office building

This bill gives necessary approval for the state to go ahead with the sale of a building in St. Albans and enter negotiations for a new state office facility. It is a step in an economic redevelopment plan for that city.

As always, here's wishing you a very good week.

Stay in touch,

Bill

Rep. Bill Botzow

1225 South Stream Rd.

Bennington, VT 05201

802 447-7717

botzow@sover.net

bbotzow@leg.state.vt.us