

Arts + Leisure

Image Farm owners Matt and Pam Heywood create memorable designs for business. See inside.



On the run

Mount Abe hosted MUHS and many other teams at a Tuesday cross-country meet. See Page 1B.



Fall Home

Architectural and interior design is the focus of our annual fall home supplement. See Section C.

ADDISON COUNTY INDEPENDENT

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Middlebury and I think

all of us, Jamie included,

President Laurie Patton.

"I will say that

we knew when we took

only way to test a proposi-

\$1.00

Middlebury business outreach at crossroads

MIDDLEBURY — Almost four years into its five-year trial, the Middlebury Business Development Fund (MBDF) is struggling to achieve its goal of bringing substantial new businesses and jobs to town, in spite of the efforts of its energetic executive director.

That was the consensus opinion last week among several local officials and entrepreneurs who lobbied for creation of the MBDF back in 2012. It's been a joint effort by the town, Middlebury College and the

local business community to bring new enterprises to the community and help existing firms grow. The record shows that while the MBDF and its chief administrator, Jamie Gaucher, have courted a diverse crop of prospects, organizers' original hopes of landing some businesses with 40-or-more employees remains an elusive goal.

"We know Jamie has worked energetically to try to bring jobs to



GAUCHER

tion such as this one is to try it," Donahue added. "We have no regrets about doing so."

Area MBDF boosters cited a still-thawing economy and the challenges of attracting young entrepreneurs to a rural area as among the obstacles that Gaucher has faced in his recruiting efforts. One official close to the process who requested anonymity said he had hoped to see more cooperation from the college in identifying and courting potential alumni prospects. Former Middlebury selectboard Chairman John Tenny believes the MBDF process would benefit from more exposure (See Middlebury, Page 11A)

Gaucher touts list of successes, prospects in recruiting effort

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — Jamie Gaucher, director of the Middlebury Office of Business Development & Innovation, said he fields inquiries from an average of seven to 10 prospects each month exploring Addison County's shire town as a possible place to lay down

He said some of those inquiries are "very serious," from entrepreneurs who already have a business plan in the works and who are seeking information about land availability in Middlebury and advice on financing and/or how to navigate the permitting process. Some of the calls come from folks who are simply putting out basic feelers, instilling little confidence that they might call back.

Gaucher invites some of these (See Gaucher, Page 12A)

Lincoln faces trash deadline

Casella seeking to renegotiate deal

By GAEN MURPHREE

LINCOLN — Casella Waste Systems said it will end or change its current waste collection arrangement with Lincoln on Oct. 1 and no new arrangement is yet in place.

The town's selectboard is still searching for affordable and workable ways to get Lincoln's trash and recycling picked up.

Selectboard Chair Bill Finger said that the volume of recyclables and trash that Lincoln produces is not enough to make it cost-effective for Casella to come up the mountain and collect it from an area with a dispersed

"And then the smaller haulers ... can only take on so many customers so to speak," Finger said. "But we think we're making progress at this point, actually. We're crossing our fingers."

Last May, Casella representative Dennis Poole informed the Lincoln selectboard that his company was losing too much money on its arrangement with Lincoln and needed to make changes. The arrangement had remained largely unchanged since 2008, said Poole, and Casella was losing around \$26,835 annually on its Lin-

"This program was strictly built off of a plan that would have worked 10 years ago," Poole explained. "We had an older deal that was based on a flat monthly amount that didn't amount to what we needed to do to cover our costs.'

What's changed, said Poole, is the recyclables market.

Eight or nine years ago — when contracts such as the one in Lincoln were arranged — Casella could expect to make around \$5 to \$10 per ton (See Casella, Page 14A)



Middlebury registered voters take note: General Election voting on Tuesday, Nov 8, will take place at the community's new recreation center/gym at 154 Creek Road. (See By the way, Page 3A)

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MIDDLEBURY FARMER GEORGE Foster, right, stands with UVM Extension Agronomy Outreach Professional Rico Balzano during an Addi-MIDDLEBURY FARMER GEORGE Foster, right, stands with over extension agronomy outlook. The son County farm bus tour Monday. The tour highlighted conservation efforts in the county to improve water quality.

Independent photo/Trent Campbell



CHERYL CESARIO, LEFT, listens to Orwell farmer Josh Lucas discuss the many conservation practices he has implemented on his farm to improve water

Independent photo/Gaen Murphree

Ag tour highlights farm efforts to improve lake

By GAEN MURPHREE

ADDISON COUNTY — Legislators, policy makers, representatives from state and federal entities and others got on the bus Monday to see what Addison County farmers are doing to improve water quality in Lake Champlain.

"It's exciting," said Tom Berry, Senator Patrick Leahy's lead advisor on agricultural and natural resource issues. "I've been at this work for a while, and the Senator for a lot longer, and I can actually see, visibly, a change on the ground. I'm seeing more of the ground is green than brown now as the corn comes off it, and in the spring I've seen the same thing.

"So my takeaway is that we — the big 'we' of the farmers, the technical support,

etc. — are being successful in understanding how to make conservation work for farmers and providing some of the technical and actual physical tools needed to begin implementing these programs.

Water quality expert Ethan Swift came away similarly impressed.

"It's kind of the best of both worlds. It's nice to see the win-win of these practices and programs, fulfilling both the farmers' concerns and the environmental issues that we're facing," Swift said.

Swift, a watershed planning and restoration expert for the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, leads development of strategic plans to address phosphorus pollution for both the Otter Creek

(See Farm tour, Page 14A)

Middlebury to buy new ladder truck

State to reveal updated rail bridges plan, Oct. 11

By JOHN FLOWERS

MIDDLEBURY — The Middlebury selectboard on Tuesday unanimously endorsed the fire department's proposed purchase of a new ladder truck — along with related tools, radio technology and other equipment — for a total of \$866,471 from a Wyoming-based vendor.

The company, HME, was the low bidder among three companies that vied for the contract to replace the Middlebury Fire Department's largest and most expensive vehicle — its ladder truck. Firefighters and other Middlebury officials have spent more than two years determining whether to replace or repair the existing 1993 Pierce Arrow ladder truck, which has exceeded its anticipated 20-year lifespan and is currently damaged. It was last May that the swivel mount on top of the truck froze, thus preventing the ladder from rotating.

The HME bid for just the ladder truck (minus related equipment) was \$825,100. Finishing out of the running were the Pierce and Smeal companies, which bid \$937,913 and \$853,797, respectively.

Middlebury Fire Department Asst. Chief Myron Selleck was part of a committee that evaluated the three bids based on an 83-item specifications list to ensure the town would get a quality product. The vehicle will be equipped with a 111-foot, rear-mounted steel ladder that will give firefighters good exterior access to the larger buildings in town in the case of a blaze.

"I believe we have created a good model for future apparatus committees," Selleck said.

Fire Chief Dave Shaw confirmed the new ladder truck will be able to access repairs and maintenance at an HME center in nearby West Ossipee, N.H., thus assuaging some selectboard members' concerns that

(See Ladder truck, Page 2A)

Winter ticks plague state's moose herd

By GAEN MURPHREE

VERMONT — Archers will head into the woods on Saturday for the start of moose season and hunters with guns will get to take their shots beginning Oct. 15. But fewer hunters will be roaming Vermont's forest this fall on the lookout for one of the state's most iconic animals.

This year the Department of Fish and Wildlife issued 40 percent fewer moose permits (160 in total) and again restricted hunting in all but two management areas to adult males, in an effort to bolster a herd hit hard by a pesky arachnid that is also a growing nuisance to humans — ticks.

Moose, it turns out, are not good groomers. And that evolutionary detail, hitched to three-and-a-half centuries of landscape-altering Euro-

pean intervention, are behind the current challenges besetting the state's moose herd, according to biologist Cedric Alexander, Fish and Wildlife's Moose Project Leader.

After decades of record numbers and thriving populations as moose reclaimed their ancestral turf, for the past half-dozen years a "winter tick epizootic" (think "epidemic," but for animals) has put the herd in decline.

The damaging explosion of this parasite goes back hundreds of years to when Vermont's virgin forests were cleared for settlement. Twohundred-fifty years ago the Green Mountain State was 95 percent for-

"We changed all that," said Alexander. "We made this state into an (See Moose, Page 13A)



MOOSE IN VERMONT woods can brush against clusters of hundreds of ticks that infest the animal's coat and can suck its blood all winter.

Photo courtesy Vermont Fish & Wildlife

City police investigate recent car break-ins

VERGENNES — Vergennes police said they are actively investigating a series of thefts, almost all from unlocked cars, on four city streets early on Sunday morning.

In all, according to Police Chief George Merkel, 16 cars and one garage were entered on Maple Manor, Thomas Circle, South Maple Street and Booska Court. Technically, entering the garage would mean a burglary, not a theft, charge, he said.

Most of what was taken were small amounts of money, some jewelry and one GPS unit, among other items, Merkel said.

In other incidents between Sept. 19 and 25, Vergennes police:

• On Sept. 19 at the request of Auto Creek on West Street checked out an apparent illegal campsite and confiscated and disposed of a halfgallon of liquor, a syringe and bedding; police found no one there.

• On Sept. 19 helped Williston police by trying to find a Main Street resident; city police did not find him, but passed on information about his whereabouts.

• On Sept. 20 talked to the driver of a car reported to have been driven erratically on Route 7 and determined the driver was OK.

• On Sept. 20 responded to a report of a possibly suicidal individual on Walker Avenue and arranged for a family member to drive the person to the Counseling Service of Addison County in Middlebury.

• On Sept. 20 responded to a Main Street accident in which an elderly driver struck the front door of the Black Sheep Bistro.

• On Sept. 20 checked out an alleged violation of a restraining order on Main Street, but determined the violation could not be proven.

• On Sept. 20 helped deal with two loose goats in the woods near the Booth Woods subdivision; a homeowner agreed to hold onto them until their owner could pick them up.

• On Sept. 20 looked for a car reported to be driving through a new subdivision of West Main Street after dark with its lights off, but could

• On Sept. 21 checked out a report of a dog left in a car outside a Main Street business, but found no dog in the car

• On Sept. 21 helped Vermont State Police by responding to a report that a cyclist had been struck by a vehicle on Jersey Street in Ferrisburgh; police learned there had been no car involved, but that a woman had fallen off her bike, and the Verthe University of Vermont Medical Center.

works department to remove dirt and debris that a truck had accidentally dumped in front of Champlain Farms on Main Street.

• On Sept. 21 took a report that a delivered package had been stolen from a School Street home.

• On Sept. 21 stopped a tractortrailer truck for speeding on Main and was insulting the occupant.

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Police Log

Street, and as well as issuing a speeding ticket, also issued a number of citations to the driver related to the condition of the truck, such as lights being out.

• On Sept. 22 took a report that a car had been struck by another while parked on Main Street.

• On Sept. 22 were told by VSP to be on the lookout for a tractortrailer truck that had nearly caused an accident on Route 7 in Middlebury. Police pulled the truck over in Ferrisburgh, and during the stop another truck driver stopped and told police that the truck had passed him on a bridge near Middlebury while there was traffic oncoming. Police ticketed the driver for illegal passing and cited him for two violations on allowable time limits for operating the vehicle, and placed the truck out of service.

• On Sept. 22 sent the department canine to help VSP look for the occupants of a vehicle that had crashed on Route 7 and then fled the scene; the search was unsuccessful.

• On Sept. 23 helped VSP by responding to a one-car accident on Route 7 that left the car in a ditch. Police said the driver was unhurt and they had the vehicle towed.

• On Sept. 24 responded to a report of a man lying unconscious in the middle of South Maple Street. Police found him with a welt over one eye and blood on his face and said when he awoke he cursed them. Police said the man, whose bloodalcohol level tested at 0.239, was also belligerent to VARS personnel and to nurses at Porter Hospital, and they took him to the Act 1 detoxification facility in Burlington.

• On Sept. 24 stopped a car on Route 7 that was reported weaving over the center line and were told by the driver it was experiencing mechanical problems and was on the way to a repair shop.

• On Sept. 24 spoke with a man who alleged he was receiving harassing and threatening texts and calls, but determined the issue was more of a dispute and advised him to block the number.

• On Sept. 24 arrested Kelly Ann McAvoy, 26, of Vergennes on an outstanding warrant and lodged her at the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility; police also issued gennes Rescue Squad took her to her a civil citation for driving with a suspended license.

• On Sept. 24 cited Stephen Va-• On Sept. 21 called the public lade, 39, of Middlebury for driving under the influence of drugs after stopping his car on Route 7 following an alert to be on the lookout for a speeding vehicle being driven erratically.

• On Sept. 25 issued a no-trespass order to a woman who had refused to leave a New Haven Road resident

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Moose

(Continued from Page 1A) agricultural landscape. We cleared 70 percent of it. The moose were driven

By the end of the 19th century, habitat loss and overhunting had largely wiped both moose and deer both off the Vermont landscape.

But human patterns again changed, as Vermonters fled the stony fields and hill farms of the Green Mountains for greener pastures out West.

"Especially when the hill farms were given up due to the West being opened up, and people dying in the Civil War, and markets changing for sheep and so on and so forth the land reverted back to brush lands," Alexander explained. "And the combination of the agricultural lands that hung on and the brushlands was all ideal for deer.'

As Vermont's forests regenerated, the moose returned. By around 1980, the state was once again 80 percent forested and by 1993 there were enough moose that the state instituted a managed hunt, to keep the herd in balance in the absence of their former predators, wolves and panthers.

But the ecological balance of this reclaimed landscape was now altered. The intricate, delicately interlocking web of life developed over eons was stitched back together in ways that didn't quite fit right — not

In this newly reforested Vermont, moose and deer (both members of the cervid family) now overlapped their ranges, in ways that hadn't happened before European settlement — in ways, it turns out, that are bad news for moose.

"Moose didn't really evolve through the eons on the same latitudes with deer. Deer only started intermixing to a greater level after we changed the habitat," said Alexander.

"So for the first time we have relatively dense deer numbers in northern Vermont, whereas when the Abenaki were existing up here anything north of Route 2 especially and probably north of Route 4 was mainly moose. And that's what they survived on." 'TICK BOMBS'

Deer brought with them their parasites — winter ticks and brainworm - but these were parasites that deer had evolved with and had good defenses against.

Not so the moose, for whom these newly introduced parasites — new in evolutionary terms — can be devas-

"So now you have this other species of cervid that's present on the landscape when moose are expanding back in through Vermont and Maine and northern New Hampshire. And now moose are encountering winter ticks because these ticks live on deer," said Alexander.

Deer can handle these ticks, in part, because they are "programmed groomers," Alexander said.

"They will groom themselves every day just out of habit," he continued. "And they're also more agile and adept at reaching areas with their tongue. So only a few ticks survive on deer, and it's not in any way debilitating to them.'

This "programmed grooming" gives deer an advantage in what scientist Bill Samuel calls the "evolutionary arms race between ticks and hosts." Deer groom before the tick can latch on. Not so moose.

Alexander estimates that by April, towards winter's end, a typical Vermont moose can be carrying up to 70,000 ticks. That's more than enough bloodsuckers to be debilitating, especially when you consider that they can grow to the size of your little finger.

'Moose ... don't seem to even feel the larvae and the nymphs feeding on them," he said. "It's only when the ticks molt into adults in late February or March that the moose start grooming but by that time — because they've got 30,000 to 70,000 ticks on them — they end up actually causing anemia because of all the blood lost at a time of year when the moose is already on a nutritionally deficient diet.'

The greatest mortality is among

"Ticks are a huge problems for the calves because when they brush against these we call them 'tick bombs' (ticks cluster in the fall in huge clumps of hundreds or thousands) it doesn't matter if you're a big bull that weighs 1,400 pounds live weight or a calf that weighs 300 pounds you get the same shot of ticks.

"Proportionately it's five times worse," for a calf, Alexander said.

"The calves, especially, which go into the winter without much fat reserves to begin with, are susceptible to dying. Of course, they've rubbed off and broken off a lot of hair. So they're susceptible to exposure if there's a freezing rain and then they have no way to stay dry or stay warm when it drops down cold and freezes up again and they've lost all this en-

GLOBAL WARMING

Global warming is also contributing to the moose herd's tick prob-

A couple decades ago, said Alexander, winter ticks might fall off a deer in April and hit snow and get eaten by birds or just die. Now in a warmer, snowless April, they hit bare ground, crawl into the underbrush and live. Whereas before, snow might come in October and November and again, help wipe out that year's batch of ticks, we're now seeing Decembers with hardly any snow at all.

These trends make conditions better and better for ticks to survive and breed and keep sucking the life out of moose for longer periods.

A secondary concern, said Alexander, is that moose don't like it hot. True northern animals, they prefer the cool. But as summers get incrementally hotter, the moose spend more time trying to cool off and less time eating. The heat makes them less energetic and more lethargic.

Still, it's the ticks that are wildlife officials' main concern.

Nevertheless, state wildlife officials are hoping to see better calf numbers this year, given that last year's hunt put female moose for the most part off limits.

"May and June is when the calves are born, (and) this is the first year we've had cows giving birth that might have otherwise been taken by a hunter last fall," Alexander said. "So they're out there producing calves, and we should see an increase in sightings this fall. If we don't then we'll have to look at all the data."

One aspect of Fish and Wildlife's strategy to address the winter tick infestation is to find a healthy balance of moose on the land. This year's reduction in hunting permits and limits to bulls addresses the herd's current decline. But a decade or so ago, the concern was a spike in numbers, especially in the Northeast Kingdom. The department is working to establish a long-term moose density — geared to different habitat areas around the state — that maintains a healthy herd and a healthy land-

"Our current 10-year moose management plan (2010-2020) should continue to help address the tick issue by maintaining lower moose densities (no higher than 1.75 moose per square mile) in the Northeast Kingdom and even lower densities throughout the rest of the state," said Alexander.

This winter, the department will conduct its first collared moose study. It will investigate rates and causes of mortality, including deaths caused by

"Hopefully we'll have a bunch of GPS collars on cows and calves by the end of January and we'll get some good data from that," Alexander said.



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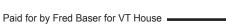
"Fred has an impressive record of accomplishment in his first two years in Montpelier. He listened, worked hard, asked a lot of questions and used good common sense as he navigated the many bills that went through his committee and onto the floor of the House...

We need experienced independent thinkers in the legislature, people who are in touch with the real needs of Vermonters. Fred fits the bill perfectly.

"Representative Fred Baser has recognized the need to develop housing that is affordable to the middle class first and has promoted this idea. I look forward to working with Fred on this project.'

- Phil Scott







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