



# Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation Newsletter

Number 24-25

Winter 2006

## Book Press Building Nearing Full Occupancy

“It’s great for this building to have books in it again,” says Rich Norford, the warehouse manager for Chelsea Green Publishing at the Book Press building. Norford has many book titles in his warehouse, which occupies just part of this vast building, home to 22 tenants. He knows that at one time this 300,000 square foot building housed a large book publishing operation.

Quebecor, an international corporation with large holdings in book publishing, occupied the Book Press building until 1998 when it announced it was closing its Brattleboro plant. This was a blow to the local economy in terms of jobs and tax revenue. It also left the large facility empty with a huge amount of vacant space to fill.

At that time, BDCC’s Executive Committee recognized that Brattleboro had little room for industrial growth and recommended to the Trustees that BDCC purchase the property as the town’s next “industrial park.” The purchase was finalized December 28, 2000 with BDCC paying \$1.45 million. That purchase involved VEDA funding.

Interestingly, it was the need for financing the original construction of the building, planned back in 1954 for the Alan Browne Co., which created the Brattleboro Development Credit Corp. in the first place.

Since Quebecor’s departure, there



*The Book Press Building now has more than 20 tenants.*

have been a number of tenants occupying varying amounts of space here. FiberMark, whose main plant is nearby, has occupied nearly 30 percent of the space and is the anchor tenant. C&S Grocers also has warehouse space here.

A variety of factors make the Book Press building a desirable location. BDCC executive director Kurt Isaacson says the space is “reasonably priced, commercially zoned, has high ceilings and is close to Interstate 91.”

Isaacson says the building is suitable for both storefronts, such as Vermont Plumbing Supply and warehousing space. David Teece, owner of Vermont Plumbing Supply says being at the Book Press in Brattleboro is good for

his business. “We’re a cornerstone in the redevelopment of the Book Press.” By being an anchor tenant, Teece says he got in on the ground floor and there are good expansion capabilities and extensive parking for customers as well as easy access to the I-91.

“The Book Press is a good place and I’m very comfortable,” says Teece.

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## BDCC Trustees

*President, Debbie Boyle,*  
Chittenden Bank, 258-4019  
dboyle@chittenden.com

*Vice President, Peter Van Oot,* Downs  
Rachlin Martin PLLC  
258-3070, pvanoot@drm.com

*Treasurer, John Meyer,*  
Piecik & Co., PC, 257-1307  
jmeyer@sover.net

**William Palumbo,**  
Kenyon Realty, 464-7171  
sutton@sover.net

**Kevin Meyer,** Mary Meyer Corp.  
365-7793  
kevin\_meyer@marymeyer.com

**Phil Steckler,** Country Business,  
Inc., 254-4504 phsobi@sover.net

**Dart Everett,** Everett Real Estate,  
254-9258, deverett@sover.net

**Bruce Gardner,** Omega Optical  
254-2690, gardner@sover.net

**Carl Lynde,** BankNorth, Vermont  
257-6519, clynde@banknorth.com

**Mark Richards,** The Richards Group,  
254-6016  
Mark.Richards@therichardsgrp.com

**Hugh Barber,** SVE Associates,  
254-9318, hbarber@sveassoc.com

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### The BDCC Newsletter

**Kurt Isaacson,** *Executive Director,*  
BDCC@sover.net  
www.brattleborodevelopment.com

**Sandy Otero,** *Administrative  
Assistant*

**Art Edelstein,** *Newsletter Editor*  
artedel@sover.net

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### Company News

Do you have news of interest to the Brattleboro business community? Has your company expanded, introduced a new product, won an award?

Send your information to:

*Newsletter Editor*  
Brattleboro Development  
Credit Corp.  
76 Cotton Mill Hill  
Brattleboro, VT 05301

Fax it to us at 257-0294 or  
e-mail us at BDCC@sover.net

## From the Executive Director

**A**s you will read in this issue of the newsletter, BDCC has been very active in the community recently. On September 12 and 13 we helped sponsor and promote the Creative Economy Symposium Acting Locally – Creative Minds solving the challenges in Industry, Commerce, Education and the Arts. The event was held at the Marlboro College Graduate Center here in Brattleboro. Bill Ivey, former Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, spoke about “Creativity and the Public Interest,” in his keynote address on Monday evening, Tuesday morning, Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, President of Marlboro College and a former arts advisor to President and Mrs. Clinton spoke on “acting locally.” There were more than 80 participants in the two-day session. The symposium participants identified four challenges to strengthen our community and enhance the environment of the creative economy. This type of discussion is taking a long term approach to economic development by creating a place where people want to live and work. We are looking at the multi-dimensional community when we discuss the creative economy.

On the business front, I want to tell you I am excited that many of the large commercial buildings which were unoccupied and on the market for sale have been sold and are now actively being leased out.

From a high of one million square feet in 2003, we have less than a quarter of that space now empty in Brattleboro. This is very good for our economy in terms of both space and the tax base. It also shows that the economy is growing in strength as shown by the confidence of those who are occupying the once-empty space. As you read in our Page One story,



the Book Press building, which was sold in 1998 to BDCC after Quebecor left, is now doing very well. We have 22 tenants and are expecting more to sign leases. This is very attractive space and I urge you to contact me should that facility be of interest to you.

One of our strongest companies, Omega Optical held its open house on September 15. Since moving to their Delta Campus, that company has added 20 new jobs to its roster of employment.

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## Annual Business Plan Competition Announced

**B**DCC's Business Plan Competition is underway. The competition was open to all Windham County entrepreneurs with an interest in starting a business or expanding a small business.

“This is a terrific opportunity for a business person with a great idea to get funding that would allow that idea to come to fruition,” said Kurt Isaacson. “Our mission,” he explained, “is job creation and we believe a competition is one vehicle that can help achieve that goal.”

The competition required participants to initially submit a two-page out-

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# BDCC Annual Meeting

**B**DCC held its annual meeting on October 20 and elected Debbie Boyle, a vice president at the Chittenden Bank in Brattleboro, as its president.

Boyle's election marks the first time in BDCC's 51-year history that a woman has held this post.

"I'm looking forward to my term as President of the BDCC Board," said Boyle, "mainly because I get to work with a highly committed group that has a wealth of knowledge about the area. "Kurt Isaacson has been a wonderful addition to the organization.



*Debbie Boyle*

Financially, BDCC is in good shape and so going forward we can continue to reach out to the other economic drivers in the area like the local Chambers, Windham Regional, and the Brattleboro Arts Initiative, and work together to ensure that we keep a strong and diverse economic base in

Windham County."

John VP Meyer was elected treasurer.

Toni Bouchard from Efficiency

Vermont gave a presentation concerning the various ways businesses and residen-

tial electric consumers can reduce their electrical usage.

She discussed the economics of how energy efficiency can actually help keep more dollars in the local economy. (Efficiency Vermont, based in Burlington, was created by the Vermont legislature and the Vermont Public Service Board to help all Vermonters reduce energy costs, strengthen the economy and protect Vermont's environment.)

At the meeting executive director Kurt Isaacson announced the first annual BDCC business plan competition. This competition invites small business owners and potential business start-ups to compete for a \$20,000 first prize. (See accompanying article on page 2.)

## Business Plan Competition

*continued from page 2*

line of their plan by December 9 from which a group of six finalists will be chosen. The finalists will then work with business consultants from the Small Business Development Center and the Senior Core of Retired Executives to write a complete business plans. Competition finalists will present their plans to the judging panel consisting of a committee of BDCC board members, venture capitalists, bankers and others in the community. All finalists will be eligible for the \$1,000 participation award.

To qualify, businesses or start-ups must have annual revenues of less than \$500,000. Preference will be given to those plans that propose the creation of jobs. Businesses or proposed businesses must be for-profit organizations.

"BDCC wanted a vehicle to spur small business growth in Windham County," explained executive director Kurt Isaacson discussing the reason for the competition. "We felt this was one method to achieve that goal. Small businesses, especially in Vermont, are prime drivers of job growth."



## Bill Johnson Retires

**S**ince 1994 consulting engineer Bill Johnson has worked with BDCC overseeing a variety of projects at our buildings. Johnson retired the end of September. In his work he has been involved in many projects at the Cotton Mill. With the changing tenant base he has helped coordinate the construction of walls that separated the

businesses, overseen sprinkler system upgrades, fire alarm installations and meeting state safety codes. He helped with the purchasing and installation of elevators.

Bill also helped the Cotton Mill save money on its fuel and electricity bills by writing computer programs that tracked the usage of these utilities.

Johnson leaves with a feeling of accomplishment. "The properties are in good shape and plans are afoot to further improve them. The tax base for the Town of Brattleboro has really been raised by the efforts we've put into improving our properties."

"Bill has been an instrumental part of this organization for 11 years and will be sorely missed," said BDCC Executive Director Kurt Isaacson.

Johnson is relocating to Rutland and will spend winters near Tampa. The 72-year-old Rutland native has been an engineer since 1956 and has lived in the Brattleboro area for 30 years. Everyone at BDCC wishes Bill the best in his retirement.

## Book Press Building

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“It’s reasonably priced,” agrees Norford. “I’m glad BDCC took it over. It’s good for a Vermont company like ours to have this facility instate.”

BDCC offers “flexible leasing arrangements,” says Isaacson. According to him, there is a fluctuating demand for this type of space.



*Rich Norford of Chelsea Green Publishing likes the Book Press' proximity to I-91.*

Hal Lier at Nefitco.com and New England Fitness Equipment, a four-year tenant, also praises the building and BDCC's management. “It’s been a great opportunity for us. The space allows for expansion and we don’t have to build a facility. The space is flexible and the lease rates are very competitive.”

For Lier, the growing number of tenants since his 2001 occupancy means better security for all and improved services.

## Business Plan Competition Receives Strong Response

The response to the Business Plan Competition (see page 3) brought 44 responses. BDCC will announce the six finalists on January 12. We thank the community for its strong interest in this competition.

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**Brattleboro Development  
Credit Corporation**  
76 Cotton Mill Hill  
Brattleboro, VT 05301  
Phone: (802) 257-7731  
Fax: (802) 257-0294  
www.brattleborodevelopment.com  
bdcc@sover.net