River Valley and TwinState Makerspace are NBRC grant recipients

Sep 02, 2015
Eagle Times
Nancy A. Cavanaugh

Yesterday, Gov. Maggie Hassan and U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen announced that seven New Hampshire projects will receive $1,150,716 in grant funding from the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) to help spur economic and community development in the North Country.

"The Northern Border Regional Commission is a critical regional collaboration that has a strong tradition of supporting economic and community development in some of our most economically distressed areas," said Gov. Hassan. "Each of these projects will promote business development, job creation and economic growth across the North Country by addressing infrastructure and transportation needs, boosting our travel and tourism industry, supporting entrepreneurs and strengthening workforce development efforts."

The grants will be awarded to the Franconia Ski Club and the state-owned Cannon Mountain Ski Area, the Town of Northumberland, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, TwinState MakerSpace Inc., River Valley Community College, the Grafton County Economic Development Council and Plymouth State University.

“Today’s announcement is great news for job creation and the economy in northern New Hampshire,” said Sen. Shaheen. “These seven projects will support small business growth while addressing important infrastructure needs that are crucial for economic development in the North Country. These grants, and the Northern Border Regional Commission’s continued work, are helping to rejuvenate North Country communities and businesses that have faced significant economic challenges.”

River Valley Community College (RVCC) was awarded $150,000 for improvements to the former Lebanon College. RVCC recently purchased the former college and will be expanding its educational opportunities to those in the Upper Valley. Renovation of the space will enable downtown Lebanon to maintain an educational presence and to build customized training opportunities for the Upper Valley’s nascent technology sector.

The TwinState MakerSpace, Inc’s application for $250,000 was approved by the commission. The organization will use the grant to partially fund the purchase and renovation of downtown Claremont’s derelict Sawtooth Building located at 44 Main St. The 10,800 square foot space was once a forge built in 1902 by the Sullivan Machine Co. The project will bring the building back into service as a creative hub with productive space to support those in the science, technology, engineering, artistic and math fields.
A joint application by the Franconia Ski Club and the state-owned Cannon Mountain Ski Area was selected for a $150,716 grant that will help upgrade the new Mittersill alpine ski racing and training slopes as well as install complementary snow making machines.

The Commission approved a $250,000 grant for the Town of Northumberland to help fund municipally owned water and wastewater lines to the former Groveton paper mill site; a property now owned by a private developer seeking to prepare the site for continued industrial investment.

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation will receive $250,000 to relocate a maintenance shed in Dixville Notch, immediately adjacent to the proposed Balsams Resort development project.

The Grafton County Economic Development Council will use $45,000 to construct a second story pedestrian bridge that will link the two separated business incubator buildings that it owns in Lebanon with North Country Council in partnership with Dartmouth College’s Office of Entrepreneurship and Technology Transfer.

Plymouth State University and partners will receive $55,000 to capitalize their “Bienvenue New Hampshire” program that provides French translation, marketing, educational opportunities, and bilingual support for front line hospitality organizations in Sullivan, Grafton, Coos, and Carroll counties.

Created by the U.S. Congress in 2008, the NBRC is a federal-state partnership whose mission is to help alleviate economic distress and encourage private sector job creation throughout the northern counties of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. In its five-year history, the NBRC has awarded 75 grants amounting to more than $14.2 million.