

. . . Federal Grant Allows Transit Agency To Build New HDQ Facility In Wilmington

U.S. Senators Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and U.S. Representative Peter Welch (D-Vt.) Wednesday announced that the Federal Transit Administration has awarded the Deerfield Valley Transit Association (DVTA) \$3 million to build a new administrative and maintenance facility in Wilmington. The project was selected on a competitive basis through agency's 2012 State of Good Repair Program.

The DVTA will use the \$3,084,831 grant to construct a new building to centralize its administrative, maintenance, operations and biodiesel production facilities in Wilmington. These operations currently are split between Wilmington and West Dover. The new facility will include maintenance bays, an interior bus wash, a large fuel tank, office space, and paved parking for 30 vehicles. It also will tie into two adjacent recreation trails.

Leahy previously secured more than \$1 million in federal transportation funding for the project, which the DVTA used to develop design plans, demolish an old factory on the site and begin permitting for the new facility, and Leahy, Sanders and Welch each sent letters of support for the project to the Federal Transit Administration.

Leahy said, "After many years of outstanding service in Southern Vermont, I am delighted that Deerfield Valley finally will be able to move forward with this key transportation and economic development project to consolidate these operations in Wilmington. In Irene's wake, the transit agency's excellent work in furnishing emergency transportation, under trying circumstances and in areas that were hit hardest, certainly underscored the vital need for a new and modern facility."

Sanders said, "This grant will give Windham County residents additional and affordable transportation options. It will also be a much needed economic boost to an area of the state that is still recovering from some of the worst damage caused by Tropical Storm Irene."

Welch said, "This is great news. Access to public transportation in rural areas is always a challenge. Deerfield Valley Transit Association has been leading the way in meeting that

challenge by finding ways to make public transportation work in rural areas. These funds will ensure more Vermonters have access to reliable public transportation."

"We are so grateful for this grant award," said Susan Haughwout, chair of the DVTA Board. "This long-overdue facility, which secures the future of public transit in Southern Vermont, was made possible by the hard work of our board, staff, consultants, VTrans and FTA partners, and the local community. We especially thank Senator Leahy for his long-term efforts, as well as Governor Shumlin, Senator Sanders and Congressman Welch for their support."

The DVTA started service around the Mount Snow ski resort back in 1996. It has grown into a 13-route service to eight towns in the Deerfield Valley, providing nearly 300,000 bus and van trips each year. The DVTA marked its 3,000,000th ride in January. When Tropical Storm Irene hit communities throughout Vermont last August, the transit agency was widely credited with offering a crucial lifeline by ferrying people and much-needed equipment and supplies throughout the region.