



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Northeast Kingdom REAP Zone

Lead Entity: Northeast Kingdom Enterprise Collaborative, Inc., Vermont

Demographics: Population: 60,862, Poverty Rate: 13.5%

Background: Essex, Orleans and Caledonia Counties of Vermont make up an area known as the Northeast Kingdom. The three county region is the most isolated and sparsely populated corner of the state. As a result, it has consistently been the most economically distressed. The countryside is dotted with picturesque villages that have lost their economic foundation, leaving behind poverty and a community infrastructure with few means of support.

Purpose: The Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP), as a pilot program, was established to mitigate the negative effects of a lack of employment opportunities and job losses to rural communities. This REAP was also established to create an environment for communities to find strategies to solve their own problems. The outcomes and lessons learned will help USDA to assist other communities throughout rural America experiencing similar problems. The REAP will document the success of the Northeast Kingdom Enterprise Collaborative and its member efforts to promote social, economic and community development in the region.

The Northeast Kingdom Enterprise Collaborative is committed to the economic and social well-being of the Northeast Kingdom and the highest possible quality of life for its people and communities. The Northeast Kingdom Enterprise Collaborative is a non-profit organization incorporated in the state of Vermont. The Board of Directors is inclusive of the community, including low income residents. The Board of Directors will bring a wide variety of public and private individuals and organizations from the area into the planning of the demonstration area. The Snelling Center for Government will provide financial and administrative services for the Northeast Kingdom Enterprise Collaborative.

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