

Recreate. Relax. Repeat.

Burke Vermont



BURKE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - 2025 - THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2025 Board of Directors: *Chris Andrews (completing 3rd of 3 year term, term up for renewal)*, Michelle Cleveland (completing 1st of 3 year term), Burton Hinton (completing 2nd^t of 3 year term), John Kascenska (completing 3rd of 3 year term, not renewing board position for 2026), *Karen Kennedy (completing 3rd of 3 year term, term up for renewal)*, Jennifer Palmieri (completing 2nd of 3 year term), Elaine Lind Wentzell (recently resigned from board)

2025 Officers: John Kascenska, President; Chris Andrews, VP; Michelle Cleveland, Secretary; Karen Kennedy, Treasurer

MEMBERSHIP – We currently have 265 members

MISSION STATEMENT

The object of the Burke Area Chamber of Commerce, Inc. shall be to promote the economic, civic and social welfare of the people of Burke and vicinity. The Burke Area Chamber of Commerce, Inc. is organized to advance the general welfare and prosperity of the Burke area so that its citizens and all areas of its economic community shall prosper. Promotion shall be provided and particular attention and emphasis shall be given to the interests of the area.

GEOGRAPHIC AREA

As the BURKE AREA Chamber of Commerce, our geographic area includes Burke, VT and other towns within a 40-mile radius of Burke. We also welcome members from other areas who have an interest in the Burke Area and the objectives of the Chamber as stated in our bylaws.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2025 was an exciting year of change in Burke with the hiring of a new Executive Director at the Burke Mountain Club and the sale (finally!) of Burke Mountain to Bear Den Partners! We are pleased to support BMC as they have expanded their event offerings and made improvements to the building and grounds including adding a new Children's Room in the library. Over the summer, they hosted events including Live Music & Picnics on the Green with the Burke Chamber and local businesses sponsoring the events.

And, of course, Spring brought a new beginning to Burke Mountain with the sale of the resort to Bear Den Partners. In celebration of this, they led the way as Grand Marshalls of the Burke Fall Festival parade. We look forward to this new chapter at Burke!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU – OUR MEMBERS! If you have news to share, events to promote, ideas, questions or feedback for the Chamber just send us an email or contact a board member. Our role is to support area businesses and promote the area so we need your input.

Other Items of Note:

- **Chamber Financials** –The Chamber is in good shape financially. We have 265 individual and business members which is a lot for a small chamber in a rural area.
- **Collaboration with Local Groups** – In addition to the Burke Mountain Club, we continue to collaborate with other groups to host events. The West Burke United Methodist Church had vendor space at the Strawberry Festival and Fall Festival where they raised money with bake sales. The West Burke United Methodist Church also assists us with the Santa Visit to West Burke. The Burke Mountain Club is the venue for the Burke Fall Festival Craft Fair and they also participate in our Halloween event and assist us with the Christmas Tree Contest/Display in the village. The Halloween event is a collaborative effort between the Chamber, East Burke Market and other East Burke Village businesses and groups.
- The Chamber is responsible for the **free Wi-Fi** (The Burke Connection) available in East Burke Village.

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- The Chamber is responsible for the **Burke Area Kiosk Display** located on the green at the Burke Mountain Club/East Burke Library. The large display was designed by Flek and includes photos highlighting area offerings and a list of popular annual events. It includes the website address, burkevermont.com, as well as the website QR code. Repairs to the kiosk, plexiglass and an updated display are in the works.
- In 2023, we created a new **'Business of the Year' award** to be presented at the Annual Meeting in early November. The award is meant to recognize a member business that demonstrates outstanding customer service, a positive work environment, community support and responsible business growth. Nominations were submitted by fellow chamber members. In 2023, the award was presented to Mike's Gas & Redemption of West Burke and in 2024, East Burke Market was chosen for the award. **The 2025 Business of the Year winner is East Burke Rentals**, owned by Allen and Robin Beaupre. The award presentation will be at our annual meeting on November 3rd.

EVENTS

- June – We hosted the **Strawberry Festival in the West Burke Village Park** which featured food trucks, live music and, of course, strawberry shortcake. Locals enjoy having an event in the park and meeting up with friends & neighbors. Visitors to the area also attend and enjoy the small-town community festivities. We estimate an attendance of about 200 people.
- September – **The Burke Fall Festival** had an amazing turn out, perfect weather and near Peak Foliage colors! It was one of the most well attended festivals in the last 10 years with positive feedback from attendees and craft fair vendors. We look forward to doing it all again on September 26th, 2026.
- October – Together with East Burke Market and other local businesses, we hosted **The Gloaming** in East Burke Village on October 25th. A variety of activities took place in the village including a Trunk or Treat, trick or treating at village homes/businesses, a haunted trail as well as activities at Thaddeus Stevens School, Café Lotti and Kingdom Trails. Burke Mountain Club hosted *Gruffalo* themed events including a scavenger hunt, outdoor movie, storytelling and more. The event was well attended and enjoyed by adults and kids alike.
- December – **Santa** will be visiting West Burke on Sunday, December 14th from 11am-1pm. The event will be held at the Community Building in West Burke with wagon rides, cider, cookies and more. The **Christmas Tree display/contest** on the green in East Burke Village will be up for the holiday season. It's become a popular tradition in the village and people really enjoy the festive sight of 15 lit up Christmas trees as they head into the village. Five winners will each receive \$100 for a charity of their choice. There will be a **Tree Lighting & Holiday Party on the green at the Burke Mountain Club on December 14th from 3-5pm**. Winners of the tree contest will be announced at the event.

MARKETING INITIATIVES COMPLETED AND IN PROGRESS

- We are members of the **Vermont Chamber of Commerce** and in 2025 became members of the **Northeast Kingdom Chamber of Commerce**. We collaborate with both organizations to promote the area and support local businesses.
- **Print advertisements:** We will have a two-page coop ad in the 2025/2026 *Snowmobile VT* early winter edition. We also have a featured listing in the *VT Inspiration Guide Stay & Play Directory* (print and digital editions) published by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce.
- **Online ads:** Vermont.com (annual campaign) – We receive 100-200 website referrals each month from this campaign.
- **E-newsletters** are sent on the first of each month and include info for residents and visitors such as monthly events, lodging, local deals and other area news. E-newsletters have a high open rate of over 50% each month. (According to Constant Contact, the e-news service we use, that is a high open rate percentage). A link to the monthly e-newsletter is shared on our website and social media pages.
- The chamber website, **BurkeVermont.com** is regularly updated with events, listings, area news and more. The site receives an average of 50,000 visitors per year.
- Regular posts are made to our **facebook** page and we have over **5,000 followers**. We use social media to share news about the area and our business members including regularly sharing posts from other pages.
- Regular posts are also made to our **Instagram** page which has almost **1,000 followers**.
- The Chamber puts together a **printed list of weekly events**. The list is emailed to all chamber members each week and posted on facebook and Instagram. A print edition is posted at select locations in Burke/Lyndonville.

(All print and online ads direct readers/viewers to the Chamber website, BurkeVermont.com, where they can learn about area offerings and member businesses. Coop ads consist of a general chamber ad for the area as well as individual ads from participating businesses)

We are thankful for the support of our members and the community and look forward to a healthy & prosperous new year for all. The Chamber will continue to provide support to our local businesses and always act in the best interest of the community.

Thank You for your continued membership and support!