



It's Not Just Confetti:

The Secret Sauce Behind Thriving Downtown
Events

2026 Downtown & Historic Preservation Conference

It's Not Just Confetti

The Secret Sauce Behind Thriving Downtown Events




SAINT ALBANS
DOWNTOWN

 **Discover**
St. Johnsbury
VERMONT



CATAMOUNT
ARTS 

We Can't Do It All!

Successful downtown events require support systems.

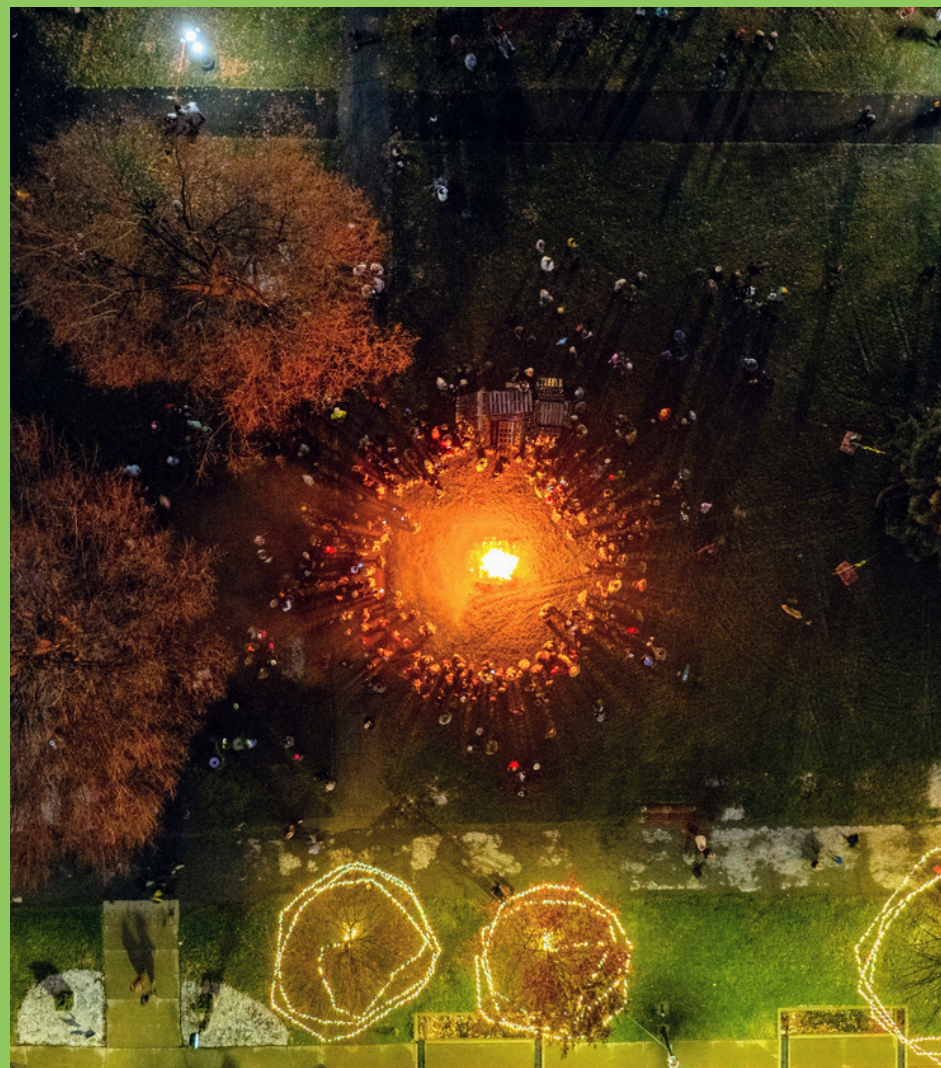




Downtown Saint Albans looks at **Co-Planning as the Meet-Cute** of events planning. A seed of an idea comes to us, it fills a gap in programing, and we work together to make magic happen!!

Helping good ideas happen.

- By acting as a fiscal agent, downtown organizations can help events move from idea to reality.
- Sometimes the biggest barrier to an event isn't creativity — it's paperwork



Many community groups have great event ideas but lack:

- nonprofit status
- insurance
- banking structure
- payment processing
- grant eligibility

By acting as a fiscal agent, downtown organizations can help events move from idea to reality.

Turning Fundraisers Into Downtown Destinations

- Charity events can also drive economic activity.
- Helping supporters to Thinking beyond one Traditional space



A fundraiser can support a cause and support downtown vitality at the same time.

- activating storefronts
- encouraging walking downtown
- creating multi-stop experiences
- connect fundraising with local businesses

What does this deliver:

- tourism
- foot traffic
- restaurant sales
- visibility for nonprofits

Acting as the behind-the-scenes orchestrator for complex community events

Sometimes the most important role is simply making sure everyone is rowing in the same direction.



downtown organizations often become:

- coordinators
- communicators
- troubleshooters
- relationship managers

Connecting:

- volunteers
- venues
- sponsors
- city departments
- decorators
- vendors
- nonprofits
- media
- businesses



Discover St. Johnsbury stimulates and promotes the vitality of downtown St. Johnsbury's cultural, commercial, and community resources. **One of the ways we do that is through producing & supporting community events.**

Promoting Other Groups' Events

- Community Event Calendar
- Include other org's activities on event programs
- Social media shares
- Signature events on attractions brochure





Sharing Connections & Resources

- Share event supplies
- Provide a venue
- Referrals for food trucks, musicians, activities & connections
- Pitch in & volunteer

Adding Capacity

- “Packaged” events that I facilitate & market but don’t produce (Eclipse, Historic Main St. Fall Festival, Americas 250th Birthday)
- Annual document w/ ‘big’ event dates, for internal scheduling
- Brainstorming & troubleshooting



Signature Community Events	
PLANNING USE ONLY! DO NOT SHARE WITH THE PUBLIC. DATES LISTED ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.	
Events expected to draw large groups to town, as well as relevant holidays to help St. J organizations coordinate significant event dates. For suggestions, email director@discoverstjohnsbury.com to be added to the Discover St. J calendar.	
Title	Venue
Winter Farmers Market	Welcome Center
HOLIDAY - NYD	
HOLIDAY - MLK Jr. Day	
NEK Classical Series: Young Concert Artists on Tour	South Church Hall
Title	Venue
Winter Farmers Market	Welcome Center
SJA Winter Carnival	St. J Academy
HOLIDAY - Valentine's Day	



CATAMOUNT FILM + ARTS



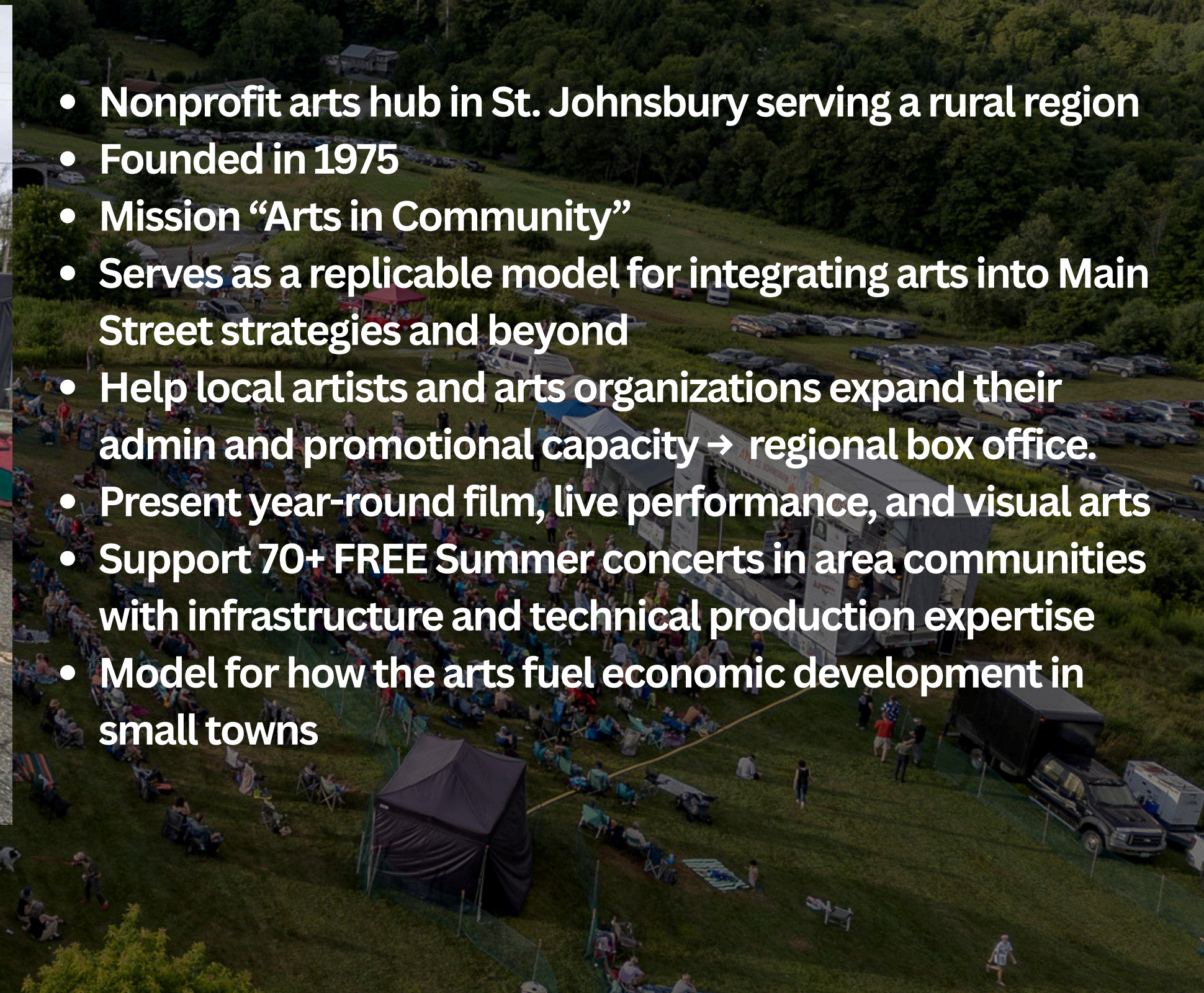
INTEGRATING ARTS INTO MAIN STREET STRATEGIES

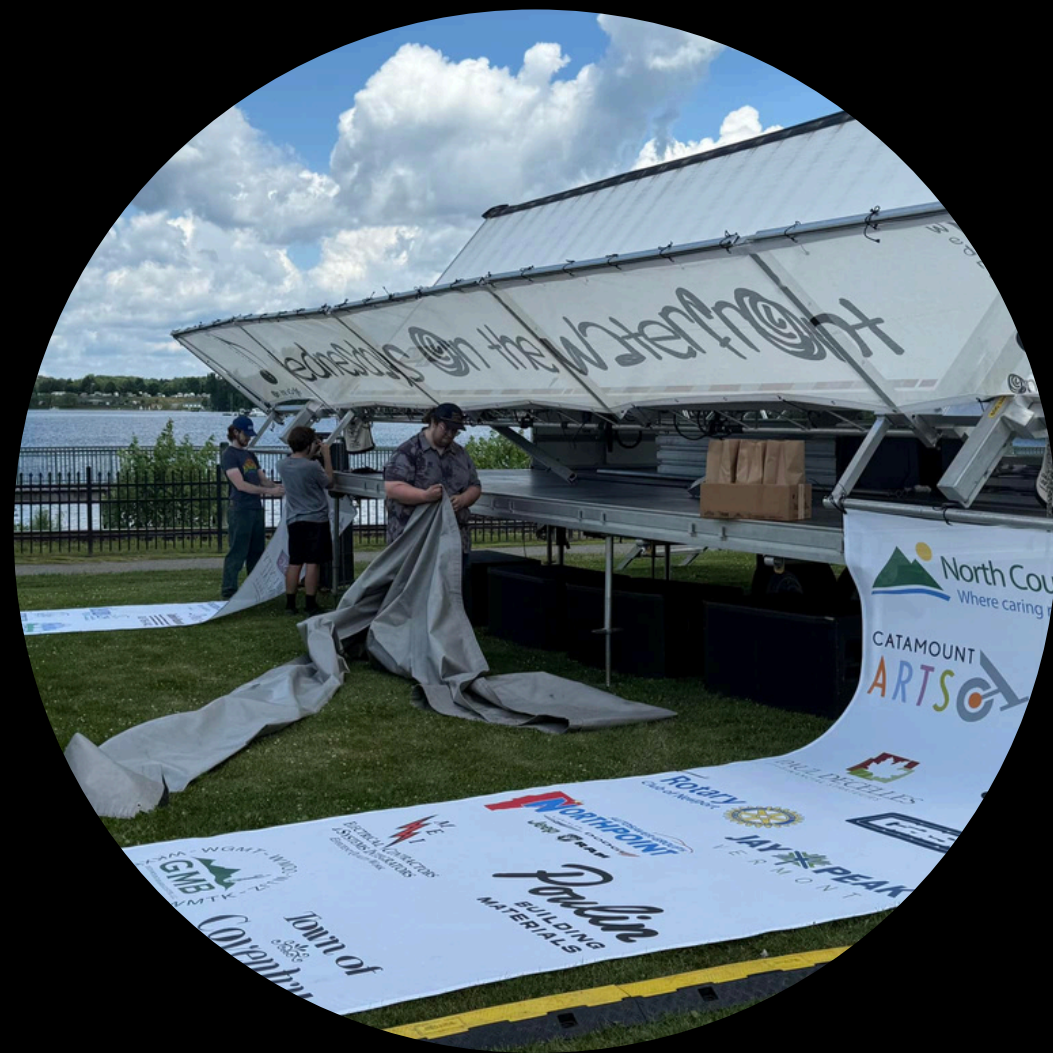
PRESENTED BY MOLLY STONE - ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, CATAMOUNT ARTS

WE ARE CATAMOUNT ARTS

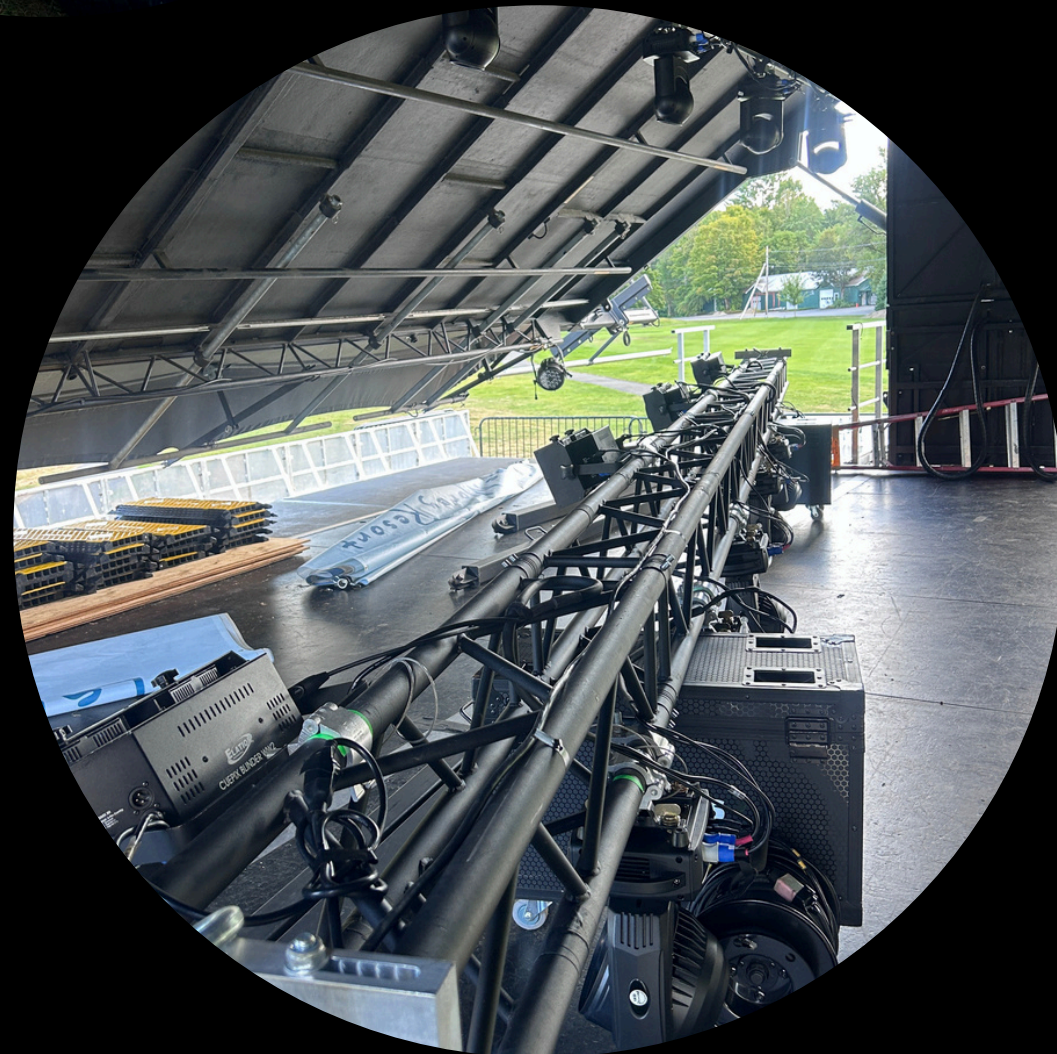


- Nonprofit arts hub in St. Johnsbury serving a rural region
- Founded in 1975
- Mission “Arts in Community”
- Serves as a replicable model for integrating arts into Main Street strategies and beyond
- Help local artists and arts organizations expand their admin and promotional capacity → regional box office.
- Present year-round film, live performance, and visual arts
- Support 70+ FREE Summer concerts in area communities with infrastructure and technical production expertise
- Model for how the arts fuel economic development in small towns





OUR ROLE IS OFTEN LESS ABOUT “PRESENTING” AN EVENT OURSELVES AND MORE ABOUT PROVIDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT HELPS OTHERS BRING EVENTS TO LIFE.



IN 2025, CATAMOUNT ARTS COLLABORATED WITH: MONTPELIER, LAKE MOREY, ISLAND POND, KING PINES, LYNDON, JOHNSON, NEWPORT, COLEBROOK, FRANCONIA, COVENTRY, ST. JOHNSBURY, LITTLETON, BURKE, BETHLEHEM, BRADFORD, AND FAIRLEE, AS WELL AS PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



Bradford, VT



St. Johnsbury, VT



Newport, VT

At Catamount Arts, we've learned that thriving downtown events don't happen because one organization does everything — they happen because organizations work together to make it easier for communities and volunteer-led groups to succeed.



Burke, VT



Fairlee, VT



Littleton, NH



Montpelier, VT



Island Pond, VT



Lyndon, VT

Sustainable events require shared infrastructure, shared risk, and shared belief in the long-term value of cultural participation. When municipalities, arts organizations, funders, local businesses, and community members all see themselves as stakeholders in a shared mission, events become more stable and more ambitious year after year.



DTWN St. Johnsbury, VT



Johnson, VT



Littleton, NH

Est. 2022

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

FINAL FRIDAY



FINAL FRIDAY

“Final Friday was recognized by the State of Vermont as a Signature Event—not just because it’s fun, but because it’s a powerful example of how arts, culture, and community can drive economic vitality in a rural downtown.”



Final Fridays demonstrates whay committed partnerships matter so deeply.



Consistency builds something much larger than attendance numbers — it builds belonging.



The result is not only stronger arts programming, but stronger downtowns, local economies, and social connections within communities.

THANK YOU

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