2011 Annual Report

Economic Development & Tourism

TOWN OF
KILLINGTON
VERMONT

2011 Annual Report

2011 was an energizing year for the Office of Economic Development and Tourism as it faced challenges both planned and unforeseen. Roles the EDT was tasked with in 2011 included those for which it was prepared – growing existing events, bettering existing town relationships and developing new marketing partnerships – and those unexpected, including town-wide budget deficits and the prodigious Hurricane Irene.

Throughout the year, the EDT faced these challenges and was a contributing factor to 2011's positive growth, generating an estimated economic impact of more than $4.4 million to the region as well as more than a billion media impressions for the Town. Additionally, one percent tax returns from 2011 increased 12 percent over returns collected in 2010.

Events, marketing, communications and long-term planning have been the core goals of the EDT, and all were successfully managed with aplomb thanks to the dedicated staff and volunteers who have supported and advocated for the EDT and its goals.

In this annual report for 2011, we've focused on key milestones that we consider to be suggestive of EDT success over the past years. The following pages will lay out information the office's goals, accomplishments, metrics for measuring success, and plans for 2012- 2013.

The EDT was honored and proud to receive recognition for these efforts and others from other entities throughout the state in 2011 as well. The office received a second consecutive designation of the Killington Hay Festival as a Top 10 Event by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, the designation of both Rt. 100 and Rt. 4 as Vermont Byways by the Vermont Scenery Preservation Council, and the prestigious 2011 Governor's Award for Marketing Excellence. These achievements bring merit and pride to the Town, but more importantly, they help us to grow our image as a leading destination in Vermont, open the doors to new sources of funding, and compete against other towns and resorts that have decades of marketing under their collective belts.

Looking ahead, the EDT will continue to espouse the need for strong, dedicated marketing initiatives, especially in a year of economic challenges. Killington as a town plans to continue to market itself competitively with other destinations, and try harder than ever to bring both short and long-term spending to the town.

Best,

Suzie Dundas
Director
Economic Development & Tourism

Killington's 250th Birthday: 1761 – 2011

2011 Annual Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2011 Goals and Key Actions ***Page. 4***

Economic Indicators of Success ***Page: 9***

Key Goals and Initiatives for 2012 ***Page: 16***

This report is divided into three major sections – what the EDT's goals were in 2011 and how they were accomplished, indicators of success and extended information on our results, and a look at key goals and initiatives for 2012 through 2013.

First, we'll explore 2011's goals and efforts in terms of branding, marketing, and events.

The next section will detail case studies of specific EDT-supported or produced events and their implications for the town, as well as the indicators by which we measure success. This portion also includes information on late August's Hurricane Irene and its short-term and long-term impact on Killington's tourism.

Finally, we'll provide a detailed look at some of 2012's major event, marketing, communication, and town development projects.

This report was prepared by the Town of Killington Office of Economic Development, with assistance and statistical information from the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing. This report is also available online at www.KillingtonTown.com.

2011 Goals: Branding

Prior to 2011, the various public outreach entities in Killington - including Town Departments, the EDT, Resort, Chamber of Commerce, Library, and Elementary School – all had separate logos with separate identities. These logos were confusing to the consumer, and made the offices seem like business entities, rather than one large destination vacation spot.

GOAL

Unite all Entities Under the Same Brand

In order to compete against already-united brands and destinations, the EDT identified the need to gather all town entities under one easily recognizable, clean, and attractive brand logo. By bringing representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, Resort, Town, and community members to the table, the EDT was able to re-image the town, unifying our consumer outreach and helping to identify us as a world-class destination.

The various logos seen by consumers prior to 2011

New logos, introduced June 2011

GOAL

Build off Killington Resort's Brand Recognition

Killington Resort has been the leading advertising and economic driver for the Town since it opened in 1958. Because of their successful marketing and outreach efforts, the Resort's logo is highly recognizable and helps support a dedicated skier base. Consumers see the Resort logo and automatically associate it with big-mountain adventure. In order to build off this brand recognition and identity, the Town decided to approach logo design with a 'similar-but-different' mindset. By using the most recognizable aspects of the Resorts logo, including colors and font, the Town was able to create a logo that suggests the same 'big-mountain adventure' feel while still retaining its own characteristics and brand.

2011 Goals: Branding

GOAL *Involve the Community in the Selection Process*

After working with designers to create the idea of a 'similar-but-different' approach to the new logo, the EDT presented several variations at public meetings, and invited public comment and feedback. Additionally, hands-on design workshops were held community representatives and business owners to make sure everyone with a stake in the community had a chance to be involved in the final logo selection.

Alternate logo designs presented for discussion at public meetings

Posters from Summer 2011

GOAL *Create Collateral with a Recognizable Look and Feel*

Prior to 2011, each piece of collateral – be it a poster for an event, advertisement for a marketing campaign or outdoor signage piece – was designed independently, with no long-term goal in mind. The key behind the EDT's introduction of a new logo was to create a theme which could be used throughout our collateral, regardless of season, project, or intended venue. This marketing initiative has been a major step towards establishing an easily recognizable, attractive brand which we can customize to fit our current need.

2011 Goals: Events

GOAL

Attract Events that Promote Our Existing Assets

During 2010 and 2011, the EDT produced and supported a series of successful new events, including the Winter Dew Tour, *Snoe.Down Music Festival, Cooler in the Mountains* Summer Concert Series, and American Junior Golf Tournament. The office also re-established or revamped existing events, including the Killington Stage Race, Killington Classic Motorcycle Touring Rally, and Killington Hay Festival. In 2011, the EDT focused on promoting and supporting events that would help us introduce the Town's assets to new crowds and audiences. By expanding the Killington Junior Golf Tournament from 99 golfers in 2010 to 144 in 2011, we were able to introduce more dedicated golfers to Killington's luscious greens. And by partnering with Americade to produce the Killington Classic and promote the Labor Day rally to the more than 50,000 riders who attend June's Americade Motorcycle Rally, we're introducing motorcyclists to Killington's roads and breathtaking scenery. The goal of attracting events that are a natural fit for the town is two-fold: first, we ensure that our guests are likely return as visitors. Second, we're able to ensure that we have the assets event promoters require for successful events, which makes it much easier for us to recruit long-term, larger scale events.

Motorcycles pack the Grist Mill in June 2011 as Americade Motorcycle Rally Participants visit Killington mid-week

GOAL

Expand Existing Events to Increase Revenue

In 2010, the EDT focused on producing events – creating reasons for people to come to town. In 2011, those events were taken to the next level, increasing efforts on events and initiatives designed to drive not just visits, but overnight stays.

- In 2011, the Fourth of July Celebration was expanded into a Star-Spangled Birthday Celebration, marking not just the Fourth of July, but also Killington's 250th Birthday. The EDT led a committee that expanded the parade, added programming elements like a photo booth and giant birthday cake, and advertised the event to second-homeowners and out of towners. These efforts resulted in a larger event, and likely more money spent in town over the course of the weekend.

- The 2011 Killington Junior Golf Tournament was expanded from 2010, with an increase to 144 total golfers – 45 more than in 2010. This brought additional spending as more people visited the Town and region. This also means an increased commitment from the American Junior Golf Association to Killington as the tournament begins to build name recognition and a positive reputation.

2011 Goals: Marketing

GOAL

Continue to Grow and Expand our Online Offerings

The majority of people planning leisure vacations are using the internet as their top resource, and the town is aiming to capture that market by making vacation-planning and destination information about the town plentiful and easy to find. In 2011, the EDT updated DiscoverKillington.com, and began significant online marketing. Social media advertising allows the office to tailor its ads to potential customers based on their interests, and is much less expensive than traditional advertising. Looking forward, the town will continue to expand our online presence with social media promotions, add information customized for smartphones and on-the-go devices, and make DiscoverKillington.com more modern and easier to navigate.

According to the U.S. Travel Association, approximately 76% of people planning leisure trips do so online. (http://www.ustravel.org/news/press-kit/travel-facts-and-statistics)

Sample 2011 ad designed to introduce golfers to Killington

GOAL

Undertake Marketing Initiatives Aimed at Long-term Results

Many of the marketing initiatives undertaken in 2010 were intended to drive short-term results – daytrippers and immediate 'heads in beds.' In 2011, the EDT began to focus on marketing strategies designed to have long-term impact – strategies designed to do things like build Killington's reputation, and have people begin to associate the name 'Killington' with the idea of constant activity and high-quality entertainment. An example of this is the 2011 Golf Marketing Campaign, arranged as a partnership between Killington Resort, Green Mountain National, and the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing. Although this campaign aimed for 2011 visits, an additional goal was to spread the word that golf in the Killington region is accessible, affordable, and high-quality. Our marketing efforts were aimed at golfers across New England, not golfers already familiar with the courses or planning to golf in the region. Efforts like this are hard to quantify short-term, but due to the large number of impressions this campaign earned, measurable golf website traffic, and feedback from golf industry leaders, we can surmise that this campaign had a positive affect on the long-term future of golf in Killington. Golf trending in future years will help us further evaluate this hypothesis.

2011 Goals: Marketing

GOAL
Achieve Statewide Recognition for the Town

The EDT received several notable recognitions from State and tourism industry leaders in 2011, including:

- The Governor's Award for Marketing Excellence from the Vermont Travel Industry Conference
- The designation of the Killington Hay Festival as a Vermont Chamber of Commerce Top 10 Event
- Rt. 100 and Rt. 4 were designated by the State as Vermont Scenic Byways, bringing state recognition, funding, and staffing assistance to the promotion of these key routes. As both the Crossroad of Vermont Byway (Rt. 4) and the Rt. 100 Scenic Byway (Rt. 100) cross in Killington, our town is primed to see increased tourism as driving these roads becomes a popular vacation activity. These nine byways are promoted by the State via videos, brochures, information at visitor's centers, signage, maps and more – all of which provide additional exposure for Killington.

The logo for the Crossroad of Vermont Byway. The EDT is currently leading the development of a final logo for Rt. 100

GOAL
Develop New Marketing Partnerships to Expand our Reach

Guests dance near the stage at the Cooler in the Mountains Summer Concert Series, presented by Long Trail Brewing Company

The EDT developed key partnerships in 2011 that allowed our events and marketing campaigns to have reach beyond what we could afford to buy with a traditional spend. The Killington Hay Festival, for example, partnered with Vermont Life Magazine, Fox 44, The Franklin Park Zoo in Boston and others to help drive additional exposure for the event and better leverage our investments.

For 2011's *Cooler in the Mountains* Summer Concerts, the Town partnered with Long Trail Brewing Company to present the event, relying on substantial financial and promotional assistance from the company. Other key sponsors of the event included Killington Resort (which played an increased partnership role from 2010) and Casella Waste Management. We look forward to continuing these key partnerships in 2012 with continued concerts and further promotional marketing partnerships.

Measuring Results

What factors are used to calculate results?

The 2010 Strategic Plan outlined a series of indicators to measure its efforts. We'll use these same indicators in 2011.

- **Event Attendance:** When we know the approximate number of people who attended an event, we can use average daily spending numbers to calculate how much money was likely spent in our area – this is the *estimated economic impact.* This number helps us to evaluate which efforts we should continue, and which are not providing a positive return for the town.
- **Publicity and Media:** A long-term way to build brand recognition and a positive reputation for the town is by keeping our name in the news. By looking at the number of media impressions earned for various events and promotions, we can gauge what holds the most interest for consumers, and what stories we should be pitching to increase our exposure for the Town. Media impressions – or how many people see or hear the name Killington – is a way for us to reach larger audiences without buying advertising. This is referred to by the EDT as "earned media."
- **Taxable Receipts:** Taxable receipts offer a statistical view at our economic results, monthly and by year. This information comes from the State Department of Taxes and allows us to make observations about likely reasons for changes and shifts in data.
- **Macro and Micro Economic Factors**: By looking at macro-trending, such as multi-year consumer spending rates, and micro-trending, like local spending in Killington and surrounding communities, we're able to provide context for the challenges of the consumer environment in which the EDT is working.
- **Case Studies:** In order to provide more information on specific events and spending, the EDT will look in detail at case studies for two events and provide data on why these events are considered successful. This is a new factor not shown in the 2010 Annual Report.

Events supported or produced by the EDT in July & August 2011

Measuring Results: Event Attendance

Estimated Spending in Town by Event

By multiplying (the number of people who attended each event) x (the average daily seasonal expenditure per person) x (the average number of days stayed per person,) we're able to calculate an approximate number of how much spending occurred in town around each event.

Event	Estimated Attendance	Average Daily spend	Average Number of Days in Town	Estimated Economic Impact
Winter Dew Tour 2011	30000	$56.93	2	$3,415,800.00
snoe.down	4000	$56.93	1	$227,720.00
Killington Stage Race	1590	$40.26	3	$192,040.20
Killington's Star Spangeled Birthday Celebration	500	$40.26	1	$20,130.00
Dog Days	400	$40.26	1	$16,104.00
Killington Wine Festival	605	$40.26	2	$48,714.60
AJGA	450	$40.26	5	$90,585.00
Cooler in the Mountains	2000	$40.26	1	$80,520.00
Circus Smirkus	1862	$40.26	1	$74,964.12
Spartan Race	6000	$40.26	2	$241,560.00
Hay Festival	1000	$41.23	1	$41,230.00
Dock Dogs National Championships	1200	$41.23	1	$49,476.00
Total	**19607**			**$4,498,843.92**

Average daily spending, per person, per day
(averages both day trips and overnight guests)

Winter:	$56.93
Summer:	$40.26
Fall:	$41.23

VT Visitor Spending Breakdown (2009)

Food & Beverage:	25.9%
Lodging:	17.4%
Groceries:	18.8%
Entertainment & Recreation:	8.2%

Other VT Spending Stats

- Direct visitor spending totals $1.42 billion per year
- 33% of all lodging nights are second homeowners
- Aug & Feb are the busiest months for visitors

Source: Vermont Department of Tourism & Marketing

Measuring Results: Publicity and Media

Media Impressions per Event

The chart below shows approximately how many people saw the Town of Killington mentioned in various publications and outlets. This media – which is earned, not purchased – gives the Town exposure in markets where we could not otherwise afford to have a presence, be it nationwide or in expensive advertising markets like New York City and Boston.

Note that this is only a sample of the events that received coverage, or a representative summary.

Event	Media Outlets	Impressions
Winter Dew Tour	LA Times, Transworld Snowboarding, NBC, Fuel TV, MTV2, Denver Post, Hulu.com	293,564,750
Killington Stage Race	VPR, Boston Globe, Bike World News, VeloNews, Rutland Herald, SevenDays, Royal Gazette Online	7,564,750
Killington Junior Golf Tournament	Boston.com, GolfWeek, Bennington banner, Sun Chronicle, Rutland Herald, PegTV, WCAX, VermontVacation	10,265,831
Killington Dog Days	Metroland, SevenDays, Kids VT, Times Argus, Post Star, Star 92.9, VermontVacation	3,048,120
Killington Wine Festival	SevenDays, Mountain Times, Vermont Standard, Best of Burlington, AAA.com, WXAC	3,876,610
Cooler in the Mountains Summer Concert Series	Burlington Free Press, Fox44, Vermont Arts Council, Yankee Magazine, SkierNews, Brattleboro Reformer, Times Argus	43,945,830
Spartan Race	Rutland Herald, Times Argus, Outside Magazine, Bennington Banner, VermontVacation	4,361,112
Hurricane Irene	CNN, AP, NBC, MSNBC, Weather Channel, Huffington Post, Washington Post, New York Times, NPR, NECN, Boston Globe, Fox News	1,342,293,193
Farm to Table Festival	Oprah.com, OffManhatan.com, Deerfield Valley News	7,615,627
Killington Hay Festival	The Ski Channel, VermontLife Magazine, Boston.com, Family Friendly Boston, Jamaica Plain Gazette	6,634,803

Increased interest in Killington makes it easier to recruit events and target likely visitors. Once potential guests have heard of Killington, they are much more likely to visit – we don't have to introduce them to the region *and* convince them to visit when they've already been introduced to it through a trusted news source.

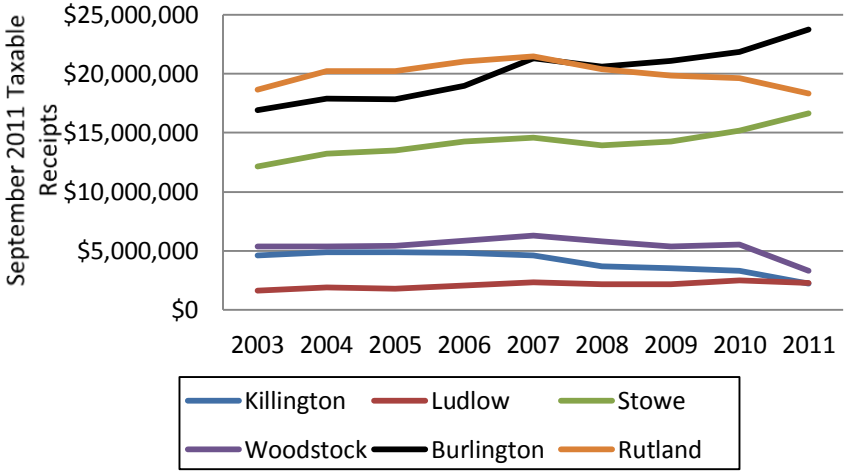
Measuring Results: Taxable Receipts

Hurricane Irene

Hurricane Irene hit Killington on August 29th, destroying roads in and out of town and effectively isolating Killington from travel throughout the state for more than two weeks.

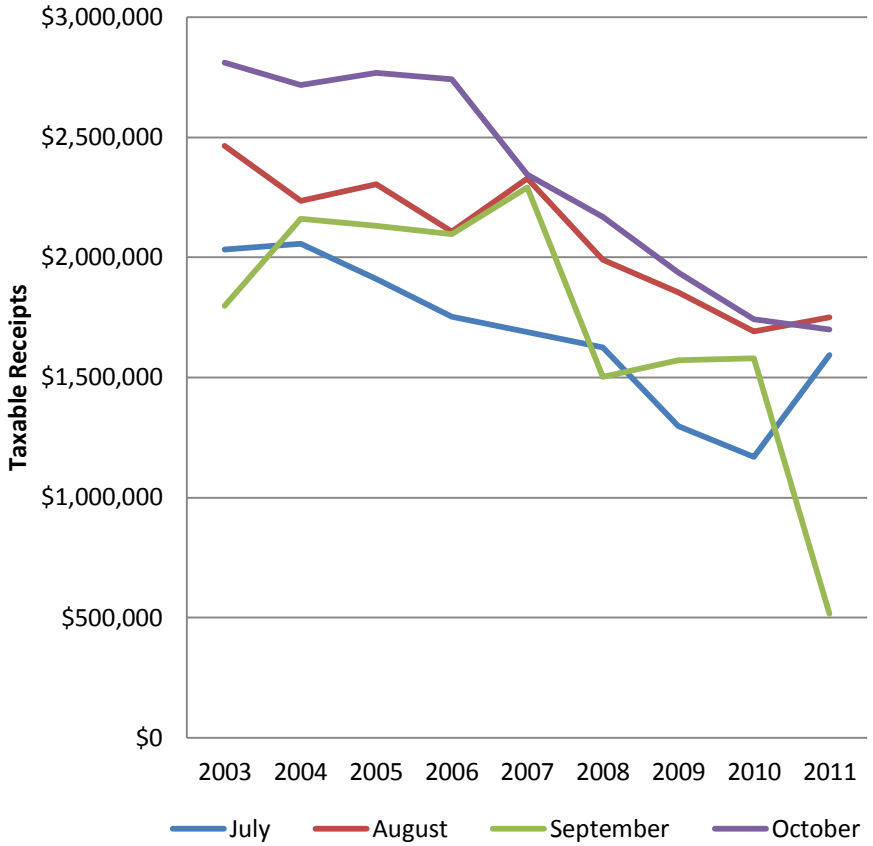
Statewide, September 2011revenues from the sales and use tax were $20.27 million - 3.8 percent off target. However, Killington saw a much larger percentage drop in business, as did surrounding central Vermont communities*.

Fortunately for the state but unfortunate for the town, Killington likely lost seasonal foliage visits and autumn tourists to other towns in the State that were not as heavily impacted by Hurricane Irene, like Stowe and Burlington. This is evidenced in the chart below, which shows a dramatic rise in spending in Stowe and Burlington at the same time that spending in Killington, Rutland and Woodstock is falling.



*http://finance.vermont.gov/sites/finance/files/pdf/revenues/October%202011%20Revenue%20Press%20Release.pdf

Impact of Irene on July-October Taxable Receipts

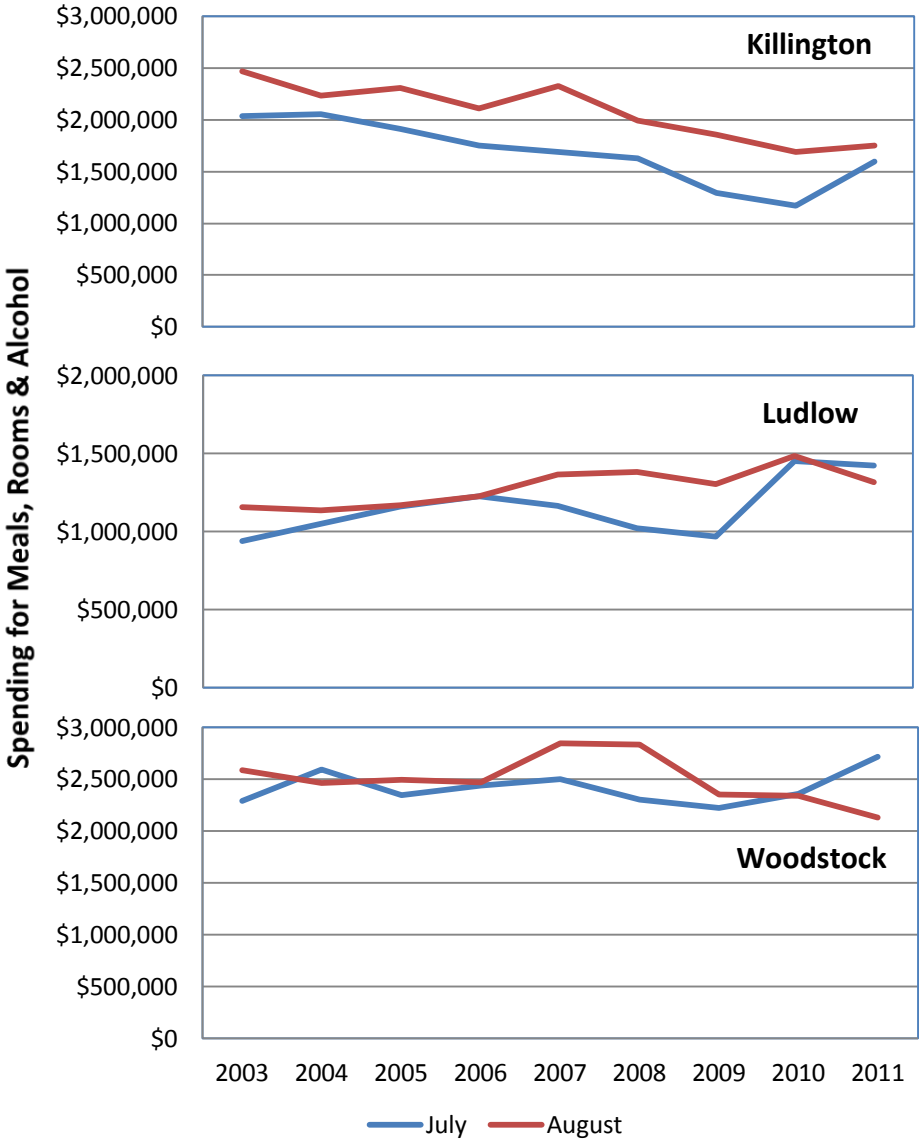


September: $1,064,232 drop in 2011
October: $43,559 drop in 2011

Despite the huge drop in spending during September and October 2011, the total option tax revenue collected by the town for the year was **$736,419.00 – $86,419.00** more than predicted in the budget and **$79,310.73** more than 2010.

Measuring Results: Taxable Receipts

When we look at receipts not affected by Irene, we see positive, upward growth



The three charts to the left suggest that local factors are responsible for Killington's growth

These three charts display the taxable receipts for Killington, Ludlow, and Woodstock for July and August 2011 – two months on which the EDT focused a significant amount of its resources

- Killington saw growth from 2010 for both months
- Ludlow saw a decline from 2010 for both months
- Woodstock saw growth from 2010 for July, but not August

This suggests to us that we have to look at local – or micro – economic factors to explain the changes. If these factors were statewide – or macro – we would expect all towns to see the same results. For August and July 2011, the leading factor driving visitors to Killington was the EDT, with significant support from Killington Resort and other businesses. This correlation suggests that EDT efforts were a contributing factor to summer growth throughout town.

"Our second year of substantial day-to-day growth – all attributed to EDT's efforts."

- Phil Black, Owner, Lookout Tavern, *referring to growth from July 1 to the end of August*

"[Summer concerts] give visitors who are here something to do, and helps validate their decision to spend their vacation dollars in Killington."

- Bill Vines, Owner, Birch Ridge Inn

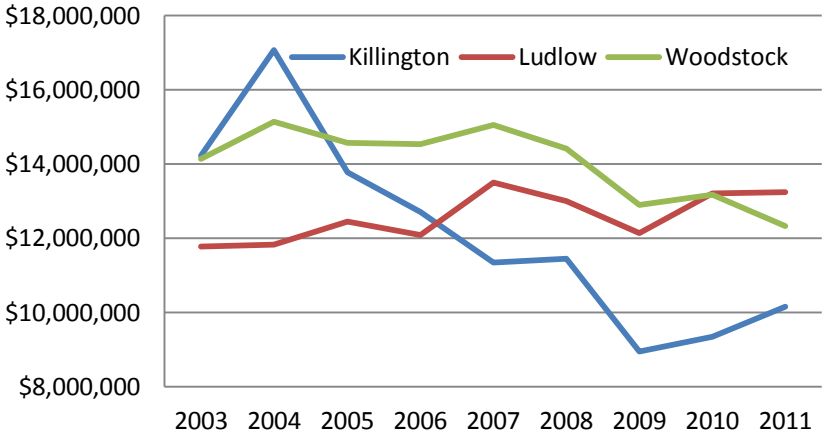
Killington spending in July was up 36 percent, with August spending up four percent.

Measuring Results: Taxable Receipts

This chart shows Killington's MRA (Meals, Rooms, Alcohol) & Retail Sales receipts for the months of July, August & October of each year – September has been removed to ensure that Hurricane Irene's effects do not influence the overall trending.

The EDT's intense summer and autumn efforts began in 2010, which saw a **$389,680** growth over 2009 – not only reducing a seven-year trend of decline, but actually turning that drop into an economic increase. That trend continued in 2011, jumping from **$9,341,551** spent in July, August and October of 2010 to more than **$10,147,600** – more than eight percent up. *This is the most growth seen during these months since 2004.*

July, August & October Taxable Receipts



Measuring Results: Macro & Micro Factors

Consumer Spending by Household			
	2008	**2009**	**2010**
National	+1.7 %	-2.8 %	-2.0 %
N.E. Region	+6.4 %	-1.9 %	-.008 %*

By looking at consumer spending on a national level as well as a regional New England level, we're able to provide context for the economic climate in which the EDT is working.

- National Consumer Spending is once again on the decline, indicating that consumers are spending less money per year, and likely cutting down on luxury expenditures like vacations
- New England as a region saw a minimal drop in 2009 and stayed level in 2010, indicating that the regions where our likely guests live (Boston, New York, CT, etc) have slightly more money to spend on non-essential goods than the average American
- This suggests that it would be wise to focus on regional advertising for the next year until the market begins to shift in a positive direction
- These are the most up-to-date numbers available, but based on trending, it would seem that national spending will begin to level out in 2012. Therefore, it would be wise to consider advertising in 2013 that expands the size of our "local" market (Canada, DC/MD/VA, etc)

Source: The Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Surveys, 2008 – 2010

*Statistically insignificant

Case Study: Killington Junior Golf (AJGA)

2010 was the first year of the Killington Junior Golf Tournament – an official event of the American Junior Golf Association (AJGA.) With over 5,500 members under age 18, the AJGA is the largest competitive golf association for up-and-coming junior golfers. The event was expanded in 2011, with positive results for the town.

In 2012, the Killington Junior Golf tournament will be held in late June, a decision intended to maximize revenue at Green Mountain National. We also hope this start the summer season early and expose golfers to our courses earlier than in years past.

Estimated Economic Impact in 2010 v. 2011

Why Target Golfers?

Golfers are a key group for the town to be targeting with marketing. Based on their demographics, they are exactly the audience **likely to visit and return** to Killington in non-winter months.

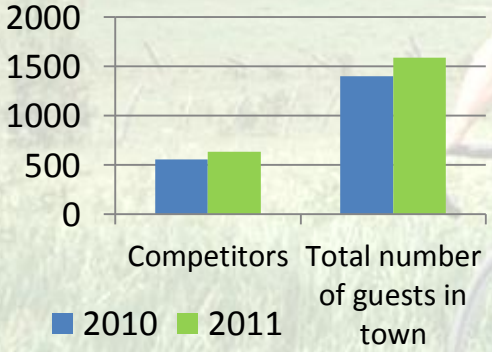
- Average age: 39
- New golfers: 59% male, 49% female
- Avg. Household income: $87,300
- Avg. net worth: $768,400

*for the region

Case Study: Killington Stage Race

The Killington Stage Race – once a staple of the New England competitive cycling scene – is now beginning to regrow its reputation as one of the most challenging and serious events of the summer. Resurrected in 2010, the Stage Race saw 559 competitors in its first year back, and 636 competitors in its second year – a growth of 14 percent in just one year. This suggests to us that cycling events are an excellent match for the area.

Estimated Economic Impact 2010 v. 2011



Cost to Town

2010:	$48,000
2011:	$39,000
2012:	$33,000

Media Impressions

2010:	1,846,240
2011:	7,564,750

Looking Forward

The Killington Stage Race contract is up for renegotiation in 2012, and the EDT plans to continue to sponsor the race at a decreasing level, having provided seed money to get the event up and running again after a ten-year break. The race will be adding new divisions in 2012, and registration opened in mid-February. Cyclists, like golfers, are an important segment of the population for us to target, given the excellent riding conditions and propensity of bike clubs and events surrounding Killington, and the fact that cyclists tend to have a higher average household income.

Sources: Golf data, National Golf Federation Demographic Report; Stage Race data extrapolated based on avg. spending data from the State.

Looking Forward: 2012 Plan

In 2012, the EDT has a tighter budget, but the same roles and tasks as years past. Therefore, it is more important than ever for the EDT to work with partners, leverage marketing and media partnerships, and transition to less expensive forms of exposure and communication.

River Road

Rebranding our Summer Assets

The Town of Killington has many features which make it the perfect spot for a destination stay or day trip, including the summer and recreational assets on River Road. Over the past years, the Parks & Recreation Department and Sherburne Memorial Library have developed strong program offerings like free outdoor summer concerts, summer adventure programs, sports camps, a swim team, and a large 4th of July celebration. These offerings, however, have been marketed one-by-one, and aren't well known. In 2012, the EDT will help the Parks and Recreation Department with marketing and PR for their offerings in order to brand all the activities and programs together under one brand to last into future years. This will include:

- Assistance with press release scheduling, writing and pitching
- Creation of a River Road website
- Assistance in creating a new logo and marketing materials for the River Road experience
- Staff assistance for marketing consulting

The new branding initiative for River Road activities will make it easier to promote and more recognizable among consumers.

This summer poster is a chance for the Town to market the events together, instead of one-by-one.

The architecture of Green Mountain College echoes the laid-back, classic feel of Vermont as a state

Statewide Projects

Working with the State to Promote Vermont Assets

Many people visit Killington because they recognize the name or have a connection to the Town, but there is an untouched segment of vacationers that the EDT has not targeted before – visitors who want to visit Vermont, but don't have a specific destination in mind. By working with partner organizations like the Vermont Department of Tourism & Marketing, the Visitor and Convention Bureau and State Chamber of Commerce, we'll make sure Killington's efforts complement state-wide efforts. Additionally, by being part of efforts that promote Vermont as a destination, we'll be able to introduce visitors who are interested in the state (but haven't determined where) to the Town of Killington. This ties directly into the EDT founding goal of branding Killington as a four-season vacation destination.

Looking Forward: 2012 Plan

Online Presence

Building and Expanding our Biggest Marketing Tool

Since the vast majority of vacation goers are planning at least one aspect of their trip online, it's more important than ever to have a strong online presence in terms of:

- An attractive, easy-to-navigate website
- Interactive social media
- Highly-targeted online advertising
- Electronic communication and multimedia assets

Updating the Town's web presence is extremely important as it impacts how easy it is to find information when doing an online search, how likely media outlets are to cover Town stories, and whether not guests feel a connection to the Town. Online assets are generally *less expensive than traditional outreach, easier to update,* and have results that are *easier and more accurate to track.* These are important factors to consider, especially in a budget-conscious spending year.

An expanded social media presence and interactive website will allow people to easily and quickly find information they want – an essential requirement for any online strategy

Byways

Continue existing long-term development

Of the nine state byways, two cross in Killington. All are featured on State promotional and advertising assets

The Crossroad of Vermont Byway (Rt. 4) and the Scenic Rt. 100 Byway (Rt. 100) both received designation as official state byways in 2011, opening the door for national funding and state promotional and marketing assistance. These regional efforts – completed in conjunction with the State and surrounding towns – have created a new asset for the town: Killington is now sitting at the intersection of two scenic byways. State efforts so far to promote the byways include the creation of a custom video for each byway and a promotional brochure for distribution throughout New England. In 2012, the EDT will continue to take a leading role in further developing both byways, including promotional and marketing expansions. The EDT also plans on revamping the Scenic Rt. 100 byway logo, and creating itineraries for day trip tours, families, nature lovers, and others.

More information, including custom videos, on the Vermont Byway Program is available at http://www.vermont-byways.us.

Looking Forward: 2012 Plan

Events

Hosting and recruiting events has been and will continue to be a core function of the EDT. Two of the major event goals for 2012 are outlined below. Events – although they appear to be short-term endeavors – help us to build the reputation of Killington as a destination where something is always happening, and introduce our Town to attendees who may become return visitors. This is the reason why it's essential to recruit events that match our outdoor, athletic, healthy lifestyle brand.

Evaluating Events

Focusing on Events with Clear Returns

The EDT would love to have events every weekend – but our resources don't allow for that. Instead, we prioritize events, spending the most time and money on those that deliver the best results on behalf of the town. 2012's efforts will be focused on events that deliver measurable, large-scale returns (The Killington Stage Race, the Killington Classic, the Spartan Race, and the events of the Killington Hay Festival.) We'll also eliminate events that are time or resource-intensive and don't produce significant results, like 2011's Killington Dog Days or Circus Smirkus.

We'll focus on events that drive overnight stays, such as:

- The Killington Stage Race
- The Killington Classic Motorcycle Touring Rally
- The Spartan Race
- The Killington Junior Golf Tournament

And we'll make sure new events we introduce or support are designed to encourage overnight stays, like:

- The Snowmont Music Festival
- The Vermont Challenge
- The Killington Farm to Table Festival

The EDT will focus on events that target participants likely to return to the region

Generating Stays

Turning Customers into Return Customers

When evaluating whether or not to support or recruit an event, the EDT will look at long-term goals in addition to short-term returns – we'll aim to make sure our events target guests whose demographics suggest that that are likely to return to the region. By focusing on athletic and outdoor programming, we'll reach an audience that is more likely than the average traveler to spend their free time outdoors or in adventure recreation. We'll also work to integrate town businesses into our events by partnering with hotels or promoting local restaurants. In so doing, we we'll introduce guests to businesses and assets in the region, providing more opportunities for them to create a bond with one aspect of the town.

Looking Forward: 2012 Plan

The Town of Killington has very strong assets and plenty of reasons to visit year-round – but without dedicated and well executed marketing efforts, it will be extremely difficult to attract visitors and customers. Below are select marketing goals for 2012 aimed at growing short and long-term tourism.

New Marketing

Introducing Non-event Based Marketing

In 2012, the EDT will begin marketing aimed at promoting the town's existing assets, rather than wrapping all of our marketing around specific events. These efforts include projects like:

- Marketing weddings: Weddings are a key group for the town to be attracting. They are year-round, can fill non-event weekends, and benefit many types of businesses (venues, restaurants, entertainment for guests, bachelor/ette party locations, etc.) Additionally, the Town already have the assets required for a great wedding (scenic views, lodging, transportation systems, and more) – we just need to market them. By creating a significant wedding presence for Killington, including a new web landing page, fulfillment pieces, presence at wedding shows, and more, we'll begin to spread the word that our region can accommodate any type of wedding party. This is likely to drive weddings in both the short and long-term future.
- Online advertising: Online advertising is very effective as it allows us to precisely target who we want to reach (e.g: cyclists age 24 - 30 in Boston who like "Vermont.") By targeting guests who are self-identified as belonging to a demographic more likely than the average online user to visit Killington, we are able to steward our advertising dollars better than with a traditional print ad. We're also able to reach trip planners exactly when they are making decisions. For example, we can buy advertising that makes DiscoverKillington.com a top result when someone does a search for "Vermont vacation info," or any number of other keywords.

A Town vehicle with the new Town logo

Branding

Creating an Identity as Town

The EDT introduced a new town logo in 2011, which set the tone for all marketing – events, graphic design, advertisements, and publications all took on this new advertising feel (see page 4.) In 2012, we'll finish this branding project by revamping DiscoverKillington.com – a time-intensive but extremely important process. Launching the new site (as well as an updated KillingtonTown.com site) will make our web presence match our print and online presence – a necessity for any comprehensive, long-term rebranding effort. The goal for launching this new site is March 2012.

We'll also continue to make our print and event presence – including logo design, marketing materials and electronic communications – match the new, rebranded town image.

Conclusions

Despite the challenges of 2011, the Town of Killington continued to support economic growth and outward marketing – an absolute necessity for Killington to become the leader in New England tourism that it certainly has the capabilities to be.

Tourism spending and growth, unfortunately, do not grow on a steady, per-annum basis. We may see a few years of significant growth, followed by a year of no growth, followed by a small decline, and then another year of rapid upward growth. Measuring results year-to-year is a clear and consistent way to track results, but it doesn't reflect the up-and-down nature of long-term growth. Development is a multi-year commitment with an inordinate amount of variables influencing the process at various times. By expecting level, consistent growth that matches our budget or calendar cycles and expecting all results to be immediate, we may do ourselves a disservice in the long run. However, the decision of the Town to continue its commitment and support of Economic Development and Tourism shows a commitment to sustainable growth in the future

The EDT will continue to make decisions in the best interest of the town, and seek input from community members, town leaders, residents, and experts on tourism and marketing. The EDT was created with the goals of increasing four-season tourism, promoting the region, creating opportunities to bring revenue into town businesses, and undertaking projects design to positively impact the overall Killington experience. We'll continue to fulfill these roles on behalf of town, residents, and visitors to our community. We'll also seek to introduce new ideas and opportunities to the town as the spending climate and trends in vacation demands and marketing practices evolve.

Finally, the EDT would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the individuals, volunteers, businesses, and state and community organizations who have significantly contributed to the EDT's efforts throughout 2011 – far too many to list in one document. The assistance, expertise and support from these people and organizations have been critically important to the EDT since the early years of its inception, and will continue to rely on their support and assistance as we move forward. The EDT looks forward to more years of economic growth, new visitors, and successful development during all four seasons.

Prepared by the Office of Economic Development & Tourism

TOWN OF
KILLINGTON
VERMONT