

# Crisis on the Horizon

Controlling the Cost of Education,  
A critical issue in Central Vermont's future.

- **Central Vermont now spends \$100 million annually on public education.**
- **In the past five years, enrollment has declined more than six percent.**
- **In those five years, budgets have increased 26 percent.**
- **Education costs are increasing at a rate of \$5 million per year.**
- **Enrollment has declined in 17 of the region's 23 towns since 2001.**
- **Ten towns have seen a double-digit percentage decline in enrollment.**
- **The region's total enrollment is down about 650 students since 2001.**
- **That enrollment represents a loss \$4 million in annual state funding.**
- **Median per pupil spending is \$9,875, more than any town spent in 2004.**
- **Ten of 23 towns now spend more than \$10,000 per equalized pupil.**

## **RELATED CENTRAL VERMONT CHAMBER PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS**

### **Controlling the cost of education:**

Vermont residents and businesses are best served by heavy reliance on market competition and private sector expertise, including private sector non-profits.

- Expand school choice.
- Increase incentives for school consolidations and the flexibility accorded local boards.
- Resist pressure to increase per-pupil education block grants above the rate of inflation.
- Regionalization of services and education for improvement and/or cost savings.
- Merging of municipalities and schools to improve efficiency and/or flexibility.

### **Slow or reverse declining enrollment:**

The lack of housing is a very serious social and economic issue that must be addressed.

- Approve "new neighborhoods" and "housing land bank" legislation.
- Facilitation of, and support for, housing development in all price ranges, and reduction of obstacles preventing housing development.
- Revisions in local zoning to encourage more dense development, especially housing.