

## Tourism Department Debuts New On-line Itinerary Planner



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MONTPELIER, Vt. – In the fiercely competitive on-line travel and tourism market, every destination and service provider is looking for a technological edge.

So Vermont's Tourism Department is hoping that its new on-line itinerary planner will position the Green Mountain State in the fast lane of the information superhighway, and put more visitors on the state's highways and byways.

"This is really a remarkable tool, a step ahead of where everybody else is," said Bruce Hyde, Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing. "With more travelers using the Internet to plan even weekend road trips, we think this has the potential to really boost our tourism bottom line."

The new system, called the Vermont Itinerary Planner, is part of the department's VermontVacation.com website and allows clients to plan and map their entire trip.

That includes searching for lodging, dining, recreation, attractions, shopping, and events by town or by region, and adding them to a day-by-day itinerary.

What makes the system unique is that visitors to the site can save their itinerary and then update it to add new events or change existing ones, even personalizing events such as visits to relatives.

The entire trip can then be mapped complete with directions for easy driving between events, and updated remotely during the trip.

Merchants can add or update their own business listings, and will see immediately if events or attractions are closed or unavailable during their proposed visit.

The Itinerary Planner is part of the ConnectVermont Project, an ambitious program designed to integrate broadband, fiberoptic, and other technologies as part of a system to support both tourism and travel on Vermont's roadways.

Sen. Patrick Leahy has been instrumental in helping to secure nearly \$15 million in federal Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) funding from the Federal Highway Administration since 2000.

These funds have already helped with the development of a system of interactive computer kiosks at Vermont's rest centers, development for broadband infrastructure on Vermont's interstate corridor and other technological advancements.

"21st Century travelers turn to the internet for information and reservations. We all know Vermont is the best place to vacation, but VermontVacation.com is also going to make it the easiest place to plan a vacation," said Senator Patrick Leahy.

The state plans a formal introduction of the itinerary planner to national travel media in early 2007.

"We are very excited about the potential for Vermont's online itinerary planner to help bring more visitors to our state," Hyde said.

For more information or to experience the Vermont Travel Planner, please visit [www.VermontVacation.com](http://www.VermontVacation.com) (<http://www.VermontVacation.com>)

