

Arrival of Amtrak in Essex Junction

JULY 19, 2021

FREE EVENT

29 RAILROAD AVENUE
ESSEX JUNCTION, VT



Essex Junction celebrated as Amtrak Reopened for Business!

The rain didn't stop the train or the crowd on Monday, July 19th as the Amtrak Vermonter pulled into the Village of Essex Junction station. Thank you to all who found their umbrellas and spent the morning with us!

Village President, Andrew Brown was a guest speaker at the ceremonial Amtrak send off celebration in St. Albans. He recognized the return of the Vermonter as an important step in reopening Vermont and thanked **Senator Leahy, Senator Sanders, and Congressman Welch** for their ongoing support of passenger train travel. He extended thanks to Senator Leahy's team for prompting the Village to file a request for Congressional Directed Spending Funds – earmark funding for desperately needed renovations to the station in Essex Junction. The Village President said he has great hope for the future of passenger rail in Vermont and supports the proposal to build a commuter rail system with the potential to link many of Vermont's major municipalities – with the Village serving as Vermont's principal rail junction, as it has always been.



Photo courtesy: Brian Shelden



Meanwhile, in Essex Junction, Brownell Library hosted a fun morning with a craft project at the pavilion where over 35 kids and 20 adults took part in making train-themed noisemakers to prepare for the Vermonter's arrival. Sweet Wheels Donuts provided a colorful display of yummy donuts and juice. Brownell's toy train served up some extra fun and kids learned about the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program which builds early literacy skills and prepares children for school.

Next stop! The crowd gathered and cheered for the arrival of the Amtrak Vermonter as it pulled into the Essex Junction station. Over 100 people were waiting to board the train while those in attendance snacked on treats and hot coffee provided by Nest Coffee & Bakery.



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Unified Manager Evan Teich welcomed the crowd and thanked the citizens for their patience as services resume and as plans for station upgrades become a reality. **Village President Andrew Brown** delivered his second speech of the day, this time with a focus on the dire condition of the station and the need for continued support of renovations to Essex Junction's multimodal station.



Those in attendance received a surprise greeting (and a few fist pumps) from **Lieutenant Governor Molly Gray**. Other guest speakers included **Representative Karen Dolan**; Executive Director of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, **Charlie Baker**; **Perry Martel** from the Vermont Rail System who is also an Operation Life Saver Vermont Board Member; and **Brian Shelden** of the Essex Economic Development Commission.

The event wrapped up with a walking tour of the new housing and commercial development, including the planned Crescent Connector project. **Robin Pierce, Community Development Director** led a group through the Village to showcase the work that would compliment an upgrade to the station.

In addition to the guests who agreed to speak at the Essex Junction event, the Village Board of Trustees and Unified Manager Evan Teich send special thanks to **Tim Jerman** and **Jerry Fox** of the Essex Community Historical Society for lending photo displays of the station; **Megan Allison** and the staff of Brownell Library for hosting the children's event and for lending equipment; **Village**

Public Works for loading, unloading and setting up tents and equipment; **Greg Morgan**, super volunteer and former Essex Economic Development Commission Chair, for his time and for sparking the idea for this event; **Tammy Getchell** for coordination and event planning; **Al Villa** and **John Gawdrecki**, Essex Amtrak caretakers for providing access to the station for the event; **Representative Lori Houghton** and **Representative Karen Dolan** for spreading the word and encouraging participation; **Essex Rec** for coordinating the use of their shuttle buses; **EJRP** for loaning out tents, chairs and tables; **Robin Pierce** for event coordination and hosting the walking tour; and **Toni Clithero**, VTrans Amtrak Grants Program Manager and **Chip Sawyer**, Director of Planning for St. Albans for coordinating our event with the other festivities happening that day.



For details about the Multimodal station renovation project, please visit the Village website at: <https://www.essexjunction.org/departments/planning/essex-junction-multimodal-station>.