

Community Garden To Have Additional Land

HARDWICK — The Center for a Biobased Economy is initiating revitalization of the Hardwick Community Garden. Located near the Cottage Street Bridge along the Lamolle River, the town has offered the project support and additional land that has been used by gardeners in the past.

Town Manager Dan Hill said he was pleased to see the expansion as community gardens are an effective way to promote community development. He said this instilled pride in the town and fostered community relationships.

The Center for a Biobased Economy is a recently formed non-profit dedicated to promoting sustainable agriculture in the greater Hardwick area. With the guidance and informational resources offered by the Vermont Community Garden Network, CBE is taking the initial steps toward a robust garden program in Hardwick.

CBE's Hilary Hoffman said the garden offers seniors, youth, the disabled and families from all socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds a place to get out for some fresh air together, exercise, and support each other in growing great vegetables and flowers.

According to the Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger, about 55,000 Vermonters, including 21,000 children, are "food insecure," meaning their families cannot afford adequate diets, so parents skip meals in order to allow their children to eat. In the last five years, Vermont's rate of the most severe form of hunger — children going without food — has more than doubled. Visits to local food pantries have hit record numbers; so has the number of Vermonters using Food Stamps.

In addition to individual gardeners, CBE is encouraging the in-

volvement of youth, senior, church, 4-H and other groups.

Participating gardeners will receive a 20 foot by 20 foot plot that has been tilled and fertilized and the use of garden tools. Smaller plots (10 foot by 10 foot) are available for children under 12. Fees support the circulation of two newsletters, mowing of the garden perimeter and picnic area, and an end of season Harvest Celebration. CBE hopes to provide a picnic table for gardeners to use as well as a sand pile for young children.

High Mowing Seeds has offered to donate seeds and North Hardwick Dairy has volunteered to plow and till garden space. Vermont Soy has expressed interest in planting a soybean demonstration plot. The Hardwick Food Pantry and the Community Kitchen welcomes any produce community gardeners would like to donate.

A work weekend is scheduled for May 20 and 21 to kick-off the gardening season. Plots will be leased for the season on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration forms can be picked up at the Hardwick Gazette, United Church, Memorial Building, Buffalo Mountain Co-op, Promised Land Ministries, The Flower Basket, and the Greensboro Early Learning Center. For further information, contact Hilary Hoffman at hardwick_community_garden@yahoo.com or 533-2598.