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Burlington Free Press WEEKEND

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PRINT-ONLY SUBSCRIBER-EXCLUSIVE SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE

TRIAL OF THE CENTURY American culture wars began 100 years ago at Scopes Monkey Trial

Builders of affordable housing brace for cuts on the horizon



Kelley's Field II, recently opened by Cathedral Square and Evernorth, utilized 13 sources of funding for the \$11.3 million project, including federal sources of funding that are threatened by proposed Trump Administration budget cuts. PHOTOS BY DAN D'AMBROSIO/BURLINGTON FREE PRESS

Federal cuts impact construction in state

Dan D'Ambrosio Burlington Free Press USA TODAY NETWORK

Construction of affordable housing in Vermont is headed off a cliff if the budget cuts proposed by the Trump Administration come to fruition, according to top officials at two of the state's most prolific developers of low-income housing – Cathedral Square and Evernorth. A fiscal year 2026 budget proposal from the Trump Administration calls for a 44% reduction in funding – totaling \$32.3 billion – for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which offers critical funding programs for builders of affordable housing. “If that happens, it’s just an enor-

mous hit to our ability to build more housing,” said Kathy Beyer, senior vice president of real estate development for Evernorth. “We will build significantly less affordable housing. It could easily be 50% less.” Evernorth builds low-income housing across the state of Vermont, including in Chittenden County, as well as in Maine and New Hampshire. The non-profit currently has nine projects under construction in Vermont with local partners like Cathedral Square, comprising 285 apartments. Another seven projects are in the pre-development stage, which will add another 227 apartments of low-income housing for the state. See HOUSING, Page 3A



Kathy Beyer, Evernorth's senior vice president of real estate development, said the average cost of construction in 2020 was \$220 per square foot. By 2024, it had increased to \$375.

SCHOOLS IN VERMONT

Meet the 11 people who will redesign districts

Megan Stewart Burlington Free Press USA TODAY NETWORK

All 11 members of the Vermont Redistricting Task Force — charged with designing Vermont's new school district boundaries — have been selected. Planning for school district consolidation – from over 100 to roughly a dozen districts – is one of the first steps outlined in Vermont's new “education transformation” act, which seeks to reform the state's public education system over several years. District consolidation is one of Act 73's most controversial provisions, with some Vermonters fearing merging districts will mean closing schools, impact transportation times, and strip resources from higher-need communities, like Winooski, the state's most diverse municipality. The Vermont Redistricting Task Force is required to submit three or fewer options for new boundaries, along with a written report, to the legislature by Dec. 1. Act 73 states that each new school district must have between 4,000 and 8,000 Pre-K to Grade 12 students. There are approximately 84,000 students enrolled in Vermont's public school. The new school districts will go into effect on July 1, 2028. The task force is comprised of five non-legislative members, including former superintendents and school business managers, and six lawmakers from different parties and districts. Those lawmakers are split equally between members of the House and Senate. House Speaker Jill Krowinski selected the three representatives and two of the non-legislators for the task force. The Senate Committee on Committees – comprised of Senate pro tempore Phil Baruth, Sen. Ginny Lyons and Lt. Gov. John Rodgers – appointed the three senators and two of the non-legislators. Gov. Phil Scott selected one non-legislator. See REDESIGN, Page 2A

UVM to expand psychology program to help rural areas

Beth McDermott Reporter assisted by AI USA TODAY NETWORK

The University of Vermont has received a \$1.2 million federal grant to expand its clinical psychology doctoral training program, according to a community announcement. The grant, awarded by the Health Re-

sources and Services Administration, aims to address Vermont's mental health crisis and the shortage of trained professionals, especially in rural areas. The funding will support UVM's clinical psychology Ph.D. program over the next three years, enhancing training in integrated care, substance use treatment and trauma-informed approaches. Matthew Price, director of clinical



Price training in the Department of Psychological Science, emphasized the urgency of the situation. “Our state and local communities are facing an urgent mental health and substance use crisis, particularly in rural and underserved areas,” Price said in the announcement.

“While our leaders continue to call for expanded services, a major barrier remains: We simply don't have enough trained providers. This grant allows us to grow our impact by preparing the next generation of clinicians to serve the communities that need them most.” The initiative, titled VT HEALS, will See UVM PROGRAM, Page 8A

