

## **Killingly selected for pilot program on development**

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**By JOHN PENNEY**

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**KILLINGLY -**

Say, Killingly, has anyone ever told you that you look like a model?

Tuesday, the Borderlands Project announced the selection of Killingly as future site for a model village pilot program. The Borderlands Village Innovation Pilot is a multi-agency collaboration between Connecticut's Nature Conservancy and the Rhode Island Economic Policy Council. The program will focus on current and future economic growth in town, with an eye toward rural preservation by channeling new development into existing or planned village centers.

Killingly beat out 11 competing Connecticut towns, including Putnam and Plainfield, during a two-month selection process. Exeter, R.I., was chosen as the Ocean State's finalist. The two towns will work through an 18-month, three-phase project separately, though representatives from both project teams will meet regularly to compare experiences.

"I think we were chosen because the interviewers liked the relationships they saw within our community," said Town Council Chairman Janice Thurlow. "We all look forward to working with Exeter as a means of working through our desire to maintain community vision for conservation and development."

Thurlow said Killingly plans to put together a committee to oversee the project within the next few months. She said a preliminary training workshop is scheduled tentatively for later this week.

Both towns will serve as test sites for the larger Borderland Project region, which encompasses 20 towns hugging the Connecticut-Rhode Island border. In Killingly, the project will focus on the relationship between Danielson and Dayville and apply conclusions to the rural lands in the eastern portion of town.

To aid the town during the 18-month project, approximately \$125,000 worth of technical assistance will be available by January. The assistance will include economists, designers and planners.

Kevin Essington of the Nature Conservancy said he hopes Killingly will show marked progress in the areas of preservation and responsible growth by the project's end.

"I hope Killingly will have exhibited demonstrative changes, whether through action on the ground or through policy changes," he said. "During the selection process, we found Killingly to be the town most ready for this process, mainly because of the diverse group of people working for them."

For Killingly resident Donna Grauer, the town's biggest challenge in the next few years will be balancing economic growth with rural preservation.

"I like growth; industry attracts young families and new businesses," Grauer said. "Having boundaries between industry and nature is part of the beauty of living in town."

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