



The Upper Valley..... A Special Place

The Upper Valley Region is a special place for those of us who know it, but where is it and what makes it special? In general the Upper Valley is a geographical area which stretches along each side of the Connecticut River in central New Hampshire and Vermont. The river separates the two states, but it is also a bond between them. The region includes a variety of topography from the foothills of New Hampshire's White Mountains and the Green Mountains of Vermont to the rolling agricultural land along the Connecticut. The Upper Valley is approximately two hours from Boston, four and a half hours from New York City, and three hours from Montreal. New Hampshire's state capital, Concord, is about an hour away as is Montpelier, the capital of Vermont. Vermont's largest city is Burlington, which is one and a half hours away; it takes about the same time to get to Manchester, New Hampshire's largest city.

The geographical center of the Upper Valley is Hanover/Lebanon on the New Hampshire side and Hartford/Norwich in Vermont. Hanover is home to Dartmouth College, one of the Ivies and the ninth oldest college in the nation. In Lebanon, on the edge of the Hanover/Lebanon city line is the new Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. Lebanon is a retail/commercial and light industry center supported by a commercial airport. On the Vermont side, the town of Hartford is the crossroads of Interstates 89 & 91, which leads north-south and east-west. Passenger service by Amtrak's "The Vermonter" makes daily stops in White River Jct, VT. Norwich, just north of White River Jct., is a charming New England community, which maintains its own special character while enjoying inter-relationships with Hanover and other communities. Norwich and Hanover make up the Dresden School District, the first inter-state school district in the nation, created in 1963, which includes the Richmond Middle School and Hanover High School.

Some people might think of the area as "isolated northern woods." Yes, there are a lot of woodlands and conservation, and the wise use of our forests, open meadows, hillsides, and waterways is very important. The Upper Valley is readily accessible in any season by train, plane, bus, and automobile on well-maintained roads and interstate highways (the snow crews are terrific). Some visitors actually hike here via the Appalachian Trail, which runs from Maine to Georgia and meanders through Hanover, up and down Main Street (business district) and crosses the Connecticut River into Norwich. Commercial air service is available to and from New York; a regional bus transportation system, Advance Transit, serves the area as well. Vermont Transit (Greyhound) provides service to major metro areas including Boston, New York City and Montreal.

Beyond the central geographical core of the Upper Valley is an array of distinctive communities and villages. One of the special qualities of the area is the combination of micro-urban environments with quiet, rural hamlets and open spaces only minutes apart. There are lifestyle choices from rural living to in-town convenience, from larger communities to small villages, from farm and horse country to resort and recreational communities.

The economy in the Upper Valley is robust. Major employers include Dartmouth College, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Cold Regions Research & Engineering Lab (CRREL), and a number of research and development and light manufacturing companies that provide a stable foundation for employment and commerce. Biomedical, engineering and computer software research and development firms continue to emerge. The unemployment rate in the region has been consistently low in both states.

Medical services in the Upper Valley are comprehensive. Just minutes from the Dartmouth campus and downtown Hanover and Lebanon is the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC). This medical center includes the 429-bed Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital, the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Clinic (multi-specialty group practice of over 350 staffed physicians), the Norris Cotton Cancer Center (one of 28 comprehensive cancer research and treatment facilities in the country), Dartmouth Medical School, and a 22-bed Veterans Administrative Hospital located in White River Jct. The Alice Peck day Memorial Hospital (APD) in Lebanon is a 32-bed acute care community hospital with a 50 bed nursing home. With over 60 physicians on staff, APD offers personalized care in a home-like environment. Other community hospitals within the general region include Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Care in Windsor, VT. There are also individual and group family practices as well as the Good Neighbor Health Clinic in White River Junction.

The Upper Valley is blessed with a wide array of shopping and dining options. There are retail businesses from mom and pop type stores to chain retail centers. There are strip and indoor malls in Lebanon to traditional Main Street and business districts in Hanover and White River Jct., where there are a lot of specialty shops and dining establishments. In Norwich there is the renowned general store, Dan & Whit's, where it is said, "If we don't have it, you don't need it."

Communications outlets and media are plenty. The valley is home to a seven-day regional morning newspaper and a number of weekly publications. The airwaves are active with a variety of AM and FM radio stations including traditional, oldies, country, talk, and easy listening. There is a local television station as well as state and New England wide coverage channels on cable. Local computer networks provide access to the Internet, World Wide Web national and international e-mail. Internet fax and computer services allow many residents of the Upper Valley to enjoy a rural lifestyle while keeping pace with their business concerns in metropolitan areas.

Educational opportunities are abound in the Upper Valley. There are private and public pre schools, primary and secondary schools, as well as graduate and adult education programs. The area's schools, at all levels, are very highly regarded. Approximately twenty five percent of Hanover High Schools student population is tuition paying from communities outside of Hanover and Norwich. In addition to Dartmouth's undergraduate and graduate level program, and its Institute for Lifelong education at Dartmouth (ILEAD), there is the College for Lifelong Learning, (a part of the University System of New Hampshire), Lebanon College, a community college, and a variety of technical schools and colleges. Dartmouth is a private, co-educational, four-year liberal arts college founded in 1769 by the Reverend Eleazar Wheelock. The institution sits on a 200 acre main campus immediately adjacent to Hanover's downtown business district in the southwestern corner of the township. Seventeen graduate programs in the arts and sciences, professional schools including the Tuck School of Business Administration, Thayer School of Engineering, and the Dartmouth Medical School compliment Dartmouth's undergraduate college. Dartmouth, with over 4,200 undergraduate and 1,200 graduate students, is one of the most prestigious colleges in the nation. While Dartmouth emphasizes the traditions of a small college, the institution is recognized as a research university. The college employs over 3,000 faculty, administrators, and staff members.

Cultural and academic activities are centers at Dartmouth's Hopkins Center for the performing arts, the Hood Museum of Art, and the Black Family Visual Arts Center. Year round, there are conferences and lecture series including special events at the graduate schools and The Rockefeller Center for the Social Sciences. Several communities have local theatre groups, art exhibits and galleries including the AVA Gallery in Lebanon and the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen in Hanover. The Montshire Museum of Science, located on the banks of the Connecticut River in Norwich, offers indoor and outdoor exhibits and programs for all ages, all year long. Public libraries in our towns are well used and cherished institutions.

There is an abundance of individual, team, and family recreational and sporting opportunities for all ages. Youth activities, organizations, and sports include ice hockey, figure skating, downhill and cross country skiing (the Ford Sayre Ski Program has produced a substantial number of US Ski team Olympians), baseball, basketball, field hockey, track and field, soccer, football, tennis, lacrosse, golf, and kayaking among many others. Many area communities have recreational programs and community centers. The Connecticut River is just one of the hundreds of rivers, streams, ponds and lakes offering a variety of canoeing, motor boating, rowing, sailing, and swimming. There are family campgrounds, picnic areas, nature walking and hiking trails and networks. Bicycle paths are emerging to connect downtowns to more rural areas with employment centers. Once completed, the multi-use Northern Rail Trail of Grafton County, NH will offer access for hiking, bicycling, skiing, horseback riding, and snowmobiling. There are numerous golf courses and ski areas within a short drive from most centers of the Upper Valley, and of course, hunting, fishing, and popular sports in the "north country." High school and college events are popular as well. Dartmouth College offers 34 men's and women's varsity sports including hockey, baseball, soccer, football, basketball, rowing, golf, and lacrosse among many others. Dartmouth's athletic teams compete against Ivy League and non-league opponents. The Dresden School District has a full complement of athletic programs.

The Upper Valley is a great place to live and work, but there are some special reasons why natives, "near natives," and newer residents call the Upper Valley home. It is a quiet place...the place is slower than lots of places. Low levels of crime, noise, and pollution contribute to a sense of being safe. The work ethic is strong and signs of independence and pride are all around. The beauty of the landscape mountain and valley views, pastures and dense woodlands, rivers and lakes, stonewalls, rural and village character, and the quality of fresh air and water combine to make this place special. Changing seasons, melting snow, emerging buds of spring, summer's colorful flowers and ripening hayfields...the crisp, refreshing air and brilliant colors of fall and the excitement of winter's first snowfall keep us in touch with the land. The charm of this valley can be found in its history, cultural sophistication, socioeconomic and political mix, good neighbors, spectacular beauty and educational and recreational opportunities. The Upper Valley...a very special place to enjoy...for a day, a leisurely weekend or a lifetime.

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