

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**Greg Morgan, Chair**

In 2008, the Commission reported the work on the image Essex presents to the world:

*“The Economic Development Commission began a process to review and identify the Essex brand. The Commission determined that Essex’s urban/rural setting and diverse skilled workforce were unique qualities that set Essex apart from other Vermont towns. The Commission plans on continuing its branding work and potentially dovetailing the effort with future studies.”*

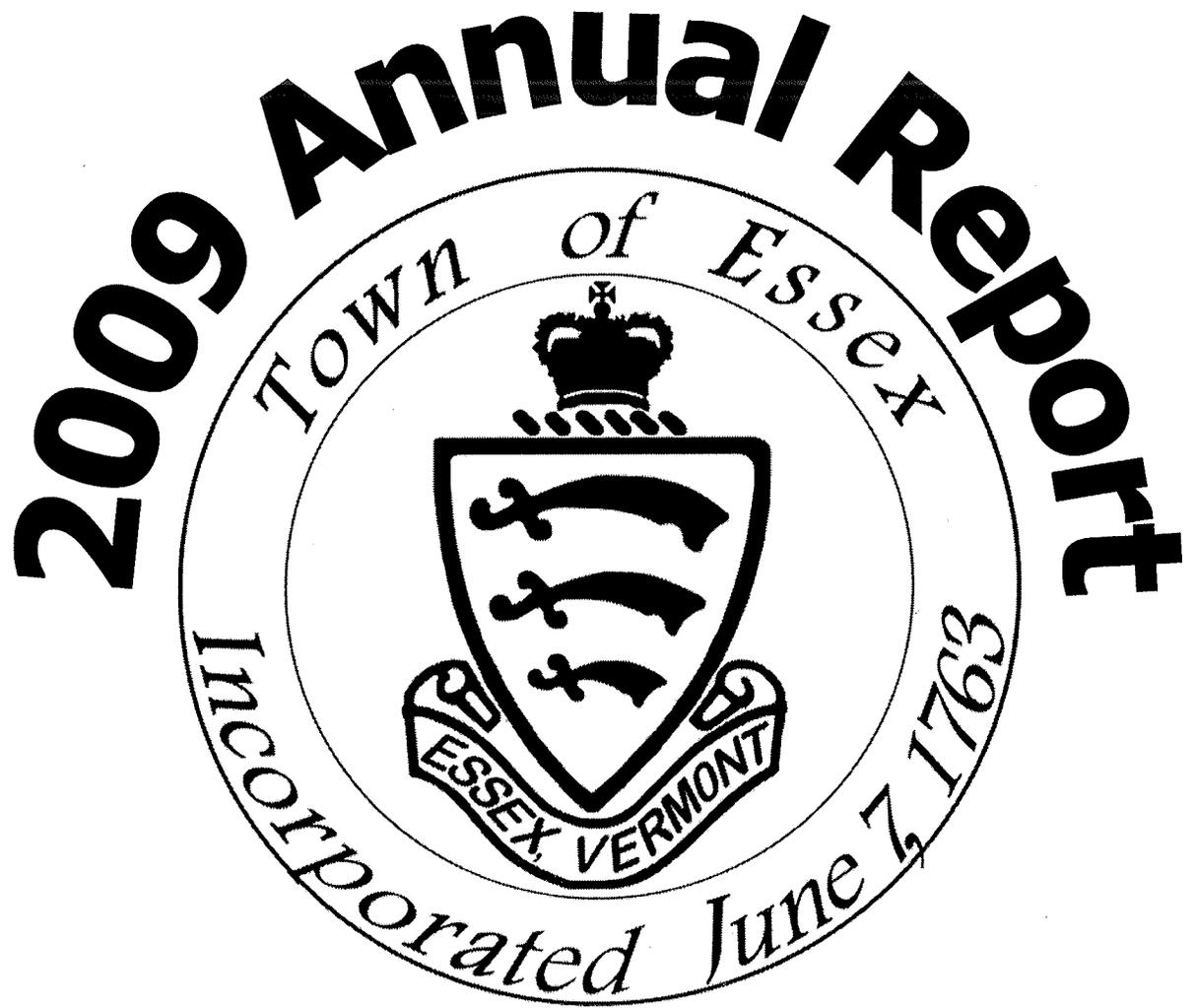
During the last half of 2009, the Town moved forward by engaging BBPC Associates, a organization experienced and skilled in helping municipalities better understand their strengths and weaknesses, engaging citizens to formulate a vision of how the local economy might evolve, researching national, regional and local trends – including appropriate business types or clusters – in economic development. The Selectboard has asked this group to report back on the results of its outreach and to formulate several pragmatic action steps to guide decision-making and achieve concrete results.

The goal is economic diversity, which means a local and regional economy that is better able to withstand both the booms and busts of the national and global economies, while keeping the residents of Essex employed in a myriad of enterprises. If all that happens, the quality of life in Essex can only continue to improve.

The public portion of this process kicked-off in November 2009 with a facilitated public meeting at Essex High School where a series of innovative discussion techniques helped citizens work together to create elements of a common vision. Efforts to further engage citizens in early 2010 include an online survey and the use of social media to gather more points of view and inform their final guidance.

At the end of next year, the EDC hopes to be able to report on positive outcomes of this outreach and planning, including the emergence of a more targeted economic development strategy and brand presented to those businesses seeking to start, grow and locate here.

The coming year promises to be an exciting one, filled with activity as a bevy of efforts begin to coalesce not only into a vision but also into a plan that can be implemented for the eventual betterment of all.



**Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2009**