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**Bunker Hill Community Cooperative
Purchases the 14-home Bunker Hill
Windsor, Vermont**

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Windsor, VT – Nearly half a year after receiving news that their community was likely to be shut down forever, homeowners at Bunker Hill Mobile Home Park are now celebrating taking ownership of their community on June 30, 2011. The community’s land and facilities are now owned and democratically operated by Bunker Hill Community Cooperative (BHCC), an association comprised of all of the park’s residents. BHCC is the third resident-owned mobile home park in the state of Vermont, and the first new co-op in almost twenty years.

“At first, when our park was at risk of being shut down, I looked at this glass as being half empty, now it's overflowing,” states Bunker Hill resident and co-op member Barbara Adams. Co-op President Dave Furman adds that this recent resurgence of optimism and pride has already made a mark on the community: “The formation of the co-op has brought everyone closer together, almost like a family. Everyone has been working hard on the grounds, and in the units, taking pride in the community”.

Yet, the path to resident ownership was not an easy nor certain one. When the park’s former owner, Rockingham Community Land Trust (RACL), sent out a notice of their intent to shut down the community back in October, 2010, Bunker hill residents were given three options: Work with RACL to obtain relocation money in the form of a state grant, wait and hope for another non-profit to purchase the property, or look into the feasibility of resident ownership. Intent on saving their homes, Bunker Hill residents ventured into what is unfamiliar territory in Vermont and investigated the feasibility of resident ownership. To this end, Bunker Hill residents enlisted the

services of two technical assistance providers, the Vermont-based Mobile Home Project of the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) and the Massachusetts-based Cooperative Development Institute (CDI).

RACLT indicated that they believed the costs of running the aging community were too high and sited the location of the community in a flood zone. Under a grant from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, CDI completed an independently reviewed feasibility study that showed that a residents' cooperative could in fact continue to operate the community affordably. This feasibility study now forms the basis of an operating plan that, combined with the ongoing technical assistance and training provided by both CVOEO and CDI, will ensure that the residents' cooperative will remain successful for years to come.

And success at Bunker Hill not only benefits the 14 families residing there who get to keep their homes. According to CVOEO's Mobile Home Project Program Director Shaun Gilpin, "this cooperative is a success not only for the community in Windsor, but for mobile home communities throughout the state as we hope to help usher in a model of community ownership that has worked so well elsewhere in the country and fits well with Vermont values of independence and strong communities."

Mobile home cooperatives are democratic associations in which homeowners in the community each buy one low-cost share, and have one vote on matters of the community. The members elect a Board of Directors to act on day-to-day issues and vote as a membership on larger matters like the annual budget, By-laws and Community Rules.

The CVOEO Mobile Home Project (MHP) is a private non-profit that assist residents of mobile homes throughout Vermont. The MHP is the only non-profit in the state that works exclusively with residents of mobile homes and assists residents with community organizing, understanding and exercising their rights under Vermont law and accessing resources to better their standard of living.

CDI is a Regional Cooperative Development Center, founded in 1994, which has assisted dozens of new and existing cooperatives throughout New England and New York. CDI is a certified technical assistance provider with ROC USA, a national nonprofit organization that works to help residents of mobile home parks form democratically-run associations and buy their parks. CDI is working with the residents of 14 mobile home communities throughout New England. CDI is not only involved with manufactured housing but provides technical assistance to agriculture, consumer, worker-owner, energy, and fishing cooperatives.

Financing was secured through Icarus Social Capital LLC of Foxborough, Massachusetts to purchase and rehabilitate the residents' community. Secondary Financing was provided by the Vermont Community Loan Fund and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.

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