

Revitalization Project Gets Boost

BY KRISTIN CALKINS
Staff Writer

Despite the sprinkles, Maclure's Alumni Band played peppy marching songs from the town gazebo as a crowd of nearly 100 gathered in the village of Groton, Friday morning.

Residents, community activists, public officials and project developers from Gilman Housing Trust and Housing Vermont were on hand to welcome Gov. Douglas to Groton (population: 900) and celebrate the town's good fortune.

The governor's appearance marked the last installment the town will receive in federal and state grants and deferred loans totaling nearly \$5 million.

The money will be used to spruce up the downtown area, fix roadways, add parking, sidewalks and curbs. Derelict buildings will be renovated inside and out for commercial space and 13 affordable housing units.

"People here are really excited about the coming changes," said Deane Page, a Groton resident who plays in Maclure's band and chairs the historical society.

Gov. Douglas told the community of his interest in restoring historic buildings and retaining the heritage and culture of the state.

"Groton residents made a strong case in Montpelier and we listened," Douglas said.

Groton Selectman Berne Bouley thanked everyone for coming out in the rain and warmly accepted the statesman's blessings.

Not to be forgotten, the Groton Free Library will eventually relocate to the Goodine building located next door to the general store.

Library trustee Susan Gordon spoke about the level of excitement being so great she and other library members didn't want to waste the enthusiasm.

"Books inspire growth and this is an opportunity to bring books into the heart of

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PHOTO BY KRISTIN CALKINS

Groton residents gather in front of the old general store Friday morning waiting to hear Gov. Douglas speak and present the town with the final installment for village revitalization. Construction will begin this fall.

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the community," Gordon said.

Sens. Bernier Mayo, R-Caledonia, and Julius Canns, R-Caledonia, were also present to show their support.

"The little towns are coming back alive, there's a lot of hope that what's happening here today will happen elsewhere," Mayo said.

Rep. Bud Otterman, R-West Topsham, was among the local dignitaries.

He said Groton doesn't share the same tax base of other towns of similar size.

"The town operates on a third of the tax base, so this new infusion of investment will greatly help Groton and the area."

Forty-one percent of the land in Groton is owned by the state. For many years, residents have felt the state hasn't appraised its land at an equitable rate.