

# Bulletin

## Doonesbury

BY GARRY TRUDEAU



Remember last fall when Garry Trudeau told the story of Wal-Mart coming to town? You've got the chance to own one of the original cartoon panels through a "silent auction." See Back Page for details.

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## WAL-MART PERMIT DENIED

The message that came out of the state Environmental Board's recent decision denying Wal-Mart a permit to build a 100,000-square-foot store two miles from St. Albans city was clear: Vermont is serious about protecting its landscape, its downtowns, and its economy from the fragmentation of scattered development.

The board, in its order of Dec. 23, declared that "the public costs of the proposed project are projected to outweigh the public benefits." Citing formidable competition the giant Arkansas-based retailer would pose for local businesses, with a resultant loss of tax revenues and escalating demand on municipal services, the board even quantified the anticipated impact: "The ratio is projected to be approximately three dollars of public cost for each dollar of public benefit."

And the board concluded that rather than boosting employment, the project would result in a "net job loss for the Franklin County region."

"The board's decision is unique in that it really hits home the notion that Vermont needs to protect its communities," said Stephen Holmes, VNRC Deputy Director for Policy. "Board members were very concerned about the impacts of this project. The decision reflects that concern and also reflects the weight of the testimony presented by witnesses for VNRC."

The decision, with its focus on Act 250 criteria examining the impact of growth and the costs of scattered development, was especially sweet for VNRC because it had earlier been denied an opportunity to present such evidence. The District 6 Environmental Commission granted Wal-Mart a Land Use Permit on Dec. 21, 1993 after ruling that VNRC had no expertise on the economic issues the organization wished to address. When a citizens group — Franklin-Grand

Isle County Citizens for Downtown Preservation — appealed the permit, VNRC asked the Environmental Board to reconsider its standing. The board granted party status, and the appeal hearings were held in July.

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## CLEAR-CUTS THREATEN FAYSTON/ DUXBURY TRACT

The findings and recommendations last year of the Northern Forest Lands Council have focused statewide attention on the importance of sound forestry practices. But in central Vermont forest liquidation continues apace on a 9,000-acre tract in Fayston and Duxbury. There, VNRC is seeking to rein in a logging operation bent on removing 75 percent of the merchantable trees and clear-cutting some 300 acres of forest.

"Basically, they're going to cut everything over 12-inches diameter in the hard-

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