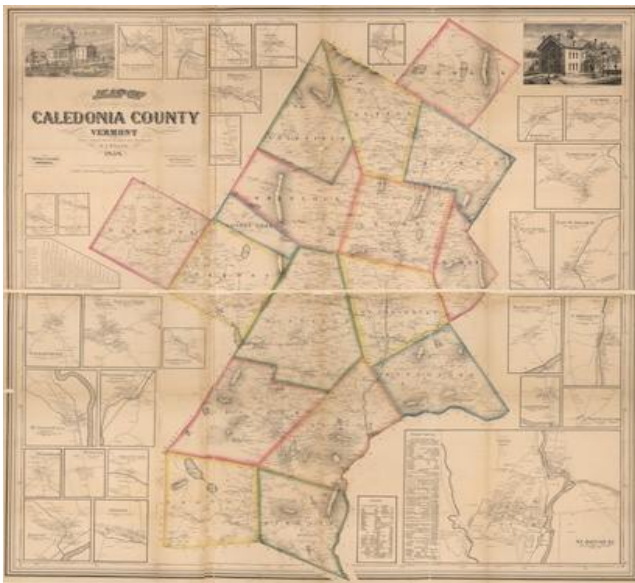




Outreach in The Middle of It All: Another Way To Help As Sheriff

I recently attended a meeting and spoke to a person before it started. I told them the story of what I would consider one of my biggest failures in law enforcement: which was not being able to get somebody help they were asking for when they realized they had a problem AND sincerely wanted to make a change. I firmly believe in protecting our community by holding lawbreakers accountable via the justice system and have the record to back that up. But I also feel strongly that we as a society do not do enough to help those who realize they have a problem AND genuinely want to change it (the last part is key). When they do want to change that window of clarity is often so short.

As a candidate, I have met a lot of people. Many of these folks have been kind enough to share their stories with me. Recovery coaches. Charity workers. Crime victims. Social services representatives. Each of them has a small piece of the puzzle. Some of them provide functions that are not widely known or represent agencies that people might not know about.

The sheriff serves a variety of court orders. If elected, I will ensure they are served efficiently and without undue delay. Many of the people being handed those court orders might be struggling with concerns (addiction, mental health, family problems, etc). Some of them might not know where to turn. A portion of these folks might be open to accessing resources if they knew who could provide what to turn things around.

Let's use known resources!

I don't think it would take much effort to put the word out to any groups in our area that would want to provide help to people who have a need and want to improve. Groups could be solicited to see what their capabilities are and how to contact them. This list of community resources could be printed and handed out to people who are the recipients of court orders. There would not be any cost besides some photocopies as my staff would be interacting with people anyways. Being involved in an eviction, a lawsuit, a family court issue might sadly provide a moment of clarity for a portion of people and providing a list of possible lifelines might enable some to seize that opportunity and work towards bettering themselves. If it is successful, perhaps this list could even be published on the department website so people in need can learn more about where to turn for help before law enforcement contact happens.

This can work.

Earlier on I shared the story (with permission) of one person I arrested and how a bit of humanity and time can be the catalyst for change. The office of sheriff is unique and the job role is special. The deputy sheriffs have access to some community members on the worst days of their life. Perhaps we can use that access to propel change. Even if it works in 1 of 1,000 cases it would be worth it.

I'm always interested in speaking with Caledonia County residents about their Law Enforcement concerns. Want to ask a question? [Contact me!](#)

Thank you.

Robert Gerrish
[Robert Gerrish for Caledonia County Sheriff](#)

The map shown above is available from the following link:
[Walling, H. F. \(1858\) Map of Caledonia County, Vermont. New York: Baker & Tilden. \[Map\] Retrieved from the Library of Congress.](#)