

*UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
District of Vermont*

Thomas J. Hart
Clerk of Court

11 Elmwood Ave.
P.O. Box 1663
Burlington, VT 05402-1663
(802) 776-2000 Phone
(802) 776-2020 Fax
www.vtb.uscourts.gov

TO: Court Users
FROM: Thomas J. Hart
DATE: December 4, 2015
RE: Vermont Interactive Technologies - Not available after
December 31, 2015

**CLERK'S
ANNOUNCEMENT
15-105**

As many of you are aware, the financial budget for the State of Vermont does not fund Vermont Interactive Technologies (VIT) operations after December 31, 2015. As a result, after that date we will not hold bankruptcy court hearings via VIT (or any successor medium currently available).

At the request of the State of Vermont's Public Service Department and VIT, I provided input describing our needs, and the Department has kept me apprised of its efforts to provide a substitute voice and video interactive network. Recent media coverage has alluded to a possible State funded start-up successor to VIT. Unfortunately, nothing that has been suggested to date will be sufficient to meet our needs.

For us, the issue regarding any start-up successor that has been proposed thus far is that it does not include any on-site technical support. We need on-site technicians to operate the equipment and - more importantly - to trouble shoot the technical problems that history has taught us will arise. The Public Service Department recently informed me that all options they are considering will be options without on-site technicians because there is no source of funding to pay for technical support staff. We are committed to pursuing - and if possible, making available - opportunities for remote video participation in hearings, and therefore gave careful consideration to the possibility of relying upon some of our users to provide the on-site technical assistance / trouble shooting we will undoubtedly need. However we determined this would be an unfair burden on the bar, a distraction to hearing participants and the Court, and ultimately lacks the level of reliability that is crucial to court hearings.

Therefore, as of this writing, we must conclude it will not be possible for us to hold hearings from remote sites. All hearings will be held in the courtrooms either at the Federal Building and Courthouse in Burlington or at the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Rutland.

We will continue to monitor any developments in remote video conferencing and if new options appear we will look into them. If any seem to be potentially adequate, Judge Brown will present them to you for discussion at a Bench Bar meeting.