

A foundation of collaboration

As the VCIA celebrates its 40th anniversary, attention turns to the next generation of professionals who will carry its legacy forward. We speak with Vermont's Captive Insurance Economic Development Director, Brittany Nevins, on the importance of the Vermont Captive Insurance Emerging Leaders programme



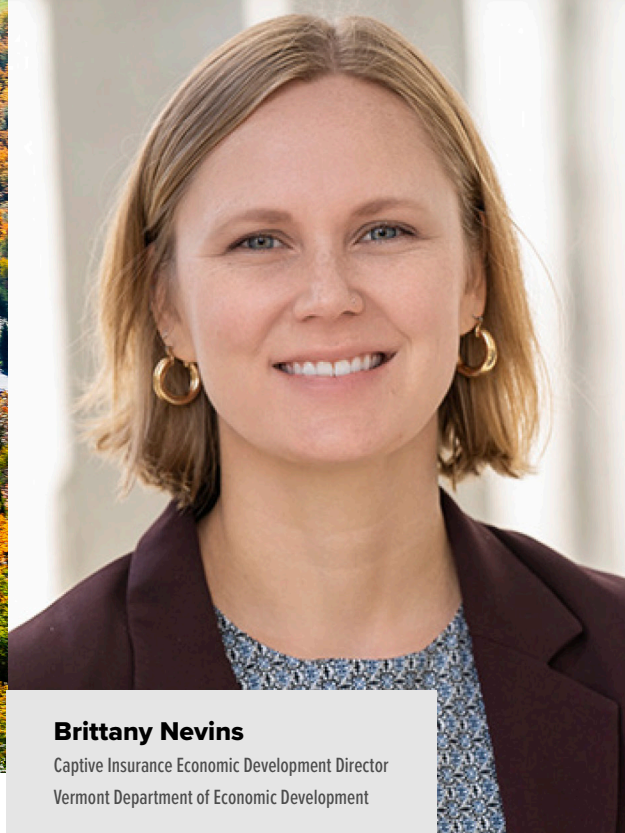
The Vermont captive insurance industry — a global leader for four decades — is now looking to the future. At the heart of this forward-thinking strategy is a powerful partnership often referred to as a ‘three-legged stool’ — the Department of Financial Regulation (DFR), the Department of Economic Development (DED), and the Vermont Captive Insurance Association (VCIA). This unique collaboration is dedicated to fostering the industry’s continued growth, and a key component of that is the Vermont Captive Insurance Emerging Leaders (VCIEL) Initiative.

As Vermont’s Captive Insurance Economic Development Director, Brittany Nevins has been instrumental in this effort. She considers her work to “help form and support the VCIEL Initiative” as a highlight of her career with the VCIA. This personal investment has already yielded tangible results. Nevins proudly notes that “we’ve already seen many people enter the industry that wouldn’t have”.

This initiative is a critical part of a broader strategy to ensure the industry’s longevity. Nevins sees VCIEL as working in tandem with other educational efforts like the International Centre for Captive Insurance Education (ICCIE), noting that they are both “excellent ways for those who are just entering the industry to receive the captive education and guidance they need to succeed”. She also points to the VCIA Annual Conference as a vital hub for this work, with the VCIEL opening reception being a “major conference highlight” for her personally.

Ultimately, the goal is to build a sustainable talent pipeline for an industry that is both growing and facing a wave of retirements. With the expertise of the VCIA and its partners, the future is bright. As Nevins advises, “truly the expertise of this great industry is right here in Vermont, you don’t need to look far to find it”.

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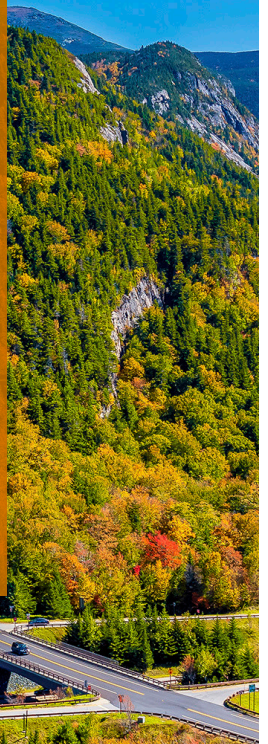
Brittany Nevins

Captive Insurance Economic Development Director
Vermont Department of Economic Development

Securing the future

An inside look at VCIEL

The Vermont Captive Insurance Emerging Leaders programme is working to secure the future of the captive industry by cultivating new talent and raising awareness about career opportunities. Captive Insurance Times speaks with two key figures in the initiative's success, the VCIA's Francis McGill and Kim McCray-Woodruff, PhD, to learn more about its goals and achievements



Could you provide an overview of the VCIEL initiative, including its primary goals and how it has evolved since its inception in April 2023?

VCIEL was a long time in the making. Before its official inception in April 2023, the VCIA and Vermont's Department of Economic Development had for some time been developing plans to formalise an emerging leaders initiative to focus on raising awareness about Vermont's booming captive insurance industry and the many career opportunities for young professionals therein.

By the spring of 2023, the VCIA board of directors and CEO Kevin Mead approved the initiative to go forward under the auspices of the association. The Vermont captive community gave a warm welcome to VCIEL. VCIEL's opening reception drew more than 70 captive insurance professionals and included the leaders of the Vermont regulatory team. Since 2023, VCIEL has grown in leaps and bounds; it has been a productive partnership between the Vermont DED, industry professionals, and VCIA.

At the start of 2025, the board of directors approved VCIEL as a formal committee of the association — just like the conference task force committee or the legislative committee. VCIEL is fully backed by the resources and strategic direction of the world's largest captive insurance association.

The committee is led by an industry committee chair, currently Sherri Steubing of Aon, and by VCIA staff liaison senior director of marketing Francis McGill. Brittany Nevins and Vermont's department of economic development play a critical role and is a funding partner of this initiative.

What have been the most significant achievements of VCIEL in its efforts to educate younger generations about captive insurance career prospects and bring them into the workforce?

Several achievements stand out for VCIEL. Perhaps the most important is forging relationships with key higher education institutions. VCIEL is now working closely with the University of Vermont, St. Michael's College, Butler University, St. John's University, and others.

Recently, VCIEL began exploring partnership possibilities with the Spencer Educational Foundation, which funds the education of future risk managers.

Additionally, VCIEL developed critical resources that are helpful entry points for students learning about captive insurance.

These include a career directory, which defines the various roles in captive insurance, which lists the different organisations headquartered in Vermont. VCIEL maintains an active internship document that students and higher education institutions can rely on for opportunities to gain experience in the captive insurance industry.

VCIEL aims to tackle the captive insurance talent issue from multiple angles, including education, networking, and resource/marketing. Could you elaborate on the key strategies and initiatives undertaken by each of these committees?

The educational, networking and resource approaches VCIEL takes all focus on raising awareness about a thriving, successful Vermont and worldwide industry and informs faculty, students, and aspiring professionals how to learn more and get involved in an active professional captive industry community. The captive industry is a dynamic field and a professional pathway filled with opportunity. We communicate this to prospective future employees and emerging leaders in many ways.

Education: VCIEL shows how exciting and prosperous the industry is through its VCIA Annual Conference Scholarship Programme which brings students to the VCIA annual conference to participate in professional education sessions, connect with captive industry professionals, and engage with the more than 75 exhibitors at the conference.

In addition, as part of its strategic planning and educational initiatives, VCIA recently hired Kim McCray-Woodruff as its new director of Learning and Professional Development to expand its learning and professional development offerings for members. McCray-Woodruff arrives at VCIA with a strong background in adult learning and higher education. She will work in concert with the VCIEL Committee to create partnerships with higher education institutions that can lead to the development of curriculum, coursework, and opportunities for faculty and students.

Networking and resource/marketing: This fall VCIEL will participate in internship and career fairs at local colleges and universities. We also hope to partner with faculty and student groups at local colleges and universities to host a few networking events.

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Kim McCray-Woodruff, Ph.D.

Director of Learning and Professional Development
VCIA

How has VCIEL collaborated with educational institutions in Vermont to integrate captive insurance curricula into their programmes, and what success have you seen in establishing internship opportunities for students?

VCIEL has made several presentations highlighting captive 101 on college campuses. The feedback we've received has been positive and we have returned many times to our respective higher institutional partners to engage with students. Sometimes we do this in class, at career fairs, or in clubs. The ultimate goal for VCIEL with higher educational partners is to develop and offer a risk management course that highlights alternative risk management and the benefits of captive insurance and we are happy to report we have begun to make inroads on this. There is still a long way to go but there is a lot of invested and committed actors who want to see this happen.

The VCIA Annual Conference plays a crucial role in VCIEL's outreach. Can you discuss the student sponsorship programme for the conference and its impact on attracting emerging talent to the industry?

The VCIEL student sponsorship programme has been a huge hit. 2025 was its second year and we saw record applicants and were able to award 10 student sponsorships. This is an achievement made possible by the students, VCIA, the VCIEL emerging leaders who helped facilitate the process, and industry sponsors who helped fund it. We look forward to expanding the programme and developing more features that will attract and motivate students to start a career path in the captive industry. Time and time again we hear from the VCIEL student scholars how much they enjoyed the conference, how exciting the industry is and how much they learned. It is truly just a stepping stone, and after the conference we work closely with the students to support their needs as they explore the industry.

Beyond students, VCIEL also targets individuals looking to make a career pivot into captive insurance. What efforts are being made to reach this demographic, and what resources are available to them?

VCIEL definitely focuses also on those professionals who are seeking a career change. It is a little more difficult to locate the demographic and figure out who wants to seek a professional change and where.

That is why awareness is so key and why VCIEL communications are so important. We put out a quarterly newsletter and we have an active web page on VCIA's new website where interested parties can submit a note of interest.

Then staff liaison Francis McGill personally follows up and has a one-on-one meeting with those curious about the industry, and we keep a career tracker to keep tabs on those interested in finding opportunities in the industry.

Vermont is the largest captive domicile globally. How does VCIEL leverage this position to attract and retain talent within the state, highlighting the unique advantages of a career in Vermont's captive industry?

VCIEL is able to harness the energy and power of VCIA, the Vermont department of financial regulation, Vermont's department of economic development and the many supportive VCIA members and industry professionals. We have so much to celebrate and so much to share especially since the Vermont public and the public at large generally is ignorant about how massive the captive industry is.

Fortunately, we have made huge strides and now have a strategic direction that will effectively leverage Vermont's position as the global leader in captive insurance that will support VCIEL's main goal of attracting and retaining new talent for the industry.

Looking ahead, what are the long-term visions and strategic priorities for VCIEL to further build the next generation of captive insurance leaders in Vermont and potentially inspire similar initiatives in other domiciles?

As previously discussed, a main goal is to have risk management and captive insurance within college curriculums and especially in Vermont's institutions of higher education. VCIEL will also play a role in VCIA's new strategic plan which highlights its major strengths of legislative advocacy, world class captive education, and member community and engagement. We plan to emphasise opportunities for captive mentorships, a captive library of resources, and much more. There are a lot of promising developments on the horizon and we feel confident with the direction we are headed.

It is a group effort and we're all invested and committed to the success of the Vermont captive industry deep into the future. ■

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Francis McGill

Senior Director of Marketing
VCIA