

Reconstruction of the Putney General Store – A story in pictures



c. 1890



2006



May 3 2008 – electrical fire



May 4 2008



Oct. 2009 after stabilization & repair



Nov. 1, 2009 – arson



“We Are the General Store” fence Dec. 2009



Sen. & Mrs. Leahy, Feb, 2010



Dec. 2010



May 2011



Opening Celebration - Dec. 10, 2011



Spring 2013



June 2015 – with pharmacy



Right: Double Rainbow in 2017 upon a recent grand re-opening



2017 – 2019 Putney General Store as run by the Putney Historical Society

**As of September 2019 – Business was sold to new proprietor/tenants:
Mike and Kim Cosco who have expanded operations into the upstairs with the new
Phoenix gift shop. The store is open 7 to 7, 7 days a week**

The Story in a Nutshell

In 2011, after two fires, 3 ½ years, over 350 local donors, and the support of many businesses, foundations, state agencies and organizations including the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), and the Preservation Trust of Vermont (PTV), the reconstructed Putney General Store was reopened. The local non-profit Putney Historical Society bought the burned out historic property in 2008 with the help of local lenders and the key early support from the state in the form of grants from VHCB and PTV. The Historical Society undertook its restoration (& after a second arson fire, its reconstruction) to ensure that the beloved 200-year old General Store would continue to serve the community as a successful store, economic anchor, and gathering place. The total development cost of \$1.3 million was raised through grants and gifts which would not have been possible without the support and confidence shown by the state. Past history with the store and others like it around Vermont showed that controlling debt and real estate costs was the key to a sustainable village business. The Putney General Store is an example of a community-supported enterprise - a partnership between a non-profit owning the property and a proprietor/tenant paying a low-market rate rent and operating the business. In the last 8 years, the store has had 4 proprietors underscoring the importance of community ownership. It has had a pharmacy upstairs, a Chinese take-out downstairs, and was run by the Putney Historical Society for a time – all the while a vibrant general store and café - providing a meeting place and community hub for the town. Recently sold to experienced store keepers, the current iteration is a general store providing groceries, sundries, deli, bakery, café, wine and beer downstairs with a new gift shop upstairs.

With its economic anchor and historic look restored, the center of the village is once again open for business - an increasingly rare commercial center in such a small Vermont town. After only a short interruption the Putney General Store is still considered the oldest operating general store in Vermont, since 1796. It is also an example of 21st century community development.