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## Locally Grown History 2009: Web site and treasure hunt help bring NW Corner past alive

By PATRICK L. SULLIVAN

Those interested in Connecticut history can now find information through Locally Grown History 2009, a Web site sponsored by the University of Connecticut that provides links, contacts and a chance to win a variety of prizes by participating in a History Hunt.

"Northwest Connecticut is a treasure trove of historical gems, and we want to help make people aware of them," said Robert Forbes, assistant professor of history and American Studies at the University of Connecticut's Torrington campus. "Taken as a whole, Northwest Connecticut's museums and historical societies are much more than the sum of their parts."

Aided by a \$16,500 grant from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, Locally Grown History — It's In Your Backyard

began May 30. The project encourages people to visit multiple historical sites via History Hunts to win prizes and to attend a history forum in October.

Participants can download a "passport," have it stamped at the sites and mail it by Oct. 31, 2009, to be entered into the prize drawing.

The Web site provides links to more than 85 participating sites — historical societies, museums, historic sites, traditional artisans, vineyards, orchards and farms.

Included are links to the Web sites for the historical societies in Salisbury, Sharon and Kent, the Sloane-Stanley Museum and Connecticut Antique Farm Machinery Museum (Kent), Battle Hill Forge (Falls Village) and The Friends of Beckley Furnace (North Canaan).

The point man for the Northwest Corner is Dan Bolognani (also executive director of the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage

Area, which also helped with funding for the project).

"Because this year's Locally Grown History program has started earlier (May 30) than last year's inaugural event, the brochure supply has already dwindled to critical levels," he said. "We'll be printing additional brochures within the next few weeks, some indication that there is considerable interest in the program."

Amy Wynn of the Northwest Connecticut Arts Council said that local experts have been invited to participate — people "who are involved with local historic sites or traditional agriculture and crafts."

This helps to get "a different slant on history, to vary the trail a bit."

The brochure, map and passport can be downloaded from the Locally Grown Web site ([locallygrownhistory.org](http://locallygrownhistory.org)), and there is a Facebook page as well.