JEB SPAULDING
STATE TREASURER

RETIREMENT DIVISION
TEL: (802) 828-2305
FAX: (802) 828-5182

UNCLAIMED PROPERTY DIVISION
TEL: (802) 828-2407

ACCOUNTING DIVISION
TEL: (802) 828-2301
FAX: (802) 828-2884

STATE OF VERMONT
OFFICE OF THE STATE TREASURER

NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release—April 3, 2008
Press Contact: Jeb Spaulding (802) 828-1452; Gregg Mousley (802) 654-3716; or Lisa Helme (802) 828-3706

Vermonters Urged to Take Steps to Improve Youth Financial Literacy

MONTPELIER, Vt.—How well prepared is the next generation of Vermonters to navigate the increasingly complex system of personal finances? In proclaiming April as Financial Literacy for Youth Month, state officials aim to remind adults to share their knowledge and skills with Vermont's youth to prepare them for their financial futures.

Governor Jim Douglas today signed a proclamation officially designating April as Financial Literacy for Youth Month. April is annually observed by states and organizations across the country as a time for raising public awareness about the importance of financial education for youth and the serious consequences that may be associated with a lack of understanding of personal finance.

"These challenging economic times only underscore the importance of teaching our youth how to manage money," said Governor Douglas. "Having the knowledge and skills to manage personal finances, allows individuals to prepare for uncertain financial periods in their lives. We should all take the time to teach young people about how our financial system works and how to begin saving for the future, budgeting, and using credit responsibly."

National surveys suggest that most financial education begins at home. A recent survey released by the National Foundation for Credit Counseling reported that nearly two-thirds of the adults surveyed said they learned about issues such as managing money, balancing a checkbook and building their savings in their homes when they were growing up. However, such instruction may be difficult for some youth to obtain. A 2007 survey of college students by the Hartford Financial Services Group reported less than half of the students surveyed said their parents make a consistent effort to teach them.

"Financial education is key to allowing Vermonters to take advantage of existing opportunities to save and grow money for retirement, make good decisions on major purchases, and have in place plans to weather a personal crisis," said State Treasurer Jeb Spaulding. "Adults don't have to have perfectly managed their own finances before they can share their knowledge with youth. We all learn from our mistakes and successes and we need to give our kids the opportunity to learn from our experience, as well as their own."

The National Jump$tart Coalition regularly administers a comprehensive survey of financial knowledge to high schools seniors across the county. The results have consistently shown a need to improve these students' knowledge of basic personal finances.

“In the last reported survey for 2005-2006, the average score was 52.4 percent, a failing grade,” said Vermont Jump$tart Coalition President Gregg Mousley. “In Vermont, we regularly work with teachers to provide instruction and resources for their students. However, our schools are already overloaded with curriculum challenges. Parents need to step forward and regularly talk with their children about financial matters.”

Both the State and Jump$tart offer resources to teachers and parents on teaching financial topics to youth. The State Treasurer’s Office has online resources available by going to www.MoneyEd.Vermont.gov. The Vermont Jump$tart Coalition has a comprehensive clearinghouse of materials available through its website at www.vtjumpstart.org.

-end-