



Green Valley Chapel



Investing in God's Work
Investing in Putnam, Connecticut

GREEN VALLEY CHAPEL- INVESTING IN A NEW FUTURE

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all." (Mark 9:35)

I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints... (Eph. 1:16-18)

A GOD OPPORTUNITY

Bruce James joined the staff of the BCNE as the Director of Evangelism in 2006 when he and his wife Karen moved to Putnam, CT. Tim Buehner joined the staff of the BCNE as Coordinator of Ministry Evangelism and Mission Mobilization in 2007 when he and his wife Marcia moved to Putnam as well.

Together, they have prayerfully examined the town and found it a promising place to start a church. They have continued to seek the Lord to draw a church planter and congregationalizer to the area while equally working to provide support for a new work. Some of this support is available from the **Baptist Convention of New England** through Steve Nerger (SDOM); the **Southeastern New England Baptist Association** with Dr. Rafael Hernandez (DOM) and Rick Pressley (CP strategist); and Pastor Clark Rumfelt and the **Church at Westerly** has taken interest in sponsoring a church.

GENERAL HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PUTNAM

Although Putnam was not made an official town until 1855, earliest settlement date is around 1691 when a road was extended from Providence, RI to Woodstock, CT.



Initial settlers were engaged in agriculture. The rich, fertile land and abundant water were the reasons for their locating here.

Grist mills, blacksmith shops, trip hammer and fulling mills grew up around Cargill Falls. Mr. Smith Wilkinson and some family members

came from Rhode Island in 1806, bought the mill complex, and built the first cotton textile mill in Windham County. The second textile mill was built further upstream by James Rhodes in 1827. Formation of the Union Block and Main Street commercial districts followed the coming of the Norwich and Worcester Railroad in 1839.



The Town of Putnam was named after General Israel Putnam - famous for cautioning his men at Bunker Hill, "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes."

Larger textile mills followed, bringing about a need for laborers filled by immigrants from Canada and Europe. The population increased enough for Putnam to become a city in 1895. This made available increased services for the townspeople.

In August of 1955, Putnam was

devastated by a major flood (from a hurricane) of the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers that run through



the town. The Army Corp of Engineers developed a water project dam creating Thompson Lake just north of the town to



prevent such devastation again.

Since the mid 1970's, Putnam has rebuilt and

progressed rapidly - expanding industry and population. Putnam today is a bustling center containing Day Kimball Hospital, a branch of the Connecticut Superior Court and the Department of Motor Vehicles. The town has also become well known as the Antique Capital of the Northeast, although that influence has been diminishing with time. The antique industry has been greatly affected by the rise of internet shopping. Equally, while a keen pastime of the boomer generation, does not have the enthusiasm of younger generations. Historic sites include many early mills and mansions of mill owners.



What's in the name: Green Valley Chapel

Putnam is centrally located in what is known as the "The Quiet Corner" and also referred to as **Last Green Valley**. In our exploration of a name for this new church, we felt this a fitting link to this community. The Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley of northeastern Connecticut and south-central Massachusetts has been called "The Last Green Valley" in the sprawling metropolitan Boston-to-Washington northeast corridor. At night the region appears distinctively dark amid the urban and suburban glow when viewed from

satellites or aircraft. In the daytime, the green fields and forests confirm the surprisingly rural character of the 1,085 square-mile area defined by the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers systems and the rugged hills that surround them.

is half the size of Grand Canyon National Park and more than ten times that of Acadia, the largest national park in the northeast. Forest and farmland make up more than 70% of its 695,000-acres, yet it lies only an hour from 3 of New England's 4 largest urban areas. Its 300,000 inhabitants reside in a relatively undeveloped rural island in the midst of the most urbanized region in the nation making it a resource of local, regional, and national importance. In our exploration of a name for this new church, we felt this a fitting link to this community.



The Mission: People Needing Christ

The only other SBC church planting endeavor ever attempted in Putnam happened in the 1960's when Baptist Fellowship of Columbia. CT began a preaching point with a small cluster of people. Because of some unfortunate circumstances, the group never became a church. As in those days, people in Putnam still have very real needs for a Savior. Several churches are moving in the direction of sharing the gospel that transforms lives, but of the 10 Christian congregations serving a population of 10,000 people, only two are considered evangelical. **East Putnam Community Church** and **Hope Community Church** (AOG) are somewhat near the objective of sharing the good news; each have modest memberships. The rest are old mainline churches with modest to no impact. There is one Catholic church, **St. Mary's** which is French Catholic, started as an

outgrowth of the mill workers. It is the only Catholic church left in the region after a consolidation of five parishes.



First Baptist Church of Putnam (ABC) was the first church planted in the community, but has dwindled in size and influence.



After conversations with pastors in the region, observations of the size of the

community and how few attend a church of significance, it is clear that another church is needed. Some of the prevalent needs expressed by area leaders in an assessment done in June of 2008 were:

- Something for youth to do. There are no After school programs of note in a high latch-key environment. A new community center (possibly a YMCA) is being negotiated and planned but some distance to building. Additionally, young non-sports oriented youth have nothing to do here.
- Something for older adults. There is no active senior center and little engagement of older adults to do much more than go to the library and play golf.
- At least half the population is made up of low income renters. This puts numerous pressures on a community priding itself in healthy community, schools and economy.

- Every town leader is highly engaged in serving the community, from the Rotary president, the AM radio station owners to the deputy mayor.
- There are numerous opportunities through the Community Development office to serve elderly and low income adults in home repair projects.



There are a number of distinctive features to the town of note:

- Because of its identity in the region, the people have a keen desire to keep the “small town” feel of the community.
- There are numerous town events, festivals, parades and gatherings at the hub of Putnam throughout the year including car rallies, opera, fairs, fire works and more.
- The town features “water fire” along the river next to the park.
- The general sense of the community is that people like living here- pride. You can hear this somewhat in the local AM radio station’s programming.
- Putnam has a number of community agencies attempting to serve the social needs of the community, largely through the small town **Day Kimball Hospital**.
- There is a food closet ministry run out of the Methodist church.





- A regional research project was recently completed to determine the overarching needs of the area. The key concern or need was for a regional community center that surrounding towns could utilize. Plans are underway to build a YMCA here in Putnam.
- Putnam has its own community “little theater” called the Bradley playhouse.
- Some research indicates a desire in the community for “traditional” when it comes to church, particularly among younger people.
- There is a project under way to revitalize an aging section of the center of town with restaurants and shops.
- There is a private Jr. and Sr. High school here in town called the **Science Academy** which is operated by a Muslim Foundation out of New Haven, CT.



- Cultural decay is present. The effect of drugs, poor education, poverty and lives without Christ can be observed in several areas. For example, one of the difficulties businesses in the town face and that results in more joblessness among town

people is employers many times cannot hire people because they fail the employment drug test.

In a meeting in March 2008, Green Valley Chapel came together for a special meeting in which the question was asked: *What are the spiritual questions one might encounter in the community of Putnam?* The following are what the group decided were in evidence in the community:

1. What do I do with guilt?
2. What happens when I die?
3. How do I get to heaven – be good?
4. Why do people suffer?
5. What’s my purpose?
6. Why are you starting a new church?
7. What’s different about your church?
8. Is Jesus the only way?
9. If God is good & great why is there evil?
10. Is the Bible true – what does it mean to me today?
11. Can God fix my problems?

PURPOSE & UNIFIED VALUES

Through prayer and much discussion a number of observations have been made. We recognize that some foundation steps were needed for the man of God that was coming, but that some issues needed to be solved after he arrived on field. There are some key values that we believe are crucial for this work to grow. Please understand we know how embryonic this work is and these are just to inform and help develop a platform:

1. Integrity in relationships
2. Unconditional, deep and intimate relationships – true friends
3. Don’t want the relationships to get in the way of the work of God



4. Connection to people in the community (the Green Valley)
5. Christ centered – His Lordship
6. People focused by being culturally relative – responsive to actual needs, and disciple making.
7. Trust
8. Responsiveness to God, and His work.
9. Christ-like balance of Grace and Truth
10. Want leadership to be compelling, stable, Christ-like mature; leading in Love, approachable, and transparent.
11. Nurturing of and for those hurting within the body.
12. Missional
 - Being involved in reaching the community locally, foreign missions, partnering with other churches.
 - Growing the body of Christ (discipleship) – internal and external mission. Responsibility to move people along.
 - Putting feet to the needs of people (teach someone to fish, opposed to being given a fish)
 - Reproducing the Christ-like people globally, locally.

It is evident that we are all on a journey that God has for us. We see that some of the first steps are:

- Identifying a church planter
- Finding a location for Sunday worship
- Building partnerships to support the work
- Developing a web presence
- Prayerwalking the community
- Bringing teams to help serve and connect us to the community relationally
- Joining community organizations or groups
- Starting more in-home groups

It is our hope and prayer that God would work in your heart as He has ours to see the potential of not just one church starting, but many churches started throughout northeastern Connecticut and Northwestern Rhode Island, for His glory.

“...But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Tim. 1:8b-10)

DEMOGRAPHICS

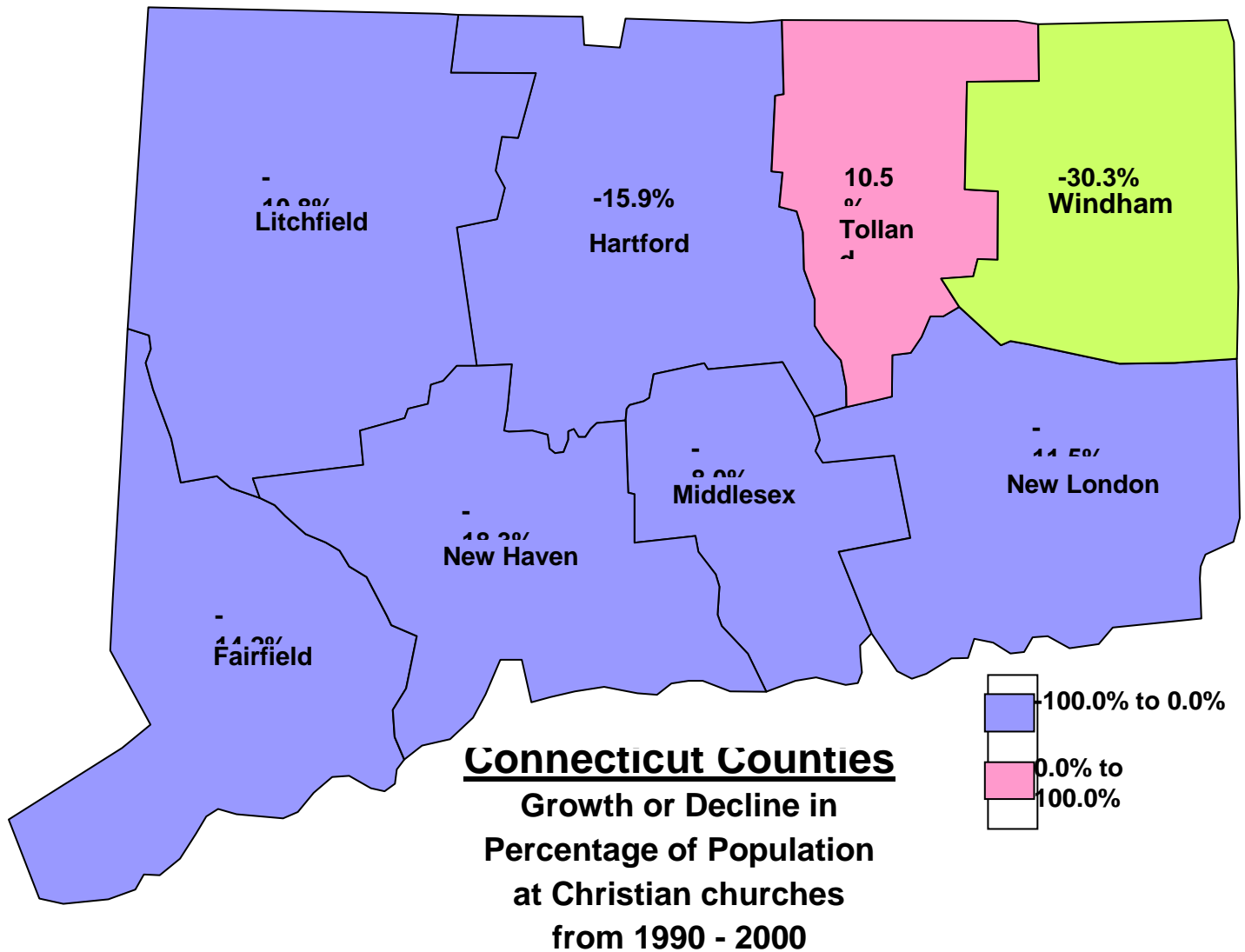
Windham County (aka: Quiet Corner) Data

Data from 2000:

Percentage of population regularly attending a Catholic church: 10%

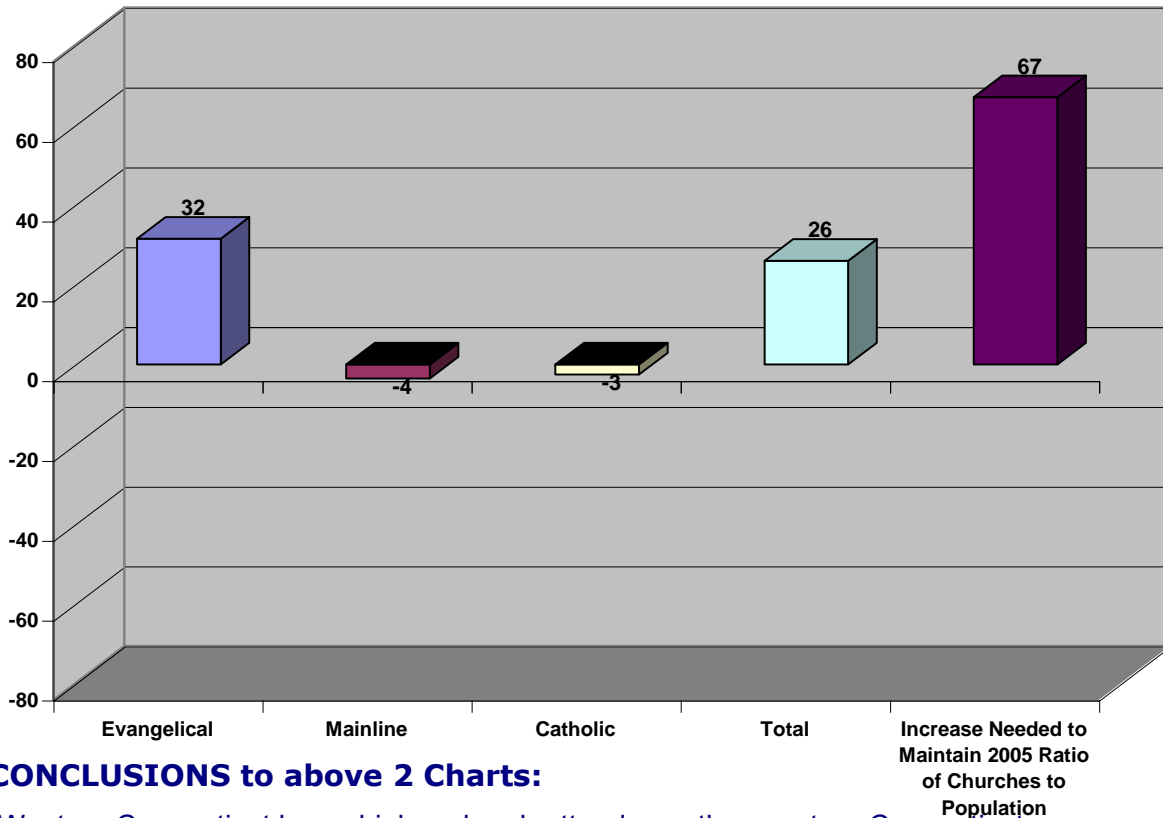
Percentage of population regularly attending a Mainline church: 2.5%

Percentage of population regularly attending an Evangelical church: 1.9%



The Next Chart shows the net gain in the number of churches in Connecticut from 2000 - 2005. There was a net gain of 26 churches. However, 67 churches were needed to keep up with population growth from 2000 - 2005.

2000 - 2005 Growth or Decline in Number of Churches in Connecticut



CONCLUSIONS to above 2 Charts:

- Western Connecticut has a higher church attendance than eastern Connecticut.
- While church attendance has essentially stayed the same for Evangelical and Mainline churches, the Catholic church has declined considerably. The percentage of the population attending church has been declining for all three groups. This resulted in a 13.4% loss in the state-wide percentage of the population that attended church between 2000 and 2005.
- A major factor in the overall decline among Protestants is the insufficient net gain in the number of churches in Connecticut. Forty-one additional churches needed to have been started from 2000 - 2005 to compensate for the decline in percentage attendance.

STATS ABOUT PUTNAM

| Population (2001) | Town | County | State |
|-----------------------|-------|---------|-----------|
| 1990 | 9,031 | 102,525 | 3,287,116 |
| 2000 | 9,002 | 109,091 | 3,405,565 |
| 2001 | 8,991 | 109,623 | 3,414,784 |
| 2006 | 8,998 | 112,278 | 3,465,947 |
| '01-'06 Growth (AAGR) | 0.02% | 0.48% | 0.30% |

| Race/Ethnicity (2001) | Town | County | State |
|-----------------------|------|--------|-------|
|-----------------------|------|--------|-------|

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------|---------|-----------|
| White | 8,748 | 105,187 | 2,997,210 |
| Black | 99 | 1,145 | 266,880 |
| Asian Pacific | 36 | 802 | 52,248 |
| Native American | 36 | 381 | 6,660 |
| Hispanic (any race) | 162 | 7,645 | 318,289 |
| Poverty Rate (1990) | 11.10% | 8.00% | 6.60% |

| Educational Attainment (1990) | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Town | % | State | % |
| Persons Age 25 or Older | 1,973 | 33.70% | 648,366 | 29.60% |
| High School Graduate | 1,081 | 18.50% | 495,696 | 22.60% |
| Some College | 739 | 12.60% | 597,693 | 27.30% |

| | Town | County | State |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Land Area (sq. miles) | 20.29 | 513 | 5,009 |
| Pop./ Sq. Mile (2001) | 435.3 | 214 | 682 |
| Per Capita Income (2001) | \$22,749 | \$22,830 | \$32,317 |
| Households (2001) | 3,484 | 40,293 | 1,285,210 |
| Median Age (2000) | 36 | 36 | 38 |

| Age Distribution (2001) | 0-4 | % | 5-17 | % | 18-24 | % | 25-49 | % | 50-64 | % | 65+ | % | Total |
|--------------------------------|---------|----|---------|-----|---------|----|-----------|-----|---------|-----|---------|-----|-----------|
| Male | 334 | 4% | 877 | 10% | 368 | 4% | 1,503 | 17% | 614 | 7% | 572 | 6% | 4,268 |
| Female | 321 | 4% | 860 | 10% | 360 | 4% | 1,537 | 17% | 662 | 7% | 983 | 11% | 4,723 |
| County Total | 7,460 | 7% | 22,529 | 21% | 9,724 | 9% | 40,267 | 37% | 16,035 | 15% | 13,608 | 12% | 109,623 |
| State Total | 213,561 | 6% | 597,220 | 17% | 279,666 | 8% | 1,294,651 | 38% | 544,994 | 16% | 484,692 | 14% | 3,414,784 |

| | Town | State |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Banks (2000) | 6 | 1,183 |
| Lodging (1998) | 1 | 756 |
| Day Care Facilities (1999) | 6 | 1,722 |
| Crime Rate (1999) Per 1,000 Residents | 23 | 33 |
| % Open Land (1990) | 74.40% | 68.70% |
| Hospitals | 1 | |
| Total Beds | 103 | |

Economics: Business Profile (2001)

| Sector | Firms | % of Total | Emp | % of Total |
|-------------------------------|-------|------------|--------|------------|
| Agriculture | 9 | 1.60% | 33 | 0.60% |
| Const. and Mining | 64 | 11.40% | 190 | 3.30% |
| Manufacturing | 49 | 8.80% | 956 | 16.50% |
| Trans. and Utilities | 14 | 2.50% | 103 | 1.80% |
| Trade | 179 | 32.00% | 1,187 | 20.50% |
| Finance, Ins. And Real Estate | 30 | 5.40% | 197 | 3.40% |
| Services | 200 | 35.80% | 2,904 | 50.30% |
| Government | 14 | 2.50% | 207 | 3.60% |
| Total | 559 | 100.00% | 5, 777 | 100.00% |

| Retail Sales (1999) Amount | Amount |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Town | \$158,699,257 |
| State | \$76,264,820,474 |

Top Five Major Employers (1997)

HealthNet of New England

Putnam Public School System

Superwinch, Inc

U.S. Button Corporation

International Paper Co.

| Top Five Grand List (1999) | Amount | % of Net |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| International Paper Co. | \$11,586,020 | 3.60% |
| Staples Inc | \$8,387,660 | 2.61% |
| Troy CMBS Property LLC | \$4,064,000 | 1.26% |
| Putnam Acquisitions LTD | \$3,903,000 | 1.21% |
| CT Light & Power | \$3,276,167 | 1.02% |
| Net Grand List (1999) | \$321,703,936 | 9.70% |
| | | |

| Crime Type | 2006 Total | Per 100,000 People | National per 100,000 People |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Overall Putnam Crime Index | 253 | 2728.4 | 4479.3 |
| Putnam Violent Crimes | 23 | 248 | 553.5 |
| Putnam Murders | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Putnam Rapes | 2 | 21.6 | 33.1 |
| Putnam Robberies | 4 | 43.1 | 205.8 |
| Putnam Aggravated Assaults | 17 | 183.3 | 336.5 |
| Putnam Property Crimes | 230 | 2480.3 | 3906.1 |
| Putnam Burglaries | 47 | 506.8 | 813.2 |
| Putnam Larceny/Thefts | 174 | 1876.4 | 2601.7 |
| Putnam Motor Vehicle Thefts | 9 | 97.1 | 501.5 |
| Putnam Arsons ¹ | 3 | 32.35 | N/A |

Web Sites for Further Exploration

- Baptist Convention of New England: **BCNE.net**
- Southeastern New England Baptist Association: **SNEBA.org**
- Church Planting Resources & More: **churchplantingvillage.net**
- Last Green Valley: **thelastgreenvalley.org**
- Attractions, Outdoor Recreation & more: **Visitthelastgreenvalley.com**
- Town of Putnam main page: **putnamct.us**
- Putnam Town Crier paper: **putnamtowncrier.com**
- Putnam AM radio: **winyradio.com**
- Putnam Antiques: **Putnamantiques.com**
- Art, Dining, Attractions: **PutnamTraveler.com**
- Bradley Playhouse: **bradleyplayhouse.org**