Our New Vision Government and Law class, seniors from school districts in our region who want to explore careers within the field of government and law, studied our county’s role in the Underground Railroad as part of an annual local history research project. Our communications team worked with the class to create a project that included:

1. A display at the county courthouse
2. A scavenger hunt throughout our community sent participants 12 separate informational web pages
3. An educational piece on our website
4. A wide array of media coverage

The partnership between our students and the comms team helped let everyone who encountered it understand immediately that the project was the work of our students through clearly branded materials. It also helped the students share their knowledge with a vast audience, much bigger than if they implemented the full project independently.

The project

FEH BOCES New Vision Government and Law students studied the local involvement in the Underground Railroad during fall/winter 2021. The project included, among other things:

- Creating an educational exhibit at the Franklin County Courthouse
- A virtual tour of the North Star Underground Railroad Museum in AuSable Chasm
- A field trip to the First Congregational Church in Malone to explore a secret passageway created to keep freedom seekers safe
- Creating a quilt square scavenger hunt
  - Meeting with the Malone Chamber of Commerce to identify locations
  - Creating quilt squares and writing interesting facts
  - Working with FEH BOCES Communications Department to create posters and web pages for each quilt square
  - Hanging posters at locations around the area

Comms role

Our 2-person comms team worked with the class to create the following:

- A banner for the courthouse display
• **12 posters of quilt squares that were hung around various historical and business partner locations throughout our region**
• Web pages with info about each quilt square, which were reached by scanning the QR code on the poster (see links below)
• **Press release/web content**, and **social media posts** publicizing project
• Coordination of press coverage
  - We took the press coverage as an opportunity to educate the students about how to react to reporters’ questions and other press visit tips with **talking point documents like this one**.
  - We provided background information like details about the program and spelling of students’ names to reporters with **informational sheets**. We shared them in **a digital folder with photos of various points in the process of the project**.

**Poster links**

Each of the scavenger hunt poster had a QR code that led to info on the quilt square and the overall project. We didn’t make those links public because we didn’t want people to be able to access them without actually seeing one of the posters.

03 Broken Dishes [https://www.fehb.org/o/franklin-essex-hamilton-boces/page/broken-dishes](https://www.fehb.org/o/franklin-essex-hamilton-boces/page/broken-dishes)
04 Monkey Wrench [https://www.fehb.org/o/franklin-essex-hamilton-boces/page/monkey-wrench](https://www.fehb.org/o/franklin-essex-hamilton-boces/page/monkey-wrench)
05 Drunkard’s Path [https://www.fehb.org/o/franklin-essex-hamilton-boces/page/drunkard-s-path](https://www.fehb.org/o/franklin-essex-hamilton-boces/page/drunkard-s-path)
07 Sailboat [https://www.fehb.org/o/franklin-essex-hamilton-boces/page/sailboat](https://www.fehb.org/o/franklin-essex-hamilton-boces/page/sailboat)
08 Crossroads [https://www.fehb.org/o/franklin-essex-hamilton-boces/page/crossroads](https://www.fehb.org/o/franklin-essex-hamilton-boces/page/crossroads)
09 Bear’s Paw [https://www.fehb.org/o/franklin-essex-hamilton-boces/page/bear-s-paw](https://www.fehb.org/o/franklin-essex-hamilton-boces/page/bear-s-paw)

**Clips**

Ours is a very rural area, so it’s typical to get the local newspaper to cover our news, but most of our local TV news reporters are based an hour away and rarely visit. For this story, we earned coverage by three different TV stations in addition to the local and two regional newspapers. The reach was remarkable – we got Facebook messages from people two hours away who wanted to come check out the scavenger hunt.

• **10/27/21** [A trip down history](https://www.fehb.org/o/franklin-essex-hamilton-boces/page/a-trip-down-history)
• **1/31/22** [FEH BOCES invites public to learn about underground railroad](https://www.fehb.org/o/franklin-essex-hamilton-boces/page/feh-boces-invites-public-to-learn-about-underground-railroad)
• 2/2/22 'A Patch of History': Students highlight Franklin County's role in Underground Railroad
• 2/3/22 FEH BOCES class highlights Underground Railroad
• 2/4/22 FEH BOCES class highlights Underground Railroad
• 2/8/22 North Country students share underground railroad research for Black History Month
• 3/4/22 Path Through History