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—For section.....News
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—Dateline.....Brattleboro
—Article Number:.....43965

Notes from editor (not for publication):

Did I get the quote ok at line 61? Thanks for the info.

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Agency continues helping refugees amid federal policy
2 shifts

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

3 Ethiopian Community Development Council anticipates
4 arrival of 50 Afrikaners in the region

####END SUBHED####

5 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

6 No to Afghans. No to Haitians. No to Somalis. But yes to
7 white South Africans. Brattleboro will be resettling 50 of them in
8 the coming months.

9 This is in line with a controversial refugee program
10 initiated by the Trump administration. While the U.S.'s refugee
11 admissions program remains suspended, leaving thousands of

12 previously approved refugees in limbo, that is not true for white
13 South Africans.

14 "The Trump administration plans to admit up to 10,000
15 more white South African refugees into the United States in the
16 coming months, arguing that their status as Afrikaners has left
17 them open to discrimination and persecution at home," the
18 Associated Press reported in May.

19 The AP reported that the South African government has
20 called the Trump administration's claims "baseless," the story
21 continues.

22 In February, the president signed an executive order that
23 lambasted a 2024 law passed by the Republic of South Africa,
24 Expropriation Act 13, "in shocking disregard of its citizens'
25 rights."

26 "This Act follows countless government policies designed
27 to dismantle equal opportunity in employment, education, and
28 business, and hateful rhetoric and government actions fueling
29 disproportionate violence against racially disfavored
30 landowners," read the executive order, which cut off aid to South
31 Africa and called on the federal government to provide
32 "humanitarian relief, including admission and resettlement
33 through the United States Refugee Admissions Program, for
34 Afrikaners in South Africa who are victims of unjust racial
35 discrimination."

36 The AP, citing a State Department notice it obtained,
37 reported that the estimated cost for resettling the additional
38 10,000 refugees is about \$100 million.

39 At least 50 of those Afrikaners are coming to live in
40 southern Vermont, said Joe Wiah, southern Vermont director of
41 the Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC).

42 Wiah was speaking at the Brattleboro Development
43 Credit Council's CEO Roundtable and Leadership Forum, which
44 took place earlier this month at the School for International
45 Training in Brattleboro.

46 As with the other refugees who now live in Windham
47 and Bennington counties, the Afrikaners will be resettled through
48 the ECDC.

49 Some are already here. More will be coming. In January,
50 *The Deerfield Valley News* reported that Wiah and the ECDC
51 were asking its volunteers to “set aside their opposition to the
52 Trump administration’s policy of allowing thousands of white
53 South Africans to move to the United States while severely
54 restricting the arrival of most other ethnic groups” and help with
55 Afrikaner resettlement.

56 In the four years it has been working here, the ECDC has
57 helped settled over 600 refugees in both counties.

58 Most of those refugees have been people of color. Not
59 anymore.

60 “As refugees, we set up an agency,” Wiah told *The*
61 *Commons*. “We resettle anyone that is assigned to us by the
62 federal government. We don’t pick and choose.”

63 Windham and Bennington counties have already
64 absorbed people from over 10 countries.

65 “We have people from Venezuela, we have Ecuador, we
66 have Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Central Africa, Republic,
67 Eritrea, Ukraine, and some I can’t remember right now,” Wiah
68 said.

69 The South African newcomers will not displace any of
70 the refugees already living and working here, who have access to
71 the ECDC’s benefits, advice, and services for five years.

72 “The ones that are here, we’re still serving them in
73 different programs,” Wiah said. “After five years, we assume now
74 that you reach self-sufficiency. And then you can take things on
75 yourself.”

76 Refugees here are working in hospitals, offices, lumber
77 mills, supermarkets, car dealerships, and a variety of other
78 places.

79 The biggest challenge for all refugees is housing, Wiah
80 said.

81 "Housing is the challenge," he said. "But the gross
82 employment continues. We're still continuing to save refugees."

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BIO/COATTAIL:

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#####END BIO/COATTAIL####

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VIDEO:

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#####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

87 #####BEGIN LOGLINE####

#####END LOGLINE####