

chamber

north central massachusetts report

CELEBRATE

The word 'CELEBRATE' is written in a large, bold, teal font. The background is decorated with stylized pink fireworks and stars. The fireworks are depicted as bursts of lines radiating from a central point, with some having small stars at their tips. The stars are simple five-pointed shapes in a light pink color. The overall theme is celebratory and festive.

Building Businesses. Building Communities.

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JUNE - AUGUST 2018



Letter From the President



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I am excited to share with you our newest edition of the Chamber's quarterly print newsletter. In a continuing effort to enhance our communications, the Chamber's newsletter has undergone a complete redesign. Our goal was to improve the publication, better convey information to you and better align with the direction and new branding of the Chamber.

Engaging our readers and making the entire piece more informative was a top priority. The refresh includes a clean, more modern and sophisticated design. We worked with member graphic design firm Sitka Creations to help us remake the publication to better meet our goals.

We have included several additional pages of content, incorporated a new color palette and added more images and graphics to make it more visually interesting. The most striking change is the addition of a cover page, which will feature a bold image or graphic element each quarter in which we hope to inspire readers or highlight a particular Chamber focus area.

I hope that you enjoy the newsletter. I believe this is an exciting time to be part of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce. I want you to know that we appreciate your membership and that we remain dedicated to delivering one of the most cost effective ways to expand your network, discover new opportunities and stay abreast of the local economy.

Your comments or feedback are always welcome. My door is always open, or feel free to email me at rnascimento@northcentralmass.com.

About the Cover: The "Celebrate" theme on this edition of the newsletter was selected in recognition of our upcoming Annual Meeting, where we take time to celebrate the business community's achievements and collective efforts in advancing North Central Massachusetts. We also thought the theme was appropriate for the Summer edition, a season which our thoughts turn to the Fourth of July and community celebrations big and small throughout the region.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CHAMBER'S DEVELOPMENT ARM AWARDED Workforce Development Grant

The North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation (NCMDC) was awarded an \$8,000 matching AMP it up! grant from MassDevelopment to support its efforts to respond to the region's shortage of skilled workers in the manufacturing industry. Working in partnership with Fitchburg State University, Mount Wachusett Community College, the region's public schools, and local manufacturers, the NCMDC will utilize these funds to support its efforts to raise awareness of career paths in the advanced manufacturing field.

The grant will be used to continue the momentum



AMP it up!

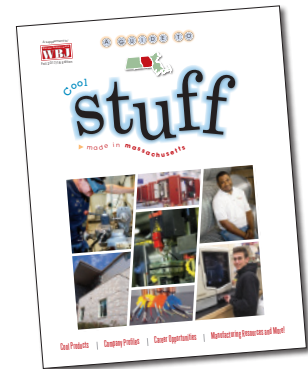
sustained from receiving this grant in previous years by continuing outreach to audiences that are not typically associated with careers in manufacturing and aims to target a new audience for a potential future workforce.

Outreach will highlight the exciting, technology-driven, well-paying career options in manufacturing, dispel common myths about the industry, and bolster the prospective employee base for these quality jobs with North Central Massachusetts companies.

The Chamber and the NCMDC remain committed to supporting and growing this critical sector of the region's economy. ◇



Who's helping North County manufacturers attract tomorrow's workforce?



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Business and Community Leaders Meet with Keolis to Discuss the Fitchburg Line

Mayor Stephen L. DiNatale of the City of Fitchburg and representatives from the Chamber and the Johnny Appleseed Trail Association (JATA) recently traveled on the Fitchburg commuter rail line into Boston to highlight the importance of the MBTA rail service to North Central Massachusetts and discuss the opportunities for improvements and future partnerships. Gerald Francis, general manager and Linda Dillon, director of customer experience from Keolis accompanied the delegation into North Station.

“It was important for the city to have met with Keolis to discuss the commuter rail and its impact on Fitchburg” said



Mayor DiNatale. “Fitchburg is fortunate to have two stops on the line. With the investment and updates Keolis is making to their infrastructure, it is imperative to build these relationships so we can continue our work promoting our city throughout the

Commonwealth.”

The trip and discussions with Keolis leadership were organized by the Chamber, JATA and the Office of the Mayor of Fitchburg in an effort to facilitate partnerships and explore ways to better improve the

Fitchburg Rail Line for the benefit of residents and businesses. Infrastructure, reverse commuting, social media outreach, commute length, connecting with local businesses, and future partnerships were all topics discussed. ♦

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION APPROVED AS COMMUNITY ADVANTAGE LENDER

The North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation (NCMDC) has been designated as a Community Advantage Lender by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Established in the wake of the 2008 Financial Crisis, the Community Advantage Lender Program seeks to extend credit to small businesses in underserved communities. It accomplishes this by seeking out lenders with experience working with clients who fit this description and ensuring their loans. The SBA provides guarantees of 85% for loans up to \$150,000 and 75% for loans above that and up to \$250,000.

Already recognized as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) and a SBA certified microlender and, the NCMDC provides gap financing and serves as a lender



US Representatives Nikki Tsongas and James McGovern; Massachusetts Asst. Secretary of Business Development and Trade Nam Pham; Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale; and numerous other business and community leaders participated in the special event to announce the designation.

of last resort for small businesses and entrepreneurs throughout Central Massachusetts. In doing so, it has lent out over \$6 million since its inception in 1996, leveraged an additional \$21 million in private funds, and created nearly a thousand

jobs. During a recent review of its portfolio, roughly half of its existing loans were found to be located in low to moderate income census tracts.

“We are very excited and honored to have been selected as an SBA approved Community

Advantage Lender,” said Roy M. Nascimento, President & CEO of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce and the NCMDC. “This new partnership with the SBA will go a long way in helping to support local small businesses and the economic growth of the region.”

Under this program, loans made by the NCMDC can be used for working capital, leasehold improvements, machinery and equipment, furniture and fixtures and refinancing of business credit card debt. Eligible businesses include manufacturing, retail, wholesale and service businesses usually having five employees or less at the time of application and meeting the definition of small business. The interest rates are flexible, but generally close to the current fixed market rate. ◇



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GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

The North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce takes an active advocacy role with government on behalf of our member businesses, focused on issues that impact business, and the economy of North Central Massachusetts. As part of our government relations efforts, we actively work to engage with policy makers. Below is an update on some of the more recent government affairs activities at the local, regional, state and federal level.

Local Affairs: We have been extremely active at the local level, monitoring legislation and advocating on behalf of our membership. Most recently, the Chamber testified before the Fitchburg’s City Council against a proposed plastic bag ban and a local option tax on alcohol “nips”. Both of these items were defeated. The Chamber has also continued to convene regular meetings with local officials from throughout the region to discuss economic development priorities and issues of concern to the business community.

State Affairs: The Chamber has voted to oppose the proposed nurse staffing ballot question. The proposal was reviewed by the Chamber’s government affairs committee and viewed as something that, if passed, would complicate delivery of acute care by our local hospitals and continue to drive up the cost of health care. Chamber positions on the other proposed ballot questions will be released in the coming months.

The Chamber also recently joined the Massachusetts Coalition for Sustainable Energy, a coalition of state business groups advocating for the expansion of natural gas capacity as a means to reduce energy costs and strengthen the economy. We also participated in Tourism Lobby Day, meeting with numerous legislators about the importance of tourism, and Small Business Day on Beacon Hill which focused on educating legislators on proposals that increase costs for businesses. We are currently monitoring the state budget and working to build support around a number of important economic development initiatives.

Federal Affairs: To date, Chamber staff have met with six of the top candidates vying for the Third Congressional District to engage them on the priorities of the local business community. The Chamber is also leading an effort to organize a North Central Massachusetts debate for the Congressional seat in the fall. Our goal with organizing a public debate is to ensure that our region’s issues are examined and addressed by the general election candidates. The Chamber has continued to engage with the current Congressional Delegation, which included participating in a number of meetings and media events with Congressman Jim McGovern and Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, as well as helping to communicate concerns we heard from some members over proposed federal tariffs on steel. ◇



Chamber President Roy Nascimento and Tom Meyers of Wachusett Ski Area meet with members of the Senate President’s staff at the State House.

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TOURISM update

Appleseed Fair Sponsorship & Vendor Opportunities

The 7th Annual Appleseed Country Fair is scheduled for Labor Day weekend – September 1, 2 and 3 at Red Apple Farm in Phillipston, MA. This quality family event showcases North Central Massachusetts and its rural heritage.

The fair includes activities for all ages including face painting, crafts, animals, live music, craft beer and



the 4th Annual FiddleFest – one of the largest fiddle competitions in New England. The fair features over 50 vendors that range from artisans and crafters to

food, beer and wine.

Have you or your business ever considered participating in the fair? It is a great opportunity to reach not only residents from the region, but also visitors from throughout New England. Applications for vendors are now being accepted. We are also offering a limited number of sponsorship opportunities. We work with each of

our sponsors to leverage their dollars to showcase them in powerful ways before and during the fair.

For more information on the fair or for a vendor application, please contact Diane Burnette at 978.534.2829.

For more information on sponsorship opportunities, please contact Maria McCaffrey at 978.353.7600 ext. 235. ◊



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North Central Massachusetts promoted globally

In an effort to promote North Central Massachusetts to travel industry buyers, the Johnny Appleseed Trail Association (JATA) participated in the 23rd Annual Discover New England (DNE) Tourism Summit & International Marketplace in Falmouth in April. The DNE Annual Tourism Summit is the only trade show dedicated to New England organizations looking to increase business from overseas travelers. Over 400 representatives from the travel industry participated in the event,



including travel writers, receptive operators in the United States and international tour operators from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Belgium, Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

This was the second year that representatives from JATA and North

Central Massachusetts participated in the trade show. JATA staff had one-on-one sales meetings with over 30 international and receptive tour operators, educating them about the region and establishing important relationships and connections for our members and attractions. JATA also helped sponsor a special

VIP reception on the first evening of the summit, which showcased craft beverages, wines and other items produced in the region. This level of participation increased visibility for North Central Massachusetts.

The Johnny Appleseed Trail Association would like to extend special thanks to Wachusett Brewing Company, Moon Hill Brewing, Wachusett Ski Area, and Polar Beverages for their support of the special reception hosted for group buyers. ◇

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Farm to Table Dinner scheduled for August 2

The Johnny Appleseed Trail Association (JATA) is pleased to announce its first ever Farm to Table Dinner being held on August 2, 2018. This special event, starting at 5 pm, will feature dining among the orchards and fields of Hollis Hills Farm, 340 Marshall Road, Fitchburg, MA.

In celebration of our local foods and beverages, JATA is partnering with local chef Kevin Williams of Roots Natural Foods. Born in Leominster, Chef Kevin knows the



foods of North Central Massachusetts well. Chef Kevin's career has afforded him the ability to travel and explore the world to expand his cooking knowledge after spending 10 years as a chef in California. Most recently, Chef Kevin took his culinary travels to Mexico, bringing back several recipes to the Roots Kitchen.

The Farm-to-Table event is designed to highlight seasonally appropriate food and beverages grown, raised or produced in North Central Massachusetts, connect attendees to this special resource and create a shared sense of community. The event will also feature an extensive raffle of local items.

Sponsorships are

available for the Farm to Table dinner. Enterprise Bank & Trust, Hollis Hills Farm and new member Little Leaf Farms have already signed on as partners for the event.

Seating is limited. Tickets are \$99 per person and must be purchased in advance. To register, sponsor or offer an item, visit www.northcentralmass.com or contact Maria McCaffrey, events & programs manager at mmccaffrey@northcentralmass.com or (978) 353-7600 x. 235. ♦

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ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING AND LUNCHEON

The Annual Meeting and Business Luncheon for the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce is scheduled for **Thursday, June 14, 2018 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Great Wolf Lodge, 150 Great Wolf Drive, Fitchburg.**

Join other business and community leaders and attend the annual meeting to celebrate business people working together for the

future of North Central Massachusetts. The program will include recognition awards and the commencement for the 2018 class of the Chamber's Community Leadership Institute.

This year's keynote speaker is Maria Milagros. Maria Milagros is a speaker, an author, storyteller and empowerment life coach. Whether sharing her life experiences and knowledge

through impactful talks, workshops, leadership training, life coaching or videos, Maria uses stories to bring encouragement, education and love to empower others to get out of their way and break free from any hindering thoughts or beliefs, so that they can live amazing lives and leave their unique and positive mark on the world.

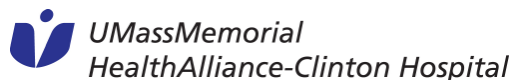
To register for the

Annual Business Meeting and Luncheon, please contact the Chamber at 978.353.7600 ext. 222 or ext. 235 or email chamber@northcentralmass.com or register online at northcentralmass.com. The cost is just \$42 per person for members and \$65 per person for non-members. Supporting sponsorships and tables of ten are also available. Please RSVP by June 8th. ◊



This year's keynote speaker is Maria Milagros.

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Thursday, June 14, 2018

The event

REGISTRATION 11:30 AM
LUNCH IS SERVED 11:45 AM

FORMAL SPEAKING PROGRAM 12:15 PM

Keynote Speaker: Maria Milagros
Author, Storyteller and Empowerment Life Coach
Recognition Awards to Committee Chairpersons
Board of Directors Recognition
Community Leadership Institute Commencement

ADJOURN 1:30 PM

QUICK hits

Ribbon Cuttings



Achieve TMS East of Leominster, MA

Pictured: Psychiatrist Dr. Rebecca Knapp; Marketing Manager Jacqueline Bien; Director of Operations Marjorie Pierce; Mayor Dean Mazzarella; David Ginisi of the Chamber; Chamber Ambassadors: Scherrie Keating of Diabetes Kare Consulting; Amanda Curtis of UMass HealthAlliance; and other distinguished staff and guests.



American Dream Granite of Leominster, MA

Pictured: Owners Nina and Jason Gonzalez and their son; Mayor Dean Mazzarella; David Ginisi of the Chamber; Sandie Cataldo of the Development Corporation; and Chamber Ambassador Donna DiMarzio of Curves.



Burnette and Myers Recognized with Distinguished Service Awards

Diane Burnette, manager of the Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center and Matt Myers, marketing and communications manager were recently honored by the Massachusetts Association of Chamber Executives.

Diane was recognized for twenty years of service in the chamber of commerce industry and Matt was recognized for five years of service. They are pictured here with Roy Nascimento, President & CEO of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber.



The Chamber hosted Congressman Jim McGovern and Debra Beavin of the U.S Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration for a tour of the region. They are pictured here visiting Little Explorers Day Care in Templeton, a small business that started as a result of a micro-loan provided by the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation.

Quick Hits continued...



Comeketo Brazilian Steakhouse of Leominster, MA

Pictured: Rodrigo Souza, owner, is recognized by Congressman Jim McGovern and Representative Natalie Higgins.



Bridle Path Tack of Westminster, MA

Pictured: Jessica Rollins, Owner of Bridle Path Tack; David Ginisi of the Chamber; Chamber Ambassadors: Shannon Girgenti of Creative Eye Productions; Tracy Lafleur of Enterprise Bank; and family and friends.

NAL's Paint Center of Leominster, MA

Pictured: David Santora, Owner of NAL's Paint Center; Mayor Dean Mazzarella; David Ginisi of the Chamber; Chamber Ambassador Tracy Lafleur of Enterprise Bank; and other guests.



In March, the Chamber hosted Jay Ash, Massachusetts Secretary of Housing and Economic Development at a meeting of the Chamber's Leadership Council and a tour of several prominent economic development projects in Lancaster, Leominster and Fitchburg. The tour provided an opportunity to showcase the region, introduce the Secretary to local developers and elected officials, as well as garner state support to move these projects forward.



The Chamber Board of Directors gathers for a strategic planning retreat to update the Chamber's strategic plan.

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HAVE YOU SEEN THE LATEST MANUFACTURING DIRECTORY?

Expansive Guide highlights the region's vast manufacturing firms and industrial space

The Chamber and its development arm, the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation (NCMDC), announce the publication of the 2018 edition of the Manufacturers Directory and Industrial Parks Guide for North Central Massachusetts. The publication is designed

to promote and connect manufacturers with suppliers as well as serve as a resource for companies looking to relocate or expand throughout the region.

Working with multiple sources, the NCMDC confirmed the operating status and primary product line of each

company listed in the directory. In addition to the listing of local manufacturers, the publication also includes a section on life science companies, a listing of suppliers and a guide to business and industrial parks in North Central Massachusetts.

The 2018 edition of the publication was supported by advertising and is being circulated to manufacturers throughout the region. For more information or to request a copy, please contact the Chamber at 978.353.7600. ♦



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June 14, 2018

**Annual Business
Meeting & Luncheon**
Great Wolf Lodge

June 19, 2018

Small Business Roundtable
Chamber Office

June 20, 2018

Clinton Business Forum
*UMass Memorial Health
Alliance-Clinton Hospital, Inc.*

June 21, 2018

**Human Resource Council – Special
Session on Employer Medical
Assistance Contribution**
Doubletree by Hilton

June 21, 2018

**Sponsor Appreciation Reception
Invitation Only**

June 26, 2018

Retailers & Restaurateurs Workshop
Chamber Office

June 27, 2018

Sales Leads
Chamber Office

August 2, 2018

Farm To Table Dinner
Hollis Hills Farm

A complete list of events with details can be found at www.northcentralmass.com/news/calendar-of-events. Please contact Maria McCaffrey with any questions.

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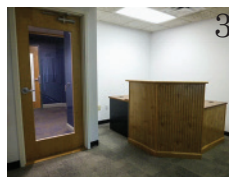


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Geronimo Properties works with you to position your business to succeed. Our great geographical locations, individual tenant mentoring, and quarterly opportunities will set up your business to progress and prosper. Geronimo Properties aims to see you succeed and are always here to help along the way



- 1 2 & 12/Marshall Shopping Center
510 North Main St., Leominster - 10,824 sq ft
- 2 Johnny Appleseed Shopping Center
1009 Central St. Leominster (3 units) - 1,267 sq ft
- 3 Twin City Shopping Center
975 Merriam Ave, Leominster, MA - 1467 sq ft



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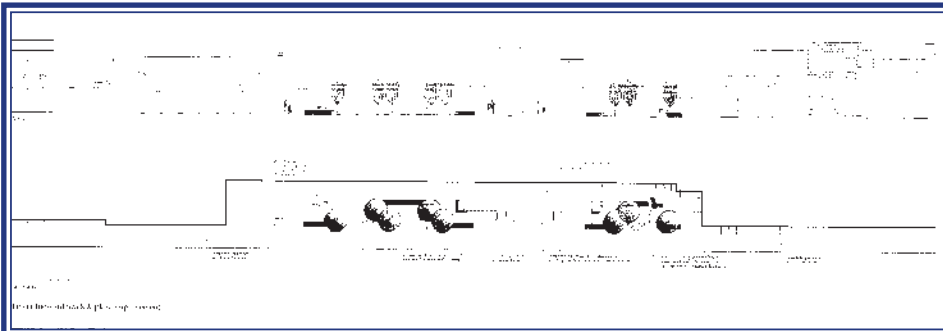
Twin City Shopping Center, Leominster/Fitchburg is getting a makeover!

Geronimo Properties is proud to announce the Twin City façade Renovation that began on April 16, 2018. The construction includes 370,000 sf. of retail space and will be completed in phases. All businesses are open during construction, and much of the work is taking place in the evening to avoid disruption.

With aggressive planning and development, improvements will invigorate the shopping center's experience for the consumer by creating a design that respects today's and tomorrow's consumers as well as improving customer experience for our future retailers.

This is a significant investment into the center and community at large. The location of the Shopping Center is in a key location. It occupies both Leominster and Fitchburg which is adjoined to Route 2, South Street and close to Route 12.

New Landscaping | WIFI | Outdoor Seating



Paul A. DiGeronimo, who manages Twin City Shopping Center states:

"We are looking forward to starting this new project. Our focus is the consumer and our community to provide an appealing and enjoyable experience."

Architect Brent Heinzer of BTH Associates, Designer Chris LeBlanc and Andrew Leonard at A.T. Leonard Associates developed the concept. Goguen Construction is the contractor.