

# CHAMBER EXCHANGE

 THE NEWSPAPER

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE WORCESTER REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOL. 3 ISSUE 2 - MAY 2019

PSRT STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 9  
Worcester, MA



## HOUSING TOPS DEVELOPMENT PRIORITY LIST

By Emily Gowdey-Backus, *Director of Communications*

Affordable housing is necessary for cities to accommodate, and eventually, grow their workforce.

Over the past five years, Worcester has increasingly become an attractive destination for businesses to launch, relocate, or invest. But for too long, the Heart of the Commonwealth has lacked the capacity to house those workers who have put the city back on the map.

While the need for new housing stock isn't unique to Worcester, the influx of businesses and investment to the Central Massachusetts hub has drawn the attention of state legislators.

Of the statewide dilemma, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito said: "As we all appreciate the robustness of our economy ... we recognize that we clearly are not meeting our responsibilities relative to creating more housing."

Across the City of Worcester, according to 2017 U.S. Census Bureau data, there were 78,036 housing units with a 9.3 percent vacancy rate. Thirty percent of the total was one-unit detached housing – single family homes – while nearly

one quarter, 24 percent, were three- or four-unit apartment buildings, known locally as triple deckers.

What's astonishing is that almost half of the city's total available housing, 48.5 percent, was built prior to 1939. The second largest home construction push in Worcester occurred between 1950 and 1959 – half a century ago.

One project in which the City of Worcester – with help from the Chamber – plans to increase the amount of available housing is by working with Patrick Lee, founder and principal of Boston-based real estate development firm Trinity Financial. Lee has embarked on the redevelopment of the former Worcester Courthouse on Main Street into affordable and market-rate housing.

In March, two years after announcing the partnership, Trinity Financial's first in Worcester, Mr. Lee said: "Worcester is a place where people coalesce, where people come together and try hard to be supportive ... in order to get things done. We don't see that in every community where we do work."

Mr. Lee, who has been very vocal about the warm welcome he has



Depicting the Highland Street facade of the former Worcester Courthouse, this architectural rendering shows what the planned apartment complex could look like once renovations are complete. Trinity Financial expects the facility to open mid-2020. Rendering courtesy Trinity Financial.

received locally, said he wants to return that kindness. Together with City Manager Edward M. Augustus, Jr. and Timothy P. Murray, chamber president and CEO, Mr. Lee plans to cultivate a construction and subcontractor force from within the local community.

By the height of the construction, 200 jobs will be created with as many local residents, minority-, and women-owned businesses as possible involved in the process.

"We want to make sure this is an opportunity for people who are in Worcester to get jobs at the project site and we also want to make sure that when you go by the site ... it's a diverse [crowd]," said Mr. Lee.

When it comes to real estate development, inclusion is paramount, he said. The best way to avoid organized protestation of a project, he feels, is to "open up the process and give [people] a stake in the outcome."

**SEE HOUSING, PAGE 21**

## GRID, THEATER DISTRICTS SHINE

By Charlene Arsenault, *Chamber Correspondent*

From the late 1970s to mid-1980s, Sherry Horeanopoulos worked at various Worcester companies: Parker Metal, Davis Press, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Her social life was here, the Galleria its mecca. The stores were thriving. Main Street bustled.

But, the Galleria shuttered in the early 1990s, and, throughout the decade, tumbleweeds rolled.

Ms. Horeanopoulos left the Worcester scene for a time. But in 2012, she ordered season tickets to the Hanover Theatre and now frequents downtown. She and a lot of others are back.

"I've seen a huge resurgence of energy," said Ms. Horeanopoulos. "[Worcester] was the center of my social universe and that certainly changed once downtown became

a ghost town. But now, I can see Worcester becoming a destination again."

Dolly Vazquez and Allen Fletcher often walk from their Canal District property for a night out on the town, especially in the warmer weather.

"We go to 110 Grill sometimes but mostly we'll have dinner at the Theatre Cafe before a show," said Ms. Vazquez. "It's beginning to feel a lot like a city."

It feels "a lot like a city" because of careful maneuvers spanning years – the latest being the formation, and November 2018 approval of a Business Improvement District in the downtown corridor. The Downtown Worcester BID unites business leaders, government entities, and residents in the Theatre and Grid districts. Currently, 140 property owners collaborate to

**SEE GRID DISTRICT, PAGE 4**

## EVERYBODY WANTS IN: CITY'S SQUARE FEET IN HIGH DEMAND

By Vaske Gjino, *Economic Development Associate*

While affordability concerns for primary-market commercial real estate, such as Boston, have heightened, there has been a national shift to secondary markets and college towns.

Compressed capitalization rates, or the expected return from investment in primary markets, has shrunk as property values outpaced growth in a property's revenue generation.

How are secondary and tertiary markets ranked?

Some indicators are population, occupancy, loan delinquency, and unemployment rates. Worcester's 2018 office occupancy rate was 95 percent – a mark comparable to cities such as Austin or Nashville.

Worcester's population has also steadily grown in line with the call for commercial, office, and retail space. Between 1980 and 2017, it has seen a 14 percent increase – more than similar Commonwealth Gateway cities and other post-industrial U.S. communities. Unemployment in the Worcester, MA-Connecticut metro area, with a population greater than 930,000, has steadily decreased since 2010. It fell to 3.9 percent in January.

Worcester's commercial real estate market continued to increase momentum from Q4 2018 to Q1 2019. Multiple expansions, relocations, and new lease agreements exemplify healthy growth in Worcester's office, retail, and industrial markets.

**SEE SQUARE FEET, PAGE 19**

Step-by-Step  
Pearl-Elm  
Municipal  
Garage  
Updates;  
pg. 11



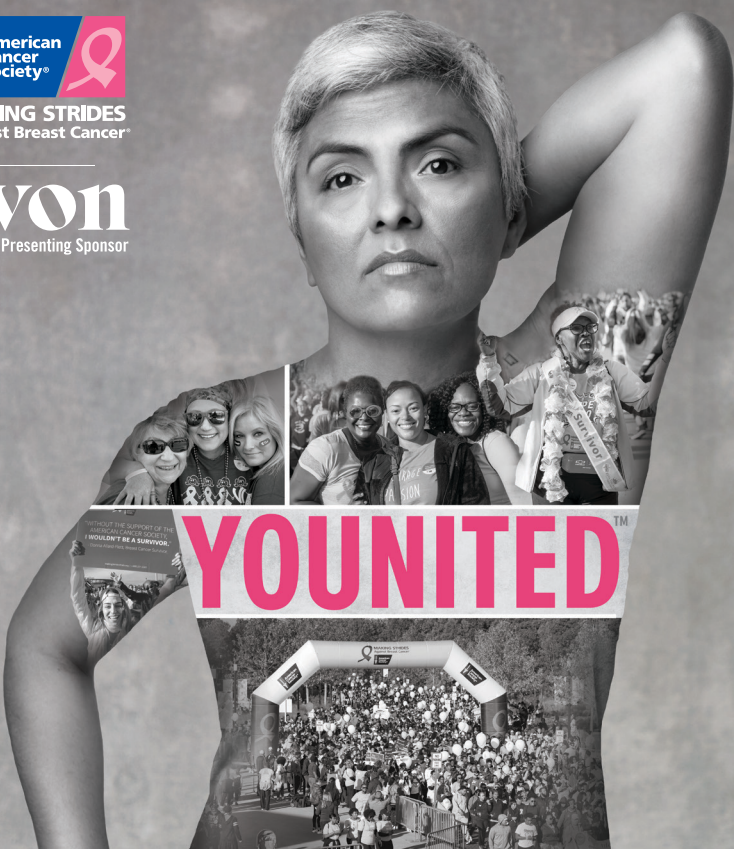
Workforce  
Development  
Adult Educ.  
Program,  
Night Life,  
Returns to  
WPS; pg. 7



Chamber  
rings in 10th  
annual WWLC  
with larger-  
than-ever  
programming;  
pgs. 12 & 13







## Making Strides Against Breast Cancer of Worcester

For further info, contact:  
Anna.Sarcinelli@cancer.org  
781-314-9487



## GROW YOUR BUSINESS WITH CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP

Every month, the Chamber offers dozens of opportunities to its members who want to grow their business. From networking to peer support to educational programs, the Chamber is focused on helping small businesses grow and prosper.

**EXPAND YOUR REACH WITH NETWORKING | PEER SUPPORT | EDUCATION**



- 
- A photograph of two women sitting at a table. The woman on the left, with blonde hair and sunglasses on her head, is wearing a grey blazer over a teal top and is looking at a smartphone held by the woman on the right. The woman on the right, with brown hair, is wearing a brown leather jacket over a white lace top and is holding the smartphone. On the table, there is a blue bottle of beer and a glass of dark liquid. In the background, other people are partially visible, suggesting a social event.

**For more info or to join, contact**  
**Kristen Luna** | 508.753.2924, ext. 226  
 kluna@worcesterchamber.org

311 Main St., Suite 200 | Worcester, MA 01608 | [WorcesterChamber.org](http://WorcesterChamber.org)

**AUBURN EXCLUSIVES**

**The bank of you.**



Member FDIC | Member SIF

hometowncoop.com | 888.307.5887

1. Special offer is for opening a First Choice Money Market Account at our Auburn Branch location only and is for NEW bankHometown customers. 1.50% Annual Percentage Yield (APY) is effective as of 4/1/2019. This is a variable rate account and the rate can change at any time without notice. Minimum balance to open account is \$500. Minimum daily balance to obtain APY is \$0.01. \$500 minimum balance required to avoid \$6.00 monthly maintenance fee. Fees may reduce earnings. Transfers from a Money Market Savings account to another account or to third parties are limited under Federal law to no more than six (6) per statement cycle. This limit includes those conducted by 24 Hour Telephone transfers, bankHometown Online Business Banking, checks, POS transactions, overdraft protection transfers, ACH transactions, online bill payments and online transfers. Not available for IRA's. This is a limited time offer and subject to change without notice.

2 Special offer is for opening a 24-Month Certificate of Deposit at our Auburn Branch location only. Annual Percentage Yield of 2.85% is effective as of 4/1/2019. Minimum balance to open account is \$1,000. Minimum balance to obtain APYs \$0.01. \$250,000 maximum deposit per household. Substantial penalty for early withdrawal. Automatically renews at maturity for 24 months at the prevailing current rate. This is a limited time offer and subject to change without notice.

\* As published in the 2018 Banker and Tradesman's Massachusetts Banking Choice Awards.





WORCESTER REGIONAL  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
RECRUIT | RETAIN | INCUBATE

President and CEO | **Timothy P. Murray**

VP of Marketing, Communications, Programs,  
& Events | **Sharyn T. Williams**

Director of Communications | **Emily Gowdey-Backus**  
Marketing, Events, & Communications Intern | **Jessica Coates**

Economic Development Associate | **Vaske Gjino**  
Director of Government Affairs & Public Policy | **Alex Guardiola**  
Membership Services & Development | **Kristen Luna**

Director of Finance | **Maria Panasian**  
Assistant to the President, Affiliate Liason | **Virginia Parent**

VP of Operations, Director of Education and Workforce  
Development | **Karen Pelletier**  
Receptionist | **Marie Prochet**

Senior Director of Membership Development and  
Finance | **Linda Salem Pervier**  
Program and Events Coordinator | **Lili Zannotti**

With publication dates in February, May, August, and November, Chamber Exchange – The Newspaper is a quarterly publication written and produced by Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce staff as well as community and member correspondents. Content is geared to business professionals, Chamber members, elected officials, and engaged citizens.

Each quarter, 20,000 copies are printed and mailed to 6,000 Chamber members and business professionals and roughly 11,000 City of Worcester registered voters. The remainder are distributed among area businesses. If you're interested in being a point of distribution, please contact Kristen Luna, membership sales and services representative, at [kluna@worcesterchamber.org](mailto:kluna@worcesterchamber.org). For advertising inquiries, please contact Kristen Luna or Linda Salem Pervier at [lsalempervier@worcesterchamber.org](mailto:lsalempervier@worcesterchamber.org).

To contact the editorial staff, please email Emily Gowdey-Backus, director of communications, at [egowdeybackus@worcesterchamber.org](mailto:egowdeybackus@worcesterchamber.org).

Unless otherwise noted, the editorial content herein is the opinion of the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce and does not reflect the opinion of any specific member, business, or partner of the Chamber.

The Chamber is located at 311 Main St. in Worcester. Any questions or comments, please call 508.753.2924.

## QUARTERLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### MAY

- 21 WIN: Life Changing to Changing Lives | *sponsor: Saint Vincent Hospital*
- 22 Financial Services Roundtable: How FinTech will Change the Way you do Business | *sponsor: Bowditch & Dewey*
- 23 Business After Hours and Annual Chamber Awards @St. John's High School | *sponsor: Fidelity Bank*
- 24 Leadership Worcester Application Deadline
- 30 Fail Safe Leadership Seminar | *sponsor: TD Bank*

### JUNE

- 4 Manufacturing Roundtable: Why Worcester
- 6 The Breakfast Club @Mechanics Hall | *sponsor: BCBS of Massachusetts and UMass Medical School*
- 11 SEMINAR: Intro to Project Management | *sponsor: TD Bank*
- 13 Business After Hours w/ Auburn, Central Mass South, & WDO Chambers @Indian Ranch in Webster | *sponsor: Commerce Bank, a Division of Berkshire Bank, and Triton Technologies*
- 18 WIN: The Power of Vision: Defining Your Own Success and Impact | *sponsor: Saint Vincent Hospital*
- 24 29th Annual William J. Short Memorial Golf Classic @Charter Oak Country Club | *sponsor: Harvard Pilgrim Health Care*
- 27 Chamber Member Appreciation Night @The Bravehearts | *sponsor: YOUR CHAMBER!* with craft beer night complements of the Bravehearts

### JULY

- 2 Worcester's Independence Day Celebration @East Park | *sponsor: Fallon Health (Rain Date July 3)*
- 27 Space Night @The Bravehearts

### AUGUST

- 5 Fidelity Bank Caring Classic @Green Hill Golf Course | *sponsor: Fidelity Bank*
- 8 Diverse Professional Roundtable Networking Social | *sponsor: BCBS of Massachusetts*
- 28 Young Professionals Night Out @The Beer Garden | *sponsor: UniBank*



*indicates an event geared to young professionals*

## CITY'S PROPOSED PUBLIC AREA BEAUTIFICATION, TRASH COLECTION, AND RECYCLING PROGRAM WILL BENEFIT ALL

In January, City Manager Edward M. Augustus Jr. introduced to the Worcester City Council his Comprehensive Clean City program to combat litter and illegal dumping. The program would significantly augment the existing Keep Worcester Clean initiative while adding several features – namely the Clear Bag Recycling program. The city manager's proposal is under review by the City Council Public Works Committee.

The Comprehensive Clean City program would include the establishment of a new Clean Team. This four-member crew would work daily to simultaneously address areas in need of new signage, paint, and/or pole replacement, as well as weed, graffiti and litter removal, and street sweeping. Areas targeted for such clean up would include traffic medians and intersections as well as publicly-owned property. The program would also provide and maintain trash receptacles in neighborhood business districts throughout the city.

Currently, at their own expense, a number of local business associations operate ongoing neighborhood business district beautification programs. The Shrewsbury Street Merchants and North Worcester Business associations' beautification programs install flowers, plants, and landscaping in their areas.

To prevent illegal dumping, including illegal use of public trash bins to dispose of household trash, the program will hire two inspectors as well as provide beautification grants.

Lastly, the program would implement the clear bag recycling program and replace the current use of plastic recycling bins. The plastic bins are a major contributor to the litter problem, as the open-top bins allow trash to blow out under windy weather conditions. The city manager's recommendation, to introduce the use of clear recycling bags, was based on a comprehensive 15-month pilot program in which residents of five neighborhoods were given clear plastic bags on a trial basis. It was determined that neighborhood litter and trash issues were significantly reduced and residents strongly supported the use of the clear plastic bags.

The Comprehensive Clean City program's new features, including the clear bag recycling initiative, would be funded by a 50-cent increase to the cost of the large (30-gallon) yellow city trash bag and a 25-cent increase for smaller bags. Included with the purchase of the five yellow trash bags would be three clear recycling bags. The new yellow city trash bags would also include a draw-string closure to make them easier to close.

The most recent increase to the city trash bag fee was more than 10 years ago. If approved, this proposal would be only the third increase since the inception in 1993.

Additionally, for those who might argue recycling bags introduce more plastic to the environment, the program will require the bag's



*Timothy P. Murray, Chamber president and CEO, supports the Comprehensive Clean City program.*

manufacturer to reclaim all bags, once emptied, plus an additional 25 percent (by weight) of all non-program trash bags filled by city residents. The removed plastic will then be recycled into usable products including railroad ties.

The Chamber strongly supports the city manager's Comprehensive Clean City program. We believe this well-researched program underscores the due diligence taken by the city's administration to ensure its success.

It's disappointing the chair of the public works committee, Councilor George J. Russell, has panned the city manager's program considering Mr. Russell has consistently increased the tax burden on city businesses and this initiative would benefit neighborhood business districts.

It's in the interest of residents and business alike to have a clean and welcoming city. It is good for both our environment and our economy. In that a majority of the Worcester City Council has disproportionately been raising taxes on the business community over the past several years, we believe the city taking responsibility for neighborhood business trash receptacles is both fair and long overdue.

We urge the city council's public works committee, and ultimately the City Council, to support this Comprehensive Clean City program.

**Timothy P. Murray,**  
**President and CEO**



**GRID DISTRICT, FROM PAGE 1**  
pay for sidewalk cleaning and new signage with the hope of polishing the neighborhood’s appearance.

“Establishing a BID was originally included as part of the city’s master plan as a way to support existing investment and encourage new development,” said Julie Holstrom, senior project manager with the Worcester Business Development Corporation and board member of the Downtown Worcester BID.

The growth is noticeable and measurable, especially to business owners, employees, and locals.

Chef Bill Aldrich opened the Theatre Cafe with Jeanette Harmsen in 2010. They saw an opportunity to cater to theater-goers and businesses during a time when restaurant options in the area were slim pickings.

“The growth came from the proliferation of new business offices,” said Mr. Aldrich, “professionals living in new housing units, and the slow-but-steady elimination of the negative view many Worcester-ites have of downtown. Yes, the downtown of the 1950s and 1960s is gone and we won’t see it return in its same form, but there is positive growth here and it will sustain itself.”

With the opening of several restaurants near the Theatre District, including Deadhorse Hill and Armsby Abbey, there are a growing number of options.

“The difference between downtown today and say, five years

ago, is huge and mostly where density is concerned,” added Brendan Melican, lifelong Worcester resident and a business owner. “The various businesses seem to be better-tied together throughout the day, and all week, as opposed to having separate day, night, and weekend crowds,” he said.

The concept of a BID is new to Worcester, but the city’s designation is one of nine in the Commonwealth.

By definition, a BID exists when commercial, nonprofit, mixed-use, and residential properties contribute 3 percent of the total assessed value of their properties to a common fund which provides upgrades to a specific neighborhood. Worcester’s BID encompasses the 78 acres surrounding Worcester Common.

Troy Siebels, Hanover Theatre president and CEO, helped lead the effort to make the Downtown Worcester BID a reality.

“There are many others that have invested even more; and the city has certainly invested a lot in Main Street, the Worcester Common, the [Worcester Public] library, and more,” Mr. Siebels said. “A BID will help us make sure those investments pay off. The BID gives us the feet on the street to make sure the beautiful spaces we’re creating are clean and welcoming.”

Siebels said the Hanover Theatre’s opening a decade ago was a major milestone, as was the purchase of City Square and the Worcester Common Oval. Local growth, he said, is bigger than “anyone

thought possible.”  
The Grid District represents the revitalization of a 6-acre block in the heart of the Theatre District, which not only includes the Hanover and Palladium theaters but also new comedy club WooHaHa!. Among the successful restaurants and bars in the Grid District are Brew on the Grid, the Worcester Beer Garden, Stix, Revolution Pie & Pint, and Craft Table and Bar – the latter two at which musician Christine Greenawalt has been moonlighting as a bartender.

“The vibe and atmosphere downtown is buzzing,” said Ms. Greenawalt. “The Grid is bringing life back to downtown and making Worcester relatable to a typical walking city ... districts offering food choices, entertainment choices, [and] community events.”

Mr. Melican concurs, adding some of the best food in the city – namely Armsby Abbey, Crust Artisan Bakeshop, Deadhorse Hill, Addie Lee’s Soul Food, Talyta’s Café, and the Theatre Café – lies downtown.

“The 110 [Grille] has a bar scene that reminds me of the Sole [Proprietor] 20-ish years ago when you never knew who or what you’d run into,” he said.

Adding to the live music options, the Pavilion at the Beer Garden, a state-of-the-art entertainment complex featuring entertainment in a 200-seat venue, opens May 29.

Steve Carter, vice president of Grid Management which is owned by MG2, calls the Grid District a

“live, work, play community within the Downtown Worcester BID and similar to the Theatre District.” Grid Management oversees 710 apartments, 650,000 square feet of commercial and retail space, four restaurants, and a beer garden spread across 6 downtown acres.

“We found creating a work, live, play environment in a safe, clean [atmosphere] with entertainment and dining would enhance the city’s vision,” said Mr. Carter.

“Worcester was the perfect city to develop our strategy. We are headed in the right direction. The environment downtown is electric on Friday and Saturday [and] working with Hanover Theatre and the DCU [Center] is critical.”

With all of the puzzle pieces coming together, Ms. Holstrom and many others, believe Worcester is poised to become a destination city that will offer a little bit of something for everyone.

“One of the primary goals of the BID is to make the city’s downtown an 18-hour day locale for residents, businesses, and visitors alike,” said Ms. Holstrom.

“In some ways, many out-of-towners get Worcester a little better than locals,” said Mr. Melican, who is born and bred Worcester. “I meet plenty of people in from out of town, and I’ll point them in the direction of my favorite spots. But, more often than not, those are the venues that drew them here in the first place. We’re a city and finally starting to act like one.”



**ABOVE:** A section of Front Street, with views of Washington Square in the background, depict a bustling downtown Worcester on July 1, 1950. **BELOW:** In an image taken circa 1972, a previous iteration of the Worcester Common, with City Hall in the center, shows how much has changed in four-and-a-half decades. Both images are from the Collection of the Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts.




## Retail & Office Space For Lease


### 1 Exchange Place | Worcester

Conveniently located just off I-290 exit 16, this iconic collection of multi-story buildings — which includes the former Worcester Police Headquarters, Worcester District Court and Worcester Fire Station — offers a unique opportunity to those seeking either professional office space or retail/restaurant space in close proximity to downtown Worcester.

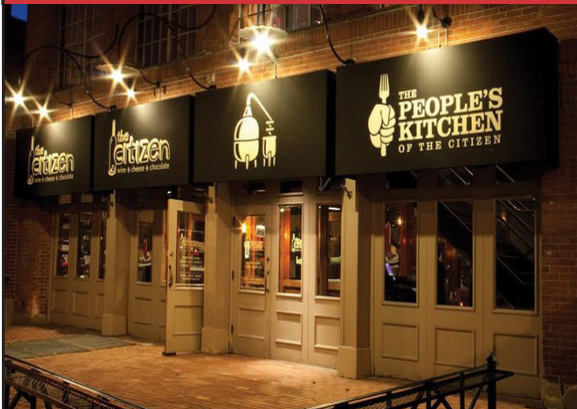
#### OFFICE




- Suite sizes range from 1,500 SF to 3,500 SF
- Custom build-out available
- Plans for major cosmetic updates.




#### RETAIL




- Centrally located bar / tap room / restaurant space
- Subdividable space
- Outdoor seating



All information regarding property for lease is from sources deemed reliable. While we do not doubt its accuracy, we make no warranty or representation to the accuracy thereof and the same is submitted subject to errors, omissions, change of price, rental or other conditions, prior lease or withdrawal without notice. Any projections and assumptions are used for convenience and example only and do not represent actual future performance. You and your trusted advisors should independently verify all information and projections.

**Glickman Kovago & Jacobs**

 **1 Mercantile Street** Suite 510 | Worcester MA 01608 | 508.753.9100

BROKERAGE SERVICES

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT



# CHAMBER TO PRESENT ON IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL MEDIA AT NATIONAL CONVENTION

By Sharyn T. Williams,  
Vice President of Marketing,  
Communications, Programs, and  
Events

Like most of our members, the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce belongs to both local and national trade associations. And, like many of you, our goal is to enhance our organization by improving our products and services, learn about industry trends and best practices, and bring more value to our members.

With the community in mind, we belong to the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE), the national organization representing and supporting Chambers across the country.

Just as with Chamber membership, we understand that getting the most out of our investment in ACCE means being an active participant. Each year we attend the annual conference from which we bring ideas back to enhance your Chamber experience.

With Chamber members at the forefront of change in our local communities, we rely on your information and stories to build reliable coverage of the business community and the region. We

share those stories with you through multiple media outlets including our quarterly newspaper, twice-monthly E-news blasts, website, social media, and TV and radio shows.

Because our communications efforts have been so well-received locally, we submitted a proposal to present on this topic at the 2019 ACCE national convention in Long Beach, Calif. We are pleased to announce our proposal was selected as one of the discussion topics for the upcoming conference in July.

Presenting at the ACCE conference later this summer will be Chamber President and CEO Timothy P. Murray; Emily Gowdey-Backus, director of communications; and myself.

The session will include advice from our editorial staff on how to maximize available channels to tell member stories, build reliable communication platforms, educate the community, and do so in communication with city and state government.

We hope you have found our communication outlets valuable news sources and a potential opportunity for your business. As always, your feedback is important and we welcome your input.

# MIDTOWN MALL: STILL FRONT STREET'S SORE THUMB?



As it sits, Midtown Mall exits onto both Front and Mechanic streets - an area of downtown the city is eager to develop. Photo by Emily Gowdey-Backus.

By Alex Guardiola, Director of  
Government Affairs and Public  
Policy

As New England's second-largest city continues to grow, and its economic development moves forward, building owners play an increasingly important role in this progress.

We see pride of ownership in the Canal District with the Worcester Public Market, slated to open this summer, and Crompton Place, whose tenants beautify the neighborhood, and we see it on Grove Street at the Trolley Yard, among others.

City administrators and businesses alike know urban revitalization is a give and take. Yet one address remains a quagmire in this equation.

Former Midtown Mall Owner Dean Marcus didn't do his tenants any favors. Since 2014, there have been 21 code and health violations ranging from oil mixing with groundwater to electrical safety issues, rodent infestations, and hazardous mold. In that time, there were 602 instances in which the police were called to the Front Street property. For decades, the city tried to convince Mr. Marcus to upgrade or sell to a developer willing to do so - until May 5.

Yet, even after the \$4 million sale of the property to fellow Worcester developer Feliciano Lana earlier this month, it looks as though a reprieve isn't in the works for Midtown Mall shopkeepers. In the days since the sale, documents detailing multiple, similar violations at three of Mr. Lana's downtown properties have come to light.

Replacing one bad owner with another doesn't solve the continued issues in that building.

One month and one day prior, the Worcester Redevelopment Authority - responsible for urban renewal, land acquisition, business relocation, site preparation and public improvements - held a public meeting at City Hall for residents and Midtown Mall tenants to voice their opinions of the property's ownership. Thankfully, the years-long actions of the WRA, led by Chair Vincent Pedone, paid dividends in moving this situation forward.

Prior to the meeting, through the WRA, the city obtained the authority

to vote to take Midtown Mall by eminent domain.

Due to the amount of attention and publicity this hearing received, it was no surprise the number of citizens who attended whether to testify or listen to Mr. Marcus. Unfortunately, Mr. Marcus, who was requested by the WRA at the previous hearing to produce a plan for the structure's future, did not. He did, however, state he has been in contact with developers and a potential buyer.

Whether Mr. Lana was among those potential buyers, we don't know. However, what we do know about Mr. Lana - who owns 44 Front St., 50 Front St., and 250 Commercial St. - is that his history of ownership is colored in the same light as that of Mr. Marcus.

A May 8 story by the Telegram & Gazette chronicled multiple similar violations - including everything from mold and inadequate plumbing to overflowing dumpsters and vermin, some of which led to court appearances - occurring at Mr. Lana's properties in recent years.

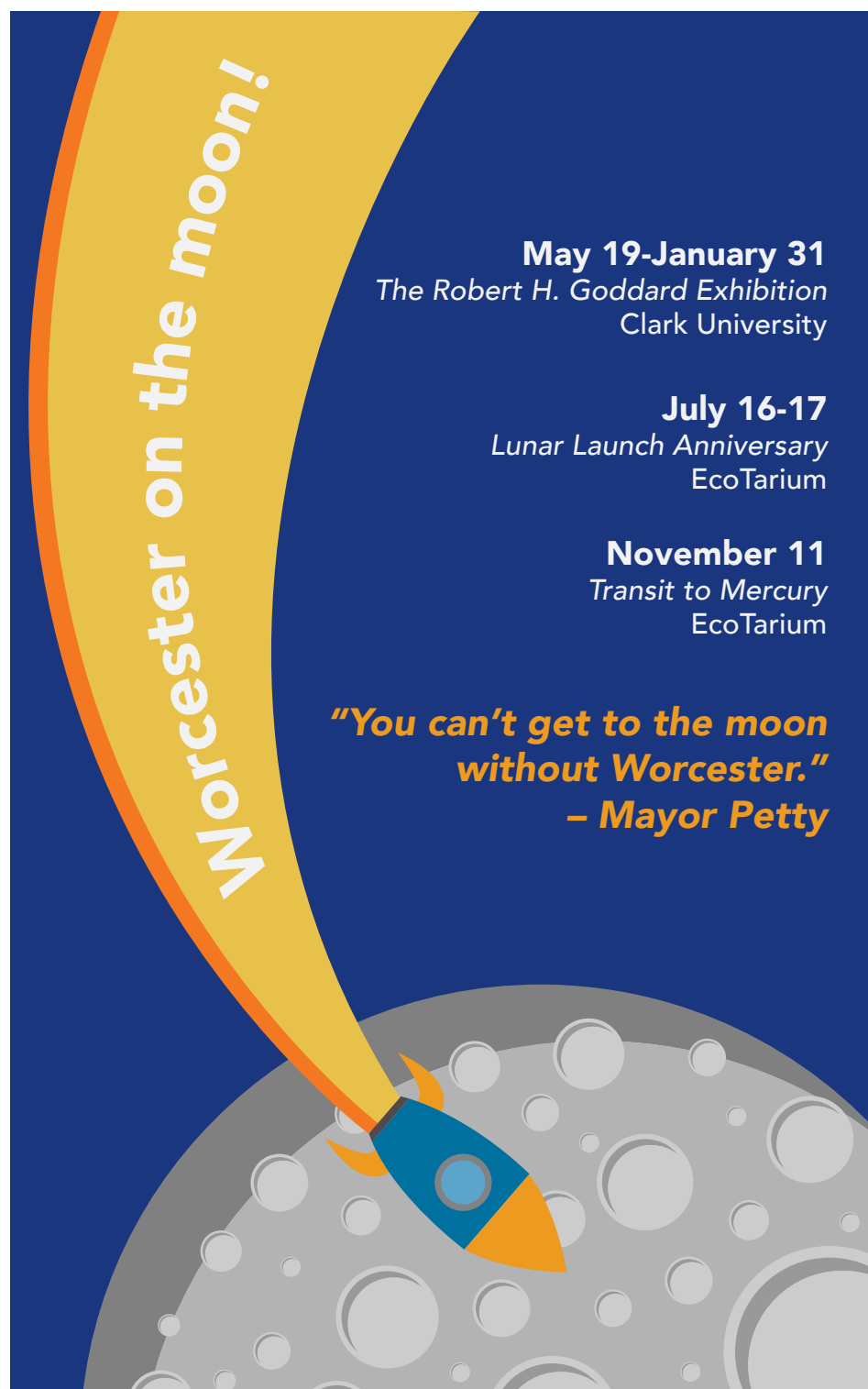
If either Mr. Marcus or Mr. Lana toured the city as it stands today, they would see new levels of investment taking place across the city - including downtown.

Since the old Galleria, which connected Front Street and the Washington Square rotary, was taken down, the newly-opened area has experienced a transformation the likes of which aren't paralleled in recent decades.

Upscale apartments line the corner of Front and Foster streets while new restaurants and coffee shops sprouted up making the neighborhood a culinary destination.

Hotels have heard the cry for more rooms as Worcester rises in the ranks of travel destinations and begun to fill in downtown and the newly-redeveloped Mercantile Center lures brands with national recognition and the long-vacant.

The old courthouse will be converted into mixed housing apartments and the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences bought several buildings as their program continues to grow and flourish making the northern end of Main Street a livable destination for students.





# DARLING HIRED TO ESTABLISH 18-HOUR DAY IN WORCESTER'S BID

**By Emily Gowdey-Backus,  
Director of Communications**  
A Clark University graduate, Evelyn Darling is returning to Worcester to help the city, especially its commercial downtown, build a reputation as an 18-hour destination by marketing the Downtown Worcester Business Improvement District.



A defined area within a city in which business owners commit to paying an additional tax, BIDs help establish everything from sanitation initiatives to increased hospitality and beautification efforts, even adding events to the community calendar.

Locally, Ms. Darling will oversee the operations within the Downtown Worcester BID including strategic use of the space as well as marketing and promoting Worcester as a public gathering place. The entity is governed by a 14-member board of directors and was petitioned for by more than 90 city business owners.

When approved, the Downtown Worcester BID; which includes venues such as The Hanover Theatre, the Worcester Public Library, the Worcester Common; was designed to entice working professionals to spend more time downtown after their 9:00-to-5:00 workday.

Day-to-day operations of the Downtown Worcester BID also include directing a cohort of

hospitality ambassadors employed by Streetplus. These individuals, who will be drawn from the local community, will execute Ms. Darling's plans on the ground.

Starting in May, they will have a visible presence on the streets of the Downtown Worcester BID collecting litter, landscaping, and providing directions.

"Outside of the [Streetplus] contract," which accounts for half of the BID budget, said Ms. Darling, "we will create a plan for plantings and beautification – for place-making."

She plans to do so by both creating new events and playing a role in existing items on the city's calendar such as when PowWow Worcester takes over the city to install murals and the Chamber's annual Independence Day fireworks celebration.



**LEFT:** Evelyn Darling, executive director of the Downtown Worcester Business Improvement District. **RIGHT:** Boundaries of the Worcester Business Improvement District stretch clockwise from Foster Street to Francis J. McGrath Boulevard, Myrtle Street and Main Street. Photos courtesy Worcester BID.

Ms. Darling spent nearly a decade as the executive director of the Fields Corner Main Street program in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston. Therein, she gained valuable community development experience applicable to Worcester.

Before her return, Ms. Darling

also served as director of community development for the Vietnamese-American Initiative for Development, also in Dorchester.

Amherst, Boston, Hudson, Hyannis, Springfield, and Taunton, among other Commonwealth cities and towns, are also home to BIDs.

Help build up your business with a Clinton Savings Bank Guidance Line of Credit<sup>1</sup>

- Pre-approved financing for capital expenditures
- Competitive interest rates
- Custom designed financing

**Clinton Savings Bank**  
An experience you can bank on.

**Managed IT**  
We manage your network - so you can focus on your business

IT Support and Systems Maintenance

VoIP PBX and Cloud Communications

IT Compliance and Security Solutions

Cloud Infrastructure Solutions

When your business needs stable, reliable, secured email and protected infrastructure...

**866-304-4300**  
[www.tritoncomputercorp.com](http://www.tritoncomputercorp.com)

<sup>1</sup> All such lines are subject to bank underwriting requirements.  
Member FDIC Member DIF 888-744-4272(4CSB) • [clintonsavings.com](http://clintonsavings.com) f • t • in • o



# POPULAR ADULT CONTINUING ED. PROGRAM, NIGHT LIFE, RETURNS TO WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS CURRICULUM, WITH WAIT LIST

**By Liz Tiley, Night Life Manager**

Back by popular demand, the Night Life program re-launched this spring with 80 participants taking advantage of the skills- and career-based education opportunity.

Housed at Worcester Technical High School, Night Life is a vocational, technical workforce development program designed as an outlet for Worcester residents to learn everything from beginners' Spanish to budgeting basics, computer programming to yoga, financial planning for retirement to the fundamentals of automobile care and maintenance.

"There's something for everyone," said Liz Tiley who has managed the program since its resurrection in November 2018.

"It's clear Night Life is a beloved program that has been sorely missed – and an important asset to the Worcester community," said Ms. Tiley. "Every day, I receive phone calls from people telling me how happy they are that Night Life is running again and asking for [more information]."

Not only does the after-work-hours programming afford the owners of local companies an opportunity to connect with their customer base outside of their shops, it also helps local residents advance their skills.

"When it comes to advancing your career," said Ms. Tiley, "adult continuing education sets you apart from your peers. It provides a credential that lets employers know you possess the skills they need."

Ms. Tiley explained that each of the Night Life classes culminates with a certificate of completion noting the participants' achievement and dedication to career advancement.

Night Life, she said, "reduces the skills gap by providing employers with more-qualified employees [who] are able to earn a higher income" – a win-win.

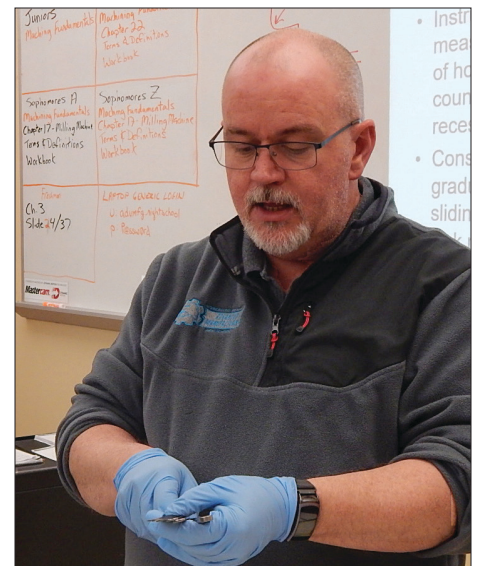
While 80 participants were enrolled in the spring cohort, another 50 were placed on a waiting list.

Prior to the next cohort's start, in September, what Ms. Tiley needs most is feedback. She is asking local businesses to identify what skills they would most like to see in their workforce and connect with herself and other Night Life administrators to design corresponding courses.

Ms. Tiley welcomes those with life skills knowledge – everything from carpentry to sign language, Adobe Photoshop to EKG technicians, and commercial drivers to drone pilots – to sign up as Night Life instructors. Course proposals and inquiries can be submitted to her at [tileyl@worcesterschools.net](mailto:tileyl@worcesterschools.net).



Precision measurement instructors and students take advantage of the Night Life program offered at Worcester Technical High School. The second cohort of 2019 is expected to begin in September. Photos courtesy Liz Tiley.



**BECKER COLLEGE**  
School of Graduate & Professional Studies



**WORCESTER REGIONAL  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
RECRUIT | RETAIN | INCUBATE

Partners in Professional Excellence

# WORKING WITH YOU

# 25%

TUITION DISCOUNT

Receive a 25% tuition discount to the School of Graduate & Professional Studies if **you** or **your immediate family member** works for a business with a Worcester Regional Chamber membership.

**ADULT BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAMS**

(5-7 WEEK OPTIONS | EVENING | ONLINE)

**BACHELOR'S:** Business | Criminal Justice | Early Childhood | Forensic Sciences | Legal Studies | Psychology | RN-BSN

**MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS**

**MASTER'S:** M.A. Mental Health Counseling | M.F.A. Interactive Media

**Learn more! 508.373.9500 [gps@becker.edu](mailto:gps@becker.edu)**

Becker College | 61 Sever Street, Worcester, MA 01609



# WE BELIEVE IN HELPING OUR

# THRIVE <sup>AND</sup> THE OCCASIONAL HIGH FIVE WHEN THEY DO.



At Country Bank we treat our business customers like a really big deal, because they are. Whatever your business banking needs, we'll be there for you with smart banking products, lending expertise, and personal guidance. We'd be honored to be your bank. So stop by and see us, and let's see about one of those high fives.



278 Park Avenue | 315 Main Street

Member FDIC

Member DIF

## WHEN ONLY THE BEST WILL DO



EXPERIENCE THE PASSION OF HOSPITALITY™

## FOR YOUR NEXT MEETING OR EVENT



CONNECT<sup>SM</sup>  
PREFERRED HOTELS & RESORTS

363 PLANTATION STREET / WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS / 508.754.5789 / [BEECHWOODHOTEL.COM](http://BEECHWOODHOTEL.COM)

The Region's only  
**AAA Four Diamond Hotel**  
and member of the prestigious  
**Preferred Hotels &  
Resorts Connect Collection**

**DiRōNA** awarded fine dining  
**Sonoma Restaurant** and cocktail bar

**8,000 square** feet of indoor  
conference and banquet facilities

Home to an extensive collection of  
**global fine art**

Ample **complimentary parking**

Voted Best Hotel  
*Telegram & Gazette*

Voted  
**Best Venue for a Business Meeting**  
**Best Hotel for Business Clients**  
**Best Venue for a Corporate Event**  
*Worcester Business Journal*

Ranked **One of the**  
**Best Hotels in the USA**  
*U.S. News & World Report*



# AFFILIATE CORNER: 2019 BRINGS NEW LEADERSHIP, ADVENTURES

## By Chamber Staff Webster Dudley Oxford Chamber Hires Milas as Executive Director

Small-business owner John Milas, was appointed executive director of the Webster Dudley Oxford Chamber of Commerce earlier this year.

Owner of bookkeeping firm Make Cents, LLC. based in Thompson, Conn., Mr. Milas said many of his customers operate in the tri-town area represented by the WDO Chamber and he was encouraged by the success of these local businesses to take the position.

Even though the “heyday” of textile manufacturing in the community has died down in recent years, “this [remains] a great area” to do business, he said of Central Massachusetts.

With Mr. Milas’ appointment, the WDO Chamber is looking to reignite a spark between itself and local companies.

One of the reasons Mr. Milas said he was excited to join the organization was to spearhead a campaign designed to increase WDO Chamber awareness. He plans to start by “filling the calendar” and promoting the organization via social media.

Even now, only five months into his tenure, Mr. Milas is seeing a positive return on the increase in the WDO Chamber’s outreach.

“People are starting to see there’s a lot more activity going on [locally],” he said, “and I think that’s going to bring them back to see what’s new.”

## Wachusett Chamber Ventures to Iceland

For the past seven years, the Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce has traveled the globe with its members and area residents alike. The organization’s latest adventure took the group to Iceland in search of the northern lights and other natural wonders.

“We partner with Collette tours to select trips that will interest local travelers [and] Iceland is currently ranked as a top destination,” said Jen Stanovich, Wachusett Area Chamber executive director. “Iceland is an absolutely beautiful country and the terrain is unlike anything I have ever seen. Its volcanoes and glaciers, lava rock and hot springs, weather that can change on a dime, and winds that seem to come out of nowhere. It was an amazing experience. And, to share that experience with travelers from our community made it even more special,” she said of the experience in March.

The Wachusett Area Chamber offers these trips to both Chamber members and non-members.

“It’s a community service and a way of connecting with residents in the towns that we serve,” Ms. Stanovich added. “Over the years, we have built a following and gained many repeat travelers. It’s a fun group that continues to grow.”

Always looking ahead, Ms.

Stanovich is planning the 2020 trip for April 2 to 10 and chose Tuscany as the destination. In a spotlight-style tour, participants will stay in one hotel and tour locations from a central point.



**LEFT:** Jen Stanovich, Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce executive director, takes in the view at Iceland’s Glacier Lagoon. **RIGHT:** An active geyser sprays water. The group traveled to the island nation March 18 to 24. Photos courtesy Jen Stanovich.

“Our home base will be in Montecatini Terme and from there we will travel to multiple Tuscan cities including Florence, Lucca, Pisa, Siena, and San Gimignano – just to name a few.”



**Affiliates: Auburn | Blackstone Valley  
Central Mass South | Wachusett Area  
Webster Dudley Oxford**



## #1 INDEPENDENT BROKERAGE IN WORCESTER

We want to thank all of the home buyers and home sellers in Worcester who trusted us with their real estate needs in 2018. **We appreciate your support!**

Also, thank you to our agents and staff in the Worcester office who work so hard to meet and **exceed our clients needs!**

We look forward to serving you in 2019! If you are looking to buy or sell a Worcester area home, **go with the best!**

945 W. Boylston Street, Worcester, MA 01606  
(508) 425-7372 | [Worcester@LamacchiaRealty.com](mailto:Worcester@LamacchiaRealty.com)



# FALLON PAYS IT BACK WITH TWO NEW MEMBER-FOCUSED PROGRAMS



Joe Anderson, Fallon Health's director of sales, is pictured left speaking to Lisa Vaughan, an account manager. Photo courtesy Fallon Health.

**By Emily Gowdey-Backus,  
Director of Communications**

For Fallon Health, member well-being tops their priority list. And, as more and more people focus on improving their personal health, everything from nutrition and exercise classes to smoking cessation programs, the more it helps bring overall medical costs down.

Wanting to encourage the creation and retention of healthy habits among its members, Fallon decided to spread the wealth – literally.

In mid-April, the Worcester-based firm announced the launch of two, member-focused programs designed

to do just that for companies new to sign on with Fallon.

"We want to craft solutions responsive to the market," said Joe Anderson, Fallon's director of sales. He explained, in recent years, through conversations with broker partners, Fallon came to understand that its members wanted more options to personalize the healthy lifestyle-related benefits in their health care plans.

The first new program is the Shared Performance campaign which offers "financial rewards" to companies with 75 to 99 enrolled Fallon members. Now, in

addition to benefits including gym membership reimbursement, Fallon members whose coverage group does not exceed a certain amount of cost each will year will receive a "premium credit," according to the April press release.

Mr. Anderson explained that the amount Fallon pays to providers compared to the total amount they collect each year in premiums is called the medical loss ratio. On average across the industry, 10 percent of the total premiums are needed to "keep the lights on," he said, while 90 percent covers medical and prescription drug costs throughout the year.

"Doesn't it make sense, if members have a good year," he said, and don't exceed the 89 percent set aside to cover their medical costs, "to share money back" as a reward added Mr. Anderson, who has been in his current role for eight years.

Second is the Smooth Start Guarantee, also launched last month.

"When a company chooses Fallon," said Mr. Anderson, "they expect [our services] to be up and running day one so their new employee can be" easily transitioned to the team.

However, when it comes to employee benefits, a lot of "last minute decisions" are often executed in the final days before a new hire starts. In those cases, "time is of the essence," he said.

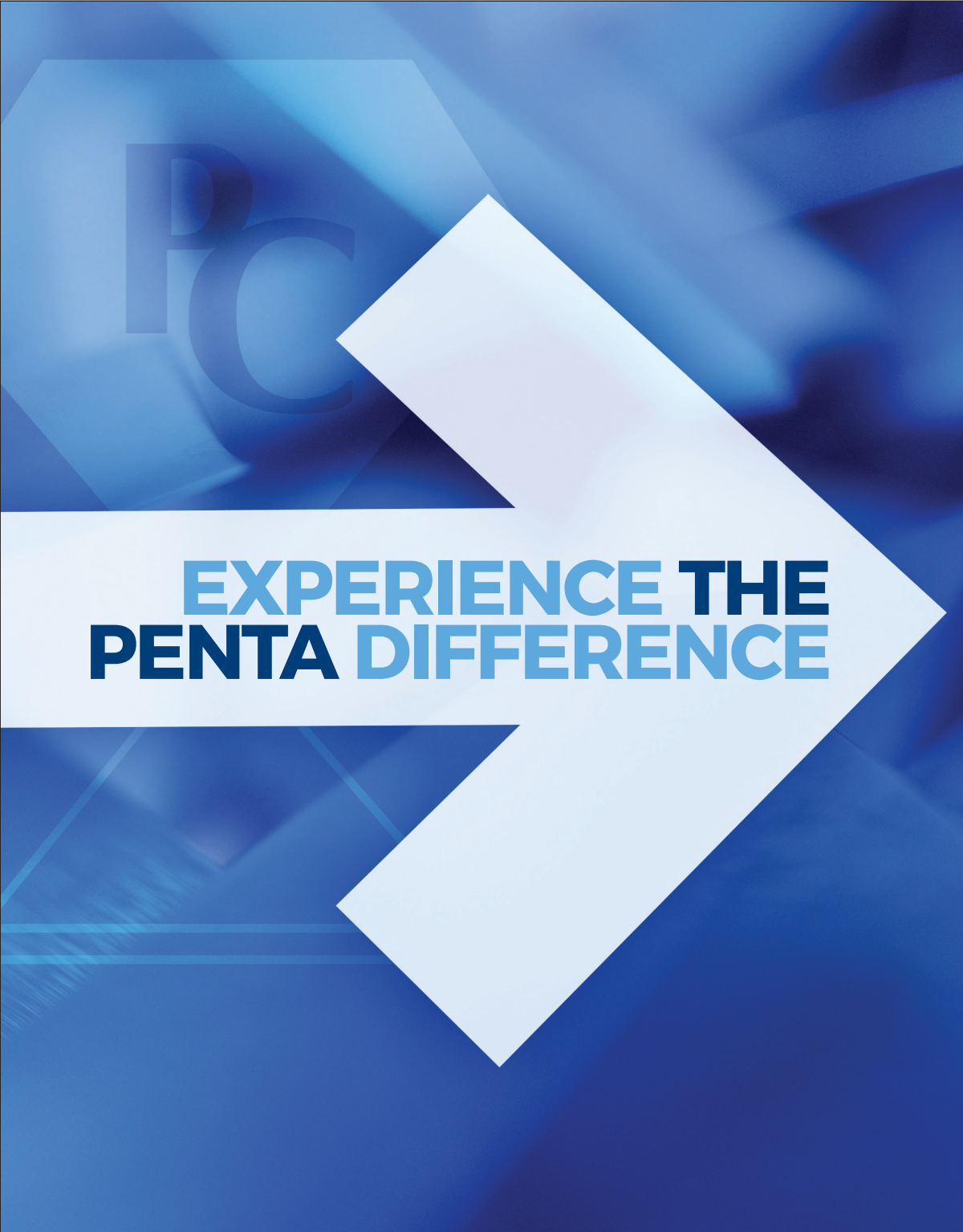
Through the Smooth Start Guarantee program, if an employer using Fallon's services is not satisfied by the health insurance aspects of an onboarding experience, said employer will receive a \$5,000 credit. Eligible companies must be new to Fallon and have between 51 and 99 enrolled Fallon members.

The expectations Fallon must meet include a dedicated implementation manager, a dedicated account manager, and member receipt of member identification cards within eight days of enrolling a new employee for member benefits.

He characterized The Smooth Start Guarantee as a programmatic commitment from Fallon to support in a time of transition. Fallon wants to ensure its members that choosing Fallon means there is "a system in place that will meet or exceed [an employer's] expectations. You don't have to worry about that piece of the move, we have it covered," said Mr. Anderson.

Yes, financial reimbursement speaks the loudest when it comes to member benefits, he said, but these programs are so much more than that. For Fallon, he added, this is a commitment to the community and to improving individuals' health.

"The employees are the engine of any business," said Mr. Anderson. "If you have a healthy, engaged employee, chances are they will be more productive."



## EXPERIENCE THE PENTA DIFFERENCE

**FOR 30 YEARS,**  
we have helped clients from  
numerous industries achieve  
greater success and awareness.

We welcome the opportunity to  
help your organization in 2019.

Voted Best Advertising Agency  
& Best Woman-Owned Business,  
Worcester Business Journal

2019 Recipient of the  
Public/Private Partnership Award,  
WEDC

Call or email to learn how PENTA can  
potentially help your business achieve  
its marketing objectives in the  
year ahead.

 **PENTA**<sup>TM</sup>  
pentamarketing.com

The PENTA Building / 208 Turnpike Road  
Westborough, MA 01581 / 508.616.9900  
info@pentamarketing.com / pentamarketing.com



# CITY STARTUPS, ENTREPRENEURS DRAWN TO LEGAL CONFERENCE

By Vaske Gjino, *Economic Development Associate*

More than 80 people attended the Start Me Up Legal Conference created by Bowditch & Dewey, LLP and hosted in conjunction with the Chamber.

Marketed to budding entrepreneurs and startups at all ages of their growth, the three-hour program on March 27 held at the AC Hotel by Marriott in Worcester was designed to help new companies navigate the legal landscape and create an effective legal roadmap for their businesses moving forward.

Accessing accurate legal guidance as a startup can be a daunting task. If the correct legal steps aren't taken when the company is in its infancy, those decisions made in the early days can have dramatic effects later on in the life of the company.

The conference featured three panels of seasoned startup founders and legal experts from Bowditch

& Dewey's startup team and the community.

These individuals led discussions centered around the three life stages of a startup business: formation, operation, and exit.

Conversation began with advice regarding whether or not it is more advantageous to setup as a Limited Liability Company (LLC), S-Corporation, C-Corporation, or Limited Partnership (LP).

Depending on the type of entity a startup is registered as with the state, there can be roadblocks in their future regarding everything from the type of ownership allowed to acceptable management styles, where capital can be raised to the types of incentives the firm can offer, and its exit strategy.

Panelists discussed the long-term planning essential for establishing a board of directors and how doing so in the early stages can create advantages for if or when an entity decides to exit its current market.



On March 27, the Start Me Up Legal Conference was hosted by Bowditch & Dewey, LLP in partnership with the Chamber. Photo courtesy Bowditch & Dewey.

# CONSTRUCTION ON PEARL-ELM GARAGE NEARS COMPLETION

More than a year ago, the Chamber was contacted by several members concerned about conditions in the Pearl-Elm Municipal Garage. Its state of disrepair at the time included broken elevators and cordoned-off parking areas. In response, the Chamber requested the City of Worcester develop a detailed timeline for the renovation of the 800-parking-space garage servicing Main Street.

While major renovations are on track to conclude by the end of this year, according to the Worcester DPW, some will extend into 2020.

Level 8	Fall 2019
Level 7	Fall 2019
Level 6	Fall 2019
Level 5	July 2019
Level 4	August 2019
Level 3	July 2019
Level 2	June 2019
Level 1	May 2019

### Construction Schedule

#### 2019 Activities

- Ramp area reconstruction will be ongoing through 2019
- Lobby elevators will be complete in August and October 2019
- Lobby area will be completed in December 2019
- Elm Street west stairs (August 2019)
- Elm Street east stairs (November 2019)
- Exterior masonry (September 2019)

#### 2020 Activities

- The Pearl Street west and east stairs will be completed in January and March 2020, respectively
- Waterproofing and traffic coatings throughout the facility may be completed in the spring



# RECOVERY STARTS WITH DETOX

Begin your journey today.



Get Help Now: 508-581-5225 | 29 N Main St, Millbury, MA 01527

Most Insurances Accepted





# WOMEN'S CONFERENCE RINGS IN 10<sup>TH</sup> YEAR WITH GROWING CROWD, PROGRAMS

## KEYNOTES PROVIDE UPLIFTING MESSAGE TO WOMEN

By Jessica Coates, *Fitchburg State University Intern*

The morning began with a room full of 800 women who were bright-eyed, ready to learn and share. Jade Simmons, the morning keynote speaker, burst onto the stage in a purple whirlwind, greeting the crowd gathered in celebration of the 10th annual Worcester Women's Leadership Conference with piano music.

She spoke of audacity, not as a negative personality trait, but as one necessary for growth.

"Audacity is the courage to go beyond where you've already been" Ms. Simmons said. "You are already awesome, I know you are. But do you know there is more out there for you? There is a next level, and you get to upgrade to that."

She continued on to weave together storytelling and classical piano ballads, engrossing the crowd with each note. Ms. Simmons took the room on a journey through her life from learning the piano as an 8-year-old to performing lengthy and complicated classical piano concerts to discovering her true purpose lay in a mixture of piano and storytelling.

By the end of her keynote, Ms. Simmons showed conference-goers the possibilities that open up when you're not afraid to make a change in your life.

As the conference transitioned from the first workshop into lunch, attendees enjoyed a special treat. Janet Marie Smith, an experienced baseball park designer who is assisting in the design of Worcester's Polar Park, gave a keynote about her experience working in a traditionally male-dominated field.

Ms. Smith commenced by talking about why she was hired by Dr. Charles Steinberg, president of the Worcester Red Sox Triple A team.

"He liked the idea of bringing something fresh to [Polar Park], and I think that is something women in the workplace often bring – a different perspective and a willingness to be your all," she said.

Tracing her professional experience

in baseball park design, Ms. Smith also spoke fondly of working with Larry Lucchino, former Boston Red Sox president and CEO.

The research and input the team is seeking for the design of Polar Park, she said, is extensive.

"We started, of course, by looking at the most classic parks and those that had the most longevity and tried to dissect ... what was it that made these parks special" she said.

The answer, Ms. Smith said, lies in how fans connect with the facility.

Walking the group of women gathered at the DCU Center through the ethos of an iconic baseball park – of which Fenway Park in Boston; Camden Yards in Baltimore, Md.; and Connie Mack Stadium in Philadelphia, Penn.; are included and all of which have Mr. Lucchino's fingerprints on them – she said traditions built over time help create a sense of shared ownership among the community.

Ms. Smith hopes that will be the case for Polar Park as well and plans to prioritize a ballpark-city relationship. The team's urban planning approach will help to both facilitate economic development in the Canal District and make it a truly special experience for fans across the Commonwealth.

To wrap up the 10th annual Worcester Women's Leadership Conference, Mel Robbins strode confidently onto the stage and was welcomed with a roar of applause.

"The most important thing I want each and every one of you to work on is believing in yourself," Ms. Robbins said. "I want you to go to work on getting rid of the excuses and the space that you allow for doubt and negative self-talk because that's the only thing standing in your way."

Punctuated by engaging videos of people facing their fears, in her keynote Ms. Robbins went on to talk about researching her recent book, "The 5 Second Rule."

For her, there is a five-second window that exists between when inspiration morphs into anxiety and when confidence becomes doubt. By disrupting that window – counting backwards from five – "we can change our lives," she said.

She advised using the five-second rule in various circumstances including encouraging yourself to speak up in a meeting and having professional contributions noticed and acknowledged.

It can be used to improve morning routines, stop engaging in bad habits, and communicate more clearly with loved ones.

Ultimately, according to Ms. Robbins, by interrupting these negative thoughts, the mind can

refocus on the task at hand with confidence.

Over the past decade; as the conference has grown in attendance, workshops, and keynotes; its speakers like Ms. Simmons, Ms. Smith, and Ms. Robbins, have spread words of encouragement and demonstrated the power of giving 100 percent.

## POLITICAL SPHERE SEES A WAVE OF INPUT, PARTICIPATION FROM WOMEN; MORE NEEDED

By Emily Gowdey-Backus, *Director of Communications*

On average, a woman needs to be asked seven times to run in a political race before she accepts the premise and does so.

A man, also on average, need only be asked once.

This gender disparity was the catalyst behind "Engaging Women in the Political Process," one of seven breakout sessions hosted at the 2019 Worcester Women's Leadership Conference. Discussion was anchored

by four women with varied political campaign management experience, all of whom are connected to the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus.

For Karen Duffy, panel moderator and MWPC board member, the lack of a Worcester-area chapter drove her participation and leadership.

"I've written checks, I've talked to people. But I wanted to do something," she said of the local committee's creation. "In whatever way possible, get engaged," she urged those in attendance.

Because women account for half of the population, and certain aspects of their lives are regulated by state and federal legislation, she said, it's imperative they have a say as political agents in this country.

"As women, we all face very similar issues as we grow up and get out into the work world and political arena. We can be very supportive" together, said Ms. Duffy.

Political influence comes in all shapes and sizes. Gail Jackson-Blount, immediate past MWPC board chair, recounted that her political involvement started as a teenager reading newspapers from across the globe as a federal government intern. From that experience, she chose to study journalism and "use [her] communications skills to help influence change."

Advising those women who may still be on the fence about political participation, she summarized her jump into political involvement as

looking inward and evaluating what you can offer a team.

"You have to make a decision that you want to make a difference and [define] what you have to offer. No matter how small, you can make a difference in someone's life and the community," she said.

Because of the female political presence, fellow MWPC member Celia Blue said she felt reassured to get involved in politics.

Though she was "petrified," Ms. Blue said "I had women around me that were inspirational" and supported my decision to enter the political realm and support campaigns with which I shared core beliefs.

Collaboration and cooperation are the fundamentals of women's participation in the political arena, agreed Miriam Posner, a fellow MWPC board member and panelist.

"Whether you're ready to be a candidate or you understand gender parity in politics is going to make us a better, stronger, more inclusive Commonwealth," Posner suggested using social media and personal networking connections to "elevate" chosen candidates.

Next year, the MWPC will turn 50 years old and, by then, the organization's goal is to have equal representation among women and men in the Commonwealth's legislature. While the body stands at 28.5 percent women, a gain from 2018's 25 percent, Ms. Duffy knows there's a long way to go, but it's a worthwhile effort.

## GET YOURSELF AN ESTATE PLAN

By Jessica Coates

Just in case three keynotes weren't extraordinary enough for the 10th anniversary of the WWLC, attendees also had the option to attend a choice of seven morning and afternoon workshop sessions.

One such workshop, "Wise Women Plan Ahead: Financial and Legal Decision Making," was full of invaluable information centered around estate planning. The workshop, run by attorneys Polly Tatum and Shakisha Morgan, walked the audience through the elements and key aspects of estate planning as well as answering a variety of questions about the subject.

"When we're talking about estate planning, we're talking about what our plan is after we [die]" said Ms. Tatum.

Ms. Morgan, echoing Ms. Tatum, explained estate planning is also important in circumstances when individuals are incapable of making their own decisions while alive. Because wise women plan ahead, she stressed the importance of considering the possibilities of what may happen when an individual cannot manage their assets. Working with a professional, she said, will ensure the protection of assets.

The pair outlined key components of estate planning for those in the audience who wanted to get started right away. First, was power of attorney. Establishing either a financial- and/or legal- as well as health-related power of attorney gives someone other than the individual the ability to, for example, hire an attorney, renegotiate a loan, or choose a health care facility, on the other person's behalf.

Next were probate, wills, and trusts. Under probate, creditors are permitted to take money owed to them first, a process which can often leave the family with no return.

In order to avoid this process, a will or trust is necessary. There are different variations of these documents, but they both serve to limit probate and ensure the estate goes to the family. When writing a will, an individual decides the destination of their estate and their post-death legal representation. A trust allows an individual to avoid probate by providing for direct distribution.

With the complexity of documents needed for estate planning, it's important to stay ahead of the game and plan, early on, for multiple possible life outcomes.



**ABOVE:** Jade Simmons, a classically-trained pianist, speaks to the crowd about her history as a performer and the importance of overcoming obstacles to pursue a passion. Photo by Matt Wright Photography.



**ABOVE:** Breaking gender barriers, Janet Marie Smith has been designing baseball parks for decades. She's involved with the development of Polar Park – slated to open in April 2021. **BELOW:** The day's events wrapped with Mel Robbins, author of "The Five Second Rule." In that time, she said, anxiety can be combated and bad habits extinguished. Photos by Matt Wright Photography.



THE WORCESTER  
*Women's*  
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
LEAD | INSPIRE | MENTOR

Thank you to our lead sponsors!



# SAVE THE DATE #WWLC2019





# ***WHERE WILL YOU FLY NEXT?***



PHILADELPHIA



DETROIT



NEW YORK



FORT LAUDERDALE



ORLANDO

***Fly***  ***Worcester***

When you fly from Worcester Regional Airport, you can fly for less, skip the crowds, and directly reach five different cities that **connect you with the world**. Worcester Regional Airport is a flexible, convenient way to travel. **Learn more at [flyworchester.com](http://flyworchester.com).**

***worcesterregionalairport***





# EASE, AFFORDABILITY OF ORH EXEMPLIFIED BY COUPLE’S LOW-STRESS EXCURSION TO NYC

**By Vaske Gjino, Economic Development Associate**

Comfortable, fast, and easy – these are three adjectives used by UMass Medical School employees Stefan Sprinckmoller and Odile Scherrer to describe their travel experience flying out of Worcester Regional Airport (ORH) earlier this year.

When it was announced that “Harry Potter and the Cursed Child” would be playing on New York City’s Broadway, initially the show was only slated to play in London, Mr. Sprinckmoller and Ms. Scherrer purchased tickets.

The pair boarded a Jet Blue flight to JFK Airport in New York City for a weekend vacation in the Big Apple. The total? Just \$100 each roundtrip.

When asked about their travel experience with ORH versus flying out of other regional airports, Mr. Sprinckmoller said: “The price, speed of travel, and all around comfort” were the biggest advantages.

Graduates of Clark University, Mr. Sprinckmoller and Ms. Scherrer stayed in Worcester after graduation to pursue employment in research positions at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and have remained city residents for the past six years.

While ORH currently offers flights to New York City, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, Philadelphia, and Detroit, beginning this summer, a lot of attention is being focused on raising awareness of the Central

Massachusetts facility which services roughly 120,000 passengers each year – and rising.

At a MetroWest Business & Community Leadership Breakfast on March 15, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito announced the Massachusetts Port Authority, which owns ORH as well as Logan International Airport in Boston, will invest \$300,000 in an eight-month campaign to increase marketing efforts for ORH.

According to recent Massport data, residents within the ORH catchment area make three million trips per year. More than three quarters of those residents – 84 percent – choose to travel out of Logan Airport in Boston. The \$300,000 investment is designed to draw a portion of that business to ORH.

Announced in March, the campaign went live on April 1 and will wrap in December. Business and leisure travelers alike will be targeted by the campaign through four platforms – print, radio, digital, and social media advertising campaigns.

Massport, a state entity located in Boston, has already invested more than \$100 million into ORH since 2010.

It hopes to coincide this campaign with the recent positive coverage of the Heart of the Commonwealth including the relocation of the Pawtucket Red Sox Triple A franchise to the city in 2021, ensuing development of the Canal District, and redesign of Main Street.



The ease of traveling via Worcester Regional Airport is a draw for people from all walks of life – no matter their age. JetBlue airliners are shown below after the carrier began flights from ORH in November 2013. Photos courtesy Worcester Regional Airport.



# DISCOVER CENTRAL MASS, CHAMBER KICK START 2019 WITH TWO HIRES IN NEW DIRECTOR OF SALES, COMMUNICATIONS ROLES



**LEFT:** Now the director of sales with Discover Central Massachusetts, Monique M. Messier previously served as executive director of sales at the recently-launched MGM Springfield in Western Massachusetts. A resident of Ware, she attended Becker College and the University of Massachusetts Amherst. **RIGHT:** Emily Gowdey-Backus was named director of communications with the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce in mid-February. She comes from a journalism background where she most recently wrote for the Providence Business News after freelancing for the Worcester Telegram & Gazette. Photos courtesy Ms. Messier (left) and Love & Perry Photography (right).

**By Chamber Staff**

Effective Feb. 19, Emily Gowdey-Backus will serve as the director of communications for the Chamber.

In this position, Ms. Gowdey-Backus will act as editor of the Chamber Exchange, a quarterly newspaper, working with members and community voices to cover the stories and news which drive the Central Massachusetts business community.

Additionally, she is the voice behind the Chamber’s five main social media platforms – Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

Scheduling and hosting of the Chamber’s radio show is also under Gowdey-Backus’ purview. While Chamber President and CEO Timothy P. Murray will continue to host Chamber Exchange: The TV Show, management of and scheduling guests will be overseen by Ms. Gowdey-Backus.

“We are increasingly aware of the need for local news coverage and the community’s desire for it,” said Mr. Murray. “The work that our members do on a daily basis to provide jobs, create community, and strengthen our regional economy is a story worth telling and we are using every avenue we can to do just that.”

She will also cover Chamber events, assist with the organization’s website content, and support other departments as needed.

A native of Burlington, Conn., Ms. Gowdey-Backus comes to the Chamber after three years reporting for the Providence Business News in Providence, R.I. Prior to that she freelanced for the Worcester Telegram & Gazette.

Ms. Gowdey-Backus received her bachelor’s degree from St. Lawrence University and holds a master’s degree in international journalism from Cardiff University in Wales.

As a tourism and event

destination, Worcester County’s popularity continues to grow. To meet the interest, so too is the team at Discover Central Massachusetts.

As of March 6, Monique M. Messier has taken on the role of director of sales with Discover Central Mass. Operating all aspects of the sales department, Ms. Messier is responsible for evaluating existing Discover Central Mass processes and developing a sales strategy which will maximize both meeting planner outreach and secure new regional contracts.

“Monique brings a great deal of passion and experience to Discover Central Mass,” said Stephanie Ramey, Discover Central Mass executive director.

“She is familiar with the Central Massachusetts market, has developed great connections within the event community, and knows the ins and outs of what planners want in a destination,” added Ms. Ramey.

From start to finish, Ms. Messier – who brings a quarter century of success leading, mentoring, and developing sales teams – will oversee the Discover Central Mass sales strategy and ensure planner satisfaction and retention.

Ms. Messier has an extensive background in hospitality ranging from hotel sales in corporate, resort, and convention center positions.

Prior to joining Discover Central Mass, Ms. Messier was a member of the executive team tasked with the launch of MGM Springfield. In this position, she was in charge of establishing sales initiatives for MGM Springfield while also overseeing the MassMutual Convention Center sales team and its corresponding budget.

A resident of Ware, Ms. Messier attended Becker College in Worcester and the University of Massachusetts Amherst where she studied hospitality management.



# HOUSING NECESSARY BEYOND DOWNTOWN, STROE & ADLER STEP IN

**By Emily Gowdey-Backus,  
Director of Communications**

A former stamp manufacturing facility, the building at 128 Chandler St. in Worcester reflects the strength of the city's allure.

In the next 16 months, the 1890 building will be transformed with the help of historic tax credits into 47 market-rate studio and one-bedroom apartments. And they can't come fast enough.

As Worcester's population increases, those figures are compounded by the opportunities available in the Heart of the Commonwealth for millennial-generation adults, and others, looking to advance their careers in a location that won't break the bank.

In 2010, the last U.S. Census counted 181,045 residents of Worcester. Seven years later, the most recent U.S. Census Bureau figures show a rise to 184,743 and the city expects that number to go higher in the 2020 Census.

With this influx, housing is in high demand. And it's not just single-family homes for which city residents are clamoring, a surfeit of variety is needed.

"The development at 128 Chandler St. adds much-needed housing to the city's stock in a time when vacancy rates are extremely low for renters," said Vaske Gjino, the Chamber's economic development associate.

He said the neighboring property,

126 Chandler St., is similarly poised for renovation and will see Worcester Common Ground add roughly 30 affordable-rate units to the local market.

Together, both properties are "a prime example of mixed-income housing development – exactly what we strive to support throughout Worcester," he added.

Currently vacant, Daniel Stroe, managing member of Stamp Factory Lofts LLC, said the WCG project "compliments" his company's plans.

He feels the location, Chandler and Piedmont streets, away from the downtown, was serendipitous.

"We feel there's a need for workforce housing in that type of neighborhood and this building was a good example of conversion potential to accomplish that vision," he said of the purchase made with business partner Tim Adler.

Located between Park Avenue and Main Street, the building lies outside of the Downtown Worcester Business Improvement District and away from luxury-style apartment complexes popping up around Union Station. But, said Mr. Stroe, not too far to commute there for work by car – let alone bike or on foot.

While some of his and Mr. Adler's projects have occurred within that sector of the city, namely a six-story Norwich Street office building converted into apartments, Mr. Stroe said this time, and with this type of housing in particular, he's

pleased to be working in an area which has yet to be over-saturated with development.

"It's good we're not [operating] in the same place as 10 other developers," he said. "It's good to ... spread it around the city."

In the case of 128 Chandler St., said Mr. Stroe: "If this building were closer to downtown, I wouldn't have discredited it. It has a very good function where it is," he said noting proximity to the bus station.

This neighborhood, said Mr. Stroe "needs housing" and exists within an Opportunity Zone and is therefore a win-win. However, he added, "it's also a question of finding the right fit" with the type of renovations in which he and Mr. Adler have excelled.

The pair choose projects which modernize historic facilities while maintaining original architectural and design elements representative of a neighborhood's age and which tie back to earlier uses of the property.

"Our purpose is to make it modern and functional, but not change too much of the historic appeal," said Mr. Stroe.

With this project, "hopefully, you won't see too much of a difference on the outside," he added.

While windows will be replaced and "restoration of features that were lost, [including a Piedmont Street door]" will be executed, he said the public can expect a finished

product very similar to Winn Residential's Canal Lofts at 39 Water St. in Worcester.

Once the Chandler Street renovation is complete and marketing of the units begins, given the neighborhood and style of housing, Mr. Stroe said cost is a top concern

Utilities and parking will be included in the rental cost of these studio and one-bedroom apartments, he said of the balance being struck between affordable and market-rate housing needed in Worcester.

Stamp Factory Lofts LLC, he said, "[is] not affordable housing and not luxury. It's in the middle."

Not far beyond Chandler and Piedmont streets, nine-tenths of one mile in fact, is Kelley Square and the proposed site of Polar Park and a slate of planned redevelopment.

While Mr. Stroe said the decision to purchase and renovate 128 Chandler St. was made by himself and his business partner prior to the announcement of the relocation of the Pawtucket Red Sox to Worcester, he feels the redevelopment of the Canal District-Green Island-Kelley Square region would mean a significant improvement to the neighborhood streets abutting the property.

"The most important impact," he said, "is the proposed modernization of Kelley Square, which would mean better access for the middle Chandler Street area."

## GET YOUR PROJECT OFF THE GROUND WITH AN SBA 504 LOAN!

**Long-term loans for:**  
purchasing land and buildings,  
new construction,  
renovation and leasehold improvements,  
machinery & equipment

**Benefits to Participating Lenders**

- ↓ loan to value
- CRA credits
- WBDC works with SBA on all application & servicing requirements

**Benefits to Businesses**

- ↓ down payment
- Fully fixed rate
- No balloon payment

Looking for consistently lower rates?  
Check out the newly added  
**25 year loan option!**  
Contact us for more information!



### Signs of Spring!



**Great Rates...**

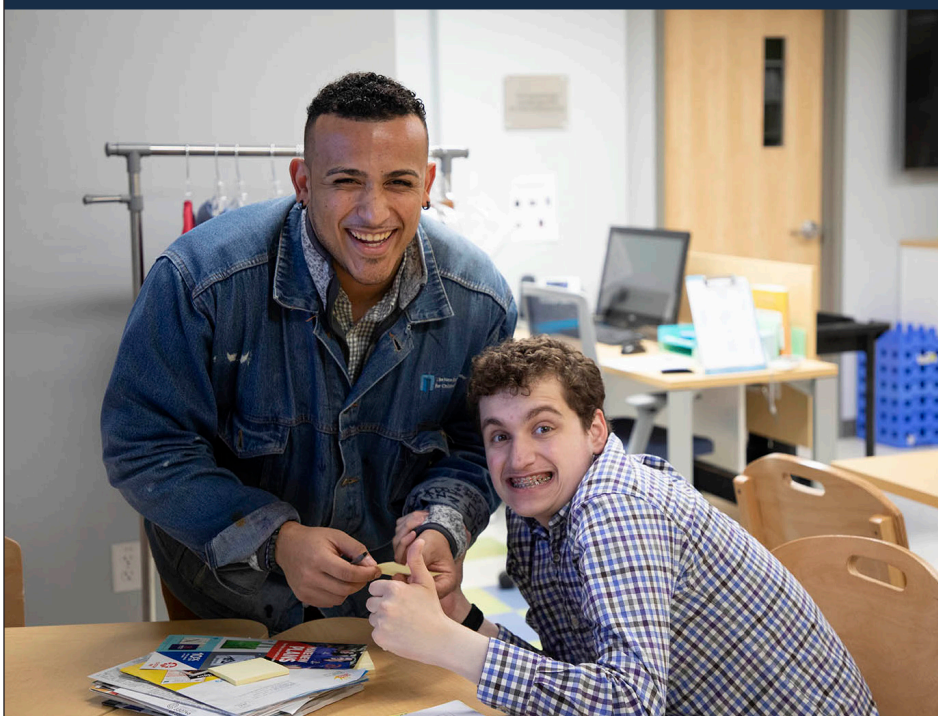
April 2019	
4.50%	10 Year Fixed Equipment
4.50%	20 Year Fixed Real Estate
4.72%	25 Year Fixed Real Estate

Call the WBDC today!  
(508) 755-5734

89 Shrewsbury Street  
Suite 300  
Worcester, MA 01604  
[www.thewbdc.com](http://www.thewbdc.com)



## LEARN FROM THE BEST



The New England Center for Children® (NECC®) has been helping children with autism make breakthroughs every day for 43 years. We are training the next generation of expert educators to serve children around the world. Teach children with autism while we help you build your career!

[www.necc.org/work-at-necc](http://www.necc.org/work-at-necc)



The New England Center  
for Children®  
Autism Education and Research

## Join the Club

JOIN THE DCU CENTER  
PREMIUM SEAT EMAIL LIST



- ENTERTAIN CLIENTS -  
- TREAT YOUR EMPLOYEES -  
- A BIRTHDAY THEY REMEMBER -



FOR PRIORITY ACCESS  
TO SUITES AND CLUB SEATS  
TO PREMIER TOURING  
ARTISTS AND EVENTS

EMAIL [GROUPS@DCUCENTER.COM](mailto:GROUPS@DCUCENTER.COM) TO JOIN



# DUNN ADDRESSES UPCOMING WORCESTER REAL ESTATE PLANS, DEALS, AND REDEVELOPMENT AT CHAMBER'S APRIL WIN

By Emily Gowdey-Backus,  
*Director of Communications*

Multi-million-dollar development was at the heart of a keynote address given by Peter Dunn, assistant chief development officer with the City of Worcester, on the afternoon of Tuesday, April 16 at the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce's monthly Women's Information Network.

Among those properties currently, and soon-to-be, under development throughout the city, and outlined by Mr. Dunn, included: the former Elwood Adams hardware building, Harding Green in Kelley Square, the Red Sox Triple A affiliate ballpark, Union Station's second commuter rail platform, the former Boys' Club building and Worcester Courthouse as anchors of Lincoln Square, the Theatre District including Hanover Theatre's administrative property, and Mission Chapel.

One aspect of this type of work which often goes unnoticed, said Mr. Dunn is "the cost associated with redevelopment" in a city like Worcester.

Throughout the past decade, he outlined how the city, in partnership with interested development companies, has utilized a multitude of financing tools to change its appearance, invest in the economy, and improve the quality of life for residents. This includes state, federal, and historic tax credits; grants; brownfield remediation monies; and local investment among other forms of funding.

In addition, the city continuously identifies commercial property assets – existing and potential – and analyzes how best they can be improved in order to attract commerce.

"The more uncertainty we can remove from the equation," said Mr. Dunn, "the more likely [businesses] will" choose a Worcester property.

And the city's efforts have not gone unnoticed. For example, said

Mr. Dunn, nine of 11 companies to bid on the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel site adjacent to Rt. I-290 are based outside of Worcester.

Mr. Dunn advised the 100-plus person crowd at the Chamber's April WIN event to have patience.

"A lot of what's happening today [began] with building blocks over time," he said. However, "in order to make those improvements construction is inevitable."

Underlining the, sometimes, lengthy timeline that comes with multi-stage redevelopment, Mr. Dunn noted that the redesign of Main street is expected to wrap up mid-summer 2020.

The aim, he added, is to "make [Main Street] as walkable and accessible as possible ... and we appreciate everyone's patience."

One of the city's major redevelopment success stories is the Business Improvement District.

A vision for much of the downtown area is being collaborated on among business owners through the BID. Approved by the Worcester City Council in fall 2018, on April 16, Mr. Dunn announced the appointment of Evelyn Darling as executive director of the BID which operates as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

For more information on the administration and future plans of the Downtown Worcester BID, including the team of ambassadors, turn to page six for "Darling Hired to Establish 18-Hour Day in Worcester's BID." Streetplus, the company contracted to train the ambassadors, said Mr. Dunn, came highly-recommended by BIDs in New Haven and New York City.

As redevelopment continues throughout the city, and ensuing construction projects cause traffic delays, the City of Worcester has provided a website to help residents and travelers alike better navigate Worcester streets. It is: [worcesterma.gov/engineering/construction-activity](http://worcesterma.gov/engineering/construction-activity).

## LET'S GET SOCIAL



@ChamberWorc



@WorcesterChamber

## TUNE IN FOR MORE

CHAMBER  
EXCHANGE   
The TV Show  
Hosted by Tim Murray

THE  
VOICE  
OF BUSINESS  
CHAMBER RADIO BROADCAST

Mon., Wed., Fri. at 2:30 pm  
on Charter TV 193

Every Wed. at 12 pm on 102.9  
FM or [unityradioma.org](http://unityradioma.org)





**198 Charlton Road, Sturbridge, MA  
NOW LEASING**

Conveniently located at the intersection of the MA Pike and I-84, 198 Charlton Road offers 43,000 sq. ft. of premier Class A office space.

This beautiful, 3-floor building boasts a modern design with sun-filled foyers, open floor plans, and a central elevator for full wheelchair accessibility.

[www.atm-associates.com](http://www.atm-associates.com)



**ATM ASSOCIATES**  
421 Main Street,  
P.O. Box 207  
Sturbridge, MA 01566  
508-347-3368

**WORCESTER BEER GARDEN**  
ON THE GRID

**STIX**  
NOODLE BAR

**brew**  
ON THE GRID

**Revolution**  
PIZZA

**Craft**  
TABLE & BAR

Visit the Restaurants  
on Franklin Street

**THE GRID**

Catering &  
Event Space Available!

[www.gridhg.com](http://www.gridhg.com)



**Business banking your way.**

**We do business like you do business —  
with passion, commitment and a personal touch.**

Stop by one of our convenient locations,  
visit us at [tdbank.com/smallbusiness](http://tdbank.com/smallbusiness)  
or call 1-855-278-8988.



**America's Most Convenient Bank®**



# WITH SBA LOAN HELP, FLYING RHINO CAFE CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

By Joyce Stewart, Worcester Business Development Corporation Executive, Director of SBA and Finance

As owners of The Flying Rhino Café & Watering Hole on Shrewsbury Street, Paul and Melina Barber are known for crafting an extensive menu, cultivating a bright ambience, and prioritizing friendly service for its guests.

The restaurant, which celebrates its 20th anniversary next year, announced its spring menu in April. The updated offerings include new barbeque options thanks to the addition of an outdoor smoker. Now, guests can dine on smoked salmon, pork, and brisket.

Yet, it's the couple's emphasis on planning ahead which should be equally credited for the success of The Flying Rhino Café & Watering Hole among local residents.

In 2017, the Barbers were approved for a nearly \$400,000 Small Business Administration 504 loan through the Worcester Business Development Corporation. The couple applied for the loan to finance ownership of the 5,800-square-foot restaurant in the heart of the city's culinary quarter. Together with the WBDC (40 percent), and Country Bank (50 percent), 90 percent of the Barber's loan was covered leaving them just a 10 percent balance.

"Working through the application process up to the closing of the

loan was a seamless process thanks to the WBDC and Country Bank," said Mr. Barber. "The minimal down payment, and a low, 20-year, fixed-rate allows for extra cash flow, if we need it and [in case of] unexpected expenses."

For more than 50 years, the WBDC has been partnering with local lenders to help businesses, many of which may not have access to high-quality financial resources, achieve their goals. In the case of the Barbers, the SBA 504 loan was the best option. This loan can be used to acquire land, buildings, or equipment as well as help entrepreneurs afford renovations and business upgrades.

Use of the SBA 504 loan strengthens local businesses by helping them become property owners and fostering neighborhood revitalization and long-term business community growth.

The Flying Rhino Café & Watering Hole opens daily at 11:00 am for lunch, dinner, and late-night bites.

Part of a Chamber effort, the WBDC was created in 1965 by a group of Worcester County business leaders as a private, nonprofit with a mission to serve as an innovative and leading force in the economic development of the city and surrounding region. Its efforts result in local job creation, expansion of the city's tax base, and relocation of businesses to Worcester County.



Paul and Melina Barber opened Flying Rhino two decades ago with a lively, colorful interior and an even more enticing menu. The restaurant is located at 278 Shrewsbury St. in Worcester. **ABOVE:** Photo courtesy WBDC. **BELOW:** Photo by ERB Photography.



## Build a Stronger Team

Time management, creative problem solving, communication and conflict resolution are essential skills in today's business world. Take advantage of **FREE** soft skills workshops for employers and employees.

**September - November 2019**  
**Tuesday & Thursday**  
**8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

**Workshops will be held in Worcester, Southbridge, and other QCC locations.**

These workshops are **FREE** for those who qualify for the Direct Access Grant. Call 508.751.7929 or visit [www.QCC.edu/wd](http://www.QCC.edu/wd) for more information

### SQUARE FEET, FROM PAGE 1

The city's office space vacancy rate for 2018 was 5 percent – a sign of high demand. Its inventory of industrial warehouse and distribution space is also experiencing a surge of interest high demand – just 4.9 percent vacancy in Q1 2019.

More than 8.5 million people can be reached within 60 miles of Worcester. Therefore, the city's competitive location has it poised to take advantage of the growing demand for distribution-facility square footage among e-commerce sector companies.

In addition, more than 100,000 square feet has been leased or acquired in the Worcester market during Q1 of this year.

Within downtown, more than 40,000 square feet of office and retail space has been activated in Q2 2019. Tenants include Fuel America, WooHaha Comedy Club, Revolution Pie & Pint, Craft Table & Bar, TEC Connectivity, Reliant Foundation, Howard Stein Hudson, Feldman Surveyors, Daymark Energy Advisors, the Massachusetts Department of Industrial Accidents, and the Cannabis Control Commission.

Within Worcester's neighborhoods,

combined, Redemption Rock Brewing and MexiCali have anchored retail venues larger than 10,000 square feet while the Habberdash and Stillman Quality Meats boosted activity in the nearby Canal District.

Sail to Trail WineWorks and LLB Architects, two companies new to Worcester, have revitalized spaces in Greendale by activating more than 2,000 square feet.

Table Talk Pies is eyeing an industrial expansion and has broken ground on a 27,000-square-foot cold storage facility in the South Worcester Industrial Park. The freezer building assists the company in vertically integrating storage under one roof. Table Talk Pies previously relied on facilities in Uxbridge, Westfield, Worcester, and Philadelphia to accommodate production. Construction of the cold-storage facility is expected to last nine months.

Growth of such an anchor manufacturer is good news. The city's economic development strategy will not only incorporate the existing innovation economy – science, technical services, health care, and education – but also efforts to grow the manufacturing and agriculture industries.

## ONCE READ, PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

FOR ADDITIONAL COPIES, PLEASE CONTACT EMILY AT [EGOWDEYBACKUS@WORCESTERCHAMBER.ORG](mailto:EGOWDEYBACKUS@WORCESTERCHAMBER.ORG)



# EVERY STUDENT COUNTS AT WPS

By Karen Pelletier, Vice President of Operations & Director of Education and Workforce Development

Central Massachusetts is only as strong as its workforce. Roughly 18 months ago, the Chamber began discussions with Worcester Public Schools to strategize about how to better-connect students with employers for career paths.

In order to compete regionally, nationally, and internationally, local companies – Chamber members included – need qualified, prepared workers. The Chamber wants to ensure that local youth are given every opportunity to succeed, not just in college, but in the trades as well.

Worcester is fortunate to have a nationally-recognized vocational school, Worcester Technical High School, but there are far too many students on the waitlist, let alone those who don't bother apply. The Chamber met with WPS Superintendent Maureen Binienda to explore making Worcester Tech an 18-hour facility to accommodate more students. The discussion evolved into several initiatives.

Innovation Pathways is a two-year, after-school hours program where high school students earn industry-recognized credentials.

Second, and relaunched this spring, Worcester Night Life opens up Worcester Tech to adults after 5:00 pm for workforce and personal

enrichment courses. Turn to page seven to learn more about the return of Night Life to the WPS curriculum.

And, Opportunity Worcester. In April 2018, the Chamber, along with the region's workforce training partners, spoke to more than 1,000 juniors and seniors at nine local high schools. The message? You matter. On April 3, the group met for a one-night event targeting WPS upperclassmen.

In his keynote, City Manager Edward M. Augustus Jr. said: "Amazing things are happening in the city right now [and] the its priorities aren't just baseball. We're spending five times the money we are spending on Polar Park on new schools. Worcester is investing in our future, and that's you."

Often, students feel a lot of pressure to go to college and while a four-year school is a great path, it's not the only option advised Ms. Binienda and the city manager. Recent high school graduates can enter some careers with a credential and work their way up the ladder, often without debt.

Workforce partners in attendance included MassHire Career Center, Worcester Jobs Fund, Worcester Community Action Council, and the Grafton Job Corps. Emphasis focused on mastering soft skills – show up, on time, communicate well, problem solve – the basis for any successful career.

# STARTUP WORCESTER PROFILE: GISELLE RIVERA-FLORES, 2016-17



**NAME:** Giselle Rivera-Flores  
**TITLE:** Founder  
**COMPANY:** The Learning Hub  
**AGE:** 34  
**HOMETOWN:** Brooklyn, N.Y.  
**FAVORITE WORCESTER BITES:** Deadhorse Hill, La Cucina, Antonio's Pizza  
**FAVORITE DOWN TIME LOCATION:** Annie's Book Stop

Photo courtesy Giselle Rivera-Flores

By Emily Gowdey-Backus, Director of Communications

Entrepreneurship was never the ultimate goal for Giselle Rivera-Flores, but rather a happy result from discovering her true passion after a collection of life events.

From a young age, Ms. Rivera-Flores remembers telling her mother and grandparents that she wanted nothing more than to be an attorney when she grew up.

After moving to Worcester, meeting her husband, and graduating from Quinsigamond Community College, Ms. Rivera-Flores considered Worcester her home. She continued her education at the University of Massachusetts Boston as well as Worcester State University and, over time, her career path led her to positions in business development and asset management.

A long-term, nearly eight-year stint with the GRID District in downtown Worcester, working as a leasing agent, drew her away from the idea of being an attorney. The most rewarding part of working at the GRID, said Ms. Rivera-Flores was "showing people new perspectives," the possibilities of a space, through marketing strategies.

She fondly remembers the transformation of the Portland Street Lofts apartment complex into a "live, work, play" environment for residents of Worcester.

Ms. Rivera-Flores branched out into full-time entrepreneurship in 2016. As a digital media strategist, she took on clients – including Mass Foodies, the Worcester Public Market, the Worcester '78s, and Discover Central Massachusetts – and performed everything from social media and event management, to content creation, and productivity coaching.

This is also when she launched The Learning Hub, for which she was selected as a Startup Worcester company. A science, technology, engineering, arts, and math, or STEAM, initiative; The Learning Hub was born from personal experience.

One of Ms. Rivera-Flores' daughters experiences attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, more commonly referred to as ADHD, and

she felt the local school system was not adequately meeting the child's needs. She pulled her daughter out of the classroom and began to homeschool her using a hands-on, interactive approach.

Speaking with other local parents, Ms. Rivera-Flores saw an opportunity to provide a solution to an unmet need. The Learning Hub, via its Facebook page, schedules pop-up educational sessions for students in Kindergarten to sixth grade at local partner institutions including Worcester Public Library, the EcoTarium, and after-school programs.

One of the most popular events hosted by The Learning Hub, she said, is the annual Make a Pie workshop in which families come together to bake a pie at the famed Table Talk pie company. It costs \$2 to attend, as a fundraiser for The Learning Hub, and is a fun way to gather the family and work toward a common goal, said Ms. Rivera-Flores.

In addition to The Learning Hub, Ms. Rivera-Flores launched Be Studios – a shared workspace for photographers which will also offer classes for those looking to improve their photography skills – in early May and manages a personal consultancy brand.

A transplant to Worcester, Ms. Rivera-Flores counts among her biggest successes in business the ability transition from the 9:00 am to 5:00 pm "rat race" of working a full-time job while parenting. With that change, she said she has been able to "accept Worcester for its potential" and "authentically" market the place in which she enjoys living and raising a family.

Entering her third year in business as an entrepreneur, Ms. Rivera-Flores said it's time to refine the types of projects she takes on as a one-woman shop.

"My biggest goal is to focus on my audience and not be everything to everyone," she said. "Yes, I can build websites, but that's not all."

"Over the next year," said Ms. Rivera-Flores, "I'd like to focus on who I'm working with. ... I'm big on ecosystems and making sure my clients can cross-promote."



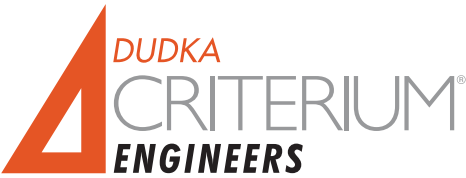
We know buildings and we understand business.

Criterion-Dudka Engineers specialize in leading-edge engineering services for building owners, builders, buyers, managers, and developers.

We solve problems to help plan for the future, including:

- Commercial Property Condition Assessments
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessments
- Commercial Building Structural Evaluations
- Cost Segregation Studies
- Third-Party Quality Assurance Construction Services

Call us today to discuss your engineering needs.



844-885-0153  
criterion-dudka.com



HOUSING, FROM PAGE 1

The redevelopment of the former Worcester Courthouse is designed to create 117 new apartments. In March, the breakdown stood at 50 affordable-priced units and 67 market-rate units. Accommodations range from studio lofts to three-bedroom apartments.

Mr. Lee said certain areas of the courthouse are in “pretty bad shape” and redevelopment of the space will focus on mechanical, electrical, and plumbing issues before restoration of the terrazzo floors, for example, will take place.

In total, the project will cost “upwards of \$40 million,” he said, with financial support from MassHousing, the MassHousing Redevelopment Corporation, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Berkshire Bank, and the Worcester Business Development Corporation.

The Chamber hopes this investment will encourage other Massachusetts and regional housing developers to take a second look at opportunities in Worcester.

According to Smart Growth Economics founder and CEO, Mahesh Ramachandran, the City of Worcester has a “\$2 to \$3 billion untapped real estate market.”

At the March 11 Chamber construction and real estate roundtable, he said Worcester has experienced 14 percent population growth since 1980. In relation to other Massachusetts gateway cities, said Mr. Ramachandran, “nowhere is comparable to Worcester.”

Ranging from 25 to 34 years old, the majority of new-to-Worcester residents earn \$40,000 or less annually and are interested in rental housing. The statistic which underlies the need for housing, he explained, is that just 1 percent of the city’s workforce both live and work downtown.

Many locals, including Ms. Polito, remember when the courthouse played an active role in the lives of Greater Worcester residents and are happy to see it return to such a role.

“Once these halls were filled with so many citizens of this area, of the Commonwealth, seeking access to justice,” said Ms. Polito on Feb. 28 in the former courthouse lobby.

With that fondness in mind, Mr. Lee and Trinity Financial incorporated a public exhibition space into the building’s design. Named in honor of Marshall Walter “Major” Taylor, the famed early 19th century Worcester bicyclist, the space will chronicle the athlete’s life and accomplishments.

While the 15- to 18-month process of redeveloping the courthouse into housing moves forward, the need for accommodations – suitable for multiple ages and demographics – continues to be a topic of concern in Central Massachusetts.

“It’s not only about who’s here today,” said Ms. Polito. “It’s about our kids, making sure they find good homes to afford in the Commonwealth. It’s about our parents, who want to stay and age in their communities.”



Cost Effective Advertising

Whether your a **B to B** or **B to C** business, we’ve got options!

Digital, Print, Outdoor Opportunities

Website - [www.WorcesterChamber.org](http://www.WorcesterChamber.org)

Monthly Audience

• unique users: 11K+ | sessions: 14K | pageviews: 29K

E-News & Info

Twice Monthly Audience

• 12K+ biz professionals in 35 towns | open rate: 25%

Chamber Exchange - The Newspaper

Published in Feb., May, Aug., and Nov.

• circulation: 20K | biz professionals in 35 communities, 10,500 voters in Worcester, key locations

Chamber Exchange - The TV Show

Two Taped Shows Each Month

• Shows air 6 times on Charter TV3 - Channel 193 at 2:30 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for 2 weeks.

Outdoor Advertising

Audience

• Visitors per year: 185,500  
• Federal Plaza Garage, 570 Main St., Downtown Worcester



DID YOU KNOW?

Members can post events for free on the Chamber's website.

For more info about advertising, contact

Kristen Luna | 508.753.2924, ext. 226  
[kluna@worcesterchamber.org](mailto:kluna@worcesterchamber.org)

Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce

311 Main St., Suite 200 | Worcester, MA 01608 | [WorcesterChamber.org](http://WorcesterChamber.org)

Let's Build Your Future, Together.

A local, community bank that has a lot to offer!

At Cornerstone Bank, we offer a full suite of deposit products, from basic to higher earning accounts that reward you. Our financing options range from personal and auto loans to home equity and mortgages. Plus, many convenient services like our instant issue debit cards and our mobile app to help you manage your accounts.

For businesses, our seasoned, professional lenders are uniquely positioned to deliver prompt, customized banking solutions. We offer a robust selection of deposit, financing, and cash management products and services designed to help your business grow and streamline your operations.

Visit us today!



Charlton • Holden • Leicester • Rutland • Southbridge • Spencer  
Sturbridge • Warren • Webster • Worcester



[cornerstonebank.com](http://cornerstonebank.com)  
800-939-9103



Dining Establishment?  
We Can Help  
Feed Your Success.

Fletcher Tilton serves as counsel to more than 100 restaurants, breweries, pubs, and wine purveyors. We understand the demands, complexities, and requirements of running a business centered on food and drink, and the variety of challenges you face each day. Our experience allows us to help with everything from structuring new ventures and corporate formation, to commercial lending, real estate lease or purchase, permitting, workforce issues, and more. Every step of the way, our expertise remains on the table.

Call Mark Donahue 508.459.8029 or Todd Brodeur 508.459.8038.

Real Knowledge in Real Life

Fletcher Tilton PC  
Attorneys at law

[FletcherTilton.com](http://FletcherTilton.com)

WORCESTER | FRAMINGHAM | BOSTON | CAPE COD



# A LOOK BACK AT RECENT CHAMBER EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY





# CHAMBER ANNOUNCES RETURN OF WORCESTER SPORTS STREET

**By Timothy P. Murray, *President and CEO***

*This column’s style and title are written in tribute to, and in the spirit of, legendary Worcester Telegram & Gazette sports writer Nick Manzello. In its heyday, the late Mr. Manzello’s weekly column which acted as a recap of the Central Massachusetts and Worcester sports scenes and was looked forward to by sports fans of all ages with great anticipation.*

*While unable to match Mr. Manzello’s granularity of reporting or column frequency, we hope in our quarterly newspaper to similarly provide the local community with a recap of what is happening with the City of Worcester’s major sport teams – recognizing their positive impact on our local economy and quality of life.*

*Additionally, when time and space allow, we will give, as Mr. Manzello would say, “a tip of the fedora” to the city’s youth, collegiate, and amateur athletic teams and athletes in recognition of their outstanding accomplishments. If you would like certain team or player accomplishments highlighted in this column, please pass along your comments to Emily Gowdey-Backus, director of communications. Her email is egowdeybackus@worcesterchamber.org.*

Sports Street is still buzzing over the Worcester Technical High School’s boys’ basketball team Division 4 state championship – a buzzer-beating 55-52 victory over the Abington High School team. Many Worcester sports fans were surprised to learn this win was the first time a boys’ basketball team from the City of Worcester has ever won a state championship.

The Chamber would like to extend congratulations to Worcester Tech players Nicholas Cruz, Jasiel Latorre, Jose Bonilla, Deron Kumah, Malcom Gaines, Zaire Peart, Andrew Enlow, Cooper Nyanue, Innocent Nortey, Brendon Hamilton, John Babb, Eduardo Moreira, Frederick Siayor, Cesar Flores, Jaheim Simpson. A big shoutout also needs to be given to the coaching and support staff: Sean Lynch, Don Cummings, Anthony Barbosa, Duane Anderson, Ray Sanchez, and managers Rodney Maldonado and Justice Bautista.

Speaking of championships, coming off their third Futures Collegiate Baseball League of New England championship, the Worcester Bravehearts will open their sixth season, and the first of 28 home games, at Hanover Insurance Park at Fitton Field in Worcester on Thursday, May 30 at 6:30 pm. During the off-season, Bravehearts Owner John Creedon, Jr. and the team were busy expanding operations. Over that time, Creedon acquired the Nashua Silver Knights, a fellow Futures Collegiate Baseball League of New England ball club, which is based out of Nashua, N.H.

While the Boston Red Sox have gotten off to a slow start on the diamond, plans for the new Polar Park, the future home of the Triple A Worcester Red Sox team, are flying

around the bases. Currently, the City of Worcester-owned ballpark is expected to be complete in April 2021. Managed by the Worcester Redevelopment Authority, the construction project is a joint venture between Gilbane Building Company and the nationally-based Hunt firm.

Architectural firm DAIQ, which has worked with the MLB Red Sox team in previous years, was selected to assist with the ballpark design and Sasaki Associates was chosen to assist with the landscape architecture for Polar Park and the site’s integration with abutting neighborhoods.

Gilbane has been involved in previous Worcester redevelopment including the new North High School and Worcester County Courthouse apartment complex.

The \$100-million-dollar, state-of-the-art ballpark will be complimented by an additional \$100 million dollars in new private sector construction featuring 250 market-rate housing units, a hotel, and an office building which will include retail. An additional \$40 million dollars in state funding will be used for infrastructure and parking improvements, namely the redesign of Kelley Square. Utility work relating to Kelley Square and Polar Park is currently underway. The WRA recently adopted orders to acquire property near the ballpark along Washington, Madison, and Plymouth streets as construction moves forward.

The Massachusetts Pirates, the Worcester-based indoor arena football franchise of the National Arena League and who play at the DCU Center, started their second season in April. Owned by local businessmen Hassan and Jawad Yatim, the team is made up of a number of former Division 1 players. In their inaugural season, the Pirates made a strong playoff run before being eliminated.

Given the space limitations, arena football field dimensions are smaller than the traditional 120-yard by 53.3-yard NFL regulation size, there is a lot of action to see.

Accordingly, the NAL rules have eight players per team on the field compared to the NFL’s rules which allow for 11 per team on the field at any one time.

This fast-paced brand of football, which includes the ability to score on kickoffs, is a must-see for sports fans.

While the National Hockey League’s Stanley Cup Playoffs continue, the second season of professional ECHL hockey in Worcester came to a close in April. While the Worcester Railers did not repeat capturing a playoff spot as they did in their inaugural season last year, Railers’ fans can be buoyed by the recent comments of Railers’ Owner Cliff Rucker as the team begins preparing for the 2019-2020 season. In several interviews, Mr. Rucker indicated he hopes next season’s team will get off to a strong start and he will look to strengthen the team’s relationship

with their NHL affiliate, the New York Islanders, as it relates to player personnel and organizational development.

The Worcester ‘78s, of the American Basketball Association, lost the regional championship versus the Syracuse Stallions in a 139-129 shootout in March. The ‘78s, whose home games are played at Worcester State University, won several games to advance to the regional finals in their third season with the ABA.

The Worcester Blades, a Canadian Women’s Hockey League affiliate team, concluded their inaugural season without a win as one of six teams in the CWHL. After relocating from Boston, the Blades played their season at the new Fidelity Bank Worcester Ice Center in the Canal District. Central Massachusetts native Derek Alfama, the Blades’ general manager, felt the team built community connections in their first year which bodes well for the future. However, not long after the conclusion of the latest season, the 12-year-old CWHL announced that it was going out of business citing an “unsustainable business model” as the reason behind its shuttering.

The CWHL’s announcement was followed by a boycott of professional competition by roughly 200 professional female hockey players in both the CWHL and the National Women’s Hockey leagues.

With teams in the United States, Canada, and China, the CWHL was one of two professional female hockey leagues in North America before they closed. The other league, the NWHL, has offices in New England, New York, New Jersey, and Minnesota.

An athlete’s statement said they do not intend to play during the 2019-2020 season until better working conditions are established throughout professional women’s hockey.

Currently, the typical pay model for female professional hockey players is roughly \$2,000 per season, per player and does not include health insurance. U.S. women’s Olympic hockey gold-medalist, Kendall Coyne Schofield tweeted in response to the conditions: “We may represent different teams, leagues, and countries but collectively we stand as one. #ForTheGame.”

Girls youth hockey is one of the fastest-growing sports in the nation. It will be interesting to see how this dynamic plays out as a potential fan base rapidly expands among players and parents.

It’s also curious whether the NHL will be able to find a way to partner with one unified professional women’s league, as many hope. Sports Street is rooting for this to happen as interest in women’s hockey grows locally.



**SUPERIOR  
WASTE & RECYCLING**

**508-797-4848**

**TRANSFER STATION  
RECYCLING CENTER**

**OPEN TO THE  
PUBLIC**

**Superior also offers dumpster rentals  
and residential/commercial pickups**

**Hours: M-F 7:00 am - 6:00 pm | Sat 7:00 am - 5:00 pm**

**No appointment needed  
2 Kansas Street, Worcester, MA 01610**





# **Minuteman Press®**

**WE DESIGN, PRINT & PROMOTE...YOU!**

## *Spring for great service!*

**35** *years*

**INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE**

**GREAT PRICES, FAST, AND RELIABLE**

*Think of us for your next project!*

**SPECIALIZING IN:**

**DIGITAL AND OFFSET PRINTING**

**PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS**

**BANNERS, POSTERS AND SIGNAGE**

**MAILINGS**

**122 GREEN STREET, WORCESTER, MA 01604**

**WORC@MINUTEMANPRESS.COM • PHONE: 508.757.5690 • FAX: 508.795.1960**

**WWW.WORCESTER.MINUTEMANPRESS.COM**