



Chamber provides options for members to *get connected*

Be-coming a Chamber member will help promote a business in a number of ways--almost from "day one." Simply getting listed in the Chamber's online directory ensures extra priority for your company during a web search.

The best return on a company's investment in Chamber membership, however, is the opportunity to meet local business owners, potential customers, and the new connections they all represent.

Chamber staff are constantly organizing a wide range of events to help members interact, support new relationships and promote their businesses. Efforts are made to accommodate people's interests and diverse schedules, with programs held early morning, mid-day or evening.

For business owners who must seek other businesses and individual clients, the "business-to-business" industries, the Sales Leads Group meets at 8 a.m. on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month. For members who aren't able to make morning meetings, there's a new Sales Leads Group II held on the 1st Tuesday of every month at 4 p.m.

Sales Leads participants meet in the Chamber conference room and the facilitator this year is Greg Aldrich, a search consultant for Search Control.com, a firm that promotes marketing with the latest generation of search engine optimization.

He explains, "The purpose of Sales Leads is for each participant to know what everyone else [in the group] has to offer, so we can each refer that person. This is a benefit for Chamber members. At a typical meeting, we introduce anyone new, then we have a 60-second 'commercial' for everyone attending. In addition, there are two, 10-minute presentations by participants, or instead, we may get a guest speaker or presenter, on a special topic, for 20 minutes."

Mr. Aldrich reports that several dozen people usually attend, and that a roundtable format allows for further discussion. "We also have a one-on-one opportunity that participants can opt into, and sometimes it expands to three or four [people]... to meet outside of the Chamber." People choose this option by pooling business cards and then drawing a random card for a one-on-one meeting.

"The Sales Leads group is certainly a place where new members like to come," he adds. "It takes a long-term commitment," before it's likely to measure a return in sales or other measurement of progress. Another benefit of this kind of networking, he points out, is that "it lets people know what are the ideal prospects for you."

There are events and programs, in addition to Sales Leads, that promote connections among members, with other business owners, community leaders and elected officials.

One that should appeal to everybody is Business After Hours, where events are

hosted at different member locations from [generally] 5-7 p.m. Strictly casual, the BAH includes a cash bar, hors d'oeuvres and a minimal fee--and they are scheduled every few months.

Another event of general interest is the early-morning Good Morning Breakfast [see page 3] held on alternate months and featuring guest speakers in a "talk show" format. For business women, there is the Executive Women's Network, which meets monthly [see page 7], for a "brown bag" lunch and expert presenters on topics of special interest.

For those under age 40, a HYPE! group [see page 3] offers monthly events that promote social and professional networking. For business owners and managers who understand the importance of communicating directly with elected public officials, the annual Elected Officials Reception will be held at the Four Points Sheraton Leominster and is attended by the area's mayors, town managers, selectmen, state and U.S. senators and representatives [see page 3].

With all these options, there is a networking event available that will fit virtually anybody's schedule. Chamber members are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities. To reap the maximum benefits of your membership--all you have to do is show up!



Greg Aldrich

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Season Tickets are now available, offering discounts for two popular Chamber programs--the Good Morning Breakfast and Human Resources Council. See the enclosed order form.

New Members

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Holiday Blue Laws

- Federal, state and municipal offices, the Chamber office, schools & most banks are closed.
- Retail stores and businesses need permits from the local police chief to open on Thanksgiving. They also need a permit to open before noon on Columbus Day or before 1 p.m. on Veterans Day.

- Labor Day is Monday, Sept. 5
- Columbus Day is Monday, Oct. 10

- Retail, grocery stores and package stores as well as manufacturers and other non-retailers--if open--may be restricted to voluntary employment or overtime pay. For specific exceptions concerning mandatory/voluntary hours or extra, holiday compensation, or for more information, see: www.mass.gov/dos/bluelaw/index.htm

MA Legislature Contemplates Paid Sick Days

After Labor Day, the General Court will be considering imposing a one-size-fits-all mandate on all businesses in Massachusetts -- that all employees earn up to 7 paid sick days per year to care for themselves, their child, spouse, parent, or the parent of a spouse. Massachusetts Paid Sick Days Act (H. 1398 and S. 930) will have a huge impact on the cost of doing business in the Bay State.

If adopted, this law would allow employees -- including seasonal and part-time employees -- to accrue one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours on the job, up to a maximum of seven paid days per year. All employees would be eligible for this benefit starting on their first day of employment. These bills would only require that the worker provide documentation of the leave after three consecutive days off had been taken. This makes it impossible to prohibit employees from abusing the benefit, and directly interferes with an employer's ability to run their business.

For business owners, this mandate may require overtime, hiring temporary workers, and additional training costs. For the state's economy, it means the loss of 50,000 jobs, with 28,000 of those coming from the small business sector (com-

panies with less than 100 employees), and the loss of \$10 billion in economic activity.

The proposal ignores the fact that many employers already have a formal policy for 'paid time off' and most small business owners already arrange for their employees to take time off as needed, and the reality that small businesses need flexible policies that better fit the needs of their employees and their business.

The Chamber opposes this legislation because we feel it is unnecessary to create laws for matters that are resolved between employers and employees everyday and the cost to employers during this time of economic uncertainty jeopardizes job creation and the back bone of our economy—small businesses!

These bills are currently before the Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development.

Meet state & local elected officials at November multi-chamber event

Chamber members and their guests have an opportunity to meet their elected officials on Tuesday, November 15th. The Chamber will be hosting its Annual Elected Officials Reception from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel in Leominster.

The North Central Mass in conjunction with other Route 2 chambers are hosting this event to provide members with the chance and talk one-on-one with their local leaders. Invited guests include our region's state senators, state representatives, mayors, city councilors and selectmen. This event will provide a forum for business leaders to interact with elected officials on the state of economic development in the communities along Route 2. Oftentimes, this event allows business people to recognize and thank our region's elected officials for their hard work and dedication.

The cost to attend this event is \$20 for members & \$30 for non-members. Hors d'oeuvres will be served and a cash bar will be available.

To reserve, use the form on the back of this newsletter. For more information, contact Marissa at (978) 353-7600 x235.



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The HYPE! program
[Helping Young Professionals

Emerge] offers monthly events for business people in the North Central region who are age 21 - 40 with an emphasis on both social and professional networking. Events are free of charge; don't miss the following dates.

Buffalo Wild Wings, 150 Whalon Street [K-Mart Plaza], Fitchburg, will host Monday night football Sept. 12, at 5:00 p.m.

A HYPE get-together will be at the Colonial Hotel- 625 Betty Spring Road in Gardner on Thursday, Sept. 22 at 5:00 p.m.

On Thursday, Oct. 27 at 5:00 p.m. come join the group at Fitchburg State University, 160 Pearl Street, Fitchburg for a Political Science Discussion Panel.

In November, discover Phoenix Park at 2 Shaker Road [Suite B218] in Shirley. This will be a fund-raising event to benefit the United Way, and it's scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 10 at 5:00 p.m.

For information, call 978-353-7600.



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Good Morning Breakfast

Breakfast events start at 6:45 a.m. with coffee and buffet breakfast, at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel Leominster, 99 Erdman Way off Route 12 at Rte 2. To reserve, see the back page or for more information call 978-353-7600, ext. 235.

'Banker & Tradesman' publisher featured on November 18

The discussion at the November 18 breakfast event will be on the commercial and industrial real estate market, and ways in which it impacts the economy on state and local levels.

Timothy M. Warren Jr., has been invited as the featured guest speaker. He is the chief executive officer of The Warren Group, a publishing and information services company that is best known in Massachusetts for its real estate newspaper, *Banker & Tradesman*. The Warren Group is now in its fourth generation of family ownership and traces its roots to 1872. The firm has been collecting and publishing public records throughout its history. Its extensive database of real estate sales and ownership records is used by real estate professionals throughout Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island.

Mr. Warren often provides analysis of real estate issues to news outlets such as The Boston Globe, WBZ radio, Boston Herald, and NECN. He joined The Warren Group in 1973, became its president in 1988 then its CEO in 2004.

Sponsor for the November breakfast is North Central Charter School in Fitchburg.

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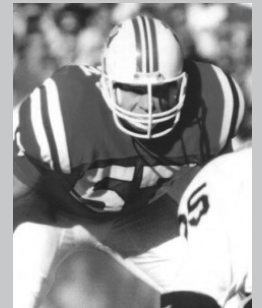
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September 16 event to feature former NE Patriot

Guests at the September breakfast will have a chance to hear Steve Nelson--best known for his 14-year career (1974-1987) as a linebacker with the New England Patriots. A three-time All Pro Selection (1980, 1984 and 1985), Mr. Nelson was inducted into the New England Patriots Hall of Fame in 1993. Throughout his professional playing career, he only missed a total of three games, and currently ranks sixth all-time in games played for the New England Patriots.

Mr. Nelson is the former athletic director and head football coach at Curry College, where he holds the record of being the most-wins coach in Curry College history. His peers recognized him with Coach of the Year honors in 1998 and in 2003.

Mr. Nelson is currently a regular contributor on Sports Radio WEEI's 850 AM Big Show with Glen Ordway, and he serves as a football analyst for WCVB Channel 5's New England Patriot telecasts.



Steve Nelson

At the breakfast, he will share his experiences as a professional athlete and coach and give guests an insider's view into the workings of the Patriots organization as well as sports broadcasting.

Sponsoring the breakfast is Research Results, Inc., based in Fitchburg, which does marketing research and analysis.

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HUMAN RESOURCES COUNCIL HRC

HRC events are from 11:45 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. in the Chamber Conference Room and include lunch. Use Page 8 to reserve.

The Chamber's Human Resources Council hosts a monthly seminar series that focuses on a wide range of labor issues and employer/employee relations. These topics are important whether you have a single employee or 1,000. All business owners and managers are encouraged to take advantage of this very affordable program. Guest speakers are top experts in the fields of HR, labor relations and the law.

Drug & alcohol testing is focus on Sept. 21

For September 21, Marianne Pappas, RN, BSN, MSB will be addressing the HRC group about testing employees for substance abuse and medical surveillance.

She is director of HealthAlliance's Take Charge Occupational Health Program. Take Charge provides area business comprehensive drug and alcohol options including; policy development, supervisor training, employee training and random testing programs. Ms. Pappas has been conducting urine drug and alcohol testing for over 25 years.

The program will include an overview on "Everything you need to know about drug and alcohol testing." Most employers need to know conditions for requiring alcohol and drug testing of their staff, based on current regulations.

Employer and employee responsibilities will be outlined, especially concerning prescription drug use, work place safety and employee performance indicators. Employer considerations for the types of drug testing that meets company needs and testing procedures will be reviewed, as well as interpreting test results and options if an employee has a positive test. Ms. Pappas will share some notable case studies.



Marianne Pappas

Oct. 19 session reviews labor laws under FLSA

Most business owners are familiar with federal wage & hour laws, and realize they are changing regularly. When employers are caught in violation, they may be unaware by design [it can't happen to me], or by simply not paying attention.

The results of an employer's ignorance can be costly. Early in August, the U.S. Labor Department announced that it had recovered more than \$23,000 in back wages for four employees of New Haven, Conn., restaurant. In June 14, the Department mandated \$1.3 million in back wages and fringe benefits for employees of Chelsea, Mass., contractor working on Long Island, NY. Also in June, a pizzeria in Salem, Mass. paid over \$80,000 in back wages to 11 employees after an investigation. When a business owner or manager ignores the regulations, who's to blame?

To help local employers and managers stay on top of these regulations, the HRC seminar on October 19 will present Patty Colarossi, wage & hour inspector for the U.S. Department of Labor

Wage and Hour Division in Boston. She will outline updates as well as review the basics about wage & hour laws and FLSA [Fair Labor Standards Act].

Nov. 16 seminar will help employers reduce liabilities



Atty. Jon Sigel

Learning how to lower the risks of employment liability will be the focus of the November 16 workshop. More than ever, those who hire and supervise employees must be familiar with employment and discrimination law concepts, requirements and prohibitions. Employers must remain vigilant about emerging workplace issues and develop prudent, effective employment policies and practices. This HRC session is designed to educate managers and supervisors on the key elements of employment law and update employers on new laws, regulations and compliance measures. It is intended to help management reduce the risk of liability and be in the best position to defend employment related claims in the event of employment litigation.

Presenting these issues will be Jonathan Sigel, a partner in the Labor, Employment and Employee Benefits Group at the law firm of Mirick, O'Connell in Worcester. He has extensive experience representing management in the negotiation and litigation of employment and discrimination claims in the state and federal courts. He also appears frequently before the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Mr. Sigel advises clients on a broad range of employment issues, including employment, severance and non-competition agreements; handbooks and policies; terminations and layoffs. He advises management on proper wage and hour classification and represents employers during investigations and audits by the Department of Labor and the Office of the Attorney General and other agencies. In 2003, Jonathan received the "40 under Forty" Award from the Worcester Business Journal. He received the Samuel Seder Young Leadership Award from the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts in 1998. Jonathan was named a Massachusetts "Super Lawyer" by Boston Magazine and Law & Politics in 2009 and 2010.

New Director Profile

Stephen Mullaney advocates streamlining state & local regulations

As the principal in SJ Mullaney Engineering, Inc., Stephen Mullaney is especially familiar with local development and the construction industry. His brother Michael is a structural engineer for McKenzie Engineering and his other brother David owned Mullaney Corp., a local design/build firm responsible for the construction of numerous public buildings and businesses in this area.

Mr. Mullaney states, "I have been in [my own] business for seven years. Before that, I was with David E. Ross Associates in Ayer. I grew up in Leominster... went to St. Bernard's High School and Northeastern University, where I received a B.S. in civil engineering."

Describing his company, he states, "We deal mostly with site development, getting through the permitting process. We work with developers, builders and landowners. Lately we have been working with clients involved in excavating and mining for aggregates, such as sand and gravel."

He points out that "with Massachusetts' 'home rule' system, every town is like going into a different country" which is an extra challenge for any building project. In other states, he continues, county government might determine regulations at the most local level.

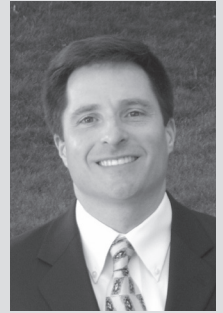
The goal of community and business leaders, and elected officials, he notes, "is to see what can be done to simplify the rules and regs... We have to streamline things."

Mr. Mullaney believes the Chamber can be effective in this mission, "in its advocacy for business, at the state and local level. These issues affect everybody. The Chamber has the staff and the means... to have a presence at the State House... to attend public hearings," he says, adding that it's the kind of lobbying "that business people do not have the time for."

"I have participated in local government as a volunteer. In the early 1990s I served on the committee investigating a regional airport, and the redevelopment of Fort Devens (where) I met some of the players on the state level. In Leominster, I was on the Police Station Siting Committee, and I have provided advice for the city council's zoning sub-committee."

Mr. Mullaney advises community leaders to "be proactive--don't wait for the state" to force initiatives, such as regionalizing public services. "I would like to see the Chamber advocate for the formation of regional offices such as health agencies."

Outside of work, Mr. Mullaney says, "I like volunteering at St. Leo's Church in Leominster" and spending time with family and relatives. He also like skiing but admits, "I haven't had much time (for that) lately."



BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

September 29, Thursday -- 5 - 7 p.m.
Fidelity Bank, 9 Leominster Connector

Join other members for a Business After Hours BBQ networking event on Thursday, September 29, 2011, 5 - 7 p.m., hosted by Fidelity Bank at the Leominster Connector Office, where Commercial Road ends near Mechanic Street in Leominster. Members are encouraged to bring clients and associates to enjoy a relaxed, casual atmosphere. Bring plenty of business cards. Meet other Chamber members, and get the word out about your company.

Use the back of this newsletter to reserve for this networking event or call for information at 978-353-7600.

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These lunch events are from 11:45 a.m. - 1.30 p.m. and unless indicated otherwise, are held at the Leominster Lodge of Elks, 134 North Main Street in Leominster.

Each EWN brown bag lunch event includes the opportunity to promote your business or service with a tabletop display for the duration of the lunch and workshop. Exhibitors may set up on a 2' x 6' table, available to Chamber members for \$30 and nonmembers at \$50. Use the back of this newsletter to reserve a table top. Contact Marissa Torres at (978) 353-7600, ext 235 or torres@massweb.com for more information.

Elected officials offer 'snapshot of the region' on Sept. 7

On Wednesday, September 7, Senator Jen Flanagan, Representative Steve DiNatale, Leominster Mayor Dean Mazzarella and Fitchburg Mayor Lisa Wong join the Executive Women's Network for a snapshot of the region. The officials will offer updates on changes to the region, goals moving forward and will field audience questions.



Lisa Wong



Steve DiNatale

Mayor Wong has served as an economic development consultant in New England and abroad. From 2001-2006, Ms. Wong worked for the Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority, including two and a half years as the agency's director. Her ultimate vision for Fitchburg is to revamp it with affordable housing, job opportunity, skilled workforce and easily accessed outdoor recreation.

Representative Steve DiNatale [D-Fitchburg] has served on the Fitchburg School Committee and the City Council before being elected to the Mass. House in 2007. He is vice chair, for the

House Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change and serves on the Joint Committees on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies; Higher Education and Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy.

Mayor Mazzarella has focused on the importance of small businesses across the city. A concentrated effort has been made--particularly in support of those in the downtown area. Actions included the hiring of a small business coordinator, the creation of the Leominster Small Business Association and the addition of five downtown events annually.

Sen. Flanagan, a Leominster resident, is currently serving on several committees, including her role as assistant vice-chairman of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. She also chairs the Senate Committee on Steering and Policy and is vice chair for Joint Committees on Public Service and Transportation



Dean Mazzarella



Jen Flanagan

Find out what Mistress Carrie is up to on October 5

Mistress Carrie of WAAF-FM fame is back by popular demand at the October EWN to tell you more about what she's doing to make a difference in the lives of U.S. troops.

In 2006, she was the first 'non-news' journalist to be embedded in Iraq with the U.S. Army. In August of 2008, she was given the opportunity to take an orientation flight in an F-15 fighter jet with the Mass.

Air National Guard.

Carrie is currently working with Homes for Our Troops, a national non-profit, non-partisan 501(c) (3) organization founded in 2004. The organization helps those who have returned from military service with serious dis-



Mistress Carrie

abilities or injuries since September 11, 2001. It raises money to build homes at no cost to eligible veterans and service members

Stay tuned and don't miss this event, Mistress Carrie is planning a big announcement.

November 3 EWN event will 'connect' with other chambers

Guests at the EWN scheduled for November 3rd will "switch gears" for their regular lunch date to an after-work get-together in conjunction with members of several other chambers of commerce in the Route 2 corridor.

This networking event on Wednesday, Nov. 3 from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m., hosted by Fidelity Bank at their main office at 9 Leominster Connector, where Commercial Road ends near

Mechanic Street in Leominster. Members are encouraged to bring friends, customers and associates to enjoy a relaxed, casual atmosphere where you can get the word out about your company.

The event is free of charge and there will be refreshments. To reserve, use the back of this newsletter. Call Marissa at 978-353-7600 ext. 235 for information.

Coming Events

Season Ticket holders must confirm attendance—
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Sept. 7, Wednesday
Oct. 5, Wednesday

EXECUTIVE WOMEN'S NETWORK

'Brown Bag' lunch seminar
11:45 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Leominster Lodge of Elks
134 No. Main St., Leominster

Sept. 29, Thursday

Business After

Hours
5 - 7 p.m.
Fidelity Bank
9 Leom. Connector,
Leominster

Sept. 16, Friday
Nov. 18, Friday

Good Morning

6:45 - 8:30 a.m.
Four Points Hotel
by Sheraton Leominster
99 Erdman Way

Sept. 21, Wednesday

Oct. 19, Wednesday

Nov. 16, Wednesday

HRC

noon-1:30 p.m.
Chamber Conf. Rm.

2nd & 4th Wednesdays 8 - 9:30 a.m.

1st Tuesday 4 p.m.

Sales Leads Group

Chamber Conf. Rm. -- *Free for members*

Nov. 3, Wednesday

EWN After Hours

5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Fidelity Bank
9 Leom. Connector, Leominster

Nov. 15, Tuesday

Elected Officials

Reception

4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
Four Points Sheraton Leominster
99 Erdman Way, Leominster

Sept. 12, Monday

Sept. 22, Thursday

Oct. 27, Thursday

Nov. 10, Thursday

HYPE!

5 p.m. at Changing locations --
Free for members

Return the entire following portion of this page, including address label. **Please include payment.**

date	event	#tix	members	non-members	total
9/7	EWN ['BrownBag' free] Table Top	_____	\$30	\$50	\$ _____
9/16	GOOD MORNING Breakfast	_____	\$21	\$40	\$ _____
9/21	Human Resources Council	_____	\$20	\$35	\$ _____
9/29	Business After Hours	_____	\$10	\$20	\$ _____
10/5	EWN ['BrownBag' free] Table Top	_____	\$30	\$50	\$ _____
10/19	Human Resources Council	_____	\$20	\$35	\$ _____
11/3	EWN After-Hours	_____	-	-	\$ _____
11/15	Elected Officials Reception	_____	\$20	\$30	\$ _____
11/16	Human Resources Council	_____	\$20	\$35	\$ _____
11/18	GOOD MORNING Breakfast	_____	\$21	\$40	\$ _____

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