

BUSINESS PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2016-17

Building Businesses.
Building Communities.

North @ Central
MASSACHUSETTS

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

www.northcentralmass.com

The origins of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce can be traced back to the 1900s with the formation of chambers of commerce in Leominster and Fitchburg. In 1984, the boards of directors of both groups, along with several smaller business groups, voted to regionalize and merged to form the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce.

The North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce seeks to promote economic development, job creation, and overall business growth in North Central Massachusetts, while strengthening its existing businesses through numerous programs and services that the organization offers.

This business plan was prepared as a result of the planning process by the Chamber staff with input provided by members of the Board. It is the goal of the Board of Directors to develop and implement strategies to take the Chamber into the future. The plan was approved by the Board of Directors and is designed to serve as a blueprint for the future success of the Chamber and its affiliate organizations.

This document is a summary of the full business plan and articulates the mission, vision, values and broad goals and objectives. Operational and management goals are set internally by the staff under the direction of the Chamber President & CEO. Programs and projects will be undertaken with care and consideration of actual resources of the Chamber and its members. This business plan is also a fluid document that the Chamber may need to change to reflect the changing world.

The Chamber membership is encouraged to provide input to the Chamber staff and Board members at any time. As outlined in the business plan, the membership will be surveyed at least annually to ensure that the organization is meeting or exceeding the needs and expectations of its membership.

MISSION

To advance the economic development of North Central Massachusetts by creating and sustaining relationships among businesses and between businesses and the community.

VISION

To make North Central Massachusetts the best region in the state to live, work, raise a family or build a business by strengthening communities and improving our quality of life.



CORE VALUES

Integrity: We will be open, candid and fair; honor our commitments; and adhere to high ethical standards and objectives.

Excellence: We will consistently deliver programs, services and products of the highest quality that meet the expectations of our members and other stakeholders.

Focus: We will stay on task and achieve the goals that we set; focus on the needs of our members and of North Central Massachusetts; and develop and retain lasting relationships.

Leadership: We will be visionary and future-oriented, while respectful of our history and past commitments, in our thinking, decision-making and programming.

Respect: We will respect the diversity of people, businesses and of ideas as strengths to be sought and utilized in the Chamber.

Community: We will remain committed to improving the quality of life of the residents of the North Central Massachusetts by promoting initiatives that create a vibrant community. We will build and enhance relationships and public/private partnerships within the organization and community.

Innovation: We will be creative and inventive to solve problems and develop solutions. We will foster use of new technologies, delivering programs, services and opportunities to educate our members to the practical application of new technologies.

PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS

The Chamber's business plan is focused on promoting our strengths, expanding our existing businesses and business opportunities, and significantly improving the economic future for all who call North Central Massachusetts home. Recognizing the most universal and critical needs of our members and region, our priorities will focus on:

- ▶ Community Development
- ▶ Economic Development
- ▶ Government Affairs
- ▶ Membership Advancement
- ▶ Organizational Sustainability

PRIORITY AREA 1: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Collaborate with public and private sectors to enhance the perceptions of North Central Massachusetts, address emerging community issues and develop our workforce to meet the needs of businesses. We recognize the importance of developing our region to create a quality of place where we all want to live, work and visit.

Goal 1: Leverage the strengths of North Central Massachusetts to improve the quality of life and economic sustainability for our members and the community at large.

Objective A: Improve the quality of education and job training in North Central Massachusetts to increase the pool of talented workers in the region and support business growth and development.

Objective B: Develop and retain an ongoing source of diverse leaders, who are prepared and committed to serve as catalysts and sustainers of positive change for the betterment of North Central Massachusetts.

Goal 2: Develop and support initiatives that enhance the region's image.

Objective A: Promote the resources, positive activities and accomplishments of North Central Massachusetts and encourage citizens to take pride in their community by developing greater community awareness, identity and image.

Objective B: Promote the importance of "buying local" to the North Central Massachusetts economy.

PRIORITY AREA 2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Strengthen the North Central economy through the work of our affiliates— the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation (NCMDC) and the Johnny Appleseed Trail Association (JATA) — to attract private sector investment and grow jobs in the region. We recognize that by attracting and retaining employers, existing businesses and the residents of North Central Massachusetts will benefit through new opportunities and increased prosperity.

Goal 1: Expand private investment and jobs in North Central Massachusetts.

Objective A: Market North Central Massachusetts as a distinct and unique business environment to encourage the growth of existing business and industry and attract new business ventures to complement the region.

Objective B: Expand the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation's small business lending and technical assistance services to support entrepreneurship and small business growth in North Central Massachusetts.

Goal 2: Increase tourism related opportunities in North Central Massachusetts.

Objective A: Market North Central Massachusetts as the preferred visitor, group tour and small meeting destination in Massachusetts and New England.

Objective B: Build and cultivate the Johnny Appleseed Country brand as a unique and vibrant region comprised of cities and towns that are rich in history, culture and entrepreneurial drive and that offer authentic New England experiences and events.

Objective C: Provide visitors to the Johnny Appleseed Trail Visitors' Center with a positive experience.

Objective D: Secure new resources to help sustain and expand the Johnny Appleseed Trail Association's regional tourism marketing program and grow the economic impact for North Central Massachusetts.

PRIORITY AREA 3: GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Aggressively support issues and programs to improve the business climate and oppose legislation that negatively impacts business in North Central Massachusetts, becoming sufficiently involved in the political process to really make the voice of the business community heard. We are committed to providing resources to represent North Central Massachusetts at all levels of government for issues of importance to the region's economic and business advancement.

Goal 1: Establish a business friendly legislative and regulatory environment.

Objective A: Proactively advocate on local, state and federal government affairs issues that will have a direct impact on the business community or impact the economic advancement of North Central Massachusetts.

Objective B: Champion regionalism to enhance the business environment and economic development through coordination and the leveraging of resources.

Objective C: Continue to be a leader on transportation initiatives. Set private sector objectives for area rail, air and highway transportation development and work with local, regional, state and federal governments and planning agencies toward their implementation.

Objective D: Continue to be a leader on energy initiatives. Advocate for measures and initiatives that support and encourage a reliable and more affordable energy supply that keeps pace with the region's growing population and economy, while protecting our environment.

Goal 2: Develop and strengthen initiatives that inform and encourage Chamber members to participate in government affairs.

Objective A: Sponsor programs and events that electively engage members and public officials.

Objective B: Involve the membership in grass roots lobbying.

PRIORITY AREA 4: MEMBERSHIP ADVANCEMENT

Provide opportunities for our members to succeed and collaborate with other businesses and organizations. We are committed to providing valuable benefits and services that give our members a competitive edge and enhance the value of membership.

Goal 1: Deliver valuable and unique benefits and services that make membership a sound investment.

Objective A: Provide programs that offer Chamber members the opportunity to network with their peers or to meet new customers and/or promote their businesses.

Objective B: Provide services and benefits that offer Chamber members the opportunity to save money, save time or provide support for the challenges that they face in their business.

Objective C: Enhance the professional and personal development of our members.

Goal 2: Keep Chamber members informed of the Chamber's programs, policies and events; foster community awareness of the Chamber and its objectives; and support other departments within the Chamber by providing technical expertise for communications.

Objective A: Improve communications to better tell the Chamber's story.





PRIORITY AREA 5: ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Position the Chamber and the staff for long-term success by gaining operational efficiencies, securing new resources, leveraging existing resources for greater effectiveness and continuing to implement sound financial and operating policies and practices. In order to achieve our vision and implement our business plan, we must ensure our sustainability by strengthening our capabilities and leveraging our members' investments.

Goal 1: Position the organization and the staff for the long term success by improving operational effectiveness.

Objective A: Continue to improve both the Chamber building and Johnny Appleseed Visitors' Center to create a safe and efficient work environment, and provide a welcoming environment for members and visitors.

Objective B: Create and implement a technology plan to achieve organizational goals.

Objective C: Create an organizational culture that nurtures staff development, teamwork and continuous improvement.

Goal 2: Increase and strengthen the membership and financial base through strong retention and recruitment.

Objective A: Examine current and future revenue sources in order to plan for the future.

Objective B: Increase market penetration in the region of number of members.

Objective C: Improve member retention.

Objective D: Increase non-dues revenue sources to strengthen the financial position of the Chamber and its affiliates.

BOARD of DIRECTORS

Mr. Neil Abramson, Owner,
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Mr. Will Aubuchon, IV, President
W. E. Aubuchon Company, Inc.

Mr. Wayne Canty, President
Heat Trace Products, LLC

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North Central MA Chamber of Commerce

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