



## Chamber hosts economic development tour

A group of 25 diplomatic and commercial representatives of 16 countries, members of the New England Consular Corps., participated in a special bus tour of North Central Massachusetts in October. The Chamber's economic development affiliates,



One stop on the tour included a visit to Laddawn at Devens. The national firm manufactures a diverse line of plastic packaging products. Chamber staff including President Roy Nascimento participated, as well as Nam Pham, assistant secretary of the Office of Business Development & International Trade for the commonwealth; Mark Sullivan, executive director of the Mass. Office of International Trade & Investment (MOITI); and Peter Milano, senior director of business development at the Mass. Office of Business Development.

the North Central Mass. Development Corporation (NCMDC) and the Johnny Appleseed Trail Association (JATA), co-hosted the event along with the Mass. Office of International Trade and Investment (MOITI). "The event provided an opportunity to introduce foreign diplomats to North Central Massachusetts and promote the region as a great place to live, work, visit or grow a business," noted Chamber President Roy Nascimento. "We have a number of international businesses already thriving in our region and believe that this is a dynamic area for any industry."

The bus tour featured stops at Quiet Logistics in Devens, to learn about their Quiet Brand Incubator, which is designed to support innovative e-commerce startups; Laddawn, Inc. in Devens, a plastics firm that manufactures recyclable plastic films and bags for industrial, food and medical markets; Boutwell Owens of Fitchburg, which produces printed paperboard packaging; and Great Wolf Lodge in Fitchburg for a lunch and presentation about the region conducted by the Chamber. The tour also included a trip to the summit of Wachusett Mountain and concluded with a special reception with business leaders hosted by Wachusett Ski Area at their base lodge.

Countries represented on the tour included Brazil; Cape Verde; Canada; Columbia; Ireland; Japan; Mexico; Nepal; Netherlands; Poland; Portugal; South Korea; Taiwan; Turkey; United Arab Emirates; and the United Kingdom.

For more information on the economic development tour, please contact the Chamber at 978.353.7600 ext. 244 or visit [www.northcentralmass.com](http://www.northcentralmass.com).

## Chamber offers new experiential networking program

In September, the Chamber and the Johnny Appleseed Trail Association introduced an additional networking program for members called **Experience North Central**. Styled like the Business After Hours program, it offers attendees yet another social/business interaction opportunity with the inclusion of an experience at one of our many gems within the community.

The first Experience North Central featured a cider donut and fudge making lesson at the nationally renowned Red Apple Farm in Phillipston, a 100 year old destination for all things autumn. In October, we featured local craft brewery, Moon Hill Brewing, in celebration of Manufacturing Month. Both were said to be "the best networking experience ever" by several attendees.

If you're ready to get beyond traditional networking and would enjoy learning behind-the-scenes secrets of local businesses, then Experience North Central is for you! Our next event will be in January 2018. Have an idea for an Experience? Contact Maria McCaffrey, at 978.353.7600 ext. 235 or [mmccaffrey@northcentralmass.com](mailto:mmccaffrey@northcentralmass.com)



Tired of the same old networking experiences? Check out our new Experience North Central and join members (like those shown above) sampling the varieties at Gardner Ale House.

# New Members ~ Please welcome these businesses

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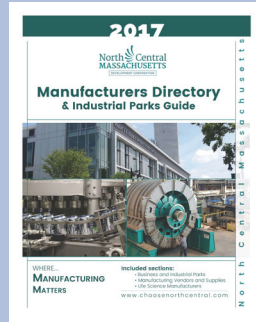
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The North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation is getting ready to publish the 2018 edition of the Manufacturers Directory and Industrial Parks Guide for North Central Massachusetts. It is the region's most comprehensive collection of this specialized information, outlining available industrial sites and local manufacturing-related businesses, describing their products, contact information and more.

The publication is designed to



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The Fitchburg Municipal Airport recently celebrated the launch for construction of a brand new terminal. Seen here, city officials and community leaders gathered for a ribbon cutting ceremony to capture the milestone moment. Pictured with the scissors is Fitchburg Airport Commissioner Joe Liberatore, flanked by Mayor DiNatale of Fitchburg and on the right, City Councilors Amy Green and Paul Beauchemin. Also attending were Dr. Richard Lepidus of Fitchburg State University, Roy Nascimento and David Ginisi of the Chamber, and Chamber Ambassadors Amanda Curtis, Kim Kunce and Tom Littlepage.



We were happy to celebrate North Central Constable Services' ribbon cutting at 63 Fairmount Street in Fitchburg with officials from City Hall. Pictured here is President Nelson Laguer-Crespo and his wife Dalise Laguer, Mayor Stephen DiNatale, Councilor At Large Marcus DiNatale, David Ginisi of the Chamber, Chamber Ambassador Tom Littlepage, and members of the New Life Spanish Christian Church.

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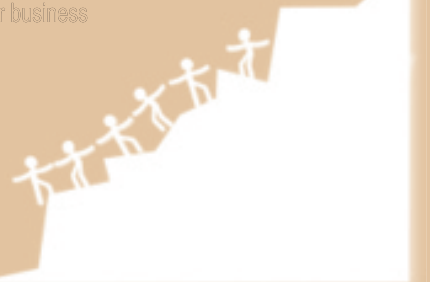
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## - Board Member Profile -

### James Vander Hooven

James Vander Hooven, Ph.D., has taken over the reins as president at Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner, after the retirement last year of Daniel Asquino. He was previously vice president for enrollment management at Landmark College in Putney, Vermont. Prior to joining Landmark College, he was president of Tohono O'odham Community College, a tribal college located on the Tohono O'odham Reservation in Arizona. He has held administrative positions at Lakes Region Community College in Laconia, New Hampshire, and at National American University in Denver, Colorado.

Vander Hooven attained his B.A. in English from Ohio State University and an M.A. degree in American studies from the University of Wyoming. In 2009, he was awarded his doctorate in higher education leadership from the University of Maine, where he focused on student access.

He believes educational institutions play an active role in the business community. "Colleges should be at the table and play a big role with business and industry in meeting their need for workplace training," he points out. This includes a broad range of fields, "from medical and advanced manufacturing to human resources and customer service."

The advantage of a community college, he states, "Is that, after identifying a need, we can respond rapidly," to provide training for any kind of business. "I believe that in a month, we can put on a workshop, and do it at a MWCC site



or at (the client's) facility. We had a discussion about how to help a business in town," he continues. "For them, training (employees) during business hours wasn't possible. Why limit a workshop to business hours if that doesn't work for everybody," he explains, noting that a class can be offered during a third shift.

"The role I would envision for myself on the Chamber Board of Directors is to help meet the needs (for employee training) of our local businesses."

Vander Hooven and his wife, Jennie, have three school-age children, Jude, Jonah and Josephine.

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Breakfast events start at 6:45 a.m. with coffee and buffet breakfast, at the

The next Good Morning North Central Breakfast, will be January 12, 6:45 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.. The cost is \$25 for Chamber members and \$40 for non-members.

The sponsor is Monty Tech (Montchusett Regional Vocational Technical School) in Fitchburg which draws students from 18 communities throughout North Central Massachusetts.

Stay tuned for more information about the special guest who will be interviewed by our guest M.C. at the January breakfast, or contact Maria (see left) for further information.

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The Johnny Appleseed Trail Association (JATA), the tourism affiliate of the Chamber, made a donation of \$3,085.00 to the Athol Firefighters' Association in September to aid in their fire relief efforts. Roy M. Nascimento, president of JATA, presented the check to Deputy Chief Jeffrey Parker (pictured in the center of the photo) and Bruce Winters (pictured on the left) of the Association this fall at Red Apple Farm in Phillipston.



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# Economic Development

## Microloan program becomes more accessible to Gardner



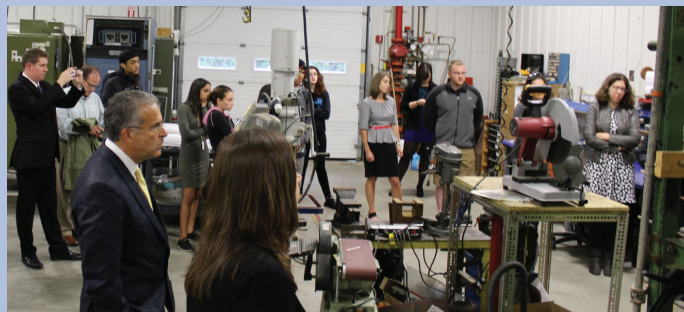
Jim Bellina, left, is shown at the Gardner Chamber office signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Roy Nascimento, president & CEO of the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation.

The Chamber's economic development arm, the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation (NCMDC), and the Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce recently signed an agreement to partner. The collaboration involves the NCMDC providing start-up and existing small businesses in the Gardner area with access to its microloan financing programs, which provide loans of up to \$150,000 to help businesses that may not meet traditional lending standards. The Greater Gardner Chamber will provide the NCMDC with marketing support and a presence in their office for their loan officers to counsel potential clients.

"We're really pleased to be able to partner with the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation on this loan program," said Jim Bellina, president & CEO of the Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce. "This is a great resource to support businesses and economic development in the greater Gardner area. The NCMDC's track record and commitment to growing new and existing businesses in North Central Massachusetts have played an important role in our expanding regional renaissance.



The Fitness Asylum in Hudson, a new Chamber member, celebrated the opening of their new studio. Pictured are owner Bonnie LeFrak with husband Douglas Nix, their children Frances and Fiona Nix, and local officials.



BJA Magnetics of Leominster hosted a Chamber tour in honor of National Manufacturing Day for students, community leaders and members of the media.



The Chamber's economic development arm, the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation, and Relmagine North of Main have announced that they are collaborating on an effort to expand financing to entrepreneurs and existing

small businesses in the North of Main neighborhood in Fitchburg. Relmagine is providing a grant of \$25,000 for a loan loss reserve that will be leveraged with capital from the development corporation to provide micro-loans of up to \$50,000. This project supports existing efforts around revitalization of the downtown business district and helps stimulate new entrepreneurship and investment in the North of Main. Shown above at Gallery Sitka West are Chamber President Roy Nascimento with Patricia Pistone from the Montachusett Opportunity Council.



North Central Mass. Development Corp. staff Sandie Cataldo and Norman Vigeant are shown handing over the big check to Henry Genao (shown center). He was approved for a microloan for \$15,000 to help cover startup costs associated with opening Hailey's Takeout, a Spanish-American takeout restaurant at 301 Lancaster St., Leominster.





Manny's Appliances, 120 Hamnilton Street, celebrated their grand opening and ribbon cutting with officials from the City of Leominster. Pictured here are Store Manager Stephanie Dupuis and Ryan Moore of Manny's, Mayor Dean Mazzarella and Melissa Tasca of Leominster, and Chamber representatives David Ginisi, Jeff Ardis and Alexis McKeon.



The North Central Mass. Development Corp. recently approved a loan for \$25,000 to Sarah Hawkins (center) for the purchase of Rituals Salon, an existing business located at 646 Central St. Lending VP Bruce Larson and Economic Development Manager Sandie Cataldo are shown with the check. This loan was in partnership with Workers Credit Union. NewVue Communities, a community development corporation, assisted with a business plan and financial package.

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In October, the Chamber was happy to celebrate the opening of a new branch of DCU at 210 New Lancaster Road in Leominster. Shown wielding the scissors is branch Manager Angela Brown, surrounded by her staff, local officials and representatives from the Chamber.

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The 2018 Community Leadership Institute kicked off the nine month series with their first program held at Shaker Hills Country Club. Featured in the photo are the 22 participants along with their executive sponsors and supervisors. CLI is dedicated to providing participants with individual leadership skills and a deep understanding of the region. Day-long sessions involve site visits with presentations and interviews, focusing on education, government, health care, social services, justice system, media, arts and culture, environment and history.





Pictured (L to R) is Michael Nicholson, executive aide to Mayor Mark Hawke of Gardner; Chamber President Roy Nascimento, State Representative Donald R. Berthiaume, Jr. of Spencer; State Representative Jeffrey Roy of Franklin who is chairman of the House Manufacturing Caucus; and Ken Tomasetti, president of ACT.

The Chamber and State Representative Jon Zlotnik of Gardner partnered to organize a special manufacturing tour of Advanced Cable Ties (ACT), located in Gardner, for legislative leaders on October 20. Organized around Manufacturing Month, which falls in October, the tour highlighted the importance of manufacturing to North Central Massachusetts as well as legislative efforts to eliminate the inventory tax for manufacturers. Attendees on the tour, which included legislators, economic development officials, business leaders and members of the media, were able to get a behind the scenes look at ACT's manufacturing process and how the company produces its cable tie products used by a variety of industries.



More than 125 attendees including federal, state, and local elected officials attended the Annual Legislative and Candidates Reception, held at the Chockset Inn. It is one of the Chamber's premier events of the fall season and provided members an opportunity to engage with their lawmakers in a relaxed, social setting. Special thanks go to Mount Wachusett Community College for sponsoring the event.



Jim McGovern, U.S. Representative for the Second Congressional District, is shown with Niki Tsongas, U.S. Representative for the Third Congressional District when they spoke at the Chamber's 2017 Congressional Luncheon. They updated

members on issues in Washington D.C. and engaged in a Q&A session with attendees. Special thanks are extended to Fitchburg State University for sponsoring the luncheon.



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# Chamber announces 'Blueprint' for government affairs

The Chamber recently unveiled its Public Policy Agenda for the new fiscal year--outlining the Chamber's legislative priorities on issues important to businesses and the advancement of North Central Massachusetts. The agenda was developed to serve as a blueprint for the Chamber's government affairs efforts and have been reviewed and approved by the Government Affairs Committee and Board of Directors.

"The passing of a new budget and opening of the fall legislative session presents us with new challenges and opportunities," Christopher McDermott, the Chamber's public affairs manager, explained. "We look forward to facing these head on and this document provides the road map we'll use to do so."

The Chamber advocates on behalf of businesses across the region, and the new Public Policy Agenda outlines a platform which builds upon the area's competitive advantages. The agenda is focused around five priority areas: economic competitiveness,

small business, manufacturing, education, and transportation.

"Our public policy agenda is focused on supporting a strong business climate and ensuring that North Central Massachusetts remains a great place to live, work and grow a business," said Chamber President Roy M. Nascimento. "We look forward to working with our legislative delegation to advocate these priorities."

"There aren't many places that host the range of businesses and industries you find in North Central Massachusetts," McDermott added. "We want to use our presence in the community and on Beacon Hill to ensure that public officials recognize this region's potential and work with us to realize it."

For more information or to view the Chamber's Public Policy Agenda, please visit [www.northcentralmass.com](http://www.northcentralmass.com) or contact Christopher McDermott at 978.353.7600 ext. 224.



## Chamber testifies on city's tax burden

The Fitchburg City Council voted in October to continue its gradual shift towards a balanced property tax, reducing the impact on commercial and industrial property owners by an unprecedented four points. This brought the business community's share of property taxes to 112 percent of the residential levy.

Massachusetts allows two models for property taxes: single and dual rates. The single rate means that both residential and commercial properties are taxed at the same level. A dual rate, however, dictates that one group--typically businesses--shoulders more of the burden and pays a higher share of taxes based on a property's assessed value.

A single rate tax system has come to be recognized as a key indicator that a community is open for business, and the Council acknowledged this at their annual tax classification hearing. Through a spirited discussion, Councilor Marcus DiNatale noted that seventy eight percent of Fitchburg's property fell under a residential use. If Councilors hoped to reduce the tax share carried by voters, the only responsible method would be to attract new commercial investment, as had been done with Great Wolf Lodge and GameOn Fitchburg. Maintaining a dual rate would only serve to discourage such efforts and perpetuate the root problem.

"Tax rates are only one factor in an economy, but a powerful one, and continuing to move towards a single tax rate would serve as a strong incentive for businesses to locate or expand in Fitchburg," testified Chamber President & CEO Roy Nascimento at the tax hearing.

Ultimately, the Council voted 8-3 in favor of reducing the burden on commercial property owners. For fiscal year 2018, the average commercial property owner with property valued at the average of \$318,096 will see a decrease of \$73.45 - had there been no change and the council maintained the 116 shift, the average increase would have been \$203.45. Industrial classified properties will also see a reduction



*Financial Advisor, Christine Pelletier, celebrated the opening of her new Edward Jones office in Leominster. Ms. Pelletier was joined by Melissa Tasca and Mayor Dean Mazzarella of the City of Leominster, David Ginisi of the Chamber, Representative Natalie Higgins, and Edward Jones representatives from surrounding towns and communities.*



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# North Central Massachusetts Lights Up Times Square

The Chamber's tourism arm, the Johnny Appleseed Trail Association (JATA) launched a new advertising campaign last month aimed towards the affluent New York and Canadian markets. The campaign included being featured on the world famous ABC Good Morning America Screen in Times Square New York, which catches the eyes of over 1.5 million people daily, as well as advertising placed in the Wall Street Journal and the Toronto Star.

This marketing effort is an example of the many ongoing efforts of JATA



to promote the region to visitors, travelers

and groups in key areas. Ultimately these efforts help generate additional visitors and additional dollars to the communities in our region. In 2016, our collective regional tourism marketing strategy resulted in \$131 million economic impact for North Central Massachusetts.

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## Celebrate the Holidays with Gift Local

The Gift Local gift card brings together over 55 local vendors so you can give the gift of choice this holiday season. Learn more at [GiftLocalMass.com](http://GiftLocalMass.com)

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## Serving on Ambassador Committee opens doors

Interested in connecting your business to the nearly 1,000 member businesses and organizations in our region while supporting the Chamber's mission? The visibility and status within the business community--that you earn by serving with the Chamber's Ambassador Committee--could be a good fit for you!

The Ambassador committee is a volunteer group of the Chamber that meets monthly to serve fellow members by providing information, resources and member-to-member support. Ambassadors also help members increase awareness and encourage active participation in Chamber and affiliate programs and services.

For more information, please contact the Chamber office at 978.353.7600 ext. 234 or ext. 240.



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**978-466-4000**

or visit us at

<https://umassmemorialhealthcare.enrollware.com/schedule>



## Find your health insurance link through Chamber

Need health insurance for your small business? The North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce remains committed to helping our members to access the best health insurance plans available and to make sure that your health insurance needs are met. As always, we are just a phone call or email or visit to our office away to help you navigate health insurance plans and find what best meets your needs. Contact the Chamber at 978.353.7600 ext. 222 for information on available plans and to receive a quote.

### U.S. Postal Service STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

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Signed: Marie N. Auger

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# Coming Events

View all events, register and pay online:  
**northcentralmass.com**

For more information, contact Maria McCaffrey at  
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## December:

**December 6th – Women's Leadership Connection**

**December 7th – Holiday Business After Hours**

**December 13th – Sales Leads**

**December 14th – HYPE!**

## January:

**January 10th – Sales Leads**

**January 12th – Good Morning North Central**

**January 16th – Small Business Roundtable**

**January 17th – Human Resource Council**

**January 19th – HYPE! CEO Unplugged**

**January 23rd – Getting to Know Your Chamber**

**January 24th – Sales Leads**

## February:

**February 14th – Sales Leads**

**February 20th – Small Business Roundtable**

**February 21st – Human Resource Council**

**February 22nd – Business After Hours**

**February 28th – Sales Leads**