

35 Year Anniversary Edition

chamber

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About the Cover:

As we celebrate 35 years of "Building Businesses, Building Communities", we want to showcase our decades of strong advocacy and dedication to making a better North Central Massachusetts. The cover showcases our rich history, while also showcasing the Chamber today. We are about working collectively to advance the economy of North Central Massachusetts and strengthen its quality of place.



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CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF BUILDING BUSINESSES, BUILDING COMMUNITIES!



This year marks the 35th anniversary of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce. It was back in January of 1984 that this organization was formed as a result of the merger of several local chambers of commerce in the region. This major milestone is a great time for us to reflect on our history, but more importantly to look forward to

the future of our dynamic organization and region.

Much has changed since our founding, but the Chamber has remained true to our mission of supporting our members and advancing North Central Massachusetts. It is inspiring that so many of the Chamber's decisions made over the last 35 years are still making a difference today in supporting local businesses and growing our economy. I would like to thank our entire Board of Directors for their leadership and role in guiding this organization and serving the interests of our members and communities. I would also like to thank and acknowledge the 159 board members that came before them who helped drive our organization to what we are today.

More importantly, I would like to thank you, the business community, for your years of dedication and support in

shaping our Chamber. The business community is, at its core, the backbone of our organization and the driving force in making our region a thriving one. We are extremely grateful for your continued support and always value your voice.

Over the next year, we will celebrate this milestone with you, our members and partners. It is you who have led this community for the past 35 years and it is you who will lead us into the future, remaining focused on the pressing needs of the day and committed to working collectively to advance our region.

While we have much to be proud of, the history of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce will continue to unfold. Standing still and resting on our laurels is simply not possible. We have bold plans for the future and look forward to working with you to continue to drive North Central Massachusetts forward.

Onward!

Roy M. Nascimento, CCE, IOM
President & CEO

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GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS UPDATE



Pictured L-R on the back row are Chris McDermott, the Chamber's Public Affairs Manager; Natalie Higgins, State Representative for Leominster; Stephen Hay, State Representative for Fitchburg; Jennifer Benson, State Representative for Shirley, Harvard and Lunenburg; State Senator James B. Eldridge; Susannah M. Whipps, State Representative for Athol and Phillipston; Harold P. Naughton, Jr., State Representative for Clinton; and Chamber President Roy Nascimento. Pictured L-R on the front row are Dean Tran, State Senator; Anne Gobi, State Senator; Jon Zlotnik, State Representative for Gardner and Westminster; and Kimberly Ferguson, State Representative for Sterling and Princeton.

January marked the beginning of a new two year legislative session at the State House. Issues such as education reform, health care costs, sports betting, transportation, and climate change are expected to be the hot button issues that will be dealt with during this session. As legislators took their seats, the Chamber worked to ensure the region's priorities were recognized. Just a week after they had been sworn in, we held our annual legislative briefing with the North Central Massachusetts Delegation, highlighting our State House goals for 2019. The topics discussed included economic development, regional planning, support for the tourism and manufacturing industries, and education reform. Before the month was out, the Chamber rallied support behind three bills which address several of these issues. These included legislation focused on industry certified credentialing in high schools and two bills which support the region's growing visitor industry.



The Chamber reviews priorities for 2019 with the region's legislative delegation.

In other news, the Chamber also recently testified at a public hearing on the proposed regulations associated with the new Paid Family and Medical Leave Law. Once codified, these regulations will guide how the recently established Department of Family and Medical Leave enforces this law. Having reviewed the current draft, we attended a public listening session in Worcester and voiced concerns over the administrative burdens for small businesses and a lack of clarity regarding approval of private, alternative plans. The Chamber will also

host a public session with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development on March 8, providing local businesses an opportunity to testify or ask questions about the regulations.

To raise awareness of the recommendations from our recent report Build North Central Massachusetts: Promoting the Industrial Heart of Massachusetts, we also organized editorial meetings with regional press outlets and conducted outreach to legislative leaders. The Chamber hopes that the report will help inform and motivate

public policy leaders as they begin the dialogue around education reform.

The Chamber will continue to monitor these vital issues and ensure that the needs of the North Central Massachusetts Business Community are not ignored by Beacon Hill. If you run a business in the region and want to make your voice heard on these or any other issues, please contact the Chamber's public affairs manager, Christopher McDermott, at (978) 353-7600 ext. 224 or cmcdermott@northcentralmass.com. ♦

CHAMBER PUBLISHES MANUFACTURING REPORT

The Chamber and its economic development affiliate, the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation (NCMDC), recently published a report entitled "Build North Central: Promoting the Industrial Heart of Massachusetts." The recommendations developed by a taskforce of manufacturers focuses on steps the region and state can take to address workforce challenges and fuel economic advancement throughout the region. The report highlights a mix of both programmatic and policy related recommendations and strategies focused around workforce and education, regional cooperation and regional promotion.

"Aligning and integrating our educational system with the needs of employers must be a priority if North Central Massachusetts is to compete and prepare the workforce of tomorrow," said Ray Martino, President & CEO of Simonds



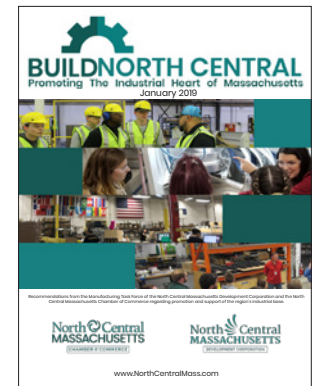
Chamber President Roy Nascimento, addresses the Manufacturing Taskforce of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce and North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation at the AIS head quarters in Leominster, MA.

International and Chair of the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation. "Too many manufacturers today are having difficulty finding the qualified and skilled workers that they need, and the problem will only get worse if we are not ready with new solutions for the coming years."

Some of recommendations highlighted in the report include creating career pathways; a greater emphasis

on both college and career readiness; expansion of career exploration programs into the middle schools; introduction of high school credentialing courses; increasing the labor pool by attracting more workers to the region; and expanding technical education in both vocational and conventional high schools.

The Chamber convened the taskforce to address workforce issues and provide a unified vision for improving



the workforce pipeline. The Chamber is working with partners to address this skills gap, retain the region's young talent, and introduce them to the high-tech, high-skilled, and high-paying careers of the modern manufacturing industry. The Chamber believes that building successful education partnerships between businesses and the region's schools is critical to collective, on-going efforts. ♦

For more information or to view the full report, please visit www.NorthCentralMass.com.

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CHAMBER WELCOMES TWO FSU INTERNS

The Chamber is pleased to welcome Christopher Gerardi of Shrewsbury and John Ronan of Townsend as interns for the spring semester. Christopher is majoring in Communications Media with a concentration in Professional Communications. His focus on online communications such as social media and other online platforms is what led him to the Chamber. John is majoring in Business Administration with a minor in Economics.

Both Christopher and John are learning a variety of aspects of the Chamber and its affiliates. They have been gaining hands on learning experience by assisting with drafting press releases, helping organize special events and assisting with advertising campaigns.



FSU interns John Ronan and Christopher Gerardi.

Christopher and John came through Fitchburg State University's Internship program, which allows students to explore a career field and gain relevant

work experience, apply academic learning to real world situations, and build critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and professional skills. ◇


ECONOMIC FORECAST

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Friday, March 29, 2019
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 Jeff Fuhrer
Executive Vice President
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

 Dr. Keith Williamson
Dean of Business & Technology
Fitchburg State University

To register, contact Kat Deal:
KDeal@northcentralmass.com | 978.353.7600 x235

TOURISMupdate

Annual Tourism Update Breakfast

Forum to bring together tourism related businesses and organizations in the region

The Chamber's tourism affiliate, Visit North Central Massachusetts, will host its fourth annual **Tourism Update Breakfast on Friday, April 10, 2019 from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at the Double Tree by Hilton, 99 Erdman Way, Leominster, MA.**

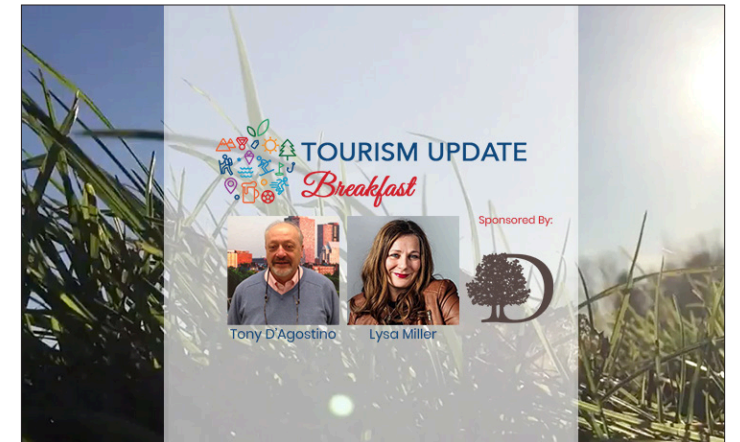
This exciting and fast paced breakfast event features industry experts who will share their professional insights on marketing North Central



VISIT NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS
JOHNNY APPLESEED COUNTRY

Massachusetts. The 2019 breakfast program is sponsored by the Double Tree by Hilton.

"Tourism is important to the future of North Central Massachusetts and plays an increasingly important role in our local economy" said Roy



Nascimento, president of Visit North Central Massachusetts. "We organize this annual program as a way to bring tourism related stakeholders in the region together to share best practices, learn new trends in the industry and to take advantage of new opportunities

to better market local businesses and the region to visitors."

The cost is just \$25 for members/\$35 for non-members and includes a breakfast buffet. For more information or to register, please visit us online at www.northcentralmass.com or call 978.353.7600 ext. 235. ◇

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QUICK hits

Chamber Attends REDO Meeting

Right: Chamber President Roy Nascimento and new Senate President Karen Spilka. Far Right: Chamber President Roy Nascimento participated recently in a discussion on regional economic development with Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, Senate President Karen Spilka and Michael Kinneally, the new Secretary of Housing and Economic Development.



Root 2 (Roots Natural Foods)

The Chamber was thrilled to celebrate with Roots Natural Foods and their expansion into their second location (Root2) which can be found inside Orchard Hills Athletic Club in Lancaster, MA. Pictured: Owner Marieke Cormier; Mayor Dean Mazzarella; and Chamber Ambassadors: Kimberley Kunce, Michelle Haggstrom, Jason Regan and Melissa Tasca.



Chamber Meets New Congressional Staff

Chamber President Roy Nascimento, and Public Affairs Manager Christopher McDermott, had the opportunity to meet with Joe Thibodeau, Director of Community Development for Congresswoman Lori Trahan.



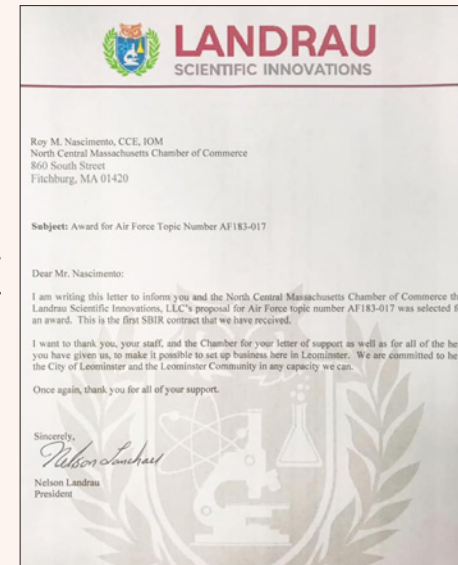
Creative Connections

The North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation awarded Creative Connections of Ashburnham, MA with a \$25,000 micro loan to help with the expansion of their business. Pictured: Owners Mark and Angela Setevdemio; Sandie Cataldo and Brendan Hannen of the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation.

QUICK HITS CONTINUED...

Thank You Letter

The Chamber received a generous thank you letter from Landrau Scientific Innovations of Leominster for helping secure their first SBIR contract.



Manufacturing Pipeline Summit

Chamber President Roy Nascimento, was invited to be a panelist for MassHire North Central Workforce Board's Manufacturing Pipeline Summit, where he spoke about the Chamber's dedicated efforts in workforce development throughout the North Central Mass region.



Artist in Hue

The North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation awarded Artist in Hue of Leominster, MA with a \$10,000 micro loan as they begin their new business. Pictured: Owner Candice Churchill; Sandie Cataldo and Brendan Hannen of the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation.



Reliant Medical

Chamber President Roy Nascimento, received a tour of Reliant Medical's brand new Leominster location and presented the team with a congratulatory certificate.



Ambassador Meeting

Our Chamber Ambassadors kicked off their first meeting of 2019 this past month and look forward to connecting with all of our chamber members. Pictured: David Ginisi of the Chamber facilitating the meeting of our 19 chamber ambassadors.



NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CELEBRATES 35 YEARS

evolved into a full color, seasonal publication that is distributed widely throughout New England and as far away as Canada.



1989 – The Chamber launches its Community Leadership Institute to help shape leaders in the region. Over 230 business and community leaders have graduated from the program since its inception.

1985 – The Chamber establishes the North Central Chamber Foundation as a 501(c)3 non-profit affiliate focused on assisting in the betterment of the region. Since its founding the Chamber Foundation has awarded over \$1 million so far in scholarships.



1986 – The Chamber establishes the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation (NCMDC) as its formal economic development arm and initiates a fixed asset financing program for area small businesses.



1987 – The Chamber publishes the first “Guide to North Central Massachusetts” as a tourism publication to promote the region to visitors. The guide has



resulted in nearly 1,000 new jobs. The average loan is just \$25,000.



1996 – The Chamber leads a regional effort to support redevelopment of Fort Devens, including active participation in the creation of a redevelopment plan and supporting passage of a \$200 million bond to implement the plan.



1991 – The Chamber launches the “Blueprint for the 90s” – a community and business-based planning effort that served as a roadmap for driving economic development efforts over the last twenty five years and led to the creation of many of the economic assets that have helped to shape the region’s economy.

1994 – The NCMDC establishes its first micro-loan program to assist small businesses. Since its inception, it has gone on to lend out over \$6.3 million dollars, which has been leveraged by \$24 million in bank capital and has

1996 – The Chamber establishes the Johnny Appleseed Trail Association as its formal tourism affiliate. JATA, doing business as Visit North Central Massachusetts today, developed and implemented a regional marketing plan to attract visitors and groups to the region. Since its humble beginnings, the organization has grown the economic impact of tourism from virtually nothing to over \$144 million dollars in direct spending from visitors.

1997 – After lobbying by the Chamber, the MassHighway Department constructs The Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center

This year marks the 35th Anniversary of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce. Since its founding, the Chamber has evolved into the region’s leading economic development and business advocacy organization. The

on the site of a burned-out Howard Johnson’s Restaurant along Route 2 in Lancaster. The Center’s opening was a product of the Chamber’s economic development master plan launched in 1991. Approximately 165,000 people visit the center each year.



1997 – Anita Raboin, Former President of Appleseed Personnel Services is elected as the first woman Chair of the Chamber’s Board of Directors.

1999 – The Chamber establishes the Executive Women’s Network, today called the Women’s Leadership Connection, to foster success for local women in business.

2001 – The Chamber paves the way for the Route 12 Improvement Project.



2005 – The Chamber breaks ground on its new 6,000 square foot building in Fitchburg to serve as its headquarters and as a regional center to support the business community.

2007 – The NCMDC is

Chamber has been defined by its strong leadership, dynamic program of work and its positive impact in advancing the economy and quality of life in North Central Massachusetts.

“This major milestone is a great time for us to

designated as a Community Development Financial Institution by the U.S. Treasury.

2010 – The Johnny Appleseed Trail Association, receives official designation from the state as the Regional Tourism Council for North Central Massachusetts. This designation creates a formal partnership with the state’s tourism office and enables the region to receive its share of matching tourism grants.



2012 – The Chamber partners with Fidelity Bank to launch the first Economic Forecast Breakfast which highlights the economic outlook for North Central Massachusetts.

2012 – Recognizing the importance of a locally focused community college the Chamber leads a statewide coalition of business groups to oppose efforts by the state to usurp control and centralize the state’s fifteen community colleges.

2012 – The Chamber’s economic development arm, the NCMDC, receives state designation as the official Regional Economic Development Organization for North Central Massachusetts.

2014 – The Chamber works with local and state officials to help attract Great Wolf Resorts to the region and advocates for tax incentives for the project. The project helps create over 500 jobs for the region and generates millions in new tax revenue for the city and state.

2014 – To help local manufacturers reduce their energy costs, the Chamber’s economic

development arm creates a program to provide net-metering credits from a local solar field. The initiative has produced a collective savings of over \$1 Million for participating firms.

2015 – The Chamber’s economic development arm, the NCMDC, is approved as a micro-loan provider by the U.S Small Business Administration.

2016 – The NCMDC is approved as a micro-loan intermediary by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and establishes its fourth micro-loan fund.

2016 – The Chamber introduces a new logo, symbolizing its continued growth and transformation while being respectful of its history.

2016 – The Chamber’s economic development affiliate signs an innovative agreement with the Worcester Regional Chamber to provide start-up businesses in the Worcester area with micro-lending resources.

2016 – The Chamber’s economic development affiliate signs an innovative agreement with the Worcester Regional Chamber to provide start-up businesses in the Worcester area with micro-lending resources.



2017 – The Chamber is named a finalist for the National Chamber of the Year Award, the first chamber of commerce in Massachusetts to have ever been named a finalist for this prestigious honor.

2017 – The Chamber secures \$300,000 in pledges from local businesses to establish the Economic Advancement Fund with the NCMDC. This new fund provides resources to expand economic development efforts and continue to advance the North

Central economy. year we plan to celebrate this milestone with our members and partners who have been an important part of our past success and who will lead us into the future, working collectively to advance North Central Massachusetts.” ◇

2017 – The Chamber’s economic development affiliate signs agreements with the Assabet Valley, North Quabbin and the Greater Gardner Chambers of Commerce to extend its micro-lending resources to start-up businesses.



2018 – The NCMDC is designated as a Community Advantage Lender by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

2018 – The Chamber is awarded 4-star Accreditation from the accrediting board for its sound policies, effective organizational procedures, and positive impact on the community. Of the approximately 7,000 chambers in the United States, only 204 have earned the recognition as an accredited chamber of commerce.

2018 – The Chamber’s economic development arm partners with Fidelity Bank and the Greater Gardner Chamber to establish its fifth micro-loan fund, called the Colonial Bank Loan Fund. This new loan fund is capitalized with a \$300,000 contribution from Fidelity bank.



2019 – The Chamber’s history continues to unfold!

Visit NorthCentralMass.com for more on the Chamber’s history. ◇

Save the Date

35TH ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

Join other business and community leaders and attend the annual meeting to celebrate business people working together for the future of North Central Massachusetts. The program will include recognition awards and the commencement for the 2019 class of the Community Leadership Institute. Please visit NorthCentralMass.com to register or for more information.

Thursday, June 13, 2019, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Great Wolf Lodge New England, 150 Great Wolf Drive, Fitchburg



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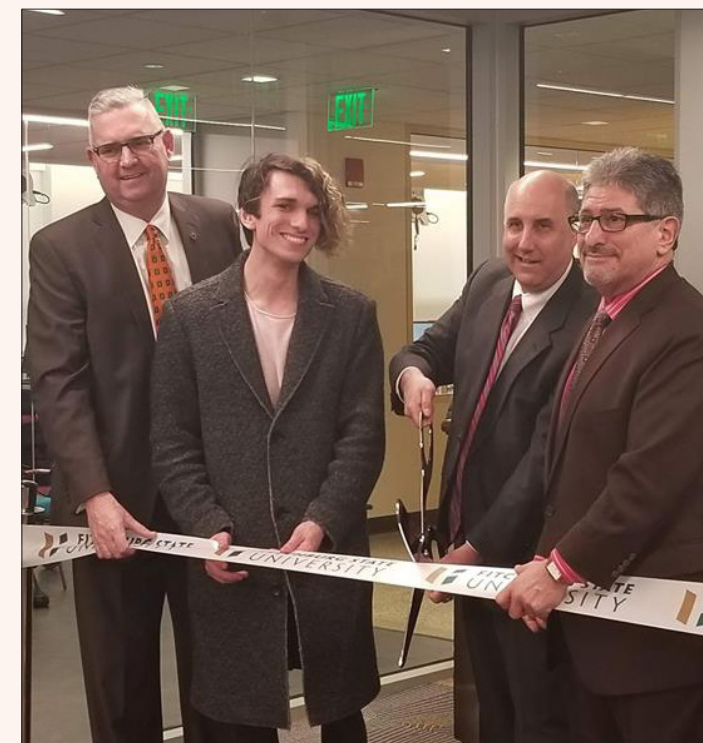
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QUICK HITS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11...



Wachusett Brewery Brew Barn

The Chamber was thrilled to be a part of the grand opening of Wachusett Brewery’s Brew Barn inside Great Wolf Lodge. Pictured left to right: Wachusett Brewery CEO Ned LaFortune; Senator Dean Tran; Mayor Steven DiNatale; Chamber President Roy Nascimento; Great Wolf Lodge General Manager Henry Tessman; Wachusett Brewery President Christian McMahan.



FSU ideaLab

Fitchburg State University celebrates the opening of the new ideaLab. Pictured are Representative Stephan Hay; Senior Jules Stackhouse of the game design program at FSU; FSU President and Chamber Board Member Dr. Richard Lapidus; and Mayor Steven DiNatale.



Health Alliance Emergency Wing Tour

Chamber President Roy Nascimento, was given a private tour by Deborah Weymouth, President of UMassMemorial Health Alliance-Clinton Hospital, of the new state-of-the-art emergency wing at the Leominster campus.



O’Brien’s Pub (Wachusett Mountain)

The Chamber was thrilled to celebrate Wachusett Mountain’s latest addition, the grand opening of O’Brien’s Pub. O’Brien’s Pub was named after Joe O’Brien, a past Chair of the Chamber and former general manager of Wachusett Mountain. Pictured left to right: David Crowley Sr., Carolyn Crowley-Stimpson, Joe O’Brien and his family, Ralph Crowley, Jeff Crowley, and Orson the Polar Bear.

More Quick Hits, Page 21

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For more information on advertising in the newsletter or our other publications, please contact our membership services team at 978.353.7600 ext. 240. ◇

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North Central Calendar of EVENTS

To register or for a complete list of events visit us at www.northcentralmass.com.

March 19

**Small Business RoundTable:
Staying Passionate about your
Small Business**

Chamber Office, 8 a.m.

March 20

**Human Resource Council:
Millennial Mindset with
Mark Altman**

Chamber Office, 12 p.m.

March 22

Connect North Central

DoubleTree, 8 a.m.

March 29

Economic Forecast

DoubleTree, 7:45 a.m.

April 10

Tourism Update Breakfast

DoubleTree, 7:30 a.m.

April 24

**Human Resource Council:
New to the Workforce**

Chamber Office, 12 p.m.

April 25

35th Anniversary Celebration

Apple Hill Farm, 5:30 p.m.

April 26

Connect North Central

DoubleTree, 8 a.m.

May 2

New Member Orientation

Chamber office, 3:30 p.m.

May 10

**Good Morning North Central:
Scholarship Breakfast**

DoubleTree, 7 a.m.

May 21

Real Estate Summit

Great Wolf Lodge, 7:30 a.m.

May 31

Connect North Central

DoubleTree, 8 a.m.

June 3

Golf Scholarship Tournament

Sterling National, 8 a.m.

June 5

Women's Leadership Connection

Great Wolf Lodge, 12 p.m.

June 13

Annual Business Meeting

Great Wolf Lodge, 11:30 a.m.

June 28

Connect North Central

DoubleTree, 8 a.m.

The 35th Anniversary Celebration on April 25th, 2019

will take place at Apple Hill Farm & Country Club located at 143 Joslin St, Leominster. Join us for this special event to celebrate this milestone!

The evening will feature complimentary beer and wine, farm to table appetizers, a special anniversary cocktail and much more!

The cost is just \$35 for members. Register online at NorthCentralMass.com. ◇

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QUICK HITS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15...



Jackson Hewitt

The Chamber was happy to celebrate with Jackson Hewitt on their new location in Leominster with a ribbon cutting ceremony. Pictured: District Manager Danielle Wright; Mayor Dean Mazzarella; Director of Economic Development Nikki Peters; Chamber Ambassador Melissa Tasca; David Ginisi of the Chamber; and other City of Leominster officials.



Winter Reception Photos

This past holiday season, the Chamber hosted a Winter Reception at The Groton Inn, complete with fantastic hors d'oeuvres, an open bar, and a very special exclusive cocktail. Thank you to all of our amazing members who attended and joined in the holiday spirit!

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CHAMBER WELCOMES AIDAN HORGAN

The Chamber is pleased to announce the addition of Aidan Horgan to its professional staff in the position of Member Services Specialist. Mr. Horgan is a recent graduate of Fitchburg State University with a bachelor's degree in political science and a minor in business administration.

In this position, Mr. Horgan will be responsible for helping raise the Chamber's visibility and educating businesses in the region about the Chamber's service offerings, promoting the benefits of membership and ensuring that current members enjoy maximum value for their investment.

He is a native of Princeton



Aidan Horgan.

and graduated from Wachusett Public Schools. He currently resides in Fitchburg, where he is active in the community including serving as a school

committee member and volunteering at Fitchburg Access Television. While at Fitchburg State University he was active in Moot Court, wrote for the student newspaper and also interned at Mayor Stephen DiNatale's Office in Fitchburg.

His early goals will be to expand the Chamber's presence in communities across North Central Massachusetts and find the best ways to help members grow their business with assistance from the Chamber and its affiliates. ◇

Members can reach Aidan at 978.353.7600 ext. 244 or via email at ahorgan@northcentralmass.com.

HEALTH INSURANCE

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 from being able to help you decide what health insurance plan best meets your needs.

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