

Winter 2020 Edition

chamber

north central massachusetts report

Building Businesses. Building Communities.

**WHEN IT
MATTERS
MOST...**



**SUPPORT
LOCAL!**



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MASSACHUSETTS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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For Editorial & Advertising

Contact Ryan Murphy
rmurphy@northcentralmass.com
978.353.7600 x240 | phone: 978.353.7600 | fax: 978.353.4896
www.northcentralmass.com

About the Cover:

This issue of the Chamber Report focuses on the importance of supporting local businesses. The Chamber's involvement in the "buying local" movement is not new, but takes on a new importance due to the pandemic and its devastating impact on small businesses. Our feature article on page 12 and 13 provides some highlights, and – in related news – the results from a recent survey of businesses are featured on page 10 and 11. The cover design was selected to showcase small businesses within our membership as they respond to the pandemic.

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CONDON JOINS CHAMBER STAFF

The Chamber is pleased to welcome Travis Condon to its professional staff in the position of Public Affairs Manager.

In this position, Mr. Condon will be tasked with growing the advocacy and public policy efforts of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber and increasing the visibility of the region's businesses and economy on Beacon Hill.

"We are excited to have Travis join our team and help contribute to the Chamber's work of improving the business climate and advancing the economy of North Central Massachusetts," said Roy M. Nascimento, President & CEO. "His strong communications background and relationships with leaders from throughout the state will make him a tremendous resource for our members and communities."



Travis Condon.

Condon is well known and respected in the region. He joins the Chamber from WPKZ Radio in Fitchburg where he served as the host and producer of the "K-Zone Morning Kommute" program since 2014. In that position, he developed relationships with decision makers from Beacon Hill

and cultivated a network of business and community leaders locally. He is a native of Leominster and is active in the community, including serving as Vice President of the Board of Directors of Fitchburg Access Television, broadcast host of the Fitchburg 4th of July Parade, and emcee of the annual Memorial Day and Veterans Day Ceremonies. He holds a Bachelor's Degree from Bridgewater State University in Communications and Public Relations.

"I am truly thankful to the North Central Massachusetts Chamber team for giving me this opportunity," said Condon. "I'm excited for the chance to work for an organization that does so much for the community that I grew up in and to use my position to advocate for our local businesses, especially given the current, unprecedented times." ♦

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CHAMBER RELEASES 2021 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

At their September meeting, the Chamber's Board of Directors reviewed and approved a new Public Policy Agenda for the new fiscal year that outlines the Chamber's legislative priorities on issues important to members and the advancement of North Central Massachusetts. The agenda was developed to serve as a blueprint for the Chamber's government affairs efforts with input provided from the Chamber's non-partisan Government Affairs Committee which is comprised of members from diverse industries.

"The North Central Massachusetts business community continues to face unprecedented challenges in this COVID-19 landscape. We are working closely to address the ongoing pandemic and recovery needs of the community while remaining actively engaged in important, pro-



Photo courtesy of the State House News Service.

business policy issues," said Roy Nascimento, President & CEO of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce. "Our public policy agenda is focused on navigating the recovery, supporting a strong business climate and ensuring that North Central Massachusetts has access to the crucial resources it needs to remain a great place to live, work and grow a business."

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 while addressing this difficult time. The agenda is focused around six priority areas: novel coronavirus and economic reopening; economic competitiveness; small business; manufacturing; education; and transportation.

We are working closely to address the ongoing pandemic and recovery needs of the community...

— Roy Nascimento

"Our 2021 public policy agenda is meant to serve as a roadmap to help spearhead economic recovery for the region and builds off of our successful advocacy efforts in past years," said Travis Condon, the Chamber's Public Affairs Manager. "We look forward to continuing to work with our members during these difficult times to engage elected officials on the critical issues that matter most to local businesses and the advancement of North Central Massachusetts." ◇



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WELCOME TO THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE CLASS OF 2021



Pictured here is the Community Leadership Institute Class of 2019 at their graduation ceremony.

The Chamber is pleased to announce the participants for the 2021 Community Leadership Institute (CLI). CLI is dedicated to providing participants with individual leadership skills and a deep understanding of the region. The nine-month program focuses on education, government, health care, social services,

justice system, media, arts and culture, environment and history. The Chamber created the Institute to inspire a new generation of men and women to enthusiastically assume important roles in their community. The program challenges individuals from diverse backgrounds to be influential in our region's future.

Participants in the CLI Class of 2021 include:

- Anna Wilkins, North County Land Trust
- Ashley Kenney, Fitchburg Public Library
- Cindy Dalton, City of Fitchburg, Community Development Department
- Colby O'Brien, The Arc of Opportunity
- Kelly Johnson, Digital Federal Credit Union
- Kijah Gordon, Mount Wachusett Community College
- Marcio Cirino, Jr, Rollstone Bank & Trust
- Nancy De La Rosa, Primerica
- Natalia Aguilar, Resource Management, Inc
- Paul Chlebeczek, Baystate Financial
- Ryan, Murphy, North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce
- Sam Smith, Advent Financial
- Scherrie Keating, Diabetes Kare Consultants
- Ty Adorno, Leominster Credit Union

The Community Leadership Institute began in 1988, known then as Leadership North Central. Over the last 25 years, more than 250 participants have graduated from the Institute and become leaders in their communities, with

over 100 in the last five years. Participants for CLI are sponsored by their business and are seen as leaders or potential leaders within that company. Applications for each class are available in July and August of each year, and sessions are held once per month from October to June. To ensure the safety of all participants, sessions this year will be conducted in a hybrid format, with virtual learning and some small in-person meetings with safety protocols in place. Sessions will remain in the hybrid format until it is safe to resume normal operations. ◇

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PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR BUSINESS

The North Central Massachusetts Chamber would like to remind members to always be on the lookout for possible scams and frauds. Online fraud is on the rise and businesses continue to be a target of thieves and scammers looking to exploit the COVID-19 pandemic for their gain. Often fraudsters try to impersonate trusted institutions, like your bank/credit union, government agencies, or trusted non-profits in the community like the chamber of commerce.

While we haven't received any specific reports, we wanted to be proactive and alert you to the following chamber practices so that you can stay vigilant and protect yourself and your business.

- ▶ The Chamber will never ask you for any personal data through unsolicited emails, texts messages, pop-up windows or website banners. If you were to receive something electronically that looks suspicious and claiming it's from the Chamber then reach out to us immediately;
- ▶ If you ever receive a suspicious call from someone claiming to be from the Chamber or one of our affiliate organizations and asking for personal or financial details, then reach out to us immediately. We may occasionally call to collect or confirm information, but you should not provide any sensitive information unless you are absolutely certain that it is a legitimate call from the Chamber;
- ▶ The Chamber does not endorse any particular products, services, candidates, companies or charities other than its own affiliate organizations. Any solicitations you receive claiming that they are affiliated with the Chamber, endorsed by the Chamber, claiming their product is distributed by the Chamber or using similar language should be viewed with some level of caution. You should contact the Chamber immediately to confirm validity;
- ▶ The Chamber is an independent organization that is not affiliated with any national, state or local chamber of commerce. Any other business groups approaching you claiming that they are associated with our Chamber or one of our affiliate organizations should be viewed with caution. You should contact the Chamber to confirm validity.
- ▶ Always scrutinize unknown or suspicious emails that you receive with attachments or with requests for sensitive details or money transfers. Scammers will mask their email domains to impersonate legitimate sources. If you are suspicious about an email you receive, then you can scroll over the email address to reveal the domain. An email from the Chamber should have the domain of @northcentralmass.com. When in doubt, call to confirm the legitimacy of the email.

We encourage you to continue to be alert and don't fall for any scams that may compromise your business or personal information. For useful information regarding Coronavirus related scams, please visit the Federal Trade Commission, <https://www.ftc.gov/>. ◇

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CHAMBER SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

CONTINUED IMPACTS TO BUSINESSES FROM COVID-19

Results from a business impact survey issued to businesses located in North Central Massachusetts highlight the continued impacts to the local business community due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was conducted by the North Central Massachusetts Chamber in partnership with the MassHire North Central Workforce Board, the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, NewVue Communities and many of the cities and towns in North Central Massachusetts.

Nearly 250 responses were received, representing businesses from all twenty-seven cities and towns located in the region. Respondents reflected the top industries in the region

including health care, manufacturing, retail, food and beverages, financial services, education and agriculture among others.

“Our businesses have been working hard to operate safely, but the results show that many are still struggling from the economic impacts brought on by the pandemic” said Roy Nascimento, President & CEO of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce. “This survey data will be very helpful to our efforts to help support our businesses and communities as they continue to navigate the pandemic.”

Nearly 64% of the businesses and organizations reported losses when compared to 2019, with nearly 25%

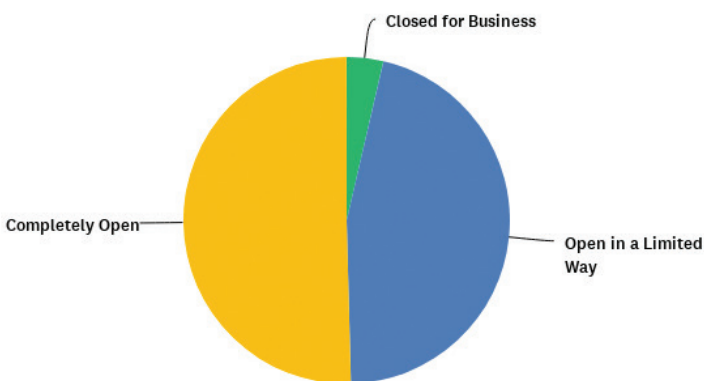
reporting losses of 50% or more. Nearly 54% reported that they expect it will be more than six months before their operations return to a normal level. Twenty-five percent of respondents estimated they could stay operational on current cash flow and reserves for six months or less. Forty-three percent of the businesses responded that they had difficulty getting employees to return to work citing health and safety concerns, child care

and adult care as the top reasons. Some businesses noted falling behind on rent and other bills, while the vast majority reported increased costs due to additional sanitation or shifting operations online.

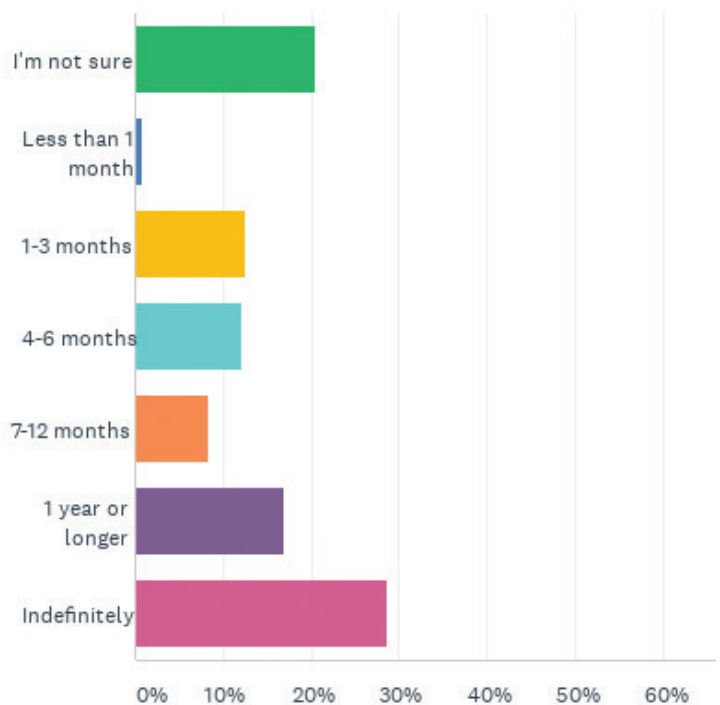
Over 50% of the respondents indicated that they were completely open, while 46% indicated that they were only partially open in a limited way and the remainder were still closed due to the pandemic.

Continued on page 9

Q1: Which of the following best describes your business/organization right now?



Q4: How long do you estimate your business/organization can operate with your current cash flow and reserves?

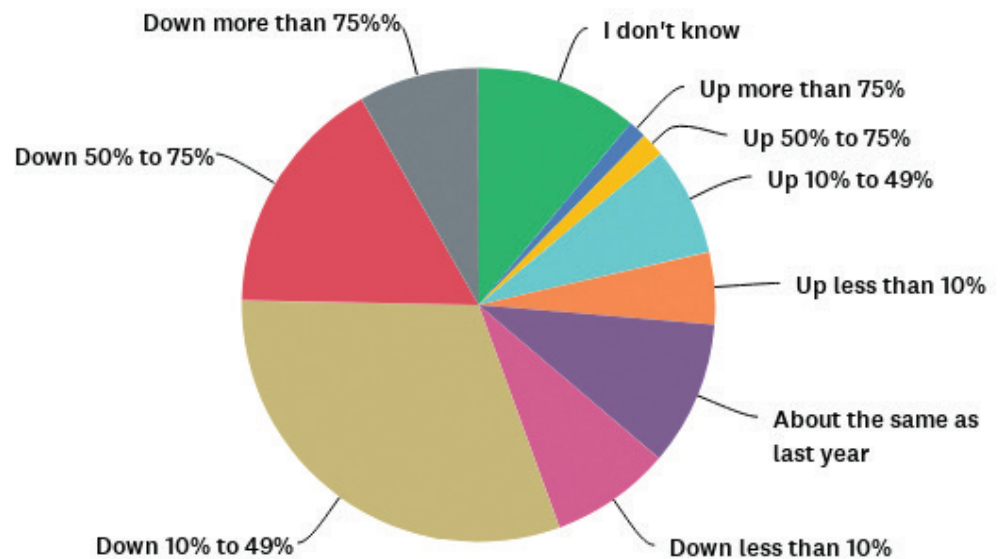




Our businesses have been working hard to operate safely, but the results show that many are still struggling from the economic impacts brought on by the pandemic. This survey data will be very helpful to our efforts to help support our businesses and communities as they continue to navigate the pandemic."

– Roy Nascimento

Q10: Approximately what percent change in gross business revenue did your business/organization experience in YTD 2020, compared with the same period in 2019?



Continued from page 8

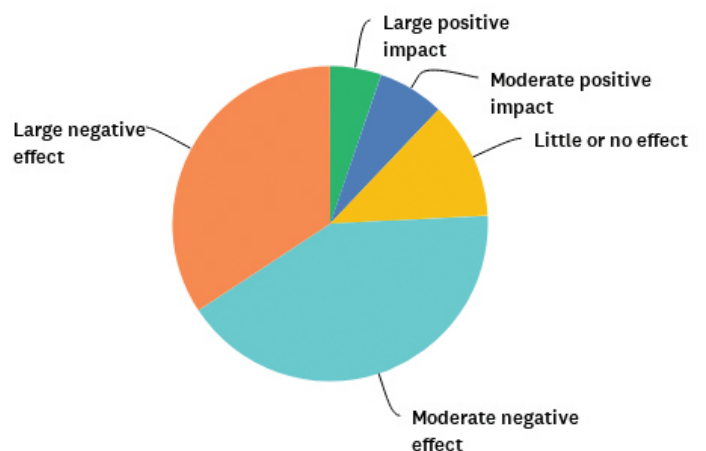
Of those closed, several cited they were closed for good while others reported that they were unsure if they would be able to reopen.

Financial programs to mitigate layoffs such as the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) was the top response when asked what businesses were using to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, followed by reduction in expenses and use of personal savings. Communications, marketing, and social media to reach their customers was the most requested resource when respondents were asked what resources,

beyond financial assistance, would be most helpful.

This survey was conducted online between October 20, 2020 and November 11, 2020 and was a follow-up to an initial survey conducted by the Chamber in March during the early days of the pandemic. The goal of the survey was to collect some fresh data and dive much deeper into the continuing impact of the pandemic to local businesses. A complete copy of the report can be found on the Chamber's website at www.NorthCentralMass.com. ♦

Q5: How would you rank the severity of the economic impacts from COVID-19 on your business/organization?



When it Matters Most... ***SUPPORT LOCAL!***

This year has placed unimaginable challenges on the North Central Massachusetts small business community. The COVID-19 pandemic created an unprecedented wave of disruption to our local economy which many are predicting will permanently alter how we make things, buy things and even where we work. The Chamber has always been a strong advocate for buying local and other initiatives that help to strengthen our local communities and contribute to the economic sustainability of the region. Our efforts to support local businesses take on a new significance this year, and

we know that shopping local is going to be more important than ever before this holiday season. The small businesses that help define our local communities continue to face hardships as the pandemic goes on, and it threatens to exacerbate the trend towards online shopping and consolidation among many of these industries. However, there could also be opportunities for our local businesses and the regional economy as supply chain disruptions exposed by the pandemic may encourage consumers and businesses to look to local suppliers and local businesses to help them fulfill their needs.

Since the pandemic began, the Chamber has been focused on providing guidance, resources and a support system to help businesses get through the crisis. Recognizing the importance, the Chamber has developed several marketing campaigns to support small businesses and encourage consumers to shop, eat and visit locally. We have developed new locally focused content, new messaging and we are utilizing digital and social media channels to promote, connect and engage with consumers. The Chamber has also been utilizing its “Gift Local” gift card initiative to encourage shopping local. With nearly 50 businesses currently participating, consumers are given a choice when deciding on where and how they want to spend their money.

“Our restaurants, hotels and local retailers are among the hardest hit by the pandemic. These businesses are finding innovative ways to adapt, transform and survive,” said Roy M. Nascimento, President & CEO of the North Central

Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce. “We want to encourage people to support local businesses whenever they can. These business owners are working hard to keep their doors open, create jobs, and fill needs in our community and deserve our support”

“These businesses are finding innovative ways to adapt, transform and survive...”

– Roy M. Nascimento

The state has also stepped up with a new awareness campaign entitled “My Local MA” to encourage consumers to support local businesses. The Chamber has embraced the effort and is supporting the campaign.

“The My Local MA campaign reminds Massachusetts residents that where they shop, dine and travel matters,” said



The Kitchen Garden.



Smith's Country Cheese.

Keiko Matsudo Orrall, executive director of the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism. "Supporting My Local MA strengthens community pride and helps keep our economy running. Spending locally keeps people employed and keeps Main Streets and small businesses thriving in our 351 cities and towns. We want people to stay safe and put their money where their heart is — right here in Massachusetts."

Why is this important? A recent survey conducted by the Chamber shows that 64% of the small businesses reported losses when compared to 2019, with nearly 27% reporting losses of 50% or more. Nearly 60% also reported that they expect it will be more than six months before their operations return to normal. Twenty-five percent of respondents also estimated they could stay operational on current cash flow and reserves for just six months or less. The survey also showed that marketing to reach their customers was the most requested resource when asked what resources, beyond financial assistance, would be most helpful.

It's no secret that local small businesses have a tremendous impact on our local economy. When you buy goods and services from local businesses and merchants, the money you spend stays in our communities. National research shows that for every \$100 spent at a locally owned business, \$48 stays in our cities and towns. That's compared to only \$14 of \$100 that is spent at a chain and just \$1 when spent at large e-commerce retailers. Those dollars support the essential services that we all rely on, including police, fire, schools, streets and more.

Local and independent small businesses are also more likely to give back to the community, create more jobs and opportunities, and support other area small businesses. They are often the first to step up when teams need sponsors and fundraisers need venues or goods. Small businesses also work hard to keep your trust each and every day, providing unparalleled products and services. All of this helps to strengthen our communities and contributes to our quality of life.



Smokestack Roasters.

With the holiday season before us, there is no doubt that consumers are all thinking about shopping and the gifts they want to buy for the people in their lives. With busy schedules and the pandemic, it's easy to consider turning to the internet to get shopping done. But that type of shopping has consequences

on the local community. This winter is expected to be a difficult one for many small businesses, the Chamber will be encouraging everyone to consider local businesses when making their buying decision. Not only does this support local businesses, but it has profound rewards for the community. ◇

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State Senator John Cronin.

The January edition of the Chamber's longest running program, Good Morning North Central, is scheduled for January 8, 2021 at 7:30 a.m. In his first Chamber event since winning the election, Senator Cronin will be discussing his plans for supporting and advancing North Central Massachusetts. The January program is sponsored by Resource Management, Inc.

Senator Cronin is a former Infantry Officer in the U.S. Army and combat veteran and has spent his entire career in public service to the country. He was born in Leominster and raised in Fitchburg and Lunenburg. He graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point and commissioned as an Army Officer in 2013. After being honorably discharged from the Army as a Captain, Cronin began work at the

Harvard Law School Legal Services Center working with professors and students to provide legal advocacy to indigent veterans. Currently, he is completing his Juris Doctor at Suffolk Law in the evening.

The popular Good Morning North Central series is a high-profile, fast-paced and educational program geared towards executives, senior managers, professionals and business owners. Each of the programs has a business-oriented focus and features relevant speakers to present on topics of interest to local businesses.

Registration is just \$10 for Chamber members/\$25 non-members. For more information or to register, please contact Kathleen Deal at 978.353.7600 ext. 235, kdeal@northcentralmass.com or visit www.northcentralmass.com. ♦

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CHAMBER LAUNCHING NEW PODCAST SERIES

Stay tuned! The North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce is launching a new podcast series this winter season. The podcast series will feature conversations from the Chamber's ongoing live web chat series with community and business leaders, plus additional content that is relevant to our members and communities.

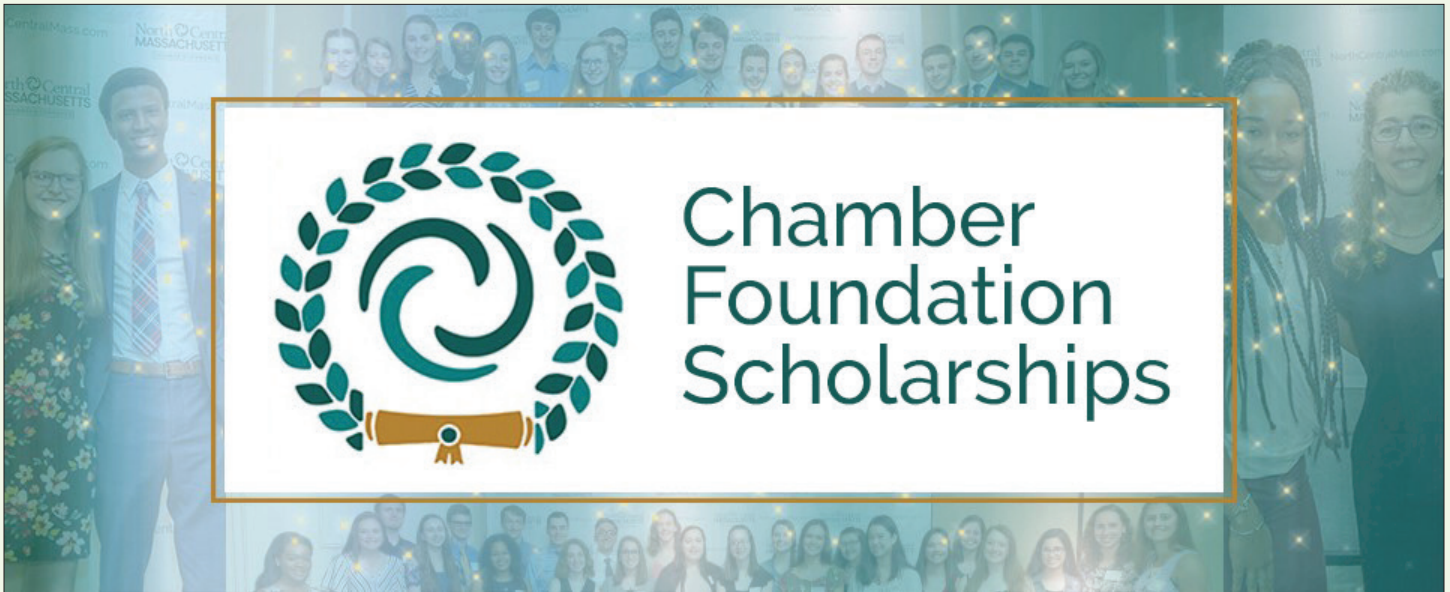
"We want to be seen as a resource for crucial information pertaining to our members and the communities of North Central Massachusetts," said Roy Nascimento, President & CEO of the Chamber. "The way the public consumes information

is constantly changing, and we are excited to utilize the skills of our team members to break into this medium."



"We recognize that our members are often very busy, and while we wish they could attend every event we host, we know that isn't always feasible," said Kathleen Deal, Events & Programs Manager at the Chamber, "This will give members the flexibility to keep up to date with issues that impact them while juggling their day to day responsibilities."

Kat Deal and Travis Condon, Public Affairs Manager at the Chamber and a former radio host, will produce the podcasts. For more information on the podcast and to listen to episodes, head to: www.NorthCentralMass.com. ♦



Applications for the 2021 scholarship program through the North Central Massachusetts Chamber Foundation will be accepted starting February 1, 2021. Students interested in applying for a scholarship through the Chamber's Foundation should contact their high school guidance department to submit an application. Each year, the Chamber Foundation distributes approximately 25 scholarships to local high-achieving high school students in North Central Massachusetts. A limited number of applicants are submitted by each school in the Chamber's service area each year and for consideration by a committee of Chamber members. Deadline for applications is Monday, March 1, 2021.

Since the establishment of its scholarship program, the North Central Massachusetts Chamber Foundation has awarded over a million dollars in scholarships. Many of these awards are made possible through contributions from members of the Chamber and proceeds from the Chamber's Scholarship fundraiser.

Scholarships endowed through the Chamber Foundation are often named in honor of prominent members of the North Central Massachusetts business community whose philanthropy and commitment to the community have helped shape North Central Massachusetts.

The Chamber's Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization focused on assisting in the betterment of the region through charitable activities. Funds raised by the Foundation are utilized primarily for education/workforce development initiatives and charitable activities in North Central Massachusetts, including scholarships to eligible applicants pursuing education and grants to support economic and community development projects.

For more information on the North Central Massachusetts Chamber Foundation's scholarship program or a list of the named scholarships, please visit northcentralmass.com or call 978.353.7600 ext. 235. ♦

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TOURISMupdate

JOHNNY APPLESEED VISITOR CENTER GETS NEW APPLE TREES



Apple Tree planting at the Johnny Appleseed Visitors Center.

Three new apple trees were planted this Fall at the Johnny Appleseed Visitors Center on Route 2 in Lancaster! Special thanks to MassDOT for providing the new trees to replace ones damaged earlier this year.

The Johnny Appleseed Visitors Center, considered by many the gateway to North Central Massachusetts, opened in 1997 as a way to welcome people traveling through the region and give them a place to stop, stretch

their legs, and learn more about the twenty-seven communities of North Central Massachusetts. The center has an impressive collection of unique items that showcase the region, including 91 apple trees on its premises to highlight the region's strong agricultural heritage and connection to apples. The center has been highlighted in the media, including WCVB's Chronicle and the BBC.

The Johnny Appleseed Visitors Center is open every

day from 9am-5pm and also features a popular gift shop that carries many local products including jams, jellies, honey, maple syrup, fudge, chocolates, cheese, cider, donuts and that local icon of American kitsch – the pink plastic flamingo! Visitors to the center can also find a wide selection of books highlighting the history of the region, plus good-quality logo merchandise and souvenir items. ♦

Go to www.visitnorthcentral.com to keep up-to-date!

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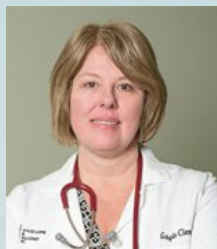
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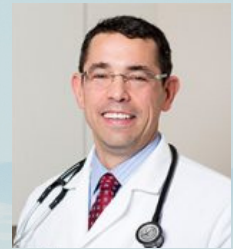
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Payam Aghassi,
MD, FCCP



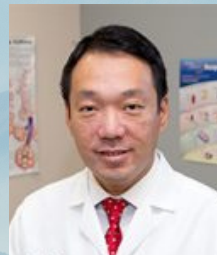
Plutarco Castellanos,
MD



Mustafa Albakour,
MD



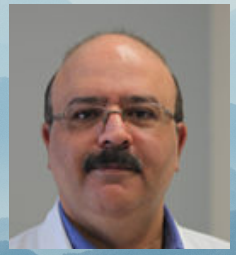
Kaitlin Zuber,
NP



Ryan Chua,
MD



Mandeep Hundal,
MD, FCCP



Omid Atoofi, PA

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Corey Saltin,
DO



July Laudeza,
MD



Kimberly Robinson,
MD



Ali Khodabandeh,
MD

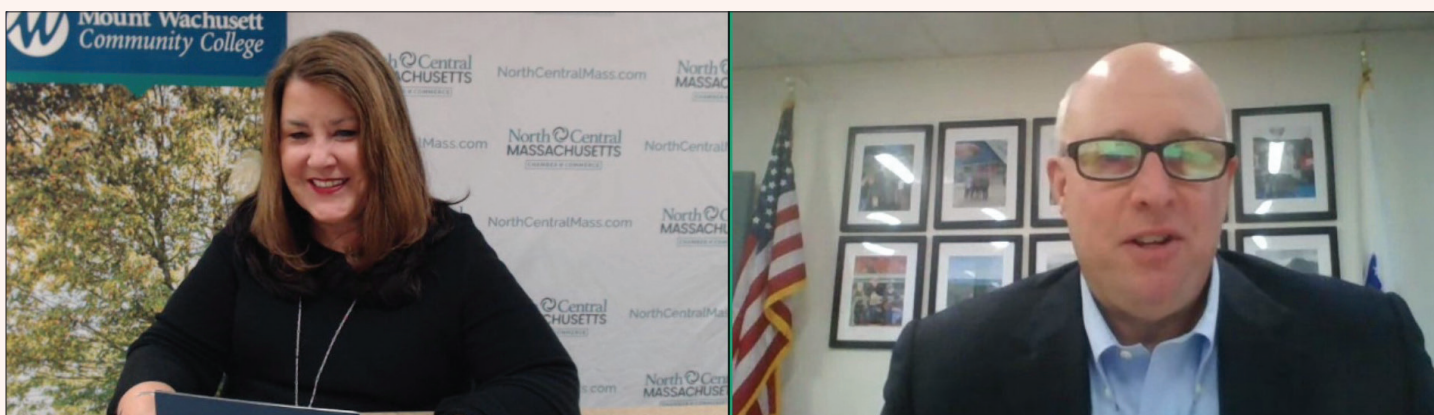


Rupen Amin, MD

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QUICK hits

The way we all live and work has changed dramatically, but we know it remains critically important for you to stay informed and connected. We have made it a priority to deliver relevant programming to you – hosting nearly seventy-five different online programs that have helped to inform, educate and connect our members and communities. Pictured here are a few of our recent online programs. Missed one? No problem, you can access full recordings on our online program library.



CHAMBER LIVE CHAT WITH SECRETARY MIKE KENNEALY

Lea Ann Scales of Mount Wachusett Community College emcees a Chamber “Live Chat” program with Secretary Mike Kennealy of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development to discuss the Massachusetts economy, COVID-19 and recovery!



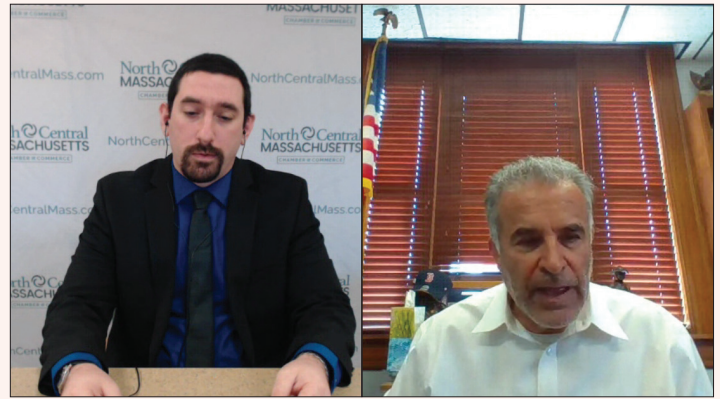
CHAMBER HOSTS CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

Congressman Jim McGovern and Congresswoman Lori Trahan answer questions from Matt Bruun of Fitchburg State University during the Chamber Congressional Update Forum in October. Topics included economic stimulus, political polarization, secure elections, support for manufacturers, infrastructure, PPP forgiveness for small businesses and much more.



ANDREW LELLING SPEAKS ON THE GOOD MORNING NORTH CENTRAL PROGRAM

Andrew Lelling, U.S. Attorney for the District of Massachusetts was a featured speaker at our Good Morning North Central program in September where he discussed the work of his office and took questions from members ranging from the Cannabis industry to the federal government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

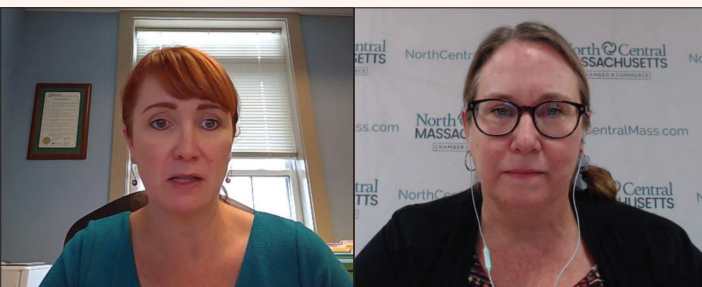
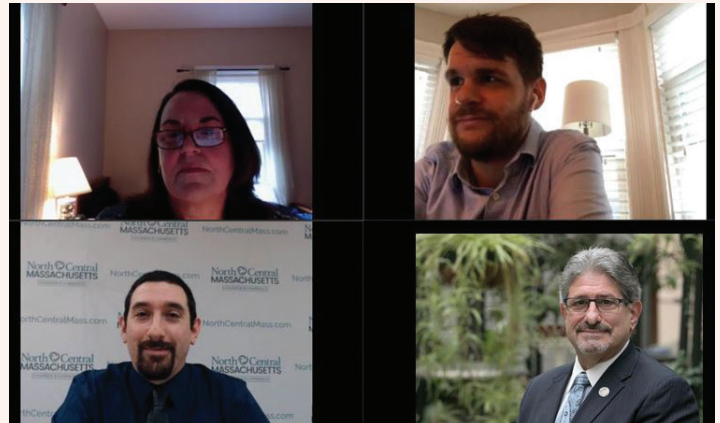


MAYOR DEAN MAZZARELLA'S INTERVIEW ON THE CHAMBER'S LIVE CHAT

Mayor Dean Mazzarella of the City of Leominster is interviewed by Travis Condon during a "Live Chat" hosted by the Chamber in November. Members were able to ask questions and hear directly from the Mayor on what's happening in Leominster and the city's response to COVID-19.

MAYOR STEPHEN DINATALE'S INTERVIEW ON THE CHAMBER'S LIVE CHAT

Mayor Stephen DiNatale of the City of Fitchburg is interviewed by Travis Condon during a "Live Chat" hosted by the Chamber in November. Also pictured is Mary Jo Bohart, Fitchburg's Director of Economic Development, and Tom Skwierawski, Executive Director of Fitchburg's Community Development Department. Members were able to ask questions and hear directly from the Mayor and his team on what's happening in Fitchburg and the city's response to COVID-19.



CHAMBER LIVE CHAT WITH DEVENS LEADER

Jessica Strunkin, Vice President of MassDevelopment and administrator of Devens is interviewed by Kat Deal during a "Live Chat" hosted by the Chamber in November. Members were able to ask questions and hear directly about what's happening in Devens.



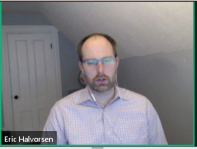
TRAVIS CONDON RECOGNIZED BY THE FITCHBURG VETERANS COUNCIL

Travis Condon, the Chamber's Public Affairs Manager, was recognized recently by the Fitchburg Veterans Council for his efforts with the Annual Veterans Day and Memorial Day events for the City of Fitchburg.

QUICK HITS CONTINUED...

UPDATE PROVIDED ON REGIONAL ECONOMIC PLAN

Eric Halvorsen, Principal of RKG Associates, Inc. – the economic development consulting firm that has been hired by the Chamber to assist with the development of a new regional economic development plan – provides an update at the November Good Morning North Central.



PHASE 1 COMPONENTS (JAN-JUNE)	PHASE 2 COMPONENTS (JULY-DEC)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Background Materials Regional Tour, Stakeholder Focus Groups Demographic, Economic, Market Analysis SWOT Analysis Regional Benchmarking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target Industries Workforce and Skills Analysis Opportunity Site Identification and Evaluation Policy and Incentives Analysis Implementation Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy Identification Implementation Matrix Organizational and Resource Capacity Draft/Final Strategy Document

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VALLEY FLORIST AND GREENHOUSE RECEIVES LOAN FROM NCMDC

The North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation recently provided a loan to Valley Florist and Greenhouse in East Templeton. Pictured (L-R) are Sandie Cataldo, Economic Development Manager, NCMDC; Brendan Loughman, Owner, Valley Florist & Greenhouse; and Brendan Hannen, Micro-Loan Manager, NCMDC.



STERLING ACADEMY OF GYMNASTICS RECEIVES LOAN FROM NCMDC

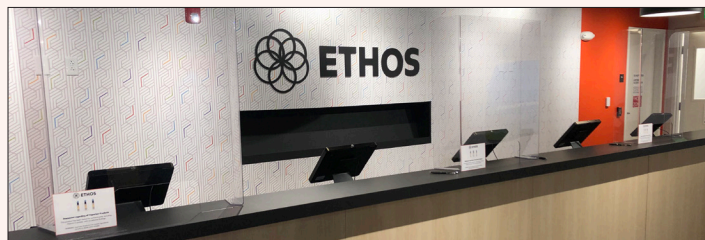
The North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation (NCMDC) recently provided a loan to the Sterling Academy of Gymnastics. Pictured (L-R) are Brendan Hannen, Micro-Loan Manager, NCMDC; Nancy Carbone, Co-Owner of Sterling Gymnastics; and Norman Vigeant, Vice President of Lending, NCMDC. Not pictured is John Carbone, Co-Owner of Sterling Gymnastics.



50/50 DINER RECEIVES LOAN FROM NCMDC

The North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation (NCMDC) recently provided a loan to the 50/50 Diner, a restaurant in Fitchburg. Pictured (L-R) are Brendan Hannen, Micro-Loan Manager, NCMDC; Michael Cataldo, Reesi and David Cordio, Co-Owners of the 50/50 Diner; and Sandie Cataldo, Economic Development Manager, NCMDC.

QUICK HITS CONTINUED...



TOUR OF ETHOS CANNABIS DURING THEIR GRAND OPENING

Kat Deal, the Chamber's Programs Manager (Left) and Sandie Cataldo, Economic Development Manager (right) tour Ethos Cannabis in Fitchburg, Massachusetts during the dispensary's grand opening.



DIANE BURNETTE OF THE CHAMBER SPEAKS ON AAA TRAVEL PROGRAM

The Chamber's Diane Burnette, Manager of the Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center on Route 2, was a guest speaker on a travel program in the Fall hosted by AAA Northeast where she promoted the region as a great destination for leaf-peeping and much more!



NEW MAYOR OF GARDNER, MICHAEL NICHOLSON, SPEAKS ON GOOD MORNING NORTH CENTRAL PROGRAM

The Honorable Michael Nicholson, the new Mayor of Gardner was also a featured speaker at the Chamber's September Good Morning North Central where he discussed his agenda and the city's efforts around recovery from COVID-19.



HOSPITAL PRESIDENTS DISCUSS THE HEALTH CARE LANDSCAPE

The November edition of the Chamber's Good Morning North Central featured the leaders of the region's four major healthy systems discussing the health care landscape and how they are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keep up with the latest Chamber news at
www.NorthCentralMass.com

Advertise in the 2021 Spring/Summer Guide to North Central Massachusetts

Plans are underway to publish the 2021 Spring/Summer edition of the Guide to North Central Massachusetts. This well-known magazine is published by the Chamber's tourism arm – Visit North Central Massachusetts – to promote the region. The guide is an effective and affordable opportunity to showcase your business to consumers in North Central Massachusetts and throughout New England. The guide is distributed at 250+ locations in New England, including the Johnny Appleseed Visitors Center on Route 2 in Lancaster and 46 AAA offices in the state. The guide is also distributed at travel shows, to visiting bus tours and posted on VisitNorthCentral.com and the state's tourism website.

Rates start at just \$280! To inquire about advertising or to reserve your spot, please contact Diane Burnette at 978.534.2829 or via email at dburnette@northcentralmass.com



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North Central Calendar **EVENTS**

A complete list of events with details can be found at web.northcentralmass.com/events. Please contact Kat Deal with any questions.

December 10

Live Chat with Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale

11:00 AM

December 11

Live Chat with Leominster Mayor Dean Mazzarella

11:00 AM

December 16

Webinar Series: Management Foundations - Best Practices in Organizational Management

11:00 AM

December 17

Virtual Connect North Central

2:00 PM

December 18

Young Professionals of North Central: Virtual Holiday Party

5:00 PM

Due to COVID-19, all Chamber programs and events are currently being presented as online programs. We will be resuming face to face events when appropriate. Please check the Chamber website and social media platforms for updates. You can also take advantage of our full library of recorded programs at northcentralmass.com.

January 8

Good Morning North Central

7:30 AM

January 12

Small Business RoundTable

8:00 AM

January 13

Women's Leadership Connection

12:00 PM

January 20

Human Resource Council

8:00 AM

January 28

Virtual Connect North Central

2:00 PM

February 3

Express Webinar

11:00 AM

February 9

Small Business RoundTable

8:00 AM

February 17

Webinar Series

11:00 AM

February 26

Connect North Central

2:00 PM

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