

Fall 2021 Edition

chamber

north central massachusetts report

Building Businesses. Building Communities.

THE WAR FOR TALENT

A WAR THAT THE NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGION CANNOT AFFORD TO LOSE



Government
Affairs Update
page 6

Feature Story
"The War
for Talent"
page 12

North  Central
MASSACHUSETTS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

\$52,000 in
Scholarships
Awarded
page 16

North Central
Calendar of
Events
page 26



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About the Cover:

The cover design was selected to highlight the ongoing workforce shortage that many businesses are facing. In today's economy, businesses are in a constant talent recruitment battle where there can only be so many winners. Learn more about "The War for Talent" on pages 12-14.

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The Chamber's Ambassadors Committee.

AMBASSADORS COMMITTEE

Interested in connecting your business to the hundreds of member businesses and organizations in our region while supporting the Chamber's mission? The Chamber's Ambassadors Committee could be a good fit for you! Chamber Ambassadors are a volunteer committee

that meet monthly to serve fellow members by providing information, resources, member-to-member support, increasing awareness and promoting active participation in Chamber and affiliate programs and services. For more information, please contact the Chamber at 978.353.7600 ext. 244. ◇

SMALL BUSINESS COUNSELING AVAILABLE

Free one-on-one counseling and technical assistance is available to entrepreneurs and existing businesses in North Central Massachusetts through the Chamber and its economic development arm – the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation. The Chamber also has partnerships with a variety of organizations that provide counseling and assistance and are a resource to members, including the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network Central Regional Office (MSBDC) at Clark University; Center

for Women and Enterprise (CWE); Massachusetts Export Center; Service Corp of Retired Executives (SCORE); Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD); and NewVue Communities to name a few.

For more information or to schedule an online appointment, please contact Sandie Cataldo, Economic Development Manager at 978.353.7600 ext. 232. ◇



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CHAMBER RECOGNIZED AS FINALIST FOR NATIONAL HONOR



"Chamber of the Year" Finalist Award.

On July 20, the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce was recognized as a finalist for the prestigious 2021 Chamber of the Year award, presented by the Alexandria, VA-based Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE). The award is the most prestigious and competitive recognition presented annually in the chamber industry and recognizes the leadership role that chambers have in their communities.

The finalists for this recognition represent the best of the best. To be selected as a finalist, the chamber must have demonstrated

organizational strength and made an impact on key community priorities, such as education, transportation, economic development and quality of life. The North Central Massachusetts Chamber was one of four finalists in its category – along with chambers in Cumming, GA; Leesburg, VA; and Tuscaloosa, AL.

"This year's finalists are among the most impactful organizations within the industry," said ACCE President & CEO Sheree Anne Kelly. "Following a tumultuous year, these chambers emerged as community champions, providing catalytic leadership to address their

“While we don't do the important work we do for the accolades and awards, it is still very special to be recognized as one of the best chambers nationally by our peers.”

— Roy M. Nascimento

region's greatest challenges and opportunities for prosperity.”

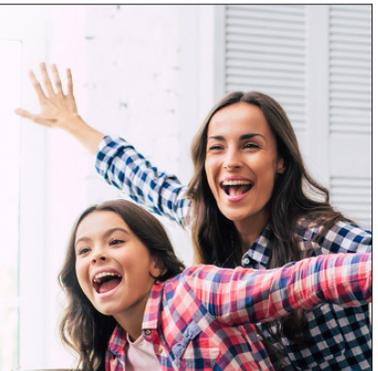
“While we are disappointed that we were not selected as the final recipient, we are very honored and humbled to have had the North Central Massachusetts Chamber recognized as a finalist for the 2021 Chamber of the Year Award. While we don't do the important work we do for the accolades and awards, it is still very special to be recognized as one of the best chambers nationally by our peers.” said Roy M. Nascimento, President & CEO of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce.

“We want to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to our Board of Directors, members, partners and communities for their contribution to our success.”

This is the second time that the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce has been honored as a finalist for the National Chamber of the Year Recognition – the first was in 2017. The North Central Massachusetts Chamber is the first chamber of commerce in Massachusetts and New England to have been named a finalist by ACCE for this prestigious and competitive recognition. ♦

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GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS UPDATE



Photo courtesy of State House News Service.

The North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce remains engaged in constant communication with our local, state and federal elected officials. In July, Congressman Jim McGovern and Congresswoman Lori Trahan joined us for the Inside North Central Massachusetts podcast. The two spoke about the American Rescue Plan Act and the proposed infrastructure package. The two are also slated to join the Chamber’s Congressional Luncheon in October. In early August, the US Senate passed a bipartisan \$1 trillion-dollar infrastructure bill that included hundreds of billions of dollars for areas including roads and bridges, electrical grid and power infrastructure, broadband investments and water infrastructure.

The Chamber continued to advocate for economic development and workforce development

throughout the state budget negotiations. The Chamber was part of joint letters sent out to Beacon Hill from the Massachusetts Business Coalition on Skills and Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education that pushed for investment into career technical institutes and the workforce pipeline. That advocacy helped to ensure the inclusion of \$15.4 million for career technical institutes, \$6 million for dual enrollment and \$6 million dollars for regional economic development organizations as part of the Commonwealth’s \$48.1 billion-dollar budget. As part of the Massachusetts Coalition for Sustainable Energy, the Chamber was a part of multiple letters sent out to members of the legislature and the Massachusetts Energy Efficiency Advisory Council calling for a measured approach utilizing natural gas as the Commonwealth works to meet the emission

reduction timeline laid out by the Governor.

Now that budget discussions have wrapped up, state legislators are focusing on the \$5.3 billion dollars the Commonwealth is receiving from Washington D.C. as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Governor Charlie Baker has put forth a plan to spend \$2.9 billion dollars of the funds, along with a \$1.6 billion-dollar supplemental budget with the House and Senate holding hearings on priorities prior to putting forward their own spending plans. Since the publication of the Chamber’s new One North Central regional economic development plan, we have engaged in active discussions with the region’s delegation, educating them on the strategies contained in the plan, and how ARPA

funds could be used to help implement some of the bolder initiatives. The Chamber intends to continue meeting with area leaders and stakeholders in hopes that the One North Central plan can serve as a unifying voice for the region as we seek to help the region navigate economic recovery and serve as a roadmap to advance the region in the coming decades.

In Mid-August, the U.S. Census Bureau released the latest local-level population and demographic data from the 2020 Census. According to the data, Massachusetts population rose to 7.02 million people and saw an increase of 7.4 percent, outpacing the Northeast average of 4.1 percent growth. This growth was enough to ensure that Massachusetts would retain its current levels of representation in

Continued on page 7

“The Chamber intends to continue meeting with area leaders and stakeholders in hopes that the One North Central plan can serve as a unifying voice for the region as we seek to help the region navigate economic recovery and serve as a roadmap to advance the region in the coming decades.”

Continued from page 6

Washington D.C. Based on the new data, and population changes, parts of the Commonwealth could see a shake up when it comes to their legislative and Congressional representation once districts are redrawn in the coming months.

The Chamber is continuing to monitor city and town affairs which included Westminster promoting Stephanie Lahtinen to Town Administrator, and Townsend appointing Ross Perry as their Interim Town Administrator. Leominster welcomed Amanda Curtis, a familiar face at the Chamber, as the City's new Economic Development

Coordinator. Shortly after her appointment, Curtis met to discuss the City's priorities and the One North Central Regional Economic Development Program. With multiple contested municipal elections this Fall, the Chamber is excited to once again host the popular Legislative & Candidates Reception on September 23 at the Chocksett Inn in Sterling.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Travis Condon, the Chamber's public affairs manager, at (978) 353-7600, ext. 224; or via email at tcondon@northcentralmass.com. ♦



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. Contact the Chamber at 978.353.7600 ext. 227 for information on available plans and to receive a quote.



We want to hear about the great things happening with our members.

Have you hired any new employees? Have you expanded? Has your business celebrated a new milestone or received an award? Do you have a special event coming up? Have you supported a local community group?

Send us your announcements, news, events and press releases and we will post it in our members news section and share it on our social media. This is one of the many great perks that we offer members. The Chamber has a high-traffic website and strong social media presence. Our social media channels boast over 20,000 total followers and garners an average of 167,365 impressions monthly and over 2 million impressions annually. The Chamber's multiple websites have become a go-to resource for local stakeholders, business professionals, elected officials, visitors and groups in our region, averaging 10,000 monthly pageviews.

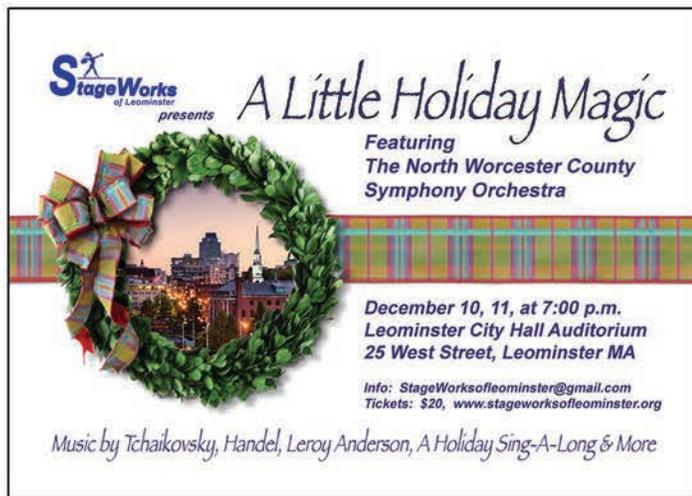
If you want to increase your exposure, send all business news and events to rmurphy@northcentralmass.com.

StageWorks, Inc.

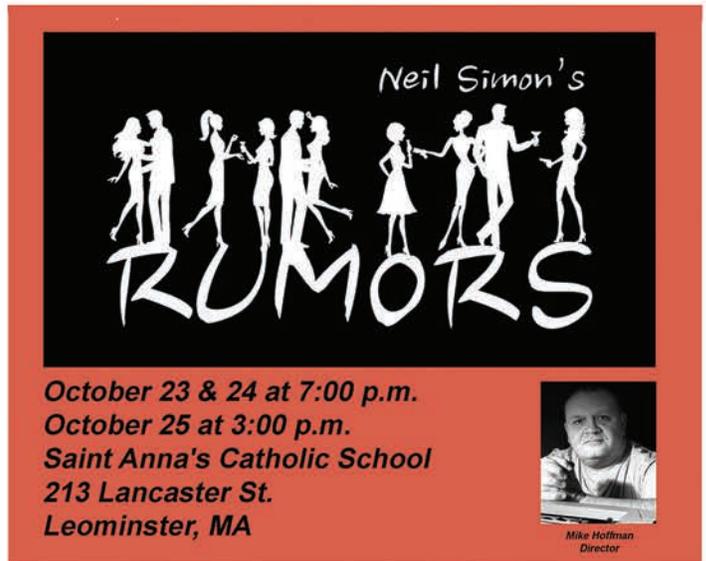
StageWorks, Inc. is a new arts performance company located in Leominster. It comprises two organizations: StageWorks of Leominster, a theatre performing organization, and the newly created North Worcester County Symphony Orchestra. The latter was formed out of a need for live, affordable music in Leominster, replacing the original Thayer Symphony which rebranded and moved from the area.



StageWorks of Leominster
BROADWAY
Our Way!
A Cabaret Style Concert
 September 24, 25 at 7:00 p.m.
 Leominster City Hall Auditorium
 25 West Street
 Leominster, MA 01453



StageWorks of Leominster presents
A Little Holiday Magic
 Featuring
 The North Worcester County
 Symphony Orchestra
 December 10, 11, at 7:00 p.m.
 Leominster City Hall Auditorium
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 Info: StageWorksofleominster@gmail.com
 Tickets: \$20, www.stageworksofleominster.org
 Music by Tchaikovsky, Handel, Leroy Anderson, A Holiday Sing-A-Long & More



Neil Simon's
RUMORS
 October 23 & 24 at 7:00 p.m.
 October 25 at 3:00 p.m.
 Saint Anna's Catholic School
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 Mike Hoffman
 Director

Our mission is to develop, promote and sponsor performing arts productions for the cultural enrichment of the city and beyond. We encourage the fostering of appreciation for the performing arts while promoting education. StageWorks of Leominster strives to nurture and encourage artists and to provide a safe, all-inclusive space where they can thrive, grow, take risks and make bold choices. If you would like to sponsor or advertise in our playbill, please use the information below to contact us.



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 November 12, at 7:00 p.m.
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 November 14, at 3:00 p.m.
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Banm Santee

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MGM Design

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Sterling, MA
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Brandon Funeral Home

305 Wanoosnoc Road
Fitchburg, MA
FUNERAL

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Leominster, MA
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225 New Lancaster Road
(Route 117)
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Keep up with the latest Chamber news at www.NorthCentralMass.com

FEATURED MEMBER PROFILE

SOLVUS GLOBAL SOLVING THE RIGHT PROBLEMS WITH THE RIGHT TEAM



Aaron Birt, Co-Founder & CEO of Solvus Global presents to a group of community leaders during a recent tour.

In August 2017, Sean Kelly, Aaron Birt, and Diran Apelian from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), combined their expertise and together, formed Solvus Global to bridge the innovation gap through the creation of next-generation technologies.

According to their website’s timeline, Solvus Global built out their first office space and laboratory on Rockdale Street in Worcester back in 2018. CEO Aaron Birt secured their first subcontract award from the Army Research Laboratory (ARL) as a result of the team’s expertise in cold spray and existing partners in the research community, which he established during his days at WPI. In continuation of his PhD dissertation, COO Sean Kelly was able to obtain project funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF).

Starting out with two employees and only a handful of customers to its name; Solvus Global has since expanded their staff, facilities, and customer base.

“Now Solvus [Global] has approximately forty employees across Central Massachusetts. And we recently opened our new 32,000 sq. ft. Manufacturing site in Leominster.”

At Solvus, employees harness the power of a creative and multi-disciplinary team to develop and commercialize next-generation technology in the materials and advanced manufacturing sector.

“Solvus [Global] exists to solve technological problems that are impactful on society, the environment, and everything in between. We aim to solve the most prevalent problem at the right time with the right team,” said Kelly.

The intuitive company has a current model that houses multiple business units within Solvus to assist with bridging the gap between material consumption and production, in a sustainable way. The goal is to transition each unit to become its own standalone entity. Commercialization of these brands is not far from reality.

Solvus Global business solutions include but are not limited to:

- **Powders On Demand** – Quality-controlled, inertly packaged metal powders for cold spray repair and additive manufacturing
- **Build It Gigantic (B.I.G.)** – Cost-effective additive manufacturing of large specialty material parts utilizing techniques
- **Kinetic Batteries** – 3D printed solid-state Lithium-ion batteries for dense energy storage with custom-fit electrode cells
- **Augmented Process Ecosystem for X (APEX)** – Manufacturing Intelligence for advanced manufacturing processes that coalesces data from OEM equipment, advanced sensors, process models to one place
- **VALIS** – Machine learning model for optimized non-ferrous metal scrap sortation with real-time adaptive algorithms to maximize the value of recycling

For the future, Solvus Global will continue to develop business enterprise units to serve as multi-faceted solutions for the greater community. In adaptation to the ever-evolving world, Solvus tailors each solution to support the marketplace for many years to come.

Keeping up with the fast-paced COVID-19 pandemic landscape, Solvus has taken on a hybrid working model to prepare for the “new normal.”

Kelly stated, “We’re flexible. We’ve done our homework – complying

to the regulations and recommendations from the CDC and the state of Massachusetts. With our 3 locations and remote option, we tell our employees to work where it makes the most sense at the current moment based on their workload and projects.”

He also added that it was important to stay informed on current COVID-19 procedures and guidelines, as health and safety is a top priority for Solvus employees and families. They have also created a COVID council so that the company

has eyes and ears on the situation at all times.

In April 2021, Solvus Global became a new member of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce. Solvus immediately saw the local impact of joining the Chamber with their expansion to Nashua Street in Leominster amid the pandemic.

“From top to bottom, members’ interests and needs are consistently at the [North Central] Chamber’s forefront,” Kelly said. “Everyone is always willing to help and there are plenty of opportunities to network.

“The [North Central] Chamber [of Commerce] puts their members first.



Pictured L-R Mayor Dean Mazzarella of Leominster; Sean Kelly, Co-Founder & COO; and Aaron Birt, Co-Founder & CEO discuss Solvus Global's recent expansion to Leominster during a recent tour of their site..

They don’t just say it, they act on it,” he added.

While Solvus Global is coming up on their four-year anniversary in August, the business is looking to grow and hire more dedicated employees, both full-time and part-time.

“We’re looking to deliver more powder products and continue software testing than ever before,” said Nicole Boyson, Marketing Manager.

“We are progressing toward additional funding opportunities and getting into the industries to make our mark in the world.”

Solvus Global looks to a bright future ahead of them with innovative technology at their side.

“We’re only as strong as the individuals we have on our team,” Kelly stated. “Each and every person matters from the most recent to the most

“ Solvus [Global]

exists to solve technological problems that are impactful on society, the environment, and everything in between.”

— Sean Kelly —

senior hires.. Bottom line: Curating the right team sets us up for success.”

To learn more about Solvus Global and their solutions, or to inquire about a potential job or partnership opportunity, visit their website at www.solvusglobal.com or email them at people.matter@solvusglobal.com. ◇

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THE WAR FOR TALENT

A WAR THAT NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS CAN NOT AFFORD TO LOSE

“ It’s all about **THE TALENT** in today’s economic development world and how employers can

competitively tap into that pipeline to bring qualified workers to their businesses.”

— Jeff Roberge

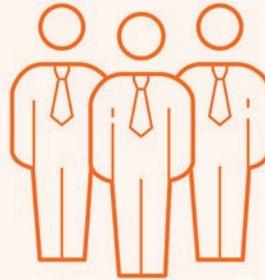
A central theme of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce Regional Economic Development Plan—One North Central—prioritizes the importance of developing a strong talent pipeline and workforce development for the region. With our aging workforce and strong competition for younger, high-skilled talent, One North Central identifies strategies to help the region focus on strengthening the core of our workforce through advocacy, partnerships and resources to maintain the businesses who currently call North Central Massachusetts home while growing a strong pipeline to support new businesses locating to the region.

We call this the War for Talent. And it’s what is keeping our members up

at night! Two of the most concerning challenges facing our members revolve around the talent pipeline and finding qualified workers. While we can place some blame on the pandemic, which provided the unemployed with supplemental federal unemployment benefits making going back to work less desirable, there are also challenges related to lack

40.2%

of businesses in the region are having difficulty hiring



**results from Spring COVID-19 Impact Survey*

of affordable childcare and concerns about personal health and safety that have certainly kept some people out of the workforce.

For employers, the problem unfortunately runs deeper than the pandemic, and even as more people return to the workforce, the war for talent is expected to heat up in the years to come. It will not just be between companies, but

regions, communities and even our state and country will be competing for the talent needed to help fuel economic growth and prosperity. It’s a war we must win by working collaboratively to address talent acquisition and growth while becoming more aggressive in our tactics to remain strong, viable communities for both families and businesses who live and work here.

Jeff Roberge, Executive Director of the MassHire North Central Workforce Board which is charged with helping employers develop the talent they need to grow and prosper, said this is not a regional issue, but a national one. “Businesses throughout the country are struggling to find the qualified workers they need. It’s all about the talent in today’s economic development world and how

Continued on page 13

Continued from page 12

employers can competitively tap into that pipeline to bring qualified workers to their businesses.”

Our region is not immune to this issue, as a recent UMass Donahue Institute study commissioned by the Chamber indicated that by 2040, as many as 27% of residents in North Central Massachusetts may be over the age of 65, versus 12.5% in 2010. So, while baby boomers still represent a third of the workforce in the United States, there are simply not enough workers to fill their positions upon retirement.

Employers are also recognizing that some workers lack the skills or credentials they need to compete in today’s economy. According to the Center on Education and Workforce at Georgetown University, there will be millions of unfilled jobs by 2025 if the “skills gap” issue between education and talent does not match available jobs. We also live in an environment where labor has become mobile and workers are no longer tied to a particular company, industry or even geography, and the popularity of remote work opportunities intensifies the competition. From the perspective of the

4 workers commute out of the region
5 

27%
of residents in the region may be over the age of 65 by 2040, versus 12.5% in 2010



**UMass Donahue Institute study*

region, workers can also pick up and move to other regions or states which in turn puts the region at a competitive disadvantage in attracting, growing and retaining businesses.

Rocheleau Tool and Die in Fitchburg has a long history spanning four generations of bringing highly productive and efficient blow molding machinery to its customers world-wide. As a local employer, the company is working to attract youth through engagements with local vocational high schools and universities to get today’s youth excited about employment opportunities with the company. In fact, Rocheleau Tool & Die employees serve on the UMass Lowell Plastics Advisory Board and the Monty Tech Machine Technology Advisory Committee.

“We realize by engaging with our future workforce in an educational setting, we can help define a path where students can envision opportunities to establish a successful career. When industry can share knowledge with educators, gains can be made in closing

the skills gap. The better we cooperate, the better chance we can grow our businesses and create opportunities where our local youth can grow along with us,” said Steven Rocheleau, President, Rocheleau Tool & Die. “When educators and business owners are aligned, we both do our part to keep jobs and workers here in the region.”

The Chamber is committed to providing our members with the tools they need to combat the war for talent. We’ve always taken a leadership role by placing importance on education and workforce development to the quality of life and economic prosperity of the region. In recent years, we have expanded our advocacy efforts by joining coalitions such as the Massachusetts Business Coalition on Skills and the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education. We’ve also fostered partnerships with the region’s schools and higher education institutions while working diligently to grow the pipeline through our WorkNorthCentral.com online resource portal and WorkNorth Central Hiring events. While the

chamber and our members are fighting the war for talent with eyes wide open to address these challenges, our advocacy, partnerships and resources are the ammunition to win the war.

STRONG ADVOCACY:

We believe the very foundation of our region’s talent pipeline is rooted in our strong educational system. We’ve been a longstanding advocate for an educational system that prepares our youth for success and for our state to excel in a competitive environment. Our advocacy efforts on Beacon Hill and at the city and town halls in our region aim to create career pathways in our schools, increase access to high-quality vocational education, and to implement other reforms to better align with what our businesses need while preparing the students for long-term success.

“We know the greatest asset for our region is the talent of our residents and what they bring to the industries where they work,” said Senator John Cronin (D-Lunenburg). “The Chamber is a strong advocate for improvements within our schools to create stronger college and career pathways for our youth and I am committed to standing alongside the Chamber as we work together in achieving these goals.”

STRONG PARTNERSHIPS:

We believe strong partnerships are critically important and winning the war for talent will require a concerted

Continued on page 14

Continued from page 13

effort from the public and private sector, education and business leaders, and through philanthropy and non-profits to work toward improving our schools and the talent pipeline. Since not one company, group or industry can do it alone, our efforts have included building partnerships with the Workforce Investment Board, Mount Wachusett Community College, Fitchburg State University and others, as well as partnering with local schools to host career exploration programs. We're encouraging internships and other work-based opportunities for young adults with our members, and we have conducted research and shared our findings to keep all of our stakeholders updated on our efforts. As a way to make college more affordable for graduating seniors, we also distribute more than \$50,000 each year in scholarships.

STRONG RESOURCES:

We believe by providing resources to connect the unemployed and underemployed with jobs



Montachusett Vocational Technical School students on manufacturing tour.

“The Chamber is a strong advocate for improvements within our schools to create stronger college and career pathways for our youth...”

— Senator John Cronin

that we can respond to the immediate challenges employers face when finding qualified workers. Through creative resources to connect employers with

job seekers, as well as with our existing portfolio of economic development tools, we can change the war for talent into the peace of a restful night's

sleep for business owners. Since we launched the WorkNorthCentral.com online jobs resource portal last year, more than 6,000 jobs have been posted, making it the largest, geographically-focused jobs board in the region! And, on September 28, we're hosting a major, regional hiring event to provide face-to-face interactions for job seekers with potential employers, as well as opportunities for career coaching, free professional headshots, workshops and seminars, and more than 50 employers showcasing a variety of employment opportunities across multiple industries.

But this isn't the end of our efforts. In fact, the war on talent is just beginning.

Together, we can continue to identify and work toward new and innovative solutions with a multi-pronged approach to address talent attraction, retention and development. We will continue to strengthen the core of our workforce through advocacy, partnerships and resources.

It's a war the North Central Massachusetts region cannot afford to lose! ♦

Sponsorship Opportunities Available

Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center presents
Third Annual Jesse H. Stallings, Jr. Memorial Speaker Series

— Guest Speaker —
**Former US Army 1st Lieutenant, World Champion Triathlete
2016 Paralympic Bronze Medalist**

Melissa Stockwell Live Online Event!

October 21, 2021 6:00pm-7:30pm EST

For more information or sponsorship opportunities, contact Stephanie Marchetti at smarchetti@veterans-outreach.org

Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center, 268 Central St., Gardner, MA 01440 veterans-outreach.org

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CHAMBER UPDATES

MINI-GRANTS: The Chamber, in partnership with NewVue Communities, has launched a new mini-grant program to support small businesses in the region with their recovery and/or growth. The program provides small grants between \$500 to \$5,000 that can be used for any professional services that will help the small business. Examples of professional services that the grant can help cover include accounting/bookkeeping, marketing, new signage, and legal services. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until September 30, 2021 or until grant funds have been expended. Please contact Sandie Cataldo at 978.353.7600 Ext. 232 for more information or to request an application.

NEW LOANS: The Chamber's economic Development arm – the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation (NCMDC) - has approved twenty-two traditional micro-loans since October, 2020 for a total of \$930,250. The loans were made to a mix of start-up and existing small businesses that were unable to secure financing from traditional sources. In addition, the NCMDC also provided sixty-four Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans since October totaling \$859,841 and helped submit another forty-six PPP loans through participating lenders. Our loans helped create 38 new jobs and saved 158 jobs.

LOAN PROGRAM EXPANSION: The NCMDC Board voted to increase the maximum size of loans to \$250,000 and expand its loan program to include commercial real



Staff of North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce in front of the Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center on Route 2 in Lancaster.

estate mortgages. The real estate loans can be used for a first mortgage for purchase, rehab or expansion of an existing structure or a second mortgage with a participating financial institution. The fixed rate loans will be provided with flexible terms, low fees and interest rates as low as 1%. Monthly payments will also be deferred for up to one year on the loans. Please contact Sandie Cataldo or Maribel Cruz at 978.353.7600 for more information.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: Our team has provided over 2,200 hours of direct technical assistance to small businesses so far this year. The technical assistance has been delivered face to face, as well as via phone and ZOOM. In addition, the Chamber has resumed hosting representatives from the Massachusetts Office of Business Development; MassDevelopment; the Small Business Development Center; and other partners for confidential counseling and technical assistance. Members interested in receiving technical assistance or counseling from the Chamber or one of its partners should contact 978.353.7600 Ext. 222 to schedule an appointment.

CHAMBER FOUNDATION: The Chamber and NCMDC Boards each approved contributions of \$25,000 to the North Central Massachusetts Chamber Foundation. The Foundation is the Chamber's charitable affiliate and supports education and community development efforts in the region. The contributions will help build up and strengthen the foundation's endowment.

CHAMBER PODCAST: The Chamber continues to record new interviews with

business and community leaders for its "Inside North Central Massachusetts" podcast series. The podcast is available for downloading via PodBean and Apple Podcasts.

CHAMBER GIFT CARDS: As we want to encourage consumers to shop and eat at local businesses as much as possible, we have eliminated the purchase fee charged when anyone buys a Gift Local Gift Card. We are also continuing to waive the processing fee for members who accept the cards. Members interested in purchasing gift cards as employee and client gifts this holiday season should contact the Chamber at 978.353.7600 Ext. 222 to place their orders.

MEMBER DISCOUNTS: Members interested in offering a discount on our Member to Member Discount page should email Lauren Goulet at lgoulet@northcentralmass.com with the "Member Discount" in the subject line. ♦

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\$52,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

THROUGH THE NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS CHAMBER FOUNDATION

A number of the region's most outstanding high school seniors are recognized with scholarships from the Chamber Foundation of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce. A total of \$52,000 in scholarships were awarded this year. These awards were either endowed or funded by companies and individuals. The Scholarship Committee selected scholarship recipients from among college-bound seniors in the Chamber's service area. The sole basis for selection was merit - in all

aspects of students' endeavors, from academics and sports to volunteer work and employment.

Since the establishment of its scholarship program, the North Central Massachusetts Chamber Foundation has awarded over a million dollars in scholarships to over 600 students. Many of these awards are made possible through contributions from members of the Chamber. Scholarships endowed through the Chamber Foundation are often named in honor of prominent

members of the business community whose philanthropy and commitment to the community have helped shape North Central Massachusetts. The Chamber wishes to thank TD Bank and Unifil for their sponsorship of this year's scholarship program, as well as the many Chamber members who contributed towards the scholarships.

Twenty-six scholarships of \$2,000 were distributed to the following seniors from throughout North Central Massachusetts:

Continued on page 17

Luke Boccelli
North Middlesex Regional High School
 Awarded: Chamber Foundation Scholarship

1



Kelsey Harris
Wachusett Regional High School
 Awarded: HealthAlliance Hospital Guild Scholarship

2

Sara Buszkiewicz
Oakmont Regional High School
 Awarded: Barbara Silva Scholarship

3



Eliza Howlett
Leominster High School
 Awarded: Rollstone Bank & Trust Scholarship

4

Patrick Conlan
Leominster Center for Technical Education Innovation
 Awarded: Salny Family Scholarship

5



Cailin Joyce
Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School
 Awarded: Chamber Foundation Scholarship

6

Margaret Constantino
St. Bernard's High School
 Awarded: M. Ruth Lee Scholarship

7



Cailey LeBlanc
Oakmont Regional High School
 Awarded: Elizabeth & Anthony DiGeronimo Family Scholarship

8

Jackson Dallas Mark
Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School
 Awarded: Enterprise Bank & Trust

9



Vivian Liu
The Bromfield School
 Awarded: Workers Credit Union

10

Victoria Fagundes
North Middlesex Regional High School
 Awarded: David L. McKeehan Scholarship

11



Kaitlyn Ostrowski
The Bromfield School
 Awarded: Chamber Foundation Scholarship

12

Lindsey Parise
Nashoba Valley
Technical High School
 Awarded: George R. Wallace, Jr. and Alice G. Wallace Scholarship

13



Vincent Soubbotin
Leominster Center for
Technical Education
Innovation
 Awarded: Chamber Foundation Scholarship

14

Kelly Provencial
Oakmont Regional
High School
 Awarded: Benjamin Asher Scholarship

15



Verda Tetteh
Fitchburg High School
 Awarded: UMass Memorial HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital Scholarship

16

Lindsay Romano
Oakmont Regional
High School
 Awarded: Roderick W. & Donna M. Lewin Scholarship

17



Hana Valikangas
North Middlesex
Regional High School
 Awarded: Elizabeth & Anthony DiGeronimo Family Scholarship

18

Jocelyn Rossignol
Clinton High School
 Awarded: Patricia S. Alario Scholarship

19



Henry Vandermillen
Groton-Dunstable
Regional High School
 Awarded: Ronald Ansin Scholarship

20

Lauren Ruggiero
Lunenburg High School
 Awarded: Adams Family Scholarship

21



Cynthia Wangeera
North Middlesex
Regional High School
 Awarded: UMass Memorial HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital Scholarship

22

Kaden Scopelliti
Fitchburg High School
 Awarded: UMass Memorial HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital Scholarship

23



Thailee Zarycki
Leominster High School
 Awarded: UMass Memorial HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital Scholarship

24

Edward Siaw
Leominster High School
 Awarded: Edward C. J. Healey Scholarship

25



Ardon Zibel
Leominster High School
 Awarded: M. Ruth Lee Scholarship

26

Continued from page 16

“Congratulations to the students who were awarded scholarships from the North Central Massachusetts Chamber Foundation,” said Roy M. Nascimento, President & CEO of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce. “The Chamber is committed to providing these scholarships to local students to continue their education and

develop into future leaders in North Central Massachusetts. Thank you to the many local businesses who helped make these scholarships possible.”

The Chamber 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 Chamber’s Foundation are

utilized primarily for education/workforce development initiatives and charitable activities in North Central Massachusetts.

For more information on the North Central Massachusetts Chamber Foundation’s scholarship program or to view a list of the named scholarships, please visit northcentralmass.com or call 978.353.7600 ext. 222. ◇

TOURISM update

VISIT NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS UPDATE

We saw great success with our Spring “Discover Your Next Adventure” campaign which concluded in June. The campaign utilized a mix of paid print, digital and social media advertising to promote the region as a safe and family friendly destination. VisitNorthCentral.com saw strong traffic from the campaign, with visitors increasing by 230% compared to the same timeframe the previous year (and a 102% increase compared to 2019) and pageviews increasing by 304% (92% increase compared to 2019). On Facebook, the campaign had 333,676 impressions from April to June and over 17,500 engagements, which represents a



“Discover Your Next Adventure” campaign featured advertisements in key markets promoting visiting the region. Pictured here is an ad that ran in AAA Magazines throughout the Northeast.

394% increase over the same period the previous year. Independent data sources that we use to track visitation shows that the region saw a 284% increase in visitors from April to June compared to 2020 and a 30% increase over the same time period in 2019. Lodging data also shows signs that the region is experiencing some

recovery from the pandemic, although some of the numbers are still below pre-pandemic levels. The Spring months saw very strong increases in occupancy rates, revenue per room (RevPar), average daily rate (ADR), room availability and rooms sold. Hotel occupancy for YTD through July was 56.2%, a 20.6% increase over the previous year,

however ADR was down through the year by 12.7%. Room availability was up 22%, RevPar was up 5.3%, total room revenue was up 28.6% and rooms sold was up 47.2% for YTD through July.

The Chamber’s tourism arm, Visit North Central Massachusetts (VNCM), has developed its annual marketing plan to promote the region to visitors and groups for the new fiscal year that started July 1, 2021. The marketing plan will be executed in alignment with the recently released “One North Central” Economic Development Plan which highlights tourism as a priority industry for employment and

Continued on page 19

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

Continued from page 18

revenue in our region. The marketing plan was approved by the Board of Directors and submitted to the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism as part of our annual tourism grant submission. Marketing efforts will continue to target the regional drive market within a 250-mile radius, including key origin markets like Boston, Southern Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Connecticut and Rhode Island highlighting our safety, rural character and the unique and engaging experiences that North Central Massachusetts has to offer. We plan to expand our investment in our marketing efforts, utilizing a diverse mix of digital and print advertising in our target markets. We are planning to continue with the strategy of updating our website and social media platforms with strong content, continuing to optimize our site for new searches and investing in social

media to promote, connect and engage with visitors. We also plan to resume attending trade shows in the next year to further promote the region as a destination to groups and other target markets.

In other news, VNCM recently applied for a matching capital grant from the state to make some modest renovations and improve the overall experience for the 165,000 annual visitors to the Johnny Appleseed Visitors Center on Route 2. Our vision is to not only operate the best visitor center in the state, but to also transform the center into a destination that provides an engaging experience and encourages visitors to learn more about the region's communities, local attractions and businesses. The Fall/Winter edition of the Guide to North Central Massachusetts is now available and will be distributed throughout the region and New England. Copies can be picked up at the Chamber office or at the Visitor Center. ♦



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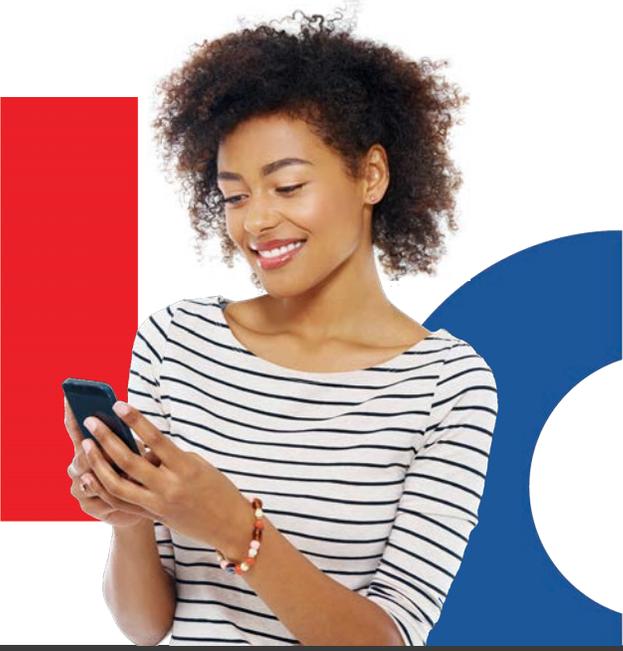


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QUICK hits



AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Chamber Ambassador, Scherrie Keating of Diabetes Kare Consulting, who was voted among her committee peers as the 2020- 2021 Ambassador of the Year.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS OF NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

Congratulations to Kelly Rooney of Leominster Credit Union who was selected as the Chair of the Chamber's Young Professionals of North Central Massachusetts.

AGING SERVICES OF NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REBRAND

The Chamber recently celebrated the rebrand of Aging Services of North Central Massachusetts at their headquarters in Leominster. Congratulations to the ASNCM team! Pictured here is Lori Richardson, CEO of ASNCM and Chamber President Roy Nascimento.



QUICK HITS CONTINUED...



SPONSOR RECEPTION

In June, the Chamber hosted a special reception at Bull Run Restaurant to thank members who sponsored our programs and events over the previous year. Their support of these important programs contributed towards our success in growing the economy and serving our members.



INSPIRE COUNSELING AND SUPPORT CENTER RIBBON CUTTING

The Chamber recently celebrated the grand opening of Inspire Counseling and Support Center in Leominster. Congratulations to the Inspire Counseling and Support Center crew!



CLI CLASS OF 2021 VOLUNTEERS WITH NORTH COUNTRY LAND TRUST

Members of our Community Leadership Class of 2021 volunteered with North Country Land Trust and had a fun evening of trail work at Mount Watatic!



BUSINESS AFTER HOURS – FITCHBURG CITY HALL

The Chamber would like to thank the City of Fitchburg for hosting a Business After Hours back in July at their new City Hall!



QUICK HITS
CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

QUICK HITS CONTINUED...

AIS, INC. MANUFACTURING TOUR

Employees of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce had the opportunity to visit AIS and tour their facility in Leominster.



LEOMINSTER'S NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR VISITS CHAMBER OFFICE

Leominster's new Economic Development Coordinator and former Chamber Ambassador, Amanda Curtis, stopped by the Chamber office recently to discuss her new role in the City and our One North Central Regional Economic Development Plan.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE DAN SENA VISITS CHAMBER OFFICE

State Representative Dan Sena stopped by the Chamber office to discuss the One North Central Regional Economic Development Plan in July. Pictured L to R, Travis Condon, Public Affairs Manager at the Chamber; State Representative Dan Sena; and Roy Nascimento, Chamber President.



MASSECON EVENT

Chamber President Roy Nascimento and Bruce Platzman, CEO of AIS, Inc. in Leominster were panelists for a recent event hosted by MassEcon on the advantages of doing business in the region. Photos courtesy of MassEcon.

QUICK HITS CONTINUED...



FITCHBURG CITY HALL RIBBON CUTTING

The Chamber recently helped celebrate the grand opening of Fitchburg's new City Hall, a "City Hall for All." Congratulations to everyone who was involved with the City Hall project!



CHAMBER RECEIVES NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AWARD

The Chamber was honored with an award from the Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts (AIVA) for its "A Message for North Central Massachusetts" video that was unveiled in March, 2020.



YATIM CENTRAL CONVENIENCE RIBBON CUTTING

The Chamber recently helped celebrate the grand opening of Yatim Central Convenience's new location in Lunenburg. Congratulations to the Yatim Central Convenience crew!



SOLVUS GLOBAL VISIT

On Friday August 27th, the Chamber accompanied Senate Ways and Means Chairman Michael Rodrigues and Senator John Cronin on a visit to the region. The day's final stop at Solvus Global included a discussion on workforce development with Chamber President & CEO Roy Nascimento; Jeff Roberge, Executive Director of the MassHire North Central Workforce Board; Mount Wachusett Community College's President, James Vander Hooven; and VP of External Affairs, Lea Ann Scales; along with Leominster Mayor Dean Mazzarella and members of his administration. Solvus Global CEO, Aaron Birt, provided a tour of their new Leominster location along with insight into their plans for the facility.



Looking for ways to network with other business professionals in the area?

Check out the Chamber's monthly "Connect North Central" program. This networking event provides you with a great opportunity to foster relationships with other businesses in North Central Massachusetts! Visit www.NorthCentralMass.com for more information or to register for an upcoming program.

SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE — BE VISIBLE —

Participate in Chamber programs and watch your business grow.

The Chamber offers members the opportunity to showcase their products and services by sponsoring programs and events throughout the year. From the smallest to largest business, we provide multiple sponsorship opportunities and various programs to meet our member's marketing needs. Regardless of your budget, there is a sponsorship opportunity available for you at the North Central Massachusetts Chamber!

For more information on sponsorship opportunities, please contact Kat Deal, Events & Programs Manager at 978.353.7600 ext. 235 or via email at kdeal@northcentralmass.com.

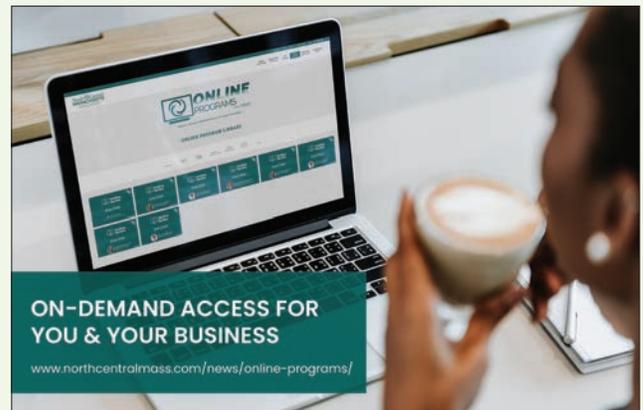


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EXPLORE the North Central Massachusetts Chamber's on-demand online program library and access training sessions, workshops and seminars that will help your business succeed. Access the library at www.NorthCentralMass.com.

Save the Date

WLC
WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONNECTION

GUEST SPEAKER
Lauren Baker
The First Lady of Massachusetts

Women's Leadership Connection is meeting on September 22, 2021 starting at 11:45 a.m. at Great Wolf Lodge. We are honored to have First Lady of Massachusetts Lauren Baker as our guest speaker.

Her continued passion for service and social responsibility is evident through her commitment to a number of causes. As a Co-Founder of the Massachusetts Covid-19 Relief Fund, Lauren

helped raise over \$31 Million for statewide emergency humanitarian relief. Lauren actively serves on the Regional Board of Directors for the American Red Cross of Massachusetts, the Wonderfund, Phoenix Charter Academy Foundation and The Care Institute.

Registration is required for this event and includes lunch.

Thank you to the Women's Leadership Connection Sponsor Fidelity Bank. ♦

Save the Date
WINTER RECEPTION
at The Museum of Russian Icons

Thursday,
December 2nd, 2021

Visit northcentralmass.com for more information or to register the event

Sponsored by:
AIS

Save the Date

2021
North Central MASSACHUSETTS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Legislative & Candidates Reception

Sponsored by:
Mount Wachusett Community College

Back by popular demand! Mark your calendars for the Chamber's Annual Legislative & Candidates Reception scheduled for Thursday, September 23, 2021 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Chocksett Inn, 59 Laurelwood Road in Sterling, MA. The reception is one of the premier events of the season in North Central Massachusetts. Mount Wachusett Community College is the premier sponsor for the event.

This is a great opportunity to connect and engage with elected officials and business leaders from throughout the region.

The event will feature an open bar and gourmet appetizers and hors d'oeuvres. Cost for members is \$35 and the general public is \$45. Registration is available online at www.northcentralmass.com or by calling the Chamber at 978.353.7600 ext. 235. ♦

DON'T MISS A THING!

Sign up for the Chamber's emails TODAY!

Get the latest business news, events and updates.

SUBSCRIBE AT
www.northcentralmass.com/news/e-news

Full Calendar of Events on Page 26

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.

The Chamber is following recommendations made by the CDC when it comes to in person events. We look forward to seeing fully COVID-19 vaccinated individuals, as well as those not vaccinated - who are recommended to wear a mask and appropriately socially distance. If you are experiencing any signs of illness within two weeks of the event date, we kindly ask for you to not attend the event. Check www.NorthCentralMass.com for changes on upcoming events.

September 8

Human Resource Council: Return to Work

*Chamber Conference Room
12:00 PM – 1:30 PM*

September 14

Small Business RoundTable: Creating Digital Ads

*Chamber Conference Room
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM*

September 17

Good Morning North Central

*Great Wolf Lodge
6:45 AM – 8:30 AM*

September 22

Women's Leadership Connection featuring First Lady Lauren Baker

*Great Wolf Lodge
11:45 AM – 1:30 PM*

September 23

Legislative & Candidates Reception

*Chocksett Inn
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM*

September 24

Connect North Central

*Chamber Conference Room
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM*

September 28

Work North Central Massachusetts Hiring Event!

*Great Wolf Lodge
11:00 AM – 6:00 PM*

October 6

Human Resource Council: Recruit & Retain

*Chamber Conference Room
12:00 PM – 1:30 PM*

October 12-13

Quickbooks 2 Day Seminar

8:00 AM – 12:00 AM

October 13

Business After Hours: AIS, Inc

*AIS
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM*

October 14

Congressional Luncheon

*Great Wolf Lodge
11:30 AM – 1:30 PM*

October 29

Connect North Central

*Chamber Conference Room
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM*

November 9

**Small Business RoundTable:
Getting Your Business Organized!**

*Chamber Conference Room
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM*

November 10

**Human Resource Council:
Cyber Security**

*Chamber Conference Room
12:00 PM – 1:30 PM*

November 12

Good Morning North Central

6:45 AM – 8:30 AM

November 19

Connect North Central

*Chamber Conference Room
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM*

December 2

Winter Reception

*Russian Icon Museum
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM*

The Guide to North Central Massachusetts: 2021 Fall/ Winter Issue



VISIT NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS is excited to announce that the 2021 Fall/Winter Issue of the Guide to North Central Massachusetts will be available starting September 1st. You will be able to find a copy of the guide throughout Southern New England at 250+ different locations and 46 AAA offices. It can also be found at the Johnny Appleseed Visitors' Center on Route 2 in Lancaster. The Guide to North Central Massachusetts is published to assist in promoting tourism and travel in the North Central Massachusetts region. The guide is printed twice a year and has seasonal stories and a calendar of events that encompasses some of the great events happening in North Central Massachusetts. ♦

Save the Date

WorkNorthCentral Hiring Event

Find your next job in North Central Massachusetts!

Recognizing the challenges that local employers are facing with recruiting and retaining qualified workers, the Chamber is hosting this regional jobs fair on Tuesday, September 28, 2021 from 11:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Great Wolf Lodge, 150 Great Wolf Drive, Fitchburg, MA.

Reserve your space today! Space is limited and we are anticipating a strong response. The Work North Central Hiring Event will be free for jobs seekers and the Chamber

will be heavily marketing the event using print, digital, social media, and earned media. We are also partnering with the North Central Massachusetts Career Center, Workforce Investment Board, Fitchburg State University, Mount Wachusett Community College and others to help spread the word to jobs seekers.

For more information or to reserve your spot, contact Kat Deal at 978.353.7600 Ext. 235 or email kdeal@northcentralmass.com ♦

North Central MASSACHUSETTS

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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WorkNorthCentral Jobs Board

Find your next job in North Central Massachusetts!

The Chamber is proud to offer members the opportunity to post an unlimited number of job openings at no cost. Premium job postings are available for members starting at the Business Growth Level of membership and above.

Start posting your jobs at
WorkNorthCentral.com!

