

Summer 2022 Edition

chamber

north central massachusetts report

Building Businesses. Building Communities.

ROLLING OUT THE WELCOME MAT NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS SHINES AS A VISITOR DESTINATION



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North Central
MASSACHUSETTS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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at Heywood Hospital



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North Central MASSACHUSETTS

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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For Editorial & Advertising

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About the Cover:

This edition of the Chamber Report takes a look at our growing tourism economy. The feature article highlights the economic impact to the region, as well as the importance of our collective efforts to attract more visitors and support the region from a placemaking and talent retention standpoint. In this edition you will also find profiles of our 2022 Chamber scholarship recipients, news and updates from the Chamber and so much more. We continue to be focused on growing our local economy and making sure the business climate in North Central Massachusetts is a strong one to help your business grow. Thank you for taking the time to see what your Chamber and our members and partners have been up to. We hope that you enjoy reading the Chamber Report!

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COME, SIP & STAY

FEATURED MEMBER PROFILE

MAKING OPPORTUNITY COUNT

Empowers Local Community Through Additional Resources

There are a few handfuls of designated community action agencies that truly stand out among the rest. Making Opportunity Count (MOC), located in Fitchburg, Ma., has thrived through their community outreach, providing systems, programs, and collaboration for low-income individuals and families to build pathways out of poverty.

According to their website, their mission is to empower families to achieve economic security by eliminating barriers and creating opportunities. Nicole Michaud, Vice President of Advancement, said it best when asked about MOC's clients:

"We're here for people facing serious crisis like potential homelessness, and we're here for people who find themselves needing a little extra support, especially since the pandemic when unemployment soared and we could help through our emergency assistance program to pay utilities or rent," she stated. "If we aren't able to assist clients ourselves, we will find other resources and be that connector for the local community. We do everything we can to help people avoid crises moving forward."



MOC Grand Opening | Photo courtesy of Danielle Ray, Sentinel & Enterprise.

Making Opportunity Count serves the 30 cities and towns that span the North Central Massachusetts region. Most recently, MOC has grown programming to include behavioral health and a youth innovation center located in Fitchburg.

The Counseling Center at MOC launched from staff recognizing that there was a need to support mental health in the local area, as well as an additional and important need to create another opportunity out of poverty. Their website states that all services are designed to meet clients' individualized treatment needs through consultation, collaboration and coordination of care that respects their strengths and differences. Additionally, the center is committed to inclusive care and serves people of all ages, backgrounds, and types of needs.

The Counseling Center offers a variety of languages to bring mental health care access to non-English speakers, and has prioritized diversifying the Center's staff through a variety of strategies including an intern program. Through grant funding, the Counseling Center provides paid practicum opportunities for students of color attending Fitchburg State University and other colleges in the area. The initiative removes barriers to care, keeps clients engaged, and fosters a relationship between patients and therapists while providing financial support to their interns.

Currently, The Counseling Center is serving over 200 clients since becoming officially licensed in July 2021 and has nine therapists on staff.

Making Opportunity Count also continues

to further develop their Youth Innovation Center, located in the Cleghorn neighborhood in Fitchburg, Ma.

The Youth Innovation Center looks to provide resources to enable youth in the area to explore and research anything that they might be interested in pursuing for their future. It was designed by the center's Youth Founders, a core group of young individuals who guided MOC in what they wanted the space to look like, feel like, and what should be included and focus on.

"[The Youth Innovation Center] aims to be a space for them to have the resources to explore what interests them," said Michaud.

The Center's space includes a multimedia room for podcasting, music editing, vlogging, and other digital arts, partnered with the Fitchburg Access TV station; a makerspace with a dry studio for artwork and creativity, in coordination with the Fitchburg Art Museum; and an open floor plan for performances or wellness activities.

Additionally, the Center looks to include a mentorship component to assist youth in exploring their interests and hearing

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from real-life experiences in the local community. “It’s flexible and fluid; we built the space to be able to accommodate future generations of youth,” she said.

The Center is looking to open in July 2022, after final construction is complete.

Several opportunities that MOC brings to the community could not have been possible without the assistance of the North

Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce.

“We appreciate the diverse program offerings and networking opportunities from the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce,” said Colby O’Brien, Senior Director of Advancement at MOC. “We love getting to know the different community drivers in the area and fostering relationships, such as AIS, who is providing the furniture for the Youth Innovation

Center, and the local businesses and financial institutions who support us.

“What sets MOC apart from other agencies is our holistic approach to services that are driven by compassion – and that is what is needed in the community,” O’Brien said. “We get to see the impact we have on the community – from kids in Head Start or WIC to elders receiving Meals on Wheels. It’s great to see how quickly our staff respond with resources in such a caring and

compassionate way and the positive impact the agency has in our community.”

You can learn more or donate to the Making Opportunity Count’s Youth Innovation Center on their website, www.mocinc.org. If you are interested in becoming a patient or learning more about The Counseling Center at MOC, please visit www.counselingatmoc.org, or follow MOC on Facebook @makingopportunitycount and Instagram @making_opportunity_count. ♦

CHAMBER STAFF PROMOTED



Sandie Cataldo.

The Chamber is pleased to announce two promotions. Sandie Cataldo, who joined the staff in 2015, has been promoted from Economic Development Manager to Senior Economic Development Manager, and Maribel Cruz, who joined the staff in 2021 as our Community Business Advisor, has been promoted to Economic Development Manager. The promotions

were made to better reflect their responsibilities and seniority, recognize their success and contributions to our organization, and better align with the changes we have made at the Chamber’s economic development arm, the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation. Please join us in congratulating them on their well-deserved promotions! ♦



Maribel Cruz.

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GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

At the time of this writing, candidates' signatures are being verified for federal and statewide offices as election season continues to shape up. The Chamber has engaged with candidates for the Governor's race and the major constitutional offices. Efforts have included interviews with the candidates on our Inside North Central Massachusetts Podcast: Election Series, which is available on our website as well as Apple and Spotify. The Chamber is also monitoring a number of other races in North Central Massachusetts. The region's two Congressional delegates are expected to face challengers this November, and in addition to at least two open seats, a number of our State legislative delegation will also face opponents in November.

In April, Governor Charlie Baker signed a supplemental budget for FY22. One of the biggest impacts for our members was the extension of outdoor dining and to-go cocktails through April 1, 2023. The midyear spending bill also included an additional \$700 million to be directed to the ongoing COVID-19 response and \$100 million for road repairs. The Governor also filed a \$3.5 billion economic development bill that, if passed, would enable new infrastructure and jobs, and invest in



Senate President Karen Spilka hears from business and community leaders at a forum organized by Senator John Cronin.

“The Chamber is continuing to work to advance North Central Massachusetts through multiple initiatives contained in the One North Central regional economic development plan.”

every city and town in the Commonwealth. The proposed Act Investing in Future Opportunities for Resiliency, Workforce, and Revitalized Downtowns (or FORWARD) contains a significant set of opportunities to advance community and economic development, including a number of shovel-ready projects in cities and towns across the Commonwealth, while ensuring that every community would receive at least \$250,000 in funding, although a number of communities in our footprint would be poised to receive a larger amount.

After the Governor released his \$48.5 billion

budget proposal for FY23, the Chamber spent time engaging with House delegates while they crafted their \$49.7 billion version of the budget in the latter half of April. The Chamber also attended a roundtable with Senate President Karen Spilka at the MassHire North Central Career Center. The roundtable, organized by Senator John Cronin, provided the region's stakeholders the opportunity to engage the Senate President on a number of issues facing the region including the need for an increase in resources for English language learners in education, the ongoing shortage of

available workers, and the need to further support initiatives to develop the workforce and talent pipeline. As of this writing, the Senate has unveiled their \$49.68 billion budget with debate set for late May. The Chamber was pleased that several priority areas, including workforce development and economic development were included, but disappointed that tourism priorities were not included in the Senate's budget proposal. The Chamber will work with our Senate delegation and our members in the visitor sector to advocate for tourism in the final budget. Once the Senate passes their budget, then it will move onto conference committee where differences between the House and Senate will be reconciled.

In addition to the budget discussions, the Chamber continues to monitor Governor Baker's \$700 million tax relief proposal released earlier

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this year along with his \$1.7 billion proposed supplemental budget unveiled in May. While attempts to suspend the state's gas tax have been thwarted, there is hope that the Governor's relief package or something comparable could pass in the legislature. The Department of Revenue announced that April tax collections came in more than \$3 billion more than what was collected in April 2021 and more than \$2 billion above their own monthly benchmark. Other big issues that are still pending before the legislature include sports

betting, mental health, round 2 of the ARPA budget, and climate and energy policy.

The Chamber is continuing to work to advance North Central Massachusetts through multiple initiatives contained in the One North Central regional economic development plan. Senator Cronin spearheaded an effort to secure funding in the first round of ARPA funding that will aid us in reconvening the education compact to work on initiatives surrounding workforce development and developing a talent pipeline. Fitchburg and Gardner,

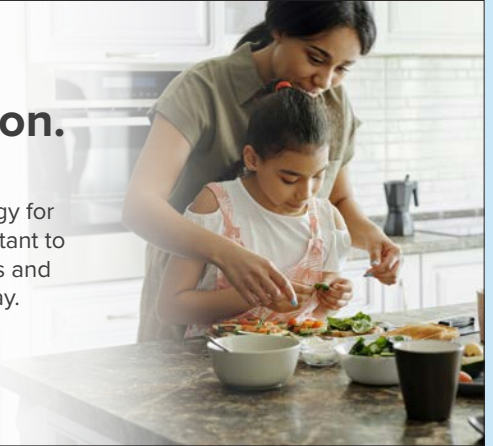
along with the Chamber's economic development arm, are also contributing funds to help with a new initiative aimed at attracting new investment to the region.

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. ♦

Energy is our passion.

We take pride in providing the energy for life that is so important to our families, friends and neighbors every day.

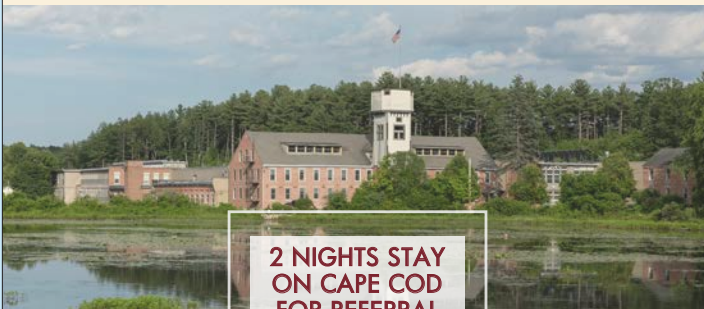


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CHRISTOPHER MCCARTHY TO CHAIR CHAMBER'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Christopher W. McCarthy.

Christopher W. McCarthy, president and COO of Fidelity Bank has been elected Chair of the Chamber's Board of Directors for 2022-2023. The announcement was made at the Chamber's Annual Meeting on June 9, 2022.

McCarthy was named president and COO of Fidelity Bank in 2015, after more than twenty years of experience in community banking. Headquartered in Leominster, Fidelity

Bank is one of the oldest and continually growing independent, local community banks in Central Massachusetts. Fidelity offers a full range of banking, investment and insurance products and programs, and operates thirteen full-service banking centers located throughout the region.

McCarthy earned both a Bachelor's degree in Marketing and an MBA from Nichols College. He also holds a post-graduate degree from the Graduate School of Banking at Colorado.

In addition to his involvement with the Chamber, McCarthy serves on a number of boards and charitable organizations, including the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, the Worcester Business Development Corporation and Saint Vincent Hospital.

He is also active at his alma mater, Nichols College, serving as a member of the College's Board of Advisors.

He succeeds Rachel Lopez, president of Resource Management Inc. (RMI) who now moves to the position of Immediate Past Chair of the Board of Directors.

"It is an honor and privilege to have been elected Chair of this dynamic and respected organization that plays such an important role in North Central Massachusetts," expressed McCarthy, "I am excited to continue Rachel Lopez's efforts and make sure the Chamber remains a strong resource for the local business community."

As the Chair, McCarthy will work with the Board, Chamber staff, and membership to champion the

Chamber in its mission to serve the region's business community.

In the same election, James L. Vander Hooven, Ed.D., president of Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner was elected Vice-Chair; director Barbara Mahoney, president & CEO of Leominster Credit Union was elected Treasurer; and director Dr. Richard Lapidus, president of Fitchburg State University was elected Assistant Treasurer. New members elected to the Board were Winfield Brown, president of Heywood Hospital; Jackie Cullen, owner of RiverStyx Brewing; Melissa Glenny, president of Franklin Professional Associates; Mike Johansen, president of Bemis Associates; and Lori Richardson, president of Aging Services of North Central Massachusetts. ♦



NEW NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS CHAMBER MEMBERS

873 Cafe and Tavern

873 Main Street
Ashby, MA
RESTAURANT

Behavioral Health Perspectives LLC

76 Summer Street, Suite 145A
Fitchburg, MA
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Better Day Solutions/ The Crypto Patio

481 Electric Avenue
Fitchburg, MA
BUSINESS SERVICE

East Coast Sales and Liquidation

41 Main Street
Leominster, MA
RETAIL STORE

E-for All Greater Worcester

175 Cabot Street, Suite 100
Lowell, MA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ORGANIZATION

Fitchburg Acupuncture

21 Culley Street
Fitchburg, MA
ACUPUNCTURE

Fitchburg Cultural Alliance

675 Main Street
Fitchburg, MA
ARTS & CULTURE
ORGANIZATION

Fitchburg Healthcare

1199 John Fitch Highway
Fitchburg, MA
SKILLED NURSING FACILITY

Freedom's Way National Heritage Area

94 Jackson Road, Suite 311
Devens, MA
NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

G.T. Smith Jr. Inc.

207 S. Ashburnham Road
Westminster, MA
EXCAVATING

Game On Fitchburg

100 Game On Way
Fitchburg, MA
RECREATION & SPORTS

Golden Key Realty LLC

P.O. Box 141
Westminster, MA
REALTORS

Leominster Animal Hospital

129 New Lancaster Road
Leominster, MA
VETERINARIES

Lunel Technologies

100 Powder Mill, Suite 145
Acton, MA
ELECTRICAL

Mully's Indoor Golf Lounge

44 Old Princeton Road
Fitchburg, MA
GOLF

Naturale Foods

70 Nashua Street
Ayer, MA
FOOD DISTRIBUTOR

Next Generation Elite LLC

44 Old Princeton Road
Fitchburg, MA
FITNESS

Paramount Trust Insurance

2 Shaker Road, Suite B103
Shirley, MA
INSURANCE COMPANY

Razz-M-Tazz Promotions, LLC

94 Worcester Road
Westminster, MA
PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

Royal Flush Plumbing

48 Clemence Road
West Townsend, MA
PLUMBING/PIPING/
HEATING/AIR CONDITIONING

Sandra Vernet Communications

Leominster, MA
PUBLISHER/WRITER

Tough Stuff Recycling

145 Authority Drive
Fitchburg, MA
WASTE/RECYCLING

UniFirst

8 Industrial Park Drive
Nashua, NH
BUSINESS SERVICE

Vending Zone

Fitchburg, MA
VENDING

Wireless Zone - Verizon

975 Merriam Avenue, Suite 115
Leominster, MA
RETAIL STORE

Worcester Area Mission Society (WAMS)

6 Institute Road
Worcester, MA
NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Worcester Regional Food Hub

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World Farmers

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AGRICULTURE

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MARCH — MAY

FASTRACK MICRO-LOAN PROGRAM LAUNCHED

The Chamber's economic development arm, the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation (NCMDC), has launched the Financing And Support Track Loan (FASTrack) Program to help small businesses obtain immediate, small-dollar funding to support a variety of needs.

This new loan program was designed to help local small businesses obtain quick access to capital and avoid using high-interest credit cards or online lending offerings. The FASTrack

Program, which offers loans of up to \$5,000, provides decisions within two business days of applying and closing within two weeks, if approved. All fees and closing costs are waived, and the loan terms include a fixed interest rate and no prepayment penalty. If approved, the business is also eligible to receive business assistance from NCMDC staff and consultants.

The FASTrack Program is open to businesses with a minimum of one year in business and at least one year's tax return. The loans

can be used for working capital, debt consolidation, equipment, inventory and repairs.

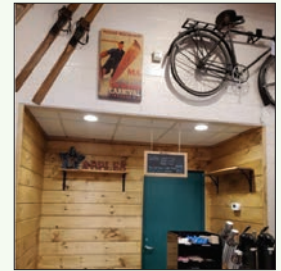
As a microloan lender, NCMDC can provide loans to small businesses up to \$250,000 for working capital, real estate, equipment, inventory, expansion and working with our banking partners to provide gap financing for the final piece of a project.

For more information about the NCMDC loan programs, please call 978.353.7607 or visit NorthCentralMass.com. ♦

CHAMBER UPDATES



The Boards of the Chamber and its affiliates met in the Spring at the Groton Inn for a day long strategic planning session.



Renovations have been completed at the Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center in Lancaster.

STRATEGIC PLANNING: The boards of the Chamber, the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation and Visit North Central Massachusetts met in the Spring to begin working on the Chamber's next strategic plan. They reviewed the great progress made on our current strategic plan and discussed a variety of topics that are crucial to supporting our members and keeping our region a vibrant place to live, work and visit. We would love to hear from you. What can the Chamber and our affiliate organizations do over the next three years to support your organizations and the communities of North Central Massachusetts? Please send us your ideas and share your feedback by emailing rnascimento@northcentralmass.com.

LAND BANK: The Chamber has commissioned a planning study to help us flesh out the Land Bank concept that was recommended in the One North Central economic development plan. The land bank concept was recommended as a tool to help spur more real estate development in the region. It would provide the region a method to identify and acquire land for economic development, market the property, and sell/lease the land when

a prospect is identified. The study will commence this Summer and should be completed by the Fall.

VISITOR CENTER: Our Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center in Lancaster has completed some renovations and upgrades to help improve the experience and better showcase the region to the more than 165,000 visitors that stop there each year. Renovations include new floors, rustic paneling on the walls, new rugs and new office furniture thanks to a generous donation from AIS. Handicap doors, new security cameras, a dog walking station, a water refilling station and new signage were also added. Matching funds to help support the project came from a grant from the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism and from the City of Leominster.

NEW LOANS: The Chamber's economic development arm – the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation - has closed 15 micro-loans for a total of \$561,500 since October 1, 2021. The loans were made to a mix of existing and start-up businesses and ranged from \$6,000 to \$150,000. There are another four loans totaling \$458,500 that have been approved but have not closed yet.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: During the last quarter, our team provided over 300 hours of direct technical assistance to small businesses. We also hosted several workshops and seminars geared towards supporting small businesses, including a webinar in Spanish on marketing, a workshop on digital marketing and a session on business planning and cost control. This spring, we hosted our first client reception to thank our loan clients and connect them with resource partners.

FAÇADE AND POP-UP SHOP GRANTS: The North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation is partnering with ReImagine North of Main in Fitchburg and the City of Leominster to help fund façade improvements for a number of small businesses in both Cities and a pop-up shop program in Fitchburg. The project is funded through a state grant the development corporation received.

WELCOME SIGNS: The Chamber is sponsoring the construction of welcome signs at key entrances in the cities of Fitchburg, Gardner and Leominster. The signs are intended to provide a positive first impression to

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visitors, potential investors and future residents, as well as boost civic pride. The new signs were designed to look like traditional New England style community welcome signs, except they are made of composite for their durability and longevity. Each sign is carved with the city's seal and painted to match the official colors of the community. We are working with the three cities to identify key gateways for the signs. We have selected Leominster based company Add-A-Sign to design and construct them.

DIGITAL MARKETING: Traffic to our websites is averaging approximately 12,232 unique page views each month for FY2022. This represents a 2.3% increase over the prior year. We continue to be very active on social media, populating our Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter platforms with our content. Our social media platforms have a combined 21,836 total followers. In CY2021, our social media platforms garnered an average of 217,000 impressions monthly and a total of nearly 2.4 million impressions for the year. That represents a 20% increase over the previous year.

JOBS BOARD: The Chamber continues to promote the WorkNorthCentral.com online jobs board as a resource to connect employers and job seekers in North Central Massachusetts. The jobs board has had over 8,000 jobs posted and more than 76,000 views since being launched. We encourage members to post any employment opportunities they offer on the jobs board or send them to us and we will post them for you.

ENERGY SAVINGS: From its inception in August 2014 through April 2022 the solar field on Pleasant St. has produced 10,960,426 kWh of Net Metering Credits to the



Pictured here is a design of one of the Welcome signs being sponsored by the Chamber.

manufacturers participating in the program. Total value of these credits is \$2,404,344 and the collective savings to participants totals \$2,043,692.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: Developing the pipeline of talent for our members and communities to compete continues to be a priority for the Chamber. As referenced in our last edition of this newsletter, the Chamber has commissioned a workforce study to assess and recommend ways to enhance the labor pool in the region. We are

expecting the study to be completed this Summer and hope it will be a resource to help develop strategies to deal with the workforce challenges faced by employers. In addition, we continue to partner with Mount Wachusett Community College and the Spanish American Center on the national Equitable Credentialing Initiative that our region was selected for through the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives and the American Association of Community Colleges. ♦



Maribel Cruz and Sandie Cataldo of the Chamber staff assist a small business owner. Over 300 hours of direct technical assistance was provided during the last quarter.

CHAMBER LAUNCHES REVISED GIFT LOCAL GIFT CARD PROGRAM

After launching the Gift Local Community Gift Card Program back in 2016, the North Central Massachusetts Chamber is proud to announce the introduction of a new Gift Local E-Gift Card – a very user-friendly and more robust platform making it even easier for merchants and card holders to help drive business in the region.

“The Chamber is always looking for innovative ways to help grow our members’ businesses and build community,” said Chamber President Roy Nascimento. “Participating members honored the card to help drive the local economy and keep spending local. We are now ready to take this gift card program to the next level.”

Using Yiftee as its new gift card technology partner, the Chamber will transition to the new gift card platform over the next 6 months with the original program remaining valid through December 31, 2022. Existing old Gift Local Gift Card holders (that operated on the prior system) can convert their unused card to the new format by coming to the Chamber office. The Chamber will absorb the processing fees for exchanging and activating the cards and, as a courtesy, will add a \$5 bonus to the balance on any old gift cards exchanged for a new Gift Local E-Gift Card.

Chamber members will be hearing much more about the new Gift Local E-Gift Card in the



“The Chamber is always looking for innovative ways to help grow our members’ businesses and build community.”

— Roy M. Nascimento

weeks and months ahead. Consumers can purchase the Card as gifts or for self-use, and companies can use it for employee rewards, anniversary gifts, customer appreciation, survey incentives, contests and anything they might have used a gift card for.

“Most importantly, the dollars stay local and benefit our shops and restaurants and our communities,” added Nascimento.

The new Gift Local E-Gift Card is much more convenient for both participating merchants to process and for gift card holders to redeem. People can purchase the E-Cards

online and email, text or print them for use in shops, restaurants and other local services. To accept the Cards, participating merchants just need to accept Mastercard and process it via a key-entry (like a phone order). There will no longer be any need for a separate web terminal for processing, dual entries into the terminal and POS system, and any costly POS integration.

There is no additional cost for Chamber merchants to participate in the program. To opt-in, they simply run a 10- cent charge (or whatever is their minimum) on a prepaid Mastercard that Yiftee will send by email (the “Activation Card”). This serves as the authorization to participate and businesses agree to Yiftee’s Merchant Agreement found here: yifteeutil.com/merchant_agreement.pdf. Participating merchants will be paid through their credit card bank in their normal settlement, with their normal Mastercard

CNP processing fee. The Cards only work at participating merchants who opt-in to the program.

Businesses interested in accepting these Cards should contact the Chamber office as soon as possible. The Chamber is planning to launch the new card to the public by September 1, 2022 with a marketing campaign and merchants who are signed up will be featured.

“We hope participating businesses will continue to honor the card and encourage fellow business owners to join in accepting the gift card,” said Nascimento. “We also encourage new businesses to sign up to help drive more local dollars spent in the region. We’re very excited about this new E-card and developing new business for our members.”

To sign up to accept the new Gift Local e-Gift Card or for more information, call Lauren Goulet, Chamber Operations Manager, at 978.353.7600 or email lgoulet@northcentralmass.com. ♦

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Now Accepting Applications for the Class of 2023



Community Leadership Institute class of 2022 at the Kick-off Luncheon hear from Dr. Michael Greenwood.

The Community Leadership Institute is now accepting applications for the 2022-2023 program year. The Community Leadership Institute began in 1988, known then as Leadership North Central. Over the last

25 years, more than 275 participants have graduated from the Institute and become leaders in their communities, with over 100 in the last five years. Participants for the Institute are sponsored by their business and

are seen as leaders or potential leaders within that company. The best leaders know that training their successors to be competent, knowledgeable and well-connected community leaders is crucial for the North

Central Massachusetts community's economic vitality. The Community Leadership Institute was developed to support the access to the region's many organizations, industries and business leaders as part of the succession plan not only for individual businesses but for the community at large in this 21st century technology and knowledge-driven economy.

Deadline to apply for the 2022-2023 Community Leadership Institute is **August 26, 2022.**

Please contact Kat Deal with questions regarding the Community Leadership Institute at 978.353.7600 ext. 235 or by email kdeal@northcentralmass.com! ◇

WorkNorthCentral Jobs Board

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CHAMBER CELEBRATES THE TOP SCHOLARS IN NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

Congratulations to the 2022 Scholarship Recipients

In May, the Chamber recognized twenty-six of the most outstanding high school seniors in the region at our popular annual Scholars Breakfast. A total of \$52,000 in scholarships from the Chamber Foundation was distributed to these seniors. These awards were either endowed or funded by companies and individuals. The Scholarship Committee selected the 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.

Congratulations to the scholarship recipients for their impressive achievements, as well as their parents for the support they provided that helped make their success possible, and the educators and community leaders that invested in nurturing this future generation of leaders. The Chamber would like to acknowledge the following members for sponsoring the 2022 Scholars Breakfast. The proceeds

from the breakfast support the Chamber Foundation.

The Chamber wishes to also thank the many members who contributed towards the scholarships. Since 1985, the Chamber Foundation has awarded over a million dollars in scholarships to over 600 students.

Members interested in establishing a scholarship for next year or contributing towards the Chamber Foundation can contact Lauren Goulet at 978.353.7600 ext. 222 or via email at lgoulet@northcentralmass.com. ♦

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SCHOLARSHIP AWARD WINNERS



ISABELLA ALLEN, a senior at Oakmont Regional High School, has been awarded the Benjamin Asher Scholarship for \$2,000. Isabella is the daughter of Christine and Daniel Allen. She plans to attend John Hopkins University to study Mechanical Engineering.

Isabella is on the National Honor Society, Robotics Club, Friends Club and participated in a new club called Best Buddies. She has played on the Varsity Softball and Varsity Cross Country teams since freshman year. She volunteers her time on her church's Outreach Committee as well as the Church Tech Crew.



BRUNA BIZ, a senior at Fitchburg High School, has been awarded a Chamber Foundation Scholarship for \$2,000. Bruna is the daughter of Simone Madeira. She plans to attend Harvard University to study Astrophysics.

Bruna is President of the National Honor Society, has been on Special Honor Roll all four years as well as been a recipient of the Renaissance Award since Freshman year. She is a Student Council Representative as well as a Student Ambassador. Bruna has danced at Miss Tanya's School of Dance for the past 16 years and was Team Captain in 2021.



LILY COMEAU, a senior at Gardner High School, has been awarded a Chamber Foundation Scholarship for \$2,000. Lily is the daughter of Susan and Richard Comeau. She plans to attend Tufts University's School of Engineering to study Computer Science.

Lily is on the National Honor Society and Treasurer of Gardner High School's Student Government. She is the Website Designer and Editor of the Gardner High News. Since 2018 Lily has been a member of the Select Choir as well as the Musical Theatre group.



TAYA CORN, a senior at North Middlesex Regional High School, has been awarded the Ronald Ansin Scholarship for \$2,000. Taya is the daughter of Kristen Erickson-Corn and Aaron Corn. She plans to attend UMass Amherst to study Physics.

Taya is on the National Honor Society and Vice President of the Tri-M Music Honor Society. She has taken trombone lessons since 2014 and plays on the Jazz Band. Taya has competed in Irish Dancing since 2010 and has taught lessons since 2018. In her spare time, she volunteers at local food banks, town library and community events.

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ELSA CRANSON, a senior at Wachusett Regional High School, has been awarded the HealthAlliance Guild Scholarship for \$2,000. Elsa is the daughter of Annalisa and Peter Cranson. She plans to attend UMass Amherst to study Biology.

Elsa is First Oboist in the audition-based symphony at the Worcester Youth Orchestra as well as an English Hornist. She plays the oboe in the Wachusett Symphony Orchestra and takes piano lessons through school. Elsa is also a Competitive Gymnastics Coach at Clinton Turner Gymnastics.



CAROLYN DORMAN, a senior at Nashoba Valley Technical High School, has been awarded a UMass Memorial HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, Inc. Scholarship for \$2,000. Carolyn is the daughter of Maureen and Brian Dorman. She plans to attend Simmons College to study Nursing.

Carolyn is on the National Honor Society as well as the National Technical Honor Society. She is on the Yearbook Club and plays on the Varsity Soccer, Track & Field, Indoor Track & Field and Cross-Country Teams. Carolyn volunteers here time in her community and enjoys baking, reading and drawing.



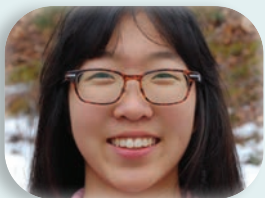
SHEA DIVOLL, a senior at Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School, has been awarded the George R. Wallace, Jr. and Alice G. Wallace Scholarship for \$2,000. Shea is the son of Shannon and Andrew Divoll. He plans to attend Worcester Polytech Institute to study Mechanical Engineering.

Shea is the President of the National Honor Society and is a member of both the Math and Chess Clubs. He participated in the Massachusetts Student Government Day in 2021. He is Captain of the Varsity Baseball Team and umpires for Westminster Little League. Shea has volunteered his time with Rotary International as well as various community service ventures.



PETER EPRO, a senior at Leominster Center for Excellence, has been awarded one of the Elizabeth & Anthony DiGeronimo Family Scholarships for \$2,000. Peter is the son of Vanessa and Brian Epro. He plans to attend Mount Wachusett Community College to study Horticultural Studies.

Peter was Student Council President his Freshman year, a Student Representative as well as a Stagehand in the school's theater club. He volunteers his time in the G.I.V.E. club, Habitat for Humanity as well as various farms. Peter prides himself in his personal plant collection. He has amassed well over 100 plants by different propagation methods.



FELICIA JAMBA, a senior at The Bromfield School, has been awarded the Adams Family Scholarship for \$2,000. Felicia is the daughter of Blythe and Nicholas Jamba. She plans to attend Georgia Institute of Technology to study Computer Science.

Felicia is President of the National Honor Society, Treasurer of the Spanish National Honor Society as well as a member of the Science National Honor Society. She is Secretary of the Student Council and a Student Advisory Council member on the District School Committee. Felicia is a member of the Garden Club, the school's yearbook as well as Team Lead & Programmer on the Bromfield Robotics Team.



EMMA KENNEY, a senior at Groton-Dunstable regional High School, has been awarded the Salny Family Scholarship for \$2,000. Emma is the daughter of Nancy and Brian Kenney. She plans to attend Elon University to study Environmental Science.

Emma is a member of the National Honor Society and was elected Executive Board President of the Student Council. She is a member of the Environmental Club, Best Buddies Club as well as a Student Peer Trainer for the World of Difference Institute: Anti-Defamation League. Emma is Co-Captain of the Varsity Volleyball Team and President of the Spanish Club.



MOLLY KIMBALL, a senior at Lunenburg High School, has been awarded a Chamber Foundation Scholarship for \$2,000. Molly is the daughter of Tamsen and Christopher Kimball. She plans to attend Boston University to study Education & Human Development.

Molly is a member of the National Honor Society, Captain of the Varsity Girls Ice Hockey Team and played on the Varsity Girls Lacrosse Team. She volunteers her time at the Learn-to-Skate Program, House Hockey Program as well as tutoring. In her off time, she enjoys beekeeping and babysitting.



ABIGAIL KIRRANE, a senior at Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School, has been awarded the David L. McKeehan Scholarship for \$2,000. Abigail is the daughter of Nicole and Francis Kirrane. She plans to attend Norwich University to study Criminal Justice.

Abigail is Team Captain of the Varsity Soccer and Lacrosse Teams. She is the Cadet Battalion Commander of the Marine Corps JROTC unit at her school. She participates on the MCJROTC Color Guard as well as Marksmanship Team. She volunteers a lot of her time with multiple organizations; NEADS, Salvation Army and Rotary Club of Fitchburg East to name a few.

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MACKENZIE KUPFER, a senior at Fitchburg High School, has been awarded the Leominster Credit Union Scholarship for \$2,000. Mackenzie is the daughter of Michelle Denning. She plans to attend Bentley University to study Finance and Sports Marketing.

Mackenzie is on the National Honor Society, a 2021 Girls State Alumni and Rotary Club Student of the Month. She is Captain of the Varsity Field Hockey Team, Ski Club President, is a member of the Varsity Ice Hockey Team and Coed Dek Hockey Team. She is the Leader of the school's food pantry, is a Peer Mediator and a Student Ambassador.



OLIVIA LATINO, a senior at Leominster High School Center for Technical Education Innovation, has been awarded a UMass Memorial HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, Inc. Scholarship for \$2,000. Olivia is the daughter of Wendy & Anthony Latino. She plans to attend Worcester State University to study Biology.

Olivia is the Treasurer of the National Honor Society and has been a member since her Sophomore year. She has been a member of G.I.V.E. all throughout high school and was named an Officer her Senior year. When she isn't working part-time at Benchmark Senior Living at Leominster Crossings or Market Basket she volunteers her time at her church, Our Lady of the Lake.



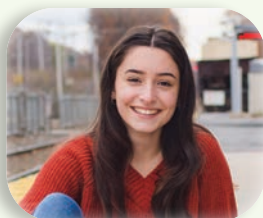
DOMINIC MONTOYA, a senior at Leominster High School, has been awarded the Edward C.J. Healey Scholarship for \$2,000. Dominic is the son of Heather Leger and Michael Montoya, Sr. He plans to attend Franklin Pierce University to study Psychology.

Dominic is on the National Honor Society as well as a member of the Student Government Program called S.T.U.M.P (Students for Transparency and Understanding Municipal Politics). He is on the Varsity Baseball Team as well as Co-Captain of the Leominster Senior Ruth Baseball Team. He volunteers his time with G.I.V.E. and with the Buddy for the Little League Challenger Baseball Program.



ADAM MULLANEY, a senior at Leominster High School, has been awarded the Enterprise Bank & Trust Scholarship for \$2,000. Adam is the son of Christina and Michael Mullaney. He plans to attend Worcester Polytech Institute in the fall.

Adam is ranked first in his class and has been on High Honor Roll all four years. He is President of his school's Math Team. Adam is on the Psychology Club, Cross Country Team and has helped tutor students in biology, algebra, geometry and chemistry.



CALLIE NELSON, a senior at Leominster High School, has been awarded a M. Ruth Lee Scholarship for \$2,000. Callie is the daughter of Lori and Michael Nelson. She plans to attend Worcester Polytech Institute to study Biology and Biotechnology.

Callie is on the National Honor Society and is also on Student Government where she was Treasurer her Sophomore and Junior years. She performs guitar and percussion in the school's Marching and Jazz Bands. She is also Band Leader for the After Hours Band which is a student lead rock band. Callie volunteers her time at her local church, tutoring as well as giving music lesson.



CAROLINE OSWITT, a senior at Wachusett Regional High School, has been awarded the Patricia S. Alario Scholarship for \$2,000. Caroline is the daughter of Jennifer and Gregory Oswitt. She plans to attend Boston College to study Economics.

Caroline is on the National Honor Society, Science National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society as well as President of the Math Honor Society. She is a Student Council Representative and plays on the Varsity Swimming Team, Lacrosse Team and Field Hockey Team where she is Captain. Caroline is Vice President of the Wachusett Leo Club (Junior Lions) and is a Mountaineer Volunteer for a community service club.



FIONA PICONE, a senior at Oakmont Regional High School, has been awarded the Roderick W. and Donna M. Lewin Scholarship for \$2,000. Fiona is the daughter of Meghan and Chris Picone. She plans to attend Williams College to study Biology.

Fiona is Vice President of the National Honor Society, Class Treasurer, and an Ambassador for both Oakmont Students and MIAA. She is Captain of the Varsity Girls Cross Country, Indoor and Outdoor Track Teams. She is a member of Students Against Destructive Decisions Club and for the past two years has been a Junior Coach for Girls On The Run.

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ALISHA PRAILEAU, a senior at North Middlesex Regional High School, has been awarded an Elizabeth & Anthony DiGeronimo Family Scholarship for \$2,000. Alisha is the daughter of Heather Pederson. She plans to attend Fitchburg State University in the fall.

Alisha is on the Varsity Soccer Team as well as the FC Stars Club Soccer Team. She participates in the High School United Soccer Camp as well as the Wind Symphony. She plays for the Pep Band at all Football Games and has played for the National Honor Society Induction. Alisha also volunteers her time tutoring 8th Grade Math.



MADELINE PRECHTL, a senior at Groton-Dunstable Regional High School, has been awarded the Barbara Silva Scholarship for \$2,000. Madeline is the daughter of Winnie and Eric Prechtl. She plans to attend Northeastern University to study Biology.

Madeline is President of the National Honor Society and Treasure of the Student Council. She is Captain of the Cross-Country Team as well as Track and Field Team. She has taken piano lessons for the past 10 years. She volunteers her time at the Groton Public Library and is a Math Tutor. In 2020 she founded the Science 4 Fun Website where she created experiment videos to post as educational entertainment for young students.



EKATERINA RAU, a senior at St. Bernard's Central Catholic High School, has been awarded the M. Ruth Lee Scholarship for \$2,000. Ekaterina is the daughter of Irina and Douglas Rau. She plans to attend Providence College to study Biology.

Ekaterina is Treasurer of the National Honor Society and Latin Club President. She is a member of the Art Club and is a Peer Tutor. Ekaterina is a Church Club Member at Faith Lutheran Church and volunteers her time at the Gardner CAC and assists the Latin 2 Teacher at her school. She is on the Athol Area YMCA Swim Team as well.



MARGOT SONIA, a senior at Nashoba Regional High School, has been awarded a UMass Memorial HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital, Inc. Scholarship for \$2,000. Margot is the daughter of Sue and Mike Sonia. She plans to attend Boston College to study Neuroscience.

Margot is a member of the National Honor Society and has received Highest Honors every semester since the 8th Grade. She is Captain of the Cross-Country Team and the Karate Competition Team. Margot is a MIAA Student Ambassador and Band Drum Major. She is a 2nd Degree Black Belt and an EMT Crew Chief in the Nashoba Cadet Program.



NORA SWAINE, a senior at Leominster High School, has been awarded the Rollstone Bank & Trust Scholarship for \$2,000. Nora is the daughter of Jennifer and Matthew Swaine. She plans to attend Quinnipiac University to study Marketing.

Nora is President of the National Honor Society as well as President of the Student Government. She is Vice President of Best Buddies a member of Student Council and a G.I.V.E. Officer. She is President of the Journalism Club and volunteers her time tutoring students and at the Leominster Police Department.



SOPHIE THOMPSON, a senior at The Bromfield School, has been awarded one of the Chamber Foundation Scholarships for \$2,000. Sophie is the daughter of Lisa Rosen. She plans to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study Chemical Engineering.

Sophie is on the National Honor Society and is Vice President of the French Honor Society. She is a National Merit Commended Scholar and a member of the Reading and Writing Club. Sophie is Co-Captain of the Varsity Crew Team and a Board of Director for the Central and Western MA Girl Scouts.



SYDNEY VANGILDER, a senior at North Middlesex Regional High School, has been awarded the Workers Credit Union Scholarship for \$2,000. Sydney is the daughter of James VanGilder. She plans to attend the University of Washington to study Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology.

Sydney is a member of the National Honor Society as well as the Tri-M Music Honor Society. She is a Drum Major in the Marching Band and a Band Manager and Principal Piccoloist in the Wind Symphony. Sydney is a Student Leader for the young Women's Empowerment Group as well as the Pride group and a Founding Member of the NM Freethinkers.

CONGRATS!



ROLLING OUT THE WELCOME MAT:

North Central Massachusetts Shines as a Visitor Destination

Pictured at the very top is a youth soccer camp at the Fields at Progin Park in Lancaster. Youth and Amateur sports tourism continues to grow in the region.

With 130 plus restaurants, 1,420 rooms to stay, 27 communities to visit and more than a million visitors annually, North Central Massachusetts is on the map as a growing drive destination for family fun, outdoor activities, and sporting events for those throughout New England and beyond.

Want to take a walk? Hop on a bike? Or even a scooter? There's a trail waiting for you. State and community parks, conservation areas, even former railroad routes make North Central a haven for those who like to move their bodies. Want to check out a soccer game or enjoy a night on the town with friends? We've got dozens of fields home to sporting events, and restaurants and breweries abound!

"We are confident in North Central Massachusetts' ability to entice individuals and families to rethink their vacation plans. Easily



Couple hiking on Wachusett Mountain.

drivable amenities, food and farm attractions, and arts and culture venues present an appealing and affordable alternative to hectic air travel to far-flung destinations in the U.S. and around the world," said Henry Tessman, General Manager of Great Wolf Lodge, a family destination located in Fitchburg that attracts more than half a million people annually and employs more

than 700 staff, known as Pack Members.

In 2020, a group of local business and community leaders, dignitaries and other key regional stakeholders got together to really understand what makes our region tick. The result is One North Central, a regional economic development plan to set a path forward for growth and opportunities. The group analyzed

dozens of quantitative and qualitative data and factors to identify target industries as viable targets to invest in the region and grow their businesses.

One of the top industries identified was the tourism sector.

Prior to the pandemic, the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism identified tourism as the third-largest industry in Massachusetts, providing more than 155,000 jobs and a payroll of \$5.9 billion state-wide, with North Central Massachusetts offering the potential of more than 16,000 jobs in the industry and more than \$185 million in direct visitor spending. Post-pandemic, tourism in North Central Massachusetts is slowly rebounding, proving the region's potential in the industry.

Rick Walton, President of Moon Hill Brewing Co., and the Gardner Ale House, knows a thing or

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two about hospitality. His businesses serve more than 150,000 customers annually, with approximately 50 full- and part-time jobs filled. “Right now, many businesses are experiencing crickets when it comes to hiring workers, but we are doing more to retain our current workers, including offering higher wages and providing opportunities for growth in the business,” said Walton. “Rather than having a revolving door of workers, we want to cultivate an evolving family of employees.”

Tessman echoed Walton’s thoughts as Great Wolf Lodge grapples with finding and retaining qualified workers. “While local companies must spend more money on training and developing employees to run their business, I’m fortunate to have strong corporate training programs to train someone on a skill if they have the drive to work at a family resort,” said Tessman. “We are also working with our local trade schools, high schools and colleges to seek employment, but it would be great if our educators would look to providing areas of hospitality for study so we can more clearly identify our future workers.”

For Dean Hirtle, Senior Vice President, Game On



Children enjoying the Davis Farmland petting zoo. Agri-tourism is an important element of the region’s tourism economy.

“There is a lot of growth here and when people visit, they are surprised by what this region has to offer.”

– DEAN HIRTLE –

Sports and Performance Center in Fitchburg, running a tourism business is fairly new, as the facility formally opened in late 2021. “Businesses have a major opportunity to invest in North Central Massachusetts,” said Hirtle. “There is a lot of growth here and when people visit, they are surprised by what

this region has to offer.”

Game On is situated in West Fitchburg on more than 100 acres of land, with only 40 acres currently developed—the additional 60 acres will be transformed into additional turf fields, parking areas, and there are plans to build a hotel to accommodate the more than 5,000 to

10,000 visitors at Game On during any given weekend. “Fitchburg is getting on the map, but we need to utilize marketing opportunities to make people aware of what is happening here. We live and work in a competitive youth sports market so the opportunity here to increase visitor spending will positively impact the economy for the region.”

In addition to hosting sporting events, such as soccer, lacrosse, and basketball for teams from across New England and up and down the East Coast, Game On also serves as the home field for Monty Tech and Fitchburg High School sports. “We take great pride in supporting local athletic departments to use our facilities.”

While Game On is fast becoming a sports destination for athletes, the region is also home to large athletic field complexes in Lancaster and Devens, which host a variety of soccer and lacrosse games, to name a few.

Tessman said the sporting complexes provide additional tourism dollars for all the local businesses in the region, including Great Wolf Lodge, which is located just minutes west on Route 2A from Game On. “With the current

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Visitors hiking Wachusett Mountain. The region’s many outdoor recreational assets are a draw for families from throughout New England.

Continued from page 19

and future growth this region is experiencing, we will see more businesses expand or create additional opportunities to cater to these travelers,” he said.

Walton also believes the region has a lot to offer, where one can hike, ski, paddle, sit and relax all within the same day. “We are quintessential New England,” he said. “Every region in the world has its benefits, so it is necessary to compete with other areas to obtain the tourism dollars. We have a solid Chamber of Commerce and a solid regional tourism council, but we just need the funding to promote ourselves and get the word out about what we have to offer.”

Tessman agrees that state funding is critical to ensure success of the industry. “We have proven that tourism dollars stimulate all other business sectors, but we have to fight every year to expand or

maintain marketing dollars,” he said. “Other states in New England spend more dollars on tourism and those states experience the benefits of it. While it’s unfortunate that most of the funding the state does spend on tourism marketing ends up in the Boston area, we need to start screaming a little louder here in North Central to prove our value.” Make no mistake, Tessman added, that Great Wolf Lodge has experienced eight years of success in North Central Massachusetts, with plans to invest upward of \$40 million in upcoming renovations for the future. “We look forward to many, many more years of presence here in Fitchburg.”

Local business owners can help the tourism industry capitalize on the region’s assets to promote good health, happiness, and well-being. In addition to good jobs and a lower cost of living, the proximity to

“ To attract and retain a talented workforce, you have to offer an appealing place for someone to call home.”

– RACHEL LOPEZ –

tourist amenities makes our region a beautiful place to live and work, which helps in the recruitment of hiring talent who do not call North Central home yet.

Rachel Lopez, Division President of Resource Management located in Fitchburg, was born and raised in North Central. As a local employer in the region who hosts colleagues and potential employees residing out of the area, Lopez utilizes the region’s amenities and assets to attract talent. “To attract and retain a talented workforce, you have to offer an appealing place for someone to call home,” she said. “While I am biased because I grew up here, I’m always thinking about ways to show my out-of-town colleagues and guests the best of what this region has to offer. I’d love to have someone visit the area and consider entertaining a job opportunity here because of the experience they had when they visited us.”

Lopez added she encourages out-of-town colleagues to make a family trip out of their visit by staying at Great Wolf or skiing at Wachusett Mountain, and looks to local museums, restaurants and farms when planning employee events. “While

we have been on a hiatus for hosting large group functions due to the pandemic, I am really looking forward to bringing back employee outings and annual celebrations to share the local area with my colleagues in Florida.”

“I encourage our local business owners to take their employees out to local establishments,” said Walton. “Instead of going into Boston, do a brewery tour, take a dive at Great Wolf, go skiing, and frequent our many restaurants. Also, think about buying gift cards to support our businesses, too.”

The Chamber’s tourism arm, Visit North Central Massachusetts manages a robust collaborative regional marketing program to support the visitor and hospitality industry which includes paid digital marketing, social media campaigns, public relations, and participation in trade shows. Printed twice per year, The Guide to North Central Massachusetts promotes tourism and travel in the region with stories and a calendar of events that encompass some of the great events happening here. The



Kat Deal
of the Chamber
staff showcases local
attractions and businesses at the recent Dream Destinations Travel Show.

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Chamber also operates the Johnny Appleseed Visitor Center that welcomes 165,000 visitors each year.

Roy Nascimento, President and CEO of the Chamber, believes the region is well positioned to continue to benefit from tourism and placemaking efforts. “North Central Massachusetts is a very special place located right in the heart of New England,” he said. “It’s up to all of us to share the many opportunities and experiences our region offers with our friends, family and colleagues from outside the area to not only help our tourism industry succeed but to make our region shine.” ◇

BY THE NUMBERS

Tourism in North Central Massachusetts

U.S. ADULT TRIPS ANNUALLY
1,087,751

JOBS BENEFITING FROM TOURISM
16,000

DIRECT VISITOR SPENDING
\$185.4 Million

STATE TAXES GENERATED
\$9.4 Million

LOCAL TAXES GENERATED
\$5 Million

TOP FIVE ORIGIN MARKETS

Boston, Providence/New Bedford Area, Connecticut, New York, and Maine

**Data represents pre-pandemic numbers from CY2019 and is sourced from Arrivalist Travel Data, the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism and the RKG Study conducted by the Chamber.*



Cow at Hollis Hill Farm.

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MAEED Institutions | Photo: iStockphoto

QUICK hits



MARCH GOOD MORNING NORTH CENTRAL

The Chamber held the March edition of the Chamber's Good Morning North Central Breakfast at Great Wolf Lodge which featured Dan Rivera, President & CEO of MassDevelopment and Kenneth Turner, President & CEO of Mass Life Sciences.



CLI WORCESTER COUNTY JAIL VISIT

The Community Leadership Institute Class of 2022 visited the Worcester County Jail & House of Correction to learn more about the justice system and the effects on our region. They met with Superintendent Tuttle and Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis to hear about the many programs offered at the prison, updates to the buildings and grounds, and a tour of the facility including the new medical wing.



ECONOMIC FORECAST BREAKFAST

The Economic Forecast Breakfast was a great success with over 200 business and community leaders in our region! The event featured Dr. Nancy Murray, Fitchburg State University's Dean of the School of Business and Education; Dr. Mark Melnik, the Director of Economic & Public Policy Research at the UMass Donahue Institute; and Dr. Mahesh Ramachandran, the Chief Economist for the Executive Officer of Labor and Workforce Development. A big thank you to our sponsor, Fidelity Bank!



APRIL HUMAN RESOURCE COUNCIL MEETING

The Human Resource Council met at MassHire North Central Workforce Board with Executive Director Jeff Roberge and MassHire North Central Career Center Supervisor Staci Johnson to discuss what job seekers are looking for in their next career move.

QUICK HITS CONTINUED...



BUSINESS AFTER HOURS AT 873 TAVERN

We had a great night full of networking, appetizers and drinks at our April Business After Hours at 873 Cafe and Tavern. Thank you to Sean Smith and the 873 staff for hosting the event!



EDUCATION AND MANUFACTURING ROUNDTABLE

Members of the Chamber and regional stakeholders attended an education and manufacturing roundtable with Massachusetts Senate President Karen Spilka, organized by Senator John J. Cronin, to discuss current challenges that North Central Massachusetts is facing.



TOUGH STUFF RECYCLING RIBBON CUTTING

The Chamber recently celebrated the grand opening of Tough Stuff Recycling's new warehouse in Fitchburg. Congratulations to the whole Tough Stuff Recycling crew!



K-ZONE MORNING KOMMUTE INTERVIEW

Kat Deal joined Sherman and the WPKZ crew to chat about upcoming Chamber events, updates and much more!



NEW GRANTS ANNOUNCEMENT IN GARDNER

Members of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce and Development Corporation joined Gardner Mayor Mike Nicholson, Congresswoman Lori Trahan, State Representative Jon Zlotnik and city officials for the announcement of new grant programs in the City to support local business and economic development. The grants are funded with over \$650,000 from the federal American Rescue Plan Act.



NCMDC PROVIDES LOAN TO RA ALDRICH TRUCKING

The North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation recently provided a loan to RA Aldrich Trucking to assist with the purchase of a 2020 Peterbilt tractor Model 389 to replace the current truck that NCMDC financed a couple of years ago.

QUICK HITS CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

QUICK HITS CONTINUED...



CLI SOUTH FITCHBURG PLAYGROUND/ GUS JOHNSON FIELD CLEANUP EVENT

The Community Leadership Class of 2022 held their revitalization of the South Fitchburg Playground/ Gus Johnson Field cleanup event over the weekend. They had about 30 volunteers come together to paint the concession stand, rake the fields and surrounding grounds, clear the overgrown brush on the front side of the park, and much more! The revitalization of the South Fitchburg playground was a great success!

NCMDC PROVIDES LOAN TO LYLA BEAUTY

The North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation recently provided a loan to support the purchase of a new laser system equipment for Lyla's Beauty Bar, which offers laser hair removal, electrolysis and skin rejuvenation.



WPKZ RIBBON CUTTING

The Chamber recently celebrated the 80th anniversary of WPKZ Radio in Fitchburg. Congratulations to the whole WPKZ crew for their continued success in radio!

MCCARTY COMPANIES RIBBON CUTTING

The Chamber recently celebrated the grand opening of McCarty Companies' new location in Leominster and the company's 40th anniversary. Congratulations to the McCarty Companies!



WOOSTAPRENUERS FORUM

Sandie Cataldo and Rebecca Beaton represented the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation at the Woostapreneurs Forum in May hosted by the U.S. Small Business Administration and Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce. The Woostapreneurs Forum intends to connect Greater Worcester to the entrepreneurship ecosystem and business resource providers in central Massachusetts.

QUICK HITS CONTINUED...



CINCO DE MAYO LOAN CLIENT APPRECIATION EVENT

The North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation held a Loan Client Appreciation Event in May connecting clients with local resources to help their businesses succeed! The event had food, drinks, raffles from loan clients and free headshots. Thank you to all the guests who came to the event!



5TH ANNUAL NORTH CENTRAL REAL ESTATE SUMMIT

We held the 5th Annual North Central Real Estate Summit in May, in partnership with the North Central Massachusetts Association of Realtors. Attendees connected with real estate professionals and gained insight into the current and future real estate market in North Central Massachusetts.

CHAMBER PARTICIPATES IN FITCHBURG CLEAN-UP DAY

Members of the Chamber Team and their families joined community volunteers on Saturday morning in the City of Fitchburg for a city-wide cleanup effort! Thank you to the organizers and everyone who volunteered and helped clean litter off the streets and in parks.



NCMDC PROVIDES LOAN TO BALDWINVILLE STATION

The North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation recently provided a loan to Baldwinville Station Restaurant to purchase real estate at 9 Circle Street in Baldwinville.

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS AT CAN-AM MACHINERY

We had a great night full of networking, Venezuelan food and drinks at our Business After Hours at Can-Am Machinery in May. Thank you to the Can-Am team for hosting the event!



North Central Calendar **EVENTS**

June 9

38th Annual Meeting and Business Expo

10:30 AM – 2:30 PM

June 15

Women's Leadership Connection

12:00 PM

June 24

Connect North Central

8:00 AM

August 26

Community Leadership Institute Application Deadline

UPCOMING FALL EVENTS:

September 13

Business After Hours: Game On Fitchburg

5:00 PM

September 16

Good Morning North Central

6:45 AM

September 29

Legislative & Candidates Reception

5:00 PM

September 30

Connect North Central

8:00 AM

October 6

Business After Hours: AIS, Inc.

5:00 PM

October 13

Congressional Luncheon

11:45 AM

October 28

Connect North Central

8:00 AM

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 CHAMBER@NORTHCENTRALMASS.COM.

Mediation Services of North Central MA, Inc. (MSI)

is a non-profit offering low-cost or free conflict
resolution services to individuals and organizations in
North Central Massachusetts.

**Do you have a conflict with a business, a
customer, an employee, a family
member, or neighbor?**

**Call us and ask how our trained staff and
volunteers can help you find resolution!**

We offer Mediation and Conflict Coaching

We also offer communication and conflict
resolution trainings/workshops customized to
meet the needs of your business, school or
organization and mediator training.

info@mediationncm.org

978-466-9595

mediationncm.org

435 Lancaster Street, Suite 224, Leominster, MA 01453

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Finding the right financing partner for commercial real estate is important. Let bankHometown put our experience to work for you, like we did for these businesses.

• \$25.1 Million	Industrial Warehouse and Manufacturing	Clinton, MA
• \$14.0 Million	Retail Complex Refinance	Northborough, MA
• \$14.1 Million	Office Renovation	Worcester, MA
• \$10.4 Million	Apartment Development	Boylston, MA
• \$10.2 Million	Apartment Development	Millbury, MA
• \$20.1 Million	Retail/Office Development	Worcester, MA
• \$29.1 Million	Apartment Development	Leominster, MA

Unlock your potential

We are equipped to work closely with you to determine what financing option would be most suitable for your business objectives. Our local expertise is coupled with personalized service, so you can trust that your business' best interests will be top-of-mind each step of the way. Contact us today!