

Chamber Channels

A PUBLICATION OF THE AFFILIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE
OF GREATER SPRINGFIELD, INC.

Serving Agawam, East Longmeadow/Longmeadow, Hampden/Wilbraham,
Ludlow, Springfield, West Springfield and the Women's Partnership

July 2009

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President's Message

As you may know, the ACCGS' Annual Meeting was held a few weeks ago at the Springfield Marriott and there was a wonderful turnout and a great program. At the meeting we continued the tradition of honoring a member of the Chamber business community with the Richard J. Moriarty Citizen of the Year Award. This award is given annually to an individual who exemplifies Rick's belief that to have business success the community has to be successful, and that prosperity is helped in large part by people that are involved and committed to service. This year we had the distinct privilege of honoring not one, but two individuals who are shining examples of this ideal: Tony Goncalves co-owner of Ideal Insurance and Real Estate and Attorney Bill Rooney, partner in the law firm of Chartier, Ogan, Brady, Sarnacki, Leahy and Rooney.

Additionally, two new awards were given in recognition of the contributions made by non-profit organizations to the overall quality of life in the Greater Springfield region. Dress for Success was honored as the 2009 Small Non-profit Organization of the Year and Junior Achievement of Western Massachusetts, Inc. was honored as the 2009 Large Non-profit Organization of the Year. Both of these organizations serve individuals from a variety of municipalities in the area and are outstanding partners with the business community.

These award winners have had a profound impact on the Greater Springfield region and we salute them for contributing so much to the community. Our sincere congratulations to them all!

**Affiliated Chambers of
Commerce of Greater
Springfield, Inc.**

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Legislative Update

Summer officially is here but there is a good possibility the state legislature will still be in session and hard at work. As the days of June wind down, there is a great amount of legislation undergoing final debate and Western Massachusetts is well represented during these deliberations.

-Transportation Reform, Rep. Joseph Wagner, is on the conference committee;

-Ethics Reform, Rep. Peter Kocot is the House Chairman of this committee;

-Pension Reform, Sen. Michael Knapik sat on a committee looking into this issue;

-The 2010 State Budget, Sen. Michael Knapik and Sen. Stephen Brewer are both on the conference committee.

To round out our meeting we had Jeffrey Taylor, the Founder of Monster.com, as our keynote speaker. Mr. Taylor has been recognized as an innovator and a visionary in both the internet and career industries worldwide. As the CEO of Monster.com, he reinvented the way in which the world looks at employment. His presentation was humorous, informative, fresh and thought provoking. Attendees were delighted with his enthusiasm and message. The Chamber will continue to try and bring speakers of this quality to our programs in the future.

Summer is the time of year we begin planning our programs for the coming season. Within a few weeks, you will be receiving a hard copy "special edition" of Chamber Channels. This edition will outline the many sponsorship opportunities available to you under our Total Resource Campaign (TRC) to increase your business' visibility. The following is an excerpt from a letter regarding TRC written by Arlene Putnam, Chair of the ACCGS Board of Directors and Vice President and General Manager of the Eastfield Mall.

"A number of years ago, the ACCGS Board of Directors voted to expand sponsorship opportunities for our member companies so as to be able to give more companies opportunities to highlight their businesses to other Chamber members. New sponsorships from as low as \$50.00 were created so that Chamber members of all sizes could participate and receive valuable publicity...As a long-time active member of ACCGS, Eastfield Mall has seen the benefits of sponsorship and networking opportunities provided through the events listed in this special edition of Chamber Channels. The help my company has received by being a member of the Chamber and getting involved in these events has assisted Eastfield Mall in growing and prospering over the past twenty years."

TRC is just one of the valuable benefits of being a Chamber member. The ACCGS also provides sound Legislative Advocacy in regards to such issues as unemployment insurance, real estate tax classification, workers compensation, and public infrastructure spending in the Greater Springfield

Transportation, ethics and pensions are undergoing the most sweeping reforms undertaken in many years. Reforms are never easy, as they call for changes to the way things have always been done. It is often said that if we can't do reforms in these most difficult times, when can we do them? It is very clear to all we need to do things differently, especially in the areas of transportation and pensions. However, if we were to list the top ten reforms we would like to see in these areas, it is almost certain we would not see all ten in the final legislation, as politics is truly the art of compromise. That said, the Chamber is optimistic that changes will be made and that they will be meaningful.

The ACCGS has sent the message to legislators that in dealing with the FY 2010 budget, real reforms must lead the way. In order to have financial stability, cost containment must be enacted throughout government even though that will probably mean a loss of some services. Judicial use of reserves including the Rainy Day Fund and federal stimulus dollars should be a part of the solution as well as limited new revenues. It is clear that we can not reform or cut our way out of this steep and quick decline in state income without new revenues. One reason for the swift decline in revenues (and the necessary cutbacks in services to accommodate this decline) was that we falsely counted on an ever increasing stream of capital gains income. These

region. This assistance helps to create opportunities to do business in the Pioneer Valley.

As always, please remember, should there be issues or concerns that you have that you believe the Chamber should be more closely involved in, feel free to contact me directly at denver@myonlinechamber.com.

Russell F. Denver
President, ACCGS

West of the River Chamber of Commerce Supports Education

Agawam High School

By Alan Rogers

The West of the River Chamber of Commerce Education and Agawam Scholarship Committee, headed by Alan P. Rogers, is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2009 Agawam scholarships. Eight \$1,000 scholarships were awarded to Agawam High School students, including one vocational scholarship.

The vocational scholarship recipient is James Roberts-Manning, who will be attending the Universal Technical Institute to study as a professional auto technician.

Those planning to attend a four-year college are Kimberly Dorans, Boston College; Michelle Curtis, Stonehill College; Nicholas Planzo, Western New England College; Dan Masciotra, Western New England College; Chelsea Blanchard, Boston University; Kamila Misiak, Tufts University; and Emily Gendron, Roger Williams University. All recipients and their parents will be honored guests at the West of the River Chamber of Commerce golf tournament banquet scheduled for Monday, Aug. 10 at Crestview Country Club in Agawam.

West Springfield High School

By Erin Corriveau

Also held the night of June 4th was the West Springfield High School Senior Awards Night in the

revenues grew from \$300 million just 7 years ago (2002), to \$2.1 billion in 2008. Today they are projected to be around \$500 million for this year. For the future, the Chamber is calling for a large percentage of any growth in these funds to be put into a special account to be used for capital projects or to go into the Rainy Day Fund. These revenues cannot be counted on from year to year and therefore should not be built into our budget base. Once again, now is the time to make such a change.

Most other legislation will be put off until the fall. Even then, it is hard to predict how much will be done. It looks now like the big issue come September will be a new debate on gaming. One reason for reopening this debate is because the speaker of the House, Robert DeLeo has spoken in favor of slot machines at racetracks. Another reason is the efforts by some to look for additional revenues without directly taxing residents other than the Sales Tax increase expected to be enacted along with the FY 2010 budget.

Meanwhile, the Chamber will continue to work on Unemployment Insurance (UI) costs as we expect legislation to be considered on this issue. The Chamber has fought for a long time for changes in the UI system and has had some (but limited) success. While the Massachusetts UI system was better funded than most states, and has so far been solvent,

high school auditorium. Student Senate President Kelly Beauvais gave a graceful and inspiring farewell address to the Class of 2009 before Principal Peter Dufresne presented their awards. Four West Springfield High School students were selected by the West of the River Chamber of Commerce (WRC) West Springfield Scholarship Committee to receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

As there were so many qualified students who clearly worked their hardest to attain their educational goals, the scholarship committee had a difficult choice to make. In the end, the four scholarship recipients were: Ann Bergeron, attending UMASS Amherst majoring in Nursing; Catherine Thompson, attending New York University majoring in Journalism; Katherine Marino, attending Siena College majoring in Business Economics and Marketing and Christopher Marini, attending UMASS Amherst majoring in Business Finance. Also, a special thank you to Deb Santaniello in the West Springfield High School Guidance Department for her tireless efforts of making sure the applications are submitted on time as well as her part in the coordination of Awards Night. Another special thank you goes to West Springfield High School teacher Howard Bernard for sharing his photography talent with us.

Congratulations to our 2009 scholarship winners and good luck in your future endeavors!



Marc Maccarini, Career Counselor; Livia Blanusa, Kathryn Hakanson-Stacy, Michelle Grohe, Brooke Logan, Michelle Forni, and Jessica Schnepf. Staff photo.

East Longmeadow Awards Scholarships

(over 20 states have already had to borrow funds to pay claims) it is now expected that we will have to do short-term borrowing next year. The tables that set Unemployment Insurance tax rates are formulated by the ending balance in the fund for the year. Obviously, as that balance grows, the rates go down; as it decreases, the rates go up. With the May report out, it now appears that the per employee cost could jump 30%, from an average of \$625 per employee this year to \$822 per employee next year. While these are set by a formula, the Chamber will be looking at ways to minimize this increase. You could start to help now by explaining to your elected state officials what a 30% increase would mean to your business.

Other bills we are working on are changes to the CORI Law; bills mandating a certain number of paid sick leave days for employees and trying to reverse a bad piece of legislation passed last session that mandated triple damages for any violation, even if unintended, of certain wage laws.

As always, your input is welcome.

Jeffrey Ciuffreda,
Vice President,
Government Affairs

Welcome New Members!

Greg Pytka of Hasbro Games and the Chairman of the East Longmeadow Education Committee recently had the privilege of presenting scholarships from the Cheryl Reed Wallace Scholarship Fund to East Longmeadow seniors.

Candidates were required to participate in a Job Shadow directly related to their career choice and had to be entering a college or technical school in September 2009. Applicants were also judged on extracurricular activities, their job shadow choice, internships and externships, community service, work experience, academic performance and future plans.

Winners of the Cheryl Reed Wallace Scholarship Fund were:

Diane McCormick Scholarship

Michelle Grohe

Joseph F. Dilk, Sr. Memorial Scholarship

Kathryn Hakanson Stracy

Michael Niziolek Memorial Scholarship

Brooke Logan

Ann Rutherford Scholarship

Jessie Schnepf

Chamber Scholarship

Michelle Forni

Chamber Scholarship

Livia Blanusa

These scholarship recipients received a total of \$6,500.00. In order to raise funds for the scholarship program, East Longmeadow members of the ERC 5 Chamber of Commerce host a golf tournament each year. This year's Chairperson Tammy Bordeaux of Berkshire Bank was pleased to announce that the 17th Annual Tournament will be held on Tuesday, August 11th at Elmcrest Country

Companies and organizations listed here have made an important investment in their business and in the community by joining the Chamber. Do business with Chamber members-it's good business!

Brake King Automotive, Inc.

867 Boston Road
Springfield, MA 01119
Moshe Ronen, President
(413) 783-3727
Automobile Repairing & Service

Cafe Lebanon

1390 Main Street
Springfield, MA 01103
Nadim Kashouh, President
(413) 737-7373
Restaurants

Charter Business

355 Front Street
Chicopee, MA 01013
Jim Demers,
(413) 557-6256
Telecommunications Services

The Markens Group, Inc.

1350 Main Street
Suite 1508
Springfield, MA 01103
Ben Markens, President
(413) 686-9199
Consultant

NBA Springfield

One Monarch Place, Suite 220
Springfield, MA 01144
Joe Barbieri, Director of Marketing and P.R.
(413) 746-3263
Sporting Events

Pananas Restaurant

1673 Suffield Street
Agawam, MA 01001
Leonidas Pananas, Owner
(413) 786-9012
Restaurants

RRD Technologies, Inc.

PO Box 656
Feeding Hills, MA 01030
Kevin Matys, President
(413) 786-5255
Recycling Services

Club. There are still a number of sponsorship opportunities available for this event.

For information on the East Longmeadow Golf Tournament and other events visit the Events Calendar on the Chamber's website at www.myonlinechamber.com Events or contact Sylvia Poole, Director ERC 5 at 755-1318 or by email at poole@myonlinechamber.com.

Happy Anniversary!

Every month the Affiliated Chambers of Commerce honors those members who have continuously supported our mission throughout the years. The following members joined in the month of July. Happy Anniversary!

1 Year Anniversary

American Home Interiors
Famous Dave's
J K Solutions, Inc.
National City Mortgage
Summer Wind Productions

5 Year Anniversary

Gandara Center
WP - Amy Trombley
WP - Harriet Fortin

10 Year Anniversary

Bank of America
Carr Property Management, Inc.
The Jimmy Fund Western New England Office

15 Year Anniversary

The Charles C. Lewis Company
Paskill Stapleton & Lord
The Communications Group, Inc.

20 Year Anniversary

Elegant Affairs/ The Glass Room

2009 ACCGS Golf Tournament

The Affiliated Chambers of Commerce Golf Tournament will be held on Thursday, July 9th at Crestview Country Club.

The price of \$150.00 per golfer includes greens fee, cart, lunch, snacks on the course, Reception, prizes and a souvenir picture.

The Golf Tournament is made possible through the generous support of:
Presenting Sponsor: Health New England. For information regarding other sponsorship opportunities, or to sign up as a single or foursome, contact Donna Barrett at (413) 519-0259!

30 Year Anniversary
Work Opportunity Center, Inc.

West of the River Chamber of Commerce Annual Breakfast Meeting A Huge Success!

By Erin Corriveau

West of the River Chamber of Commerce Chairman, Al Bryant of H.L. Dempsey, knew the first annual meeting of the West of the River Chamber of Commerce was going to be a hit before it even took place. As he watched over 300 people gather at The Carriage House on the Big E grounds in the early morning hours of May 15th to be captivated by Dennis Snow's energetic presentation, his original thought was validated. "It was a wonderful feeling to see so many of our local businesses come together to celebrate our accomplishments this year. In addition, we all shared in gaining greater knowledge about delivering excellent customer service - something we all have in common regardless of our industry or size of our organization."

The sold out event began with a warm welcome from Chairman Bryant. Next, chief greeter Ray Hershel, of WGGB-ABC 40, introduced the event sponsors: Berkshire Service Experts, presenting sponsor; Baystate Health, program sponsor and OMG, Inc., coffee bar sponsor. The support of these organizations contributed greatly to the meeting's success.

Chairman Bryant once again returned to the podium to review the accomplishments of the WRC throughout their first year as a consolidated chamber. These accomplishments included holding valuable events (a fall legislative breakfast at Chez Josef in Agawam featuring Insurance Commissioner Nonnie Burnes, the 2nd Annual Food Fest West held at the Clarion Hotel in West Springfield to support The West Springfield Partnership for Education and the 1st Annual Golf Night 2009 at Tee2Green in West Springfield) and the creation of the West Springfield Town Relations Survey to aid in fostering business and town relationships and the WRC Small Business

Advertising Grant aimed at assisting businesses with their advertising needs in the current economy.

Board members whose terms had expired were acknowledged for their tireless efforts in working to promote, support and enhance the economic health of the Agawam and West Springfield business communities. They are Marco Amato of James J. Dowd & Sons Insurance Agency, David Chase of NewAlliance Bank, Harry Georgiades of HG Advertising Inc., T. David Constant of Webster Bank and Andy Gross of Career Group Staffing Services. Incoming board members were then voted in: Barbara Yelle of Chicopee Savings Bank, Vin Fusaro of Fathers & Sons Collections, Clifford Bordeaux of NewAlliance Bank, Geri McCarthy of Simmons Bedding Company and Daniel McIntire of Webster Bank.

Up next was the moment the audience had waited for. Dennis Snow, formerly of the Disney Institute, took the next hour to educate local businesses on the lessons he learned from "the Mouse" on how to deliver the best customer service possible. Mr. Snow hypnotized the audience with his memories of working at Disney World and laughter filled the room as he recounted his days as Captain Nemo and shared any mishaps along the way. For those that had visited Disney World, it was eye opening as they would never guess any of what he shared had ever gone on - which was the point Mr. Snow was driving home. After his presentation, Mr. Snow happily signed books and DVD's and spoke one on one with members. Guest of the breakfasts then left to begin their Friday renewed in their commitment to customer service and anxious to share what they had learned with their colleagues. For more information on Mr. Snow, please visit www.snowassociates.com.

ACCGS Calendar

July 3

Chamber Offices Closed for July 4th Holiday

July 9

ACCGS Annual Golf Tournament, Crestview Country Club, Agawam, \$150 Per Player, Shotgun Scramble at Noon. Sponsorships Available.

July 10

ACCGS Legislative Steering Committee, TD Banknorth Conference Room, 8:00am - 9:00am

July 15

ERC Board of Directors' Meeting, The Gardens of Wilbraham, Community Room, 2 Lodge Lane, Wilbraham, 8:00am - 9:00am

July 24

ACCGS Picnic in the Park, Six Flags New England, Agawam, All Day Admission to the Park, Lunch and Dinner, Parking: \$55 Per Person.

July 28

WRC Board of Directors' Meeting, Captain Leonard House, Agawam, 8:00am - 9:00am

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