

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

March 2009

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President's Message

Business Growth Foreseen in Region

The year 2008 will be one that few will ever forget—from historic highs of gasoline prices in June and July of approximately \$4.11 per gallon down to a local low of \$1.50 per gallon by December, to the historic declines in the stock market not seen more than 90 years.

Consumer confidence reached an all-time low, and the word "bail-out" became an everyday word in America. Throughout the year, the Greater Springfield business community held strong and continued to employ tens of thousands of area residents and continued to support hundreds of civic, community and non-profit institutions to continue to improve quality of life in our region.

In Springfield, more than 40 new businesses moved into vacant storefronts throughout the city thanks to assistance from a grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Liberty Mutual moved to Springfield, hiring local residents. In West Springfield, additional retail expansion occurred, highlighted by the new Raymour & Flanagan across from Showcase Cinemas.

In Wilbraham, the Boston Road corridor continued its commercial expansion with a new Big Y World Market. In Agawam, the next Agawam Crossing development opened. In East Longmeadow, the East Longmeadow Industrial Park saw additional industrial commercial growth, and retail at the center project came to almost 100 percent occupancy.

Joseph A. Bank clothing store joined the ranks of businesses in Longmeadow. In Ludlow, there was the well-received announcement by the WestMass Area Development Corporation about the possible reuse of the historic Ludlow Mills complex.

Our local chambers of commerce continue marketing their individual communities to businesses and residents alike, highlighting the importance of businesses to each community and showing off potential development opportunities in their communities.

The year 2008 also saw the importance of how national industries can affect our local region. One only need to look at the auto industry bailout and realize that numerous area manufacturers supply parts to the auto industry and acknowledge that what goes on in Washington,

Quick Links

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SAVE THE DATE

Beacon Hill Summit

Wednesday, April 29, 2009



Legislative Update

The Chambers Legislative Agenda for 2009 was formally unveiled and distributed at our annual Outlook Luncheon held at Chez Josef in Agawam on Monday, February 9, 2009. That agenda is available on line at www.myonlinechamber.com. I encourage you to read this agenda carefully as the Chamber's five working sub committees and the entire Legislative Steering Committee have put a great deal of effort into it to be sure that it reflects what you, our members, want us to concentrate on during the year ahead.

The Outlook luncheon itself was a great event as evidenced by the over 800 attendees and given the economy and the fact that it was

D.C. affects us in Greater Springfield.

One also only needs to realize the importance large national and regional retailers have on our community. These national and regional retailers announcing they are going out of business, or severely reducing the number of stores, show the impact they have on our commercial real estate locations.

The past year also showed us how well run our local financial institutions are, given that MassMutual Financial Group and the majority of our local banking institutions decided against taking federal Troubled Asset Relief Program, or TARP, funds. This should send a loud, positive message to our business community and residents alike that there is money to be lent on a local basis. During all this, a new local bank, NUVO Bank, opened, expressing optimism in our local business community.

The year 2009 will bring a period of uncertainty but also hope that our new president and our federal, state and local leaders understand the importance of business on communities and the positive impact business has on employment, our residents and payment of taxes. These will assist in providing services to our communities, and contributions to the region's efforts to create a greater quality of life for everyone.

The new year will also see commencement and continuation of major infrastructure projects including the State Street project in Springfield with both Gov. Deval L. Patrick and President Barack H. Obama announcing their support for shovel-ready infrastructure projects. This will spur employment and badly needed infrastructure improvements which will assist companies in our region by keeping their supplies and inventory moving and assist in customer flow.

Lastly, look forward to continued small business growth throughout our region and the return of the Bradley International Airport-to-Amsterdam flights in June. It's OK to learn from the past, but it's more important to look to the future.

As always, 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

My Journey to Washington D.C. for the Inauguration

By Diane Swanson

Why we knew we had to be there on January 20th. Thoughts of my grandfather and what he would have thought of this day. My grandfather, Rev. Nathaniel Bailey, born, in Mississippi, and in addition to working a full-time job, sharecropped to take care of his family and often times not getting what he deserved, still along with my grandmother managed to raise their eight children and moved them all to Springfield, Massachusetts in the early Fifties. He would have been very proud to know that three of his grandchildren, myself, the Events Manager for the Affiliated Chambers of Greater Springfield, Inc., my sister, Kimberly Gasque, a Probation Officer of Atlanta, GA, our cousin, Cammy Bailey, an architect from New Jersey and two of his great grandchildren Stephanie Swanson a Freshman at AIC, and my nephew, Clifton Spears a student at STCC made the trip to DC to

held for the first time ever on a Monday, rather than the traditional Friday. The move to a Monday was to accommodate our keynote speaker, Congressman John Tanner (D TN) and a founder of the congressional Blue Dog coalition. Congressman Richard Neal once again set the table for the key note address and introduced Congressman Tanner. In that introduction, Congressman Neal expressed the importance of the Blue Dog Coalition to the Democratic Party which is made up of a group of 50 moderate to conservative Democrats. He also noted that Congressman Tanner was so respected he could often times speak for all fifty members.

In his remarks, Congressman Tanner did not disappoint the attendees. He very carefully laid out the immense problem the economy is currently facing, and expressed his deep regret, that although a true conservative and one who does not believe the Government should spend on any program unless they can pay for it, that the stimulus package is absolutely needed at this time.

He also noted that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been entirely funded through borrowing and therefore many portray them as not costing the government anything at this time. He noted that he had tried many times to fund these wars through direct appropriations so that everyone would know the true cost but was unsuccessful.

Interspersed throughout his insightful remarks was some great humor delivered in a comfortable Tennessee drawl. On a few occasions, Congressman Neal was a target of Tanner's humor as was Congressman Neil Abercrombie (D HI) who had traveled up with his friend to enjoy the program.

I can personally tell you from spending some time with the Congressmen after the event, the strong turnout of our membership and the quality of the program was something they both were impressed with.

The program also featured Massachusetts Senate President Therese Murray who used her time to reflect upon comments she made to Chamber members last April during our annual trip to Beacon Hill (see more at the end of this

witness history.

We headed for Washington DC on Sunday, January 18th so we could be part of the celebration for Martin Luther King, Jr. On Monday, MLK Day, we attended a celebration rally, hosted by Rev. Al Sharpton at Cardozo Sr. High School, the day was filled with surprise speakers, Mayors from, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, New Jersey, New York, Sacramento and Washington DC, Senator John McCain and former Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, came and spoke in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. on the importance of Education.

While in DC, we encountered many other celebrities, Robin Roberts of Good Morning America, LL Cool J and his wife, Russell Simmons, Angela Bassett and Spike Lee.

Tuesday Inauguration Day, we rose very early 3:00 a.m. and arrived at the metro station by 4:00 a.m. to be on the first train out. The station was already filling up, and people were energized, it was as if it were 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon. People were curious where people had traveled from and very excited about the day. We arrived at our location which was the Silver section by 5:00 a.m. and there was already a line. Security opened the gates and began screening people at 7:00 a.m. still 5 hours before our new president would take the oath. We were in the first standing section behind the seated VIP section, an awesome location, we want to thank Congressman Richard E. Neal and his staff for such great tickets. It was very cold, but we were layered up and had our hand and feet warmers going, as we all waited, some were singing, some (our group) was dancing doing what we could to keep warm and to help pass the time, still not regretting making the trip, but very glad we were there and to be with so many people who wanted to witness history, people were on a natural high.

The band starting to play around 7:30 a.m. which helped, we met people from all over the country, when we looked at the monitors, we could see the many thousands of people behind us, what an awesome sight, it literally gave us the chills, and not from being cold it was a good feeling. As each distinguished person arrived they were introduced and there were lots of cheers, this was a very excited crowd and to my knowledge there were no incidents, amazing. As my President, Barack Obama took the oath there were lots of cheers and many tears, including myself, I could not help but think of my grandparents and their lives and my parents and the struggles they had faced in their lifetime, what an awesome experience. We are glad we were there. It was my pleasure to be there on January 20th to witness the first African American President take the oath of Office.



A View of the Capitol from the Mall

article) and how those remarks stand up to the economy of today. She highlighted numbers such as the unemployment rate, certain state revenue numbers, and the projected deficit. All had radically changed, for the worse, since then. She commended the Chamber for its agenda noting that many of the issues listed were also concerns of hers. Using the term given to the federal keynoter, she proclaimed herself a Blue Dog, causing Congressman Tanner later on in his remarks to ask how she ever got elected in Massachusetts.

Also on the program, was Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno who gave a very real and somber assessment of the City of Springfield. He noted that while moving in the right direction, Springfield has had to fight through many obstacles, and now even more so given the position the state finds itself in. Mayor Sarno said he, and the city was up for the challenge. He also highlighted some major projects occurring in the other cities in the area, most of which were represented by their respective Mayors at the event.

It is important to note that events such as these serve notice on speakers and elected officials in attendance that the Chamber is strong and well versed in the legislative issues of the day. Remember to read those issues on our agenda as previously directed. Also, be sure you attend these events. Lastly, regarding Outlook 2009, a special thank you to our sponsors for helping make this event the premier event it is; Health New England, Eastern States Exposition, MassMutual Financial, PeoplesBank, United Personnel Services and Western Massachusetts Electric Company.

On another note, the Chamber's Beacon Hill Summit is an annual event and is being held on Wednesday, April 29, 2009. Our host again this year is Senator Steve Buoniconti and he is already hard at work lining up a great agenda. Watch for details, and better yet, contact me to get an advance notification of this great event.

Jeffrey Ciuffreda,
Vice President,
Government Affairs



Diane Swanson with Robin Roberts of Good Morning America



*William Sapelli, Mayor Susan Dawson, Norman Robbins, Alan Rogers.
Photo submitted by Alan Rogers.*

Career Day in Agawam

Eighth Grade Career Day for 2009 hosted by the West of the River Chamber of Commerce and held at the Agawam Junior High School on January 29, 2009 allowed over 365 students to hear about careers from a diverse roster of speakers. Over 24 speakers enrolled in the program in which they were assigned a classroom and spoke to students on a rotating basis which included four separate classes for 20 minutes each.

Some of the participants varied from such areas as Carol Appleton of the Falcons, Carl Beane of the Boston Red Sox, Chief Robert Campbell of the Agawam Police Department, Sean Davey of Clear Channel Radio Station, Paul DiGrigoli of the DiGrigoli School of Cosmetology, Derek Eggerston from the Aerospace field, Lt. John Hale from the Hampden County Jail training staff, Mina Larocca, Chiropractor, Tom Locke, Actor, Abbe McLane, Attorney, Bill Quinn,

Nominations Sought for 2009 Chamber Business Awards

The ACCGS is seeking nominations for its 2009 Business Awards.

Categories include Small Business of the Year, Emerging Business of the Year, and Small and Large Non-Profit Organization of the Year.

The award recipients will be recognized at the ACCGS' Annual Meeting on June 11, 2009.

To download the Nomination Form, visit the Chamber's website at www.myonlinechamber.com

Pathways To Procurement

The Operational Services Division (OSD), the Commonwealth's central procurement office, will be offering free training in Hampden County for businesses interested in learning more about the state's public procurement process.

This training, "Pathways to Procurement", will be held on Friday, March 20th 2009, 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at Springfield Technical Community College, Scibelli Hall, Conference Room 7. Topic include an overview of the procurement process, understanding contract forms, the Affirmative Marketing Program for minority and women owned business enterprises, Comm-PASS, the Commonwealth's e-procurement system and marketing strategies.

This training session is being offered to the business community at various locations throughout the Commonwealth with the goal of increasing the number of potential state contractors, both large and small. The March 20th training can accommodate up to 100 attendees and there is room available for

Martial Arts, Dave Ratner of Dave's Soda and Pet Food City, and Megan Rothschild to name a few.

Students were given the opportunity to choose four presentations from the list offering the above topics. Before the classroom presentations, Alan Rogers, Education Chairperson of the West of the River Chamber of Commerce, introduced Mayor Susan Dawson of Agawam, Superintendent Mary Czjakowski of the Agawam Public Schools, Chief Robert Campbell, and Junior High School Principal Norman Robbins. Refreshments were served throughout the morning catered by Giovanni's Bakery. Mr. Rogers stated that this is the third year for the program and one of the measures of its great success is the fact that over 80% of the speakers returning this year had also volunteered to give presentations in the prior two years.

Those who helped coordinate the event and who worked very hard to bring together the schedule, the students and the speakers were Deb Hunter of the Career Center at the Agawam High School who is also a member of the West of the River Chamber of Commerce Education Committee, and Jeanne Trinque, Eighth Grade Guidance Counselor at the Junior High. The Chamber of Commerce Education Committee members who helped recruit the speakers were Gina Fusick from United Bank, Mike Moreau and Melissa Pinkerton from Six Flags, Bonnie Massoia from Canary Blomstrom Insurance Agency, and Anne McKenzie from the Lower Pioneer Valley Collaborative. The Springfield Republican and the Agawam Advertiser also covered the event with featured articles and pictures.

Again, the feedback from the eighth graders, the teachers and the speakers were very positive. The students asked a lot of questions and were generally excited to hear from the different career participants as they begin to shape their own future. This is another program in a series of such events which have been held this year and in the past to expose career development activities from companies throughout the Pioneer Valley to students in schools, particularly in Agawam.

The New MA information Security Law: Part 2: Starting Down the Road to Compliance

By: Kurt Baumgarten

In the past issue we discussed the new MA law 93H and the very wide reaching regulation that goes with it. For those that missed the first installment of this series, the regulation is called 201 CMR 17 and I am sure that you will be hearing a great deal more about it in the near future. Fortunately for all of us, the state has decided to push back the compliance date until January 1st, 2010 (from the original date of May 1st, 2009). I say thankfully because it had become increasingly clear that as May 1st approached very few companies were going to be ready in time, and thus ran the risk of possible fines and penalties for non-compliance.

In part one of this series we stated that, *"201 CMR 17.00 essentially sets minimum standards for the protection of (MA resident) personal information whether it is stored in paper or electronic format."* By definition alone, those standards are merely a set of rules that need to be followed, but in reality the individual components required in order to protect the data that is covered by the regulations can be a very large nut to crack. The complexity of a compliance issue such as this that involves not only the employment of technology, but the development and understanding of policies and programs as well - certainly deserves a bit more time from the state in order for everyone to get it right. However, now that we have a few extra months we still need to get to work on the solution right

companies to register. Companies can register for the event by sending an e-mail with the company name, attendees name, e-mail address and telephone number to OSDOutreach@osd.state.ma.us.

Certifichecks Ceases Operations

A company used by many chambers as the vehicle for community-wide gift programs has issued formal notification that is has ceased operations. Calls and emails to CertifiChecks senior executives are not returned.

The company statement regarding their situation is shown on their home page: www.certifichecks.com

away.

The first step in solving this compliance issue is in understanding where we stand. That is, we need to do an objective evaluation of the condition our information security capabilities (security policies, procedures, controls) in order to find the gaps that will not pass muster in the eyes of the state. Based upon the regulation and what the Massachusetts defines as the needed components for protecting the personal information of Massachusetts residents, we can determine that the state is asking some very specific questions such as (and these are just a few):

- 1) Do you have a comprehensive, written information security program ("WISP") applicable to all records containing personal information about a resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts?
- 2) Have you designated one or more employees to maintain and supervise WISP implementation and performance?
- 3) Have you identified the paper, electronic and other records, computing systems, and storage media, including laptops and portable devices that contain personal information?
- 4) Have you identified and evaluated reasonably foreseeable internal and external risks to paper and electronic records containing personal information?
- 5) Are your security measures reviewed at least annually, or whenever there is a material change in business practices that may affect the security or integrity of personal information records?
- 6) Do you assign unique identifications plus passwords (which are not vendor supplied default passwords) to each person with computer access; and are those Ids and passwords reasonably designed to maintain the security of those access controls?
- 7) Do you have reasonably up-to-date versions of system security agent software (including malware protection) and reasonably up-to-date security patches and virus definitions?
- 8) Do you have monitoring in place to alert you to the occurrence of unauthorized use of or access to personal information?
- 9) Do you have in place training for employees on the proper use of your computer security system, and the importance of personal information security?
- 10) Do you have secure access control measures that restrict access, on a need-to-know basis, to personal information records and files?

Given many points like those listed above to consider, an exercise called an Information Security Risk Assessment is the required first step on the road to compliance. The risk assessment is basically what I mentioned earlier, an objective evaluation of the state our information security capabilities. Luckily, because Massachusetts has made the 201 CMR 17 regulations very specific, our risk assessment can be targeted in answering our compliance readiness questions. That is, even though the subject matter listed above in the state developed questions may seem overwhelming, the fact that the requirements are not as nebulous as most other state sponsored directives is a blessing. The assessment plays a valuable role if done properly because it will be used as a guide (roadmap) to pursuing the remediation steps necessary to become compliant. A properly executed assessment can save literally thousands of dollars and countless hours as you follow your road to compliance.

Remember, the evaluation of your security through the use of a

first step risk assessment takes into considerations all of the requirements of the regulation and defines where a company might fall short. For instance, you might have firewall and anti-virus, but have no idea if they are up to date. You might have policies in place for how employees are to use company computers and the Internet, but they are not part of a state required information security program. Without going through the exercise of asking the right questions, it may be difficult or even impossible to uncover the areas that need to be fixed. Unfortunately, when it comes to compliance and information security (and technology as a whole), many people just don't have the skills to understand how it all fits together. Again, the state has realized that this is the case and has given us all some extra time - but that is no reason to waste time in getting started. Before you start pulling your hair out, it might be prudent to objectively assess whether or not you need help with the compliance task. Starting off the process with the help of someone that understands the law and specializes in information security and compliance will probably alleviate the aggravation, but even without that help you should begin the compliance process and risk assessment soon. Mind you, the risk assessment process is meant to uncover deficiencies with compliance objectives, but once those are found where do you go?

The next part in this series will address the assessment findings, some of the more typical deficiencies, and how to close the gaps that are uncovered.

The author, Kurt Baumgarten is a Certified Information Systems Auditor and principal at Peritus Security Partners, LLC. He holds a Master Degree in Information Assurance and an MBA from Norwich University, and is a contributing author to newest edition of the Information Security Handbook.

ACCGS Calendar

March 3

Springfield Chamber Board of Directors, TD Banknorth Conference Room, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

March 4

ACCGS Breakfast, Springfield Marriott- Boland Way, Springfield, 7:15 a.m. - 9:00 a.m., \$20 Members, \$25 Non-members

March 11

ACCGS After 5, Sheraton Springfield, One Monarch Place, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., \$10 Members, \$15 Non-members

March 13

ACCGS Legislative Steering Committee, TD Banknorth Conference Room, 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

March 18

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

Diplomats Meeting, EDC Conference Room, 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

March 19

ACCGS Board of Director's Meeting, TD Banknorth Conference Center, Springfield, 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

March 24

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

March 25

Women's Partnership Luncheon, Clarion Hotel & Conference Center, West Springfield, 11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

March 26

Agawam Business Spotlight Tours, 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

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