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Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT Hosts 10th Annual Social Service Recognition Breakfast



We Are Better Together was the apt theme of the 10th Annual Social Services Recognition Breakfast coordinated by the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT at Norwich's Holiday Inn. The event is designed to show appreciation for social service organizations, but it also served as an opportunity for staff and volunteers of these agencies to connect as friends and colleagues who work together to improve the quality of life in eastern Connecticut.

Keynote speaker Kathleen Stauffer, CEO of The Arc Eastern Connecticut, suggested organizations look for opportunities to cooperate, collaborate, or when it makes sense, merge. Having recently completed a merger between The Arc New London County and Quinebaug Valley, she said the essential question if bigger is better was carefully considered. "We came to the conclusion that bigger is not better. Better is better, and if you can become better by getting bigger then bigger is better," said Stauffer, pointing to efficiencies and solutions realized through joining the two agencies.

Stauffer emphasized the value of nonprofit partnerships in legislative initiatives, where agencies with common goals can help educate elected officials on issues. Senator Cathy Osten echoed the sentiment and encouraged organizations to attend the Chamber's December 3 breakfast featuring Governor Ned Lamont to represent their interests.

Being better together was echoed in the words of award winners, recognized for their service above and beyond in their duties, as nominated by industry peers. The awards are sponsored annually by SAVA Insurance Group, with the breakfast supported by Citizens Bank and Walmart.

Staff Member of the Year Marlynn Benker of Always Home expressed her appreciation of all the agencies and staff she works with in Always Home's effort to prevent

homelessness. "We have a long, hard path to walk with the people who we walk with and help along. Without the collaboration of everybody and help of collegiality, I'd be walking by myself," joked Benker.

Board Member of the Year Debbie Kievits shared her story of being invited to the Board of Thames Valley Council for Community Action. "They made room for me at the table, but most importantly they heard my voice. That meant more to me than I can tell you as a single mom raising two kids," said Kievits who understands firsthand the value of the work being done.

For the first time an award was presented for Collaboration of the Year to GIRL POWER Joint Fundraiser with Girls on the Run, Girls Scouts of Connecticut, S.T.E.P.S., and Soroptimist Connecticut Shoreline. Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Terry Friedman of Madonna Place, and Kelly Thompson of Alliance for Living was recognized as Executive Director of the Year.

The SAVA Guided by Heart Award was announced at the event. Ann and Paul Dagle were recognized for The Brian Dagle Foundation, dedicated to the healing of

grieving adults as well as community education on suicide prevention and awareness. "We have been guided by our heart since we started," said Ann Dagle, thanking the many people who helped launch the Niantic nonprofit.

"Listening to everybody talk about what they do is a wonderful reminder of how important every single one of you are to this region, and I want to thank you for that," said Tony Sheridan, Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT CEO and President, concluding the appreciation breakfast.

"We have been guided by our heart since we started."

A SPECIAL THANK YOU | Through their commitment to the Chamber, these companies have demonstrated support for the many smaller businesses we serve.



2019 Looking Back



Appreciation Breakfasts

The Chamber of Commerce hosts two breakfasts where we invite the business community to recognize those who give of themselves in the service of others. In 2019, we reached the decade mark for both our Military Appreciation Breakfast and our Social Service Recognition Breakfast. The Military Appreciation Breakfast has become the kickoff for the many, well deserved Veterans Day events. Social service agencies are invited to nominate a standout staff, volunteer, board member or their executive director for an award.



Leadership Community Service Project



Leadership Eastern Connecticut Class of 2020 celebrated the completion of their capstone community service project in August. This Leadership class raised more than \$11,000 in cash and in-kind donations to renovate and improve the outdoor area of the Community Campus of The Light House, a vocational education center

in New London. Clients enjoy spending time outside and participate in enriching activities in a shaded green space. Funds raised in excess of project costs were donated to The Light House. We were thrilled to be there to share in the excitement with staff and clients at The Light House!



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New Staff Members



This year, the Chamber welcomed three new staff members: Gary Rogers, Membership Manager; Colleen Gresh, Communications Specialist; and Muonia Wiley, Marketing and Events Assistant.

500+

Member News Releases Shared

170+

New Members



50

RIBBON CUTTINGS



Running with Scissors

Over 1,000 feet of ribbon unfurled as the Chamber celebrated grand openings, renovations, and anniversaries with our members. While that works out to about one each week, things never go that easily. Some weeks found the Chamber staff running with scissors from one event to the next. These are among our favorite events to attend, where business owners open their doors and share their story of a dream realized. We're happy to keep running!



Hands on Networking

One of the best parts of our Business After Hours is visiting a spot that's new to you. Sometimes you get to try something new, too.

Teams raced on at **SuperCharged Indoor Karting and Trampoline**. Highly competitive Chamber power couple Tom and Amanda Ljubicic claimed 1st and 2nd place, respectively, separated by just a tenth of a second, according to the runner up.

At **Project Oceanology**, tours included an up close and personal encounter with a horseshoe crab. Exploring the research vessel at the dock was the next stop.

Attendees joined up in teams of 10 to solve the first puzzles in **Mystified's** nautically themed "Keeper of the Light" escape room game. By following mind-bending clues, the groups tried to make it past the first door. Co-host for the evening **First Physical Therapy** strapped volunteers into the FirstStep balance system, developed by Jan Chamberlain, to show how it helps patients regain strength and balance.



UPCOMING EVENTS

DEC 10	Workshop: New Year Ahead - Top 12 Things to Know for 2020 Marketing Vision 12:00 - 1:15 pm 914 Hartford Turnpike, Suite 206, Waterford
DEC 11	Business After Hours and 150th Anniversary Celebration at Dime Bank 5:30 - 7:30 pm 290 Salem Turnpike, Norwich
DEC 12	Coffee & Contacts: Networking with the Chamber 8:00 - 9:00 am Old Lyme Country Club, 40 McCurdy Road, Old Lyme
DEC 12	YPsocial - "Northern Lights" at Mystic Aquarium 6:00 - 8:00 pm 55 Coogan Boulevard, Mystic
JAN 8	Business After Hours at Hoffman Audi 5:00 - 7:00 pm 490 Broad Street, New London
JAN 16	Sexual Harrassment Prevention Training 8:30 - 10:30 am Charter Oak Federal Credit Union, 1055 Hartford Turnpike, Waterford
JAN 29	Sexual Harrassment Prevention Training 3:00 - 5:00 pm Charter Oak Federal Credit Union, 1055 Hartford Turnpike, Waterford
JAN 30	Business Breakfast and Mini-Expo: The Business of Cannabis 7:30 - 10:00 am Holiday Inn, 10 Laura Boulevard, Norwich

Pre-registration is suggested for most events. Call (860) 701-9113 or visit ChamberECT.com to learn more about any event. Cancellation Policy: Notice must be given at least three business days prior to event. No-shows or those unable to cancel in time will be billed.



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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Bake Culture

Customers enjoy and learn about the origin and background of different types of bread at this world of pastry delights.
455 Trolley Lane Boulevard, Suite 902, Mashantucket | 860.629.8008 | bakecultureusa.com

Carelot Children's Center, Inc.

Carelot Children's Center is committed to providing quality care and education in a warm, secure and loving environment. It is our philosophy that early childhood should be a time of fun, exploration and discovery.
315 Flanders Road, East Lyme | 860.739.1993 | carelot.net

Century 21 Shutters and Sails - Niantic

A full service real estate firm that is dedicated to providing the quality of life that our communities have to offer, whether you are looking for a year-round home or prefer to summer where the sea breezes are like no other place on earth.
377 Main Street, Niantic | 860.331.1510 | c21shuttersandsails.com

Century 21 Shutters and Sails - IMT Group

Our team of expert real estate agents are always there to help our clients. From leaseings to listings, to property management and beyond, the experts at IMT Realty are here to help.
333 Long Hill Road, Groton | 860.213.8333 | imtrealstate.com

CULTURED AF

CULTURED AF is a lifestyle brand and cultural hub curating creative experiences that provide artists + patrons opportunities to connect outside of the traditional spaces.
176 State Street, New London | 860.629.9172 | culturedaf.life

Estuary Council of Seniors

The Estuary Council of Seniors, Inc., promotes independent healthy aging through supportive programs, services, and advocacy for older adults.
220 Main Street, Old Saybrook | 860.388.1611 ext. 210 | ecsenior.org

Farmers Insurance Agency

With over 30 years of experience within the insurance and financial services industry, an agency with a strong focus on helping the community address their insurance needs.
339 Flanders Road, Suite 101, East Lyme | 860.850.4416 | agents.farmers.com/ct/east-lyme/michael-whalen

Hard Rock Cafe Foxwoods

Hard Rock Cafe Foxwoods delivers delicious food in a high-energy atmosphere featuring a living museum of authentic music memorabilia spanning the decades.
350 Trolley Line Boulevard, Mashantucket | 860.312.7625 | hardrockcafe.com

Londregan Commercial Real Estate Group

Londregan Commercial Real Estate Group is one of the most sought after commercial real estate firms in southeastern Connecticut due in large part to its ability to close deals quickly while rendering the best deal possible.
New London, CT | 860.444.8811 | londregan.com

TGBC Business Consulting

A business adviser and project management professional, TGBC empowers business leaders by defining their strategy, setting goals, aligning their activities to put their strategy into action.
463 Main Street, Old Saybrook | 860.661.6854 | tgezobusinessconsulting.com

Tractor Supply

At TSC, customers find everything they need to maintain their farms, ranches, homes and animals. As the inventors of the "do it yourself" trend, our customers handle practically every chore themselves, from repairing wells to building fences, welding gates together, constructing feed bins, taking care of livestock and pets, repairing tractors and trucks and building trailers for hauling.
915 Hartford Turnpike, Suite A6, Waterford | 860.437.4333 | tractorsupply.com

Utopia Home Care, Inc.

Nothing compares to the comforts of home. Utopia's compassionate home care services can help your loved one maintain their independence and quality of life.
400 Bayonet Street, Suite 400, New London | 860.443.7222 | utopiahomeware.com

Governor Lamont Addresses Opportunities and Challenges in Eastern CT at Business Breakfast



Growth, opportunity and the importance of planning for the future. Governor Ned Lamont and speakers at the Business Breakfast on December 3 conveyed a decidedly optimistic view of our economic future, particularly in eastern Connecticut. That optimism rests squarely on addressing issues that could impede growth: transportation, energy, and workforce.

The Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT and the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce welcomed Governor Lamont to speak about his plans for the State and our region and address questions from representatives from industry leaders, small businesses, and nonprofits. The morning was sponsored by Coastal Wealth Management, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation/Foxwoods, Norwich Public Utilities and UCFS Healthcare. Norwich Mayor Peter Nystrom welcomed 130 attendees on a snowy day to the Holiday Inn in Norwich.

Jason Cerniglia, of Coastal Wealth Management, set the positive tone by sharing their view of a continuing strong market, a disconnect with forecasts of a slowing economy. “The economy is actually doing quite well: GDP growth is at 2.1%, unemployment is still at historical lows, and we’ve got a very accommodating federal reserve in that interest rates are staying, and probably will stay, low for the foreseeable future.”

Governor Lamont picked up on that theme, particularly as it pertains to our region. “I am not allowed to invest anymore, but if I was, I’d be investing in eastern Connecticut...you really have such economic momentum,” said Lamont, citing Electric Boat’s securing the largest maritime award for shipbuilding in the history of the Navy at \$22 billion. He focused on the stability this multi-year contract affords, with plans to hire 1,000 people each year over several years into good paying jobs.

Having a trained workforce is essential to this economic growth, said the governor. The creation of the Governor’s Workforce Council includes a manufacturing czar and a platform

for business and academia to communicate about programs that meet workforce needs with creative strategies to meet the needs of industry and small manufacturers over the next five to ten years. With tens of thousands of jobs unfilled the relationship with the technical schools and community colleges is essential. “This is a real elevator that could lift people up and make sure nobody is left behind,” said the governor.

On the strength of the job market, Governor Lamont added, “This is an amazing time to upgrade our housing stock and invest in downtown Norwich, Groton and New London and bring those cities to life.” Norwich Public Utilities’ Chris LaRose expressed their commitment to supporting this type of economic growth.

Contributing to economic growth in New London, Lamont cited the opportunity with wind power and State Pier, starting with a collaborative agreement with Orsted and neighbors in New London harbor. “At the end of the day, it would be transformative.” In addition to hundreds of jobs, wind power provides “good clean renewable power that we control” with prices locked in for the next 10 to 20 years. The Governor also commented on the relationship with Millstone which was solidified early in his administration, ensuring the power plant’s operation as a carbon-free option through the 2020’s.

Governor Lamont turned his speech to tourism as “another unsung major industry,” where he worked to increase funding in a tough budget cycle. The focus is on leveraging marketing dollars to get the message out. He sees tourism as being valuable beyond immediate returns as “it reintroduces the state of Connecticut to a new generation,” bringing young people to experience the state where there are jobs and excellent educational opportunities waiting for them.

Rodney Butler, Chairman of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, raised the impact of transportation issues on tourism and economic growth in his remarks introducing

the governor. Relying on safe transportation for employees and visitors, the tourism economy depends on this essential function of government. “Whether you agree with tolling or not we should all be thankful to the governor for shining a bright light on the need to fix our ailing transportation substructure,” said Butler.

The critical issues around transportation are acknowledged by all parties in Hartford, according to the governor. The disagreement is about how to fund repairs on structures like the Gold Star Bridge. He noted the importance of not raiding the rainy-day fund or incurring excessive debt to achieve infrastructure improvements. The \$2.5 billion rainy-day fund is the largest in the state’s history and will allow Connecticut to weather a moderate to severe recession and maintain fiscal stability.

Questions from the audience raised concerns about proposed tolling on trucks, and its potential spread to include cars or exceed the limited timeline. Lamont defended the importance of developing a revenue stream while making adjustments so local businesses would not be hit with tolls more than once each day. With the unpopularity of tolling, Lamont suggested it would not easily be expanded.

Transportation improvements include improving railway service and experience throughout the state. GMCC President Peggy Roberts asked about increased rail stops in Mystic, to which the governor responded enthusiastically.

The crux of the state’s future success, according to Lamont, is economic growth. He recruited the roomful of people to represent the state to incoming businesses. “There’s nobody better able to sell the state of Connecticut,” said Lamont. “Tell them the good and bad about Connecticut, but emphasize the good, if you would.” Calling out the state for being a “laggard” over the past generation, he pointed to growth sectors including small business, advanced manufacturing, life sciences and biotech, and digital media.

Governor Lamont noted the private-public relationship in his administration. Bringing people with private industry experience into the public sector, he hopes to spur economic growth, evaluate state offices and employ technological solutions, and reduce the time it takes for businesses to move through the regulatory process. Jennifer Granger, of UCFS Healthcare, presented in her remarks a reflection of that approach in the nonprofit sector, with fully integrated services and electronic records that seamlessly transition patients from location to location, and soon, to major healthcare systems in the state.

BENEFACTOR NEWS

Best of Bauer 5-Star Chelsea Groton Bank: Doing the Right Thing

BauerFinancial, the Nation's Premier Bank Rating Firm, commends Chelsea Groton Bank, New London County, Connecticut on its achievement of another 5-Star Superior Rating. Not only has Chelsea Groton Bank earned Bauer's highest (5-Star) rating for financial strength and stability, it has maintained that top rating for 102 consecutive quarters giving it the added status of being a "Best of Bauer Bank". This designation is reserved specifically for banks that have earned Bauer's highest rating consistently for 100 consecutive quarters... or longer. Earning and maintaining Bauer's highest 5-Star rating indicates Chelsea Groton Bank is one of the strongest banks in the nation.

"BauerFinancial would like to congratulate Michael Rauh, President and CEO and the entire team at Chelsea Groton Bank. Strong leadership and dedication to excellence both inside the bank and outside in the community are the building blocks for success," remarked Karen L. Dorway, president of the research firm. "Community banks, like Chelsea Groton Bank, are fiscally-fit because they go the extra mile to help their neighbors and friends be fiscally-fit as well. In the end, Chelsea Groton Bank reaps the benefits of the strong communities it helped to build," concluded Dorway.

Mariani Reck Lane LLC Attorneys Recognized as Super Lawyers

The law firm of Mariani Reck Lane, LLC is pleased to announce that Attorneys Linda Mariani and Jonathan Lane have been honored by virtue of their inclusion as Connecticut Super Lawyers and "New England Super lawyers" in the field of family law. Attorney Mariani has been so honored year after year. Because the Super Lawyer recognition is the result of peer nominations, independent research and peer evaluations annually, attorneys recognized for inclusion must be reviewed anew each year. Attorney Jonathan Lane has been selected by his peers as a "Rising Star." Only 2.5% of the state's pool of attorneys receive this honor. The Super Lawyer designation is awarded only to those attorneys with a high degree of peer recognition and professional achievement.

2019 Connecticut Super Lawyers Recognizes Seven Attorneys from Suisman Shapiro

The New London, CT, law firm Suisman Shapiro announces that seven of its attorneys were selected for inclusion in the 2019 Connecticut Super Lawyers listing. Super Lawyers is a rating service of outstanding lawyers from more than 70 practice areas who have attained a high-degree of peer recognition and professional achievement.

The following Suisman Shapiro attorneys were named to the 2019 Super Lawyers list: James P. Berryman for Workers Compensation Law; Michael A. Blanchard for Criminal Defense; John A. Collins III for Personal Injury Law; and Theodore W. Heiser for Employment & Labor Law.

The attorneys below were named as Rising Stars: Eric W. Callahan for Business/Corporate Law; Roger T. Scully for Personal Injury Law; and Kyle J. Zrenda for Personal Injury Law.

The selection process is multi-phased and includes independent research, peer nominations and evaluations that identify a high degree of peer recognition and professional achievement. Only up to 5% of the state's total lawyer pool is selected for Super Lawyers and no more than 2.5% are named to the Rising Stars list.

MEMBER NEWS

The Power of Community and Compassion: 2019 Preston Community Fund Grants Announced

The Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut (CFECT) is pleased to announce the 2019 Preston Community Fund grant awards. One of more than 500 funds at the Community Foundation, the Preston Community Fund supports the arts, and cultural and social needs of the residents and organizations of the Town of Preston.

Five nonprofits received a total of \$3,276: Amos Lake Association, Arts for Learning CT, Catholic Charities, Preston City Congregational Church/Two-Can Food Pantry, and Preston Boy Scout Troop 75. These grants will support projects including a water quality maintenance project, a curriculum-linked arts program for all Preston Plains Middle School students, providing for emergency basic needs, stocking a local food pantry, and helping members of Boy Scout Troop 75 participate in the 2020 Vermont High Adventure Trip.

TVCCA joins Meals on Wheels America and Subaru of America, Inc. in Sharing the Love this Holiday Season

Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA) is proud to announce that it will be participating in the 2019 Subaru Share the Love Event as a member of Meals on Wheels America – one of four national Share the Love charitable partners supported through the campaign. From November 14, 2019, through January 2, 2020, Subaru of America will donate \$250 for every new Subaru vehicle purchased or leased to the customer's choice of participating charities.

Participating Meals on Wheels America members, like TVCCA, will receive a share of the donation raised by Subaru in their state. TVCCA partnered with Secor Subaru in New London to raise awareness for the popular year-end sales and giving event and drive support for Meals on Wheels through a Business After Hours that was hosted through the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut on November 20.

Over the last five years, TVCCA has received nearly \$225,000 in donations through Subaru of America's partnership with Meals on Wheels America, including the donation of a brand new Subaru Outback that is used to deliver Meals on Wheels in Eastern Connecticut.

Nature Center Receives Multi-Year Grant Towards Coogan Farm Vision

The Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center has received a grant from The Edward and Mary Lord Foundation of Norwich that will advance the Coogan Farm project that began five years ago when the Center acquired the property.

The three-year grant, which totals \$250,000, will "allow us to further our collaboration with our neighbors the Denison Homestead and Mystic Seaport Museum," said DPNC Executive Director Davnet Conway Schaffer.

The grant will support the following projects: complete the vision for a Greenmanville Trail that tells the story of the Greenman brothers' farm; solidify the connection along the historic trails between the Coogan Farm and the Denison Homestead; restore the Farm's Gallup Orchard that has produced fruit since colonial times; and develop new indoor and outdoor gathering spaces in the Avery Farmhouse Welcome Center and at the Stillman foundation to meet the growing demand for educational programs that connect children to nature.

SHOP LOCAL. WIN PRIZES!

Holiday Shopping Trail

Shop local this season with the Chamber's **Holiday Shopping Trail** and enter to win great prizes.

November 24 through December 24, pick up a Holiday Shopping Trail passport at a participating venue and collect stickers by visiting passport venues. The more stickers you collect the better your prize could be!

For participating vendors or more information visit ChamberECT.com/trail.



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The Southeast Connecticut World Affairs Council (SECWAC) is a regional membership organization that is a member of the World Affairs Councils of America.

Our mission is "to foster an understanding of issues of foreign policy and international affairs through study, debate, and educational programming." SECWAC provides a non-partisan, non-advocacy dialogue between members and speakers. Our speakers are often U.S. policymakers, educators, authors, and other experts on foreign relations.

SECWAC arranges over 12 meetings within our annual speaker series between September and June; the meetings range in topic and are hosted at venues along the I-95 corridor, welcoming members and guests from Stonington to Old Saybrook, and beyond.

Learn more and become a member at SECWAC.ORG

MEMBERSHIP: \$85 General Admission; \$25 Young Professionals under 35; Walk-ins Welcome for \$20; always Free for Students and Educators. New Corporate Membership—Contact us!

UPCOMING SPEAKERS: LEARN MORE AT SECWAC.ORG



THURS., DECEMBER 12

Sarah Wiliarty, Wesleyan University
"The Rise of Populism/Nationalism in Europe"
@ Crozier Student Center, Connecticut College



THURS., JANUARY 23

Megan O'Neill, Associate Director, Imagine Scholar
"A Different Look at Rural African Education"
@ First Congregational Church of Old Lyme



THURS., FEBRUARY 13

Karolin Machtans, German Studies, Conn. College
"The Refugee Crisis in Europe: The Case of Germany"
@ Crozier Student Center, Connecticut College



THURS., MARCH 26

Dean Accardi, Global Islamic Studies, Conn. College
"India, Pakistan, and the War over Kashmir"
@ Crozier Student Center, Connecticut College





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