



One SouthCoast

NAVIGATOR

CHARTING SUCCESS FOR SOUTHCOAST BUSINESS

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BUSINESS NEWS FOR AND ABOUT MEMBERS OF THE ONE SOUTHCOAST CHAMBER

DECEMBER 2024

Shop Local This Holiday Season: A Gift to Your Community

As the holiday season approaches, thoughts often turn to gift-giving, festive decorations, and holiday meals. This year, there is an opportunity to make your holiday shopping even more meaningful by choosing to shop locally. Supporting local businesses is more than a trend—it is a way to invest in your community, discover unique gifts, and make a positive impact on the environment. Here are some compelling reasons why shopping local should be at the top of your list this holiday season.

Strengthening Your Community

When you shop at local businesses, you are doing more than just purchasing a product; you are contributing directly to the local economy. Studies show that for every dollar spent at a small business, a significant portion remains in the community—circulating among local service providers, suppliers, and other small businesses. This ripple effect helps create jobs, fund local infrastructure, and support community initiatives. In contrast, spending the same dollar at a big-box store or online retailer often means that the majority of the revenue leaves the area.

Local businesses are also known for giving back to the community. Many sponsor local events, support schools, and donate to local charities. When you choose to shop local, you are reinforcing the fabric of your community and helping it thrive.

Finding Unique and Thoughtful Gifts

One of the joys of holiday shopping

is finding the perfect gift for loved ones. Local shops often carry unique, handcrafted, or locally made items that you will not find in big retail chains or on massive online marketplaces. Whether it is a one-of-a-kind piece of jewelry, handmade home goods, or specialty foods, local businesses provide an array of creative and distinctive options that reflect the character of your community.

These unique gifts also come with a story—a personal connection to the artisan who made them, the local entrepreneur who curated them, or the neighborhood that inspired them. Such stories add a personal touch to holiday giving, making each present feel special and memorable.

Supporting Sustainability

Shopping local is a more environmentally friendly choice. Independent businesses often have a smaller carbon footprint than large retailers. Many source their products locally, which reduces the need for long-distance shipping and excess packaging. Local farmers' markets and shops that focus on sustainable practices also encourage eco-friendly choices, offering organic and seasonal products that are often produced with minimal environmental impact.

Better Customer Service and Expertise

Local businesses pride themselves on their customer service. Unlike big chains, local shop owners are often passionate about their products and have a deep understanding of what they sell. They can offer personal-

ized recommendations, help you find exactly what you are looking for, and even introduce you to new products you might not have discovered otherwise.

This personal attention not only enhances the shopping experience but also builds lasting relationships. When you become a regular customer at a local business, you are not just another transaction—you are a valued member of the community.

A Holiday Gift with a Bigger Impact

This holiday season, choosing to shop local can transform your holiday traditions. Each purchase becomes a vote for the values that matter to you: sustainability, community, quality, and creativity. It is a chance to slow down, enjoy the festive season, and reconnect with your neighborhood.

Whether it is a charming boutique, a cozy bookstore, or a farmers' market, your local businesses are ready to make your holiday season special. This year, let your holiday shopping reflect the spirit of giving by supporting the small businesses that make your community unique. Shopping local is not just about the perfect gift—it is about giving back to the place you call home

Sincerely,

Mike O'Sullivan
CEO



Annual Meeting
Thursday, December 12
7:30 AM
White's of Westport

Women's Power Lunch
Friday, December 13
12 PM - 1:30 PM
Nonna's Cafe and Lounge

Business Builder's Breakfast
Tuesday, January 14
8:30 AM - 10 AM

DEI Business After Hours
Thursday, January 23
5 PM - 7 PM
UMass Law School

New Bedford State of the City
Wednesday, January 29
11:30 AM - 1:30 PM
New Bedford High School

For additional information and/
or to
register for events please visit:
[www.members.onesouthcoast.com/
events/](http://www.members.onesouthcoast.com/events/)

One SouthCoast Navigator is the official news publication of One SouthCoast Chamber

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Executive Director, Viva Fall River, Patti Rego
Executive Director, Fall River Arts and Culture Coalition (FRACC), Ashley Occhino

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- Immediate Past Chair: Eileen Migliozi, St. Anne's Credit Union
- Treasurer: Matthew Schondek, Fall River Municipal Credit Union
- Vice Chair-Government Affairs: Paul Chasse, REALTOR® Association of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Vice Chair-Small Business: Curtis Nelson, Nelson Insurance & Financial Services
- Vice Chair-Governance Committee: Doug Glassman, SERVPRO
- Vice Chair-One SouthCoast Chamber Foundation: Carl Sawejko, Sawejko Communications
- Vice Chair-Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: Gail Fortes
- At Large: William Burns, Southcoast Health System
- At Large: Kim Perry, Waring-Sullivan Funeral Home

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- Nathan Araujo, Advance Career Services
- Kevin Carando, Acushnet Company
- Barbara Casagrande, AHEAD
- Ronald Ellis, Edward Jones

- Rose Lopes, Sylvia Group
- Lynne Mastera, Precix
- Douglas Rodrigues, D. E. Rodrigues & Company, Inc.
- Carl Sawejko, Sawejko Communications
- Matthew Schondek, Fall River Municipal Credit Union
- Bernadette Souza, Youth Opportunitites Unlimited
- Michael Tavares, Horacio's, Inc.

Terms to Expire in December 2025:

- Dugan Becker, SouthCoast Wind
- Paul Chasse, REALTOR® Association of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Jenifer Cullen, Vineyard Wind
- Peter Daley, People Incorporated
- Eileen Migliozi, St. Anne's Credit Union
- Dr. Laura Douglas, Bristol Community College
- Monte Ferris, Venus de Milo
- Gail Fortes, YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Doug Glassman, SERVPRO of Dartmouth/New Bedford & Marion / Middleboro
- Gary P. Howayeck, Law Office of Gary Howayeck, PC
- Anthony Medeiros, Mechanics Cooperative Bank
- Curtis Nelson, Nelson Insurance & Financial Services
- Arti Pacheco, New York Life
- Kim Perry, Waring-Sullivan Funeral Home

Terms to Expire in December 2026:

- William Burns, Southcoast Health System
- Mike Bushell, St. Anne's Hospital
- Stephen W. Connulty, Paul & Dixon Insurance
- Catherine Dillon, BankFive
- Charlie Fellows, Lafrance Hospitality
- Jeffrey Glassman, Darn It, Inc.
- Jeff Pagliuca, Bristol County Savings Bank
- Marie Pellegrino, BayCoast Bank
- Derek Santos, New Bedford Economic Development Council
- Matt Zenni, Liberty Utilities

The Massachusetts Small Business Center (MSBDC) Network provides one-to-one free comprehensive and confidential services focusing on, business growth and strategies, financing and loan assistance as well as strategic, marketing and operational analysis. In addition, low cost educational training programs are offered across the state targeted to the needs of small business.

Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network

200 Pocasset Street, Fall River, MA 02721
Phone: (508) 673.9783 Fax: (508) 674.1929
www.msbdc.org
www.facebook.com/msbdc

Mallard

December Policy Pulse

It is hard to believe that 2024 is already coming to a close! Before we get excited about our new goals, ambitions, and, of course, New Year's resolutions for 2025, it is important to take a look back and reflect on what we have accomplished this past year. Since this is the "Policy Pulse," we will focus on some of the great events, meetings, and work we have done this past year in public policy, advocacy, and government affairs.

The impact government has on every single business is extraordinary. We here at One SouthCoast pride ourselves on being your voice, the voice of business, and advocating on your behalf at the local, state, and federal levels. As we look back at some of our efforts, please keep in mind that we are always looking for more members to get involved. Our elected officials are hired by you, they work for you, and when they hear from you, it matters.

As many of you know, one of the most significant benefits of being a member is access to our elected officials and decision-makers. This year, we brought the membership a great lineup of heavy hitters. We hosted several members from Governor Healey's cabinet, including Yvonne Hao- Secretary of Economic Development, who spoke to us in February, one hour after announcing the Healey Administration's vision for the \$4 billion Economic Development Bill that just passed in November. We also hosted a luncheon where we heard directly from Lauren Jones- Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development, and Ed Augustus- Secretary of Housing and Livable Communities, about the efforts the state is taking to tackle two major issues impacting business. The cost of housing and the workforce.

We hosted three large gatherings with State Legislators, including the Legislative Luncheon with the South Coast delegation, the Ways and Means Update with State Senator and Chairman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, Senator Michael Rodrigues, and, in partnership with the Regeneration Committee, a New Bedford-focused breakfast with the New Bedford Delegation to discuss pressing issues facing the city.

We also heard from Congressman Auchincloss at Fall River Country Club and Congressman Keating at the Century House to learn about their efforts representing the South Coast on the federal level.

On the local level, we hosted our annual State of Business with the Mayor of Fall River, Paul Coogan, and in January of 2025, we'll be host-



ing Mayor Jon Mitchell for his State of the City address.

While hearing from legislators and decision-makers in these large group formats is important, real work and advocacy is done in small group settings. In April, I was joined by Gary Howayeck of Howayeck Law and Matt Cianflone, the General Counsel for Gold Medal Bakery, for a small, in-person meeting with Secretary Lauren Jones and the Director of DFML- Bill Alpine, to discuss the challenges the business community experiences with Paid Family Medical Leave.

We held a meet-and-greet with the Mayor of Ponta Delgada, Pedro Nascimento Cabral, and our state legislators to discuss business opportunities on the South Coast and overseas.

In partnership with the REALTOR® Association of Southeastern Massachusetts, we hosted the final event for the Rail to Boston Coalition to celebrate our hard work over the years and thank Representative Bill Straus, Chair of Transportation, and Jean Fox, Project Manager for South Coast Rail for making this a reality.

We spent a day visiting the entire state delegation on Beacon Hill for Small Business Day to discuss the issues impacting our smaller members.

In partnership with the Fall River Arts and Culture and New Bedford Creative Consortium, we participated in an Arts and Culture Legislative Breakfast with the South Coast state delegation to discuss state funding for this vital sector.

While New Bedford and Fall River tend to get more of our attention, this year, we thought it was important to enhance our relationships with our smaller municipalities. The One SouthCoast Team made the rounds, meeting and visiting with many of our town officials across the South Coast, sharing our priorities and enthusiasm to be great community partners.

In Partnership with the REALTOR® Association of Southeastern Massachusetts, we announced

the SouthCoast Workforce Housing Coalition. Going forward, this coalition will focus on advocating for all housing types, particularly on the local level, where zoning, permits, and code can be significant hurdles.

We united with the ten largest Chambers of Commerce in the State to create the Massachusetts Chamber Policy Network, where we find common ground and advocate as a large coalition to amplify our message.

With help from the Chamber's Education Committee, we wrote letters to Senator Rodrigues and Senator Montigny highlighting our priorities related to education funding in the State Budget. We fought hard to defeat Question 2 and Question 5 on November's ballot, which we believed would hurt Massachusetts. While we successfully defeated Question 5, we look forward to working with State Leaders to ensure that education levels in Massachusetts do not drop due to the lack of a statewide standard.

We hosted a meeting with our entire Federal Delegation, including the offices of Congressman Keating, Congressman Auchincloss, Senator Markey, and Senator Warren, to ensure they understand the impacts the closure of the Washington Bridge is having across the South Coast.

Lastly, a committee that is near and dear to my heart is our Government Affairs Committee. This committee aims to bring together business members who have expressed a special interest in government affairs to meet directly with legislators in a small group setting to have informal yet frank conversations about real issues impacting business. We are proud to have hosted Congressman Keating at Titleist Ball Plant III, Congressman Auchincloss at Matouk Luxury Linens, the State Delegation at the New Bedford Community Health Center, Vanson Leather, and in our New Bedford and Fall River offices.

As we look forward to an exciting agenda for 2025, if you or someone in your organization would like to be more involved in our government affairs and public policy work, please email itrombly@onesouthcoast.com. I wish our members and their families a happy holiday season and look forward to another exciting year for One SouthCoast!

Ian Trombly

Vice President of Public Policy

Good News!

FRMCU Honors Well Deserved Promotion!



Matthew G. Schondek, President and CEO of Fall River Municipal Credit Union (FRMCU), has announced Karen Carpenter's promotion to Compliance Coordinator, effective November 4, 2024. Karen transitions from her role as Assistant Branch Manager, a position she has excelled in for five years. Her experience and knowledge of compliance processes are expected to drive her success in this new capacity. The Board of Directors and Management commend her dedication and extend their congratulations. FRMCU invites talented individuals to explore career opportunities via their website (www.frmcu.com) or Facebook page.



FRMCU Welcomes New Hires



Fall River Municipal Credit Union has welcomed Liz Paolucci as Loan Origination Manager and James Roy as Vice President of Finance. Paolucci, with 14 years of mortgage lending experience, will lead loan originations to provide personalized lending solutions. Roy, with over 20 years in banking, will oversee financial operations and contribute to the

Credit Union's growth. President Matthew G. Schondek expressed excitement for their roles in supporting members' financial goals. The Credit Union invites others to explore career opportunities at FRMCU.



Bristol County Savings Bank Promotes Leahy to 1st Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer



Dennis F. Leahy has been promoted to 1st Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer of Bristol County Savings Bank (BCSB). In this role, he oversees Finance and Accounting, Loan and Deposit Operations, Facilities, and Government Banking while supporting the CEO in strategic planning. With nearly 30 years at BCSB, Leahy has held key positions including CFO, contributing significantly to the bank's success. He remains Treasurer of the Bristol County Savings Charitable Foundation.

Leahy actively serves the community, holding leadership roles with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Fall River, Narragansett Council Boy Scouts of America, and Hockomock Area YMCA, among others. A Certified Public Accountant, he earned his Accounting & Finance degree from Bridgewater State University and holds advanced certifications in banking from Fairfield University and Babson College.



BankFive & FHLBank of Boston Help a Local Mother Achieve Her Dream of Homeownership

Owning a home is a lifelong dream for many, and for Vanessa, it was a dream made possible through determination, support, and the guidance of BankFive's own Christopher Craig, FVP, Regional Sales Manager. In partnership with the FHLBank of Boston, Christopher was instrumental in helping her navigate the path to purchasing her first home, providing her with both the knowledge and encouragement she needed to turn that dream into reality.

This year Southcoast Health was recognized as high performing by the U.S. News & World Report in five procedures and conditions including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), colon cancer surgery, heart attack, heart bypass surgery, and heart failure.

Southcoast Health's hospitals—Charlton Memorial, St. Luke's, and Tobey—have received high-performing ratings from U.S. News & World Report in five critical areas:

COPD, colon cancer surgery, heart attack, heart bypass surgery, and heart failure. This distinction recognizes the system's dedication to delivering exceptional care, superior patient outcomes, and innovative treatment approaches. Notably, Southcoast Health is the only health-care system in the South Coast region to earn these rankings, reflecting its leadership in specialized care.

President and CEO David O. McCready praised the clinical teams for their commitment to excellence. The recognition highlights Southcoast Health's efforts to enhance access to care, improve recovery outcomes, and provide comprehensive treatment in collaboration with specialists. Achievements such as a 3-star rating from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons underscore the organization's expertise, particularly in heart care and cancer treatment.



Do you have good news? Please email information to: info@onesouthcoast.com



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People Incorporated Named Among Top 100 Women-Led Businesses in Massachusetts

The Women's Edge together with its partner The Boston Globe, today announced People Incorporated was named one of the 24th annual Top 100 Women-Led Businesses in Massachusetts. Today, the honorees were recognized during a celebratory breakfast event. The 100 organizations honored generated over \$124 billion in total revenue in 2023, demonstrating that women leaders continue to be key drivers of the state's economy.

Megan Stirk, President & CEO of People Incorporated in Fall River, is ranked as #61 on the list, representing her fourth appearance in the Top 100 Women-Led Businesses. "The dynamic women on this prestigious list are driving change throughout the commonwealth, and I am proud to be in their company," said Stirk. "This is more of a testament to the work People Incorporated does day-in and day-out with its incredible staff to support children, adults, and families of all abilities throughout the SouthCoast. I am honored to represent such a wonderful and valuable agency."

"The organizations on this year's diverse list are driving \$124 billion of revenue into the Massachusetts economy and innovation across the country, from increased manufacturing capacity to breakthroughs in clinical care and therapeutics," said The Women's Edge Chief Executive Officer Elizabeth L. Hailer. "We are honored to celebrate the Top 100 women leaders and hope it inspires others to drive for success here in our region and beyond."

This is the 24th year that The Women's Edge – a Boston-based nonprofit organization devoted to advancing women in leadership positions — created the list through a nomination process and reviewed both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, and the 12th year that the list was created in collaboration with The Boston Globe. In addition to revenue or



operating budget, factors considered in the evaluation included workplace and management diversity, board makeup, and innovative projects. The full list will be published in the Globe Magazine's Women & Power issue at bostonglobe.com/magazine on November 1 and in print on November 3.

"These 100 exceptional leaders, and the companies they run, are at the heart of the Massachusetts economy," said Globe Magazine editor Francis Storrs. "We're delighted to highlight their inspiration and impact through our longtime partnership with The Women's Edge."

About People Incorporated

People Incorporated is a nonprofit human services organization with programs throughout Southeastern Massachusetts that support children, adults, and families of all abilities. Its mission is to strengthen our community for each of its members by providing premier services for children and adults of all abilities in a collaborative and creative environment.

Visit www.peopleincfr.org for more information.

About The Women's Edge

The Women's Edge is a non-profit organization that propels women leaders to achieve professional and personal success and deliver positive impact within their business and community. Founded in 1997, The Women's Edge achieves this mission by collaborating and connecting extraordinary women at all stages of their careers — from next generation leaders to CEOs; continually building a pipeline of high performing women leaders; delivering relevant leadership programs, events and perspectives, with actionable insights; incorporating diversity, inclusion, and belonging to foster gender and racial equity; and leveraging technology to expand reach and amplify impact. Visit <https://thewomensedge.org/> for more information.

About Boston Globe Media Partners, LLC

Boston Globe Media Partners, LLC ("BGMP") is a locally owned, award-winning media company serving Boston and New England. The cornerstone of the brand is The Boston Globe, a 27-time Pulitzer Prize winning news source and one of the most successful metro news organizations in the U.S. with the largest newsroom in New England and one of the highest daily print circulations among metro newspapers. The Globe has served the region for over 151 years as a trusted source of news and has more than 245,000 digital subscribers, a growing portfolio of events, and a range of digital and home-delivered advertising solutions that reach more consumers than any other New England media brand. Boston Globe Media's properties include The Boston Globe, Globe.com, Boston.com, STAT, The B-Side, Globe Publishing Services, Globe Events, Studio/B, and the news program Boston Globe on NESN and online.

One SouthCoast NAVIGATOR

Beginning in 2025, the One SouthCoast Navigator will be transitioning to a fully digital format and will be released monthly.

This shift will significantly expand our reach by directly emailing the Navigator to our email contact list and making it available on our website, reaching more than three times the previous audience.

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**Grand Opening/
Ribbon Cutting
Star Photo Lab
Fall River, MA**



**Government Affairs Meeting
New Bedford Community
Health Center
New Bedford, MA**



**Grand Opening/
Ribbon Cutting
Nonna's Lounge & Cafe
Fall River, MA**



RECENT EVENTS



**FRMCU Business After Hours
Stumpy's Hatchet House
Fall River, MA**



**Commonwealth Leaders Series
Century House
Acushnet, MA**



**Holiday Business After Hours
White's of Westport
Westport, MA**



**Business Builder's Breakfast
Tropical Smoothie Cafe
New Bedford, MA**



**DEI Panel
Canned Heat
Fall River, MA**



ONE SOUTH COAST
C H A M B E R

RECENT EVENTS



**Business After Hours
Narrows Center for the Arts
Fall River, MA**



**Government Affairs Meeting
Matouk
Fall River, MA**



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www.thesharefoundation.org

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(800) 404-4038
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Seekonk, MA

39 Commerce Way

Wareham, MA

Wareham Crossing
2421 Cranberry Highway

Download the Southcoast Health app today!



If your condition is an emergency, please call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

UMass Dartmouth launches free tuition program for high-need, in-state students

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth is proud to announce a transformative initiative, the UMass Dartmouth Deal, which will provide free tuition and mandatory fees to high-need, in-state undergraduate students. Made possible through critical support from the Massachusetts MASSGRANT program, the program underscores UMass Dartmouth's commitment to expanding access to higher education and supporting Massachusetts families.

"I want to thank the Healey-Driscoll Administration and the Massachusetts Legislature for their commitment to public higher education. As a first-generation college student myself, I know from personal experience that a college degree is the springboard to personal and professional success. It changes lives and transforms communities. Through this initiative and the support of the MASSGRANT program, UMass Dartmouth is committed to ensuring that Massachusetts students from working families have the opportunity to get a world-class education at UMass Dartmouth," said Chancellor Mark A. Fuller.

"UMass Dartmouth is doing an excellent job at conveying the affordability of a UMass degree, and I thank Chancellor Fuller and the other UMass chancellors for their efforts to communicate that fact to Massachusetts students and families," said UMass President Marty Meehan. "The UMass system has made record investments in university-funded financial aid, increasing aid by 73 percent to a total of \$409 million since 2015. This significant university aid, combined with the visionary expansion of MASSGrant Plus from the Healey-Driscoll Administration and the Legislature, has made it possible for the four undergraduate campuses to cover tuition and mandatory fees for the students with the greatest need."

Beginning Fall 2025, this program will be available to in-state undergraduate students with an annual family income of \$75,000 or less by providing tuition and fee support and access to a robust network of academic and professional resources like financial literacy workshops and additional scholarships to assist with costs such as books and housing. The UMass Dartmouth Deal will also guarantee eligible students a room in on-campus housing. The University expects roughly 1,500 UMass Dartmouth students to qualify for this initiative.

"I applaud UMass Dartmouth and the UMass System for their innovative approach to expanding access to educational opportunities," said Senator Michael J. Rodrigues, Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. "The Legislature, in collaboration with the Healey-Driscoll Adminis-

tration, continues to position Massachusetts as a national leader in higher education. This free tuition program is great for Massachusetts families and the Commonwealth."

UMass Dartmouth is mindful that a four-year degree is also a meaningful investment for families whose income may be higher than the eligibility requirements for UMass Dartmouth Deal. The University remains committed to providing need-based financial aid to many families. Last year, UMass Dartmouth awarded more than \$21 million in financial aid.

"I want to congratulate UMass Dartmouth for their commitment to providing educational pathways for our students. The work we have done in the Legislature in collaboration with the Healey-Driscoll administration continues to provide young people in the Commonwealth the opportunity to earn an excellent education at an affordable cost. Improving access to higher education will strengthen our local communities and economy," said Representative Tony Cabral.

"This tuition-free assistance is a critical piece to elevating career pathways for students of families with modest means to access high-quality higher education. I am proud to be a part of this Commonwealth and Legislature that has made this possible," said Representative Carole Fiola.

"Accessible and affordable education is the hand-up that many in our community need as they pursue their highest potential," said Representative Chris Markey. "UMass Dartmouth will continue to enrich and strengthen the foundation of the South Coast by implementing free tuition and fees to high-need Massachusetts residents. This commitment to our community will provide our young people the tools to achieve their brightest future."

In alignment with other UMass campuses, the initiative aims to reduce financial barriers for students who

demonstrate significant financial need, ensuring that a high-quality public education remains within reach for all. Together, the UMass campuses are dedicated to preparing students for current and emerging industries, driven by a shared vision of accessible, inclusive, and quality education.

"The decision by the UMass Board to offer free tuition and mandatory fees to high need, in-state undergraduate students will allow those who previously may not have been able to take advantage of a four-year degree program the opportunity to do so. This decision expands educational and career opportunities for all," said Mayor Paul E. Coogan, Fall River.

"The UMass Dartmouth Deal will provide a necessary boost to the educational aspirations of the SouthCoast," said Michael O'Sullivan, CEO of the One SouthCoast Chamber. "Expanding opportunities for the residents of our region, especially our Gateway Cities, will make a profound impact."

To make it easier for students, they will not have to complete a separate application for the program and will be automatically enrolled if eligible. For more details, including eligibility requirements and other program information, please visit www.umassd.edu/deal.

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Robeson Branch Office
1110 Robeson St., Fall River, MA 02720

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BayCoast Bank Proudly Supports South Coast Community with Four Key Grants

BayCoast Bank, a long-time community savings bank with a reputation for excellence, is committed to enhancing the vitality of our South Coast neighborhoods by serving those around us. BayCoast recently provided four local nonprofit organizations with important grants to help improve the communities where we live and work.

Community Action for Better Housing (CABH): BayCoast is proud to offer support for the organization's ongoing operations. CABH is dedicated to ensuring the availability of safe and affordable housing for vulnerable individuals and households in the Fall River and New Bedford areas. CABH provides safe, affordable housing to a broad cross-section of local populations, including very low-income families, unhoused individuals, people with special needs, veterans, and the elderly.

Discovery Language Academy: BayCoast is offering support to the Academy for its English Language Program for Adult Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). ESOL is a six-month program that runs as an in-person, classroom-based literacy education program for adult immigrants living in the Greater New Bedford area. This is the Academy's seventh year running the program.

OneGoal: OneGoal's vision is that every student will have the equitable opportunity to achieve their greatest postsecondary aspirations. BayCoast is providing funding to support OneGoal's programming, which provides students with transformative post-secondary advising to ensure they have the knowledge, tools, and support they need for success beyond high school.

Veterans Transition House: BayCoast Bank's grant supports the organization's Meals Pro-

gram for homeless veterans. Additionally, BayCoast's grant will assist the Anthony C. and Salvatore H. Alfiero Outreach Center. Staffed by licensed clinicians and outreach, housing, healthcare, and employment specialists, the Center serves veterans in the community who are at risk of becoming homeless, experiencing food insecurity, and in need of human services.

"BayCoast believes in supporting organizations whose mission is to improve lives, expand educational opportunities, and bring people together," said John McMahon, Senior Vice President, Community Engagement for BayCoast Bank. "Everyone deserves the opportunity to have an enriching life. BayCoast hopes to inspire future acts of kindness in our community by continuing to help our neighbors in need."



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United Way's Warm Coats ~ Warm Hearts Donation Drive Delivers Warmth to Greater Fall River



United Way of Greater Fall River

For the sixth consecutive year, United Way of Greater Fall River's (UWGFR) Warm Coats ~ Warm Hearts donation drive is collecting adult and youth-sized new or gently-loved winter coats, outerwear, accessories, and new socks to distribute to community members in need. This annual initiative, sponsored by Neto Insurance Agency, runs from November 1st throughout January 28th with weekly sortings and deliveries executed with the help of volunteers and donation drive partner, First Congregational Church of Fall River.

"We're grateful to be a part of a caring community that always takes charge in Leading the Way to change," remarks Marketing and Community Engagement Coordinator Janine Pohorely. "Whether it's through donations or by volunteering alongside our team sorting through coats and delivering requested items to community-based organizations, the Warm Coats ~ Warm Hearts initiative relies heavily on its ability to mobilize the community. This collective support, from collection site partners to individual donations to the dedicated volunteers, all work together to make this annual donation drive meaningful in providing the direct support right when our neighbors need it," Pohorely emphasizes.

Providing a basic need like access to warm clothing reinforces UWGFR's mission of

creating a Healthy Community where everyone thrives. Last year's Warm Coats ~ Warm Hearts initiative delivered nearly 1,600 coats and over 2,000 winter accessories to individuals in the seven communities UWGFR serves. This was completed with the help of volunteers working alongside UWGFR staff to pick up items at collection sites, sort through donations to ensure they are in good condition, and then deliver custom orders submitted by local community-based organizations.

The number of items distributed underscores the impact of the current economic climate. With a poverty rate of 19.7 percent, Fall River sits higher than the national average of 12.5 percent which translates to increased need (U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Fall River City, Massachusetts, 2024). Purchasing adequate seasonal attire becomes a luxury when individuals are struggling to pay their bills, put food on the table, or maintain steady shelter. The Warm Coats ~ Warm Hearts donation drive aims to strengthen Community Resiliency by tackling the urgent needs of individuals today through the provisioning of winter clothing so that they can focus on overcoming other daily challenges to build their version of a better future.

In light of the season of giving, folks are encouraged to Get Involved with the Warm Coats ~ Warm Hearts donation drive by visiting UWGFR's website, <https://uwgfr.org/warm-coats-warm-hearts/> where information can be found on donating items, becoming a collection site, volunteering, or submitting a request for items. Follow UWGFR on social media for Warm Coats ~ Warm Hearts donation drive updates and other community happenings at @UnitedWayGFR.

United Way mobilizes communities to

action so all can thrive.

True to our founding spirit, whenever there is a need in our communities, United Way is there. We bring a comprehensive approach to every challenge, actively listening and responding to local needs. Our reach across tens of thousands of communities means we can share innovations and scale impact to improve lives around the world. From strengthening local resilience to advancing health, youth opportunity, and financial security, we are working towards a future where every person in every community can reach their full potential.

United Way of Greater Fall River is well-positioned to implement this work locally by funding critical services where there are gaps in coverage. The Annual Campaign helps to maintain important health and human service programs and initiatives that align with its mission through local agency partners. Dollars raised in fiscal year 2024 helped fund over 75 programs in Greater Fall River. Current focus areas include programs to help increase high school graduation rates, improve access to quality early childcare and education, and mental and behavioral health, especially for our youth.

It takes everyone in the community working together to create a brighter future. To learn more about United Way or how you can get involved, visit www.uwgfr.org or on social media @UnitedWayGFR.

Join Investment Between City and Vineyard Wind Reboots Business Development Hub

Mayor Jon Mitchell was joined by Vineyard Wind CEO Klaus Moeller, Avangrid Chief Development Officer Ken Kimmell, New Bedford Economic Development Council Executive Director Derek Santos, New Bedford Ocean Cluster Executive Director Jennifer Downing and other officials to announce the relaunching of the City's business support center as The Quest: New Bedford's Enterprise Hub.

The three-story, City-owned facility at 1213 Purchase St. will be enhanced from top to bottom, including a new entry lobby, atrium stairs, and common areas, as well as a completely renovated top floor with dedicated space for offshore wind and maritime industry businesses.

Externally, The Quest will feature new lighting, mechanical and utility upgrades, and a repainting of the brick facade. A new logo and sign will illuminate on the side of the building, visible off JFK Boulevard on the way in and out of historic Downtown.

The Quest will serve as a physical anchor in the growing development district just north of Downtown. Its neighbor, New Bedford Research and Robotics, is in the middle of an expansion project to further its focus on developing data science, marine tech, artificial intelligence, robotics and other businesses linked to applied sciences. And The Quest is conveniently located close to several new housing developments and the passenger rail station.

"The Quest will be a nerve-center for start-ups and established companies to exchange ideas, leverage resources, and ultimately grow and expand," Mayor Mitchell said. "The Quest will contribute to the revitalization of its neighborhood and add to the dynamism of the Greater New Bedford economy, especially in the maritime sector."

Funding for the \$3 million project includes a \$1.5 million American Rescue Plan Act award from the City, and \$1.5 million from Vineyard Wind's Offshore Wind Industry Accelerator Fund, which aims to accelerate the development of offshore wind businesses, infrastructure, and supply chain in New Bedford and throughout Massachusetts.

"The launch of The Quest marks a transformative step for New Bedford's maritime and offshore wind sectors, and I am grateful to Mayor Mitchell for his leadership in once again prioritizing the investment of federal ARPA funds towards long-term projects and partnerships that will pay dividends for years to come in the City," Congressman Bill Keating said. "This revitalized space will foster innovation, collaboration, and economic growth and will be a beacon of opportunity for businesses eager to plug into New Bedford's leading role in the Blue Economy."

"New Bedford is at the very heart of the Vineyard

Wind project, and we are proud to help advance the continued development of the City's maritime and business community by supporting The Quest," said Vineyard Wind CEO Klaus Moeller. "We are grateful to our partners throughout the City, and commend Mayor Mitchell for his vision and dedication to New Bedford's growing innovation economy."

"The retooled Quest will bring together so many drivers of New Bedford's innovation economy, from traditional maritime industries to the diverse set of ocean users that make up the fabric of the City's past, present, and future success," said Avangrid Chief Development Officer Ken Kimmell. "Avangrid is proud to stand as a partner with the City and continue to support its development as a hub of the maritime economy on the East Coast."

While The Quest will get a fresh, new look and upgraded amenities to support business development, anchor tenants like Groundwork, a locally-owned co-working space on the first floor, and the New Bedford Economic Development Council on the second floor will remain unchanged.

The renovated third floor will be anchored by the new home of the New Bedford Ocean Cluster, a nonprofit maritime industry association dedicated to advancing the City's ocean economy. In addition to the NBOC's office, the third floor will feature small office suites, event space, meeting rooms, and common areas to support New Bed-

ford's growing offshore wind activity and related maritime businesses. Companies that support the marshaling phase of offshore wind projects often need modest short-term office space, ideally in proximity to one another. The third floor will be designed to suit these needs."

"The third floor of The Quest will provide much-needed space for a range of maritime businesses, from start-ups to established companies, to set-up shop, build their business, and plug into the ecosystem here in New Bedford," said Downing, NBOC executive director. "Successful cluster organizations around the world in places like Iceland and the UK have office and convening space to facilitate the growth of their maritime clusters. We frequently get office space requests from blue economy companies, so this new space will no doubt meet a growing need as our blue economy continues to grow here in New Bedford. This has been a missing piece for the NBOC since our launch six years ago."

The Quest will compliment New Bedford's other maritime, commercial fishing and offshore wind facilities, providing proximity to the waterfront, North Terminal, the New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal, Bristol Community College's National Offshore Wind Institute, and the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's proposed Offshore Renewable Energy Innovation Center on MacArthur Drive.



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