



One SouthCoast

NAVIGATOR

CHARTING SUCCESS FOR SOUTHCOAST BUSINESS

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BUSINESS NEWS FOR AND ABOUT MEMBERS OF THE ONE SOUTHCOAST CHAMBER

APRIL/MAY 2024

Advocacy: Why It's Important

Advocacy is indeed a crucial role that chambers of commerce play in supporting their members and promoting the interests of the business community. While the benefits of advocacy might not always be immediately apparent to all members, they are integral to fostering a conducive business environment and addressing issues that affect businesses' operations and growth.

Chambers like the One SouthCoast Chamber play a vital role in advocating for their members at various levels of government. This includes engaging with municipal governments to address local business concerns, working with state legislative delegations to shape policies that impact businesses statewide, and collaborating with federal delegations on issues relevant to the broader business community.

Some ways in which One SouthCoast Chamber engages in advocacy include:

- 1. Policy Development:** We research and develop policies that support businesses' interests and economic growth in our region. We often conduct surveys, hold focus groups, and collaborate with members to understand their needs and concerns.
- 2. Government Relations:** We build relationships with elected officials and government agencies to represent the interests of our members. We attend legislative sessions, hearings, and meetings to advocate for policies that benefit the business community.
- 3. Coalition Building:** We often work collaboratively with other business organizations, trade associations, and community groups to amplify their advocacy efforts and achieve common goals.
- 4. Educational Outreach:** We pro-

vide information and resources to our members to help them understand the impact legislation and regulations may have on their businesses. We also offer training sessions, workshops, and seminars on advocacy-related topics.

- 5. Communication:** We keep our members informed about relevant legislative and regulatory developments through newsletters, websites, social media, and other communication channels. We also encourage members to participate in advocacy efforts by contacting elected officials, attending meetings, and voicing their concerns.

Member participation in Government Affairs events is critical for effective advocacy. Here is why:


- 1. Direct Communication:** When members attend Government Affairs events and engage directly with elected officials, it provides a direct channel for communication between the business community and government representatives. This allows officials to hear firsthand about the concerns, challenges, and priorities of local businesses.
- 2. Informing Policy Decisions:** Elected officials rely on input from constituents to make informed policy decisions. By asking questions and sharing insights at Government Affairs events, chamber members help shape the agenda and priorities of policymakers, ensuring that the needs of the business community are taken into account.
- 3. Building Relationships:** Interactions between chamber members and elected officials at Government Affairs events help build relationships and trust. Establishing

these connections foster ongoing dialogue and collaboration, making it easier for businesses to engage with government and advocate for their interests in the future.

- 4. Increasing Awareness:** Government Affairs events provide an opportunity for chamber members to learn about relevant legislative and regulatory issues affecting their businesses. By participating in these events and asking questions, members can increase their awareness and understanding of key policy matters, enabling them to make decisions that are more informed and take action as needed.
- 5. Demonstrating Unity:** When chamber members show up in numbers to Government Affairs events and actively engage with elected officials, it sends a powerful message of unity and strength. This demonstrates to policymakers that the business community is engaged, organized, and committed to working together to address shared concerns and priorities.

Overall, advocacy and member participation are cornerstones of One SouthCoast Chamber activities. Our efforts in Government Affairs events significantly enhances the effectiveness of chamber advocacy efforts by ensuring that the voices of local businesses are heard, informing policy decisions, building relationships, increasing awareness, and demonstrating unity within the business community.

Sincerely,


Mike O'Sullivan
CEO



SouthCoast Business
Builders Breakfast
Tuesday, May 14
8:30 AM - 10 AM
The Waypoint Event Center

Yes for Mass
Drivers Presentation
Thursday, May 16
2 PM
Zoom

BankFive Business After Hours
Thursday, May 23
5 PM - 7 PM
County St. Branch, New Bedford

Legislative Lunch
Friday, June 7
11:30 AM - 1:30 PM
Rachel's Lakeside

St. Anne's Credit Union
Business After Hours
Thursday, June 27
5 PM - 7 PM
The Cove

For additional information and/or to register for events please visit:
www.members.onesouthcoast.com/events/

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

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New Bedford, MA 02740
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Fall River Office:

200 Pocasset Street
Fall River, MA 02721
(508) 676.8226 • fax (508) 675.5932

General inquiries: info@onesouthcoast.com

Chamber Staff:

CEO, Michael O'Sullivan
Vice President of Finance & Operations, Dorothy Botelho, IOM
Vice President of Corporate Member Engagement & Sponsorships, Kimberly Coroa Moniz
Vice President of Marketing & Events, Katie Greene
Vice President of Public Policy, Ian Trombly
Director of Membership & Retention, Clifford Athouriste
Marketing & Communications Coordinator, Hunter Tackett
Executive Director, Viva Fall River, Patti Rego
Executive Director, Fall River Arts and Culture Coalition (FRACC), Ashley Occhino

2024 OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Executive Committee:

- Chair: Rose Lopes, Sylvia Group
- Immediate Past Chair: Eileen Danahey, 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

Members of the Board of Directors:

Terms to Expire in December 2024:

- 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 Opportunités 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 Danahey, 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

Congrats Jeff!

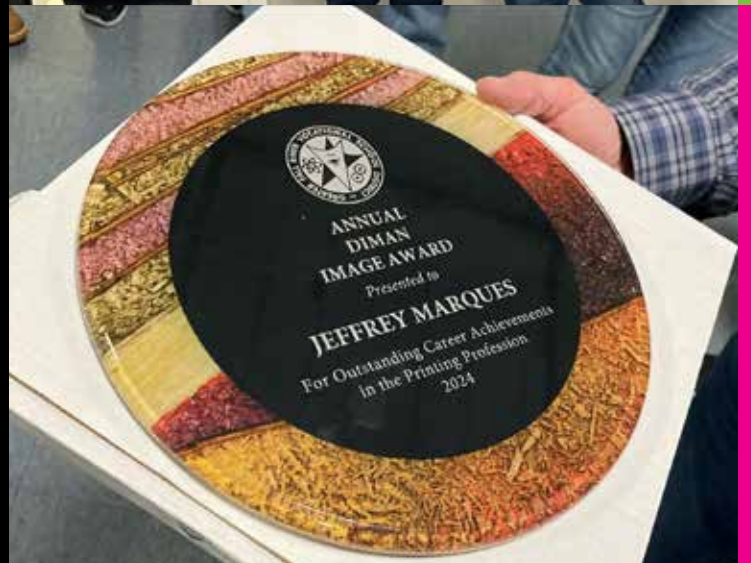
On February 12, 2024 Mr. Brian Bentley – Superintendent of Diman Regional Vocational High School and Mr. Carl Sawejko – Vice Chairperson of One SouthCoast Foundation came to Mallard Printing, Inc to award the 2024 Annual Diman Image Award for Outstanding Career Achievements in the Printing Profession to our own Jeff Marques.

Jeff is a graduate of Diman. He and his long time business partner Bob Lunquest started Mallard Printing, Inc. in 1998. They have grown the company from 5 employees to 25 employees through quality work, referrals, community involvement, competitive pricing and most of all our dedication to quality customer service. Jeff is a good example of what hard work and a good foundation can accomplish.

Jeff has always been dedicated to the community and helping our youth succeed. He works closely with Diman's co-op program to give students an opportunity to work in a real-life business environment providing valuable experience for their future employing several Diman graduates, most through the co-op program.



www.mallardprinting.com



Mechanics Cooperative Bank Announces 2023 Scholarship Winners & Deadline for 2024 Scholarship Applications

Mechanics Cooperative Bank is once again proud to announce the recipients of their annual scholarship awards! The Mechanics Cooperative Bank Scholarship Program was created to support and recognize outstanding academic achievements, leadership qualities, and community involvement amongst local students. The scholarship aims to support young talents in pursuing their educational dreams.

The following students have been selected as recipients of the 2023 Mechanics Bank Scholarship:

- Mary Arruda, Joseph Case High School
- Amanda Jacques, West Bridgewater Middle-Senior High School
- Marcus Kuriscak, Aponequet Regional High School
- Brooke Macedo, B.M.C. Durfee High School
- Peter Moor, Taunton High School
- Caroline Puccini, Somerset-Berkley Regional High School
- Emily Santos, Bristol County Agricultural High School
- Noah Sowle, Westport High School
- Jocelyn Wilson, Somerset-Berkley Regional High School

Marry Arruda is a graduate of Joseph Case High School in Swansea where she was the Captain of the Tennis and Mock Trial teams. She is an avid volunteer of both the Swansea Animal Shelter and Annelle Delorme-Hagerman Food Pantry. Mary is attending Suffolk University and majoring in Political Science.

Amanda Jacques attended West Bridgewater Middle-Senior High School and is attending the University of Connecticut where she is majoring in Multidisciplinary Engineering. While a student of WBMSHS, she was the Captain of the Varsity School, Basketball and Softball teams as well as the Vice President of her Junior and Senior Class. She was also an active member of the Spanish National Honor Society.

Marcus Kuriscak, a graduate of Aponequet Regional High School located in Lakeville, MA graduated as member of the Varsity Golf, Basketball, and Track teams. In addition, he served as a member of DECA throughout his Junior and Senior years of high school. He was an active member in his community serving as a volunteer coach for a youth Basketball league. Marcus is attending Bryant University and majoring in Finance.

Brooke Macedo graduated from B.M.C Durfee High School in Fall River, MA and is attending John Hopkins University with a double major in Chemistry and Spanish. While in high school, she was the President of the National Honor Society and served as Captain of the Varsity Field Hockey team.

Peter Moor graduated from Taunton High School where he served as not only captain of his Winter Track Team but as well as Treasurer of the Student



Council his senior year. In addition, he was the Treasurer of the Latin Club. He is now pursuing a degree in Business Administration at Curry College.

Caroline Puccini attended Somerset-Berkley Regional High School and was Captain of both her Varsity Volleyball and Tennis teams. She also served as Secretary of the Somerset-Berkley Girl Up Club her Senior year. She is attending Providence College with a major in Business/Marketing.

Emily Santos, graduated from Bristol County Agricultural High School, is attending the University of New Hampshire in pursuit of a degree in Animal Science. In high school, she was the Captain of the Cross-Country team and served as a Student Ambassador her Junior and Senior years.

Noah Sowle is a graduate of Westport High School where he was the 2022 National Honor Society President as well as a member of the Medical Club from 2020 - 2023. He was active in the community and organized fundraisers for the Arthritis Foundation and Alzheimer's Foundation. He is attending University of North Carolina Chapel Hill with a double major in Biology and Health with a minor in Chemistry.

Jocelyn Wilson attended Somerset-Berkley Regional High School where she served as Captain of the Varsity Soccer team and was a member of the Varsity Track team and Soccer club. She is a student at Franklin Pierce University where she is majoring in Health Science.

Joseph T. Baptista Jr., President and CEO of Mechan-

ics Cooperative Bank, expressed his delight in recognizing these exceptional students. He stated, "We are incredibly proud to award the Mechanics Cooperative Bank Scholarship to these deserving students. Their dedication to their studies, involvement in their communities, and commitment to excellence is truly inspiring. We believe in investing in the future of our community, and these students represent the bright future ahead of us."

Mechanics Cooperative Bank is dedicated to supporting local students and fostering their academic growth and pursuit for higher education. As part of the organizations ongoing commitment to the communities they serve, they are proud to announce applications for the 2024 Mechanics Cooperative Bank Scholarship are now open! Any local student interested in applying, should visit [Mechanics-Coop.com](https://www.mechanics-coop.com) to download an application.

About Mechanics Cooperative Bank:

With total assets of \$722 million, Mechanics Cooperative Bank offers a wide variety of personal and business deposit and loan products. As a Massachusetts co-operative bank, 100% of customers' deposits are always fully insured. Established in 1877, Mechanics Cooperative Bank is Massachusetts' second-oldest co-operative bank with nine conveniently located branches in Bridgewater, Taunton, North Dighton, Somerset, Swansea, Fall River, Westport and New Bedford. For more information, call 1-888-MECHANICS (632-4264) or visit [Mechanics-Coop.com](https://www.mechanics-coop.com). Member FDIC. Member DIF. Equal Housing Lender.

One SouthCoast Chamber Policy Pulse

On March 26th, tragedy struck the City of Baltimore and all Americans when the Francis Scott Key Bridge was destroyed by a cargo ship that lost power. Despite the Key Bridge reportedly being in “Fair Condition,” this horrific tragedy is a sad reminder of the poor state of many of our roads and bridges in the United States.

Massachusetts’ bridge system is the oldest in our country, with an average age of 56. A MassDOT report shows over 450 bridges across the state are deemed “Structurally Deficient.” Some of this is, of course, due to the mature nature of our commonwealth, but the issue stands nonetheless. The South Coast is no stranger to bridge infrastructure challenges. Infrastructure challenges related to progress and investment, such as the completed construction of the Veteran’s Memorial Bridge in Somerset or the upcoming work on the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge, while frustrating at the time, are positive developments in our road and bridge inventory. On the other hand, infrastructure challenges caused by a lack of attention and action can devastate a community and an economy, as we have witnessed firsthand with the Washington Bridge in East Providence.

It has been over four months since the abrupt closure of the westbound lane of Interstate 195 in East Providence. This is not just a minor inconvenience. It is a significant disruption to our daily lives. On December 11th at 5:00 PM, during peak rush hour, Rhode Island officials concluded that the bridge needed to be closed due to severe structural concerns. Initially, reports were that the bridge would need to be closed for a few months due to repairs. Well, four months later, and a visit from the United States Secretary of Transportation himself, Pete Buttigieg, we learned that this scenario was far from reality. Engineers have determined that the bridge’s westbound side needs to be rebuilt entirely, an effort estimated to take a minimum of two years. This is a situation that demands immediate attention and action.

Most media outlets in Rhode Island have covered the Washington Bridge saga thoroughly. While it has made some local headlines, the impact of the Washington Bridge delays on Massachusetts residents and businesses is



not receiving the attention it deserves.

The truth of the matter is the business community here on the South Coast is feeling the impact. The travel times over the Washington Bridge have skyrocketed, depending on the time of day. Employers are now facing increased staffing challenges, delivery delays, and operational inefficiencies due to transportation uncertainties.

Southeastern Massachusetts boasts several beautiful tourist attractions, including Battleship Cove and the Narrows Center for the Arts in Fall River, the Whaling Museum and the Zeiterion Performing Arts Center in New Bedford, Horseneck Beach in Westport, and much more. However, a significant boost to the local economy comes from out-of-state vacationers from New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island en route to Cape Cod. These visitors often stop along the I-195 corridor for authentic Portuguese food, world-class seafood, to gas up their vehicles, grab a coffee, stretch their legs, and admire our robust arts and culture scene. This pass-through activity will be significantly impacted if these delays are not addressed.

As I write this, according to GoogleMaps (a GPS service provided by Google), if a driver is heading north on Interstate-95 from anywhere South of Providence with Cape Cod as their final destination, GoogleMaps is currently directing them to stay on I-95, surpass the I-195 exit east, and instead, continue north on I-95. This route will direct them to take I-495 South until they reach the Bourne Bridge. While this route is technically about eight miles longer, the driver saves significant

time, avoiding the delays caused by the Washington Bridge. This reroute allows travelers heading to Cape Cod to completely circumvent Southeastern Massachusetts and its fantastic businesses and experiences.

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation is implementing a redesign of the east and westbound lanes to allow for six smaller lanes of traffic, as opposed to the current 4-lane design. There is optimism that this new design should help alleviate some congestion.

One SouthCoast is banging the drum on behalf of the business community. We are encouraged by Secretary Buttigieg’s visit, and we have meetings scheduled with the offices of Congressman Auchincloss, Congressman Keating, Senator Markey, and Senator Warren. We have met with Representatives from the Small Business Administration (SBA) and will continue to advocate on your behalf. The Small Business Administration (SBA) has declared the bridge closure an Economic Disaster, and low-interest SBA loans are available for businesses in Bristol County who qualify. For more information on these opportunities, please get in touch with Ian Trombly at itrombly@onesouthcoast.com.

Ian Trombly
Vice President of Public Policy

ONE SOUTH COAST
CHAMBER

LEGISLATIVE LUNCHEON

Friday, June 7, 2024
11:30 AM - 1:30 PM
Rachel's Lakeside

Tickets available online at
onesouthcoast.com

Good News!

Bristol County Savings Promotes Alves and Riendeau to VP

Bristol County Savings Bank (BCSB), headquartered in Taunton, Massachusetts, announces it has recently promoted Chris Alves and Erin L. Riendeau to the position of Vice President.



As Vice President/Mortgage Operations & Sales Support Manager, Chris Alves is responsible for the management of mortgage origination operations for the Bank's retail, wholesale and broker lending channels. Prior to his promotion, he held the positions of Mortgage Operations & Sales Support Manager, Mortgage Operations Supervisor and Internal Sales Coordinator for the Bank. Alves currently serves on the Emerging Leaders Board for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Metro South in Taunton and has volunteered for Junior Achievement of Southern Massachusetts in New Bedford. He earned his MBA and bachelor's degree in Accounting from University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and graduated from the Massachusetts Bankers Association New England School for Financial Studies, Babson College, Wellesley, Massachusetts. Alves resides in Dartmouth, Massachusetts.



Expanding her role as Executive Legal Assistant and Paralegal, Erin Riendeau will continue to assist and provide oversight on legal and corporate governance matters at the Bank. In addition, Riendeau was elected as Corporate Secretary of the Bank. Previously, Riendeau held the positions of Paralegal and Legal Administrative Assistant at Adler Pollock & Sheehan P.C., Legal Administrative Assistant at Burns & Levinson LLP and Paralegal at Tappalian & Tadros, PC, all in Providence, Rhode Island.

Active in the community, Riendeau is a Board Member and Treasurer of the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) representing the towns of Berkley, Dighton, Rehoboth and Somerset and was recently elected to the Board of Trustees for Argosy Collegiate Charter School. Riendeau earned her bachelor's degree in History from Providence College and is also a graduate of the Massachusetts Bankers Association New England School for Financial Studies, Babson College, Wellesley, Massachusetts. Riendeau resides in Somerset, Massachusetts.

Bristol County Savings Bank Background Information:

Bristol County Savings Bank, a Massachusetts chartered bank and wholly-owned subsidiary of Beacon Bancorp, is a full-service banking institution with approximately \$3.1 billion in assets. Founded in 1846, Bristol County Savings Bank has expanded its branch network to include 16 full-service offices in Attleboro, Dartmouth, East Freetown, Fall River, Franklin, New Bedford, North Attleboro, Raynham, Rehoboth and Taunton, Massachusetts, and Cumberland, Greenville and Pawtucket, Rhode Island, as well as a Loan Center in Warwick, Rhode Island. The Bank also operates limited service educational branches at Taunton and Attleboro High Schools. In addition to traditional banking services, Bristol County Savings Bank offers wealth management services through its affiliate Bristol Wealth Group. The Main Office and Corporate Headquarters of Bristol County Savings Bank are located on Broadway in Taunton, Massachu-

sets. For more information on Bristol County Savings Bank, visit www.bristolcountysavings.com.



BayCoast Bank Promotes Daniel J. DeCosta to Executive Vice President, Chief Information Officer



BayCoast Bank (baycoast.bank), a long-time community savings bank serving the people and businesses on the South Coast of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, is proud to announce that Daniel J. DeCosta of Wrentham, Massachusetts, has been promoted to the position of Executive Vice President, Chief Information Officer.

In this pivotal role, DeCosta manages the day-to-day operations of the Information Technology, Information Systems, and E-commerce departments. He also takes on key responsibilities as BayCoast's Solutions Architect, utilizing his technological expertise to design new business processes that help expand efficiencies across the organization. Many of these efficiencies assist the BayCoast family in delivering on its mission – to provide exceptional service and solutions for our community.

DeCosta holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Information Systems from the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth and has completed numerous specialized training and certification programs that further enhance his expertise.

"It is a pleasure to announce Dan's promotion to Executive Vice President, Chief Information Officer," said Nich-

olas M. Christ, President and CEO of BayCoast Bank. "Dan's ability to develop and deliver critical business efficiencies is a testament to his expertise and dedication to our organization. Our entire BayCoast team congratulates Dan on his well-deserved promotion."

About BayCoast Bank

BayCoast Bank is a long-standing community bank providing financial products and services to the people and businesses of Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island through 25 branches and loan production offices, with more coming soon. The Bank offers a family of complete financial services through its subsidiaries: BayCoast Mortgage, BayCoast Financial Services, BayCoast Insurance, Plimoth Investment Advisors, and Priority Funding. For more information, visit baycoast.bank or call 508-678-7641.



Local Financial Advisor Qualifies for Edward Jones Recognition Conference



Edward Jones Financial Advisor Ron Ellis recently qualified for the Edward Jones recognition conference, Momentum, which celebrates the contributions and achievements of 819 successful financial advisors from the firm's more than 19,000. The event will be held May 20-23 in Orlando, FL, and includes financial advisors from both the U.S. and Canada.

The Momentum conference recognizes high-achieving financial advisors who have embraced the momentum it a

takes to build and sustain a successful practice through leadership, service, advice and guidance. Attendees will be immersed in learning opportunities and a collaborative environment designed to propel them to even greater heights.

"At the heart of our firm's purpose is making a positive difference for those around us. Financial advisors attending Momentum have put that purpose into action by helping clients find and fund the possibilities for their lives," said Chuck Orban, an Edward Jones principal responsible for the firm's recognition events. "I look forward to the upcoming three days with this dynamic, motivated, service-oriented group of professionals."

Ellis and his client support team professionals can be reached at 508-758-3311. You may also visit their website at <https://www.edwardjones.com/ronellis>.

Edward Jones is a leading financial services firm in the U.S. and through its affiliate in Canada. The firm's more than 19,000 financial advisors serve more than 8 million clients with a total of \$1.9 trillion in client assets under care at the end of December 2023. Edward Jones' purpose is to partner for positive impact to improve the lives of its clients and colleagues, and together, better our communities and society. Through the dedication of the firm's approximately 52,000 associates and our branch presence in 68% of U.S. counties, the firm is committed to helping more people achieve financially what is most important to them. The Edward Jones website is at edwardjones.com, and its recruiting website is careers.edwardjones.com. Member SIPC.



Child & Family Services Names Chanda Coutinho as New COO



Child & Family Services, Inc (CFS) is

proud to announce Chanda Coutinho as their new Chief Operations Officer (COO). Chanda succeeds Paula Borges, who spent 40 years at CFS, fourteen of those as the COO.

Chanda has been with Child & Family Services for the past 21 years with her roots in clinical outpatient therapy. She joined CFS with a passion for working with children and improving the mental wellness of our community. Chanda is bilingual and fluent in Portuguese and offering culturally sensitive and diverse services at all our locations is a top priority for her. "I look forward to continuing to ensure CFS is providing the best equitable and evidence-based services to our community," stated Mrs. Coutinho.

Chanda received her BSW from Bridgewater State University and her MSW from Simmons College in 2002 and has been a licensed clinical social worker since 2004. Her areas of focus and training while a practicing clinician and supervisor have been trauma focused cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing and family therapy and a recent certification in recovery coach supervision.

Before her recent transition to COO, Chanda was directly overseeing the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC), which is a SAMHSA contract that has a focus on increasing access to care for our community, and the Community Behavioral Health Centers (CBHC), which is a contract that is part of the state's road map to improve access to behavioral health services in the state.

In addition to overseeing these, Chanda also managed the Psychiatry services for the agency along with overseeing several DPH, and BSAS (Bureau of Substance Addiction Services) funded programs and contracts. Part of her journey with CFS has been working to bring new contracts and programming to CFS, and she looks forward to continuing this work on a larger scale as COO. "I am passionate about improving youth services and growing our substance use disorder service options," said Mrs. Coutinho. "Integrating a comprehensive approach to treatment and respecting every individual's path to wellness is one of my top priorities."



BayCoast Mortgage Welcomes Debra Lambert as Loan Officer



BayCoast Mortgage (baycoastmortgage.com), a full-service lender that has earned a strong reputation for excellence in the mortgage industry, is proud to welcome Debra Lambert of Fall River, Massachusetts, as Senior Loan Officer.

Lambert is a seasoned professional with over 25 years of experience in the mortgage industry. She takes pride in developing meaningful relationships with her clients, providing expert guidance to help them navigate the mortgage process and achieve their homeownership goals.

Before joining the BayCoast family, Debra was the Owner and Mortgage Originator for Accutrust Mortgage in Fall River, MA. She also held key roles at Trident Mortgage and GMAC Mortgage, contributing to her extensive industry expertise.

Lambert is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management. She has earned the Certified Mortgage Planning Specialist (CMPS) designation.

"I am pleased to announce the addition of Debra Lambert as Senior Loan Officer," said Nicholas L. Christ, President and CEO of BayCoast Mortgage. "Her knowledge and expertise will be invaluable to the community we serve, as we endeavor to help our neighbors finance their dream homes. We are excited to welcome Debra to the mortgage team."

Lambert is active in the local community, notably participating in the Pan Mass Challenge since 2008. In her leisure time, she enjoys many activities, with a particular love for sailing during our beautiful Southern New England summers.

About BayCoast Mortgage

BayCoast Mortgage Company, LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of BayCoast Bank, serving MA, RI, CT, NH, PA, NJ, MD, VA, SC, NC, and FL, offering a wide variety of home mortgage products including FHA, VA, Land, Construction, Conforming and Jumbo Loans. Visit baycoastmortgage.com or call 877-466-2678.

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



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Venus de Milo
Swansea, MA**



**Mayor Paul Coogan's
Fall River State of Business
Fall River Country Club
Fall River, MA**



ONE SOUTH COAST
C H A M B E R

RECENT EVENTS



**Business Builder's Breakfast
The Cottages of Dartmouth Village
Dartmouth, MA**



**Congressional Luncheon
with Jake Auchincloss
Fall River Country Club**

Raymond E. Shaw Elementary School is Recognized for Outstanding Design and Model School



Outstanding Design

Turowski2 Architecture is pleased to announce that the Raymond E. Shaw Elementary School was recognized for Outstanding Design in the American School and University (ASU) 2023 Architectural Portfolio. The American School and University is a professional publication which ensures education professionals responsible for the planning, design, construction, maintenance and management of education facilities are up to date on the latest trends, technologies and strategies that drive the education facilities and business market. ASU has been recognizing and celebrating the best in School and University Design nationally for 41 years.

Model School

T2 is pleased to announce that the Raymond E. Shaw Elementary School was also recently recognized

and selected as a Model School by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Board of Directors. The MSBA is a quasi-independent government grant providing authority that participates in design and funding affordable, sustainable, and energy efficient schools throughout the Commonwealth. Their Model School Program seeks to adapt and re-use the design of successful, recently constructed Pre-K through 12th grade schools to meet the requirements of other school districts. The Raymond E. Shaw School was one of six schools selected for the program in 2023.

The Raymond E. Shaw Elementary School serves 550 students in Grades 3-6 in a suburban town along an historically important regional river which provided irrigation and transportation initially, and later water power to various industries. The mills were known for manufacturing filaments and string,

including the string used in baseball manufacturing. The site is 14 acres within an over 200-acre parcel, removed from the context of the town up long driveway, and surrounded mostly by woods and wetlands - the theme of the river, the mills and their product are 'woven' into the design of the site and building. Molded red brick is the predominate material of the structure, a material commonly used in many New England Mill Buildings. Large windows formerly used for lighting the workplace of mills interiors illuminate the interior learning spaces, saving energy, promoting health, and increasing learning retention. 'Strings' and 'meandering rivers' weave learning spaces together, through elements and patterns of the site and internal application of finish materials and playful lighting. The building will be certified LEED Gold.

Client

Millbury Public Schools

Design Team

Nitsch Engineering; Dodson & Flinker; Engineers Design Group; GGD Consulting Engineers; Good Harbor Techmark; PEER Consultants; Crabtree McGrath Associates; Architix; Lahlaf Geotechnical; James Carr Architecture & Design; Thornton Tomasetti; Hastings Consulting; Acen-tech; Todd Tsiang

Completed

September 2022

Capacity

550 Students

Area

90,257 sq. ft.

Space Per Student

164 sq. ft.

Total Cost

\$48,924,792

Cost/Square FT

\$542

The Law Office of
GARY P. HOWAYECK, P.C.

**OUR PHILOSOPHY IS
PREVENTION**

The Law Office of Gary P. Howayeck, P.C. is dedicated to preventing employment-related problems from disrupting the business activities and goals of our clients.

(508) 676-6666
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Healey-Driscoll Administration Opens State Contracts with Child Care Providers for First Time in 15 Years to Invest \$400 Million in Annual Financial Assistance

The Healey-Driscoll Administration announced today that the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) has posted two requests for responses (RFRs) for early education and care programs that will invest an estimated \$400 million a year to provide care for approximately 20,000 children eligible for child care financial assistance. EEC is updating and re-procuring these services for the first time since 2009, which will improve the customer service experience for families, strengthen and align educator staffing and training requirements across programs, improve performance monitoring and effectiveness, and continue efforts to simplify rates for providers.

The re-procurements purchase high-quality early education and out-of-school time care through contracted seats in center-based and family child care (FCC) programs. One RFR focuses on families who are income eligible for child care financial assistance. The second one focuses on “priority populations” that includes families experiencing homelessness, young parents, and families working with the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Awardees provide financial assistance, direct child care, and social services that support the needs of the whole family.

“Our administration is the first to reprocure these child care services in 15 years, continuing our work to break down barriers for low-income families and early education programs and make government services more user friendly and equitable,” said Governor Maura Healey. “In Massachusetts, making child care more affordable and accessible is a top priority. I thank the Legislature for their partnership in making historic investments in early education and care this fiscal year and look forward to working with them on continuing these efforts in fiscal year 2025.”

“We know that the high cost of child care is one of the biggest burdens facing Massachusetts families. That’s why we’re focused on making it more affordable and equitable for families,” said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. “Once awarded, these updated contracts will improve our child care financial assistance system for early education providers, children and families, helping our hardworking providers deliver the high-quality care that our littlest learners need

and deserve in the communities where they live, learn and play.”

EEC’s goals for these re-procurements focus on centering the family voice and restructuring requirements to continue to modernize and improve the experience for parents and providers. Some of the key changes include:

- Incorporating clearly defined customer service and communication expectations to ensure all families have a respectful and consistent experience.
- Instituting consistent staffing expectations for early education and care programs and umbrella agency staff.
- Setting training and professional development criteria for programs and staff to ensure that all programs are equipped with the experience necessary to serve and meet the needs of children and their families.
- Introducing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and a collaborative approach to monitor performance, program effectiveness, and compliance with core service requirements.
- Making transportation services a separate critical supportive service for priority population contracts, reimbursing providers for each child receiving transportation through the contract. This creates a daily per-child transportation rate for all priority population families, separating it from other support services.

“Through this re-procurement, the administration has an opportunity to transform how our child care financial assistance system works for contracted early education and care providers, as well as the experience for families accessing financial assistance and care. These changes reflect our values in centering equity, providing high-quality learning experiences for children, and enabling a respectful and dignified experience for families,” said Secretary of Education Dr. Patrick Tutwiler.

“Our child care financial assistance programs are a critical tool to expanding access and affordability for families. Our work to implement improved contracts builds on the significant regulation and policy reforms we rolled out in the fall and transformative changes to our rates approved by the

Board of Early Education and Care in January. Together, all of these efforts aim to make it easier for providers to administer child care financial assistance, attracting more providers to participate in the state’s system,” said Early Education and Care Commissioner Amy Kershaw.

“Child care provided through EEC ensures children involved with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) receive early education in a safe, nurturing environment,” said Acting DCF Commissioner Staverne Miller. “We appreciate our partnership with EEC and the investments made by the administration to create a strong educational foundation for future success. For parents and caregivers, accessible child care provides comfort and reassurance that children are well-cared for while receiving an education.”

Child care financial assistance is provided to families through contracts with providers to secure a set number of seats for families, and vouchers which are portable and families can use at any program that accepts child care financial assistance. The state’s programs are funded federally through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and by the state through multiple EEC line items. This fiscal year, the Healey-Driscoll administration and the Legislature delivered \$778 million towards child care financial assistance, an increase of \$60 million over FY23. Governor Healey’s FY25 budget proposal increases funding by another \$154 million, investing \$914 million in child care financial assistance next fiscal year.

In October, the Administration implemented significant improvements to the state’s Child Care Financial Assistance programs that simplify the application process for parents, reduce paperwork for families and early education programs, and better support homeless families, families with disabilities and families facing domestic violence. This January, the Board of Early Education and Care unanimously approved the Administration’s transformative changes to how the state reimburses providers who accept state child care financial assistance, known as rates. The approved rates not only increase funding for all providers, but also make significant progress on addressing long-standing inequities in rate amounts by geographic region and age group of children served.

Mayor and Official Kick Off Construction on Buttonwood Park Zoo Expansion

Buttonwood Park Zoo will soon be home to some new animals.

Mayor Jon Mitchell joined Buttonwood Park Zoo Director of Zoological Services, Gary Lunsford, and others Friday morning to break ground on the expansion of the Animal Ambassador program. The Buttonwood Barn, located in the northwest corner of the zoo by Charlie's Nature Play Area, will be completely renovated to increase the program's capacity and exhibit space, which will lead to a more diverse range of animals in the program.

"In the Animal Ambassador program, children can interact with animals up close, an opportunity to learn that isn't available on the Internet," Mayor Mitchell said. "Expanding this program is great for the Zoo because it creates educational opportunities for the region's school children."

The current 3,600-square-foot barn will be completely remodeled to improve animal exhibits, provide more space for enclosures and medical care, and boost educational space and programs. A small new addition will provide a welcoming entrance vestibule, and a family restroom. The

current restrooms will also be refurbished.

The new facility will be more environmentally friendly. The old gas heating system will be replaced with electric heating and cooling to eliminate the need for fossil fuels. Additionally, irrigation infrastructure in the rear of the building will minimize stormwater runoff.

The Zoo's Animal Ambassador program, which started in 2014, is an environmental education-based program that connects visitors with animals up close. From opossums and skunks to birds and others, these critters will now have a home in view of zoo guests instead of behind the scenes.

"We are very excited about renovating the Buttonwood Barn into an educational animal facility," Lunsford said. "We have shaped this project for several years now to find the best fit to serve the City of New Bedford. This is a big step in revitalizing the Buttonwood Farm for our guests."

Construction on the \$2.4 million renovation project will begin in March with an estimated completion in January. The Buttonwood Park Zoologi-

cal Society continues to support the project, first with an initial \$100,000 for design work, and will also be helping with animal accommodation during renovation. BayCoast Bank is also a supporter of the Animal Ambassador program, recently making a \$250,000 donation to further educational opportunities.

The project is part of Phase II of the Zoo's Master Plan, which was unveiled in 2016 and drives expansion efforts over the next decade.



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To earn the window cling, each business must meet the following requirements:

- Be a business located in New Bedford.
- Have recycling containers with fewer than 3 contaminants. Contaminants include all items other than bottles, cans, jugs, jars, paper, and cardboard, as list-

ed on this flyer: https://s3.amazonaws.com/newbedford-ma/wp-content/uploads/sites/40/20200810091738/TrilingualFlyer_2020-Final-Final.pdf

- Have waste baskets with fewer than 3 recyclable items.
- Have a way to recycle cardboard. This could be by participating in the City’s business cardboard collection program, having a properly used cardboard dumpster, or by being able to fit the cardboard in your recycling cart(s).

Staff from the City of New Bedford and the Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District will partner with students from UMass Dartmouth to visit businesses downtown. We have visited businesses on Acushnet Avenue and will visit as many New Bedford businesses as possible. If you think your business deserves recognition, contact us and we will visit to verify the requirements are met. You may be featured on New Bedford Recycling’s social media pages with your window cling.

Elissa Paquette, President, dNB Inc. said, "dNB Inc. is excited about the recycling incentives that

the Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District and the City are offering businesses, as we look forward to keeping downtown environmentally conscious!"

Recycling is mandatory in New Bedford. If your business is not currently eligible for a window cling, you can:

- Increase recycling – Arrange private collection through your hauler or participate in the City’s program to recycle bottles, cans, jugs, jars, paper, and cardboard.
- Ensure cardboard gets recycled - Arrange private collection through your hauler or participate in the City’s program. Small to medium size New Bedford businesses can join the City’s cardboard recycling program for free.

If you have questions, please email Marissa@gn-brrmdistrict.org or call (508) 979-1493. For additional information, visit New Bedford Recycling on Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor, or follow @NBRecycling on Twitter.

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Healthfirst Opening the First School-Based Health Center at Diman



HealthFirst Family Care Center Inc. and Diman Regional Vocational Technical High School are happy to announce a unique partnership by opening the first School-Based Health Center in the Greater Fall River area on Monday, March 4, 2024.

The School-Based Health Center at Diman will offer primary care services provided by medical doctors and family nurse practitioners. HealthFirst's Chief Medical Officer Eric R. Vaught, DO, MBA, MPH, FACHE, in addition to providing medical care, will also provide administrative and medical oversight. "Many adolescent children in the Greater Fall River area do not have access to a primary care provider for chronic and acute medical issues, therefore, I am glad to see this partnership with Diman move forward as a first step towards HealthFirst meeting this specific need in our community," said HealthFirst CMO, Dr. Eric Vaught.

In addition to primary care, the school-based health center will provide integrated mental health and counseling services, as well as nutrition therapy, chronic disease care management, preventive health screenings, and testing and vaccination services. All services are provided free of charge for the students at Diman.

When asked, HealthFirst's Chief Operating Officer, Linda Medeiros said, "We have been looking to open a school-based health center in the Southcoast since 2021. We began working with our local elected officials to secure funding, laying down the groundwork for the perfect location and initiating relationships with the leadership and school committees. We are beyond

happy to finally announce the opening of a school-based health center at Diman. We look forward to supporting the students of Diman and the Greater Fall River area."

Diman is a regional vocational-technical high school located in southeastern Massachusetts, about mid-way between Cape Cod and Providence, RI. Their 18 vocational-technical programs have over 1,400 students enrolled in grades 9 through 12. "Diman remains committed to being the school system our students and families need us to be - a world-class educational institution that meets the needs of the whole child. Healthcare is a human right. This historic partnership with Health First, the first of its kind in the area, will provide equitable healthcare access for our students. Access to healthcare, large co-pays, and appointment availability burden families and skyrocketed student absenteeism. Pioneering this initiative proves what this community has come to expect from Diman - a school that cares deeply about every aspect of a student's growth and life" says Andrew Rebello, Diman's Assistant Superintendent and Principal. Diman's Superintendent, Brian Bently said "We are looking forward to a successful partnership

between Diman and HealthFirst to bring the first school-based health center to the Southcoast. This is truly an amazing avenue for better serving the students in our community."

HealthFirst Family Care Center, Inc. (HealthFirst) is a non-profit, federally qualified community health center (FQHC) located in Fall River. HealthFirst has a proud history of providing adult and pediatric primary care services that include medical, oral health, social services, and limited medical specialty services to all residents, both insured and uninsured in the Greater Fall River community.

The HealthFirst school-based health center at Diman will be open to the students starting Monday, March 4, 2024 and will remain open five days a week throughout the school year. For more information about HealthFirst and the health center at Diman please visit the HealthFirst website. HealthFirstFR.org



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S&P Cites New Bedford's 'Very Strong Management' in Affirming City's Bond Rating

A leading credit rating agency has affirmed the City's credit rating, pointing to New Bedford's effective leadership and strong economic prospects.

Standard & Poor's recently awarded New Bedford a AA+/Stable long term enhanced rating and affirmed its AA-/Stable underlying rating, giving the City high marks for financial health and management. Among the key metrics the City scored high on were: Very Strong management, Very Strong liquidity, Strong economy, and Strong institutional framework. S&P uses 10 grade levels in its evaluations, from General Default to Strong, Very Strong and Extremely Strong.

"The ratings reflect our view of New Bedford's very strong management with strong financial management policies and practices – including its quarterly review of budget-to-actual reports; detailed five-year capital plan that it updates annually, including planned funding sources; (and) investment-management policy that adheres to commonwealth statutes," the 2024 S&P Global Ratings report states.

"New Bedford's economic profile has benefitted from the city's diversification away from its traditional dependence on port activities, as well as from the city's relative affordability and investments to support offshore wind development," the report also stated. "These high marks are a testament to the professionalism and commitment of our finance and economic development teams," Mayor Jon Mitchell said. "Our disciplined management of the City budget and our efforts to expand and diversify the regional economy are producing tangible outcomes – notably lower interest rates that mean savings for taxpayers."

The high credit ratings helped the City solicit several competitive bids and sell \$23.5 million worth of bonds and notes earlier this month. Proceeds will fund various capital projects.

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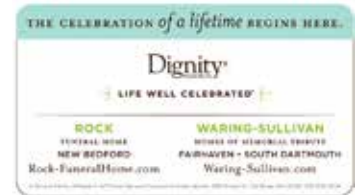
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