

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR REPORT JUNE-JULY 2010

Submitted by Joseph Seacrist

1. **The Watertown Economic Development Commission successfully held its annual “Meet and Greet” on June 9, 2010 at Casa Dijana’s restaurant in Watertown. Approximately 35-40 local businesspeople attended for cocktails and appetizers. Also represented was the newly formed Watertown/Oakville merchant’s association by its President Lynn McHale.**
2. **Town Council President Ray Primini, Town Manager Chuck Frigon, Watertown Economic Development Commission chairman Joe Mcgrail, and Economic Development Coordinator Joe Seacrist had a press conference followed by a luncheon with Mr. Bill Seres the Controller for Anstro Corporation on June 3. The Anstro Corporation has purchased the former A.J. Oster building on Frost Bridge Road. Anstro needed to expand from its building in Wolcott. Its warehouse is located in Bristol and its new facility in Watertown will be used strictly for production. Anstro manufactures the hardware components for brake kits. At the Watertown building there are stamping and wiring machines, along with a grinding room and a tool-making area. The building was purchased in the summer of 2009 and production began on April 1. The building was in good shape but needed to be retrofitted from a warehouse to a 24-hour production only facility. \$5 million was invested in the 40,000 square foot building to merge the operations of Anstro and Eyelet Tech.**
3. **Spoke with a local Commercial Real Estate Broker concerning the possible leasing of two manufacturing facilities: one for a pastry maker and another for a plastics recycling operation. The second one required rail access. This broker has currently available more than 200,000 sf of manufacturing space in Watertown. He has promised to contact the interested parties about their possible re-location to Watertown. Both parties are interested in approximately 75,000 to 100,000 sf.**
4. **The former Winchester Electronics building at 400 Park Road in the business park has been re-opened by the owner and a manufacturing company named GABE has occupied the building. They will employ approximately 100 employees eventually.**

- 5. Honda of Watertown has applied to the Planning and Zoning commission to convert an existing building at 774 Straits Turnpike, adjacent to their current building into a used car sales facility.**
- 6. Vice Chairman of the EDC, Don Orsini, attended the quarterly meeting of CEDAS, representing the Watertown Economic Development Commission at their June 23rd meeting at the Traveler's golf tournament, and reported back on his findings.**
- 7. Spoke with Dr. Mark Robbins of the Willow Group, the author of the Original Economic Development Survey which was done for the Watertown Economic Development Commission in December of 2005, concerning the costs of updating the report for the current economy.**
- 8. On behalf of the Watertown Economic Development Commission, I approved the latest revision of the CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) a regional strategy which is necessary for any town to receive Federal Funds for Economic Development. The revision committee was headed by the Shelton Economic Development Commission and covers approximately 8 towns in this part of the state. Project status for funding is determined by the Council of Governments for the Greater Naugatuck Valley.**
- 9. Worked closely with Doreen Breen, the new Market Manager to help get this year's Farmer's Market up and running. She is doing a great job and the first session was well attended and had more vendors than we have had before. There was a mixture of food, arts and crafts and music, which has not happened before. The schedule for the theme for each week has been published. July 17 will be Main Street Art Walk Day; July 24 will be Green up Watertown; July 31 Meet your local Merchants, leaders and community; August 7 will be Kids and Community Farms Day; August 14 will be Roving with Fleece and Fiber; August 21 will be Back to Earth Balance and Wellness Day; August 28 will be Grass Roots Creations-Craft artists Day; September 4 will be Harvest Festival-Gardening Day; and the final day will be Historical Watertown & Honoring our Veteran's Day.**
- 10. The DPUC final ruling on the Watertown Power Project's proposal to change its contract was due last week, but has been delayed "for a couple of weeks" according to a spokesman for the DPUC. Researched and obtained a copy of**

a research study on the impact of Biomass (which the Watertown project is) on greenhouse gasses.

- 11. Obtained several movie filming permit applications from two movie producers who would like to shoot films in Watertown this summer.**
- 12. Put a local real estate developer in touch with the owners of the Seeley property. He has a potential buyer he says.**
- 13. Spoke with Natalie Testa, owner of Ragtime on Main Street about her concerns with a new nearby competitor whom Testa feels is not paying personal property tax and is unfairly competing with her.**
- 14. At the request of Rob Kane, helped one of his neighbors with the process for setting up a portable food truck on Straits Turnpike.**
- 15. Arranged for Bob Santy, the President of CERC to address the EDC at its September meeting.**
- 16. Researched the progress and techniques the Torrington Economic Development Corporation is using for its plans to re-develop the downtown section of Torrington.**