

## Our Businesses

# Top 100? That sounds pretty good



**Michael Nicastro**  
Chamber  
Chatter

Abraham Lincoln once said, "If you look for the bad in people expecting to find it, you surely will." There's no better statement to describe the front page tabloid journalism practiced by The Hartford Courant this past week regarding Bristol being named number 84 on Money Magazine/CNN's list of 100 Best Cities in which to live and raise a family.

One can only surmise that Mara Lee's intent was a purposeful slam at a city she knows nothing about

and frankly is in no position to report on. If that wasn't the case then the level of ineptitude in researching the subject is probably one of the contributing factors as to why the state's oldest published newspaper is wafer thin and can be read in less than five minutes.

Frankly, who cares? The fact is that the City of Bristol made the list and no amount of whining, dirt throwing or mud slinging will change it. So thanks Hartford Courant for your heartfelt congratulations but please excuse us because we now have some serious marketing to do.

And marketing we will do. In fact, the chamber's economic Development Committee met this week and we have already launched a marketing planning committee made up of chamber members and staff to develop, fund and deploy a marketing campaign leveraging this wonderful news.

First things first. We have already spoken with Money Magazine and we are in the process of

obtaining the proper trademarks and attribution policies to publish our ranking in other periodicals, on signs and in electronic media. Our Facebook and LinkedIn pages have already been updated and the web site will soon have the article and the logo designating our status.

In the next few months, we will be developing and placing ads in some key economic development magazines and newspapers throughout New England and other targeted areas of the US.

We've got a lot to say and much to boast about. Frankly, we've always had a lot to say and much to boast about but now we have a third party endorsement that will allow us to tell our story without being accused of acting like the "fox in the henhouse."

So to our members and our affiliate communities who can benefit from this as well, all we can say is get ready for a fun ride while we leverage this distinction. To those who would prefer to join the Courant and wallow in the mud, have a

great time and let us know how that's working out for you. In the meantime, we've got work to do.

## City planning note

We met this week with Alan Weiner and Chris Beauchemin of the city planning department. Alan and Chris wanted to update the chamber and its members regarding the Aquifer Protection Area Program which appears to be coming to a critical point in the mapping and registration process.

Suffice it to say that Aquifer Protection Areas (APA) are identified by the state DEP and are mapped by water companies that own wells. The APA includes the well field and any areas of contribution to the well also referred to as a "recharge" area. Once the APA is mapped and the maps approved the municipality must adopt the APA and provide proper protection.

In Bristol, the oversight of the APA (once finalized) will be done by the Zoning Board. This will require that certain facilities, many of

them businesses in the APA map area register with the municipality and the DEP in order to continue doing business in the APA area. Registration is crucial and the city's Planning Department will be working with the chamber to get out in front on this issue.

As of yet, our APA maps have not been finalized so we have some time to prepare. We do however have Level B preliminary APA maps that have allowed Planning to identify the businesses and other facilities that may be affected. Many times the area of the final maps are much smaller and a number of businesses and facilities affected will diminish. Be that as it may, it makes sense to prepare now.

The chamber will be planning a series of meetings and seminars on the issue starting this September and member businesses affected will be advised that they may fall into the APA map area. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to call me at the Chamber and I can point you in the right direc-

tion on the issue.

## Chamber Note

The chamber wants to offer our deepest sympathies to the family of Father Brian Monnerat who passed away unexpectedly while on vacation in Bermuda.

As a member of the St. Matthew Parish, I can attest first hand that Father Brian loved his parish, loved his priesthood and was a critical and stabilizing presence after the tragedy that occurred in 1999 with Father Lysz. He will be sorely missed.

While this will be another challenging chapter for the Church of St. Matthew, the parish family is strong and will solace in the memory of a good man and fine priest.

*Michael Nicastro is president and CEO of the Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce. He can be reached at M.Nicastro@CentralCTChambers.org*

## Businesses can benefit from new state laws

Governor M. Jodi Rell announced in a press release that businesses can begin applying for a number of new economic development programs, designed to foster job growth and support business expansion and new industries, as a result of new laws that took effect July 1.

"This past session many great things were accomplished, but I am most proud of the bipartisan measures that focused on boosting job creation efforts across the state," said Rell in the press release. "We put into place a number of new laws that will be a tremendous benefit to the

businesses that call Connecticut 'home,' as well as to companies that may be considering moving to our great state and making capital investments here."

New programs and measures that businesses can apply for include:

A \$15 million small business loan program will provide up to \$500,000 in loans and lines of credit to businesses and nonprofits employing fewer than 50 people. The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) will be accepting applications ([www.decd.org](http://www.decd.org)).

A \$5 million pre-seed financing program will pro-

vide financial assistance to businesses developing innovative concepts. Connecticut Innovations ([www.ctinnovations.com](http://www.ctinnovations.com)) will be administering the program.

An angel investor tax credit program will provide 25 percent personal income tax credits for up to \$100,000 in angel investments in bioscience, photonics, information technology and green technology businesses. Connecticut Innovations will be administering the program.

A sales tax exemption for machinery, supplies and fuel used in renewable energy and clean energy tech-

nology industries.

An insurance reinvestment tax credit program provides \$200 million in insurance premium tax credits to entities investing in Connecticut companies through fund managers approved by the DECD. The program encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, strengthens the state's insurance industry and promotes technology and green jobs. DECD will be accepting applications from fund managers wanting to take part in this program.

The state's enterprise zone program is being expanded to provide benefits to: (1) bioscience com-

panies and (2) certain businesses and commercial properties in Hartford; areas of Farmington, New Britain and Bristol; and any municipality that has a major research university with a bioscience program.

Other notable business measures already in place:

The state's job creation tax credit program has been expanded to include small businesses and companies that hire workers with disabilities. DECD is accepting applications.

Public Act 10-158, the permit reform legislation, shortens the timeframes businesses face when trying to secure environmental

permits from the state. It includes a series of business-friendly reforms to the permitting process that will expedite job creation—without undermining environmental protections. Several parts of the new law were effective upon passage.

"From investing in innovation and entrepreneurship to streamlining our permitting process, these new laws are part of a thoughtful, comprehensive approach to improving our business climate and supporting job growth and business expansion," the governor said in the press release.

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