



# MILFORD

. . . on the Move

March 2007

ACCE/NAMD Award for Excellence Finalist

## Mark Your Calendar

**March 15<sup>th</sup>**

5:00—7:00 PM

☪ **Business After Hours**  
**RE/MAX Right Choice /**  
**Sensitive Care**

55 Old Gate Lane

**March 16<sup>th</sup>**

1:00 PM

☪ **Ribbon Cutting**  
**Liquid Lunch**

84 Broad Street

**March 28<sup>th</sup>**

5:00—7:00 PM

☪ **Business After Hours**  
**Blue Turtle**

1201 Boston Post Road

**March 30<sup>th</sup>**

1:00 PM

☪ **Ribbon Cutting**  
**Lillith's Loom**

8 Broad Street, Milford

**April 5<sup>th</sup>**

12:00 PM

☪ **Ribbon Cutting**  
**Cancun Charlie's**

1 Schooner Lane, Milford

**April 11<sup>th</sup>**

5:00—7:00 PM

☪ **Business After Hours**  
**Beach House Restaurant**

141 Merwin Avenue, Milford

**April 13<sup>th</sup>**

8:30—9:30 AM

☀ **Good Morning Milford**  
**Technical Concepts**

Milford Chamber Board Room

**April 25<sup>th</sup>**

5:00—7:00 PM

☪ **Business After Hours**  
**Milford Yacht Club**

131 Trumbull Avenue

## LABOR ISSUES CHALLENGE EMPLOYERS

by Marshall R. Collins, Esq.,  
Milford Chamber of  
Commerce Lobbyist



Employers are facing yet another major challenge at the Legislature. While most legislators are focused on trying to adopt a budget and resolving the energy and health care issues, more than 30 anti-employer bills have been raised by the Labor and Public Employees Committee. Chamber members need to contact their legislators and ask for their help to defeat these measures. Annually since 1993, when the General Assembly passed landmark workers' compensation reform, efforts have been made to repeal those same measures which were designed to help make Connecticut's economy competitive. This year is no different and may be even worse.

### Workers' Compensation.

Two proposals would significantly increase employers' workers' compensation costs:

- **SB 153** eliminates the two-year statute of limitations on scarring claims and extends the compensable area to anywhere on the body regardless of the effect on earning ability.
- **SB 847** significantly increases discretionary benefit awards for up to 520 weeks.

Several more would either mandate that employers

assist employees in filing workers' compensation claims or penalize employers that fully exercise their rights in contesting such claims:

- **SB 171** allows claimants to receive an additional award for a payer's undue delay in making payments.
- **SB 399** significantly increases the penalty on insurers for delays in workers' compensation payments.
- **SB 401** significantly increases the penalty on self-insurers for delays in workers' compensation payments.
- **SB 1037** doubles the penalty for employers who unreasonably delay a workers' compensation hearing.
- **SB 172** requires employers to request hearings to assure that claimants are receiving benefits.
- **SB 846** requires employers to assist injured employees in filing a workers' compensation claim.

Others, such as **SB 152** would provide additional relief to claimants where a violation of procedural rules results in case dismissal.

### Union Organizing Campaigns.

Several bills are intended to facilitate union organizing efforts. Among those are:

- **HB 5701** requires recognition of a union card check system instead of secret ballot elections as required by the National Labor Relations Act.
- **SB 601** limits the rights of employers to communicate with their employees on a wide range of matters.

(Known as Captive Audience legislation.)

### Workplace Mandates.

Multiple proposals mandate employer policy regarding everything from paycheck frequency, overtime, to sick leave and vacation time.

- **HB 7317** gives employees an additional year to use unused vacation time, or requires that they receive a lump sum payment for such unused time.
- **SB 601** requires employers to provide paid sick leave to all employees.
- **SB 1037** requires that all employees be paid in full at least bi-weekly.
- **HB 5699** mandates that businesses employing home health aides increase the hourly rate to such employees by a 20-25%.
- **SB 1380** requires mandatory overtime for drivers and merchandisers.
- **HB 6989** prohibits virtually all non-compete agreements.

These are just some of the anti-employer proposals that are advancing through the Legislature. Organized labor and plaintiff's advocates are actively seeking passage of these measures. Unless employers lend their voices to the debate, the cost of doing business in Connecticut will increase. Higher payroll costs will be added to tax increases, high energy costs, and rising health insurance rates unless Chamber members speak up now.

## New Increase In Tax Savings for Connecticut Commuters



Commuters may be able to add convenience and save money as they travel to work in the new year. As of January 1, 2007, employers can offer their employees up to \$110 per month in pre-tax commuting benefits toward monthly fares for trains, buses and vanpools. (Employers can also offer up to \$215 per month for qualified parking.)

The **Commuter Tax Benefit** program (previously known as DeduCT-a-Ride) is provided as a commuter service by the Connecticut Department of Transportation. Employees who participate in the program may use the benefit when they commute to work on commuter trains, buses, in vanpools or toward the cost of qualified parking.

That's good news for employees in the Greater New Haven area, who can choose from a variety of convenient transportation options, such as the Shore Line East Commuter Rail, New Haven

Line (Metro-North) trains, CTTransit buses, DATTCO buses and Easy Street and employer vanpools.

In addition, helping employees find the quickest and most convenient commute possible can be a significant benefit for any company. Rideworks provides information on low-cost transportation options that improve the mobility of the work force and help employees get to work on time and less stressed.

The **Commuter Tax Benefit** program is easy for employers to set up, often at little or no cost. Employers have three options for offering the benefit to employees:

- Provide the benefit in addition to an employee's current salary. The benefit is free of all payroll and income taxes to the employee, and the employer deducts the cost as a business expense.
- Allow employees to deduct a portion of their gross income each month to pay for transit, vanpools and/or qualified park-

ing. Employees would not pay income or payroll taxes on the amount of the deduction, and the employer would not pay payroll taxes because the amount is not treated as taxable income.

- Provide employees with part of their commuting expense tax-free in addition to their current salary, while also allowing them to set aside pre-tax income to pay for the remaining amount of the benefit (up to the specified limits).

For more information on the **Commuter Tax Benefit** program or to schedule an appointment, contact Brooke Hoberman, Rideworks' Employer Services Coordinator, at [bhoberman@rideworks.com](mailto:bhoberman@rideworks.com) or 1-800-ALL-RIDE (1-800-255-7433, ext. 129). For information on other transportation alternatives, call Rideworks at 1-800-ALL-RIDE or visit [www.rideworks.com](http://www.rideworks.com).



**B U S I N E S S**  
**SHOWCASE**  
**2 0 0 7**

**RESERVE YOUR BOOTH NOW!**

Be a part of **BUSINESS SHOWCASE 2007**

**Wednesday, May 16, 2007, Sacred Heart University**

This is the region's largest continually run, collaborative "Business to Business" EXPO in Fairfield County! Showcasing 180+ of the best of Connecticut's Business Community for the past 14 years.

Sponsored by the collaborative strength and power of these Chambers of Commerce: Greater Valley Chamber, Bridgeport Regional Business Council, Fairfield, Monroe, Stratford, Trumbull and the **Milford Chamber of Commerce**.

**Reserve your space today by calling: Nell Moll, 878-0681**

## MEMBER NEWS

### *Congratulations*

**Schick** has earned star status in OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program. It is one of 1,600 workplaces in 270 industries nationwide that have earned VPP status. The VPP recognizes companies committed to effective employee protection beyond the requirements of OSHA standards.

**The City of Milford** is pleased to announce that Milford has once again been named one of the 100 Best Communities in American for Young People. Milford is the only community in Connecticut to win this prestigious award two years in a row.

**Sherrill Cooke**, Founder & Executive Director of the **Bob Cooke Skin Cancer Foundation** has been recognized by the President. Sherrill won the "Daily

Points of Light" Award in honor of the positive and lasting difference she has made to the lives of others.

**Susan Letso**, founder of the **Connecticut for Child Development**, a non-profit dedicated to advocating for individuals with autism, Asperger's Syndrome, and other developmental disorders, has recently been named by Enterprising Women magazine as one of 2007 Advocacy Award Winners.

**Tri-City Heating & Cooling** recently provided an air purification system for a West Haven family in need. **Seamus Warakowski** heard of this family with a sick child and provided the entire system free of charge.

**Connex Credit Union** awarded \$300.00 to the Connecticut Food Bank. The Connecticut Food Bank transports,

warehouses and distributes donated food products to 650 food-assistance programs including soup kitchens, shelters and family day care centers.

**NIKTEK LLC** has been named one of top 50 diversity owned businesses in Connecticut. NIKTEK is a Native American owned and operated business.

**Cracker Barrel** will be celebrating their 10th Anniversary March 6<sup>th</sup> at their Milford location.

Congratulations to **The Women's Business Development Center** as they celebrate their 10th year. The WBDC is a non-profit organization that promotes economic development through entrepreneurship.

### Do you have news to share?

Submit your business announcements to Member News by emailing [lworobel@milfordct.com](mailto:lworobel@milfordct.com)

## UNDER CONSTRUCTION

### Work has begun on the Milford Chamber of Commerce 2007/2008 Membership Directory

#### Increase Your Company's Visibility!

The Milford Chamber of Commerce annual membership directory is considered the "Who's Who" in business. This directory provides you and your company with a competitive edge when Chamber members, area businesses, local citizens, and newcomers look for businesses in the greater Milford area. Set your company apart from the competition with a display ad.

#### Boost Referrals.

An ad in our directory means you get preferred referrals from the large number of calls we field weekly. Boost your visibility with a display ad.

#### Support Your Chamber.

Advertising revenues contribute to our ability to provide programs and services to our members and community.

A variety of ads available from 1/8 page to full page; black & white or full color and pricing to fit every budget.

**Call Nell Moll today, to reserve your space. 878-0681.**





# Celebrating Excellence—52<sup>nd</sup> Annual



The Milford Chamber kicked off 2007 with the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting and 2006 Awards of Distinction. Two hundred and sixty members attended the luncheon at Oak Lane Country Club in Woodbridge.

Speaker of the House, State Representative James Amman 118<sup>th</sup>, also honored the awardees with Citations.

## Ambassador of the Year Dennis Fendo, AFLAC



Dennis Fendo being an extremely active member of the Chamber has made multiple contributions to our organization. As a member of the Ambassadors Committee, he is actively involved with membership recruitment and retention. He serves as a Chairman of the Tuesday Leads Group. His positive attitude and follow through have earned him the respect and honor of his peers. In addition, Dennis is a member of NAIFA, Advisory Board member of Bob Cooke Skin Cancer Foundation, Vice President of the Fairfield Professional Network and Social Chairman of the Mount Snow AARP Ski Club. Dennis is an independent agent representing AFLAC since 2001.



## Director of the Year Tracy O'Brien, Marvin Display 1, LLC.



Tracy O'Brien began her career at Marvin Display as a manager in 1984, then purchasing the company in 1996. Marvin Display is a premier distributor of retail store fixtures and also specializes in flag merchandising and installations. Tracy serves on the Milford Chamber Board of Directors, Executive Committee and chaired The Captain's Ball Committee 2006. She also is an active member in the Milford Rotary Club as Chairperson of International Service and participates in fundraising efforts for United Way of Milford, Boy Scouts of America and the YMCA. Tracy has become a vexillologist (flag expert), and has presented numerous talks on the history and evolution of the American Flag to local schools and organizations.

## Human Service Award Mary Ann Nilan

Mary Ann Nilan has served as Director of Development & Enthusiasm for St. Ann Church and School for over four years. Examples of this can be found in her parish work on Saint Ann's "Turning the Learning" Project, a complete facility renovation, the Stewardship Committee, and expansion of the Pre-K program. Mary Ann is a breast cancer survivor who founded and became president of the "Get In Touch Foundation", a non-profit whose mission is "to encourage women of all ages to get in touch with their bodies. Mary Ann resides in Milford with her three children, Betsy, Mary and Eddy.



## Public Sector Award, Joel Baldwin, City of Milford

Joel Baldwin was born in Milford and descended from one of our founding families in the early 1600's. Joel served two terms as Mayor of Milford as well as Tax Collector, member of Board of Finance and Charter Revision Commission. Since 1991, he has served as Executive Director of the Human Resource Development/Youth & Family Service Agency. The Agency is the City's resource and referral agency as well as providing social service programming and Family Therapy. Joel serves as Chairman of the Milford Network of Social Service Agencies, Chairman of the Milford Youth Network, Board member and Secretary of TEAM, Inc., Board Member and Treasurer of the Milford Cemetery Association. Former board member of the Milford Rape Crisis agency, Kids Count, Milford Historical Society and other entities. His community service is admirable.



## Community Service Award (Individual) Bishop Jay Ramirez Kingdom Life Christian Church



Bishop Ramirez is acknowledged as the key catalyst in the redevelopment of the Devon area of Milford. Since purchasing the first Devon property fifteen years ago, Bishop Ramirez has not only renovated the properties the church has bought, but his example has inspired others to invest in the community and renovate a large portion of Devon. The Bishop is one of the founding members of the Devon Revitalization Committee. Bishop Ramirez has served on the Fund Raising Committee of the local Boy Scouts chapter, created Joseph's Storehouse; a furniture warehouse that distributes free furniture to Milford residents that are fire victims, battered women, and families in crisis financial situations. Prior to being ordained a Pastor, Bishop Ramirez was a Fire Chief of Emergency Medical Services in Longview, Texas and has an extensive background in rescue and emergency medical response.

## Community Service Award (Organization) Devon Rotary Club of Milford

The Devon Rotary Club was founded in 1966 by Dr. Oliver Andrus, a Devon Rotarian and Past President of the Milford Rotary Club. Devon Rotary maintains membership at around 60. In 2006, the Devon Rotary Pavilion at Walnut Beach and the Liberty Rock Park were constructed in partnership of the Devon Rotary and the City of Milford and presented to the citizens of Milford. Planning began three years prior, and hundreds of hours of volunteer's work in planning, engineering, electrical, plumbing, and landscaping was donated to the City. Other projects to benefit the City include the flag pole at Housatonic River Park, tee markers at the Orchards municipal golf course, the cupola at the Milford Rotary Pavilion at Fowler Field, the Vial of Life, a playground at Boys and Girls



# Meeting and 2006 Awards of Distinction



Village, furnishing of the Emergency Room at the Milford Hospital, full sponsorship of the Devon Knights youth basketball team, purchase of a van for the Beth El Shelter and other projects. In addition, approximately \$20,000 in scholarships are granted each spring to Milford students seeking higher education.



### Corporate Award Tri-City Appliance/Heating & Cooling Seamus Warakomski



Tri-City Appliance was founded in 1964 by James and Cecelia Warakomski and was named for its three original cities of service: Stratford, Fairfield, and Bridgeport. Son Seamus took over leadership of the business in 1984 and helped it grow and increase profits by adding a retail parts store in 1986. By 2002, Tri-City Appliance had grown to fifteen employees, and the service area expanded to reach most of Southern Connecticut. Seamus and partner James Franze started a new division in 2002 named Tri-City Heating and Cooling, and by 2005 acquired Superior Mechanical of Stratford. Over the past few years Tri-City Appliance and Heating & Cooling has increased their employment rolls to over 50 persons. Tri-City is an active member of the Milford Chamber of Commerce, and Seamus actively participates as a member of the Devon Rotary. Seamus is also a client and Junior Consultant for Action International. Professional awards include the 2006 Trane Distinguished Dealer Award. Tri-City prides themselves on maintaining high ethical and moral values.

### Business Person of the Year Suzanne Manning, Milford Living Magazine

Suzanne Manning, is the publisher of *Milford Living Magazine*, *Q Magazine* and *BeWell Magazine*, as well as President of Red Mat Holdings, a custom publishing company. She is an alumni of Sacred Heart University with a bachelor's degree in Philosophy. She is the co-founder of the non-profit organization, "Quit for Control", a smoking cessation program. She currently serves as an active member on the Board of Directors of The United Way of Milford, The Get In Touch Foundation, The Network of Executive Women, and the Saint Ann School Board. Suzanne is a member of a number of business, civic and community-based organizations including Milford Chamber of Commerce, Milford Hospital Auxiliary, Milford Democratic Town Committee and Milford Historical Society. As an active parishioner at St. Ann Church, she can be seen volunteering for many local causes



around town. Suzanne resides with her husband James, children Todd and Maryalice in Devon.



### Lifetime Achievement Award Robert Kapusta, Esq. Kapusta & Otzel Law Firm



Robert Kapusta graduated from the University of Connecticut with a B.A. in Economics and later from Georgetown Law School. He began his legal career as an Air Force JAG where he received a commendation for rendering "Excellent Legal Services" in his trial of court marshal cases. He later was assigned to the Pentagon JAG General's office and promoted to the rank of Major. After returning to Connecticut he continued his litigation and civil law practice by becoming a state prosecuting attorney. By using his valuable experience, he became the City Attorney of Milford and Chairman of the City Economic Development Commission. The diversity of his legal background has enabled him to enjoy the practice of law in later years which he regards "not as an occupation, but a lifestyle", thus enabling him to serve clients more effectively. He currently is a member of American Bar Association, Connecticut Bar Association, Milford Bar Association, Arbitration Panel of American Arbitrators, Milford Progress, Inc., New Haven Legal Assistance Association as well as Milford Lions Club.

### Milford Progress, Inc. Economic Development Award Sage-Milford Properties

In early 2004, Sage-Milford Properties was formed to purchase the derelict property at 84 Broad Street. The building was not to code, and behind in taxes. Through the assistance and support of Milford residents, business owners, and organizations such as Milford Bank, Milford Progress, the Chamber of Commerce, Architect Ray Oliver and Contractor Michael Buckley, the building is now renovated, fully leased, and thriving. Sage-Milford Properties is so-named because the owners felt it would be wise (sage) to invest in property in Milford. We thank owners Michael Brown and Tessa Marquis for their contributions to the Milford business community.



Thanks to our Sponsors:



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS (As of February 20<sup>th</sup>)**1-800 Pack-Rat**

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www.1800packrat.com / Storage

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Continued on page 7

**Northeast Energy Partners**

415 Boston Post Road, Milford  
701-0776  
www.neenergypartners.com  
Energy Broker

**Nutmeg Maps**

46 Market Place, Milford  
783-1098 / Maps

**Penner Law Firm, LLC**

326 West Main St., Suite 202, Milford  
878-1254 / www.pennerlawfirm.com  
Attorneys

**Perco, Inc**

157 Whalley Ave., New Haven 06511  
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155 North Broad Street, Milford  
874-3133 / www.pjnm.net  
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**ReDesigning For U**

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1412 Windward Avenue, Milford  
876-7023 / Contractors/General

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41 River Street, Milford  
874-0317 / Barber Shops

**The Salvatore Law Firm**

167 Cherry Street, #420, Milford  
878-9797 / www.salvatorelawfirm.com  
Attorneys

**Bruce R. Schechter, DDS, LLC**

One Golden Hill Street, Milford  
878-1787 / www.brsdds.com  
Dentists/Orthodontists/Oral  
Maxillofacial Surgeons

**Sitka Wellness Center**

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Milford Money



# Save the Date!

## July 9<sup>th</sup>



Mill River Country Club, Stratford

Sponsorship Opportunities Available

Call Kathy Alagno, 878-0681

To Benefit

Milford Chamber of Commerce Trust Fund

## SCRAPBOOK OF RECENT CHAMBER EVENTS



*Holiday Business After Hours at The Milford Bank  
Photo by S.M. Cooper*



*Commerce Bank hosted a Business After Hours in February  
Photo by S.M. Cooper*



*Milford Hospital Walk In Center celebrated their Grand Opening with a Band Aid Cutting.  
Photo by S.M. Cooper*



*Action Coach Bob Kademian discussed Marketing at a Good Morning Milford in January*

**A Special Thanks to our Hosts, Sponsors & Presenters!**



*Business After Hours was held at Daniel Street in January*



*Alan Booth, Gilman Performance Systems presented "The Human Side of Management" at Good Morning Milford in February.*



*A Ribbon Cutting ceremony was held in January for Milford Indoor Tennis  
Photo by S.M. Cooper*



## Reward Employee Dedication

**Give your employees the gift of choice for all their years of hard work and dedication.**

**Give "Milford Money" Gift Certificates.**

**Milford Money is redeemable at over 100 participating member businesses in the Milford area.**

"Milford Money" gift certificates are available in \$5, \$10 and \$25 denominations and may be purchased at:

- Milford Chamber of Commerce - 878-0681
- The Milford Bank (all 4 branches) - 783-5700