

Staff Information:

Economic Development Manager, Christine Soutter
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Overview:

The Economic Development office supports new and existing businesses through outreach, research, resource development, partnerships with local, state and federal agencies and various initiatives that support economic prosperity.

The ED Manager works within the Department of Development Services and Community Planning and serves as staff to the City's Economic Development Committee and the Vision 2020 Committee. The EDM also serves as the City Manager's designee for the Skyhaven Airport Advisory Committee and the Somersworth Chamber of Commerce board of directors. The EDM serves as the City's liaison for the downtown revitalization project and participates in several business and economic development associations.

In fiscal year 2013 the City continued to see incremental economic growth during a cautious recovery. The year was marked by the kick off of the downtown revitalization project which will not only enhance the function and aesthetics of the downtown but will also serve to project a more vibrant representation of the City. The following is a summary of development and other economic development efforts of the City:

Canal Street Mills**New and expanding business:**

- The City welcomed over a dozen new businesses to the area including Hampshire Pewter, Central Fence & Deck, Aaron's, Dress Barn and American Ambulance.
- A 20,000 square foot expansion to Label Tech on Interstate Drive was completed.
- Wentworth Douglass Hospital began construction on an ambulatory surgical center located in front of The Works Athletic Club.
- Eyesight Ophthalmic will be expanding into Somersworth in the Spring of 2014. Construction is underway.
- Star Lumber closed after 60 years and the property will soon house the Goodwill and a small commercial strip development.

Recruitment and Retention:

- The City of Somersworth is partnering with the City of Rochester to offer a Seacoast Manufacturing Exchange, possibly the first of its kind in the State, to bring together area manufacturers to exchange ideas, network and identify strategic partnerships. Meetings are held quarterly and are open to all manufacturers.
- A regional recruitment effort has been formed between Somersworth, Dover, Rochester, Portsmouth and Pease. Blue Dolphin
- The Seacoast Economic Development Alliance, is facilitated by the Department of Resources and Economic Development and is working with the University and the Community College to bring in businesses to the region through a variety of marketing efforts including brochures, letters and advertisements in business magazines.
- The department is working with several potential development partners on a variety of projects in the downtown utilizing RSA 79-E as an incentive to invest in the downtown.
- Communications have improved through the website and a monthly e-newsletter. The newsletter provides timely resource and event information and has been well-received by the community.
- The Economic Development Manager is working with the NH Division of Economic Development to further develop the business recruitment strategy.
- Malley Farm now has high speed cable from Comcast. High speed internet access will serve as both a retention and recruitment tool for Malley Farm.
- NH DOT has approved a pre-engineering study for improvements to Route 108. Strong support has been voiced for Exit 10 and that remains at the forefront of discussions.
- The City of Somersworth and Dover are working together to strengthen the partnerships between the CTC's and the local business community. BizEd Connect meets monthly and has succeeded in setting up several internships and projects.
- The City has had numerous positive stories in the local newspaper in regards to our downtown improvement project and the partnership between our Career Technical Center and local businesses. Several interviews in regards to City economic development projects were aired on local radio stations and WMUR.

Municipal efforts:

- The City Council adopted RSA 79-E which now has one completed project, 44 Market St. The formerly vacant building now has a two bedroom apartment and a restaurant.
- The City continued participation in the **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)** through the Strafford Regional Planning Commission. The CEDS is a regional economic development planning effort that was submitted to the 44 Market Street Economic Development Authority (EDA).
- City staff is currently updating a Community Profile of the City that will include the City's history, natural resource base, demographics, business profile, recreation opportunities, and other quality of life components. This profile will be used to market the City and all it has to offer.
- The City enhanced the website which now prominently features Economic Development. The department also worked with CGI Communications to update the Community Videos located on the website.

Infrastructure Improvements-Your City Dollars at Work:

The City has begun several infrastructure improvements to foster economic development and maintain and improve the quality of life of our residents, property owners, visitors, and business owners alike.

- The City bonded infrastructure improvements on High Street and Market Street beginning with the Somersworth/Berwick Bridge and continuing up to the intersection of High St. and Washington St. The northerly portion of Main Street will

also be included. The improvements include upgrades to the City's drainage, water and sewer systems, and reconstruction of the road and sidewalks.

- The Somersworth/Berwick bridge will be rehabilitated through funds already secured through City, State and Federal agencies.
- City will be using funds from a State Transportation Enhancement Grant to upgrade sidewalks, improve the streetscape and enhance pedestrian safety.