CCM & Northeast Municipal Leagues Collaborate to Promote Racial Equity
Fairfield University

LEAD WITH INTEGRITY

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

TRACKS AVAILABLE IN:

- Nonprofit Management
- Public Healthcare Management
- State & Local Government

fairfield.edu/MPA
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OFFICERS
President, Michael J. Freda
First Selectman of North Haven
1st Vice President, Luke A. Bronin
Mayor of Hartford
2nd Vice President, Jayme J. Stevenson
First Selectman of Darien

DIRECTORS
Elinor Carbone, Mayor of Torrington
Thomas Dunn, Mayor of Wolcott
Justin Elicker, Mayor of New Haven
John A. Elsesser, Town Manager of Coventry
Laura Francis, First Selectman of Durham
Joseph P. Ganim, Mayor of Bridgeport
Barbara M. Henry, First Selectman of Roxbury
Matthew Hoey, First Selectman of Guilford
Laura Hoydick, Mayor of Stratford
Catherine Iino, First Selectwoman of Killingworth
Matthew S. Knickerbocker, First Selectman of Bethel
Marcia A. Leclerc, Mayor of East Hartford
Curt Leng, Mayor of Hamden
W. Kurt Miller, First Selectman of Seymour
Rudolph P. Marconi, First Selectman of Ridgefield
Michael Passero, Mayor of New London
Brandon Robertson, Town Manager of Avon
John Salomone, Town Manager of Norwich
Scott Shanley, General Manager of Manchester
Erin E. Stewart, Mayor of New Britain
Mark B. Walter, Town Administrator of Columbia

PAST PRESIDENTS
Neil O’Leary, Mayor of Waterbury
Susan S. Bransfield, First Selectwoman of Portland
Mark D. Boughton, Mayor of Danbury
Herbert C. Rosenthal, Former First Selectman of Newtown

HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS
Leo Paul, Jr., Former First Selectman of Litchfield

CCM STAFF
Executive Director, Joe DeLong
Deputy Director, Ron Thomas
Managing Editor, Kevin Maloney
Layout & Design, Matthew Ford
Writer, Christopher Gilson

Connecticut Town & City
© 2020 Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

Inside this issue...

NLC REAL Initiative 4
Special Session: Police Accountability Law 6
Dalio/CCM Education Digital Divide Partnership 8
Workers Comp. Issue 11
Trash to Energy? 12
CT COVID Response 14
NLC Webinar: People Look To Local Leaders 16
CCM Virtual Convention 18
CIRMA News 22

CONTACT US FOR A COMPLIMENTARY ANALYSIS OF YOUR PLAN

Expand your municipality’s retirement plan potential with financial solutions rooted in 50+ years of institutional experience.

Phone: 888-231-6372
Email: info@beirnewealth.com
Website: www.beirnewealth.com

Outcomes Matter. Trust is Earned.
CM and the Northeastern municipal leagues (Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont) have entered into an arrangement with the National League of Cities’ (NLC) Race & Equity And Leadership (REAL) initiative to provide customized technical assistance to leagues, trainings for boards of directors and staff, which will in turn, help boards decide on what specific state approaches would be most appropriate to create platforms and trainings for discussion and movement on racial equity.

NLC’s REAL initiative “serves to strengthen local leaders’ knowledge and capacity to eliminate racial disparities, heal racial divisions, and build more equitable communities.” Through training and online resources, REAL helps build safe places where everyone can thrive socially, economically, academically and physically.

This CCM/NLC REAL partnership is a part of what will be CCM’s sustained engagement on inclusion, which will consist of, among other things, periodic free trainings for municipal officials, including at CCM’s annual conventions; CCM staff development trainings, and access to consultants for community trainings/conversations.

A NLC REAL introductory webinar was held on August 12 for CCM Boards of Directors as well as boards of Northeastern municipal leagues. A similar webinar was held for CCM staff and regional league staff.

NLC REAL
America’s foundational document, The Declaration of Independence, tell us that we are born with certain unalienable rights, like those of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In the 250 years since Thomas Jefferson wrote those words, Americans have periodically asked why it seemed those words were only true for some. These questions have led to the abolishment of slavery, the right of women to vote, and same-sex marriages. But while this country has made tremendous leaps, questions remain whether or not we are all equal participants in the American Dream. The National League of Cities created the Race, Equity, and Leadership (REAL) initiative to ask how local leaders can be part of the solution.

REAL was created after the moment of mass protests sparked by the shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. It was a time when Americans once again asked why race was the strongest predictor of outcomes in life – and more importantly, why Black Americans were more likely to see negative outcomes in everything from infant mortality to life expectancy. Leon Andrews, Director of REAL, raised these issues in a webinar on the topic of race equity, saying that “the work we’re doing is not about preventing further conflict, but really understanding the work that needs to be done to really address some of the inequities.”
In the six years since REAL was first started, this initiative has provided training and technical assistance to over 700 city leaders and their teams. They offer programs ranging from how to have those conversations on race and equity to implementing racial equity plans.

Andrews notes that these conversations are not easy to have, so normalizing a conversation on racial equity is often a critical starting point. He asks, “How do we create spaces to normalize a conversation on racial equity, what does that look like, realizing that people have different starting point on how they understand these issues, and, particularly the town/city leaders, how do you see your role in this space?”

A fruitful exercise would be to operationalize goals in a town or city. For REAL, acknowledging the problem is not the solution, and is only the first step towards being accountable. Andrews says that the crucial move is from “intent to impact.”

That impact is to close the gaps in outcomes based on race. This is what is meant by equity; race no longer predicts one’s success in this country. Using Denver as an example, Andrews said that the economy would have been $40 billion larger if there were no gaps of income between Black and White Americans.

That figure is for just one city, and Connecticut is not only one of the most segregated states but also has the highest per capita personal income. The data bears out the truth: while only 15% of white families in Connecticut have inadequate income, 47% of Latinx and 39% of Black families are struggling to make ends meet.

Many local leaders ask themselves how can we close those gaps; how do we incentivize equity? Andrews says that there is no one perfect example, but organizing principles learned when you have those conversations about equity combined with operations that aim to close the gaps is key. In Connecticut, one aspect might be to learn why there are persistent gaps and combine that with policies that will begin to realize equity.

“Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed,” Langston Hughes wrote in his 1935 poem, “Let America Be America Again.” Nearly 100 years ago, Hughes recognized the problems that Jefferson didn’t when he wrote that “all men are created equal.” What the National League of Cities is offering in REAL is an opportunity to look at lifetime outcomes and ask, “why is race the number one predictor of outcomes in life” and “how can I lead the way in changing those outcomes?”

This is a moment that calls for change, where Americans are once again asking these hard questions and having these hard conversations. It is CCM’s hope that through working with NLC REAL, establishing a staff Inclusion Committee and developing a robust and sustained trainings for municipal officials, as well as consultants to facilitate community conversations, Connecticut towns and cities can begin to have the needed dialogue to develop policies to ensure fairness and equal opportunity for all residents.
Since May, there have been continuous protests and rallies to support police reform, and ways to address racial inequities. During a special session, the Connecticut General Assembly passed a bill that Governor Lamont signed which attempts to address police officers who act outside the law, and subsequently face corresponding consequences. In addition, the law modifies training and oversight along with other tools to ensure police accountability.

Many of the actions taken by the law are reforms that are already taking place and CCM generally supported them. Several reforms are intended to address the few “bad actors” in law enforcement. One such reform enables the Police Officers Standards and Training (POST) Council to decertify or suspend certification of an officer for a variety of conduct that is unbecoming for law enforcement.

While there are several positive reforms, there are provisions which will increase costs. Body cameras have become a major accountability tool for police departments around the nation, and they allow for transparency within police departments and protect those in uniform just as much as they protect civilians. Body cameras are a helpful tool, but a costly one. While the cameras themselves are only about $1000 each, the video storage costs can be prohibitive. Those departments that currently do not utilize these cameras – which are approximately 50% of departments in Connecticut - will need to acquire and deploy them to officers by 2022.

It also requires certification from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), a national accrediting agency for law enforcement. The certification improves law enforcement transparency, accountability and integrity. CALEA certification costs anywhere between $9000 and $20,000, not including other costs associated with certification such as time and travel.

CCM is disappointed that more of its suggested changes were not adequately addressed in the law, specifically (a) regarding government immunity, (b) language pertaining to police excessive force and (c) changes in procedures and training.

That said, CCM’s efforts to highlight the unintended consequences of the original proposal were able to get some of CCM’s recommendations incorporated into the bill making it more workable and less onerous, specifically in regard to the government immunity section. Successful language changes that have been made include removing a provision that would have allowed a direct action against a municipal- ity and the removal of the provision regarding punitive awards for intentional acts which cannot be insured.

There were changes that will be problematic for officers. For instance, modifying the law regarding excessive use of force. While it may appear reasonable, it is unknown what particular de-escalation measures would need to be taken by an officer. This ambiguity could lead to additional liability and safety concerns.

Joe DeLong, CCM Executive Director said, “Connecticut and the nation are beyond studying the issue. The public demanded meaningful reform. But this law is just the beginning of the conversation. While it punishes the actions of rogue police officers, it may further punish property taxpayers across Connecticut; force local tax hikes in poor, urban communities and bring about cuts in social services where they are needed most.”

In passing and signing this bill, the Governor and the Legislature is acknowledging a moment that called for credible police reform. CCM will continue to conduct an analysis of the law, but it’s clear that there will be consequences, both intended and unintended, much of which won’t become evident until implemented within the next few years. As such, this law should only be the start of the conversation, and the framework upon which we build to make Connecticut a safer and more just place for our residents and the officers who protect us.
The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities is calling on the State to grant CCM intervenor status in the State Public Utility Review Authority (PURA) investigation into Eversource and its response to Tropical Storm Isaias. As importantly, CCM is also calling on the Governor and General Assembly to initiate an independent review of PURA's regulatory process and determine if PURA needs to be strengthened in its capacity to provide oversight to public utilities.

“PURA’s Chairman Marissa Gillett has made a concerted effort to listen to municipal concerns since her appointment. However, we must question if PURA has the tools necessary and is positioned appropriately to do an adequate job as a utility regulator,” noted Joe DeLong, CCM Executive Director and CEO. “Over the past week, municipal leaders across Connecticut have been rightly critical of the Eversource response to Tropical Storm Isaias.

In documents Eversource shared with the State before the Tropical Storm Isaias, the company planned for an outage of between 125,000 and 380,000 customers. That would require them to bring in 500 to 1,600 line crews in order to restore power within two to six days. The number of power outages the company experienced exceeded 700,000.

In 2011, Eversource was known as Connecticut Light & Power (CL&P), whose parent company, Northeast Utilities, later merged with NSTAR. At the time, Tropical Storm Irene and the late October snowstorm that followed left hundreds of thousands of residents without power, and the PURA determined the CL&P response was deficient because of the company’s failure to obtain adequate assistance in advance of the second storm.

In 2012, regulators issued a decision finding that Connecticut Light & Power should be penalized for its poor performance: “...the Authority concludes that CL&P’s performance in the areas regarding communication to customers, other service providers and municipalities was so deficient as to be less than adequate and suitable and to warrant regulatory sanction. This deficiency also involves its lack of preparation of personnel, failure to support municipal liaisons and to reasonably develop and communicate restoration times to customers.”

PURA called for the financial penalties to be imposed in the company’s next proceeding. The company contested the finding, stretching out the process for another two years until the decision became final near the end of 2015. CL&P was penalized $4.4 million, but was still allowed to increase rates. The company’s 1.2 million customers in 149 Connecticut towns and cities paid that $257 million to improve the reliability of the grid through their monthly bills. Following that increase in late 2014, regulators approved another rate increase in 2018, but only allowed half of what the company wanted.

Eversource sought the increase to pay for smart switches, stronger poles and wires and improved tree-trimming to help restore power more quickly following storms.

In comparison, United Illuminating, the other Connecticut utility which serves 17 towns, had substantial restoration completed by the first weekend.

“Eversource has been widely criticized in the wake of Tropical Storm Isaias, as it has been in the past for similar storms,” noted DeLong. “What has made this even more devastating is their severe underestimation -- again -- of another storm. Yet Eversource still requests and is often granted, frequent price increases to support a mitigation process that has not prevented the same exact poor response time and again.”

What is the bottom line here? The Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) is statutorily charged with balancing the public’s right to safe, adequate and reliable utility service at reasonable rates with the provider’s right to a reasonable return on its investment. CCM believes that in addition to a review of Eversource’s failures, policymakers must also review Connecticut’s regulatory framework to be certain that the stated mission of PURA can and will be effectively administered moving forward.
Bridging The Gap
CCM joins Dalio Education to close the digital divide for CT students

The issue of digital access was a problem that was brought into stark relief during these past few months. With families across the state being asked to learn from home, those without access to computers or the internet risked being left behind. Fortunately, public-private partnerships with organizations like Dalio Education helped get computers into the hands of those that needed them. CCM and Dalio Education are looking to further that cause with the launch of a new joint effort to help close the digital divide in Connecticut.

CCM and Dalio Education will raise awareness about the digital divide and issue a plan to move Connecticut toward universal access. They will also form collaborations with municipalities to bring high-speed internet access to families that currently don't have it.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that there is an urgent need for bold action to address the digital divide in Connecticut, which has existed since the advent of the internet in the late 1990s,” said Joe DeLong, CCM Executive Director and CEO. “While we believe action by the State of Connecticut and Congress is necessary to achieve the ultimate goal here – which is universal access – our communities cannot wait. CCM and municipal leaders are committed to doing what we can to address this problem, and we are incredibly grateful to Barbara Dalio and Dalio Education for their support.”

Tens of thousands of school-aged children and their families in Connecticut do not have access to the internet outside of school, and thousands more have sub-standard service. This lack of access deepens existing inequities as many residents who currently lack high-speed internet access are also battling systemic racial and socioeconomic challenges.

According to Broadband Now, a consortium of broadband suppliers, notes that while Connecticut is the second most connected state for internet, only 30% of users have access to a wired low-price plan, highlighting the need for an affordable option in a clear majority of Connecticut homes.

“We believe access to high-speed, quality internet coverage is a fundamental right,” said Barbara Dalio, Founder and Director of Dalio Education. “We feel an obligation to help expand access because this is about creating a more equitable Connecticut community – and Connecticut is our home. Internet access is as essential as electricity and water. Students need the internet for learning and teachers need access for engaging their students. Families need access too. If you don’t have internet access it is nearly impossible to find a job, connect with your doctor, or secure government services.”

Closing the digital divide in Connecticut will require everyone working together. To raise awareness about the divide and inspire others to join in this effort, CCM and Dalio Education will release a report and public opinion polling later this summer that will provide an in-depth analysis of the scope of the digital divide in Connecticut, as well as specific recommendations for addressing the divide.

“Through this collaborative effort, we will work with Connecticut’s most innovative municipal leaders in spearheading solutions that work for the unique needs of their respective communities,” added DeLong. “In the days and weeks ahead, we will announce collaborations with a few communities to expand high-speed internet access for thousands of families. These collaborations will provide immediate benefits for residents and their communities while also serving as demonstrations of what’s possible when everyone works together to expand internet access.”

These projects will be multi-faceted, as there will not be a one-size-fits-all solution for Connecticut. Opportunities might exist within individual communities or on a region by region basis, so CCM will utilize its research capabilities and extensive municipal data to see where gaps are and what will work across the state.

“We believe government can’t solve every problem on its own, nor can philanthropy, nor can nonprofits or the private sector,” added Dalio. “By collaborating with CCM and municipal leaders, we think we have a better chance of helping to solve this problem than if any one sector tried to tackle it on its own. Through teamwork, anything is possible.”

Both Dalio and DeLong emphasized that the goals of this partnership will not be completed without the input of people in every walk of life, citing the adage that it takes a village to raise a child. CCM and Dalio Education welcome and encourage everyone to join in this statewide, nonpartisan effort to expand internet access for Connecticut families, and to make it so every child has the same opportunity to succeed.
Roger L. Kemp • Kemp Consulting, LLC

Roger L. Kemp MPA, MBA, PhD
Credentialed City Manager • Career Adjunct Professor

~ Police Services ~

Dr. Kemp provides national professional police consulting and speaking services on evolving police-community programs. Some of these topics include state-of-the-art practices in these dynamic and evolving fields:

- Citizen Advisory Police Commissions
- Citizen Police Commissions
- Citizen Police Academies
- Citizen Police Committees
- City Council Police Committees
- Coffee With A Cop Programs
- Neighborhood Police Offices
- Neighborhood Police Officers
- Pizza With The Police Programs
- Police Bicycle Patrols
- Police Community Forums
- Police Financial Controls
- Police Recruitment Practices
- Police Walking Patrols
- School Resource Offices
- Youth Police Services

Roger Kemp’s background and professional skills are highlighted on his website. Dr. Kemp was a city manager in politically, economically, socially, and ethnically diverse communities, on both coasts of the United States. He has written and edited nearly 50 books on city subjects, and can speak and consult on them with knowledge of the national best practices in the police-community relations field.

Call or e-mail Dr. Kemp for more information.

Dr. Roger L. Kemp • Kemp Consulting, LLC
(203) 686-0281
RogerLKemp46@gmail.com
www.rogerkemp.org
Take the following steps to identify improvements and implement projects that add up to real savings for your community.

1. Schedule a no cost, no obligation energy efficiency evaluations with ESC to review existing facility conditions, analyze utility usage and summarize recommendations and associated costs.

2. Eliminate contracting hurdles by leveraging ESC’s status as a pre-approved provider of energy efficiency retrofits and cost savings services with the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services.

3. Capitalize on a variety of incentive programs offered by local utility providers working with ESC to support project implementation, including interest-free financing for up to one million dollars per municipality.
Governor Lamont issued Executive Order 7JJJ on July 24th, which establishes a rebuttable presumption regarding workers’ compensation benefits related to contraction of COVID-19 between March 10th and May 20th. Some key provisions include:

- Establishes a rebuttable presumption that an employee who initiates a claim for payment of benefits under the provisions of Chapter 568 of the Connecticut General Statutes, and who missed a day or more of work between March 10, 2020 and May 20, 2020, inclusive, due to a diagnosis of COVID-19, or due to symptoms that were diagnosed as COVID-19, contracted COVID-19 as an occupational disease arising out of and in the course of employment.
- Any wage replacement benefits paid under Section 31-307 or 31-308(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes shall be reduced by the amount of any paid sick leave available to an employee through the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act set forth in sections 5101 et seq. of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.
- The presumption may be rebutted only if the employer or insurer demonstrates to a workers’ compensation commissioner by a preponderance of the evidence, that the employment of the individual was not the cause of his or her contracting COVID-19.
- Beginning on August 1, 2020, the Workers’ Compensation Commission shall produce a report each month on COVID-19 workers’ compensation claims and shall provide such reports to the Office of the Governor and the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance.
- No employer shall discharge, discriminate, discipline, or deliberately misinformation an employee under the provisions of the executive order.

CCM urged the legislature and Governor not to establish a rebuttable presumption under the Workers Compensation Act based on the facts of a joint informational hearing on June 17th.

CCM and our members undoubtedly appreciate the work of our first responders and all essential workers during this difficult time. But the issues raised during this hearing have shown that the costs such a presumption would have on already financially struggling municipalities would only exacerbate the financial burden that our towns and cities are grappling with as a result of this pandemic.

CCM remains committed to working with the administration, the legislature, and other parties regarding any issues impacting Connecticut municipalities during this time, but CCM did not see a need to enact a presumption that has a greater chance of negatively impacting an already difficult situation.

Municipal Consulting Service

Recognizing that hiring the best people requires both a significant investment of time and effort as well as a trusted partner, CCM has added executive recruiting to our Municipal Consulting Service.

MCS assists CCM members, their school districts and local public agencies with a full complement of essential services, including:

- Grant writing and researching
- RFP drafting
- Project management
- Operational reviews
- Change implementation
- Organizational studies
- Strategic planning
- Finance and budgeting
- Purchasing
- Facilities management
- Temporary staffing

Contact Andy Merola: 203 498-3056, or amerola@ccm-ct.org for additional information.
A recent article in the CT News Junkie outlined the reasons why Governor Lamont declined to invest in a new trash-to-energy plant. While the tech might be moving away from these facilities, the article made one thing clear: “municipalities are likely to see their taxes go up as a result of the decision.” Without an alternative lined up, the Governor’s decision is to make the already untenable waste problem more costly and less environmentally friendly. Waste-to-energy facilities combust wastes which generates electricity as an output. While they are not renowned for being environmentally friendly, they are an alternative to landfills, which release more chemicals into the air, and can at least reclaim some of the energy.

One such plant, The Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA) in Hartford has been in need of an overhaul for years, and was looking to the state government for $330 million dollars to bring the plant up to modern standards.

But the Governor and Department of Energy and Environmental Protection felt that it was not worth it. Quoted in the New Junkie article, Lamont says it “just didn’t make a whole [lot] of us sense to me and a lot of other people. I think that is the costly solution if we just keep throwing money there.”

Unfortunately, towns and cities already know all too well what happens when a waste resource is suddenly taken away.

Over the past two years, the Chinese National Sword Policy has completely upended the way towns and cities handle recycling. Something that was a net-positive turned into a costly service because tipping fees skyrocketed in the absence of a place to send recyclables. Our research from 2019 showed that Bridgeport will go from $130,000 in revenue to projected $394,380 in expenses. Stamford generated $95,000 in the current fiscal year and will now pay $700,000 to company to process its materials, and Waterbury will be moving from $15,000 in revenue to a $330,000 expense.

The same thing will be happening with mainstream waste for the 51 towns and cities that use the MIRA plant. Thomas Kirk, Executive Director of MIRA said that options for municipalities will include trucking trash to places like New York, Pennsylvania, and even as far as Ohio and Virginia. Not only will the fees rise for trucking waste that far away, but landfills and shipping waste is the opposite of environmentally friendly.

While there are increasingly new technologies to handle waste, and more and more towns are adopting green measures to sort out not only recyclables, but also compostables, the ability to handle the total output of Connecticut’s towns and cities is just not there.

Lamont argues in the article that as long as Connecticut relies on trash-to-energy and burning, there is no incentive for these new technologies to come up. That reasoning is circular at best; these new services are arising every day in towns and cities wanting to be at the cutting edge.

What is true is that municipalities, already reeling from the National Sword policy that changed recycling, cannot handle another drastic change in waste management policy without incurring additional tipping fees or resorting to methods that were replaced as less environmentally friendly than trash-to-energy. MIRA worked for nearly a third of Connecticut’s towns and cities, and until new technologies that are better replace it, it deserves to be treated better than yesterday’s trash.
It might not seem like it, but the Census began earlier this year when households began receiving their official Census Bureau mailings in March. Unfortunately, that coincided with the beginning of shutdown, putting a pause on many of the events planned to get the word out. But there's still time to respond, as from now until the end of at least September, census takers will be making their final push to reach those areas that haven't responded.

Though Connecticut has the best response rate in New England, at a 65.5% response rate in July, it was only a few points ahead of the national average of 61.9%. Towns like Newtown, Milford, and Shelton led the pack with over 70% of households responding to the Census. On the other hand, Hartford, according to data from the Courant, has the lowest response rate in the nation, while Connecticut's other large cities are not that far behind. This threatens the crucial funding our state receives based on the population count.

This final push is to get all of Connecticut’s municipalities response rates up by combatting some of the issues that have led to low response rates. Information collected by the CT Data Collaborative and published on Patch.com, said that 154 census tracts from 36 municipalities accounted for the bottom 5th of self-response rates in the state; tracts with over 50% Hispanic or Black residents have lower response rates than tracts with over 50% White residents; tracts with fewer homeowners and more multi-family homes have lower response rates; and tracts with less internet access have lower self-response rates.

2020 was the first Census to allow residents to respond via the internet, making it easy for those with internet access, but there are always populations that are harder to reach. Rural areas are notoriously hard to reach both via the internet because access may be limited, but also because it’s more difficult to get a census representative out to interview homes that haven’t responded. For others, there were issues with questions about citizenship on the 2020 Census. Many feared that the inclusion of a citizenship question would prevent many immigrants from responding to the Census whether they were a citizen or not, and according to Politico, the Census Bureau has spent tens of millions of dollars combatting this fear.

There have been direct actions taken more locally. Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz, chair of the Connecticut Complete Count Committee, along with New Haven Board of Alder Majority Leader Richard Furlow knocked on doors in his ward to let residents know that it is not only safe to respond to the Census, but extremely important.

The Lt. Governor also announced along with Governor Lamont a Census “Day of Action” in order to push the response. In a coordinated effort between the state and businesses, employees were given 10 minutes of their workday on July 10 at 10am to complete the census. For most households, 10 minutes is more than enough time to respond to the 10 questions.

More locally, Danbury’s Complete Count Committee held phone banking in June as a way of reaching out to folks who may not have completed the Census. While Stratford was utilizing things like video to share on social media.

This work is still urgent; nearly $11 billion is at stake. The Census helps determine the amount of funding your municipality receives, how your community plans for the future, and your representation in government. Census data is used to provide funding for schools and other municipal departments, and plan for economic and community development in towns and cities.

There are undercounted communities in both urban and rural settings and reaching them before the end of October will be a challenge. Reaching a further 10% of residents would place Connecticut at the top of the pack in terms of Census response and put us in a good spot to make sure that we receive all of the funds we are owed.
Connecticut’s Fight Against COVID-19
Working and learning together has led to a successful virus response

Connecticut has had one of the best responses to the coronavirus pandemic so far. Given where we are now versus where we were at the same time in April, it seemed destined to happen. But it wasn’t. As each step was taken over the course of the last five months, no one had any idea what would work and what wouldn’t. That’s the very nature of an unprecedented pandemic. Fortunately, the combined efforts of everyone from the Governor to everyday Connecticut residents have made our response successful.

The first factor in this was trusting the experts. One could look at the actions taken by the science community – specifically organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers For Disease Control (CDC) – and those taken by Connecticut would be in step. By mid-March, WHO was ready to label the virus a pandemic, and Connecticut had just taken steps to declare a civil preparedness and public health emergency.

When it became clear that the CDC was recommending that people wear cloth masks in order to stop the spread of the virus, the state responded by mandating mask wearing in public far sooner than a majority of other states. Some still do not have mask orders.

And the difference that this has made in the public response has been overwhelming. Self-reported statistics have shown that Connecticut residents largely wear a mask every time they leave the house. From data gathered by the New York Times, anywhere between 66% and 95% of Connecticut residents will always have a mask on if they leave the house. For the most part, those who rarely or never wear masks amount to less than 15% of the population.

The state was quick to ramp up production and execution of testing sites throughout the state. According to the New York Times, the United States as a whole was hitting 36% of the testing target over a two-week period in July. In that same two-week period, Connecticut hit 457% of the testing target. The percent positive rate was around once percent, while the states being hit hardest over the summer – Arizona, Florida, and South Carolina – saw positive rates of 26%, 19%, and 17%, respectively.

Having this information is key, and it allows for robust and accurate contact tracing. This process in which people who are infected can anonymously let those they’ve come in close contact with, can effectively limit transmission. Before symptoms arise, people can still shed the virus, infecting others. Even in cases where those who have the virus without symptoms could be spreading it around without knowing it. A good contact tracing system will notify those that need to be tested after coming into contact, and if positive, those who need to quarantine themselves.

Connecticut has had one of the best responses to the coronavirus pandemic so far. Given where we are now versus where we were at the same time in April, it seemed destined to happen. But it wasn’t. As each step was taken over the course of the last five months, no one had any idea what would work and what wouldn’t. That’s the very nature of an unprecedented pandemic. Fortunately, the combined efforts of everyone from the Governor to everyday Connecticut residents have made our response successful.

When it became clear that the CDC was recommending that people wear cloth masks in order to stop the spread of the virus, the state responded by mandating mask wearing in public far sooner than a majority of other states. Some still do not have mask orders in place despite the CDC arguing in mid-July that the pandemic could be halted in just over a month if everyone wore a mask.

And the difference that this has made in the public response has been overwhelming. Self-reported statistics have shown that Connecticut residents largely wear a mask every time they leave the house. From data gathered by the New York Times, anywhere between 66% and 95% of Connecticut residents will always have a mask on if they leave the house. For the most part, those who rarely or never wear masks amount to less than 15% of the population.

The state was quick to ramp up production and execution of testing sites throughout the state. According to the New York Times, the United States as a whole was hitting 36% of the testing target over a two-week period in July. In that same two-week period, Connecticut hit 457% of the testing target. The percent positive rate was around once percent, while the states being hit hardest over the summer – Arizona, Florida, and South Carolina – saw positive rates of 26%, 19%, and 17%, respectively.

Having this information is key, and it allows for robust and accurate contact tracing. This process in which people who are infected can anonymously let those they’ve come in close contact with, can effectively limit transmission. Before symptoms arise, people can still shed the virus, infecting others. Even in cases where those who have the virus without symptoms could be spreading it around without knowing it. A good con-
Contact tracing system will notify those that need to be tested after coming into contact, and if positive, those who need to quarantine themselves.

Having this information is key, and it allows for robust and accurate contact tracing. This process in which people who are infected can anonymously let those they’ve come in close contact with, can effectively limit transmission. Before symptoms arise, people can still shed the virus, infecting others. Even in cases where those who have the virus without symptoms could be spreading it around without knowing it. A good contact tracing system will notify those that need to be tested after coming into contact, and if positive, those who need to quarantine themselves.

On the municipal level, New Haven was off to a jump start on contact tracing, which earned them coverage abroad on BBC.com. As a state, the initiative known as ContaCT, was off to a rocky start, but as it hired more individuals, it was able to contact trace, 40%, then 50%, 90%, and now, 100% of cases according to covidactnow.org.

Connecticut as a whole has also learned from mistakes; an unfortunate side-effect of being one of the first states hit with this virus. No one quite knew or was prepared for how the virus would spread in nursing homes for instance. Connecticut has clearly learned from those mistakes and how to pivot throughout this pandemic.

On the municipal level, New Haven was off to a jump start on contact tracing, which earned them coverage abroad on BBC.com. As a state, the initiative known as ContaCT, was off to a rocky start, but as it hired more individuals, it was able to contact trace, 40%, then 50%, 90%, and now, 100% of cases according to covidactnow.org.

In one of the Governor’s Coronavirus updates in early August, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Dr. Anthony Fauci had lauded Connecticut’s response to the pandemic and continued efforts, saying “You’re not pulling pack on your vigilance, and making sure you don’t have a resurgence of cases that would put you back.”

As the nation’s most vocal expert on infectious disease, Fauci’s commendations carry an extra weight. Connecticut is no longer at the US epicenter of the pandemic, but the country and Connecticut still have a long way to go before this virus is contained. As other states are experiencing record numbers of cases, and we approach the fall flu season, there are many large challenges ahead for our state, and we must remain vigilant. Lessons learned over the previous months, should prepare and steel the state for what lies ahead.
Connecticut has come to be a role model for the rest of the country when it comes to not only the response to COVID-19, but also in the peaceful protests that have arisen since the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Mayors Elinor Carbone of Torrington and David Martin of Stamford were joined by Mayor Svante Myrick of Ithaca, New York to speak on the National League of Cities (NLC) Northeast/Mid-Atlantic Regional Membership call to discuss the challenge of leading today during these joint crises.

Current NLC CEO and Executive Director Clarence E. Anthony began the conversations by saying that this one-two punch of pandemic and uprisings have people looking to their local officials to lead, something the three mayors on the call have been exemplified throughout these trying times.

Mayor Carbone noted in regard to the recent rallies that Torrington is the birthplace of John Brown, the abolitionist famous for his raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia. She said that the same soil that nurtured his beliefs against slavery over 150 years ago, have made Torrington a model today.

As a smaller community, a micropolitan center, Mayor Carbone said that they have held rallies rather than protests.

“We all live together,” she said, “We all go to school together, go to work and church together.”

Mayor Martin said that Stamford’s rallies have been peaceful despite being a larger city, because most of the cause has been justified as he said. He noted that he had even handed out masks at the rallies, helping to keep the protesters safe despite not social distancing.

He did however say that he wished more people would get involved and look at policing in Stamford to see that they are already compliant in many of the issues that have arisen since May.

Mayor Carbone echoed that sentiment earlier in the dialogue by saying that for years she had tried to get more and more youth to participate in local government, but had never seen them more engaged than now.

From here, the conversation moved towards how to change the situation. As Mayor Myrick noted, we all want to live in a community that is so safe you never have to call the police. That’s just not the reality as it stands.

He offered one of the talking points that has come out of the protests – why not just spend more on a broader social safety net, or rather defund the police? And the answer is that the money just isn’t there, and that the transfer of money from police to social services will leave a gap in all services if they try to handle this overnight.

With limited time, the three mayors spoke to their handling of the coronavirus pandemic in the face of unbudgeted expenses, and all three agreed that the Federal government has not done nearly enough to help towns and cities out during this crisis.

Mayor Myrick’s pronouncement was possibly the harshest of the three: “Our best-case scenario is that this will be the worst budget deficit.”

Both Mayors Martin and Carbone noted that much of the unknown expenses are still yet to come as they will be part of school re-opening in the fall. Social distancing on buses, masks, and HVAC upgrades are all considerations in addition to social distancing while in schools.

In May, NLC began the Cities Are Essential campaign urging the federal government to give federal aid directly to the towns and cities that need it the most. It has been nearly 150 days since the CARES Act was signed.

CCM is working actively with a national coalition of state, county and local government associations to secure additional federal funding from the President and Congress to help municipalities battle the financial fallout and service overloads that have resulted from the coronavirus pandemic.

The coalition includes the National Governors Association, the National League of Cities (NLC), the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the International City/County
Management Association, the Council of State Governments and the National Association of Counties. These are the seven leading organizations representing state and local governments at the federal level.

CCM asserts that the coronavirus has taken a huge chunk out of Connecticut municipalities’ reserves, leaving towns and cities of all sizes scurrying for local revenues and raising the notion of significant local tax hikes in 2021. Preliminary projections from cities and towns include $407 million in revenue delays or losses and another $63 million in added costs, according to data released last week by the state Office of Policy and Management.

“This creates really big problems at the municipal level,” said Joe DeLong, CCM executive director and CEO. “The combined $470 million in delays will eat up a big portion of all local government reserves, and present troubling choices for our distressed communities – service cuts, employee layoffs, and/or property tax hikes.”

Even though the rest of the world is hunkering down or slowly reopening under the pandemic, all municipal services must continue; lives depend on them. Connecticut municipal leaders and their property taxpayers continue to be burdened by unexpected and unbudgeted pandemic-related expenses – while local revenues steadily shrink.

Any school reopening plan will involve more unbudgeted education expenses – that should be reimbursable as COVID-19 related – ranging from personal protection equipment, possibly retrofitting of classrooms, renting additional space, adding more teachers, more bus routes, expanded remote learning resources and other needed requirements.

In order to comply with social distancing measures, towns already have had to pay for laptops so town employees can work from home. Municipalities have also spent thousands of dollars on protective gear for firefighters, police officers and others essential employees who must show up to work every day. Police, fire and EMS overtime continues to climb as do unemployment compensation costs. The coronavirus shutdown also has eliminated needed revenue from parks and recreation fees that would have increased during the warmer months.

These are challenging times, no doubt, but these times still need leaders. Mayor Carbone and Mayor Martin have shown the very spirit of leading by example. Along with Mayor Myrick, the NLC call was a way to show town and city leaders throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic the way things can and should be.

---

**With miles of responsibility...**

---

**Complete, Cost Effective, and Convenient!**

The Drug & Alcohol Testing Consortium, a program of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, offers many benefits to your municipality.

**Comprehensive Coverage**

This program covers all testing associated with DOT regulations, plus the services of a medical review officer, substance abuse professional, training, record keeping, and more.

For more information contact Beth Scanlon, (203)946-3782 | bscanlon@ccm-ct.org.
Big changes come to the Convention
The CCM convention goes virtual this year: Substance and Fun Continue

This year’s convention was always going to be new: CCM was looking forward to bringing you all to Mohegan Sun’s excellent space for a bigger and better convention. As with most events, coronavirus has prevented us from doing that. In the best interests of our members, our staff, and the many exhibitors, we’ve decided to hold the convention virtually this year.

On December 1 and 2, CCM will host the 2020 Convention virtually, but don’t expect any less programming. There will be 16 different workshops from experts in the field that you know and trust: CIRMA, BT Association of Boards of Education, CAMA, AdvanceCT, Berchem Moses, Murth Cullina, KJR Consulting, Pullman & Comley, FLO Analytics, blumshapiro, Downes Construction Company, Great Blue Research, Kristi Sullivan, and Zangari Cohn Cuthbertson Duhl & Grello.

Each of the workshops will take place just like many towns and cities have been holding meetings – virtually! They’ll carry the same benefits of learning from experts on topics like First Amendment Social Media Use, COVID-19 Adaptation, Effective Municipal Workplace Investigations, The Importance of Market Research, and the Fundamentals of Municipal Economic Development in the COVID-19 Era.

While you won’t be meeting up in person, you’ll still be able to chat with your peers in local governments across the state in online discussion rooms. Many of you have already held town and city meetings digitally, and we’ve found that there is increased participation in these online events. These forums will allow the full range of ideas to be shared among representatives in all Connecticut municipalities. The 2020 convention will be a space for you to enhance your knowledge, share skills, and improve your ability to serve your community.

This year’s registration will only be $25, so it will come as a great cost savings to those eager to attend. Be sure to keep an eye out on our website for registration information: www.ccm-ct.org/convention

The pandemic has forced a lot of things to change, but we want to make sure that you are still getting the best 2020 CCM Convention in the safest way possible. As soon as we can get back to a place where we can have in person conventions, CCM will be sure to do so, bigger and better than ever. Until then, just know we are keeping your health and safety in mind.
This year is the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, ratified in August of 1920 by the state of Tennessee. It guarantees all American women the right to vote. Now, women make up more than half of the electorate; in 2016, 55% of voters were women. But women in the 19th century were not taken seriously politically, so getting there was a long journey, and one that we would like to honor.

The suffrage movement arguably began in 1848, when the first Women's Rights Convention took place in Seneca Falls, New York. With famous activists Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the latter of which wrote a Declaration of Sentiments based on Jefferson's Declaration of Independence. That can be seen in the notable change Stanton made to one of Jefferson's most famous lines: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal."

As more states join the Union, many adopt provisions for Women's suffrage despite not being legal on the federal level. It was in one of these states that municipal politics and women's suffrage would overlap.

In the small town of Argonia, Kansas in 1887, Susanna Salter would be the first woman elected to be Mayor of a town in America. According to the Kansas Historical Society, two men trying to prove that women had no place in politics, placed Salter, then president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, on the ballot without her knowledge.

After consideration, Salter agreed to take the position if she won. And after a tally of the votes, she racked up two-thirds of the votes.

It wouldn't be for another 25 years that a major political party – Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose party – would adopt Woman's Suffrage on a national level.

Connecticut women would play a major role in the Suffragist movement until the United States finally adopted the 19th amendment and beyond. Alice Paul, one of the movements leaders lived out the final years of her life in Ridgefield. Katharine Hepburn, mother of the famous actress of the same name, had fought vigilantly for women's suffrage, even criticizing her own coalition for not doing enough.

Mary Townsend Seymour was a charter member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Hartford and was the first African American woman to run for the Connecticut General Assembly.

Women representation in politics grew almost immediately. In 1920, the first election with full Women's suffrage, five women were elected to Connecticut's General Assembly in the House; a few years later, Alice Merritt became the first female State Senator. Following their in their footsteps are Sen. Adele Eads, the first woman State Senate President Pro Tempore, and Moira Lyons was the first woman Speaker of the House of Representatives. But Connecticut's first female Mayor, Antonina Uccello, wasn't elected until 1967 to represent the city of Hartford.

Eight years later, Connecticut elected Ella T. Grasso to become the first woman elected Governor in America. She started her career as a member of the League of Women Voters.

Despite the great strides that have taken place, there are still many barriers for females in politics. Only once in history has a woman been at the top of a presidential ticket of a major political party.

We like to honor this long journey. Women have fought extraordinary battles to not only earn the right to vote, but to earn the right to govern on equal footing with men. To quote Alice Paul “There is no doubt that equal rights are the right direction. Most reforms, most problems are complicated, but there is nothing complicated about ordinary equality.”
Coloring Within The Social Distancing Guidelines

CCM to release our first ever Connecticut coloring book

This year has found people at home with a lot of time on their hands. Our local and state government officials have asked us all to stay within the social distancing guidelines. So for a fun activity we are releasing our first ever CCM Connecticut coloring book, so you can have fun coloring within the lines.

Created with scenes from all over Connecticut, you can color pictures of our Charter Oak, our founding fathers, inventions, famous musicians, and more.

The coloring book will be coming to a mailbox near you, or check it out on our webpage, but make sure to have a box of crayons ready!

As we social distance into the fall, make sure to stay busy with some fun activities while enjoying scenes from our beautiful state.

The Year Of The Innovative Idea

CCM compendium shows the breadth of ideas throughout the state

2020 has been the year of the Innovative Idea. These past few months have proven that whatever life throws at them, towns and cities will find a way to keep moving. Throughout that time we have been compiling and presenting these stories in Connecticut Town & City. We are pleased to announce our 33rd edition of the Innovative Ideas for Managing Local Governments compendium, coming out this September.

We developed these stories from many sources, including visits to Connecticut local governments; suggestions from municipal officials; newspapers and magazines in Connecticut and abroad; publications of the National League of Cities; and publications of other state municipal leagues.


In addition to that, this issue will feature write-ups from some of the best episodes of The Municipal Voice, CCM’s bi-weekly podcast. Over the last year we talked to CEOs, municipal officials, leaders at the State level, and experts from various fields about topics like the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, the new data center in New Britain, Global Warming and more.

As we move forward, Connecticut’s towns and cities will continue to need innovative ideas. Through our compendium, we hope to give each of our 169 members a glimpse at what other municipalities are doing and to see if you use or adapt the innovative ideas that are coming out of our towns on a daily basis.

Be sure to check out the issue in September

If your town or city has an innovative idea that you think would be perfect for a future issue of Connecticut Town & City, send over a news article, press release, or social media post to Christopher Gilson, cgilson@ccm-ct.org.
We Protect You. Now. Always.

When the theaters went dark. When schools closed. When retailers shuttered all but the most critical of operations. Our municipalities, schools and local public agencies felt every impact, and dutifully absorbed every responsibility.

Your responsiveness saved lives.
Your commitment knew no limits.
Your communities have much to be proud of.

CIRMA was honored to be there for you then, and will continue to be, now and always.
CIRMA Delivers $2M in Members’ Equity

Nearly $32 million delivered to members over the last ten years

The Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency, CIRMA, announced in July that its unique Members’ Equity Distribution program delivered $2 million to its members this year, bringing the total distribution to nearly $32 million, over the last ten years.

“CIRMA continues to deliver on its commitment to providing meaningful and sustainable value to its members, with industry-leading rate stability, insurance products and risk management and claim services. The tremendous value that CIRMA consistently provides its members, over time, simply cannot be replicated in the commercial space,” lauded David Demchak, CIRMA’s President and Chief Executive Officer.

With 366 members across the Nutmeg State, CIRMA is the leading provider of Workers’ Compensation, Liability, Auto and Property insurance coverages to Connecticut public entities.

“CIRMA’s Members’ Equity Distribution program affirms our deliberate approach to creating member value and substantiates the success of our long-term financial strategy and strength—it’s one of many attributes that makes CIRMA the number one choice of Connecticut public entities,” said Jayme Stevenson, CIRMA Chairman of the Board and First Selectman of Darien. “CIRMA provides unmatched products and services to our members—we protect Connecticut because we are Connecticut,” she added.

While Connecticut public entities wait to see the full fiscal impact the pandemic will ultimately have on the local economy, CIRMA’s ability to continue to deliver sustained value through its Members’ Equity Distribution program is one of the most meaningful and impactful outcomes of its mission-based focus.

How Would You Spend Your $2,500 Grant Award?

Now accepting Excellence in Risk Management Awards applications

This year CIRMA will award $10,000 in Excellence in Risk Management Awards grants. Four deserving members will each receive $2,500 to spend towards enhancing future risk management initiatives.

CIRMA’s Excellence in Risk Management Awards Program recognizes CIRMA members who have demonstrated outstanding risk management leadership and results.

The Excellence in Risk Management Awards application process allows CIRMA members to nominate their entity, their or other departments within their entity, or another CIRMA member’s program.

There are four award categories:

• Substantial Impact on Total Cost of Risk
• Establishing Risk Management as an Organizational Priority
• New and Innovative Risk Management Initiatives
• Sustained Risk Management Programs

Each of the four 2021 Award recipients will receive a $2,500 risk management grant!

The application process has gotten even easier with the introduction of our new electronic submission form. Additional or supporting documentation is no longer required.

Know of a risk management initiative or team that has helped reduce losses, increased awareness, or improved the safety culture within the workplace? Apply today to help them get the recognition they deserve for their achievements in risk management!

Applications will be accepted through September 30, 2020. To learn more about the program and to access an application, visit CIRMA.org.
CIRMA Welcomes New Staff

Behind our financial strength and leading products and services is the true CIRMA difference: Our People.

We’re excited to welcome this impressive group of professionals to CIRMA. It’s our staff who help create our innovative solutions and deliver on the promises we make our members, every day. The CIRMA team makes a difference,” said David Demchak, President and Chief Executive Officer of CIRMA.

Amanda Havens joins the Business Analytics department, working with Pamela Keyes, Vice President of Risk Management Services & Business Analytics, in the position of Business Technical Analyst I.

Amanda earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Southern Connecticut State University and a master of Business Administration from the University of Phoenix. Prior to joining CCM/CIRMA, Amanda held the position of Supervisor of Life Policy Distribution Division for the Knights of Columbus.

In her spare time Amanda enjoys competitive ballroom dance, reading, museums, baking and football.

Sean Dacey will be working with Pamela Keyes, Vice President of Risk Management Services & Business Analytics, in the position of Business Technical Analyst I.

Sean recently graduated from Quinnipiac University with an MBA in Computer Information Systems. Prior to joining CCM/CIRMA permanently, Sean held the position of Business Analytics Intern from June of 2019.

David Loomis joins the Liability-Auto-Property department and will be working with Cynthia Mancini, Liability-Auto-Property Claims Unit Manager, as a Liability-Auto-Property Claims Representative.

David received his Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from Post University and has over 20 years of insurance industry experience.

Prior to joining CCM/CIRMA, David was a General Liability Claims Adjuster for Zurich Insurance located in Rocky Hill, CT.
When I Paint My Masterpiece

Weir Farms in Ridgefield/Wilton is recognized by US Mint

Since 2010, the United States Mint has been commemorating a national park or historical site from each state as part of the America the Beautiful quarter series. And though it was nearly at the end of the series, Connecticut’s quarter recognizing the Weir Farm National Historic Site in Ridgefield and Wilton has finally been released.

The 50 States Quarters program instituted a change in the quarter dollar program after over 65 years of the same Washington Eagle design. With each new quarter commemorating a state in the order that they ratified the Constitution. The popularity of this program was such that going back to the previous design was a nonstarter.

Recognizing Weir Farm as part of the America the Beautiful is particularly apt since the site is known not as a place of great agriculture, but for the artists that flocked to the farm to paint. Owned by J. Alden Weir, who the farm is named after, the 60 acres is home to scenes from the American Impressionism era that you’ve seen in many fine art museums.

Weir, the son of an Art professor at West Point Academy who had taught James Abbott McNeill Whistler, was part of the group of American Impressionists. He might have been the most frequent painter of the scenic area, but it was also frequented and visited by his many peers including Childe Hassam, John Singer Sargent and John Twachtman. It was also there that he passed down his love of art to daughter, Dorothy Weir.

His paintings hang in the most prestigious art museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and the Wadsworth Atheneum.

Recently, Representative Jim Himes introduced a bill to make Weir Farm a National Park, making it the first National Park entirely in Connecticut. (The Appalachian Trail is designated a National Scenic Trail.) He said that the “redesignation would improve recognition of the site, potentially bring in more visitors and communicate much more clearly to the public what this property is.”

It’s inclusion on the America the Beautiful quarter series surely will bring recognition to the park around the country. At the turn of the century, some of the world’s greatest painters flocked to this area for its natural beauty, painting landscapes that will be cherished for centuries in some of our most prestigious museums.

---

**CCM Job Bank**

Current Listings:

Executive Administrative Assistant
WESTON

Land Use Enforcement Officer
WOODBURY

Finance Director
BLOOMFIELD

Jobs posted to CCM’s Job Bank can also be found on twitter @CCM_ForCT

To place or view an ad, please visit www.ccm-ct.org/current-job-postings
Throughout the coronavirus shut down, some industries were more visible shaken up than others. Many people are used to going to restaurants and movie theaters, while art galleries and small performance venues often have a smaller crowd. The Guilford Performing Arts Festival wanted to make sure that some arts that lost revenue this could be made up by increasing the number of their Artists’ Awards.

A biennial festival, the Guilford Performing Arts Festival was last held in 2019, and presented over 73 local and national artists in a multi-day, multi-venue festival. There are “dozens of free concerts, plays, readings, workshops, discussions and spontaneous happenings on and around the picturesque green in Guilford.”

According to the Festival’s estimates, the total audience in 2019 was nearly 6,000 people, including 400 students, and it had an estimated local economic impact of $567,000 over four days. 2021 will be only the third time the festival will be held, so there is room for growth.

During this off year, they spent a lot of time fundraising for their community. The total grant money they were able to raise in support of the creation of new work totaled $15,000, a majority of which was donated during the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven’s Great Give event.

Two donors are sponsoring and funding an award in their entirety. Carol Sirot of Guilford is sponsoring the festival’s dance award, which will be named the Carol Sirot Guilford Performing Arts Festival Artists’ Award in Dance. The other donor chose to remain anonymous.

While applications closed in July, any professional performing artists currently living in Connecticut were eligible. The only requirement was that they use the grant of $2,500 to develop an original, new work to be premiered at next year’s festival.

According to Americans for the Arts, over 60,000 people were laid off in the arts industry, 50,000 were furloughed, and 8,000 positions have remained vacant due to the coronavirus epidemic. Their survey response said that the median loss per organization was $21,000, and a total loss over $30 million so far.

Self-employed workers, which described many artists, were only able to begin applying for benefits in May, and Connecticut received nearly 40,000 claims in the first week alone.

The Guilford Performing Arts Festival is a reminder that making art is a job, and artists need money to survive. For everyone that had cracked open a novel, played a video game, digitally toured a museum, listened to their favorite records, or bingewatched their favorite tv shows, art is all around us. One could only imagine what social distancing would be without art.
Surviving With Local Support
New Haven Partnership Loan Program gives loans to small businesses

There is an undeniable symbiotic relationship between municipalities and small business. A healthy town is often populated with locally owned small businesses – barbers, restaurants, and other industries impervious to outside ownership. In places like New Haven, many are minority and women owned businesses.

But when relief funds for the businesses, it was these businesses that were left out. The City of New Haven in partnership with HEDCO, Inc., The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and The Amour Propre Fund have come together to offer loans to these forgotten businesses.

The Partnership Loan Program for Minority- and Women-Owned Small Businesses will offer qualifying small businesses with 20 or fewer employees to apply for a four percent term loan up to $25,000.

Initially starting with $1.5 million, businesses in New Haven and the Lower Naugatuck Valley can apply if they are a for-profit business, minority or women owned, are in good standing with the Department of Revenue Services (DRS) and have been conducting business for a minimum of one year.

The loans, which are underwritten by HEDCO, Inc, carry the four percent interest and terms in which the first 12 months are interest only. Those businesses in good standing after 12 months are eligible for forgiveness of up to 16.67% of the original loan amount, which is just over $4000 if the maximum amount is taken.

Small businesses urgently needed an influx of money to hold them over during the shutdown after being left out of the original Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), a $349 billion program that was part of the larger $2.2 trillion CARES Act bailout earlier this year.

They were unable to navigate the application process with as much ease as larger businesses that had access to staff and legal teams to file for them. This led to companies like Shake Shack, which has locations throughout Connecticut including one in New Haven, to receive $10 million loan, which they gave back after an outcry.

The New Haven program requires only a one-page application, along with standard loan information, making it accessible to any business that needs it.

New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker, quoted in the WTNH report, said that “What COVID has highlighted is the severe inequalities which are being experienced by the Black and Brown communities.”

The Partnership Loan Program seeks to make the situation equitable for the small business owners that would otherwise not have survived the extensive shutdowns due to the coronavirus. Cities like New Haven thrive on the local businesses that give it its culture, this program gives it a chance to see a day when social distancing is a thing of the past.
Economic development is not something that just happens naturally. Municipalities must look at the lay of the land; study existing businesses, zoning, and interest; and make recommendations. The town of Old Lyme Economic Development Commission (EDC) has been working on a plan that they believe will lead to smart growth “focused on maintaining the small-town character and charm” of Old Lyme.

Through the completion of three studies: a town-wide survey, two Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) workshops, and an Economic Development study. Each aimed to look at a different side of economic development.

From the town-wide survey, many agreed that the natural beauty of the beaches and open space with the New England charm was what made Old Lyme Old Lyme. So many felt that new housing development was not necessary, but the town should look into adding recreational benefits.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, infrastructure was a big key for residents when considering commercial development. Bike lanes, pedestrian infrastructure, and more visually attractive roadways were popular developments.

They noted a strong generational divide in town as well. Younger respondents were more likely to support more dining and entertainment options, according to the survey results, but were opposed to the development of condos and apartments. Older respondents were fine with the way things were but wanted more condo options so they could downsize in retirement.

While a town-wide survey might be self-explanatory, a SWOT workshop looks at a specific cross-section of “town stakeholders.” This included businesses, residents, town leaders, nonprofit organizations, and clergy.

The SWOT response noted similar findings or was able to elucidate findings from the residents. For instance, one weakness they found was that there was a lack of diversity in housing and residents, and there was an even split among demand for affordable housing, 36% for and 40% against. Adding housing will bring the “density to support additional dining, entertainment, and retail options,” which makes affordable housing an opportunity.

In a letter to the CT Examiner, the EDC said they had two main goals: “first, attracting new businesses that fit the character of Old Lyme, and second, supporting existing businesses.” Facing a declining population was a big challenge that business had to overcome.

They also acknowledged that the landscape had changed because of COVID-19: “We recognize the business and economic landscape will be altered which will require adjustments to our future plans. We believe we are in a better position to confront the “new normal” that will result from the impact of the virus by having the results from these projects as a baseline to work with.”

Encouraging the people of Old Lyme to look over the findings in the CT Examiner letter, the Old Lyme EDC asked for continued participation from the residents. Sharing the process, the findings, and the plan with residents is an integral part of the process. No economic development plan works when it flies in the face of the people. Old Lyme took the right steps to see what the town wanted first and will then build the plans on top of that.
Before 2020, the idea of going to work or school where you live would have seemed like a farfetched idea for a majority of people. In Danbury, town officials and developers have created a plan for a mixed-use city-within-a-city that will feature housing, businesses, and a school for over 1000 students.

At the June meeting of the 2020 Danbury Public Schools Task Force, Mayor Mark Boughton along with a team of others, proposed the idea of the Danbury Career Academy with the intent to “connect with various businesses, agencies, and non-profits in Danbury to provide a training opportunity for students, as well as academic classrooms.”

Located at the former Matrix building in Danbury, which has been in disuse for years, the building will be able to have space for 1,100 students over 40 classrooms across two “pods.” The proposal describes the location as having room for a gymnasium, media center, conference rooms, pupil services, and teacher’s lounge in addition to classroom space.

Danbury Career Academy would provide extra classrooms in the City rather than replace an older school. Currently the school population is increasing, with estimates putting the growth at seven percent over the next 10 years.

In some of the other pods, there will be space for apartments, a convention center, and more. This can put students in close contact with businesses that are located in the development for internships, hence the name.

According to CT Insider, it’s fairly rare for schools to be set in mixed-use developments. In Hawaii there is a plan to build a public elementary school within a mixed-use development, and in New York and New Jersey there are similar developments with charter schools.

This unusual arrangement is suited for a building which has taken on a reputation as an unusual development. The current owners, Summit Development say that the “forward-thinking structure gained immediate global attention when it first opened in 1982, and today its visionaries from Summit Development are reimagining what it means to be an innovative corporate campus.”

One hold up in the process is the unique way in which Danbury plans to finance the development. They are looking to purchase the space once it is completed rather than hiring an architect and construction company according to information gathered by CT Insider.

Because this will save money, Mayor Boughton told the papers that he would be seeking a higher reimbursement rate from the state, but that would require the state legislature to pass a bill.
Reaching kids can be difficult when they are in school. Teachers go through years of education and training to make sure they are well equipped with the skills to help children learn. This unprecedented situation posed by COVID-19 has made it that much harder, and as towns headed into the summer months, the need to keep children engaged was that much more important. Towns like Middletown had a head start on issues like this with summer reading programs to help keep children on track.

One such program called READsquared was held through the Russell Library, and saw families logging their reading throughout the summer to earn badges and certificates. The goal is to get children of all ages to build life-long reading habits. You simply download the app and log what books you have read.

They are also participating in the state’s 2020 Governor’s Summer Reading Challenge, which provides families with access to e-books and audiobooks for free. Books range from classics like Frog and Toad Are Friends by Arnold Lobel to Click Clack Moo by Doreen Cronin, aimed at the younger children, while there are many more books from recent bestseller lists aimed at the Young Adult audience.

And finally, Middletown recently announced a pilot partnership with InnovateK12 for the Summer Literacy Academy Ideas Challenge. It is a hybrid e-learning for first through fourth graders who they believe will benefit from reading and literacy immersion. It ran from July 13 to August 7 for about 150 Middletown students.

Middletown Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Michael T. Conner said that “In these unprecedented times, school districts need to apply principles of innovative design and ensure stakeholder feedback channels that drive better solutions for students and families.”

These programs are imperative to building a future in which reading is still a prized skill. Scholastic, the children’s book publisher, found in a study from 2019 that 20% of children read no books the previous summer, a jump from 15% in 2016. Getting kids to read when they are young is the key to getting teens and young adults to read without an assignment from school.

Through READsquared, the 2020 Governor’s Summer Reading Challenge, and the Summer Literacy Academy, Middletown is ensuring that they are doing everything they can to reach children throughout the summer, preparing them for when they return back to school, ready to read more books.
When discussing renewable energy in the 21st century, you are talking about one of two major solutions – either solar energy or wind energy. A new Solar field in East Windsor is set to become the largest in New England, but how much is enough?

The new development, Gravel Pit Solar, which was approved by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in 2019, is set to be built over 485 acres in East Windsor at a location known as the Gravel Pit. The town will see a massive influx in taxes for the land, even after a tax stabilization plan that was approved by the Board of Selectmen this past April. Over the course of the first two decades, the agreement calls for $380,000 per year in tax payments according to the Hartford Business Journal.

East Windsor will see additional benefits from the development as the Gravel Pits had become a party hotspot for some area residents. The developers have promised to fence in the solar array which First Selectman Jason Bowsza says will discourage illegal use.

Despite the size, he also said that only a handful of properties will be able to see it. For scale, the former largest Solar Farm in Connecticut, Tobacco Valley Solar, was about 130 acres and produced just under 30 megawatts. With the addition of such large solar arrays across the state, the question becomes how much would it take to completely fulfill Connecticut’s electricity usage over a year?

According to the United States Department of Energy, the state of Connecticut consumes 29.5 terawatthours per year. A standard unit of measurement, kilowatthour is the expression of a sustained energy of 1 kilowatt over an hour. A generous estimate says that it takes about 3.4 acres of solar panels to equal 1gwh.

Doing the math out, it would take just over 100,000 acres to satisfy the state’s yearly electricity consumption. That means that the Gravel Pit Solar Farm accounts for just one-half of one percent of our needed electricity. That’s approximate 150 square miles of Connecticut that would need to be covered in solar panels. Small arrays and home solar panels are certainly adding to the total from Tobacco Valley Solar and Gravel Pit Solar and projects like Vineyard Wind will add a significant amount (800 megawatts), there’s still a significant amount of renewable energy to be built in Connecticut before we reach 100 percent zero carbon electricity.

Each new solar array is another step towards a greener tomorrow. While getting up to 150 sq miles of solar might seem like a difficult task in a densely populated hilly state like Connecticut, it is necessary. It requires thinking outside the standard map, putting together projects where they make sense.
One of the side effects of working from home is the increased usage of just about everything in the home. Instead of going to the water fountain at work, you’re going to your own tap. And that’s true for just about everything – from air conditioners to computers, you’re probably using more energy at home than ever before. Unfortunately, Connecticut has once again topped the list for most energy expensive state in the United States.

According to WalletHub.com, Connecticut’s overall average energy costs are $372 per month, putting us $20 ahead of second place Massachusetts. Individually, Connecticut ranked third in both home heating-oil and electricity, 14th in natural gas, and a surprising 46th in motor-fuel costs. That last factor probably has a lot more to do with the short distances need to be traveled in Connecticut versus low gas prices.

This issue has gotten worse for some whose delivery charges have gone up significantly in the past few months. Anecdotal evidence from radio station Kicks 105.5 FM showed that some people’s bills doubled or tripled since the start of the pandemic.

Even before this, towns and cities were looking for more cost-efficient ways of powering their municipalities. Some more obvious solutions include the solar arrays and wind farms that have dominated the energy story for the past decade. But towns like Simsbury are also looking into tools like Community Choice Aggregation (CCA).

In this platform, a CCA model according to an op-ed in the CT Mirror, makes it so “a municipality or group of municipalities forms a CCA, which takes over the power procurement function of the utility.” They then leverage their purchasing power to utilize more sustainable sources and pass that on to consumers.

Many of Connecticut’s close neighbors have adopted measures on a statewide basis, including Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island, and it has been supported by many green energy groups in state. Simsbury, along with New Haven, Mansfield, and Middletown have all passed resolutions asking that legislation be passed enabling CCAs in Connecticut.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>$372</td>
<td>$169 (3)</td>
<td>$45 (14)</td>
<td>$79 (46)</td>
<td>$80 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>$351</td>
<td>$140 (24)</td>
<td>$65 (4)</td>
<td>$89 (35)</td>
<td>$57 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>$335</td>
<td>$130 (28)</td>
<td>$65 (3)</td>
<td>$69 (50)</td>
<td>$70 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>$329</td>
<td>$144 (17)</td>
<td>$20 (43)</td>
<td>$76 (48)</td>
<td>$88 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>$325</td>
<td>$142 (18)</td>
<td>$67 (2)</td>
<td>$77 (47)</td>
<td>$39 (7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the biggest complaints you'll hear about the Spring and Summer months is how buggy it gets out. Ants at a picnic or mosquitos at night, insects can be outright unpleasant to deal with. As part of the food chain, bugs are more important than many people might realize. Insects are one of the primary ways the plants we eat thrive and grow through pollination, but through a plethora of factors, their numbers have decreased, threatening our food supply. That's why the Branford Fire Department is putting in a Pollinator Pathway, to encourage the reintroduction of these necessary bugs back into our ecosystem.

The Pollinator Pathway Project began in 2017 in Wilton with the goal to create pollinator-friendly habitats for bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other pollinating insects and wildlife in a series of continuous corridors approximately 750 meters (about a half-mile) apart throughout the northeast. The idea is that you plan things like native trees, shrubs, and perennials for pollinators as well as clean water sources and areas for nesting bees in order to facilitate the regrowth of pollinator populations.

Where the Branford Fire Department comes in is a plot of land at the fire headquarters that they will transform into a pollinator-friendly habitat. They crowdfunded $1250 and were matched by a Sustainable CT grant that they will use to buy kelp, compost, straw, mulch, wildflower seeds, native shrubs, lawn signs and irrigation supplies for the first phase of the project. (As of writing, they were also accepting donations of plants, soil, and supplies, and asked people to contact ademi-track@branfordfire.com).

According to the main Pollinator Pathway website, there are over 300 species of bees that are native to Connecticut, all of which play a role in pollinating the plants not only in our yards and parks, but on the farms and orchards that our residents love and rely on. Unfortunately, a series of factors such as the increased use of chemicals on lawns and global warming has led to the rapid decrease in population of many of these vital insects. One of the most recognizable insects to face unsustainable conditions is the monarch butterfly, which has seen a reduction of over 50% in the area occupied in the 19-20 wintering season according to the World Wildlife Fund. For years, bees have suffered a declining population.

Gardens like the one planned for Branford need to pop up in many many more places if we want to see pollinators thriving again. Since 2017, there have been 85 designated pollinator pathways, but they will truly work best when all are interconnected by no more than 750 meters. So no matter if you love or hate the bugs in the summer, if you love the Autumn harvest, then we should all be planting pollinator friendly gardens.
Food For Thought

Composting program in Greenwich could change the waste equation

The Chinese National Sword Policy has changed the way most countries handle their recyclables, and that has had trickle down effects to the municipal level. CT&C wrote about these adverse effects on tipping fees for both recyclables and mainstream garbage in early-2019, and how recycling has gone from net-positive to net-negative. Since then, towns across the state have looked at innovative ways to get tipping fees down, and this past June, Greenwich has expanded its recycling program to include food waste.

As part of the Waste Free Greenwich program, The Town of Greenwich, the Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board, and Greenwich Green and Clean, the food scrap recycling program aims to teach people that food waste is not trash.

According to CT Deep and cited on the Waste Free Greenwich website, food scraps are one of the largest components of waste, making up more than 22% of municipal solid waste in Connecticut. This undoubtedly adds to the expenses incurred by municipalities in tipping fees, which is done by weight.

But, the problem goes further than just the weight from food scraps - they can be reclaimed into the food stream if properly composted. All of the nutrients and energy that goes into producing the food are lost when placed into a landfill where new plants, especially food plants, cannot access them. By recycling the food scraps, you end up with less garbage and more food for plants - an ecological win-win.

The system is a three-part process that is simple, voluntary, and free for all Greenwich residents.

First you collect the food scraps in your kitchen: the list include fruits & vegetables, meat & poultry, fish & shellfish, dairy products, rice & grains, eggshells, chips & snacks, nuts & seeds, leftover, spoiled & expired foods, as well as coffee grounds with paper filters, tea bags without staples, napkins & paper towels that were not used with chemical cleaners, house plants and flowers, and BPI-certified compostable bags. As you fill up a smaller pail, you transfer that to a larger transportation bin for weekly storage.

And then as need, you bring that transportation bin to the Food Scrap Recycling drop-off site.

The Food Scrap program is just one example of where the answer to a change in the way we recycle is more recycling, not less. This plan can, over time, benefit not only the town when it comes to tipping fees, but the people who grow the food that we eat, putting the Green in Greenwich.
To Regionalize or Not To Regionalize
Derby looks to see where cost savings are in partnerships

There’s no doubt that many towns and cities are struggling with a host of problems related to education. With classroom size declining in a majority of towns, balancing mandated budgets against the necessary resources while providing students with a level of quality expected of Connecticut public education without skyrocketing the local property tax is no easy task. Leaders like Derby’s Mayor, Richard Dziekan, have been looking for new ways to make sure that happens.

In a recent letter to the Valley Independent Sentinel addressing Derby’s budget, Mayor Dziekan said the town “Needs to take an extremely serious look at regionalization of city services.”

Going further, he states: “We are more than two years into a study on regionalizing the school system with Ansonia and it is time to push that forward AND look at other options with surrounding towns like Shelton who has enough empty seats in classrooms to accommodate Derby High School’s student population. This may not be a popular opinion among families with High School age children, but as a city, we cannot sustain the current model and quality of education.”

Just last year the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments released a report in which they said that regionalizing schools in Ansonia and Derby could be a no brainer. Students in Ansonia and Derby have statistically similar outcomes on state tests and the SAT, and have more courses and extracurriculars to choose from.

While the report suggested there would be few if any negatives associated with regionalizing the schools, the savings could be upwards of $40 million dollars depending on what facilities they utilize.

But Mayor Dziekan adds that in addition to looking at regionalization with Ansonia as already studied, Shelton has enough seats to accommodate all 305 Derby High Schoolers.

The difference here would be that this would be a voucher program rather than an attempt to regionalize. Vouchers are more common in public to private situations, giving families a scholarship in the amount that it would cost to send a child to public school.

In a public-public agreement, no official merger would be made, students would just have the opportunity to go to another town’s schools. Options like this exist in New London County, where many students from smaller towns have options to go to regional schools like Norwich Free Academy.

Both options are viable, and Derby has the ability to go with one or both options, or they can stick with the status quo.

Mayor Dziekan ends his letter saying that “Derby’s future will depend on hard-fought, honest solutions to problems that have festered for decades. I want residents to know that City Hall remains committed to both the fight and our future.”

While decisions regarding student’s education should not be made overnight, many will have to be made eventually with the town’s support behind whichever way they decide to go.
West Haven’s Future Looks Bright

Mayor Nancy Rossi joins The Municipal Voice

Even in these dog days of summer, it’s easy for many to see that West Haven has a bright future.

West Haven Mayor Nancy Rossi joined the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities’ and WNHH FM’s “The Municipal Voice,” to talk about the economic development in the works, and how COVID has impacted her city including one area that’s being impacted by both – West Haven’s Beaches.

“I think we’ve done good with this,” Mayor Rossi assessed, “We had to shut off our boardwalk for some time like other municipalities, but it’s since been reopened […] under the guidance of our health director and emergency management director.”

One of the keys was cooperation with other towns and cities. West Haven has for the time being kept access to the beaches for city residents only, and she believes that cooperation will keep residents safe until she is able to welcome back out-of-towners.

As with everything in the shutdown, there was a learning curve associated with the shutdown, but its seamless now, according to Rossi. While police officers or constables haven’t been walking up to every group with a tape measurer to check the distance, but measures they have taken with limiting parking – first 50%, and increasing over the summer – have allowed residents themselves to safely distance.

“I’ve been checking up on the beach,” she said, “And [the residents] have been maintaining order.”

The area is “ripe for development,” Rossie says, with projects raising the road on Beach Street to eliminate some concerns over the flood zone. With funding from the State and local bonds, Phase 1 is already underway, with an additional two phases getting them down to the empty Debonair Hotel.

Her hope is that once developers see that something is really happening, they’ll have some interest.

Economic development plans for Allingtown around the University of New Haven had a bit of a setback because of COVID, but are getting closer to opening. And according to Rossi, The Haven, which has been in development for nearly a decade, is still going forward exactly as planned.

These developments are a big part of West Haven’s future.

West Haven was placed on the Municipal Accountability Review Board (MARB) just before Rossi took office in 2017, and while the collaboration was rocky at first, “it’s gotten better.”

Among the improvements was the bond rating outlook which was improved, the fund balance that she attributes to the state’s restructuring funds, as well as grand list growth. Because of this, she hopes to have West Haven off of MARB in the near future, capitalizing on these successes.

She also had to raise taxes as part of the Five Year Plan. She notes that with universities and hospitals, the state can be doing more for PILOT, the payments-in-lieu-of-taxes, for these exempt properties, saying she doesn’t want to pass that burden to residents.

Acknowledging that COVID might have set some plans back, Rossi still remains optimistic for the outlook of West Haven.

“We continue the progress we made, but with economic development and thinking outside of the box instead of taxes.”
It’s rare to see town halls closed in the state of Connecticut. Access to local government is a point of pride for New Englanders, who practice a form of self-governance quite unlike any other in the United States. So when coronavirus put a pause on municipal business, municipalities innovated, finding ways to keep our towns and cities running. For Enfield, keeping things running has been the name of the game.

Situated near town hall, a former local bank branch will be turned into a new spot for residents to “safely conduct business, including paying taxes, acquiring dog licenses, and requesting permits,” according to the Enfield Patch.

They say that the town will utilize the old drive through as a way to expedite town business in a safe manner while the pandemic continues to force us to social distance for the health and safety of all residents. Because of this, Enfield Express will be a “point of distribution” for personal protective equipment (PPE) for local businesses.

Governor Lamont, Town Manager Chris Bromson and other officials opened up the Express at a ribbon cutting ceremony in late June.

But the plans are not just short term for the pandemic. Town Manager Chris Bromson outlined a vision that would use this new location as part of the development of Higgins Park into a town center.

Currently used as a softball field only, the area would blossom into a Town Green, with an open area for recreation, a new playscape, a new community center with an outdoor pool, a small bandshell, a dog park, and a quarter-mile walking trail with fitness stations according to reporting from the Journal Inquirer at the time of the announcement.

They hope that Hartford Line train station will bring in additional visitors to amenities like Higgins Park. CT&C covered the new Windsor Locks station in the Spring Issue, and they too planned on connecting their hub to a park, Canal State Park Trail in their case. It’s pretty clear that transportation is a key to building a healthy economic development program.

As of publication, Town and City Halls around the state were still focusing on limiting interactions between municipal employees and the public but finding innovative ways to make sure that business keeps running. Between Enfield Express, rebuilding Higgins Park into a more viable town center, and utilizing the Hartford Line, the Town of Enfield plans on keeping things moving because local government never stops.

Town Manager Christopher Bromson and Crew Leader Frank Lutwinas, raise the flag before the opening of the drive-thru of the new Enfield Express.
Channeling A Win
Jennings Beach restoration wins best in America award

Though summer is mostly over, there is always time to appreciate Connecticut’s coastline. It is one of our shining features and a reason people from all over come to visit. But the care and upkeep is no easy task. Natural causes like the tides erode the sand, and with so many visitors, debris can pile up. When something must be done, it’s up to the municipality to do the work with few exceptions. Fairfield recently took on the task of cleaning up Jennings Beach, and won a national award for their efforts.

American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) announced in late May that Fairfield, CT’s Jennings Beach was a winner of the America’s 2020 Best Restored Beaches Award. Along with four other areas – including one in nearby New Jersey – Jennings Beach was the only winner in the New England region.

The ASBPA says that “while Americans joyfully celebrate beaches by visiting them, few understand what it takes to keep that beach special. ASBPA created the Best Restored Beach award as a way of highlighting the value of restored beaches. Polls show that beach erosion is the number one concern beach tourists have about beaches.”

From a press release from RACE coastal engineering, the company in charge of the project, they describe the situation as becoming perilous for boaters in low water. To fix this they came up with a plan for dredging the channel, a process that runs the risk of losing the precious resource that makes up our beaches – sand.

The muddy sand that is dredged up from the ocean floor must go somewhere, and RACE Project Manager Steve Sternberg said “there is rarely a practical means by which the dredged material can be managed other than through offshore relocation.”

Fortunately Jennings Beach was different: “The channel bottom characteristics and proximity to Jennings Beach allowed us to pursue something really unique and highlight the potential for beneficial reuse alternatives for dredged material in the region.”

Through the use of hydraulic pumps, RACE along with another company out of Pennsylvania, moved sediment upwards of 2000 feet from the ocean floor onto the adjacent beach where bulldozers leveled it out.

Before any of this could happen though, the project had to be approved by both federal and state regulatory authorities as this work cannot be done in every case. Chemical analysis was done on the sand and ecological specialists were brought on board to make sure that the work being done was environmentally friendly.

As “the heart of the community’s recreational, water-dependent activity,” the Jennings Beach project was of the utmost importance. Winning the 2020 Best Restored Beach award from the ASBPA shows that the attention to detail in green conservation that Fairfield, RACE, and their partners took in restoring one of Connecticut’s greatest assets.
PUBLIC SAFETY

The Public Safety section of CT&C is sponsored by Emergency Resource Management. 

Learn more at: http://ermanagement.com

Tracing The Virus
Local Health Departments are key element of ContaCT

Connecticut has been the model for Coronavirus response in the United States. While it initially hit the state hard, owing to factors such as population density and frequent travel to large metropolitan areas, the work our State and Local Public Health Departments have done has put us in line with more European countries than other US states. Our local health departments and districts are still collaborating on the Coronavirus response to ensure the health and safety of reopening, and contact tracing is a main focus of that.

First implemented in early May, ContaCT, was the state’s effort to contain the coronavirus to as few people as possible through the process known as contact tracing. Once a person is confirmed to have the virus, they are put in contact with a professional who asks that they recall everyone with whom they have had close contact with, according to CDC standards. These professionals will then notify those individuals and have them separate themselves appropriately, to social distance, and to monitor their health by checking their temperature and being mindful of tell-tale symptoms such as a cough or shortness of breath.

As of the middle of June, 51 of the 65 municipal health departments have begun using the ContaCT platform, and they make up the bulk of the tracing workforce according to the CT Mirror. Because of this, the local departments have made it possible to do contact tracing on nearly half of all cases, with the goal of reaching 90% eventually.

Despite the successes, some issues have arisen that has caused setbacks in achieving that goal. For one, many people won’t answer the telephone when they assume it is a telemarketer, one health professional told the CT Mirror. This stymies the possibility of reaching everyone that the infected individual might have had contact with.

The state did update their webpage saying, Survey messages from ContaCT will be sent from SVC-Covid19@ct.gov; text messages will be sent from 855-670-0299.

Even further, there is still a language barrier in many areas. Some health departments have a person who can speak another language, but few have a person that can speak all the languages that might be spoken in a given area.

It remains that Connecticut would not be where it is if it weren’t for the local health departments working around the clock on a virus that few if any saw coming. There is no way to make up for the losses felt by everyone, but there is a way to prevent more losses from happening.
One of the scariest consequences of the coronavirus epidemic is that other medical issues seemed to take a back seat while the world figured out how to properly handle COVID-19. Fortunately, Connecticut was one of the first states to figure this out, but some residents still felt leery of seeking medical attention — so much so that the Tolland County Mutual Aid Fire Service (TCMA) that handles 911 services for the area had to remind people that it was ok to seek help.

The Journal Inquirer reported in May that the call volume had significantly decreased while the severity of the problems had increased leading the EMS service to start the campaign “Don’t Wait Until It’s Too Late To Call 911,” emphasizing that if you feel like you are having a heart attack, stroke or any other severe issue, you should call emergency medical services.

On a Facebook post, they said that there was a 30% increase in cardiac arrest calls between March and April of this year, the two worst months for the coronavirus. They said they “fear that people maybe ignoring or downplaying signs and symptoms of severe cardiac events.”

Reported in the Journal of Emergency Medical Services, a trade magazine for the industry, statistics showed that the complete data from April 2020 showed that patients found by MedStar crews in cardiac arrest were up by 113% from April 2019, while those pronounced dead on scene were up 164%.

According to Tolland Fire Chief John Little, also County Coordinator for TCMA, people felt that hospitals were included in the lockdown and would not be accessible for general or emergency care if it wasn’t COVID related.

But Hospitals were always considered essential businesses, and they were the best equipped to handle the situation even with a shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Local hospitals such as Yale began monitoring their staff multiple times throughout the day and were able to minimize the spread of infection with strict procedures.

As we moved further into the pandemic and our response to it has shown to be effective, the likelihood that people would fear going to the hospital will likely have diminished. But the campaign “Don’t Wait Until It’s Too Late” is a reminder that sometimes emergency professionals need to remind the general public that it is better to call immediately than to wait. Sometimes it can be a matter of life or death.

Don’t Wait Until It’s Too Late

Tolland County says it’s ok to call 911 for emergencies during pandemic
SOCIAL WELFARE

Around the World At Home

Cromwell Senior Center offers program to travel the world digitally

The repercussions of the coronavirus were far and wide, but some were felt far more acutely than others. Social distancing turned into social isolation for many, especially those in vulnerable communities such as the elderly. The Cromwell Senior Center recently partnered with the National Council on Aging (NCOA) and Airbnb for a creative take on an old theme by connecting seniors with experiences around the world.

As part of a grant, the Cromwell Senior Center was able to hand out coupons for free programs that are part of Airbnb’s digital offerings. From the June newsletter, they say you can choose from “hundreds of online experiences, from learning to cook Mexican street tacos with a professional chef, to traveling back in time with a WWII pen pal in Germany, to sailing the virtual seas with an Olympic sailor. Each of the programs are conducted via Zoom, the popular streaming platform, and to be eligible, you just had to be over 60 and a Cromwell resident.

The NCOA Interim President and CEO, Anna Maria Chavéz said, “NCO is working hard every day to help all older adults cope with the coronavirus and stay healthy – both physically and emotionally.”

“This partnership with Airbnb is a wonderful opportunity to provide older adults with human connections and unique experiences that can combat the isolation many of them are experiencing as they shelter in place.”

Airbnb is more widely known as the short-term rental website that allows people to rent out a home or a room for short periods of times, often at costs that are much lower than hotels. While extremely popular with users, it has run into issues with locals around Connecticut who sought to limit or outright ban homeowners from listing their properties on the site.

The issue of isolation and loneliness in the elderly is much more severe than it might seem at first glance.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, loneliness and social isolation puts many at risk for dementia and other serious medical conditions. The risk of dementia was increased about 50% in those that felt socially isolated, while heart disease saw an increase of 29% and stroke saw an increase of 32%.

Coronavirus put a lot of pressure on all of us to maintain social distancing, work from home, and to limit interactions with others. Simply reaching out and saying “Hi, how are you?” can make a huge difference in someone’s day.

The Cromwell Senior Center in getting this grant allowed seniors around town to experience something new and connect with someone maybe on the other side of the world. It became a mantra to say that we’re all in this together, throughout the crisis, and that’s what’s important.
Recognizing The Problem

Windsor is first of many to call racism a public health crisis

In the most recent Innovative Ideas books, CT&C laid out the Connecticut General Statute under Section 19a-207a which highlights the essential services provided by our local health departments. They include diagnosing and investigating health problems and informing people about health issues. Windsor Town Council took the tremendous step of adopting a measure to declare racism a public health crisis.

In their June 15 Town Council Meeting, Town Manager Peter Souza prepared a resolution on behalf of Councilor Nuchette Black-Burke that asked that the “Town Council consider approving a resolution that states that racism is a public health crisis in that racism and segregation over time has created disparate outcomes in health as well as in many other areas such as housing, education, employment, and criminal injustice.”

The Town passed the resolution unanimously.

As the resolution notes, while race is a social construct with no biological basis, it has been systematically applied to worsen the health outcomes based entirely on the color of a person’s skin. The resolution identifies over 100 studies that have come to this conclusion.

These health problems arising from racism and segregation in Connecticut have “exacerbated a health divide resulting in people of color ... bearing a disproportionate burden of illness and mortality including COVID-19 infection and death, heart disease, diabetes, and infant mortality.”

While Connecticut was certainly on the right side of the Civil War, redlining, the process of segregation through zoning, was common in Connecticut. So called “race restrictive deeds” effectively segregated areas of the state. Cases are still being discovered today as relics of a not-too-distant past, such as described in a recent article from the Middletown Press.

In that article, Sara Bronin, a UConn Law professor, said that language can be taken out of the deed, but would ultimately “wipe out a telltale record of a state that promotes itself as progressive and inclusive.”

Towns and cities across the state are still being discovered today as relics of a not-too-distant past, such as described in a recent article from the Middletown Press.

In response to the nationwide outcry over the deaths of Black Americans such as George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, Connecticut towns have listened to the people and made changes where possible.

But the first step is always education. As laid out in Section 19a-207a, it’s up to our towns and cities to diagnose and investigate health problems and inform the public. Windsor took that first step by declaring racism a public health crisis.
Fast Track To The Future
Autonomous vehicles will be a part of local transportation future

When you look back to visions of the future, you’d think we’d have flying cars by now. Unfortunately, we will have to settle for earthbound travel for most of our transportation. But, if you’re taking CTfastrak between New Britain and Hartford, your ride will be very futuristic as the state intends on implementing driverless electric buses for large tracts of the route.

In June of this year, the Connecticut Department of Transportation announced that it had received nearly $40 million in grants to be used on multiple projects throughout the state, including more train service on the Hartford Line, rebuilding a railroad bridge in Norwalk, as well as the aforementioned self-driving buses and technology according to the State's press release.

The electric buses will be used on the CTfastrak rapid bus transit corridor, of which there are 15 on order. As CT&C wrote in the May issue, there are many benefits to electric buses, primary of which is the cost of fueling. But the interesting part is that the buses will be fully automated for parts of the route.

CTDOT describes the program as a first in the nation for automated technology.

Automated technologies demonstrated will include steering, precision docking at CTfastrak station platforms, and platooning, all of which can enhance service and improve safety for drivers and passengers.

For those concerned about implementing without testing, the State plans to do extensive testing on an off-road facility first before bringing it to the streets. As an added safety guarantee, there will always be a driver on board who will take control if necessary.

The driver will also manually drive on downtown Hartford mixed-traffic roadways.

New Flyer, the company that created the technology for transit buses, said that they have leveraged “the internet of things (an extension of internet connectivity to physical devices and everyday objects) to build connectivity in sharing public roadways.”

Back in 2018, Connecticut set guidelines for vehicle testing, and municipalities such as Stamford and New Haven had applied for testing. New Haven was planning for an autonomous shuttle between the Yale New Haven Hospital and St. Raphael campuses.

If testing goes well and the technology improves, many towns and cities across Connecticut might soon develop plans for driverless transportation options around town, from the train station to downtown, or around a university campus.

We might not yet have flying cars, but every year we inch towards newer technologies that can make our streets safer and a little more modern.
Ransom in the Public Sector

By: Dale Bruckhart

Public sector organizations continue to be popular targets for ransomware attackers. Numerous high-profile incidents have occurred in recent months, crippling civil infrastructure and disrupting services. With so much at stake, it’s an important reminder for everyone involved in public sector institutions to be vigilant for suspicious activities and prepared for increasingly sophisticated attacks.

This is an interview with field CSO MK Palmore on ransomware in the public sector, offering perspective and how to stop it from impacting our life.

M.K. Palmore is the Field Chief Security Officer in the Americas for Palo Alto Networks. He has spent his career preventing and investigating cyberattacks in the public sector. Previously, he spent 22 years with the FBI, most recently as Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the Cyber Branch. Palmore is an international speaker focused on the topics of leadership, cybersecurity, and risk management. You can find more about this topic and others from an array of different thought leaders in the industry on the SecurityRoundtable.org blog.

What exactly is ransomware; how is it different from other cyberattacks?

Ransomware comes in many different forms, but essentially it is still malicious software developed with the intention of encrypting data on a targeted system(s) and holding it for ransom. This threat has evolved and increased in complexity, with specific variants configured to target the limitations of victims.

Ransomware continues to persist in our digital world – why?

Simple answer: the lack of investment and preparation. Information security professionals should be spending more time thinking like an attacker to reinforce prevention and response capabilities. The goal should be to reduce the attack surface through the use of tools explicit to the challenge. This includes the increased use of automated response solutions that leverage artificial intelligence and machine learning to mitigate intrusion. An organization can also prepare further by implementing a backup strategy that is resilient to ransomware and can restore affected data.

Why is the public sector a particularly vulnerable segment for ransomware?

Much of my background has been in the service of public sector organizations, and I’m particularly passionate about working to stop these issues. We know from multiple studies that public sector entities are highly targeted. Reasons for this are numerous, but a few of the top reasons include, prevalence of legacy infrastructure, attack surface size as a result of third-party access, and lack of IT security personnel.

Is the burning question with ransomware still “to pay or not to pay”?

During my time in the FBI, we always advised that enterprises should NOT pay the ransom. It emboldens the attacker and puts the enterprise on a target list of potential future adversaries. I understand this is ultimately a business decision for any enterprise. My advice would be to make the investment necessary to protect your enterprise.

What is at stake with ransomware on cities and infrastructure?

The current situation is very serious. We have seen ransomware literally cripple major cities and municipalities. We are becoming an increasingly digital society, and our access to civil services via this conduit is critical. When these systems are interrupted or placed in danger, it challenges the nature of our society and ability to operate.

What can we do to stop it?

We need increased visibility, priority, and investment into cybersecurity. I recommend these items in all my meetings. Along these lines, seek counsel from outside security strategists and install the needed solutions to give the needed controls, automated response capabilities, and threat intelligence. Additionally, seek a reputable backup solution and ensure the resiliency of your entire cybersecurity apparatus.

Dale Bruckhart is the V.P. of Public Sector Marketing for Digital BackOffice. He can be reached at daleb@digitalbackoffice.com
Your Answer to Trouble Free Building Automation

- Building Automation
- Lighting Controls
- System Integration
- Energy Projects
- Reporting/Trending
- Analytics
- Service Contracts
- Pneumatic Service available
- Customizable Services
- Budget Conscience
- HVAC Dashboards
- Flexible to achieve customers’ goals

WWW.CTTEMPCONTROLS.COM
Connecticut Temperature Controls, LLC
500 Corporate Row, Cromwell, CT 06416
P: 800.890.2022 • F: 860.316.5348