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## **Join the evolution: Many economic wins in Pawtucket - by Donald Grebien**

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Mayor of Pawtucket

Pawtucket is a great place to be and our track record shows it. There have been many economic wins in the city. Since June of 2017, city officials have assisted 22 individuals and companies through the process of locating properties for these companies in the city and getting them through local regulatory and a few through Pawtucket Business Development Corporation's loan processes. The Pawtucket Redevelopment Agency (PRA) also offers lending assistance to small businesses as well as the opportunity to work in partnership with developers with infrastructure improvements, brownfield loans and grants, and targeted site assembly.

Two of Pawtucket's newest businesses came to the city to operate out of historic mills. Cybersecurity company, NeQter Labs, recently relocated from Middletown to downtown Pawtucket as it plans to grow and expand its reach. Seacoast Sweets, a chocolate manufacturing company from Massachusetts has come to our city because they found a place with rich history, plenty of accessibility, exciting business opportunities, and space to grow.

Pawtucket also continues to invest in its infrastructure and schools to create and enhance the quality of life for its residents and to attract business investment. By 2021, the city's Pawtucket-Central Falls Commuter Rail Station and inter-modal transit hub opens for business, forging strong transportation ties to Providence, Boston, and throughout New England.

With Potter Burns and Nathanael Greene Elementary Schools' renovations completed, the city is now focusing on Winters Elementary School this year, as we continue to work with the city council, school department, and school committee to provide a 21st century learning environment for all of our students. City taxpayers recently approved a \$220 million school improvement bond, ensuring that the investment in our students continues.

Due to the city's efforts to use arts as an economic engine, attracting hundreds of arts and creative sector companies to its mills, the Pawtucket school department established the Jacqueline M. Walsh Performing & Visual Arts School. It's the only public arts high school in Rhode Island that accepts students by audition/portfolio only.

The art's economic development is bringing new life to our historic mill buildings. Since 1999, Pawtucket has seen nearly \$100 million in private investment in new residential lofts. There is \$73 million in new residential development (both lofts and new construction) in the pipeline now. Finally, commercial artists/studios, and small businesses, have created nearly 500 jobs in Pawtucket.

Development interest is strong in the Conant Thread Transit Oriented District (TOD) area, abutting the City's new Commuter Rail Station with 2 million s/f of space available for lease or purchase.

Development interest has only heightened with the designation of the entire TOD as well as the city's Downtown and Riverfront as Federal Opportunity Zones, offering substantial tax benefits to investors in city real estate and businesses.

With Pawtucket's newly designated National Park in its Gateway at historic Slater Mill, the industrial birth place of the nation's industrial revolution, the city is becoming a tourist destination. Over, 10,000 people come into the city every September to attend the Pawtucket Arts Festival, one of the largest art festivals in New England.

While iconic beer cities like Bend Oregon, Twin Cities, Minnesota and Boston, Massachusetts might come to mind as craft beer cities, Pawtucket has emerged as one of the craft beer hot spots. Just 5 miles from Providence, Isle Brewer's Guild, located in Pawtucket, is one of the largest American-made craft beer co-ops (brewing 15 local breweries and distilleries). Over 40,000 people came into the city to its beer festivals and events to taste its craft brews. Other Pawtucket craft breweries include: Narragansett Beer, FoolProof Brewing Company, Crooked Current Brewery, and Smug Brewing. Distilleries are an addition to the artisanal alcohol mix with two, White Dog Distilling and RI Spirits, setting up shop in Pawtucket.

Now is Pawtucket's time. Join the evolution.

For details about the City of Pawtucket's economic development incentives, contact commerce director Jeanne Boyle at [jboyle@pawtucketri.com](mailto:jboyle@pawtucketri.com).

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