



CELEBRATING
55 YEARS

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With the bad, comes the good: City has reasons to celebrate

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At this time of year, many people take time to reflect on the past and look with renewed hope to the months ahead. To be sure, 2009 was a difficult one for many residents and business people. The recession has hit our state particularly hard, adding to the personal concerns that many carry. Some have suffered ill health or serious accidents. Others have lost cherished family members or friends. Some bear the burden of caring for infirm relatives, and some may be shouldering the financial responsibilities of an entire family due to others' job losses.

Yet even with what seems a constant barrage of bad news, there have been many reasons to celebrate. City employees gave enthusiastically to the annual United Way campaign again this year and generously supported a local holiday food and toy drive. Their willingness to volunteer for non-profit and civic groups, to lend a hand to a neighbor in need, to provide caring, compassionate support of co-workers in crisis, all truly represent the wonderful sense of community that exists here in Warwick. Earlier this year, when we faced unexpected cuts in state aid, municipal and public safety employees - management and union alike - made concessions that allowed us to protect vital municipal services as well as jobs.

Several of our departments and employees earned particular recognition as well. In January, the U.S. EPA announced that the Sewer Authority had been selected as a 2008 Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant Excellence Award recipient. And, in the fall, our finance director, Ernest Zmyslinski, received the Robert Goodrich Distinguished Public Service Award from the R.I. Public Expenditure Council.

On other fronts, we continue work cooperatively to improve residents' and employees' overall health. A \$75,000 grant from The R.I. Foundation allowed us to partner with ER Card, an electronic personal health record company, to enroll employees and family members in the program for free. Warwick was well represented in activities sponsored by ShapeUpRI, and, on Valentine's Day, several hundred citizens turned out at various locations to become trained in CPR.

On the business front, we celebrated grand openings or expansions of a number of businesses, including the Carousel Grille and Ironworks Tavern restaurants, a second Warwick Washington Trust branch, and the family-owned Kearflex Engineering, Inc. A partnership among the city, CCAP and CVS/Pharmacy resulted in a new One Hour Photo Tech program, housed at our community center, which will provide critical job skills to youth. The U.S. Census' Warwick office opened recently bringing with it job opportunities for dozens of local residents.

Work progresses on the Intermodal Train Station and the Apponaug Bypass - two long-awaited projects - as well as a new development adjacent to the station. A local businessman plans a four-phase construction project that will include four office buildings with ground floor retail space, totaling 540,000 s/f; a six-story parking garage; and a 320-room hotel. The rehabilitation of Airport Rd. is now complete.

As we begin 2010, we look forward to the promise of a New Year and even better things for our residents and businesses alike.

On behalf of everyone in the mayor's office and the Department of Tourism, Culture and Development, I wish you all the best for great happiness, personal fulfillment, good health and much success in the months to come.

Scott Avedisian is the mayor of Warwick.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540