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"One on One" showcases city's diverse econ. development base

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A new program meant to afford business owners the opportunity to meet personally with municipal officials to discuss city matters and potential areas of concern is meeting with great success.

In October, I announced the "One on One" business program, an economic-based initiative in which representatives from the Department of Tourism, Culture and I will visit and tour a particular company once each month. The program is also meant to help showcase the city's diverse economic development base, which includes manufacturing, new developments, an eclectic mix of small businesses, the hospitality industry, office complexes, and revitalization projects.

Our first visit was to United Printing, a family-owned business located on Colorado Ave. The company had been awarded the bid to produce a comprehensive Warwick Restaurant Guide, and during our visit, co-owners Barbara Caminito and Lynnanne Murphy walked us through the production and manufacturing process. The visit also afforded me the opportunity to meet firsthand with workers, who discussed their responsibilities and demonstrated the sophisticated equipment that is used at the facility.

In late November, we toured Eaton Aerospace Manufacturing. This facility, which is now a division of Cleveland-based Eaton Corps., can trace its roots back to the former East Providence-based Sealol Company. Eaton is a diversified industrial manufacturer with global leadership in electrical systems and components for power quality, distribution and control; fluid power systems and services for industrial, mobile and aircraft equipment; intelligent truck drivetrain systems for safety and fuel economy; and automotive engine air management systems, powertrain solutions and specialty controls for performance, fuel economy and safety. The Warwick plant manufactures custom engineered mechanical seals for commercial and military aircraft in the aerospace and defense markets as well as, industrial aeroderivative and other turbomachinery applications.

In a time when many companies are being forced to layoff employees, the news at Eaton was heartening: within the next year, they expect to hire as many as 20 new employees. Eaton's employees are also active in the community, sponsoring blood drives, contributing to local food pantries, clothing and toy drives, and volunteering as mentors to Warwick school children. Earlier this year, the company donated \$20,000 to the Rhode Island Mentoring Partnership.

The third one-on-one is scheduled for Gregg's Restaurants, a locally-owned, family business with four locations throughout Rhode Island. Gregg's first restaurant opened in Warwick 35 years ago and remains a favorite of visitors and area residents. Future visits will include tours of newly remodeled facilities; modern, innovative hotels; a family-run farm; and a recently revitalized area that serves as a gateway to one of Warwick's historic villages.

Karen Jedson, our director of Tourism, Culture and Development and I are looking forward to these visits so that we, as a municipality, can better serve both our businesses and their customers.

Scott Avedisian is the mayor of Warwick.

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