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Branford can fill development needs

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Based on the 2007 Economic Census, the University of Connecticut recently published a report in The Connecticut Economy that finds the state's cost of manufacturing is the eighth lowest in the country.

Just as the article calls Connecticut a "prime location" for manufacturing, so too Branford is a "sound" location for emerging and expanding businesses. Offering full municipal services [water, sewer, etc.] and some of the lowest taxes along the shoreline's I-95 corridor, it's not a surprise that the Connecticut Economic Digest's described the town as "a vital community with a strong economic base, low taxes, and excellent schools and municipal services." Put that along side Standard & Poor's August reaffirmation of S&P's triple-A bond rating for the town and it's hard to find a better combination.

Ideally located mid-way between Boston and New York City, the town has an intermodal transportation network that would be an asset to any business: four interchanges on I-95 and minutes from I-91; ten miles from New Haven with its cultural attractions and academic concentration, including Yale University; commuter rail service direct to New Haven connecting to Amtrak and Metro North; and, convenient air transport out of Tweed-New Haven and Bradley International airports.

This supports the view of the Connecticut Economic Resource Center's [CERC] targeted business analysis and report. Their key findings include that the number of Branford businesses has increased over the last decade, that the town has a history of biotech firms locating in town, and that it has well-established areas for mixed-use with flexible zoning tools.

Evidence of CERC's findings can be seen in the growth and expansion of 454 Life Sciences, Zane's Cycles, Robinson Tape & Label, new construction underway for St. Raphael's orthopedic surgical center at exit 54, the newly constructed ServePro in the business park near Exit 56, CANUSA Hershman's new headquarters and operations near Rte. 1 along with Boston-based biotech Forma Therapeutics' new R&D facility, and major renovations and expansion to the Coastal Plaza at Exit 54.

The increase in new and growing businesses extends across town, including the historic town center. New additions include The Suburban restaurant, Ciarleggio Jewelers, and Shoreline Caf  joining long established boutiques, restaurant and life style centers such as soundRunner, Le Petite Caf , and Arabella. And west on Rte. 1, Action Sports has finished its expansion and renovations,

as well as national retailers Kohl's and Wal-Mart.

The town's emphasis is with ongoing improvements to its infrastructure. Branford is about to begin construction of a new fire house and a new public works facility, both critical to supporting our business community. Meanwhile, underway is a \$70 million project to replace the Amtrak bridge at Rte. 1, adding lanes to improve traffic flow at I-95's exit 53 and its intersections with Rte. 146 and Rte. 142. At the same time, the Branford's commuter rail station is being expanded to double its parking. Both projects will enhance the town's appeal as a prime site between Boston and New York and, both awarded federal stimulus funds, underscore the town's strength as a regional commercial center.

With Branford's grand list growth and steady mill rate, it offers what every business looks for in a host community - stability and service at low cost. Add a skilled workforce serving a diverse local economy of biotech, healthcare, manufacturing and retail all thriving in a healthy and friendly business environment, along with a sound location of 20 miles of shoreline mid-way between Boston and NYC, and you see that Branford offers just about everything a business needs to grow.

But don't just take the word of the Connecticut Economic Digest, CERC or Standard & Poor's. Go to the town's website at www.branford-ct.gov or e-mail us at info@branford-ct.gov to learn more about Branford and the opportunities here for you.

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