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Westmass Area Development Corporation celebrates 50th anniversary of regional development achievements

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The Westmass Area Development Corporation (Westmass), a founding affiliate of the EDC of western Massachusetts, is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Westmass has been actively developing industrial parks and major projects in Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin Counties since 1960.

Westmass, the largest not for profit development corporation in western Massachusetts, continues today with the same mission and vision that launched its early efforts. That mission simply stated is "to promote, stimulate, develop and advance the business prosperity and economic welfare of the western Massachusetts region".

Westmass seeks to attract and retain growing and expanding businesses to the region by using its permitted land resources. Over the past 50 years, Westmass has developed 15 industrial/business parks and major projects in 10 host communities. These projects have enabled Westmass to create/retain jobs for residents of western Massachusetts and stimulate private investment which generated tax revenues for the cities and towns.

Kenn Delude, president of Westmass, emphasizes the board of directors' commitment to its founding mission and vision and believes that Westmass' 50 year legacy is based upon achievements, partnerships and the leadership the corporation has received from the region's business community.

Westmass' achievements in terms of park projects, jobs, and taxes, are well documented and geographically span from Agawam and East Longmeadow to Greenfield and from Westfield to Palmer including the cities of Springfield, Chicopee, and West Springfield in between. More specifically, the 15 major Westmass projects have resulted in the development of approximately 2,100 acres of industrial property in 10 different communities, the construction of 10 million s/f of new industrial building space, the retention/creation of almost 9,000 jobs and the leveraging of \$385 million of private investment resulting in local real estate tax revenues in excess of \$10 million annually.

The critical partnerships that have been developed between the cities/towns and Westmass advanced a regional understanding of the needs of growing businesses including their need for streamlined permitting, new/adequate infrastructure and access to highways and a quality workforce to name a few. Supplementing the community partnerships are the partnerships that have been forged with businesses seeking Westmass sites. It is the businesses' need for expedience, conceptual planning and local project advocacy that have become the hallmark services of Westmass.

The quality of leadership which the board of directors has possessed over these 50 years is unparalleled. Active board participation by the region's business leaders, leaders in education and the direct involvement of the communities' economic development professionals have immeasurably

contributed to the successes which Westmass celebrates on this anniversary.

Looking to the future, Westmass intends to acquire the Ludlow Mills property at the end of this year. The Ludlow Mills Brownfield Redevelopment project will be the largest of its kind in New England, according to the USEPA and the first of its kind for Westmass. Westmass' involvement in this sustainable redevelopment project is only possible because of the support and partnership of the community, its legislative leaders, Representative Petrolati and Senator Candaras and the extraordinary commitment of Governor Patrick and his administration to this complicated and complex brownfield mill project.

The leadership provided by Westmass' current board of directors chaired by William Wagner is the catalysis for this new project. Westmass looks forward to redeveloping this economically failing aged mill and turning it into productive reuse which will result in job creation/retention, tax revenue generation and new businesses which will benefit Ludlow, the adjoining cities of Springfield and Chicopee as well as the region, which brings Westmass back to its founding mission and purpose.

Westmass is grateful for the assistance and support it has received over these many years from those cited and those too numerous to call out individually but include the region's political leaders at all levels of government, communities' boards and commissions, the lending community, our real estate brokers and professionals, appraisers, countless attorneys, contractors and developers, and the EDC of Western Massachusetts led by Allan Blair with whom our staff works in an integrated manner to attract and retain businesses and jobs for our entire region.

On behalf of the board and staff of Westmass, "Thank You All".

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