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What factors can be attributed to Rocky Hill's success in retaining and attracting businesses?

April 03, 2011 - Connecticut

Rocky Hill, Conn. Location, Location, Location. Rocky Hill sits only eight miles south of the city of Hartford and the new Convention Center. Trinity College, St Joseph's College, UCONN Law School, the University of Hartford, Rensselaer Graduate Center, Goodwin College and Central Connecticut State University are all located within a 20 minute commute. Cultural and entertainment venues such as the PGA Traveler's Open, the Bushnell Theater, the Wadsworth Athenaeum, (the oldest, museum in the country), The Hartford Stage Company, the Hartford Opera, the Hartford Ballet, and the Mark Twain House are literally minutes away. Rocky Hill is a fantastic location for families and business. A recent Tapestry Segment demographic study indicated that more than a third of Rocky Hill's population is classified in the "In Style" segment with an additional 13% classified in the "Exurbanite" segment; indicators of a ripe retail market potential.

Most of our success can be attributed to three basic factors: our central location both in Connecticut and the Northeast region; our direct access to exits 23 and 24 off I-91; and our business friendly and business responsive governmental organization. Through prudent management, our administration has been able to retain a low tax rate attractive to business (23.8 mills @ 70%) and focus our commitment on retaining and attracting business, while maintaining our exemplary education system. As a result, Rocky Hill has experienced consistent growth in our non-residential grand list and the lowest unemployment rate of all the surrounding towns.

During the past few years, Rocky Hill, like all communities throughout the state, and country for that matter, has endured difficult economic times. While Rocky Hill lost some members of our business community during these trying times, planning, zoning and development activities during the past two years will result in the addition of over 30 new businesses yielding over 500 jobs, the largest being Burriss Refrigerated Logistics, the CT Lottery and Inner Circle Fresh Foods, a soon to be commissary for all of BJ's Warehouse Club's prepared foods and baked products.

Town administration continues their efforts to implement and complete projects and initiatives focused on creating an environment that allows the business community to succeed and enhances community development. We anticipate the construction of two 75,415 s/f Class A office buildings by Farley White, located in Corporate Ridge Business Park, and the construction of the Capital Region Police Training Facility. During the past year, the Rocky Hill business community has prospered and plans have emerged for continued growth. In an effort to strive for continuous improvement, the town has funded, with state grant money, Phase I of the Silas Deane Highway Streetscape project and the Silas Deane Highway Façade Improvement Grant Program for all Silas Deane Hwy. businesses. Phase I of the streetscape is currently being designed by BL Companies for the town center and will be ready to go out to bid in April 2011. The Silas Deane Highway Façade Improvement Program has resulted in the renovation of 14 properties along the Silas Deane Hwy.

(Rte. 99).

Efforts continue to assist in the redevelopment/reuse of the former Ames headquarters property, a vacant 250,000 s/f office building located in the center of town and the redevelopment of the CT Foundry property, a vacant, blighted brownfield site located along the Connecticut River. Rounding out our development initiatives is the continuous search for a developer of the town-owned Business Park Phase II property, a vacant 62-acre former sand pit located along the Connecticut River with freight rail access.

As you can see, Rocky Hill is a community that has a plan for the future of business. Business and industry desiring a central New England location with access from two highway exits and a major national business focus, should contact the economic development director at rcarpentino@ci.rocky-hill.ct.us.

Raymond Carpentino is economic development director for the Town of Rocky Hill.

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