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## **Angel Taveras, City of Providence Mayor's message: The new face of economic development**

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Since assuming the office of Mayor of Providence nine months ago, I have made economic development a chief priority, and that has meant finding the most qualified people to support that work. I am pleased to say that after a national search, I have found an enormously talented individual to lead Providence's effort. Meet James Bennett, our new economic development director.

Bennett, a Brown University graduate, comes with a long and rich history of business, finance, job creation and government - and even professional sports. His considerable experience includes eight years on Wall Street with a strong emphasis on municipal and corporate debt; entrepreneurship - starting and building three successful companies - two environmental testing laboratories and a global electronic-components business, and launching an investment banking firm before that.

He has managed more than 800 employees, and currently directs one of the state's largest assets - the \$350 million Rhode Island Convention Center and Westin Hotel - and he has chaired a prominent statewide planning agency serving 7,000 victims of crime annually. Add to that his considerable personable and political skills, having twice been a candidate for statewide office.

Perhaps, one of Jim's most compelling achievements is coming from a long line of world-class hockey players, where he himself was the 8th round NHL draft choice (1977) and played for the Atlanta Flames.

It is his palpable sense of focus, skill and teamwork- on and off the ice - that will serve him best in his new capacity. He has already been to Austin, Texas, with the Mayor and Governor, to explore parallels in our knowledge economy, and has been in-the-field with a number of strong prospects.

Jim's passion for service to the business community is clear, and he is unafraid of challenge. In a regional economy that is still clawing back from the earlier recession, Jim's "we-have-to-make-this-happen" attitude makes him exactly the right person for this job, for this time.

To speak with Bennett and his staff, and learn more about the financial and technical assistance programs and incentives the Providence Economic Development office offers, please call 401. 680. 8400 or visit [www. opportunityprovidence. com](http://www.opportunityprovidence.com).

Angel Taveras is the mayor of Providence.

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