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Anthem Health Plans relocates into Wallingford occupying 71,000 s/f at 110 Leigus Rd.

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In October, 400 employees from Anthem Health Plans, Inc. relocated into Wallingford, occupying 71,000 s/f in their newly leased headquarters at 110 Leigus Rd., also known as the Campus at Green Hill. A second phase, involving the relocation of an additional 1,100 employees, will take place in September of 2012, once all tenant improvements have been completed. The Campus at Green Hill is a 300,000 s/f, LEED-Certified, Class A office building owned by Gale International and developed by Workstage Connecticut, LLC. Anthem Health Plans leased 217,700 s/f at the Campus for a ten-year period.

In addition to Anthem, Burns & McDonnell, a Wallingford-based firm, signed a 7.5-year lease of approximately 27,635 s/f at the Campus and will be relocating into its new facilities this November. Burns regional administrator, Carl James, said the Campus will be the company's New England regional headquarters. Burns will relocate its 85 employees from its current location in Wallingford. The Campus location will provide "room to grow to 120 employees in the next few years". Burns & McDonnell, based in Kansas City, Mo., is a full service engineering, architecture, construction, environmental and consulting firm.

Paradise Hills Vineyards Opens in Wallingford

Wallingford is now home to a second Connecticut Wine Trail destination, Paradise Hills Vineyard & Winery. Located on 65 acres at 15 Wind Swept Hill Rd., Paradise Hills is owned and operated by the Ruggerio family. The Ruggerios bought their land in Wallingford in 1977 and have been growing grapes for other Connecticut wineries. According to a recent article in the Meriden Record Journal, Albert Ruggerio, president, said the plan was always to open a winery alongside the vineyard and for the family to produce its own wine. Now that the winery is open, everyone in the family is expected to know each facet of the business, from harvesting the grapes to running the bar and making the wine.

According to Ruggerio, Paradise Hills was designed to be a "relaxing place, where people can sit, relax and enjoy the day". The vineyard offers blends and varieties of wine that are not available elsewhere. Wallingford is now the only town in Connecticut with two stops on the Connecticut Wine Trail. Paradise Hills joins another Wallingford winery, Gouveia Vineyards, a short distance away.

Courtyard by Marriott Under Renovation

The Courtyard by Marriott, 600 Northrop Rd., is putting the finishing touches on an \$800,000 renovation to update the hotel's public spaces including the lobby, restaurant, fitness center, meeting rooms and patio. The highlight of the renovations is the new state-of-the-art lobby where the traditional front desk was replaced with separate "welcome pedestals" where guests check in. The lobby also features a new eatery, The Bistro, with casual flexible seating, healthier menu options, a light evening fare and a full bar.

Rte. 5 Transformation

With its high traffic count, Wallingford's Rte. 5 retail corridor is bucking the trend and undergoing a transformation. Chef's Equipment Emporium, the largest kitchenware retailer in Connecticut, is now anchoring its own shopping plaza on 920 South Colony Rd. When completed, the plaza will be 36,000 s/f and include 7 storefronts. Staple's Plaza, 1145 North Colony Rd., is undergoing a \$6.9 million facelift. Owned by CT Properties, the 97,200 s/f retail center is anchored by Staples Office Supply and a Dollar Tree. Also undergoing renovation on Rte. 5 is: 9 South Colony Rd., a prominent downtown, 3-bay structure which was recently leased to Prudential Realty; the renovation of the Colony Diner; reconstruction of a Burger King at 888 North Colony Rd.; reconstruction of Scrubbin Bubbles Car Wash at 895 North Colony Rd.; relocation of Executive Kia auto dealership to 1114 North Colony Rd and several new retailers: Hot Rod Parts, Kiwi Spoon, Charlene Elizabeth Salon, American Muffler and Brake and Shadowland.

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