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Celebrating many positive developments in Warwick

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During recent weeks, even as we prepared to usher in the New Year, we celebrated many positive developments in Warwick as we bid goodbye to 2012.

JetBlue, an airline known for its award-winning customer service and convenience, began service from T.F. Green Airport - its 75th, or diamond location - the week after Thanksgiving, bringing 22 direct jobs and roughly 200 other positions with businesses related to JetBlue and the airport. Warwick's hotels, restaurants, retail establishments and other businesses will also benefit from JetBlue's presence. And, as the economy continues to rebound, those ancillary benefits will spark local job growth beyond just the airport gates.

In a plaza located directly adjacent to the airport property, we celebrated the opening of Chill Out Loud Frozen Yogurt. The business is owned and operated by a husband-and-wife team, who spent over a year researching the industry and trends. The result is a bright, family-friendly, welcoming shop that offers customers the opportunity to build their own frozen yogurt sundaes from a selection of ten rotating flavors and more than 50 toppings. Unique furnishings and a logo that includes a pineapple and strawberry give the store a fun and relaxed feel.

December marked the opening of BowchikaWowTown, the first indoor dog park in Rhode Island. In addition to the park, they also offer around-the-clock "doggie daycare" to accommodate those working second- or third-shifts, as well as boarding services. Employees are trained in pet first aid and CPR, and staff remains overnight in the boarding area with the dogs to ensure their comfort.

Last month also saw the opening of the Ocean State Theatre Company. The new theatre facility, hosting 409 seats for live performances, is located in a former telecommunications company facility that has been transformed into a modern live performance venue and headquarters for OSTC staff. Their move here has had a direct job-growth benefit, with roughly 17 seasonal jobs turned into full-time positions and three new, full-time positions to be created within its first year. The venue will be open year round, with educational classes and camp programs for the youth to begin in the coming year. Local restaurants, retail establishments, and other area businesses have already seen increased impact resulting from the theater's first performances, and we're anticipating further growth as we begin the full season of performances later this month.

All told, 2012 saw exciting developments for the local economy and for our city as a whole. We look forward to further growth and continued success of area business in the new year.

Scott Avedisian is the mayor of Warwick and the chairman of the RIPTA board of directors.

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