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The new year is already proving to be a busy one

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January saw the arrival of hundreds of out-of-town guests for two regional hockey tournaments, bolstering our hotel occupancy rates and benefitting local restaurants, entertainment venues and retail establishments. Our Tourism, Culture and Development (TCD) staff has also attended several trade shows during this time, including the Rhode Island Bridal Show and the American Bus Association Show in Charlotte, to very positive feedback.

In the past week, we also celebrated the addition of three exciting new ventures in Warwick. The Ocean State Theatre Company staff and cast, joined by a host of local and statewide officials, marked their grand opening with a ribbon cutting prior to their Friday evening performance of Neil Simon's "Fool's." Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt opened their first Warwick location, at 1000 Bald Hill Rd., offering 18 self-serve flavors in one of the franchise's largest stores in the area. All told, 100 jobs have been created by the yogurt franchise within the five shops they operate in Rhode Island. Massasoit Framing has opened in the northern part of the city, offering quality photography services as well as unique framing options.

Our TCD staff continues to work closely with the Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce to promote existing businesses and to assist those looking to expand in or move to our community. The TCD Department offers a website,

www.movetowarwickri.com, which contains a no-cost, searchable commercial property database, accessible for free to businesses and individuals alike. The staff, upon request, will also prepare custom property sheets for companies interested in moving to Warwick, with information tailored to their specific needs.

Warwick's long been known as the "City on the Move." If you're interested in learning more about our community and all it can offer your business or organization, please contact Karen Jedson, director of tourism, culture and development at (401) 738-2000, ext. 6402.

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

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