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New and expanding businesses along Wallingford's Route 5 retail corridor

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Wallingford's Route 5 retail corridor is in the midst of a "retail boom." Within the past six months, thirteen retailers have expanded or announced plans to open along Wallingford's Rte. 5 retail spine. The largest development is the construction of a 22,000 s/f Infinity auto dealership. George Harte Auto Group recently received Planning & Zoning approval to construct a car dealership on a 2.3 acre site at 1076 So. Colony Rd., the former site of Vinny's Home & Garden Center. The Infinity dealership will be positioning itself among other high-end auto dealerships including BMW/Mercedes, Fiat and Porsche/Audi. According to Gregory Harte, owner, the Wallingford site was selected because of its central location and access to I-91. George Hart Auto Group has other dealership locations in Connecticut and New York.

Plans for the construction of a Chick-Fil-A restaurant on Rte. 5 are also moving forward. The Atlanta-based fast-food chicken restaurant received Planning & Zoning approval to construct a 5,000 s/f building at 1098 No. Colony Rd., the former site of Midas Car Care. The restaurant will have indoor and outdoor seating and an indoor playground. According to the The Record Journal, the fast-food chain "was looking to expand into Connecticut, and Wallingford is a perfect place to start," said company spokeswoman Brenda Morrow. "The Rte. 5 location offers visibility and proximity to prominent retailers," Morrow said. Since its inception in 1946, Chick-Fil-A has become the second largest, quick-service chicken restaurant chain in the USA with 1,700 locations in 39 states and annual sales of over \$4.6 billion.

Joining this fast-food chain is a regional retailer with quite a following, Mozzicato-DePasquale Bakery and Pastry Shop from Hartford, Conn. Gino Mozzicato opened his first family bakery on Franklin Ave. in Hartford in 1973 and later purchased neighboring DePasquale Bakery which had been in Hartford since 1908. With two locations in Connecticut and an established fan base, the Mozzicato family brought their famous cannoli, tiramisu, Italian cookies and cakes to 731 No. Colony Rd. The 2,800 s/f bakery has indoor and outdoor seating for patrons to nosh on pastries and sip on cappuccinos.

Adding to the boom on Rte. 5 is DiBella's sub shop and a Verizon Wireless store. They'll share the newly configured building that was the former Neptune House Diner on No. Colony Road.

Dining options have been expanded with the addition of Don Giovanni's Bistro at 680 No. Colony Rd. This family owned eatery is their second on Rte. 5 as the Bistro adds Italian specialties to their established seafood restaurant, Captain Seas. If you're in the mood for Mexican food, try the new Taqueria El Amigo restaurant just down the road at 684 No. Colony Rd. Have room for dessert? Try the new Kiwi Spoon frozen yogurt store at 956 No. Colony Rd.

We have a new Habitat For Humanity ReStore at 286 So. Colony Rd., the sixth such store in Conn. Set up to look like a traditional furniture store, all items are slightly used and donated by local

residents.

Other new and relocating retailers along Rte. 5 include: Cerrito's Auto Sales - 280 No.Colony Rd., Medical Weight Loss Solutions - 665-J No. Colony Rd., Health Med Urgent Care - 1257 So. Broad St., B Muse Caf   - 665-C No. Colony Rd., Moe's Southwest Grill-970 No. Colony Rd., and Bobby Spurs Barbecue & Brews-728 No. Colony Rd.

Thanks Doreen!

Please join me and all members of the economic development community in wishing Doreen DeSarro all the joys and freedoms retirement has to offer. In my short tenure as Wallingford's new economic development specialist I have quickly learned of the stellar reputation Doreen has developed in her 40+ years (20 in Wallingford) as an economic development professional. I will use this space to publicly thank Doreen for her patience and tutelage in preparing a 37 year newspaper professional for the world of economic development. Her passion and pride for the profession is contagious and has my energies running high as her daily chorus; "you're going to love this job" resonates in my mind. As a lifetime Wallingford resident, I'm fortunate to have been given this opportunity for a second career where passion, energy, and integrity are the centerpieces for success.

Doreen DeSarro is the business recruiter and Tim Ryan is economic development specialist for the Town of Wallingford EDC.

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