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## **Branford provides opportunity that leads to proven success and quality of life - by Terence Elton**

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Terence Elton, Town of Branford

Branford's Stony Creek Brewery will be honored later this month by the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC), at "Celebrate CT!", its annual event that recognizes economic development success across the state. This is the eighteenth year the event will honor accomplishments and recognize the people, organizations and initiatives that create the success stories.

Stony Creek Brewery clearly falls under that category of "creating a success" and stands in a class of its own. Built on a reclaimed brownfield situated along the river within site of the Branford train station, Stony Creek Brewery is one of the best examples of how it's done. The project underscores the Town's valuable development resources by using local talent in over 95% of the design and construction of the six-acre 28,000 s/f facility, including architects, engineers, construction operations and the trades, with many of the companies having regional and national reputations.

The brewery commands a manufacturing workforce of over two dozen, with another dozen in management and on the "house" side of the business. Operating for only two and a half years, its manufacturing component has already expanded adding both square footage and equipment. Meanwhile, the Brewery's public side with a tap room, "Celebration Room," deck and riverfront "lawn" has become one of the state's top destinations, with over 300,000 visitors last year alone.

Another nod to Branford as a home for business success, and manufacturing in particular, is with the Hartford Business Journal featuring Autac, Inc. in its "Guide to Stuff Made in Connecticut." The fall issue includes a spread on the family-owned and operated business, now led by the founder's daughter who has molded it into a boutique manufacturer in the wire and cable industry, well situated in the town's sprawling IG zone near I-95's Exit 55. As a "lean and clean" manufacturer, the company has implemented production systems to both reduce waste and increase productivity in order to add value to its customers.

The town extends its hearty congratulations to both Stony Creek Brewery and Autac, Inc.'s founders, owners and employees. As these Branford businesses are recognized for their current success, another is in the making with Atlantic Wharf. Demolition of the former Atlantic Wire

complex is nearing completion, moving it closer to its transition into a mixed-use TOD development with more than 200 residential units and 20,000 s/f of street level commercial space. Only steps to both Branford's train station and its historic green with shops, restaurants, and boutiques, Atlantic Wharf will be an ideal place to "live-work-play."

While all very different, each enterprise shares a close relationship with Town Hall. Rather than functioning as departments of "regulators," the town's land use offices strive to be a resource for business development across the spectrum, from site selection efforts through final inspections

Along with business growth and expansion, infrastructure improvements continue. The Rte. 139/North Branford Rd. bridge replacement is scheduled for completion by year's end, improving access to Rte. 1 and I-95's Exit 55. It is the last piece of a multi-year project that replaced the School Ground Rd. bridge and redesigned its intersection with Valley Rd. This project series has already improved surface transportation in the east end of town, home for much of Branford's industrial and commercial activity with its biotech, R&D, medical manufacturing and aerospace operations.

Those projects, along with the recent expansion of the town's train station to accommodate increased rail service. With parking for 500 vehicles, the Shoreline East rail connects our businesses to the New Haven and Yale University communities by a ten minute train ride, and offers a direct link to Metro Service to New York and Amtrak to Boston.

By rail or road, Branford's location is ideal. Mid-way between Boston and Manhattan, Branford is a gateway to New England and a portal to the New York market. In addition to rail, the town has four exits on I-95 providing direct access to the east coast corridor and to nearby I-91 into northern New England.

And with twenty miles of shoreline along Long Island Sound, forty miles of hiking and biking trails, a half dozen parks, two town beaches, a state boat launch, numerous marinas and yacht clubs, and a robust art & music scene, our quality of life is second to none.

To discover more about Branford and for assistance in finding a site that meets your needs, go to [www.branford-ct.org](http://www.branford-ct.org) or email [info@branford-ct.gov](mailto:info@branford-ct.gov).

Terence Elton is special projects manager for the Town of Branford.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540