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Meriden is on the move attracting new businesses and investment

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The City of Meriden is located at the crossroads of Connecticut at the intersection of I-91 and I-691, as well as the Merritt Pkwy. (Rte. 15) and Rte. 5. It is also less than 40 minutes from Connecticut's largest population centers - Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, Waterbury, and Middletown and less than two hours from Boston and New York City.

A mid-sized city with a population of 58,000, Meriden boasts of its Hanging Hills - 1000 ft. high mountain ridges that frame the city. The Hanging Hills are encompassed in part by Hubbard Park, the largest municipal park in New England with 1,800 acres and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Numerous walking paths and trails are available for outdoor enjoyment throughout the park system including the new Quinnipiac Gorge Trail. This 2 ½ mile trail offers unsurpassed serenity and beauty as it follows along the Quinnipiac River and river gorge. Meriden is also home to Hunter Golf Club, an outstanding municipal course that offers a challenging and picturesque layout.

Today Meriden is proud of its natural assets, its rich history, and its strategic location at the Crossroads of Connecticut. Industrial real estate broker, Alan Bolduc describes Meriden, "as a diamond in the rough. The city has a tremendous focus on establishing additional land available for commercial/industrial development to the north and east and a strong desire and effort on redevelopment in the central district. Combined with the city's proximity to I-691, I-84, I-91, the Merritt Pkwy. and potential new rail station, makes Meriden a strong candidate for outside organizations to give a harder look going forward."

Meriden's central location makes it an obvious choice for travelers looking for overnight accommodations. The city currently is home to six hotels, including a full service Four Points by Sheraton and a Comfort Suites that recently completed a multi-million dollar renovation. Both cater to the business traveler.

Just up the road on East Main St. at the Meriden Parkade you will find a brand new 125,000 s/f Lowe's Home Improvement Center. The Parkade also is home to a new Ocean State Job Lot. It is Ocean State's first new construction in the history of the Rhode Island-based company. The new Burger King and Walgreen's, on the corner of East Main and Paddock Ave., were recently completed and positively changed the whole look of the intersection. Sundad Plaza, located at 1371 East Main St., is a 12,000 s/f plaza that will be home to a branch of Seasons Federal Credit Union. Several other prospective tenants are waiting for occupancy.

Going west in the city of Meriden is the 15-acre HUB site, centrally located in downtown Meriden, and the focus of a multi-million dollar redevelopment effort being led by the city. The city has secured over \$2.4 million in state and federal funds to clear the site and prepare the site for economic development opportunities. The city demolished a vacant building on the site this past year. The development of an intermodal transportation center immediately adjacent to the HUB site

is a key component of this redevelopment effort. It will allow for transit-oriented development opportunities on the HUB site and throughout the downtown area. The intermodal center will not only serve Meriden's existing Amtrak service and the proposed New Haven to Springfield commuter rail line but will also offer linkages to local bus, taxi and corporate van services. Downtown Meriden has been identified in the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Commuter Rail Implementation Study completed by Wilbur Smith Associates in 2005 for the Connecticut Department of Transportation as a key station stop along the proposed New Haven to Springfield commuter rail line. The intermodal center will provide increased access into and out of the downtown area while allowing the city of Meriden to attract new businesses, commuters and residents to the city's center. The engineering firm of Milone and MacBroom (M&M) has been hired to design the conversion of the 15-acre HUB parcel into a downtown park. The underground Harbor Brook will be daylighted and commercial development pads are anticipated.

Meriden is also home to MidState Medical Center, Connecticut's newest general hospital, which offers exceptional care for people throughout central Connecticut. The hospital is proceeding with plans for a \$45 million, 100,000 s/f expansion. The addition will include an additional 54 treatment beds and a new enlarged Emergency Department.

Meriden is on the move attracting new businesses and investment. For further information on incentives, available sites and investment opportunities visit us at www.MeridenBiz.com.

Michael Rohde is mayor of the City of Meriden, Conn.

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