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55 YEARS

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The months ahead promise to be exciting for the City of Warwick - by Joseph Solomon

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Joseph Solomon,
City of Warwick

The dawn of 2020 brings with it a great deal of promise for our community, as we look to build on the momentum of the past year.

Economic development throughout our community remained strong, as we celebrated the opening of small businesses and larger regional and national companies. Warwick was the choice for Tesla and Edge Fitness when they were looking to establish their first Rhode Island locations, and, to date, their arrival has been met with tremendous enthusiasm from those in our community and beyond. These additions to our business community, along with new retailers, restaurants and catering options, financial planning and medical companies and non-profit agencies, are helping to ensure that our local economy remains robust and diverse.

In fact, our very strong economy was one of the key factors in S&P Global (S&P)'s affirmation of our bond rating at "AA" and assignment of a stable outlook. Our position as "one of the state's leading commercial and retail centers," and our role as host to T.F. Green Airport, Rhode Island's major commercial airport, and its positive effect on development in the surrounding areas, were also important considerations in their assessment.

Hand in hand with our economic development efforts has been our focus on tourism and recreation. In the fall, Warwick welcomed the U.S. Quidditch Northeast Regional Championships, which resulted in some 200 hotel rooms booked in our community and over \$200,000 in a direct spending infusion into the local economy. Rhode Island will soon see the arrival of more than 3,000 athletes, fans and families—and an estimated \$2.8 million in direct economic impact – for the U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships, and Warwick's Thayer and Warburton arenas will serve as the practice rinks.

Warwick's also home to a growing number of regional and national conferences and annual meetings, whose organizers find our proximity to air, rail and the interstate a convenient option for

their out-of-state attendees. Our efforts, together with improvements to many of our recreational facilities and our terrific partnership with the Providence Warwick Convention and Visitors Bureau will most certainly result in additional announcements in the coming year.

The months ahead promise to be equally exciting. There will soon be announcements of new development projects. We'll be moving forward with my Roadway Improvement Initiative, which will see improvements to roads and conversion to LED streetlights throughout Warwick. Completion of the new fishing pier at the iconic Rocky Point Park will afford people another way to enjoy our beautiful shoreline and bay. New interpretative signage will complement recent improvements at the General George Sears Greene Cemetery. We're expanding programs for our seniors and recreational opportunities for residents of all ages. We're also continuing our efforts to ensure that Warwick remains on strong, stable financial footing.

We also look forward to welcoming additional new companies to our city to complement our existing business community and helping them to grow and succeed here. To learn more about the many opportunities available to you here in Warwick, visit movetowarwickri.com or call Karen Jedson, director of tourism, culture and development, at (401) 738-2014.

Joseph Solomon is the mayor of the city of Warwick, R.I.

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