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## **Wallingford's low electric rates continue to attract new and expanding businesses**

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With one of the lowest electric rates in New England and one of the lowest mill rates in New Haven County, Wallingford continues to be an attractive location for manufacturing and distribution within the state of Connecticut. Recently, two manufacturers have relocated into Wallingford and two Wallingford manufacturers/distributors announced plans to expand. The DexMet Corporation, which had two locations in Connecticut, recently announced plans to consolidate into a 64,000 s/f industrial building at 22 Barnes Industrial Rd. which is currently undergoing extensive renovations. DexMet manufactures a wide variety of expanded metal and plastic products used in aerospace, fuel cells, batteries, electronics, aircraft and medical applications. Bob Bochman, DexMet's president, chose 22 Barnes Industrial Rd. because of its central location and the town's fiscal stability and low electric rates. DexMet currently employs 70 people. A second manufacturer, Atlantic Steel and Fabricators, Inc., also relocated into Wallingford. Atlantic Steel is a structural steel fabrication company from within the region that leased 4,500 s/f at 65 South Turnpike Rd. The company manufactures machine parts and screw machine parts.

Two additional Wallingford companies received local approvals to expand their existing locations. Thurston Foods, Inc., which warehouses and delivers food to restaurants, schools, camps and institutions in CT, MA, RI and NH, recently sought Inland Wetlands approval to construct a 40,000 s/f addition to its building at 30 Thurston Dr. Despite higher fuel and food costs, business is brisk and the company hired 10 more warehousing staff in July. BYK, USA, a German-based paint additives manufacturer, also received Planning & Zoning approval to construct an additional 20,000 s/f of warehousing space at its 524 So. Cherry St. facility. BYK, USA, which employs 118 people, saw an 11.6% growth in sales last year. The company has long term plans to increase both manufacturing and warehousing capacity at its Wallingford site within the next 5 years.

### **Rte. 5 Retail Corridor**

IHOP restaurant recently received Wallingford Planning & Zoning Commission's approval to construct a 5,000 s/f restaurant in front of BJ's Wholesale Club at 1040-1046 North Colony Rd. Although IHOP is famous for its breakfast specialties, its also offers lunch, dinner and snack items. The IHOP chain of restaurants is following the national trend in development where chain restaurants seek locations near big box retail development. Along Wallingford's Rte. 5 retail corridor, Home Depot opened in 2001, followed by an expanded Wal-Mart superstore in 2004 and a Lowe's Home Improvement Center and BJ's Wholesale Club in 2006. Following the national trend, a Chili's restaurant opened in front of Home Depot, an Applebee's opened in front of Lowe's and a 99 Restaurant moved in several hundred yard's south along Rte. 5.

Also new to Wallingford's Rte. 5 is The Playground, an 8,000 s/f cageless doggie daycare center, one of the largest dog daycare centers in the state. Besides daycare, The Playground offers an

indoor dog park, one-on-one training, pet massage and acupuncture, pet photography and a "Gotta Love Dogs" singles event each week for single pet owners.

#### Commercial Development

Within the past six months, 14 commercial establishments relocated into/expanded within Wallingford. AirOcean Aviation LLC, a specialty transportation business that provides professional and recreational helicopter services to consumers and businesses, opened at 120 Church St. in Wallingford. AirOcean Aviation offers business applications and consumer transportation services within CT, RI and MA. Business services include aerial photography/videography and land surveying, aerial advertising, business charter services, construction lifting for heavy external payloads, utility line and infrastructure patrol and inspection. AirOcean Aviation also offers helicopter flight training, heliport fuel sales and hangar rental space.

Also new in Wallingford is PPI Benefit Solutions, an employee benefits administration company that has been in Connecticut since 1969. PPI Benefit Solutions leased 13,000 s/f at 10 Research Pkwy. in Medway Business Park. Named one of the Hartford Business Journal's "Best Places to Work in Connecticut", PPI prides itself on maintaining a positive work environment while incorporating a work experience that includes cross training to provide its employees with a variety of skills and job experiences. PPI employs 50 people.

Other new/expanding commercial businesses within Wallingford include: EPS Technology, Aero Electronics, National Floors Direct and the Quinnipiac Valley Community Federal Credit Union.

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