



CELEBRATING  
55 YEARS

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## **New year brings more investment in infrastructure, real estate development and enhanced quality of life - by Frank Picozzi**

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Frank Picozzi

Close to two dozen new restaurants added to our culinary landscape. A groundbreaking for a \$65 million, 214 class A apartment project. Nearly \$531,000 in federal funds awarded for a new Emergency Operations Center. A \$775,000 restoration project that brought a historic lighthouse back to her former glory. And a variety of free, family-friendly events that also helped to bolster the local economy. These are just some of the things our community celebrated in 2024.

Last year also brought some “first in Rhode Island” news to Warwick – Veterinary Emergency Group, Floor & Décor, Goldfish Swim School, and The Honey Baked Ham Company all chose our city as the best place in which to open up shop in the Ocean State. A number of small businesses, including Hard Knocks of Warwick, The Blue Collar Barber & Shave Company, and Ocean Ki Acupuncture, were welcomed to the community. Ocean State Job Lot opened its third Warwick location, bringing vacant space back to life.

On the tourism and hospitality front, 2024 saw the rebranding of the former NYLO hotel to The LOOM Hotel. Its name is a nod to the Fruit of the Loom Company, which operated in the adjacent Pontiac Mills. The rebranding included renovations that seamlessly blend contemporary amenities with historic charm, while their Brook Kitchen and Bar boasts a new concept for the space, offering high-end wines, seasonal specialty craft cocktails and a menu that promises the freshest ingredients to be found in New England. This year is expected to see the completion of two new extended-stay hotels, WoodSpring Suites and ECHO suites, located just steps from Rhode Island International T.F. Green Airport. The airport itself has had a banner year, including the award of \$10 million in federal funding to make additional airport renovations, the addition of numerous new flight destinations, and recognition from several national publications’ “best of” lists.

Recreational opportunities are an important part of a community’s quality of life. The Oakland Beach seawall’s improvements include ADA-compliance enhancements, site furnishings, a seasonal splash pad with integrated shade structure, and environmental restoration/resiliency improvements. Formal site design of the Mickey Stevens Sports Complex will soon be underway. The vision for improvements to this longtime recreational facility includes two baseball fields with numerous amenities, two full-size basketball courts; two full-size tennis courts/four pickleball courts; accessible restrooms; a skate park; an all-age playground and splash pad; new parking and stormwater improvements. The new year will also see the opening of X-Golf, which bills itself as “the home of indoor golf,” with state-of-the art simulators offering an authentic experience, and Urban Air Adventure Park, which offers a variety of exciting indoor attractions and activities.

The new year will also see continued investment in our infrastructure, additional residential and commercial developments, and new ways to further enhance the quality of life for those who live, work, and visit here. Stay tuned for updates as the year progresses.

Best wishes to you and yours for a safe, memorable, and joy-filled 2025!

Frank Picozzi is the mayor of the city of Warwick, R.I.

