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Branford, the choice in today's economy

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Shortly after the Connecticut Economic Digest profiled Branford as "a vital community with a strong economic base, low taxes, and excellent schools and municipal services," Branford was rated as a "triple A" town by Standard & Poor's. Indicative of the town's approach to growth and management, S&P reported that "the rating reflects the town's location, access to employment centers throughout southeastern Connecticut, very strong household income factors, and below-average unemployment." Add to those accolades the lowest taxes along the shoreline for a full-service town and an enviable quality of life, and you have an ideal place for a business, whether it's manufacturing, bioscience, health care or a service industry.

How the town plans to direct its growth is laid out in its new Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), focusing on specific areas for development. With the plan's implementation just starting, work is already underway for improvements to the infrastructure and existing services. The CT DOT has begun a \$45 million project to replace the Amtrak bridge spanning Rte. 1 at I-95's Exit 53 to improve traffic flow and public safety in the BranHaven Plaza area, home to The GAP, Shoetique, Kohl's, Commerce Bank, Pier One and other national retailers, and to provide better access to Commercial Pkwy. leading to Wal-Mart and that area's potential.

Another improvement aligned with the POCD is about to take place as Branford's train station is being expanded to accommodate 200 more vehicles. The success of the Shore Line East's extended service with reverse commutes and weekend schedules has put use of the facility at capacity. The train station locale is another of the POCD's areas of opportunity, with a perfect site for a mixed-used development located directly across the street. Already home to the popular Nellie Green's restaurant, Anchor Reef's new luxury riverfront condos, and the Branford Landing marina, its proximity to the town center and Branford's historic green make it an ideal transit oriented development site.

Branford's town center continues to be the heart of the community's civic and social activity. Ground will soon be broken for a new 120-unit apartment complex only a block from the town green and steps away from its broad variety of fine dining and shopping among Branford's "unique boutiques." This past summer, loyal customers and new patrons discovered the inaugural season of the "branford jazz" concert series, drawing hundreds of music lovers to the green to hear a different style of jazz each week [visit www.branfordjazz.com]. Plans for the 2010 season are already underway.

The POCD also includes the commercial area near I-95's Exit 56, found by a variety of new and expanding businesses as a sound location. Wilson Arms, a manufacturer located south of the exit, has completed the addition to its existing facility and has doubled its staff. On the north side of the exit 454 Life Science, renown worldwide for its DNA work, is expanding into an additional 55,000 s/f on East Industrial Rd. Internet service provider Recol is moving into nearly 17,000 s/f on neighboring

Pin Oak Dr. Around the corner on Rte. 1 (aka East Main St.) the shoreline's new YMCA is taking shape with 36,000 s/f to house two swimming pools and a variety of activity rooms, along with nature trails designed for recreation and environmental programs.

These are a few examples of Branford's diverse business community where bioscience, manufacturing, retail, healthcare and service industries all thrive in a healthy business climate. These companies exemplify the broad range of businesses that know, as reported by the Economic Digest and Standard & Poor's, Branford has what most businesses want: the lowest tax rate along the I-95 corridor, full municipal services (water, sewer, public safety), a skilled workforce, and excellent transportation links. Centrally located with more than 20 miles of shoreline on Long Island Sound, Branford has a quality of life and sense of community that is second to none. All of this is combined with a "business friendly" approach to encourage new ventures and expansions.

To learn more about Branford and the opportunities that it may hold for you, visit the town's website at www.branford-ct.gov or e-mail us at info@branford-ct.gov.

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