

Community Partners 2011 Awards Scheduled 2010 Business of the Year to be Announced

The Community Partners Program will hold its second annual Awards Ceremony on Thursday, March 24, 2011 at 10 a.m. at the Portland Senior Center, 7 Waverly Avenue. The 2010 Business of the Year will also be announced at the ceremony.

The 2010 Community Partners Program Decal can be found on the windows, doors, and work trucks of more than 135 Portland businesses. The decal indicates that the member business supports a wide variety of activities, including educational programs, recreational programs, organized sports programs, community outreach programs, and nonprofit groups. Portland residents are urged to look for these decals and support our local businesses that so generously support the community.

The Community Partners Program Member Level recognizes businesses for donations of goods or services of up to \$5,000 in value during the previous calendar year. The Gold Member Level recognizes business for donations of goods and services in excess of \$5,000 during the previous calendar year. 2011 Program Applications are available in the Planning Office at Town Hall and online at www.portlandct.org. Completed applications should be sent to The Portland Economic Development Commission c/o Portland Town Hall, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS PROGRAM



2011 MEMBER

**AWARDED BY THE
PORTLAND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

STEAP Grant Awarded for Riverfront Development

The Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) has awarded the Town of Portland \$200,000 for continued development of the riverfront property along Brownstone Avenue. Past STEAP awards have financed the completion of Phase I and Phase II of The Brownstone Avenue Extension Project.

Phase I of this ongoing improvement project provided direct access from the Village District to the quarry and riverfront recreational areas for visitors and emergency services by extending Brownstone Avenue to intersect with Middlesex Avenue. Phase II provided for a paved parking area to be used for quarry and riverfront attractions and sporting events held on the fields of the Brownstone Intermediate School.

The 2010 STEAP Grant Award, administered by the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management will be used to complete Phase III of The Brownstone Avenue Extension Project. Phase III includes the construction of a 50 by 100 foot open-air pavilion, seasonal on-site electrical and water service, and restroom facilities. Construction is expected to be completed for the 2012

The **Portland Business Journal** is a quarterly publication of the **Economic Development Commission**. Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall issues are published each year. If you have ideas for future articles, notices for meetings or events, or would like to be placed on the email distribution list for the **Portland Business Journal**, please contact Mary Dickerson, EDC Consultant at 342-7302 or by e-mail at marydickerson@yahoo.com.



2010 Planning & Zoning Department Activity Report

Each year, Planning and Land Use Administrator Deanna Rhodes prepares a summary of activity for the calendar year. The Planning & Zoning Department is responsible for the coordination, review and processing of all development applications submitted before the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Inland Wetlands Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals.

During the 2010 calendar year, the Planning Department issued 29 zoning permits, down from 44 in 2009. The uses for the permits issued included occupancy for new businesses, expansion of existing businesses, new business signage, and signage changes for existing businesses. In addition, the Planning and Zoning Commission granted approvals for 15 projects and The Zoning Board of Appeals granted four variances.

The Planning & Zoning Department also works with non-regulatory commissions, including the EDC and Conservation Commission. The department is responsible for the production, implementation and update of the Plan of Development and all land use codes, as well as the monitoring/tracking of land use, land use applications, and zoning enforcement.

News From the Building & Planning Departments

The offices of Building, Planning, Zoning & Health are located on the 1st floor of the Town Hall located at 33 East Main Street.

Office Hours:

Monday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday 8:30 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Wednesday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Friday 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Considering a New Business?

The Economic Development Commission employs a part time consultant available Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm to assist you. Contact Mary Dickerson, EDC Consultant, at (860) 342-7302.

Planning a Project?

Tuesday nights are a great time to meet with the Development Team at the Town Hall to discuss plans that you may have for business expansion or a prospective new business idea. You will receive an overview of the approval process and the technical information required to complete your project. To schedule a meeting with the Development Team, including the Fire Marshal, Building Official, Planner, Director of Public Works, Sanitarian, and Economic Development Consultant, contact Deanna Rhodes, Planning and Land Use Administrator at (860) 342-6720.

Important Contact Information for the Building and Planning Department

Planning & Land Use Administrator

Deanna Rhodes drhodes@portlandct.org
Phone: (860) 342-6720
drhodes@portlandct.org

Building Official

Lincoln White
Phone: (860) 342-6728
lwhite@portlandct.org

Administrative Assistant

Gail Pititto
Phone: (860) 342-6727
gpititto@portlandct.org

Town Sanitarian

Don Mitchell, RS
Phone: (860) 342-6718
dmitchell@portlandct.org

EDC Consultant

Mary Dickerson
Phone: (860) 342-7302
marydickerson@yahoo.com

Arrigoni Bridge Repairs Planned: Traffic Concerns a Priority for Local Businesses

The Connecticut Department of Transportation is expected to begin repairs to the Arrigoni Bridge this summer. The work is being completed because of a decrease in the rating of the river span deck that was identified during the last inspection cycle. Approximately 8,000 square feet of the 55,000 square foot bridge deck is considered to be in serious condition, being rated a three on a scale of one to nine, with one indicating the most serious deterioration.

The project is expected to cost nearly \$15 million dollars and will not only address immediate deficiencies, but also provide preemptive repairs and replacement of the sidewalks. 80% of the project cost will be paid by Federal Funds, with the remaining 20% paid by the State of Connecticut. The final plan and structural analysis is due to be completed in February, with selection of a contractor expected in April. Work is to be completed in stages of 4 to 6 months each and may narrow the bridge to two lanes of traffic for extended periods. Smart Work Zone Technology will be used to notify motorists on surrounding roads of expected wait times through the use of electronic billboards.

The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce has reestablished its Transportation Committee to advocate for the needs of local businesses and ensure that all communities affected during the construction will have a voice in the process. The Committee met on January 13th and will continue to meet monthly to address members concerns, receive updates from the Connecticut Department of Transportation, and keep member businesses apprised of developments during the construction process.

Portland Retailer Featured in Hartford Business Journal

A recent article in the Hartford Business Journal, an online business publication, featured Portland business owner, Chris Cote. He is the owner of **Chris Cote's Golf Shop** and **Chris Cote's Pre-Owned Golf Shop**, located at 275 Main Street and 283A Main Street, respectively. The article described the impact of recent changes made at eBay, Inc.

Many "brick and mortar" stores use eBay, Inc. as way to supplement their retail income without having to maintain their own retail websites. In an effort to remain competitive with other online retailers, eBay, Inc. is requiring its top sellers to offer their products to the consumer without additional shipping charges. This necessitates the local retailers either absorbing the shipping costs or passing them on to the consumer in the form of higher priced merchandise, reducing their competitiveness in the online marketplace.

The selection of Chris Cote as a focus for an article in a Hartford based publication is testimony to the impact Chris has had in marketplace for golf related products in Connecticut and across New England. Since opening his first shop in Portland in May 2008, **Chris Cote's Golf Shop** has become known around the region as the place to find a huge selection of golf clubs and equipment, exceptional customer service and on-site repairs. That success led to the spin off of **Chris Cote's Pre-Owned Golf Shop**, in August 2010. Since opening his businesses in Portland, Chris has become an active member of the business community and has been recognized for his contributions by the Economic Development Commission's Community Partners Program. Congratulations to Chris and his staff for this statewide recognition!

Group Meets to Address Safety of Pedestrians in the Village District

Local business owners, town officials, members of the Economic Development Commission, and a representative of the Brownstone Intermediate School met informally on January 26th to discuss pedestrian safety issues within the Village District before the busy summer season begins.

A list of problems was identified, including: the location of crosswalks near busy intersections, the ability of auto traffic to make a “right turn on red” at Fairview Street and Marlborough Street, pedestrian jaywalking, the number of active driveways intersecting Village District sidewalks, “quick stop” customers who do not use town designated parking areas and dash across Main Street to reach their destinations, drivers who speed through and attempt to “time” the traffic lights, posted speed limits excessive for a Village District, and employees of Village District businesses using customer parking spaces along the active roadway for all day parking.

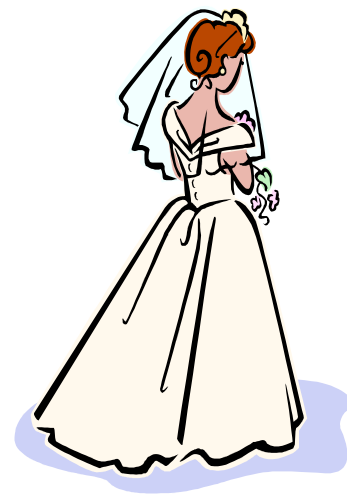
The goal of the group is to provide solutions to help make the Village District a safer place to walk and conduct business. Some of the suggestions included: enforcement of the speed limit within the Village District, requesting a DOT study of traffic patterns and car counts within the Village District, greater enforcement of traffic and pedestrian regulations, increased police presence in the Village District, creative signage to capture drivers attention and make them aware of pedestrians, pedestrian flags to be used at crosswalks, the creation of a “pedestrian zone” from the Arrigoni Bridge to the US Post Office, providing local businesses with materials to educate customers, and changes in traffic patterns to slow through traffic.

For more information about the group or to share your ideas, please contact Mary Dickerson, EDC Consultant at (860) 342-7302 or by email atmarydickerson@yahoo.com.

The Wedding Dress Receives National Recognition

Weddingwire.com, an online wedding planning site, has named **The Wedding Dress, LLC**, 222 Main Street as the winner of one of its 2011 Brides Choice Awards. Weddingwire.com surveys more than 750,000 couples and compiles the reviews to award wedding providers in 20 categories. **The Wedding Dress, LLC's** selection places them in the top 5% of wedding service providers across the country.

Since 2002, **The Wedding Dress, LLC** has been providing exceptional customer service and an extensive selection of elegant bridal, attendant, mother of the bride, flower girl, prom and formal event gowns. The business is also active in community and other charitable programs and has been recognized by the EDC's Community Partners Program. Congratulations to the staff of **The Wedding Dress, LLC**, for continued excellence!



Would you like to know more about the Portland Economic Development Commission? Attend a meeting! The EDC meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7 pm at the Portland Library, 20 Freestone Avenue.