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# Workforce subject of October Business Breakfast



Staff and students from EASTCONN Adult Education Program participating in Connecticut's No Excuses March for Education in New Haven.

Chamber members consistently name workforce as a primary concern. Meeting current staffing needs and planning for expansion is a challenge we hear across industries. With the unemployment rate for eastern Connecticut around 3.5%, there is a tight labor pool and those seeking employment may not have the skills needed.

Organizations across the region connect jobseekers with programs that respond directly to the needs of employers. On October 23, we will share information on these programs at our Business Breakfast titled Minding the Skills Gap: Workforce Development, Recruitment and Retention.

Speaker Mark Hill, Chief Operating Officer of the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board (EWIB), will share insights about this issue locally and beyond, actions local companies can take, and what programs are generating success.

One of the EWIB's leading programs, the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative has garnered national attention for effectively drawing together manufacturers, community colleges, technical high schools and the American Job Centers to address a skills shortage and workforce demands. In an April visit, U.S. Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta praised the coordination between educators

and employers and called the model "transformative."

The Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative, described as "a demand-driven model," connects over 30 community partners and over 250 employer partners, including Electric Boat and members of the Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance. The program has a greater than 95% job placement rate with 1,468 jobseekers placed between April 2016 and July 2019. Important for employers, the new hire training time and the attrition rate have both dropped by 50%.

That model is the basis for meeting other workforce-related challenges in the region to address labor market shortages and skills training in healthcare, retail and business. Key to the success of the model is connecting employers to training programs, to both inform the curriculum and create that same pipeline for jobseekers into good positions.

The Business Breakfast program will be followed by a mini-expo of workforce development organizations, where employers can learn about training programs and make mutually beneficial connections.

Many of the programs offered are tuition free and provide access to childcare reimbursement, free transportation and paid internships, removing many of the obstacles to

participating in job training.

In addition to the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative, EASTCONN will host a table at the expo to share programs employers can tap into for training: Intensive Customer Service, Microsoft Office, Manufacturing and Spanish in the Workplace. A grant from Walmart funds the Customer Service Academy where jobseekers can learn these skills.

Expo participant, Westerly Education Center offers workforce training for certified nursing assistants, process technology, customer service, banking, call center basics and sales, in addition to maritime manufacturing and trades. Connected with Community College of Rhode Island, the Westerly Education Center is similar in their breadth of classes, with

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## UPCOMING WORKFORCE EVENTS:

**2019 Eastern CT Healthcare Conversation: Today's Challenges of Attracting, Developing and Retaining a Healthcare Workforce**

October 18, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Three Rivers Community College  
574 New London Turnpike, Norwich

To attend, RSVP to Virginia Sampietro at [sampietrov@ewib.org](mailto:sampietrov@ewib.org) or 860-859-4100 x113

**Business Breakfast and Mini-Expo: Minding the Skills Gap: Workforce Development, Recruitment and Retention**

October 23, 7:45-9:15 a.m.

Latitude 41 by Coastal Gourmet Group  
105 Greenmanville Ave, Mystic

To attend the breakfast or learn more about the mini-expo, visit [ChamberECT.com/events](http://ChamberECT.com/events) or call 860-701-9113.

**Eastern CT Fall Job Fair**

October 28, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Mystic Marriott Hotel and Spa  
625 North Road (Rt 117), Groton

To learn more or reserve a booth, visit [TheDay.com/jobfair](http://TheDay.com/jobfair).

A SPECIAL THANK YOU | Through their commitment to the Chamber, these companies have demonstrated support for the many smaller businesses we serve.



# ServiceMaster Restoration by Wills Has Built a Team to Tackle Any Crisis

Service is right in the name. ServiceMaster Restoration by Wills sets a standard of service for themselves that sets them apart. It earned the company national recognition in 2018. The Marion E. Wade Award, named after the company founder, is given to ServiceMaster's top-performing franchise in North America, out of over 4,000 franchises.

"At the core, it's about operating with integrity," said Steve Wills, owner and president of ServiceMaster by Wills. Steve keeps in mind the advice his father gave him: "Make sure your decisions are the same when the lights are off as they are when the lights are on."

The full-service disaster restoration service has offices in New London, Hartford, and Stamford as well as a large loss division, SRM, that directs operations at sites around the world. Water, fire, mold—ServiceMaster Restoration by Wills has teams ready to handle individual jobs and the know-how to project manage city-wide disasters.

Flooding from the mountains in Thailand led to an extended job in the Bangkok area that spanned four months beginning around Thanksgiving and continuing into March. Steve recalls city residents turning the high-piled sandbags into de facto Christmas trees with festive decorations during the Christmas holiday. The residents' approach mirrors Steve's passion for the work.

"You are always taking a bad situation and making it better," said Steve, who has managed massive restoration projects like the aftermath in



*ServiceMaster Restoration by Wills accepts Marion E. Wade Award in 2018.*

Houston when Hurricane Harvey dropped over 50 inches of rain or in Boston when a utility crises led to whole neighborhoods of historic homes needing restoration services.

Steve began his career in ServiceMaster in high school as a summer job, and really enjoyed being there to help people in their time of need. When a franchise became available in 1982, Steve and his wife and co-owner Sheri began serving the Stonington area. They have grown the company over the years by focusing on developing a strong, dedicated team of employees who represent the company's values.

New London and Hartford Senior Operations Manager Jeffrey Lane describes their customer centered approach. "First, we restore calm, then we restore order, and then we restore property." Putting the customer first has put them first among franchisees. Working with Jeffrey in New London are Rory Bedell as Production Manager and Jay Rashleigh as Regional Account Manager and Estimator.

The strong team behind this success is built on trust and empowering employees to make the right decisions with the customers' interests in mind. Those decisions are based on consistent, up-to-date training opportunities, and the knowledge that the company has your back. In Houston, with over 224,000 man hours on the job, there was not one recordable injury thanks to the careful management of team leaders and safety protocols put in place by the Wills team.

"How we lead is a willingness to go side-by-side with people in our training and show them how we want things to get done," said Steve. Running operations can mean 60 plus hour work weeks whenever the emergency losses happen, which is a reminder to Steve how much he appreciates his people that answer the bell 24 hours a day.

Regarding retaining members of his team for decades, Steve added, "Today's business owner has to be more empathetic than they were in the past, more understanding of the trials of work in today's world." With many families juggling two jobs and kids, he says employers need to have open communication with employees and be willing to adjust where possible. The payback is a dedicated workforce. "We do the best we can to help our employees grow and develop in our company."

While it's tiring, the job is still exciting and they are fully invested in helping people at their time of need, bringing calm and organization to difficult situations. "At the end of the day, we love what we do and that's what keeps us going."



## FARM TO TABLE *gala*

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# Café Otis: Norwich's All Day Café

Most likely, you're overdue to grab a book and head to Café Otis. You're invited to linger in the former Otis Library over coffee and breakfast or lunch or dinner. There's no wrong time of day to find a fresh food alternative when you need a change of scene and a bite.

And what a change of scene at Café Otis! Two spacious dining areas with marble-topped tables surrounded by massive windows, the 1850 building is nestled in the middle of Norwich's historic downtown.

The invitation to park your laptop is sincere. The all-day café is a fixture of New York City where Café Otis owner Nancy Isa spent years working at top hotels and catering operations. She wanted to bring the café concept to her hometown and opened Café Otis in March.

All-day cafés are described by Bon Appetit: "Part café, part restaurant, part workspace, part community center, this is the fabled "third place" between work and home." The flexible space and locally-sourced, fresh menu Nancy has curated is designed to be all of these things—and more, with newly added delivery and full catering services. Plus, the Nine Mile Market offers local artisan food and gifts.

Café Otis opens its doors seven days a week from 8am to 10pm, transitioning from breakfast and lunch with counter service to a full service sit down dinner at 5pm. Happy hour from 3-6pm, Monday through Saturday is the perfect introduction to Café Otis' menu and atmosphere. Sundays are for brunch from 10-4pm, with savory dishes, breakfast favorites, and espresso drinks made with beans from Craftsman Cliff Roasters.

Centered on a fresh food concept, Café Otis

serves breakfast sandwiches that have never seen the inside of a microwave. Instead they feature seasonal vegetables and local cheddar but at a similar price point. Lunch is made to order as you build your own salad, pita pocket or grain bowl.

Smoothies and juices are made of fresh ingredients with names that pay homage to the building's heritage: Midsummer Night's Green with kale, spirulina, cucumber and celery; a beet and berry based Scarlet Letter; and Romeo and Julep with carrot, apple, ginger and mint.

The menu includes vegetarian, vegan and gluten free dishes that vie for center stage with traditional fare. Based on the fresh fruits and vegetables brought from farms just 10 minutes away, the menu changes with the season.

Dinner at Café Otis offers creative cuisine—Salmon Barlotto with mushroom barley risotto or braised short ribs with celery root puree, crispy shallots, red cabbage and a demi-glaze—at very reasonable prices. Enjoy a craft cocktail from their mixologist, who learned to make sour mix from scratch and fresh pressed juices while in Oregon. The full bar includes a careful selection of fine spirits, wines and beers.

Mediterranean and Middle Eastern influences are subtly woven into the menu, a nod to Nancy's Lebanese heritage. Traditional dishes like Falafel, Moussaka and Eggplant Carpaccio are regular menu items and spices like harissa and za'atar find their way onto roasted tofu or rotisserie chickens.

Nancy grew up surrounded by good food and lots of parties thrown by parents who love to entertain. "That's how you show somebody you love them...you cook for them and you feed them," said Nancy.

With her home life centered around good food, Nancy pursued a career in hospitality, beginning at Cornell University, where she was valedictorian of her class. Her first position was at Four Seasons Hotel in D.C. and then New York. She returned to school to earn a master's in clinical nutrition from NYU. Her interest, however, lay in creating amazing dining events. She went on to work for Great Performances Catering, where she learned from a 30-year veteran of the posh event



Owner Nancy Isa brings an extensive background in catering and event planning to her business in Norwich.

scene. She then worked for Danny Meyer of Union Square Café fame and top-notch NYC caterer Abigail Kirsch.

Naturally, Café Otis expanded into catering. The extensive catering menu is available at [CafeOtis.com](http://CafeOtis.com), but Nancy welcomes special requests. Catering can be for an entire party, or a few side dishes to help you tackle a holiday dinner. When that next potluck looms and you have no time to cook, put in an order at Café Otis. You can also stop by on the way home to pick up any menu items or a rotisserie chicken and sides for a quick, delicious dinner at home.

The inviting spaces at Café Otis make it the perfect spot to meet off-site. A sitting area and private dining room upstairs can accommodate a sit down dinner or business retreat for 15 or a cocktail hour for 30.

The full restaurant can accommodate 150 people for events or two dining rooms easily section off. Nancy is eager to have the café fill its role as community gathering spot. She has hosted fundraisers for both political parties and welcomes groups to come in to see how they can use the café for events.

If you can't escape the office, Café Otis will deliver. Click "Bring me food" on the website to enjoy fresh and delicious food. Be sure to ask the whole office before you order to avoid the sideways glances of lunch envy.

Nancy developed Café Otis after leaving a corporate position that was simply too far from the dining experience. "This isn't for me," thought Nancy. "I've got to find something that will feed my soul." In creating this inviting café, she's feeding your soul too.



Seasonal menus based on local harvests are artfully prepared at Café Otis.

**Visit Café Otis**  
80 Broadway, Norwich | [cafeotis.com](http://cafeotis.com)

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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[creation-shots-photography.business.site](http://creation-shots-photography.business.site)

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### SERAC

Non profit, engaging individuals and the 41 towns in Eastern CT communities to reduce substance abuse and other addicted behaviors and promote mental health advocacy.

228 West Town Street, Norwich | 860.848.2800

[seracct.org](http://seracct.org)

### Sistar Mortgage Branch

Our philosophy is minimizing cost and maximizing investment. We help our customers organize themselves so that they get the optimal loan while creating a personal relationship that helps us better know their needs.

22 S Ledyard Street, New London | [stephanieaugmon@sistarmortgage.com](mailto:stephanieaugmon@sistarmortgage.com)

[sistarmortgage.com](http://sistarmortgage.com)

### Southeastern Connecticut Women's Network

An organization of more than 160 dynamic business professionals, providing members the opportunity to network, make referrals, educate others about who they are and what they do.

860.949.7014 | [sectwomensnetwork.com](http://sectwomensnetwork.com)

### The Animal Experts

Offering pet boarding, sitting, doggie daycare, and dog walking in a home environment, we give pet parents peace of mind that your pet is safe, healthy and happy when you're not home.

860.857.2270 | [the-animal-experts.com](http://the-animal-experts.com)

### The Baker's Dozen, Gales Ferry

Baker's Dozen has just opened their 7th location in Gales Ferry within Bestway on Rte 12! Serving the Quiet Corner since 1980, the Cardinal Family is dedicated to providing the best service, fresh coffee and homemade goodies.

860.381.5183 | 1506 Route 12, Gales Ferry

[bakersdozenct.com](http://bakersdozenct.com)

### The ECHO Cancer Foundation, Inc.

Dedicated to providing supportive services, guidance and education to cancer patients and their caregivers, it is our goal to address each patient's individual needs so that no one lacks care or comfort while living with cancer.

330 Washington Street, #220, Norwich | 860.886.8362

[echocancerfoundation.com](http://echocancerfoundation.com)

### University of Rhode Island

#### College of Business

The College of Business is the state's flagship institution for business education, research, and outreach. We offer a range of majors and specializations, with accredited programs at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels.

7 Lippitt Road, Kingston, RI | [uri.edu/business](http://uri.edu/business)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>OCT 17</b>	<b>Coffee with the Chamber</b> 8:00 - 9:30 am   Chelsea Groton Bank, North Stonington
<b>OCT 18</b>	<b>State of the Shoreline: Old Lyme, East Lyme, Waterford</b> 7:45 - 9:15 am   Flanders Fish Market, East Lyme
<b>OCT 22</b>	<b>Business After Hours &amp; Culture Connects at Eugene O'Neill Theater Center</b> 5:30 - 7:30 pm   305 Great Neck Road, Waterford
<b>OCT 23</b>	<b>Business Breakfast &amp; Mini-Expo: Minding the Skills Gap: Workforce Development, Recruitment, and Retention</b> 7:45 - 10:00 am   Latitude 41, Mystic
<b>OCT 23</b>	<b>Workshop: Instagram for Business</b> 12:00 - 1:15 pm   Chamber Office, Waterford
<b>OCT 24</b>	<b>Halloween YPsocial at novelle</b> 6:00 - 8:00 pm   Mohegan Sun, Uncasville
<b>OCT 31</b>	<b>New England Real Estate Journal Connecticut Summit</b> 8:00 am - 3:00 pm   Mohegan Sun, Uncasville
<b>NOV 1</b>	<b>10th Annual Military Appreciation Breakfast</b> 7:45 am - 9:15 am   Marriott Hotel and Spa, Groton

Pre-registration is suggested for most events. Call (860) 701-9113 or visit [ChamberECT.com](http://ChamberECT.com) to learn more about any event. Cancellation Policy: Notice must be given at least three business days prior to event. No-shows or those unable to cancel in time will be billed.



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## Reliance Health Recognized as a Top Workplace

Reliance Health has been recognized by its employees as a 2019 Top Workplace through the Hartford Courant. In addition to ranking 6th among mid-sized employers, Reliance Health received "standout scores" resulting in Special Award recognition for their Managers.

The Hartford Courant partnered with Energage to survey companies within Hartford, Tolland, Windham, Middlesex, and New London counties to identify the top workplaces in Connecticut. 686 companies participated in the survey with a total of 13,747 employee responses. The top 60 employers were invited to the Aquaturf in Plantsville on September 19 to be recognized as a Top Workplace.

Reliance Health CEO, Carrie Dyer attributes Reliance Health's Top Workplace standing to their employees stating, "I am incredibly proud to be a part of the Reliance Health family and am grateful to all our staff for making us a Top Workplace. We have an exciting future ahead of us as we continue to learn and grow together". This was the 8th year Reliance Health received Top Workplace recognition.

## Three Rivers Community College Associate Professor Frederick-Douglass Knowles II named Virginia D. Christian Educator of the Year by Norwich NAACP

Three Rivers Community College is excited to share that Associate Professor Frederick-Douglass Knowles II has been named the Virginia D. Christian Educator of the Year by the Norwich NAACP Branch. He will receive the award at the NAACP Norwich Branch's 56th annual Freedom Fund Dinner on Thursday, October 3.

The Freedom Fund Dinner recognizes groups and individuals who have contributed to the cause of civil rights and racial justice throughout the community. The eponymous Virginia D. Christian Educator of the Year was named for a nuclear engineer who was, among other things, a charter member of the Norwich Branch of the NAACP, the first black person on a council in New London County, the first black person appointed to the State Board of Education, and a member of the State Board of Trustees for Technical Colleges.

The committee for the dinner considers nominees for the award based on their impact on education, the community, and the work

that the nominee is doing in his or her field. Derell Wilson, the Chair of the Freedom Fund Committee, said that Knowles was selected because of "his devotion, commitment, and responsibility to his students and their families as well as to the community of Norwich and Three Rivers Community College."

Knowles is an Associate Professor of English who has taught at Three Rivers for 12 years in the English and Communications Department. He also teaches classes at a local prison as part of the Three Rivers Community College Second Chance Pell Grant program. In addition to serving as the Three Rivers representative on CSU's Students First Consolidation Committee, he co-founded the Men Against Domestic Violence Artistic Expression annual event which consists of music, poetry readings and performances, and a live artist painting. Knowles also chairs the TRCC Community Involvement Committee. Last year, he was named Hartford's first Poet Laureate.



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## Electric Boat's Summer High School Intern Program

EB's Summer High School Intern Program (SHIP) is a work-based learning internship for local high school juniors. The program, a partnership between Electric Boat, the labor unions and the CT Department of Labor, is aimed at cultivating a strong pipeline for future talent in the trades. Over the next decade, Electric Boat will lose skilled workers as they begin to retire. By collaborating with local high schools, EB is preparing the next generation workforce, introducing students to high-skill, high wage manufacturing careers.

Over the course of six weeks, the summer interns work side-by-side with union members who have years of shipbuilding experience,

helping to expand the students' knowledge and prepare them for the upcoming transition from school to work. To be selected for the program, students must be at least 16 years of age, a U.S. citizen, enrolled in a career and technical education program and have completed their junior year of high school.

This year, there were 40 total interns from 11 local high schools. 18 of the students came from traditional, comprehensive high schools, 10 from technical high schools, 8 from Connecticut's Early College Opportunity (ECO) program, and 4 students from Westerly, Rhode Island's Pathways through Early College High School (P-TECH) program.

Based on their field of interest, the interns were placed in varying areas of the company. There were 20 students placed in the operations field; these interns were able to work alongside carpenters, electricians, machinists, pipefitters, shipfitters, and warehousemen. Sixteen interns focused on design, including electrical, mechanical, piping/HVAC, or structural arrangement jobs, and 4 were placed in material services. This year, there was substantial diversity among the interns, with 20 percent of the student interns being women and 35 percent of the group being minorities.

## Hartford HealthCare Opens Health Center in Pawcatuck

Hartford HealthCare has opened its newest HealthCenter at 350 Liberty Street (Route 2) in Pawcatuck. The 27,000-square-foot building was developed with patients' comfort and convenience in mind, offering easy access to primary care, pediatric and adolescent primary care, and rehabilitation services for patients in southeastern Connecticut and Western Rhode Island.

"The opening of our new health center in Pawcatuck exemplifies Hartford HealthCare's deep commitment to bring more services into the communities we serve," said Jeffrey Flaks,

Hartford HealthCare President. "This specially-designed center, along with our Mystic facility which is well under way, will make it more convenient for shoreline residents from Rhode Island to Old Lyme to access a greater array of needed medical services."

Town and business leaders welcomed both the development of the property — which had been vacant since 2003 — and the arrival of medical services to the area.

In 2018, Stonington's Planning and Zoning Commission approved a plan by Old Lyme

developer READCO to construct the two-story medical office building on the nine-acre Liberty Street site, formerly the home of the Maple Breeze amusement park. Construction began in September of last year.

In May, Hartford HealthCare also began construction on a \$24-million, 47-thousand square foot medical building off I-95 and Coogan Boulevard in the Mystic section of Stonington which will be home to a number of specialty services including neurology and cardiology along with full imaging services and primary care.

## Atlantic Broadband Expands Gigabit Internet Deployment to Additional Areas in Connecticut

Atlantic Broadband, the nation's eighth-largest cable operator, announced today the expansion of its Gigabit internet deployment for residential and business customers in Killingly and Putnam, Connecticut.

This launch is part of Atlantic Broadband's expansion initiative to make Gigabit speed internet available to 90 percent of its service area, extending across 11 states from Maine to Florida. It also expands the availability of

Gigabit in its Connecticut footprint, having initially been made available in the areas of East Lyme, Waterford, Montville and New London.

The average internet download speed over fixed broadband in the U.S. is about 96 Mbps, according to Ookla's Q2/Q3 2018 national report. Gigabit internet delivers speeds up to 10 times faster.

The Gigabit speed expansion is occurring at a time when homes and workplaces increasingly require internet with the capacity and performance to power the growing number of devices and applications customers rely on every day.

To learn about Atlantic Broadband's Gigabit internet services, visit [atlanticbb.com/internet/gigabit](http://atlanticbb.com/internet/gigabit). To learn about its internet, phone and TV for business, visit [atlanticbb.com/business](http://atlanticbb.com/business).

### **Workforce continued from page 1**

many free training programs as well as credit-earning programs.

Similarly, both Three Rivers and Quinebaug Valley Community Colleges are deeply engaged in the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative and have also built pathways to employment in healthcare, pharmacy, real estate, and business through workforce training programs.

Porter and Chester Institute of New London will also be joining the mini-expo on October 23. They offer career-focused programs in the medical, dental, CADD or electrician fields.

Connecting employers directly with these training programs is essential to the success of the model. American Job Center East acts as a conduit into training and placement. Designed to unify numerous training, education and employment programs into a single, customer-friendly system, the centers and their partners collaborate to provide seamless core services to job seekers and employers to ensure that the region's resources are being utilized.

With healthcare as the second highest area of demand, EWIB Healthcare Pipeline and healthcare partners will host an event that explores the changing realities in the

region's healthcare workforce on October 18 at Three Rivers Community College (TRCC), with speakers from across the industry and a discussion diving into essential questions on training, recruitment, and retention.

The Chamber is hosting programs like the Business Breakfast on workforce and mini-expo to help bring businesses into the pipeline. Chamber staff at the American Job Center and in our main offices are available to help make connections between employers and the training programs in our network of members.

# It has never been more important to support local journalism you can trust.

Our journalists are in the community, talking with residents, business leaders and government officials. They ask the tough questions, follow up, search for answers, comb through and analyze documents and bring you the important facts every day.



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**Did you know that every subscription to The Day is also helping to support local organizations?** Each year The Day donates its profits back to the community in the form of grants to nonprofit organizations in the region through the Bodenwein Public Benevolent Foundation.

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