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And the ECTy Goes to...



Guests enjoy our Annual Meeting & ECTy celebration in 2022.

Our annual Regional Chamber Awards, known as The ECTys, honor excellence in community engagement, innovation, customer service, and business best practices.

Each recipient is nominated by a member of the regional business community and chosen with immense consideration.

Our **Annual Meeting & ECTy Celebration** will take place on **March 30 at Foxwoods Resort Casino** from 5:00-9:30pm.

From 5:00 - 5:30 we will hold a review of the Chamber budget, foundation report, and election of Chamber Board of Directors. There is no cost to attend this portion of the event.

Beginning at 5:30pm, you are cordially invited to stay for cocktail hour followed by a plated 3-course meal as we celebrate and honor our 2022 ECTy Award recipients.

Visit ChamberECT.com/events to purchase tickets. Advertising and sponsorship opportunities are available.

Please join us in congratulating this year's ECTys Award recipients:

Small Business of the Year
Flanders Fish

Business of the Year
Robinson + Cole

Community Revitalization Leader
Veterans' Rally Point (EasterSeals)

New Business Award
The Barn

Nonprofit of the Year
STEPS

Best Place to Work
Dime Bank

Industry Innovator
Gilman Brothers Company

Tourism Leader of the Year
Olde Mistick Village

Young Professional of the Year
Jessica Talerico, Old Lyme Hardware

Volunteers of the Year
Dara Wicken and Angie Clay, Navy Federal Credit Union

Board of Directors Special Award
Alwyn Christy, Lighthouse Inn

A Special Thank You | Through their commitment to the Chamber, these companies have demonstrated support for the many smaller businesses we serve.



Pitching Easy, LLC. Owner Dennis Long Pursues his Passion of Coaching

"It's not really work when you love what you do"

New to the Chamber, but not to baseball, Dennis Long, Owner of **Pitching Easy, LLC.** branched out into the business world by launching a company with a focus on training, coaching, mentoring, and sports counseling. Whether you are new to the game or an active player, Long provides individuals with a well rounded skill set of the game, aiming to build the confidence of his clients.

What's your small business story? How did you decide to launch this business and what have you learned that would help other small businesses?

Few people are able to say they are doing what they always loved to do as their job. I don't take that feeling for granted. Pitching Easy literally began as a side job in 1984, helping the sons and daughters of co-workers with their baseball skills. What began as helping three or four kids on a summer weeknight grew into upwards of 80 individual lessons per week. At this point, in 2004, Pitching Easy was officially launched.

Aspiring young coaches - some former MLB players - have viewed Pitching Easy on social media and asked about starting their own instruction business. My answer is, "Don't quit your day job just yet." It takes thousands of conversations and relationships

before someone can comfortably transition to a sole proprietorship and make it successfully grow.

What aspect of your business are you passionate about?

Teaching young athletes to remain positive toward their goals and dreams is the motivation behind Pitching Easy. Parents often ask to talk with their child or meet as a family to discuss goals and progress toward those goals.

Baseball is my lifelong love. The game has given me lifelong experiences I will never forget and that amazing feeling is what I seek to pass along to young players each day.

How does your business impact the local community?

There is a good chance that a sibling, child, or friend has experienced baseball through Pitching Easy. The common thread through the businesses in the Eastern Chamber is that many of us have children or siblings who aspire to do great things with their lives. If your business would like to talk about ways to create an environment of positivity with children, please reach out. I would love to share thoughts with you.





YP's enjoy our first YPsocial of the year at The Gard Arts Center.

Why YP?

Connecting in Young Professionals network offers big benefits

If you are a professional early in your career, or you mentor one, you know there's a lot to navigate. Success in career, community, and life balance requires building a strong foundation of skills and support.

Young Professionals of Eastern CT, a program of the Chamber, has been designed to offer flexible opportunities to engage professionally, connect socially, and build a lasting network.

Targeted to young professionals, 40 or under, who work, live, or serve clients in eastern CT, the group offers networking, volunteer opportunities, seminars with top-level executives, professional development, and some just plain fun social activities.

Meeting people in the same stage of life and career can be limited within a work environment, especially during the pandemic. The Chamber has found that supporting and retaining talent in eastern CT is best accomplished by having people feel connected to the region and to each other.

Sign up for YP at YPECT.com. To keep up-to-date with YP events, news, community events, special offers, and community service sign up for our YP newsletter.

2023 programming made possible in part by Homestead Funding - Keith Turner.

Mentors and employers, encourage your people to learn more about the Young Professionals network at YPECT.com and help them stay connected to the region professionally and personally.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH

WED 8	Business After Hours at The Barn 5:00 - 7:00 pm 13 Fort Hill Road, Groton
THUR 9	YPsocial at Florence Griswold Museum with Progressive Leaders of Tomorrow 5:00 - 7:00 pm 96 Lyme Street, Old Lyme
THUR 23	Business After Hours at BMW of New London 5:00 - 7:00 pm 543 Colman Street, New London
THUR 30	Annual Meeting & ECTy Celebration ✨ ✨ 5:00 - 9:00 pm Foxwoods Resort Casino Sponsored by Pat Munger Construction, Foxwoods Resort Casino, Robinson + Cole, EWIB, Norwich Public Utilities

APRIL

WED 5	10th Annual Chamber Foundation Bowl-a-Thon 4:30 - 8:00 pm High Rollers at Foxwoods Resort Casino
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Registration required for most events.

Visit ChamberECT.com/events to sign up today!

Cancellation Policy: Notice must be given at least three business days prior to the event. No shows or those unable to cancel in time will be billed. To cancel, please call the Chamber at (860) 701-9113.

Follow us! @ChamberECT

We always thank renewing members and welcome new members on Facebook. Follow us to stay up-to-date on Chamber news and be the first to engage with members.



REGIONAL BENEFACTOR NEWS



Mystic Aquarium Celebrates Federal Funding for Blue Economy Workforce Development Initiative

Mystic Aquarium announced it is receiving \$650,000 in federal funding, secured by U.S. Senators Chris Murphy and Richard Blumenthal with support from U.S. Representatives Rosa DeLauro and Joe Courtney in the Fiscal Year 2023 omnibus appropriations agreement, to establish the Blue Economy Workforce Development Initiative: Creating a Pathway for Underserved Youth. The initiative recognizes the region's growing blue economy sector, the commitment to the responsible development of offshore wind to combat climate change, the need for a diverse, skilled workforce, and the reality that underserved youth face many barriers to entry.

The Blue Economy Initiative is a partnership between Mystic Aquarium and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Key players are the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut's Innovation Center in New London, and 10 youth-serving organizations throughout Connecticut. "We are excited to be part of this forward-thinking initiative," said Tony Sheridan, President & CEO of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut. "Mystic Aquarium provides unique education and workforce development opportunities in these industries that so desperately need talented and skilled workers. Marine careers are very important to this region and its future. This initiative will prepare and inspire the next generation and help ensure Connecticut remains at the forefront of the emerging Blue Economy."

With Connecticut being a critical hub for the burgeoning offshore wind industry, this innovative public private partnership will help young people develop awareness, interest, knowledge, and skills to help prepare them for competitive jobs in an emerging regional industry that desperately needs skilled workers. While focusing on underserved youth from major urban centers in Connecticut, the initiative's website and digital resources will have a national reach, utilized by Mystic Aquarium's network of partner youth-serving organizations located in high-needs communities in 28 states and Puerto Rico.

While most Blue Economy workforce development initiatives are aimed at higher education, that is often too late for many low-income, and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) youth, who may already be turned off, or turned away, from these careers. Mystic Aquarium is addressing this problem as a priority. "By introducing k-12 youth and educators to exciting blue economy content and connecting them with career professionals and role models that are diverse and relatable, young people will be more likely to pursue related coursework, understand career pathways, and see those careers as both desirable and attainable," said Katie Cubina, Senior Vice President for Mission Programs at Mystic Aquarium. "We are so grateful to our U.S. Representatives for advocating for this exciting initiative, and to our many partners who are committed to working with us to develop and test this innovative model."

Great Wolf Lodge ready to splash down in Mashantucket, adjacent to Foxwoods Resort

Great Wolf Lodge celebrates groundbreaking for new \$300 million resort. Investment by Great Wolf Resorts shareholders Blackstone and Centerbridge Partners to attract thousands of families to the region and create more than 500 full and part-time jobs at the resort.

The Great Wolf Lodge in Mashantucket will be steps away from Foxwoods Resort Casino, which features a variety of indoor and outdoor experiences ranging from concerts and comedy shows to world-class dining, zip-lining, go-karting, 36-holes of championship golf and over 80 retail stores at Tanger Outlets. The addition of Great Wolf Lodge will further enhance Mashantucket as a regional family vacation destination.



Connecticut Offshore Wind Meet the Buyer Forum 2023

On April 12, 2023, join AdvanceCT, Ørsted, Eversource, and Connecticut OSW partners for a half-day Meet the Buyer Forum, connecting Connecticut companies that provide products and services to the Offshore Wind industry with Revolution Wind supply chain executives and project managers.

Following the opening presentation portion of the program, participating companies will have the opportunity to connect directly with Ørsted supply chain representatives. The format for these meetings will be a series of 5-minute one-on-one elevator pitches to establish connections for further follow-up, post forum.

This is a no-charge networking event. For questions, please contact Natalie Rosenbaum at nrosenbaum@advancect.org or call 860-571-7137

Welcome NEW MEMBERS!

Good Graces Events

New England's premiere community and environmentally driven event planner. Our highly organized team takes your vision and realizes it. Whether you're planning a large wedding or a small family reunion, Good Graces handles all details with communication and care all while prioritizing local flowers, fare and the best vendors in New England.

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goodgracesevents.com

ConnexMarkets Inc

A financial marketplace where businesses get funded and lenders engage with well-matched borrowers. We lift-up small- and medium-sized business communities by revolutionizing the commercial lending system resulting in better funding.

64 Wall St, Madison | (833) 296-5363 | connexmarkets.com

Shoreline Happy Paws LLC

a professional pet care company based in Old Saybrook providing dog walking, pet sitting services, and peace of mind to pet parents since 2010. SHP is a team based pet care service that allows pet parents to have more availability and flexibility in scheduling on a year round basis.

61 Main St, Ste 3N, Old Saybrook | (860) 964-0464

cthappypaws.com

Hanford Cabinet

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Substance use disorder inpatient treatment center.

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landmarkrecovery.com

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MEMBER NEWS



Buon Appetito Ristorante & Pizzeria Raises \$10,260 for fallen police officers from the Bristol Police Department

On December 5th, from 3-9:30, Buon Appetito Ristorante & Pizzeria donated 100% of their proceeds from guests' purchases to the families of the fallen officers from the Bristol Police Department. Because of the generous support of the community, they raised \$10,260, which will go directly to the families.



Special Olympics Announces Penguin Plunge Events Happening Around the State

Special Olympics Connecticut is pleased to announce dates for its upcoming Penguin Plunge events and invites all to register for the Shoreline Penguin Plunge at www.soct.org/plunge. Participants in the Plunge will jump into the chilly waters of a lake or Long Island Sound to support the organization's year-round sports, health and fitness programs for athletes around the state and help create communities that accept and include people of all abilities.

The Shoreline Penguin Plunge will be held at a new location this year - Eastern Point Beach, located at 1 Beach Pond Road, Groton CT, on Sunday, March 5th. Check-in will begin at 10 a.m. and the Plunge will take place at noon. Participants must be at least eight years old and register for \$25. We then ask that you raise an additional \$75 to total \$100 raised for Special Olympics Connecticut. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged and may be done online at www.soct.org/plunge. The Shoreline Penguin Plunge is sponsored by The Day and Chelsea Groton Bank.



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Airline Expansions Continue at Bradley Airport

Breeze Airways continues expansion at Bradley International Airport, introducing new nonstop routes to Tampa, Fort Myers and New Orleans, plus one-stop BreezeThru flights to Los Angeles. The new routes will launch in May, 2023, with the nonstops now on sale at introductory fares, from just \$39* one way.

Bradley is also welcoming new, nonstop service to San Juan with Spirit Airlines. The new service to San Juan, PR will launch on June 7, with flights now on sale starting at \$74 one-way.

Spirit's new route will operate year-round, three times a week on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays.

In December 2022, the airline launched the airport's first nonstop flight to Montego Bay, Jamaica. In addition, it operates nonstop service to Fort Myers, FL, Myrtle Beach, SC, Orlando, FL, and Tampa, FL.



DOD Now Accepting Applications for New Military Spouse Career Accelerator Pilot

The Defense Department launched a 12-week paid fellowship program to expand employment opportunities for eligible military spouses.

The Military Spouse Career Accelerator Pilot program provides spouses of currently serving members of the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Space Force, to include active, reserve and National Guard components, with paid fellowships at civilian employers across various industries and locations.

Military spouses who are accepted into the program will be placed with host companies that match their location and work experience, among other factors. Spouses will receive in-person or professional training and mentoring. At the end of the fellowship, spouses who excel in the program may be invited to join the host company as a direct hire.

Spouses can find more information about eligibility and learn how to apply for this unique opportunity on MySECO, the website of the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program.

By partnering with the fellowship program, employers gain access to a pipeline of military spouse fellows that are equipped with education, transferable skills and experience in a variety of roles and industries. They represent a diverse population faced with challenges finding and maintaining careers due to frequent relocations.

Employers who are interested in hosting a military spouse fellow may visit the Hiring Our Heroes website to learn more.

Collaboration, Connections, & Community

The Power of Chamber Member Councils

Councils are member-led groups that help the Chamber provide relevant information to its greater membership about timely topics, whether through press releases, blogs, or events, while offering pertinent networking opportunities based on your areas of interest.

Each council focuses on a particular topic and includes members from all types of industries, businesses, and organizations. With varying perspectives, lessons, and learning to share with the group, councils and committees work to support each other and help promote events and news with Chamber members.

Human Resources Council

HR professionals keep the Chamber informed of labor law updates, best practices for recruitment and retention, conflict resolution, and other relevant or innovative ideas to support an engaged workforce.

Recently, our HR Council assisted in planning a Business Breakfast about employee engagement featuring a lively presentation about humanism in the workplace, and how socially focused leaders, effective culture, and HR can generate "workplace magnetism"

Energy Council

Connecting industry professionals across the region's portfolio of energy generation/distribution assets to advocate for economic development opportunities, including supply chain diversification, workforce training, decarbonization efforts, and more.

Military Affairs Council

Serves as a vital link between active duty military and the region, helping organize the Chamber's annual Military Appreciation

Breakfast, Service Person of the Month program, and military discount program.

This year's Military Breakfast in May 2023, will feature remarks from senior service representatives from the U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Army. and the presentation of the 2022/2023 Military Community Support Awards. Active-duty members of each branch of the military are invited to attend the breakfast, honoring their service and sacrifice to our community. The morning's program features

Education Council

The Chamber's Education Council strives to bring our community and schools together by acting as a liaison between the business and education communities. The committee provides volunteers the opportunity to connect with one or more schools within eastern CT.

Coming up on March 15 the Education Council will hold the 2023 Career Pathway Expo at Three Rivers Community College. This event exposes local high school students to a variety of career pathways, highlighting what kind of education, training, and skills are required to succeed in these fields.

Legislative Affairs Council

Meets to discuss legislative concerns and to propose or advocate for legislation to support economic development and the business community. The Chamber works closely with this committee to set its yearly agenda, and tracks activities in Hartford and beyond through TrackBill, our online bill-tracking software designed for members to engage in the political process.

To join a council log in to your Membership Portal and select which groups you'd like to receive invitations to.

Special Thanks to Our Regional Benefactors

