

CONNECTING BUSINESS. GROWING TALENT. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY.



CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE
EASTERN CONNECTICUT

ANNUAL REPORT

A Year of Partnership, Progress, & Regional Prosperity

As we reflect on 2025, we are proud to share a year defined by purposeful growth, stronger partnerships, and renewed economic momentum across eastern Connecticut. This was a year of refinement and forward movement, focused on strengthening our core work and positioning the region to succeed in a changing economy.

Our membership continued to thrive. We welcomed more than 140 new members, an increase over 2024, and maintained a retention rate that outperforms industry benchmarks, a testament to the value we deliver across industries, sizes, and communities.

Partnership expansion remained central to our efforts. We renewed our role as administrative partner of the Eastern Regional Tourism District and the Southeast Connecticut World Affairs Council and assumed administrative support for the Renaissance City Development Association in New London. Each partnership strengthens our ability to advance coordinated regional strategies and ensure businesses of all sizes, particularly small and family-owned enterprises, have access to advocacy, resources, and opportunity.

We also refined and elevated our programs. Our tourism conference, formerly a morning-only forum, was expanded and formalized as a day-long annual event reflecting its continued value to the region's visitor economy. We also began revamping our Community Concierge initiative into a more focused Relocation Toolkit, designed to help individuals and families move to Connecticut while supporting employers in attracting and retaining talent. General Dynamics Electric Boat has joined as a project partner, a strong signal of the employer investment this work deserves.

Leadership development remains a cornerstone of our mission. Leadership Eastern Connecticut graduated 27 passionate participants, deepening a pipeline of informed, engaged leaders across generations and sectors. The Entrepreneur Academy graduated 40 participants and expanded its reach through new partnerships with Goldman Sachs' 10,000 Small Businesses and Charter Oak State College, enhancing the program's regional influence and access to high quality business education.

Throughout the year, we saw real signs of economic revival: new investments, business expansions, and a growing sense of regional optimism. The Chamber supported this momentum by convening stakeholders, amplifying

business voices, celebrating successes, and advancing initiatives to support long-term economic resilience. Our Regional Innovation Center, which marked its second anniversary in the fall, continued to serve as a collaborative hub, building connections and driving new growth.

The Chamber sustained its commitment to legislative advocacy through timely bill tracking and ongoing engagement with municipal and state leadership. We work diligently to understand business challenges, identify opportunities, and explore areas for partnership, ensuring our business community's perspective remains part of the policy discussions shaping the region's future.

Investing in our community and quality of life was also a key priority. Our Foundation distributed over \$111,000 to benefit 46 diverse organizations and four college scholarships, a reflection of the deep community commitment that defines this Chamber.

None of this progress would be possible without the dedication of our members, partners, volunteers, Board of Directors, and staff. Together, we continue to build a stronger, more connected, and more vibrant eastern Connecticut. Thank you for your continued trust and partnership as we move forward together.



Anthony Joyce
Board Chair



Tony Sheridan
President and CEO

CONNECTING BUSINESS

Membership	4
Event Recap	5
Advocacy	6
Regional Innovation Center	6
Administrative Partnerships	7

GROWING TALENT

Leadership Eastern CT	8
Entrepreneur Academy	9
Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board	10
Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT Foundation	11

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

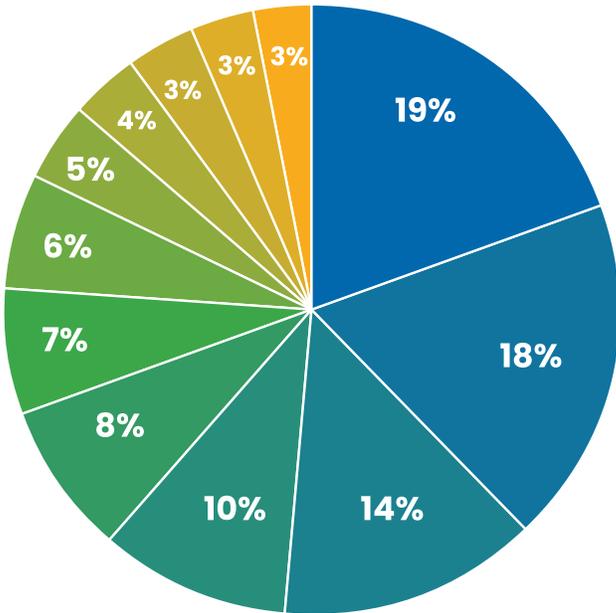
Promoting our Members	12
Awards Recap	13

GOVERNANCE

Board of Directors	14
Finances	14
Staff	15

Our Network in 2025

Membership by Region



- Groton, Mystic, & Stonington (19%)
- New London (18%)
- Norwich, Preston, & Greater Norwich (14%)
- Waterford (10%)
- East Lyme, Old Lyme, & Lyme (8%)
- Ledyard, Mashantucket, & North Stonington (7%)
- Colchester, Salem, & Montville/Uncasville (6%)
- Windham County (5%)
- Hartford County (4%)
- Tolland, New Haven, & Fairfield Counties (3%)
- RI, MA, NY, & Other States (3%)
- Middlesex County (3%)

142
New Members
↑15% from 2024

108
Towns & Cities
represented in
our membership

90%
of our members are
small businesses
*(employing fewer than
150 people)*

108,000+
People employed
by our members

4
New Regional
Benefactors

We were pleased to welcome four new Regional Benefactors, demonstrating their strong commitment to the Chamber’s mission, our regional economy, and the small business community.

Bringing People Together

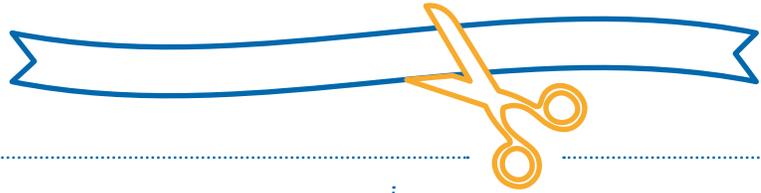
186 Events, Meetings, & Programs Hosted

WHERE BUSINESS HAPPENS

We hosted events at **70 unique venues** in **22 different towns**, underscoring our regional reach and impact.

GOING THE DISTANCE

We cut **384 feet of ribbon** for **32 businesses** – a football field of new beginnings, milestones, and momentum.



WHO'S WHO

We printed **5,151 nametags and lanyards**, each marking the start of a new conversation.

NEXT GEN

8 Young Professionals events and a **300-student Career Pathway Expo** helped cultivate our future business leaders.

HERE FOR THE APPLAUSE

We presented **33 awards** recognizing excellence, investment, service, and leadership.

See pg 13 for a list of award winners

WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE

124 Legislators, executives, and subject matter experts shared insights and expertise, turning events into tools for growth.



Advocating for Business

In 2025, we connected members directly with policymakers while advocating on their behalf. By bringing legislators to the business community through events, tracking key state and federal legislation, and engaging elected officials at all levels, the Chamber ensured members stayed informed and represented on issues impacting their businesses.

27 Bills Tracked

18+ Testimonies Presented



The Day

How small business success is igniting economic revival in the region



Dangers of pulling the plug on Revolution Wind



Officials look to elevate tourism in Connecticut

Space to Innovate

Regional Innovation Center
at CHAMBER of COMMERCE
EASTERN CONNECTICUT

The Chamber's Regional Innovation Center experienced strong and consistent facility usage throughout 2025, serving as a central meeting hub for businesses, nonprofit organizations, civic partners, and Chamber programs.

349 Conference Room Bookings

60+ Professional Development Sessions

100% Office Occupancy



Professional Development & Community Impact

The Center provided essential facility space for organizations across the public and private sectors, supporting diverse regional programming and training. This included state-level engagement with the State of Connecticut (DECD), CONNstep, and CHFA, as well as several civic, business, and non-profit partners such as the City of New London, SECCOG, Chelsea Groton Bank, Liberty Bank, Safe Futures, and Habitat for Humanity ECT.

Extending Our Reach through Partnership



ERTD is a state-designated organization responsible for marketing and promoting tourism across Connecticut's 41-town eastern region. The 37-member board is comprised of industry and municipal leaders across the region, and operates with administrative, fiscal, and marketing support from the Chamber as the non-profit administrative partner.

4 Quarterly Board Meetings

52 Public Committee Meetings

80,000 Brochures Distributed

2 New Resources Developed:
Legislative Advocacy Toolkit
Nominating Toolkit

\$70,000 in grant funding delivered to 22 organizations leveraged into \$140,000 of collaborative marketing dollars



RCDA advances economic revitalization and redevelopment initiatives in the City of New London. In November 2025, the Chamber began partnering with RCDA to provide administrative support and collaborate with its diverse Board of civic, business, and community leaders. A key focus of the partnership has been launching a strategic planning process to help define the next phase of the organization's work and establish new redevelopment priorities.



SECWAC connects the region to global issues through public speaker events featuring world-class voices—including diplomats, Pulitzer Prize winners, network news journalists, and authors—who engage audiences in dialogue on today's most pressing international topics.

11 Speaker Events

22.5% Increase in Membership

Our work is strengthened by collaboration with the following organizations and more.



Developing the Region's Leaders



For nearly four decades, Leadership Eastern CT has been equipping future community leaders with the skills and vision to address the region's challenges. This commitment to leadership in action was exemplified by the Class of 2025 through their class project renovating the conference rooms and offices at the Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center. Through painting, updated furnishings, and thoughtful touches like local food pantry photos and a volunteer recognition area, the team created a modern, welcoming space that strengthens the feeding assistance network across New London County.



Class of 2025

Shayleen Alfieri
Norwich Public Utilities

Egzon Balidemaj
Eversource

Ashlee Bownas
Dime Bank

Elizabeth Daly
National Coast Guard Museum
Association

Charity Dames
Foxwoods Resort Casino

Andrew Fitch
Charter Oak Federal Credit Union

Jessica French
SCADD

Cori Gallagher
Reliance Health

Bobby Kempke
Joshua's Worldwide Transportation

Daniel Lambertson
Pat Munger Construction Company

Chang-Ning Liu
Pfizer

Yuxin Liu
Connecticut Municipal Electric
Energy Cooperative

Claudia Mejia
Senior Resources Agency on Aging

Cassandra Meyer-Ogren
Dime Bank

Shanna Mitchell
Ascend Bank

Wyllette Mitzell Selvidio
Mystic Aquarium

Marjory Palomino

Brittany Perkins
Dominion Energy

Sandra Radley
Cardinal Honda

Dedrienne Ravenelle
Madonna Place

Shaquanna Sebastian
Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation

Renee Simao
Chelsea Groton Bank

Randall Surprenant
Norwich Public Utilities

Evan Sywak
Charter Oak Federal Credit Union

Mylasia Thomas
Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation

Kyle Uncapher-Antoniou
Charter Oak Federal Credit Union

Coby Wooten
Dominion Energy

Supporting the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneur Academy

The Entrepreneur Academy is an eight-week business development program designed to help aspiring entrepreneurs transform ideas into sustainable ventures. To ensure as little barrier to entry as possible, participation at no cost was made possible by: Liberty Bank, Southeastern CT Enterprise Region (seCTer), Waterford Hotel Group, Simon Konover Company & Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut Women and Girls Fund.

\$6,500

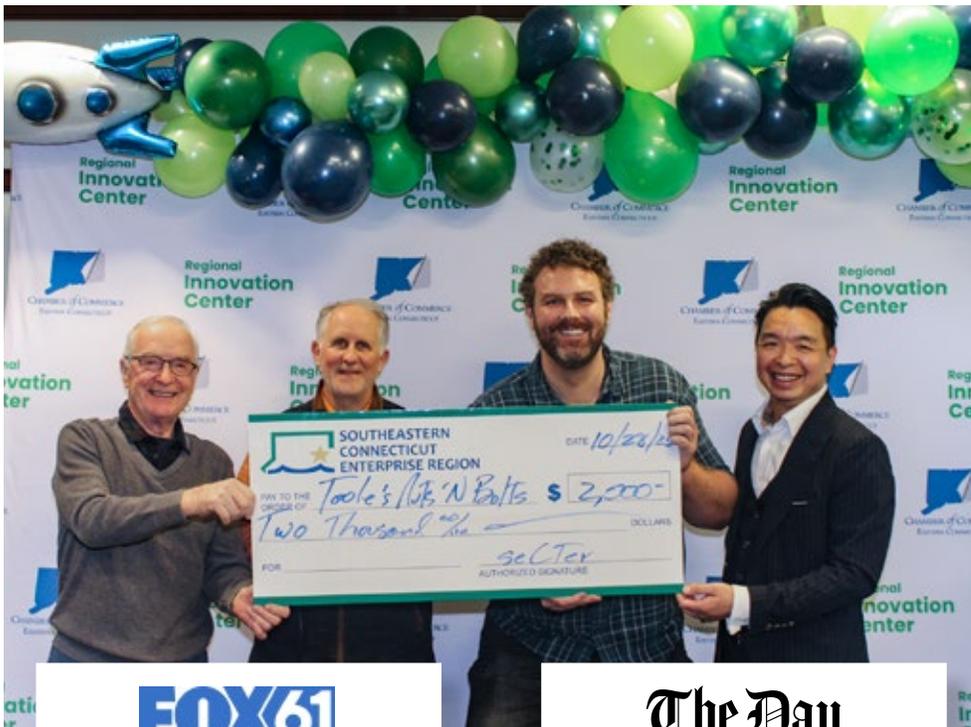
Awarded to “Most Promising Ventures”

1. Toole’s Nuts ‘N Bolts
2. The Golf Club
3. The Blue Bag Foundation
3. Yoga Me Happy
3. Sizzle Pop

40
Graduates
↑ 38% from 2024

85%
Women

67%
Minority



FOX61

Entrepreneurs shoot for the stars at Eastern Connecticut commerce event

The Day

A local jewel for entrepreneurs



The Day

What’s Going On: Entrepreneurs have a night to remember

Workforce Development in Action



The workforce development partnership between the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut and the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) supports a dedicated Business Services Representative who connects regional employers with workforce resources and talent pipelines. In 2025, this work helped hundreds of employers access workforce programs, connected job seekers with training and recruitment opportunities, and supported industry partnerships in healthcare and advanced manufacturing.

Business Services Representative Impact in partnership with EWIB:

420

Employers served through workforce programs

1,672

Job seekers connected to training and/or employers

1,000+

High school students engaged in career exploration

\$180k

Funding facilitated by our Business Services Representative in workforce training through Incumbent Worker Training & On-the-Job Training



2025 Foundation Grant Recipients pose outside of the Regional Innovation Center.

Investing in Futures

Chamber Foundation Grant Recipients

Tommy Toy Fund - United Way of Southeastern Connecticut	\$10,000	New London Youth Affairs	\$2,000
Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board	\$5,000	The Samaritan House Inc.	\$2,000
National Coast Guard Museum Association	\$5,000	United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Eastern Connecticut	\$2,000
UCFS Healthcare	\$5,000	Stonington Community Center	\$1,750
Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center	\$5,000	La Grua Center	\$1,500
Safe Futures, Inc.	\$3,500	Lyman Allyn Art Museum	\$1,500
Care and Share of East Lyme, Inc.	\$3,060	Noank Community Support Services, Inc.	\$1,500
Madonna Place, Inc.	\$3,000	S.T.E.P.S, Inc.	\$1,500
Thames River Community Service Inc.	\$3,000	Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group, Inc	\$1,500
Child and Family Agency of Southeastern Connecticut	\$2,500	Public Library of New London	\$1,459
Groton Community Meals	\$2,500	Anchor of Hope	\$1,000
Health Education Center	\$2,500	Eastern Connecticut Ballet	\$1,000
Junior Achievement of Southwest New England	\$2,500	Friends of the Canterbury Public Library	\$1,000
New England Science & Sailing Foundation	\$2,500	Goodspeed Musicals	\$1,000
New London Homeless Hospitality Center	\$2,500	Goodwill Industries of Southern New England	\$1,000
The Center: A Drop-In Community Learning and Resource Center, Inc.	\$2,500	Norwich Rotary Foundation	\$1,000
The Light House Voc-Ed Center Inc.	\$2,500	The Granite Theatre	\$1,000
The Salvation Army	\$2,500	Southeastern CT Robotics, Inc	\$1,000
Horizons Inc	\$2,400	The Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries, Inc.	\$1,000
The Riverfront Children's Center, Inc.	\$2,250	Hygienic Art Inc.	\$750
Always Home, Inc.	\$2,000		
Covenant to Care for Children, Inc.	\$2,000		
Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center	\$2,000		
High Hopes Therapeutic Riding	\$2,000		
Higher Edge	\$2,000		

\$106,169
Awarded

45
Organizations

Scholarship Recipients

Arnell Peck, University of Richmond

Cortland Ruggiero, University of Connecticut

Kathrin Fischer, University of New England

Charles Morgan, Rochester Institute of Technology

\$5,000
Distributed



Celebrating Multi-Generational Impact

Launched in June 2025, the Chamber's *Community Builders* member spotlight series honors the resilience, impact, and enduring legacy of family-owned, multi-generational, and small businesses. With a network of more than 1,300 members across Connecticut, Rhode Island, and beyond, the Chamber remains committed to supporting those who invest in our local communities and strengthen the vibrant region we call home.

New London's Unsung Resource: The Salvation Army

Holmberg Orchards: Growing Five Generations Strong in Gales Ferry

Family Fueled: The Power Behind R&W Heating Energy Solutions

Structured with Purpose: How Carefree is Raising the Roof with Quality Craftsmanship



1896

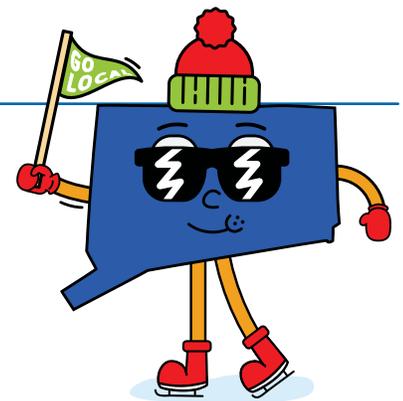
Promoting Members

Holidays in Eastern CT Made Simple: Shop Chamber & Save

The Chamber's holiday campaign significantly outperformed industry averages, generating high engagement and driving traffic to member events, discounts, and directory listings at no cost.

29%
Open Rate

17%
Click-through Rate



443

Member News Releases Shared

515

Member Events Promoted

108

Member Job Postings Shared

@ChamberECT

↑28%
Facebook Followers

↑41%
Facebook Post Link Clicks

↑333%
Instagram Reach

↑100%
Instagram Interactions

↑13%
LinkedIn Followers

Recognizing our Community

74th Citizen of the Year

Jeff Hamilton, President & General Manager, Mohegan Sun

Social Service Recognition Breakfast

Executive Director of the Year
Claire Silva, Madonna Place

Board Member of the Year
Ericka Winstead, Habitat for Humanity of Eastern Connecticut

Staff Member of the Year
Michele M. Deane, The Riverfront Children's Center, Inc.

Volunteer of the Year
Caroline Driscoll, New London Beautification Committee

Collaboration of the Year
New Capacities: Norwich, under the Leadership of United Way of Southeastern Connecticut

Guided By Heart
Deb McGrath, Southeastern CT Women's Network

In Memoriam Honorees
Lottie B. Scott

Richard "Dick" Erickson

Regional Chamber Awards

Small Business of the Year
Yankee Remodeler

Business of the Year
Sheffield Pharmaceuticals

Community Revitalization Leader
Norwich Community Development Corporation (NCDC)

Nonprofit of the Year
New London Area Food Pantry

Best Place to Work
Bouvier Insurance

Industry Innovator
Birk Manufacturing

New Business Award
Rossa Negra

Tourism Leader of the Year
Nature's Art Village

Young Professional of the Year
Lily Muir, ThayerMahan

Volunteers of the Year
Erin Sullivan & Alyson Woznicki

Board of Directors Special Award
Nick Caplanson, Dime Bank

Strategic Partnership Award
Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments + Its Members

Military Community Support Awardees

General Dynamics Electric Boat

Filomena's Restaurant & Private Dining

Service Person of the Year

ND1 (DWS/EXW) John J. Ahnen III, USN

Service Person of the Month

CCS1 Seth Chiado, USN

BM3 Lucas Kozak, USCG

SSG Emma Faucher, CTARNG

TM2 Jaisyn Bulkley-Mitchell, USN

EMN1 David Swenson, USN

ND2 Micah Marshall, USN

EC1 Ebony Reece, USN

MU1 Renee McGee, USCG

YNS2 Justin Catuzza, USN



Board Members

CHAIR

Anthony Joyce
Chelsea Groton Bank

VICE CHAIR

Marguerite Driscoll
Pfizer, Inc.

VICE CHAIR

Dave Meisinger
Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Company (CMEEC)

VICE CHAIR

Anna Lathrop
Gourmet Galley Catering & GG at Home

TREASURER

Laurie Finan
CENTURY 21 Shutters & Sails

SECRETARY

Jeffrey Godley
Lahan & King, LLC

PRESIDENT

Tony Sheridan
Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT

Peter Armstrong
Mystic Seaport Museum

Blair Bendel
Foxwoods Resort Casino

Charles Bunnell
The Mohegan Tribe

Amanda Cleveland
Silver, Petrucelli & Associates, Inc.

Raymond Collins
Eversource

Tina Couch
Mystic Aquarium

Katherine Ericson
LEARN

Donna Handley
*Backus and Windham Hospitals/
Hartford HealthCare*

Myra Lee
General Dynamics Electric Boat

Richard Lisitano
*Lawrence + Memorial Hospital/
Yale New Haven Health*

Jenna Massoud
Ørsted

Brian Orenstein
Charter Oak Federal Credit Union

Chris Riley
Norwich Public Utilities

Lou Ziegler
*Chamber Foundation/Mohegan Tribal
Housing Authority*

Finances (Unaudited)

Revenue

Dues Revenue	\$302,705
Programs & Events	\$317,269
Innovation Center, inc. Capital Campaign	\$290,822
Partnerships & Grants	\$235,008
Other Non-Dues Revenue	\$163,319
	\$1,309,123

Expenses

Operations, inc. Personnel & Benefits	\$851,956
Innovation Center, inc. Renovations*	\$239,697
General Expenses, inc. Events	\$188,401
Office, Technology, & Professional Fees (non-IC)	\$113,824
Property Taxes	\$30,147
	\$1,424,025

*Includes approx. \$38k in grant expenses not yet reimbursed

Balance Sheet

Assets, inc. Fixed Assets	\$2,707,514
Liabilities	\$169,895
Equity	\$2,537,619

Staff

Tony Sheridan
President and CEO

Megan Gilbert
Vice President

Ciera Alston
Administrative Assistant

Stephanie Clark
Business Development Manager

Denise Desrochers
Program & Event Manager

Julia Florence
Communications Manager

Joelle Garrett
Business Services Representative

Andrea Manning
Partnerships Manager

Lori Thompson
Office Manager

Emily Wilkins
Creative Manager

Kevin Zhang
Community Manager

*Thank you to our interns, Nina Matt
and Hannah Calaman!*



Chamber staff enjoy the 2025 Holiday Gala. Not pictured: Ciera Alston, Joelle Garrett, and Emily Wilkins.

Regional Benefactors

The Chamber's Regional Benefactors contribute over and above the standard membership dues structure to support important programs produced annually for the small business and nonprofits in the region. These community-oriented companies are committed to responsible economic growth, leadership development, job creation, and bringing our regional voice to Hartford and beyond.

