

## Partridge Snow & Hahn to Provide Legal and Economic Updates to Chamber Members

When Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP first opened our doors in New Bedford in 2003, our lawyers had a vested interest in helping to build an economic and cultural renaissance in the Southcoast region. The area was only just starting to recover from the 1990-1991 recession, where unemployment rates in some of our cities were reported in excess of 20 percent. I have lived and worked in Southcoast nearly all of my life, and vividly remember this time in our region's history when the future of the area looked bleak. But, even in those dark days, there was promise, a newfound energy and a commitment from residents, businesses and community leaders who had great ideas and the determination to return Southcoast to the thriving and prosperous community it once was. I believe that today's Southcoast looks very much like the picture these visionaries painted for the area all those years ago.

The New Bedford Economic Development Council recently reported that from November of 2015 to November of 2016 the unemployment rate in New Bedford dropped to 3.7 percent, resulting in the greatest unemployment decrease in the nation. In the last few years, we've seen dozens of businesses establish a presence in the region, including banks, manufacturing, marine technology, alternate energy, hotels and restaurants, casting a positive spotlight on our corner of the Commonwealth as a result.

The downtown historic district of New Bedford is almost unrecognizable compared to what it was a decade and a half ago. New restaurants, galleries and artist studios are making this city an exciting and lively place that attracts not only tourists, but new business prospects and potential investors as well. Developments such as the Killburn Mill Project, New Bedford Business Park, and the New Bedford Wind Energy Center have unlimited potential, and the long anticipated arrival of the South Coast Rail will continue to generate more opportunity for economic development.

There is an enthusiasm in Southcoast that is stirred by all of these projects, and the dozens more I don't have the space to mention. The work we are doing as members of this business community is creating a buzz that reaches far beyond our vibrant and diverse Southcoast Region. Our economy is thriving, and the future of Southcoast looks more promising than it ever has before. In 2017, the SouthCoast Chamber welcomed more than 163 new members, due to the extraordinary efforts of Rick Kidder and his team, but also because businesses continue to recognize the potential of our community, and the power of working together through the Chamber to help ensure that progress remains constant.

As a 2018 sponsor of the SouthCoast Chamber, my colleagues and I at Partridge Snow & Hahn will be writing a monthly column for the *Chamber*. It is our goal to highlight issues that impact our region in an effort to help Chamber members navigate this growing economic landscape. We want our columns to be of value to you, so please let us know if there is a topic you are interested in learning about. We also want to partner with you, and if you are interested in co-authoring a column, we'd love to hear from you. It certainly is an exciting time to be in Southcoast, and the role each of you are playing in helping our community realize this success is applauded. Thank you.

I wish you all happiness, good health, prosperity and continued success in 2018.

Happy New Year.

Randy Weeks  
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