

# Chamber Channels

A PUBLICATION OF THE AFFILIATED CHAMBERS OF  
COMMERCE OF GREATER SPRINGFIELD, INC.

Serving Agawam, East Longmeadow/Longmeadow,  
Hampden/Wilbraham, Ludlow, Springfield, West Springfield and the  
Women's Partnership

November 2008

## In This Issue

[Legislative Update](#)

[Ludlow Golf for Kids  
Tournament](#)

[2008 Washington  
Symposium](#)

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## Quick Links

[ACCGS Website](#)

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## President's Message

### Super 60

On Friday October 24, 2008 at Chez Josef in Agawam the ACCGS celebrated the success of 60 locally owned, privately held, companies located in Western Massachusetts.

The *Super 60* program, now in its 19th year, is a outgrowth of a program originally called the *Fabulous Fifty*. The *Fabulous Fifty* was a program established by KPMG and brought to the Chamber by Tom Burton, who was formally with KPMG and is now President of Hampden Bank. The immediate success of the program demonstrated the desire of the business community to recognize, acknowledge, and celebrate its success stories with the Western Massachusetts community and the "outside" world. The program grew at such a rapid pace in the late 1990's and is now known as the *Super 60*. The *Super 60* highlights 30 of the largest, privately held companies, and 30 of the fastest growing companies in the region. The companies are nominated by banks, accountants, lawyers and and some are self-nominated. Many use the *Super 60* designation in their advertising as a symbol of their success and as a thank you to their employees who help make it happen year after year.

The *Super 60* list is an indication of the health of the local economy. This year's list includes businesses from the mainstream industries that now lead our region in growth including health care, private higher education, and financial services. The list also has a large number of local manufacturing companies that have been the backbone of our region for many years and the new knowledge based companies which are helping to grow our local economy.

The ACCGS believes that in today's uncertain times the *Super 60* program is needed more now than ever. On a daily basis we are bombarded with bad news and it makes a great deal of sense to highlight to the local community that there are still many companies that are doing well, hiring employees and will be around for years to come.

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## **Legislative Update**

Your Chamber is very busy on all three levels of government: local, state, and federal.

Each day, one or more of these levels of government influences the way we conduct our lives and business. You can sit back and complain about it, or do what many of our members do, get involved. Here are just a few examples.

### **Local**

When the leaves turn colors, local selectmen and Mayors' thoughts turn towards setting local property tax rates. This fall ritual is actually the largest single community issue that affects the cost of doing business in any town or city. Recently, members of the East Longmeadow Chamber of

### **ACCGS Government Reception**

The Chamber will be hosting its annual Government Reception on November 19th at the Carriage House at Storowton Tavern. This event is an opportunity for you to speak directly to elected officials on all levels about issues that impact you and your ability to do business here in Western Massachusetts. You can talk to our state legislators about issues such as Unemployment Insurance, Workers' Compensation, taxes and regulations. It also gives our members a chance to speak one-on-one with local officials regarding upcoming tax classification efforts, zoning issues, signage requirements and traffic problems. The reception is always well attended by elected officials. The Chamber's Legislative Steering Committee, which does a great job representing you, hosts this event. I urge you to attend because the more voices heard on issues important to the business community and economic development, the better the outcome for everyone.

Russell F. Denver  
President, ACCGS

Commerce, led by its Chairman, David Leslie, formulated a message for keeping a single tax rate (same rate for residents and business) in that town. Mr. Leslie appeared at the required public hearing, supported by several of his members and armed with dozens of supporting statements signed by member businesses. The result? A victory in keeping one tax rate for East Longmeadow.

Next up are all other affiliates. Some of which have a higher rate for business (Agawam, West Springfield, Springfield) and the others that have had a higher rate in the past or have given serious consideration to that concept. Each city and town must vote annually on this issue and it is vitally important that every Chamber has a presence. If you don't believe it, give an East Longmeadow Board member a call. Congratulations East Longmeadow!

## **State**

The cautious predictions and assumptions made four months ago as the state was passing its budget have proven correct. The state budget cannot be met with the current rate of revenue collections. The \$ 1 billion shortfall that was feared now looks to be a reality. In mid October, the Governor began what are called "9-c" cuts. These are cuts made to certain budget items that the Governor can do on his own authority under section "9-c" of the state's constitution. The level of cuts is around 25% of the

projected \$ 1 billion shortfall. The Chamber's Budget Sub Committee, chaired by Dan Keenan, Vice President of Government Relations for the Sisters of Providence Health System, diligently reviews the state's monthly Revenue Report. Septembers saw a decrease in almost every category, including a 13% decrease in Excise Tax collected from car sales. Capital Gains Taxes have started to slide and as can be seen from the national economy and stock market, the slide is most likely to continue. The budget was based upon the same amount of Capital Gains being collected this year as last; a highly unlikely scenario. The Chamber is working with the administration and legislators to find ways within the budget to enact reforms and then to look at areas to made reductions that would not harm our overall economy. The task will be difficult and painful and requires everyone's attention and input.

### **Federal**

Forty-five members of the Chamber were hosted by Congressman Richard Neal in Washington D.C. for two days in September. Being in Washington D.C. and in the Capitol building during the beginning discussions of the economic "crisis" was a tremendous experience itself. Being addressed by The Chairman of the House Financial Service Committee, Congressman Barney Frank, and the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, Charles Rangel, allowed participants a rare opportunity to learn about

and be heard on this issue. Through all three days, Congressman Neal was at the center of it all. See more at right.

## ACCGS Calendar

### November 12

ACCGS After 5, Geraldine's Night Club, 1501 Elm Street, West Springfield, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., \$10 Members, \$15 Non Members

### November 14

ACCGS Legislative Steering Committee, TD Banknorth Conf. Room, 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

### November 19

ERC Board of Directors Meeting, The Gardens of Wilbraham, Community Room #2, Lodge Lane, Wilbraham, 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

\*

Women's Partnership Meeting, Clarion Hotel and Conference Center, West Springfield, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

\*

Government Reception, Storrowton Tavern, Memorial Avenue, West Springfield, 5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., \$45 Members, \$60 Non Members

### November 20

ACCGS Board of Directors' Meeting, TD Banknorth Conference Center, Springfield 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

### November 21

Women's' Partnership Board of Directors Meeting, EDC Conference Room, Springfield, 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

### November 25

WRC Board of Directors Meeting, Captain Leonard House, Agawam, 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

### November 27

Thanksgiving- Offices Closed

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