



## Office of Economic Development

Summer  
2008

### The City of Lowell is open for business!

We are delighted to launch a new quarterly newsletter that contains current information on services and programs of value to you, the business community. Regardless of whether you're a start-up or an existing company, the global market place requires that you stay innovative and competitive. We can help you with that.

Each issue will contain information that will help you with business to business transactions and offer access to programs in technical and financial assistance, workforce development, government procurement, etc.

We will also spotlight a local business and learn more about what they do and how they impact Lowell's economy. The summer 2008 issue will feature Federal Fabrics-Fibers Inc., "the world's most advanced manufactures of Air Beam structures." Their state of the art facility, located on West Adams Street in Lowell, enables the design, development and manufacturing of unique woven and non woven products for use by the U.S. military, emergency responders and other private sector companies.

In addition to business spotlights, the newsletter will include articles on commercial development projects and descriptions of new businesses that have opened operation in Lowell. Upcoming issues will include an "Ask the Expert" section that will provide insightful advice on legal, managerial, financial, personnel, and marketing questions.

While it's the City that is initiating the newsletter, we invite you to submit articles and offer suggestions and comments. There's a lot to like about Lowell, and we hope that this newsletter gives you one more reason to do so.

Very truly yours,

Edward Caulfield  
Mayor

Bernard F. Lynch  
City Manager

### In This Issue

**[Learn the latest on the progress of the Hamilton Canal project](#)**

**[Take advantage of Lowell's Commercial Revitalization Deduction](#)**

**[Business Spotlight: Take a look inside "the world's most advanced manufactureres of Air Beam structures"](#)**

**[New Businesses in Lowell!](#)**

### A 21st century vision for the Hamilton Canal District

### Your success is our business!

Lowell's **Economic Development Office** offers a host of incentives and assistance to companies and commercial developers including site selection, workforce development, small business loan programs, traditional and non-traditional finance programs and other areas of technical assistance.

These services are provided both directly and in partnership with the Lowell Development & Financial Corporation, [Lowell Small Business Assistance Center](#), [Career Center of Lowell](#), [Massachusetts Office of Business Development](#), [MassDevelopment](#), and other local and regional partners.

### CONTACTS

**[Bernard F. Lynch City Manager](#)**

**[Adam Baacke Assistant City Manager/DPD Director](#)**

**[Theresa Park Director of Economic Development](#)**

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Lowell, with over 105,000 residents, is the fourth largest city in Massachusetts, following Boston, Worcester, and Springfield.

- The first CVS ever was established in Downtown Lowell in 1963. Today, the company does about \$25 billion in sales in over 5,000 stores in America - and it all started as a "Consumer Value Store" on Merrimack Street in Lowell. CVS still maintains a store on



The Hamilton Canal District project which has been underway in Lowell since August of last year has been positively moving forward. The project actually began several years ago with assemblage of site and RFP process to secure a master developer. Trinity Financial was named master developer in September 2007.

Trinity Financial and the City of Lowell are currently managing the public planning process, which is designed to solicit input and direction from the public for the overall design and program for the redevelopment.

The Hamilton Canal District project involves the reinvention of seventeen acres of vacant and underutilized land spanning the Merrimack, Pawtucket and Hamilton Canals that will transform the gateway of Downtown Lowell into a new vibrant mixed-use neighborhood. The development site is a designated Priority Development site under MGL Chapter 43D. A Priority Development site is chosen by the state as a place for development and is thus granted an expedited permitting process.

The master planning process began on December 5, 2007 with the first in a series of comprehensive design/planning charrettes and community meetings, fully embracing the goals of the public-private partnership. With current proposed master plan, Trinity Financial will meet the municipal needs of the City of Lowell and provide significant benefits to the community. The City of Lowell's goal is to achieve the highest and best use of the entire Hamilton Canal District by incorporating contemporary, signature architecture and urban design to complement Lowell's historic built environment.

The project includes the construction of approximately 11 new buildings as well as rehabilitation of 4 historic buildings, comprising over 600 units of housing (including market rate and affordable housing), up to 330,000 square feet of commercial/office/research and development space, as well as 50,000 square feet of retail space. In addition, the Massachusetts Department of Capital Asset Management will be constructing the new Lowell Trial Court on the site.

Presently, Trinity Financial is conducting title research and planning to establish what easements, acquisitions, or other actions the Hamilton Canal project will require on Department of Conservation and Recreation lands. The project also awaits MEPA certification, which is likely to occur in mid September, allowing the project to aggressively move forward.

The Hamilton Canal District has a distinct advantage for office development due to its proximity to the commuter rail station. A recent study by Richards Barry Joyce and Partners, LLC found that suburban Boston office vacancy rates within walking distance of a commuter rail station were 33% lower than comparable locations that are not accessible by train. Moreover, with over 1,800 units of new housing permitted since 2000, a substantial majority of which are now occupied or sold, Downtown Lowell has developed a well-deserved reputation as an easy place to live and work.

City officials are committed to continuing this trend with the Hamilton Canal District project. It is anticipated that the project Master Plan and form-based code that will be developed out of the public process will eliminate the need for additional special permit or site plan review hearings for specific development sites within the district.

A direct economic benefit to the community will be the creation of over 1,000 permanent full time jobs and a generation of over \$4 million in annual tax revenue for the city, as well as a broadening of the population base of creative professionals in the city. The project

Merrimack Street.

- Downtown Lowell is part of a National Park, and was the first urban National Park in the United States. The park was established in 1978, and this year is its 30th anniversary!

- Alexander Graham Bell patented the telephone in 1876, but it wasn't until 1880 when telephone numbers were first used - the first place they were used? Lowell, Massachusetts

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## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- The National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) announced on July 9, 2008 that it is seeking proposals for high-risk research projects to develop innovative technologies for inspecting, monitoring and evaluating critical components of the nation's roadways, bridges, drinking and wastewater systems. The competition for cost-shared research and development support is the first to be announced by NIST's newly established Technology Innovation Program (TIP) in an effort to address critical societal challenges.

Application information is available at  
[www.nist.gov/tip/comp08\\_applyhtml](http://www.nist.gov/tip/comp08_applyhtml)

- Returning to Lowell for the 22nd summer, The Lowell Folk Festival will be held July 25-27. The Folk Festival is presented by Lowell National Historical Park, Lowell Festival Foundation, National Council for the Traditional Arts, Greater Merrimack Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau and the City of Lowell.

- The Lowell Small Business

will transform the gateway of Downtown Lowell by connecting the transportation hub at the Gallagher Terminal and the Lowell Connector with the core downtown, the Arts District and the major events venue thus encouraging the use of public transportation. Additionally, the proposed extension of the streetcar system will extend public transportation linkage.

Further benefits to the community include the celebration of the unique canal front through thoughtful landscape architecture, the development of safe and attractive pedestrian walkways and connections, as well as the construction of new canal crossings to support pedestrians and/or vehicles. The project also includes implementation of environmental and geotechnical testing and the appropriate site remediation measures, the removal of blighted and hazardous structures on the site and the adaptive reuse of historical buildings. Overall, the Hamilton Canal District project will celebrate Lowell's great diversity and history while promoting new economic and market activity.

If one has commercial interest in the Hamilton Canal District please contact James Errickson at [jerrickson@lowellma.gov](mailto:jerrickson@lowellma.gov).

## Tax deduction available for commercial development projects

As one of only 40 Renewal Communities in the United States, the City of Lowell is able to offer \$12 million in Renewal Community Commercial Revitalization Deduction (CRD) to eligible businesses and developers. This incentive enables businesses that construct or rehabilitate commercial property in certain census tracts to deduct costs over a shorter period of time than permitted under the standard IRS depreciation rules, thus helping small businesses and investors cut annual business expenditures significantly.

Since 2002, the city has allocated approximately \$30 million to nearly 30 businesses in the Renewal Community. To be eligible for the 2008 cycle, renovations or new construction to a site should be completed before December 31st.

To find out if a commercial property is in the city of Lowell's Renewal Community, visit the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ["Address Locater"](#) found on its website.

## Federal Fabrics: A new spin on an old technology



Federal Fabrics is the "biggest hidden secret in Lowell," according to Mayor Edward Caulfield after a tour of the company's facility, led by General Manager Mike Hainsworth, in early June.

The advantage of the company is in its total products solution. Federal Fabrics has proven to its customers to be a highly valuable and dynamic resource as they can quickly generate products that meet the highest of expectations. Their technologically patented products range from air beams-light-weight, portable air-pressurized beams to full-blown, self-inflatable rescue shelters. Federal-Fabrics' 35,000-square-foot state of the art facility, which has been located on West Adams Street in Lowell since 2000, contains an in-house design center, machine shop, and assembly plant that allow

Assistance Center begins its six-week entrepreneurial training program, Right Start, on September 17th.

- Lowell-based Enterprise Bank will hold its first annual Celebration of Excellence Thursday, November 13th at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium. Keynote speaker will be Theo Epstein, Executive Vice President and General Manager of the Boston Red Sox.

Do you have an event you would like to be listed in our fall newsletter? Send an Email to: [Newsletter@lowellma.gov](mailto:Newsletter@lowellma.gov)

## NEW BUSINESSES

- [Borrego Solar](#) is a California-based installer of commercial and residential solar systems has opened its first office outside of California and has chosen Lowell as its location.

The office will be led by COO Chris Anderson and is located at 250 Industrial Avenue East. Founded in California in 1980, Borrego Solar Systems designs and installs commercial, residential and public sector grid-connected solar electric power systems.

- [Sandbridge Technologies](#) is a semiconductor company that delivers ubiquitous wireless connectivity for the consumer market at the highest-integration level and lowest cost.

Corporate headquarters is located in Tarrytown NY and the company has recently opened a second office in Lowell, located at 59 Composite Way, Suite 400.

- [Xenith](#) is a leading innovator in protective technology. The company's major product is an Adaptive Head Protective system, which is designed to reduce the risk of major concussions and other traumatic head and brain injuries. Installed in football helmets, this design features two patent-pending products, the Xenith Aware Flow Shock Absorbers and the Xenith Fit Seeker, allowing for the reduction of sudden and dangerous movement upon impact.

the company to efficiently design, develop and manufacture products to the highest standards all in one place.

Federal Fabrics-Fibers Inc. was cofounded in 1991 by Zvi J. Horovitz and his wife, President and CEO, Bracha Horovitz. Their vision was to provide the U.S. government with superior woven and non-woven products to aid soldiers in combat. Federal Fabrics has since become the world's "most advanced manufacturers of Air Beam structures." Prices range from \$15,000 for a 15-by-16 foot shelter to around \$35,000 for a 35-by-36 foot shelter. A full list of products includes: air beams, air frames, soft shelters, full shelter systems, CB airlock systems, blowers and compressors, environmental control units, zippers and automotive.

Federal Fabrics is ISO (International Organization for Standardization) certified, allowing the company to generate solutions that meet the requirements of both business and the broader needs of society. The ISO is the world's largest developer and publisher of international standards and serves to bridge the gap between the public and private sectors.

Since its inception, the company has grown to employment of 25+, with over 90% of employees being Lowell residents, the majority residing within the Highlands neighborhood. The company has been turning multi-million dollar profits in recent years. Currently, Federal Fabrics sells products to various branches of the military, but is hoping to expand its business operations by breaking into commercial markets. Target clients include the Red Cross, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and municipal fire and rescue personnel. If you would like more information on Federal Fabrics please visit [www.federalfabrics.com](http://www.federalfabrics.com).

Xenith's headquarters is located at  
672 Suffolk Street, Third Floor.

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