



Valley FOCUS

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Chamber News

New Executive Director

Please join us as The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce welcomes Jeff Ritter as its new Executive Director. Mr. Ritter comes to the Chamber with twenty years of management experience as a local government administrator in Massachusetts and eight years of experience working on international economic development issues in Washington, D.C.

He worked on the establishment of the first full-service small business incubator as the economic development official for the City of Chicopee. He also represented the City on the Chicopee Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. Ritter served as Blackstone's Town Administrator during the 1990s, and comes from the Town of Wayland after serving as that town's Chief Administrative Officer for eleven years.

"I'm excited to return to the Blackstone Valley, and I am looking forward to joining a team of dedicated and committed community leaders. This is a special exciting opportunity to expand and enhance the regional economic tax base, while at the same time working to preserve, protect, and promote the significant historical aspects which makes the Blackstone River Valley a very special place to live, work, play, and visit."

Mr. Ritter holds a B.A. in History and Government from American University, and has completed several graduate courses in public administration at Framingham State College. Mr. Ritter also brings experience from membership in two other nearby regional Chambers.



Jeff Ritter

You are invited to meet Jeff Ritter on Wednesday, November 9th, 5:30 pm-7:30pm, in the lobby of the Millbury Federal Credit Union building on Main Street, in Millbury, MA. Food and refreshments will be available. There is no charge for this event. Prior to this networking event, the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce invites members to participate in our special Board meeting in lieu of an Annual Meeting in which we will elect our new officers for the upcoming year and thank those that have served over the past year. This special Board meeting will begin at 4:30 and last until 5:15 PM in the Community Room in the basement of the Millbury Federal Credit Union building. We hope that you will join us for both exciting opportunities! Registration requested.

Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Seeks Flood Damage Reports

For several weeks, the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce has been gathering information and reports from its membership about damage related to the recent flooding of the Blackstone River.

According to Jeff Ritter, Executive Director of the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, "the Chamber sent an E-Mail to our membership the day after the flooding event. We were seeking basic information such as what was damaged, the scope of the loss and the estimated financial impact on the business. Further, on behalf of our membership, the Chamber followed up with Congressman

Neal's Office in Milford, to advocate on behalf of the business community, communicating exactly how important federal assistance is to those adversely impacted by the flooding. Also, on behalf of our members, we wanted to make sure that if federal assistance were to become available, that our members understand the eligibility requirements and how the application process would work."

Any Chamber member who has experienced flood damage please file a report with Heather Elster so that we can keep you apprised as new information becomes available from federal, state, and local resources.

Blackstone Valley Home & Business Expo Early Bird Special

The 8th Annual Blackstone Valley Home & Business Expo will be held on Saturday, March 4, 2006 at Northbridge High School, 427 Linwood Ave, Whitinsville from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Register for you booth by December 16th and both BVCC members and nonmembers can save up to \$50! Member booth fees are regularly \$350 and nonmember fees are \$400 for a single booth. Save \$50 off of these prices

when you register by Dec. 16. Please inquire about special pricing for non-profits, home-based businesses, and double booths. The Expo features over 100 area businesses, the Best Chowder in the Valley Contest and entertainment for all ages! The expo is the perfect opportunity to showcase your business, product or service to approximately 3,000-5,000 attendees from the Valley and beyond! For more information or to reserve your booth call 508-234-9090.

Earth Day Cleanup 2006

The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce our second annual Earth Day Cleanup in celebration of Earth Day 2006. Please reserve Saturday, April 22, 2006 as the date we will again all work towards a cleaner Blackstone Valley!

We are in the process of planning the details of the Earth Day event and need your help. First of all, we invite you to participate in our planning committee. Our next meeting is Wednesday, November 30th at 1:00 PM at the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce's office at 35-37 Main Street in Millbury, MA.

Second, we are asking for nominations of sites that we should consider cleaning up. They can be sites filled with trash or areas that just need some help. Maybe you know of a place hit particularly hard by the recent floods. Maybe some debris needs to be cleared away to restore a park or path to its original state. You can nominate a site on our website, www.gardinerdesign.net/bvcc. The only requirement is that the site is located in the Blackstone Valley.

Finally, we are also looking for sponsors for this event or businesses to donate needed. If you or your business is willing to help, please contact Heather at the Chamber at 508-234-9090.



Get ready to go back to school

How long has it been since you were in high school? How are today's high schools meeting the challenge of education in a more complex society? The Education Foundation is sponsoring an excellent opportunity to see first-hand how our future workforce is developing. Please join us for Back-to-School Day on Friday, December 2, 8:30 - 11:0 a.m. at one of our nine member high schools: Blackstone-Millville Regional, Blackstone Valley Tech, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Millbury, Nipmuc Regional, Northbridge and Uxbridge. Contact Susan or Jeanne at 508-234-9090 or email sspencer@blackstonevalley.org and we'll connect you with a school.

Education Foundation grant applications due soon!

The Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Education is accepting proposals from member school districts for classroom projects that connect students to their community and prepare them for the 21st-century workforce. Three levels of grants will be awarded: mini-grants up to \$500, Education Foundation grants up to \$2,500, and Lampin Grants up to \$5,000 for outstanding, collaborative projects. The deadline for proposals is November 9, 5:00 p.m. Applications and summaries of previous awards can be found at www.blackstonevalley.org/education/grants.php.

The Education Foundation's grants are made possible by Chamber members' generous sponsorship of the annual golf tournament and by a significant contribution from the employee-owners of Lampin Corporation.