

## Chamber awards economic impact awards

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The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce and Citizens Bank are pleased to recognize four organizations for their significant investment and contribution to the economic development of the region with the presentation of the 2008 Greater New Bedford Economic Impact Awards. These awards were presented to Eagle Industries, Vectrix, W/S Development d.b.a. Wareham Crossing, and the University of Massachusetts' National Botulinum Research Center on June 26, 2008 at a special edition of the Chamber's Good Morning SouthCoast! business series. These organizations, through their investment, have created or retained jobs, improved the general appearance of the community and generated economic growth throughout the Greater New Bedford Area.

Founded as a sewing company in a basement in Missouri, Eagle Industries remains family-owned and has grown over the past 30 years to seven production facilities employing over 2,400 people. Eagle's ability to design and manufacture top quality products for our military and first responders has earned the company a reputation as a world leader in highly technical nylon gear. Currently, Eagle is working on Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment (MOLLE) that enables American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan to carry needed gear in a safe and efficient manner.

Eagle acquired the Michael Bianco manufacturing facility in New Bedford in November of 2007, and immediately transitioned all workers over to their company. In an uncertain economy, Eagle has provided job stability to hundreds of workers in New Bedford. Eagle is committed to the New Bedford area, and to forging good working relationships with the community. They are now at 360 employees in New Bedford, and are adding approximately 5 new jobs a month.

Vectrix was founded in 1996, and has spent over a decade designing, developing, patenting, demonstrating, and commercializing a world-class electric maxiscooter. Headquartered in Middletown, RI, Vectrix's engineering development facilities have been located in New Bedford since 1998. The 2007 construction of a 65,000 sq. ft. facility in the New Bedford Business Park has allowed the company to expand its testing capabilities. The company has about 150 employees, with approximately one-third in New Bedford.

Based in Chestnut Hill, MA, WS Development is one of the largest privately owned retail development firms in the country. Since 1981, WS Development has been a leader in the acquisition, development, management and redevelopment of retail and mixed-use properties. Wareham Crossing, developed by W/S Development is a new 675,000 square foot outdoor shopping center located near I-195 and I-495 in Wareham. The center combines a pedestrian-friendly Main Street featuring a vibrant mix of specialty retailers and restaurants alongside national anchor stores. Visitors enjoy wide sidewalks lined with thoughtfully placed stores, benches, detailed landscaping, and a centrally located gathering area with ample outdoor seating. Wareham Crossing is home to leading retailers including Target, Lowe's, Best Buy, Borders, Staples, and Old Navy, and restaurants such as LongHorn Steakhouse and Red Robin. Wareham Crossing is expected to provide 800 to 1,000 new jobs for the region and significant new tax revenue for the Town of Wareham.

The Botulinum Research Center (BRC) was established by the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth in 2003 at the behest of National Institutes for Health (NIH). In collaboration with many researchers in academia, government agencies and industry, the BRC was initiated as a national effort focusing on

botulinum research relevant to international safety and homeland security. The Center has an international advisory board consisting of scientists from UK, Japan, Italy, Germany and USA.

The 22,000-square-foot state-of-the art research building was open on April 5, 2007 and features biology and bio-engineering laboratories, a 4,200 sq ft BSL-3 (bio-safety laboratory) facility and a high-security research center for bio-technology and bio-chemistry. The Center promotes research to create a better understanding of the botulinum neurotoxins, their applications and the defenses against such toxins as biothreat agents. It is the university's first campus facility devoted entirely to research.

The four recipients were selected by a special committee of Chamber members based on criteria which included the construction or expansion of a new or existing facility, community impact through new or retained quality jobs, or an expansion that attracted other industry, or stimulated community development.

The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce extends its appreciation to Citizens Bank for being a partner in this important program.

The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce is a private, non-profit business association based in the City of New Bedford, MA. Chartered in 1885, the Chamber serves nearly 1,000 member businesses of all sizes from virtually all industries in the ten communities of New Bedford, Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Freetown, Mattapoisett, Marion, Rochester, Wareham, and Westport. The Chamber supports and promotes the local business community through leadership in public advocacy, education, networking, information, and community development.

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