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Choose Framingham A Newsletter of the EDIC



Welcome to the Choose Framingham Newsletter

Framingham's Civic and Business Leaders Discuss Future Economic Growth at Forum on Employment Trends



The Town of Framingham's economy is diverse, which is "a very good finding," according to Professor Maureen Dunne of Framingham State University's MetroWest Economic Research Center (MERC). Dunne presented her findings (see below) to a packed audience of business and community leaders at an event held on June 25th at the Sheraton Framingham that looked at

the Town's economic and employment trends. The forum, sponsored by Framingham's [Economic Development and Industrial Corp. \(EDIC\)](#) also included a panel discussion featuring State Senator Karen Spilka (D Ashland), Framingham Town Manager Robert Halpin, Joe Burchill, Chairman of Framingham State University's Board of Trustees, and George Sakellaris, Chief Executive Officer of Framingham-based Ameresco, Inc.

State Senator Karen Spilka, who is the Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, said

that there are many things that the state can do to encourage economic development. She also praised the Town for its efforts to streamline the permitting process for businesses seeking to locate in Framingham. In discussing the kinds of businesses in the Town, she echoed the Massachusetts tourism motto in saying, "it's all here in Framingham."

Robert Halpin, Framingham's Town Manager, discussed his desire to attract younger workers to live and work in the Town. To that end, the Town has presented recommendations to the Selectmen for revitalizing Downtown Framingham through transit-oriented development. New Downtown housing options can help to attract and retain the "next generation" workforce, which increasingly seeks a diverse, walkable urban living experience.

Joe Burchill, who is Chairman of Framingham State University's Board of Trustees and also Director of Product and Technology Finance at Bose Corporation, detailed how the University is encouraging the development of jobs in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields. He also discussed the efforts that the University makes to connect students from underserved communities to career pathways with opportunities.

George Sakellaris, who is Chief Executive Officer of Ameresco, Inc., mentioned that Ameresco was the second Framingham-based company he has established. He said that the talent pool available in Framingham is why he returned the company to the Town after a brief move to Waltham, but advocated for greater infrastructure improvements and for amenities to attract younger workers.

A brief Q&A from audience members included praise from community leaders from neighboring Natick regarding the efforts that Framingham has undertaken to attract business. Additionally, community members asked about the importance of the creative economy to growth in Framingham. You can read more about the forum at the [MetroWest Daily News](#).

New MetroWest Economic Research Center Report Shows Framingham Is a Critical Economic Engine for MetroWest Region

A new report on economic growth and employment trends in the Town of Framingham shows that the Town remains a key economic engine for the MetroWest area. Focusing on data from 2013, the study found that Framingham employment has reached more than 46,000 jobs, its highest level of employment in a quarter century. The report was produced by Framingham State University's [MetroWest Economic Research Center](#) and is available at www.framinghama.gov/edic.

"The good news is that Framingham's employment numbers have stabilized over the past decade. We have seen recent growth in total employment and gains in the overall payroll that businesses are producing, and the average annual wage for jobs in Framingham," said the report's author, Maureen Dunne. "But the study also shows that communities in MetroWest have gained some ground on Framingham."

According to the Framingham Employment Report:

- In 2013, Framingham's average wage of \$74,700 exceeded that of the rest of the MetroWest region (\$70,800) by 6 percent. Additionally, it exceeded the Massachusetts average wage (\$61,800) by 21 percent and the US wage (\$49,800) by 50 percent.

- Employers in Framingham averaged 20.6 jobs per establishment, higher than the average for the MetroWest region (17.5), Massachusetts (14.7) and the United States (14.6) in 2013.

The report also shows the economy of the Town of Framingham is larger than any of the other communities in the MetroWest region. The study's findings include:

- Among the 13 MetroWest communities, Framingham generated the highest number of jobs 46,620 which equaled 26 percent of regional employment.
- Additionally, among those 13 communities, Framingham contributed the largest share of payroll (\$3.5 billion or 27 percent).
- Framingham recorded the highest number of employment establishments 2,260 or 22 percent of the region's total. In 2013, the total number of employer establishments in MetroWest was 10,300.

"Framingham has long been a center of industry and commerce for MetroWest and the Commonwealth as a whole," said Art Robert, the Director of Community and Economic Development for the Town of Framingham. "It is exciting to see that the Town is now becoming a center of innovation, education, and culture, as well. The data also highlight that Framingham is a mature, largely built out community. Going forward, our priorities must include supporting the businesses we have, considering infill and upzoning opportunities, and enhancing our attractiveness to the region's future workforce and their employers."

The Framingham Employment Report also noted that looking at historic trends, surrounding communities have gained some ground. In 1980, 31 percent of employers in the MetroWest region were located in Framingham. In comparison, Framingham hosted 22 percent of employers in the MetroWest region in 2013. Even while the number of employer establishments in Framingham have remained steady, wages and the number of jobs in Framingham have increased. At the same time, the entire MetroWest region has grown economically, with towns in surrounding communities adding new employment establishments over the past several years.

"As Framingham's employers have become more diversified, so has the MetroWest region overall," said Mike Gatlin, Chair of Framingham's Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC). "As we think about both the challenges and opportunities for the Town going forward, we must also consider developing a regional economic development approach that will help us remain competitive against other parts of the country and even internationally."

The report was released at an event on June 25th (see above for more details).

Framingham Company Partners with Town for Energy Savings

In a win/win for local business and municipal operations, the Town of Framingham is partnering with Framingham-based Ameresco, Inc. The Town and the company announced in May that they are entering into a \$6 million Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC) that will improve energy use in 32 town owned buildings.

Founded in 2000 in Framingham by George Sakellari (who recently participated in a forum on Framingham's economic growth see above), Ameresco, Inc. is a leading independent provider of

comprehensive energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions for facilities throughout North America. Its municipal clients include the City of Henderson, Nevada; the City of Emmonak, Alaska; and the City of Gallipolis, Ohio, among others. In Massachusetts, Ameresco has worked with the cities of Lowell and New Bedford, and the Town of Natick.

"This comprehensive project reflects Framingham's commitment to energy conservation, including reducing our operating costs and achieving our sustainability goals. This contract with Ameresco allows us to replace our aging infrastructure, upgrade our buildings, and make improvements, all without burdening our taxpayers with additional capital costs. The project includes efficiency measures that will deliver \$380,000 in annual energy savings, benefiting the community for years to come," said Framingham Town Manager Bob Halpin in an [Ameresco](#) statement.

The company estimates that the environmental benefits from this project will include the reduction of more than 3.3 million pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. That is the equivalent to the carbon sequestered by 344 acres of pine forest in one year, or the elimination of 277 passenger vehicles from the road annually. Additionally, the contract will result in \$380,000 of savings for the Town of Framingham every year. In 2013, Framingham was designated as a Green Community by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the ESCP is a critical tool to help the town to reach its goal of lowering its energy consumption by 20 percent.

Loring Arena to Get A Facelift

[Loring Arena](#) a seasonal facility that is one of the region's premier ice surfaces, will be undergoing renovations to improve the facility. At the Spring Town Meeting, members voted to approve a \$5.7 million upgrade to the 52-year-old ice rink, which was built in 1963 to commemorate Framingham High School's 1961 hockey team, which won the state championship that year.

The facility operates from Labor Day to April, and provides ice time for Framingham's middle and high school ice hockey teams, youth hockey leagues, and programs for Framingham's Parks and Recreation, as well as for Bay Path Figure Skating Club, Framingham State College, and Ashland High School, among others. The arena serves both boys and girls.

The Town plans to improve the dressing areas and locker rooms so that there is better separation between boys and girls using the rink. Included in the upgrade will be the creation of concession stands and other amenities, and they will also include the removal of asbestos and lead paint and the replacement of the facility's original boiler. The renovations will also help to improve handicap accessibility to the facility.

During the debate, Framingham's Parks and Recreation Director Jim Duane said that Framingham State University has agreed to contribute up to \$300,000 to the cost of the renovations. Information, including a timeline, on the renovation project should be available in the upcoming months.



Framingham EDIC

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The [Framingham Economic Development and Industrial Corporation](#) (EDIC) was established in 1995 to stimulate economic development and expand employment opportunities in the Town of Framingham in accordance with the town's approved economic development plans.

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