

WELCOME TO THE
CHOOSE FRAMINGHAM NEWSLETTER



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Framingham By The Numbers

Choose Framingham Hosts Forum on Millennials in the Workforce

What are the MetroWest's younger workers seeking from the region? What are MetroWest's employers doing to attract and

MERC Data Show that Framingham, MetroWest Continue to Grow

On May 13th, the [MetroWest Economic Research Center \(MERC\)](#) of Framingham State University held its 24th annual conference, in which they looked at the MetroWest region's [economic profile](#). In their report, they found that the MetroWest region, including Framingham, continues to grow. At the same time, the region also continues to face challenges to further economic expansion.

The report found that in February 2016, the MetroWest region and 12 out of the 13 communities in it had unemployment rates lower than those of the state and the nation.

Additionally, the report noted:

- MetroWest's unemployment rate is 3.6 percent, compared to the Commonwealth's rate at 4.7 percent and the country's at 5.2 percent.
- Framingham's unemployment rate has kept pace with the region's, at 3.5 percent.
- Still, while the Town has a healthy unemployment rate, it is also one of three communities in the area that has a significant number of unemployed individuals.

The region is also demonstrating signs of health through the number of employees and the strength of payroll:

- MetroWest totaled 185,300 jobs in 2014, an increase from 2009 of 6.4 percent. Framingham generated the most number of jobs by far in that time frame - 48,300 - followed by our neighbors in Marlborough (28,600), Westborough (23,600), and Natick (23,400).
- Similarly, MetroWest's total payroll in the same period - \$13.5 billion - is up by 19 percent, with Framingham once again leading the way at \$3.5 billion.
- Additionally, Framingham is among the top four of MetroWest communities when it comes to average wage. The

retain Millennials? These were the questions discussed by a panel of employers and Millennial employees at a forum held at the [Sheraton Framingham](#) on June 24th. The event, "Millennials in the Workforce," was co-sponsored by the [MetroWest Chamber of Commerce](#) and included representatives from [Bose Corporation](#), [Boston Heart Diagnostics](#), [Comm Creative, Inc.](#), [Disruptor Beam](#), [South Middlesex Opportunity Council \(SMOC\)](#), and [Staples, Inc.](#).



The wide-ranging discussion touched on everything from the cost of living to access to health insurance to the desire for food truck options. Mike Gatlin, chair of [Framingham's Economic Development and Industrial Corporation \(EDIC\)](#), moderated a panel of employees and employers, who talked about the characteristics that make the Millennial generation unique, including an interest in promoting greater diversity.

During the employer panel, Comm Creative Inc.'s president Bob Fields, who will be expanding to a new facility in Downtown Framingham this summer, talked about adapting his management style to meet younger employees' needs. Heidi Friedman, the head of human resources for Boston Heart Diagnostics, reminded the audience to keep an open mind in working with Millennials and said, "the more we collaborate, the better the results." Rebecca Myers, an HR director at Staples, discussed how they too were developing more opportunities for collaboration and professional growth for their younger workers.

In discussing the Millennial generation's interest in social justice issues, Kristen Halloran, a producer at video game company Disruptor Beam, said, "What's important for me is changing somebody's world." LeVar Brewster, who provides technical assistance to individuals seeking microloans from Framingham-based nonprofit SMOC, discussed how he felt he has found his niche in MetroWest, now that he is both living and working in Framingham. Priscilla Olicio, a recent graduate of Framingham State University who now works for Bose, discussed the challenges of wanting to remain in MetroWest due to the high cost of living. All three individuals talked about wanting growth opportunities in their careers.

Framingham's [Town Manager Bob Halpin](#) welcomed everyone to the forum. Paul Joseph, president and CEO of the MetroWest Chamber of Commerce, reminded the audience that Millennials are now the largest generational cohort in the workforce. Art Robert, director of Framingham's [division of community and economic development](#), summarized what we learned about creating communities that are welcoming to the younger workforce. Choose Framingham thanks all who participated in and attended this important forum for their time and insights.

FEATURED BUSINESS: Philips Lifeline

Town's average wage is \$74,300, higher than the regional average wage of \$72,700.

Still, the MERC data also reveals the challenges the region is facing, like a cost of living that has grown higher every year for almost two decades. Housing costs, in particular, continue to grow across MetroWest, with the cost of housing growing 26 percent between 2009 and 2015. These costs are a part of the long-term challenges that New England and the MetroWest are working to address.

Framingham Businesses and Organizations in the News

June 27, 2016 - Worcester Business Journal - [Medtronic to buy Heartware for \\$1.1B](#)

June 16, 2016 - MetroWest Daily News - [Jewish Family Service of MetroWest receives grant](#)

[Choose Framingham](#) asked Kimberly O'Loughlin, senior vice president and general manager of Home Monitoring at Framingham-based [Philips Lifeline](#), about their work and why they choose Framingham:

Tell us about Philips Lifeline and the work that you do?

Philips Lifeline has more than 40 years of experience helping seniors and providing peace of mind to their loved ones. The first personal emergency response service, Philips Lifeline has served more than 7 million people and is dedicated to providing innovative solutions that empower seniors to live independently while aging well. The company is leading the industry with products and services focused on senior safety, health and connectedness.

Tell us a little of Philips Lifeline's history?

In 1972, gerontologist Andrew Dibner, Ph.D., came up with the idea for an emergency response system in answer to the question: "What would an elderly person do if he or she were alone and needed help?" Two years later, Dr. Dibner's concept became a reality when he and his wife established Lifeline Systems, Inc.

In 1983, Lifeline went public, staying focused on evolving its technology and services. In 2006, Philips Lifeline was born when [Royal Philips](#) acquired Lifeline, expanding Philips' presence in the global home healthcare market. This development also allowed Lifeline to continue to grow its market-leading service through Philips' worldwide presence, technology, and innovation capabilities.

How many employees does Philips Lifeline have both in Framingham and in other offices?

Royal Philips employs approximately 69,000 employees with sales and services in more than 100 countries. Philips Lifeline has its headquarters in Framingham. (Editor's note: Philips Lifeline has approximately 600 employees working in Framingham).

What is the company's most important service?

Providing care and resources for seniors, caregivers and healthcare providers has always been at the forefront of the work that Philips Lifeline does. Many seniors want to stay independent and live meaningful lives in their home for as long as possible. Lifeline's goal is to empower them with access to resources, support and services that will help them stay healthy and engaged in their own care, and connected to their communities and loved ones.

Our medical alert systems give seniors the continuous support they need to live healthy and independent lives. GoSafe is our newest medical alert service offering, which can detect if a senior has fallen, whether at home or on the go, and can summon help if it detects a fall even if the senior is unable to push their help button.

CareSage is our newest and most innovative "population health" offering, which uses predictive analytics to understand when a senior is in need of support and is at risk of being transported to

the hospital in an emergency - giving providers the information they need to provide support and potentially prevent the need for a trip to the hospital.

How long have you been located in Framingham?

Philips Lifeline has been located and headquartered in Framingham since 1999, when Lifeline Systems moved to accommodate its growth.

What are the benefits to being located in Framingham?

Framingham is a great area for Lifeline to be located. It allows us to find top talent and be part of the healthcare innovation corridor.

If another healthcare company were looking to relocate, what would you say to them about Framingham?

Framingham is conveniently located just west of Boston with easy access to Cambridge and the high tech corridor.

Additionally, with being located just outside of the city, commuting is a large factor for employees - commuting to Framingham is possible via the MBTA train system or by car.

What's next for Philips Lifeline?

Philips' passionate commitment to the Dibners' original quest to help seniors live safer, independent lives continues as we explore new ways to making the aging experience even better. We are excited about supporting seniors and their caregivers and working with healthcare providers and payors to enable new care delivery models that delight seniors, lower costs and improve outcomes and make a real difference in seniors' lives.

Anything you'd like to add?

While we are the pioneer and have a long legacy of serving seniors, we are just getting started. Wearables, connected devices, predictive analytics, empowered consumers and the needs of population health are enabling the changes that will help us to make the aging experience better.

Division of Community and Economic Development is Making Sure Businesses Know to "Choose Framingham"

Over the past several years, the Town of Framingham has undertaken a coordinated, comprehensive effort to think about its future and to communicate its strengths to members of the community and to decision makers in the public policy and business communities. As a part of this effort, Art Robert, director of the community and economic development division for the Town of Framingham has been busy highlighting the ongoing work of the Town, as well as advantages Framingham has to offer. On June 2nd, he presented at the MetroWest Chamber's [2016 Regional Economic Development Forum](#) on

ongoing economic development efforts taking place in Framingham as well as on the Town's vision and goals going forward. Also, on June 15th, he presented to the [LOCUS National Leadership Summit](#) on the Transit Oriented Development, smart growth opportunities that Downtown Framingham has to offer.



Art delivered the message that the Town of Framingham continues to promote itself as an ideal and desirable place to do business. He also stressed the importance of planning for growth as a partner in the MetroWest region, describing an upcoming

planning process for the MassPike Exit 13 area, to be conducted jointly with the Town of Natick. Recent changes to permitting and town bylaws mean that Framingham is now also a more accessible place to do business, build, and live - a key to its ongoing economic growth. And ongoing collaborations with state agencies, the MetroWest region, and local businesses continue to be an important part of Framingham's growth and success.

"We think Framingham has always had a lot to offer, and now we are in a better place to help people realize the potential of their business and family life in Framingham," said Art Robert. "We are excited about working with Natick to plan for the future of the MassPike Exit 13 area - a critical economic growth area - in a way that will ensure the area's attractiveness and help MassDOT complete investments that will improve access to the turnpike."

In these presentations, Art also discussed how Transit Oriented Development (TOD) continues to drive smart growth opportunities in Downtown. The downtown area continues to undergo significant changes, reflecting over \$25 million in recent public- and private-sector investments. "The downtown area is the heart of Framingham, and we want that to be reflected when you drive or walk through it," said Robert. "Downtown Framingham is the ideal TOD location and we want to make sure that people know that. We have worked very hard to help businesses succeed here, because we believe their success means success for the Town."

As the division of community and economic development continues to thoughtfully champion Framingham as a place for people to do business, they remain committed to the local businesses currently in place, often promoting these businesses as another example of why a new company should come to Framingham. And as the community continues to undergo significant changes, Town officials are working to ensure that these changes are being noticed, and encouraging others to "Choose Framingham." The division is looking forward to highlighting all that Framingham has to offer to interested parties from around the region.

Framingham EDIC

chooseframingham@framinghamma.gov

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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