

WELCOME TO THE
CHOOSE FRAMINGHAM NEWSLETTER



Choose Framingham Newsletter
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Fall Means Framingham's Farms

Fall is here. And nothing really compares to Fall in New England. With the changing leaves, crisp temperatures, and shorter days also comes apple and pumpkin picking, haunted houses, and hay rides. And

Business Profile: CMC Consulting Group

An International Healthcare Advisory Firm
Expands Its US Headquarters in Framingham

How many times do you walk into the offices of a consulting firm only to be greeted by a medical laboratory? [CMC Consulting Group](#) integrates transaction advisory, management consulting, medical affairs advisory and innovative research for companies in the healthcare and life science industries. Founded in Germany in 1999, the firm opened its first U.S.

lots of delicious, locally-grown food options. Fortunately, for those living in Framingham, we have some local options to choose from to provide us with those quintessential New England experiences and goods.

Hanson's Farm

A working farm since 1715, Hanson's Farm was farmed for almost 200 years by the Child family and was called grey rock farm after the granite ledge across the street from where the present day farm stands. In 2009, it established a community supported agriculture program (or CSA), where people buy a "share" of the harvest in advance of the season.

Ongoing Events at Hanson's Farm include:

- Corn maze 7 days a week from July-November (9am-6pm)
- Throughout the month of October, Haunted Hayrides are offered every Friday and Saturday from 7-10pm
- Farmers market on Thursdays at the Framingham Commons from 12:30-5pm

Stearns Farm

Stearns Farm CSA is a non-profit corporation funded primarily by the sale of shares in the harvest, with help from volunteers, foundations, and individual donors. It is a partnership between the farmer and consumers in which the farmer and consumer share the risk of agriculture and the bounty of a good harvest.

- October 1: Fall Festival and Annual Meeting

Be sure to get out and support your local farms in Framingham and tell us about it on social media - post your pictures and use the hashtag #ChooseFram.

- twitter.com/ChooseFram
- www.facebook.com/choosefram

Choose Framingham Highlights Downtown Framingham on Social Media

As Framingham continues working to attract new businesses and continue

location in Boston in 2010 and moved to Framingham in 2013. In the company's new location at 1 Grant Street in Downtown Framingham, visitors can see how the company uses its medical knowledge to help their clients grow.



Town of Framingham's Erika Jerram and Arthur Robert with CMC Consulting Group's CEO Gabriele Brambilla

"We fell in love with the industrial feeling of this site," said Gabriele Brambilla, CEO of CMC Consulting Group. CMC is located in office space once occupied by Dennison Manufacturing, and their offices pay homage to the generations of people who worked there. "Our employees

wanted to hear stories about the people who worked here previously. We have respect for the people who have made something, like those who used to work here."

With 20 employees in the U.S. and growing, the company is in the process of doubling its space (from 8,000 square feet to 20,000 square feet) at the Grant Street facility. Brambilla says that Framingham offers a good alternative for biotech and life science companies currently looking for space in Cambridge or Boston because Framingham offers the kind of great value that allows companies like CMC Consulting Group to expand.

CMC Consulting Group is the only advisory firm in the market that offers four divisions under one umbrella. With 7 offices worldwide, CMC complements global industry knowledge with rich, local market insight. For more information on CMC Consulting Group, please visit their website at <http://wwwcmc-co.net/>.

Building Capital: SMOC Financial Services

Choose Framingham spoke with LeVarr Brewster, MetroWest Administrator for SMOC Financial Services (SFS), about the agency's microloan program. SFS helps financially underserved entrepreneurs start, stabilize, or grow their businesses through access to microloans and technical assistance. In January 2016, Framingham was one of 16 municipalities to receive a \$125,000 "Urban Agenda" grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Town is working with SFS and other partners to establish the Framingham Business Resource Alliance. In this interview, Brewster discusses his work with SFS in helping potential borrowers access microloans.

Give us an overview of the work you do with SMOC. My role as the MetroWest Administrator for SMOC Financial Services is to provide technical assistance to potential borrowers/clients. This includes one-on-one consulting, reviewing

bolstering the economy, Art Robert, Framingham's Director of [Community and Economic Development](#) recently took a social media tour of some of the development opportunities available in Downtown Framingham. While on the tour, he highlighted some of the available sites in video clips that [Choose Framingham](#) will post on our social media accounts to promote the development opportunities.

In October 2015, Framingham officials approved zoning changes that have helped in promoting Downtown Framingham for redevelopment and is essential to attract new residents to the neighborhood. Some of the sites highlighted in the tour include 228 Concord Street, the original site of Framingham's first hospital; two parcels on South Street in the Downtown area; and Hollis Court Assemblage, a multi-parcel site with transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities.

"We know that Framingham is a great place to live and work and there are a lot of development opportunities currently available," said Robert. "We want to make sure people know about our town and what we have to offer. Utilizing social media is an extension of our ongoing outreach to the business community."

The tour of development-ready sites follows a recent event in May, hosted by the [Economic Development and Industrial Corporation](#) (EDIC) and the Division of Community and Economic Development, where over 20 real estate development companies participated in an informational session and bus tour of Framingham's TOD sites.

You can see the first of these videos at the Choose Framingham [Twitter](#) account, where you can stay up to date on what's happening in Framingham's economic development. Follow us at:

Twitter.com/ChooseFram
www.facebook.com/ChooseFram



LeVarr Brewster, MetroWest Administrator, SMOC Financial Services

of business plans, and providing referrals as needed. I also assist in coordinating monthly workshops geared towards business development. Additionally as a team, we vet clients for microloan fund eligibility.

How does the microloan program work?

SFS has partnered with six community banks and raised \$1.2 million in capital. Our bank partners include: Commerce Bank, Southbridge Savings Bank,

The Country Bank for Savings, Middlesex Savings Bank, Needham Bank, and Mutual One.

After completing a brief intake form to determine eligibility, potential borrowers meet with a SFS team member for a one-on-one consultation. Here, we explain the loan process to the potential borrower: this includes collecting pertinent financial information, underwriting, a decision by the loan committee, closing of the loan and post-loan technical assistance. Many clients require assistance in putting together documents that are needed for underwriting and we're here to help guide them through the process. We explain the strengths and weaknesses of the application as the paperwork comes in and will request supporting documents when needed. After all paperwork is complete, SFS will review the application and present their underwriting to the Loan Fund Advisory Committee for approval. Once the loan is approved, the SFS team will close the loan and provide ongoing counseling to the borrower with the requirement of meeting quarterly as a condition of the loan.

What do you think the program's impact will be on Framingham?

I think the biggest impact the microloan program will have on Framingham is the broadening of financial accessibility to the "unbanked." The goal of the microloan program is to help bridge the gap between the "unbanked" and those with access to financial services. We understand that there are many people within the community and MetroWest who are interested in starting or sustaining a business. They may also meet some challenges with commercial banks who may not offer small business loans. SFS is focused on current and emerging small business owners in the community, specifically: low and moderate income households, minorities, women, immigrants, veterans and the disabled.

What are the biggest challenges in your work? The biggest opportunities?

The biggest challenge we see as a team comes from loan applicants not following through with required paperwork in a timely manner to complete the loan application process. While we understand that it may take some time to gather important paperwork, we like to see follow-through, especially since there is a deadline to present to the Loan Committee for approval. This can also set the tone for working with a small business

post-loan. Another challenge experienced is having the difficult conversation with an applicant who may not be ready at the time of inquiry due to their financial situation.

However, this also presents SFS with a great opportunity to work with such an applicant, as we often suggest that they attend an upcoming workshop, and even can even refer them to an external agency that will help them get back on a good financial track. An additional opportunity is for SFS to address the educational aspect of the business startup world through workshops that we offer. The ultimate success is when we're able to grant a loan to a business within the MetroWest community; the entrepreneurial spirit is a beautiful thing.

Tell us a little about your background.

I'm a proud combat veteran who served 13 years in the US Army as Combat Medic and Patient Admin. My civilian experience includes extensive work in financial, social, and healthcare services. I'm happy to work for an agency that does such vastly important work for the community.

Give us a brief overview of the work SMOC does.

As stated on the website, [SMOC](#) 's mission is to improve the quality of life of low-income and disadvantaged individuals and families by advocating for their needs and rights. SMOC provides a host of services to educate the community; build a community of support; participate in coalitions with other advocates and searches for new resources and partnerships. I think that sums up the work that SMOC does quite nicely.

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.

STAY CONNECTED

