



# Economic Action of DOVER

Our City of Opportunity

Vol. 3, No. 10 Summer 2013

## Temporary & A-Frame Signage Enforcement Project

by Tim Corwin,  
Assistant City Planner

Continuing its mission to enforce the City of Dover's sign regulations, the Department of Planning and Community Development is undertaking efforts to bring the City's many temporary/A-frame signs into compliance. An overabundance of signage, particularly A-frames and other temporary signs, can quickly become visual clutter and a safety hazard. It is for these reasons that the City of Dover Zoning Ordinance requires that all temporary and A-frame signs have a temporary sign permit issued by the Planning Department.

Permits obtained for businesses located in the Central Business (CBD) and Cochecho Waterfront (CWD) Districts are valid for one (1) year. Permits obtained for temporary/A-frame signs located in the Thoroughfare Business (B-3) District and the Gateway (B-5) District are valid for six (6) months, but are available to new businesses only. In all other zoning districts, temporary/A-frame signs are strictly prohibited. Timothy Corwin, assistant city planner, explains that, "The City recognizes A-frame signs are an effective marketing tool for our business owners. However, it is important that these signs comply with our regulations to ensure that they are used safely and are aesthetically pleasing, particularly in our downtown."

The City has recently made significant progress in reducing illegal off-site temporary signage as well as eliminating flashing signs. While its focus is now turning to unpermitted temporary/A-frame signs, the Planning Department says it made a decision not to begin any enforcement actions until it had time to inform Dover's businesses. "We understand that

*Signage, (cont. on p. 3)*

## Positioning For Profit

### Optima Bank & Trust Built On Optimism

by Lynn Garcia, *Globe-Lynx Group*



*Daniel and Pamela Morrison*

Banking is meaningful to people from all walks of life. Banks are very important for teens who are just learning about finance and want to open a first savings account. They are critical for entrepreneurs who need a million dollars or more to start or expand businesses. The majority of banking institutions can provide services for both. However, one bank in New Hampshire has demonstrated that to fully address the needs of the diverse range of customers, a combination of exceptional skills, speed of service, convenience, and personal attention is the path to success. After five years in business, Optima Bank, with a total of five locations, including two loan offices, has a controlled, double-digit growth history that proves it has a winning formula for attracting and retaining customers.

Establishing and building Optima Bank could hardly be considered luck, particularly if anyone has the opportunity to meet and interview the founding and operating executives,

Daniel and Pamela Morrison. Certainly a number of individuals would be able to name a few couples that own a business together or work together, however, one must ask how many have known a couple who personally started a bank together, and who used all of their personal savings toward the start-up capital? It can

*Optima Bank & Trust, (cont. on p. 2)*

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[www.dover.nh.gov](http://www.dover.nh.gov)

**Dover Business & Industrial  
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**(603) 516-6043**  
[www.dover.nh.gov](http://www.dover.nh.gov)  
[www.locateindovernh.com](http://www.locateindovernh.com)

**City of Dover  
Planning & Community  
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**(603) 516-6008**

**Greater Dover  
Chamber of Commerce:**  
**(603) 742-2218**  
[www.dovernh.org](http://www.dovernh.org)

**Dover Main Street:**  
**(603) 740-6435**  
[www.DoverMainStreet.org](http://www.DoverMainStreet.org)

**Southeast Economic  
Development Corporation  
of New Hampshire:**  
**(603) 749-2221 or**  
**(603) 749-2211**  
[www.sedcnh.org](http://www.sedcnh.org)

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### ***Optima Bank & Trust, (cont. from p. 1)***

be agreed that it is far easier for multi-million dollar executives to form a bank than the average married couple, but to assume that the Morrisons come from a background of great wealth would be incorrect. Though the availability of capital is critical in any start-up, Optima Bank's founders contributed significantly more than their savings. They brought intellect, expertise, career banking experience, professionalism and relationships. They also had a realistic, carefully developed plan based upon accurate market research and an assessment of the banking industry, especially within the Seacoast.

Looking back at 2008 when Optima began, the country was mired in recession and the economic future appeared very dismal. Not being deterred by those conditions, the Morrisons decided on the Optima name which represented both their interest in running the best bank possible, and the optimism to forge ahead in a depressed economy. The decisions made at that time were prescient, as the business plan, developed at their dining room table, was successfully executed and steps were taken to build a bank now valued at approximately 250 million dollars in assets. Optima is also recognized as the fastest-growing bank in New Hampshire.

Confident of their own skill sets, Dan and Pam knew they would only survive and progress by surrounding themselves with the most knowledgeable and experienced board of directors and staff. Though their relationships were many and strong, they also reached out to other successful business people capable of offering diverse industry and professional experience. After an initial selection of about 20 potential board members, they were encouraged by the 15 contacts that accepted positions on the board. The level of capital infusion that their venture received from board members was also encouraging. However, the level of support, involvement, and expertise received exceeded the expectations. True to their beliefs that their staff recruitment should result in hiring "people smarter than ourselves in areas outside our own expertise," the organization's staff is comprised of highly experienced, knowledgeable professionals that can be depended upon to manage key functions of Optima and its growth. This philosophy and strategy have led to new offices being opened, and new opportunities for advancement as they continue to retain key employees.

Understanding the human role in starting this bank is understanding the organization's foundation. Other vital building blocks include having the functions and tools in place to deal with increasing and changing government regulations and compliance, information technology, financial data col-

lection, marketing, and meeting profitability targets in an era of low interest rates. As a consumer, any perception that a small, local bank is unable to provide services at a competitive rate would be in error. Optima Bank prides itself on supplying all the conveniences of mobile and online banking, fee reimbursement for worldwide ATM access, and faster loan processing, largely due to its ability to have direct, local approval. The fact that Optima can customize a loan package for commercial customers and can process loans up to \$4 million makes it a strong contender in the commercial loan arena. Clearly, Optima Bank is a local leader when it comes to convenience. This bank even offers the smart phone image app so customers can remotely deposit a check—a perk that other, much larger banks have not yet implemented.

Banks typically support a range of community activities and are generous both in monetary donation and employee involvement. Optima Bank has earned special visibility in the communities it serves. The bank is the Opening Act Sponsor of the Cochecho Arts Festival 2013 and has been a very active member of the Greater Dover Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center since joining in 2012. John Burcke, VP & Commercial Loan Officer, and Elaine Charles, an Optima mortgage originator, both work from the Bank's Dover office and have participated regularly in community events. John also serves on the Wentworth Douglass Hospital Foundation Advancement Committee. Carol Estes, VP & Commercial Loan Officer, also in the Dover office, was named SBA 504 Banker of the Year in 2010 and 2012, and through her commitment and efforts, many businesses have been able to increase local employment and become part of the economic momentum Dover enjoys.

Optima Bank's involvement does not end at the city or town line. CEO, Dan Morrison, serves as Chairman of the University of New Hampshire Advisory Board for the Center for Family Business and CEO Forum. He also serves on the boards of the New Hampshire Bankers Association and Seacoast Veterans Count. When Optima Bank was awarded the Business of the Year by the Exeter Chamber of Commerce, Dan and Pam proudly accepted the honor. Six months earlier, the Morrisons had accepted the Business of the Year award from the Greater Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce and had been named one of the Top Ten Businesses to Watch by *Business NH Magazine*.

Optima Bank & Trust is well deserving of the recognition and awards it receives, and the respect of its customers and communities. It is a shining example of how good people, a good plan, and optimism can build a great organization.

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## Signage (cont. from p. 1)

many of our businesses are not aware of our A-frame regulations and have invested in signs to display,” says Christopher Parker, planning director. Therefore, as a courtesy to the City’s business community, the City implemented an “amnesty” period through June 30, 2013. Parker explains that, “During that time, the Planning Department has focused on education rather than enforcement.”

For businesses located in the downtown Central Business District (CBD) and Cochecho Waterfront District (CWD), temporary signs must also meet what the Zoning Ordinance refers to as the “Mill Motif” design criteria. The “Mill Motif” is an attempt to promote a style or architectural continuity within Dover’s urban center that is reflective of our historical character. Parker explains that “Compliance with these criteria, which have been part of our Zoning Ordinance since the early 1980s, is very important in ensuring that the unique architectural character of our downtown is preserved.”

In conversations with Dover’s downtown business owners, it became clear to Department officials that even with the advance notice, com-

pliance with the design criteria by the July 1, 2013 application deadline would have imposed a significant burden. “We are sensitive to the fact that our businesses face many pressures, including a still recovering economy,” says Corwin. “Although ensuring City-wide compliance with the sign regulations is a priority for the Department, we want to make sure that it occurs in a reasonable and fair manner.”

Therefore, in order to ease the transition to full compliance with the City’s sign regulations, the Planning Department has adjusted its enforcement plan as follows:

- All businesses with a temporary sign will require a permit as of July 1, 2013, as planned.
- However, recognizing that for most businesses, purchasing signs that comply with the Mill Motif will be a significant investment:
  - the temporary sign permit application fee for those businesses located in the CBD and CWD will be waived;
  - compliance with the Mill Motif requirements for all existing signs in the CBD and CWD will be waived. However, temporary sign permit renewal applications, due July 1, 2014, must demonstrate compliance with the Mill Motif design criteria.

- Also, any new temporary signs in the CBD or CWD after July 1, 2013 will need to show compliance with the Mill Motif design criteria in order to be approved.

- For businesses located in the B-3 and B-5 Districts, the Planning Department will consider all existing businesses which obtain a temporary sign permit to be “new” as of July 1st. This will allow businesses that obtain a permit to continue to display a temporary/A-frame sign until January 1, 2014.

“We think this revised approach to enforcement recognizes that our businesses may need more time to adjust to the City’s long-standing sign regulations,” says Corwin. “But at the same time, by requiring permit applications for all temporary A-frames, we are moving significantly closer to full compliance with the City’s Zoning Ordinance.”

Applications for all temporary/A-frame signs are due July 1, 2013 and are available in the Planning Department office, which is open Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., or on-line at [www.dover.nh.gov/planhome.htm](http://www.dover.nh.gov/planhome.htm). Questions may be directed to Tim Corwin, assistant city planner, by phone at (603) 516-6008, or e-mail at [t.corwin@dover.nh.gov](mailto:t.corwin@dover.nh.gov).

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## Dover Education

### Determining Readiness for Higher Education in the Workplace

by Judi Currie, *Marketing & Communication Assistant, Dover Adult Learning Center*

Advances in technology continue to change the way we work and place ever-increasing demands on business for a highly-skilled workforce. Technicians, managers and administrators all use a variety of hardware and software every day. As technology becomes embedded in everything we do, even those seeking entry-level, non-technical positions need an affinity for computers and a greater degree of problem-solving skills.

Those charged with determining whether someone is college- or work-ready have been forced to re-evaluate how that measurement is taken, and where to set the bar. For decades the measure of high school equivalency in New Hampshire was the GED. Following on the heels of the decision by the New Hampshire Department of Education to adopt the Common Core State Standards, adult education will move to a more competency-based evaluation and certification tool.

The Bureau of Adult Education announced in

mid-March that the GED would no longer be the standard test and will now work with Educational Testing Service (ETS) and use their test called HiSET. The HiSET will be available in both paper and computer formats for at least three years, and will be aligned to the Common Core.

Dover Adult Learning Center (DALC) has been providing Adult Basic Education classes, one-on-one tutoring, and administration of the GED test for many years. Hundreds of students earn their high school equivalency through DALC each year. Beginning January 1, 2014, DALC will begin administering the HiSET.

The move away from the GED and to HiSET will provide a greater accommodation for students with disabilities and allow them to reach their educational goals, while still providing business with an accurate measure of their skill.

According to ETS, HiSET will certify a candidate’s attainment of academic knowledge and skills

equivalent to those of a high school graduate. HiSET scores will identify those candidates who have performed at a level consistent with high school equivalency. Information from the HiSET program also will help identify areas in which candidates are career- and college-ready, as well as areas in which additional preparation may be needed.

At the same time, the Dover Adult Learning Center effects the transition from GED to HiSET, a greater emphasis will be placed on helping students to chart their career goals, stressing the value of life-long learning, and understanding that education is not always an express train, sometimes it is a local transport with stops along the way for life’s adventures.

DALC offers Adult Basic Education classes throughout Strafford County and is headquartered in the McConnell Center in Dover. Additional information about our classes and training programs can be found online at [dalc-online.org](http://dalc-online.org).

# City Manager's Report: Economic Development Section, June, 2013

by Dan Barufaldi, *Director of Economic Development*

## Summary:

Business contacts generally report year-over-year increases in economic activity with some sectors (software, IT services and staffing) indicating a slowing growth rate. Most retailers say demand is recovering well after weather-related softness during the winter. Manufacturing contacts' sales are also ahead of last year. With only a few exceptions, businesses are not hiring much beyond replacement — with construction the standout exception locally. Aside from food, input pricing is unchanged, although a few manufacturers have raised their prices here. The outlook is positive, with most respondents expecting the current pace to continue or improve. The current unemployment rate in Dover is 3.8%.

## Retail and Tourism:

Retailers are rebounding from the negative impact of harsh and prolonged winter weather earlier this year, but the late arrival of warmer spring weather has affected the sales of some seasonal items. Merchant contacts report April year-over-year comp store sales ranging from a 0.5% decline to a 9% increase. Demand is strong for women's clothing, home furnishings, and furniture. Consumer sentiment seems a bit more positive over the last month or so, yet overall expectations remain cautious. Low single digits sales increases are predicted for 2013.

Tourism revenues are up after softer performance attributed to harsh winter weather earlier this year. In Q1, 2013, hotel revenues are up markedly as are occupancy rates. Restaurant revenues average about 1.5% up over a year ago. Most of this is attributed to strong business travel. Attendance at local museums has been flat, probably due to weather, in a year-to-year comparison. With local weather improving, tourism here has improved markedly, particularly for restaurants and museums. First quarter is historically the slowest quarter for leisure travel and Q2 sales are beginning to improve. European tourism activity dropped 5% last quarter versus a year ago and some areas are being impacted by unrest, crime, and economic troubles. Corporate business travel and entertaining remain strong.

## Manufacturing & Related Services:

A majority of Dover manufacturers contacted are reporting higher sales. Manufacturing in the Region continues to be a somewhat mixed picture. More than half report that demand for their products

has improved in the first half of 2013. Strongest sales were in the healthcare sector with a few reporting spectacular growth.

A firm in this sector, but involving semi-conductors and/or analog devices, reports languishing sales in a known cyclical market, but to an extent and duration not seen before. Another local firm in electronics for point-of-purchase systems reports rapidly building sales in two new product lines. Hiring patterns mirror the sales growth with even splits between substantial hiring, hiring stability, and staff reductions. Healthcare hiring, as expected, leads the field and staff growth here is expected to rise annually at 15-18%.

In manufacturing sectors with weak demand, weakness is not yet translating into lower capital investment. Six of eight firms reported increasing spending while the balance reported no change. Many firms are sitting on cash in this sector.

Looking ahead, only one-quarter of manufacturing respondents were negative about the outlook. Most of the rest were optimistic or "cautiously optimistic."

## Staffing Services:

Staffing contacts report weaker than expected demand in recent weeks, with billable hours falling toward year-earlier levels. This reflects a leveling off in the IT sector and downticks in temporary and permanent hiring in the light industrial and manufacturing sectors. Renewed activity is being experienced in the healthcare sector. In terms of labor supply, candidates with high-end skill sets such as mechanical and electrical engineers and software developers remain difficult to find. This notwithstanding, bill rates and pay rates have gone largely unchanged in 2013. Forward projections for staffing services are generally less sanguine than they were three months ago. Most expect only modest growth through the end of 2013.

## Commercial Real Estate:

Commercial real estate leasing and sales activity held roughly steady or improved in recent weeks. There has been virtually no construction and a flat industrial market. Regional reports in this sector contain some good news as Boston area commercial space absorption has taken off. Locally, we are still absorbing a large available leased commer-

cial property inventory and are rapidly moving to the point that new building space will be needed. Two regional firms are negotiating to buy buildings locally. Office space remains available at moderate prices, but investment sales activity is beginning to rise. Small scale commercial real estate loan demand remains well below last year's pace. Construction materials cost is rising, putting pressure on profit margins at small firms in particular. It is expected that improvement in fundamentals here will be slow, particularly for office space. The fiscal threat to the local defense industry remains real, creating a potential drag on area commercial real estate. It is hoped that with the nuclear sub build and repair industry being labeled "critical" by the Navy, and the prospect for KC46 tankers being deployed at Pease in 2016, the local defense industry picture will soon appear healthy and stable.

## Residential Real Estate:

Throughout most of the region, the median sales price of single-family homes and condos rose year-over-year in Q2 2013. Demand for homes remains strong due to low interest rates, relatively low prices, and improving confidence among buyers. Shrinking inventories continue to slow sales and place upward pressure on prices. Contacts anticipate that single-family home and condo prices will continue to rise over the next several months, with inventory levels a significant factor in determining the degree to which sales can grow. Overall there is a feeling of optimism about the trajectory of the housing market and a belief that the market will continue to recover as general economic conditions improve.

- NOTE: Non-local content contains excerpts from the *Federal Reserve Beige Book-Boston*.



## Why Investing in Early Childhood Is Important

by Justine Roberts, *Executive Director of The Children's Museum of New Hampshire*

At the Children's Museum of New Hampshire, we work to ensure that all children have access to the opportunities and experiences they need to thrive and flourish as they develop. We believe that there is nothing more important than investing in families. After all, children are our future workforce, consumers, fellow voters, and neighbors. Investing in their success is an investment in our own futures as well – as business owners and co-workers, fellow citizens, and residents of a community. The leading edge of research from fields as diverse as neurology and economics increasingly points to a need for a greater focus on learning for children of all ages. This research tells us that community-based and out-of-school-time learning resources are vital for families to ensure their kids are ready for school, and ready to learn throughout their lives.

Recent research by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman suggests that achievement gaps exist even before kids enter school. Heckman has shown that while schools can narrow that gap, the time children spend at home over the summer significantly reverses those gains ([www.heckmanequation.org](http://www.heckmanequation.org)). In other words, schools do a tremendous job of impacting children's lives when kids are in school. But the reach of school is limited, both in time, and because school does not work with families which remain the largest influence in children's lives.

Another factor which informs Heckman's work is the fact that the brain is most elastic — meaning that it develops its key structure and is most actively developing — up through age five. This is the period of time in which we learn to walk, to talk, and to care for ourselves. It is also the time during which we develop our first relationships. During this period, the brain is literally creating neurons, building networks, and myelinating — a process of insulating axons to make them more efficient. The brain is also paring neurons down as choices are made, meaning that learning is cemented within brain

structures. After age five this process slows, and the motor, cognitive and social-emotional functioning that has been established serves as the foundation for future development. This is why the first five years of life are critical for securing children's futures.

This is not just a moral issue, but an economic one as well. Art Rolnick, former research director at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, has studied the question of what kinds of returns society can expect from an investment in early childhood education. He estimates that society saves \$16 for every \$1 invested in high quality pre-school experiences.

While there has been some disagreement over the exact return on investment on early childhood programs, multiple studies, including the Perry Preschool Study ([www.highscope.org](http://www.highscope.org)), have independently corroborated the broader conclusion. Students in the Perry Preschool Study came from economically disadvantaged families and were at high risk academically. Through a longitudinal study, the researchers found that high-quality preschool programs correlate to higher high school graduation rates, fewer criminal records, a greater likelihood of employment and higher earnings as adults.

This is because kids who are ready for Kindergarten are less likely to drop out of school early, to need welfare support, or to commit crimes. As Rolnick writes in his paper *Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with A High Public Return*, this is because “[t]he quality of life for a child and the contributions the child makes to society as an adult can be traced back to the first few years of life.” (fedgazette, Published March 1, 2003).

At the Children's Museum of New Hampshire, we believe that we need, as a community, to find the most effective, most efficient ways to educate our children. In our own work, we start with the question of what it means to educate a child in the 21st Century and our program is based on the premise that children need both

skills and passion for learning to be successful as they grow. The Children's Museum encourages children to find and follow their interests, to be active and capable of remaking the world, to be competent with materials and tools, to be able to think flexibly and combine ideas in new ways, to learn over their lifetimes, to solve problems and to be resilient. This is a potent combination that has the power to influence a child's trajectory. And it is the kind of high-quality learning resource that this research points out the need for. Every child deserves to have a place like CMNH. Because the education available to children in our communities is important not only for the kids, but also for the economy, and for all of us.





# Enjoy Dinner & Movies Outside This Summer

by Chris Malloy

The Dover Downtown Dinner & Movie Series, presented by Kennebunk Savings Bank, will transform the Cocheco Mills Courtyard into a dinner/theatre experience for four nights this summer. Combining food from local restaurants with hit films, these events are sure to be the talk of the town!

Savor the last few weeks of beautiful summer weather while watching one of your favorite classic movies and indulging in delicious food and drinks from some of Dover's finest restaurants. Starting August 6th, Dover Downtown will host a four-part Dinner & Movie Series, produced by the Dover Main Street program and the special events company Community Events, LLC.

For two Tuesday nights in August and two Thursday nights in September, one local downtown restaurant will set up shop outside, bringing their services straight to you in front of the silver screen. Attendees will be able to order their favorite dishes from the featured restaurant, and then sit back and relax while watching the film on a jumbo screen. Enjoy

all of this, plus a charming courtyard environment, and experience all that downtown Dover has to offer! This fresh and delicious twist will give new meaning to "dinner and a movie."

Scheduled Dinner & Movie Series nights are Tuesday, August 6th, featuring Blue Latitudes and fan favorite film "Jaws;" Tuesday, August 20th, features Kelly's Row and the hit comedy "Anchorman;" Thursday, September 12th features The Spaghetti Stain and eighties classic "Dirty Dancing;" and Thursday, September 19th, showcases Stages at One Washington and the film phenomenon "The Rocky Horror Picture Show." Whether it is date night, ladies night, or you just happen to be strolling in the downtown, this event is a perfect way to take a break and enjoy the summer night!

Kennebunk Savings President and CEO, Brad Paige, talked about the company's perspective, "Our goal is to help build thriving towns and cities, and we know that depends upon a robust business community with a flourishing arts and entertainment scene," says Paige. "We believe that the whole Dover community

will embrace the Dinner & Movie Series."

Chinburg Properties, the owner and manager of the Cocheco Mills, is a supporting sponsor of the Dinner & Movie Series. Jen Chinburg, marketing manager for the company, explains the company's support. "We think the Dinner & Movie Series is a great way to spice up community nightlife in Dover. We have just welcomed 120 new residents in 74 apartments to Cocheco Mills. We're thrilled to be able to help generate more activity within the downtown core, and for local restaurants. We love the idea of having the courtyard be the home of such a fun event series."

The Cocheco Mill Courtyard is located at 431 Central Avenue in Downtown Dover. Seating will begin at 7:00 p.m. the night of each show, and the movie will begin at dusk (approximately 8:30 p.m.). Tickets are \$10 for the movie and will be available online at [www.DoverMovies.com](http://www.DoverMovies.com). Meal cost is based on what attendees order from the menu. For more information, visit the website or call (603) 351-3639.

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## Dover Recreation

### Recreation Related Events and Programs Help Dover's Economy

By Gary Bannon, *Dover Recreation Director*

It is a fact that when people visit a community for an event or program they usually do more than just attend the event. The benefits to the local economy from the traffic that attend programs and events are sometimes assumed to be a given but they can't be taken for granted.

Dover is fortunate to have many recreation assets such as the McConnell Recreation Center, the Dover Indoor Pool, the Jenny Thompson Pool and the Dover Ice Arena. There are also many parks and community gathering spots that draw people from far and wide on a daily basis.

With this scenario, Dover is poised to draw many people to the community each year, a situation that adds to the vibrancy of our local businesses. Each time a visitor comes through Dover for a recreation program or an event, they will potentially also visit an area business.

An example of this scenario is the four major summer swim meets that are held at the Jenny Thompson Pool each year. In New England, the Jenny Thompson

Pool is the only 50-meter competition pool north of Boston able to host swim meets that provide nationally-recognized qualifying race times. As a result, this facility hosts these four major meets which draw participants from all over the northeastern United States to Dover for a three- to four-day competition. These visitors regularly fill hotels and restaurants and purchase goods while staying in the city. The statistics show that each family spends on average \$500 for a weekend stay. If that amount is multiplied by the many families that attend these meets, more than \$300,000 is pumped into the local economy during these competitions.

The Dover Ice Arena also is a regional destination point as people travel for hours to attend programs, events and tournaments. The Arena hosts several large hockey tournaments each year and the teams that attend stay for the weekend, so each event weekend, hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent locally.

The daily traffic that comes to the Dover Indoor Pool is from the local area plus many people who travel from up to one hour away to take advantage of this great facility. The McConnell Fitness Center also boasts a broad membership of community members from around the Seacoast and southern Maine.

Because Dover has such facilities and programs, we have a great economic advantage over many other communities that do not have such offerings. With this being the case, it is important to continue to build on it and grow partnerships with the City and local businesses to coordinate recreation events with business promotions. That happens on a regular basis with the hospitality industry as they develop special rates and welcome packages that encourage visitors to explore the area and spend time and money.

Overall, Dover has what it takes to host many major recreation events and should be proud to be the destination for activities that benefits all residents and businesses.

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# Doug Dede Takes on Business Retention Volunteer Role for the Dover Business & Industrial Development Authority

by Dan Barufaldi, *Director of Economic Development*



In an effort to improve the contact frequency with local businesses for the purpose of business retention, DBIDA has been successful in acquiring the volunteer services of Doug Dede, former Dover city councilman.

Doug brings unique retailing skills and experience, including inventory management, advertising, financial services, marketing, and much more. This extensive skill set will allow Doug to be very helpful in assisting local businesses to meet their challenges and adapt their business models for enhanced profitability and stability.

Doug will be calling on Dover businesses to hear their needs and issues. He will form a tight link between Dover's existing business base and DBIDA, and in so doing, the City of Dover government. This will enable the existing local businesses to be supported as they strive for success.

If your business could benefit from a visit by Doug Dede, please contact him at 603-516-6043, or by email at [d.dede@dover.nh.gov](mailto:d.dede@dover.nh.gov).

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Dr. Joshua Howard  
Lydia Howard  
Commercial Lender Carol Estes

“Working with Optima Bank is fantastic! It’s not easy for us as doctors to find a bank that understands our business needs and how we work. Optima is more than just our local bank. When we work with them, we feel like we are among friends. I’ve never felt that way about a bank before.”

Dr. Joshua Howard  
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