



# THE REGIONAL CENTER

Winter/Spring  
2015

BRIDGEWATER • RARITAN • SOMERVILLE

A partnership for a better tomorrow  
IN SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

## LATEST ROUND OF CHALLENGE GRANTS AWARDED

The Regional Center Partnership recently awarded the 2014 round of Challenge Grants to the three member communities.

The goal of the Challenge Grants is to achieve the vision for the Regional Center that includes sustainable economic development, downtown redevelopment, neighborhood revitalization, connecting the sub-centers of the Regional Center, and using natural resources to shape development that is consistent with community planning initiatives.

Grants are available in amounts up to \$15,000 per community to support projects and initiatives that improve mobility between the communities, improve economic competitiveness and overall quality of life.

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## DAMEO ELECTED REGIONAL CENTER PARTNERSHIP VICE-CHAIR

Jason Dameo, General Manager of Dameo Trucking, Inc. of Bridgewater has been unanimously elected Vice-chair of the Regional Center Partnership.

Dameo has served as an At-Large Private/Institutional Sector representative on the Regional Center Partnership since 2013.

## AMAZING THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN & AROUND THE REGIONAL CENTER

On Monday, December 8, 2014, the Somerset County Regional Center Partnership formally introduced “Amazing Things Are Happening In & Around the Regional Center Toolkit,” a comprehensive marketing package that focuses on the benefits, amenities, and advantages available to Somerset County businesses and residents in and near the Somerset County Regional Center.



The “Amazing Things” Toolkit includes video & Powerpoint components that function as a marketing tool to support the business attraction and retention needs of developers, the tourism industry, realtors, human resource professionals, educators, residential and commercial real estate professionals, economic development professionals, and others who desire to explain the benefits of the county and communities in the heart of Central New Jersey. **Continued page 3**

## ONE SEAT RIDE EXPANDS SERVICE

The NJ Transit One-Seat passenger train ride to Manhattan expanded to nighttime service on Monday, January 9, 2015, from rail stations in Raritan, Somerville, and Bridgewater. Morning one-seat rides, initiated early in 2014, have proven very successful. Prior to the start of the service, passengers to New York City had to change trains at Newark because the diesel engines on the Raritan Valley Line are not allowed

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## **REGIONAL CENTER PARTNERSHIP SETTING GOALS FOR 2015**

The major objective of the Regional Center Partnership in 2015 is to build upon past successes and to continue making the Somerset County Regional Center a premier location in New Jersey favorable for business attraction and growth and a special place to live, work, shop, and enjoy recreational and tourism opportunities. The specific direction to reach these goals will be established at the Regional Center Visioning Session planned for the spring of 2015 and from the Regional Center Strategic Master Plan update planned for later in 2015.

In addition, the “Amazing Things are Happening In and Around the Regional Center” toolkit initiative that was begun in 2014 will be marketed and distributed to all interest parties in 2015.

## **SOMERVILLE TOWN CENTER EARNS COUNTY AWARD**

The Somerville Town Center Phase II has earned the 32nd Annual Land Development and Planning Awards in the Mixed Use category from the Somerset County Planning Board. The West Main Street project will include 62,000 sq. ft. of retail space and 135 rental units.

The award was based on: Redevelopment of an old obsolete retail development; High density development in the Regional Center; Within walking distance of the NJ Transit rail station; Part of the Transit Village Community; Creating a Main Street presence and; Façade reflecting the historic character and design elements of Main Street.



## **INTERNATIONAL STEAK HOUSE OPENS IN SOMERVILLE**

As 2015 began, Somerville Borough welcomed Wolfgang's Steakhouse, an internationally renowned restaurant. With four locations in Manhattan and others in Beverly Hills, Miami, Waikiki, Japan, and Korea, Wolfgang's brings a well-respected reputation to a town known for a variety of fine dining.

Owned by Wolfgang Zwiener, the philosophy of the restaurant is based on the core principles learned from his years as Peter Luger's head waiter.

## **RAIN BARREL REBATE PROGRAM TO CONTINUE IN 2015**

The partnership between the New Jersey Water Supply Authority and the Regional Center will continue to offer Rain Barrel Rebates in 2015, beginning in the spring. Rebates of up to \$200 will be available to homeowners throughout the Regional Center communities. Information is available at [www.regionalcenterpartnership.org](http://www.regionalcenterpartnership.org).

## **REGIONAL CENTER PARTNERSHIP WELCOMES ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL REPRESENTATIVE**

In January Victoria Allen, Executive Director of Marketing & Public Relations for Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital was unanimously elected to the Regional Center Partnership as an at-large private/institutional sector voting member.

Ms. Allen's election to the RCP fills a vacancy on the RCP voting membership and ensures a continued presence by RWJ University Hospital Somerset on the RCP.

## SOMERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT MUSEUM OPENS

The Somerville Fire Department Museum on North Doughty Avenue is now open for public viewing on Saturdays from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon or by appointment by calling 908-526-7098 or 908-526-4828 after 5:00 P.M. Information is available at [www.firehousemuseum.org](http://www.firehousemuseum.org).

The department is represented by artifacts from the early days of fire fighting in the borough. The building was constructed in 1888 for the West End Hose Company. Since 1999 Somerville has received over \$400,000 in historic preservation grant funding for the restoration - \$279,500 from the Somerset County Historic Preservation Grant Program and \$186,872 from the New Jersey Historic Trust.



## CHALLENGE GRANTS (CONT.)

**Bridgewater Township** - Funding in the amount of \$15,000 to construct ADA ramps at the intersection of Woodlawn Avenue (south side) and Rambler Drive. The project is part of an ongoing sidewalk initiative funded by a 2012 Regional Center Challenge Grant. Completion of the Woodlawn Avenue sidewalk will extend the pedestrian pathway to the Municipal Complex, YMCA, shopping, parks, playfields and Bridgewater Raritan High School.

**Raritan Borough** - Funding in the amount of \$15,000 to update the 2006 Transit Village Study to address what has transpired in the neighborhood around the station relating to land use, zoning, property conditions, NJ Transit service, parking, etc.

**Somerville Borough** - Funding in the amount off \$15,000 will be used to initiate a study of the Borough's sanitary sewer system to identify peaks in flows within the network utilizing innovative state-of-the-art technology. Three cameras will be purchased and placed inside manhole covers to monitor data and provide an alarm in the event of a system failure or overflow. By locating the cameras in varying locations a baseline will be developed that will identify changes on water flow following wet weather, new construction, and other issues that impact flow.

## AMAZING THINGS (CONT.)

The package of materials, available to the public on DVD or thumb drive, includes two Powerpoint presentations, one that explains what a Regional Center is and what the designation enables the communities to accomplish, while the other details the "Amazing Things" that are found in and around the participating communities.

In addition, the Toolkit includes a series of videos that highlight the history of the region and the 7 virtues of the Regional Center while outlining the significant quality of life amenities including natural features and attractions; cultural attractions, programs and events; access to services and resources; major economic initiatives and major infrastructure investments. The Toolkit showcases the Regional Center as a highly attractive location to work, live, shop and for recreation.

Troy Fischer, Chair of the Regional Center Partnership, explained that the Toolkit coordinates "all the marketing pieces from municipalities, the county, and advocacy organizations into one comprehensive marketing initiative." He noted that the Toolkit is a dynamic document that will change and grow over time. Explaining that pieces of the program can be extracted for customized use, he reinforced the fact that the entire six-part program is available for public use.

The "Amazing Things" program will be supported by social media outreach featuring the events happening every day that make the Regional Center special.

A web site, [www.rcponline.org](http://www.rcponline.org) features the entire Toolkit which is also available on disk or thumb drive by contacting the Regional Center Partnership by email at [info@rcponline.org](mailto:info@rcponline.org) with name, organization, address and request for DVD or thumb drive.



*Raritan Mayor Jo-Ann Liptak addresses the gathering at the kick-off of "Amazing Things"*

## MUNICIPAL UPDATES

### BRIDGEWATER

A new Park & Ride facility under construction at the corner of Route 22 East and Milltown Road will accommodate Trans-Bridge Lines non-stop bus service to New York City. Occasional service to Newark Liberty Airport and Phillipsburg will also be provided.

The Township is moving forward on plans for redevelopment of the former Weyerhaeuser site in Finderne into a millennial focused residential project.

The Township Zoning Board is looking into permitting commercial/retail land use along Route 202 north of Fisher Scientific. The parcels are zoned residential and a change to commercial development would be in keeping with the Township's economic development goals.

### RARITAN

Phase Three of the Orlando Drive reconstruction project between Loomis Street and Old York Road will begin this summer. This will complete a three year/three phase project that began at the intersection of Route 206 and Orlando Drive. The project was substantially funded with state Transportation Trust Fund grants.

### SOMERVILLE

A residential project on East Veterans Memorial Drive consisting of 117 studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments is now under construction.

### ONE SEAT RIDES TO NYC

#### EXPANDS TO EVENINGS (CONT.)

in the tunnels under the Hudson River because of their fumes. NJ Transit has purchased dual-use locomotives that are powered by both diesel and electricity to make one-seat rides possible.

Freeholder Peter Palmer, Chairman of the Raritan Valley Rail Coalition, noted that the added service will make it easier for people to take the train to the city in the afternoon, have dinner, attend a Broadway show and then return on a one-seat ride. There are now five one-seat trains going daily to Penn Station and five returning to New Jersey.

## 2014 REGIONAL CENTER PARTNERSHIP

- Chair: Troy Fischer  
Vice-Chair: Jason Dameo  
Treasurer: Freeholder Patrick Scaglione  
Secretary: James Ruggieri (non-voting position)
- At-large Private/Institutional Sector Representatives  
Troy Fischer, Chair, Senior General Manager, Bridgewater Commons\*  
James Driscoll, Site Manager, Workplace Solutions, Johnson & Johnson Company\*  
Jason Dameo, General Manager, Dameo Companies\*  
Victoria Allen, Executive Director-Marketing & Public Relations, RWJUH at Somerset
- Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders  
Freeholder Brian Levine\*  
(Patrick Scaglione, Freeholder Alt.\*)
- Somerset County Planning Board  
Bernie Navatto, Chair, Somerset County Planning Board  
Walter Lane, Director of Planning, Somerset County
- Bridgewater Township  
Mayor Daniel J. Hayes, Jr.\*  
Councilman Matthew Moench  
Planner Scarlett Doyle  
Henry E. Reynolds, Jr., local private/institutional representative
- Raritan Borough  
Mayor Jo-Ann Liptak\*  
Councilman Andrew Sibilia  
Planner David Maski  
Don Christensen, local private/institutional representative
- Somerville Borough  
Mayor Brian Gallagher\*  
Councilman Ken Utter  
Planning Board Vice-Chair Lisa Yates  
Rick St. Pierre, local private/institutional representative
- Somerset County Business Partnership  
Michael Kerwin, President/CEO  
(John Maddocks, Alternate)
- Somerset County Park Commission  
Ray Brown, Secretary/Executive Director  
(Cynthia Sullivan, Alternate)  
\*RCP Executive Committee member

## 2015 REGIONAL CENTER MEETING DATES

- Wednesday, March 18 at 5:00 P.M.  
Wednesday, May 20 at 5:00 P.M.  
Wednesday, July 15 at 5:00 P.M.  
Wednesday, September 16 at 4:30 P.M.  
Thursday, November 12 at 5:00 P.M.  
Wednesday, January 20, 2016 at 5:00 P.M.  
All meetings take place in the County Administration Building  
Engineering Conference Room, 2nd Floor, 20 Grove Street,  
Somerville, New Jersey.

## THE REGIONAL CENTER

BRIDGEWATER, RARITAN, SOMERVILLE • SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

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