

Allstate-Bill Rogers Agency Opens in Portland

Allstate-Bill Rogers Agency recently opened at 201 Marlborough Street. The agency owner, Bill Rogers, brings decades of professional business and customer service experience to the insurance marketplace in Portland. In an industry that continues to move toward maximizing the use of the internet and on-line services, **Allstate-Bill Rogers Agency**, offers the same conveniences but focuses on the importance of customer service and personal relationships that have been lost with the increase in technology. The recent opening of the **Allstate-Bill Rogers Agency** in Portland has been a long awaited strategic initiative for both Allstate and agency owner Bill Rogers.

Bill stated, "When I learned the 201 Marlborough Street location was available, I became very interested. Not only is the location perfect, the building space and configuration is ideal for the Agency to effectively conduct business in a very unique and historic site. I feel that Portland offers the Agency a vibrant business community with a small town feel. I am very much looking forward to meeting the residents of Portland and surrounding communities and helping them meet their insurance and financial needs."

The Allstate Corporation was founded in 1931 and is the nation's largest publicly held personal lines insurer. A Fortune 100 company, with \$130 billion in total assets, Allstate is widely known through the "You're In Good Hands With Allstate®" slogan.

The **Allstate-Bill Rogers Agency** office is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday 8:30 am to 7 p.m., and on Saturday by appointment. As a licensed representative, Bill can offer a full range of insurance and financial products, including auto, renters, home, life, banking and retirement investment solutions. Contact the Agency by phone at (860) 316-2761 or stop by and welcome Bill and his staff to the Portland business community!

Brownstone Avenue Improvements Completed

For more than a decade, a direct connection between our Village District, historical quarries, and riverfront areas has been viewed as an instrumental step in economic development. The completion of the Brownstone Avenue Extension Project, funded by a Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) Grant, makes the connection a reality. The road extension, which was formally opened at a December 15th Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, creates a vital link between the growing quarry and riverfront attractions and the Main Street Village District.

While only 700 feet in length, the new road will direct traffic through the Village District, providing more visibility and more potential customers for Main Street businesses. In addition, a planned parking area will offer additional parking for visitors to the **Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park**, the town owned trails along the riverfront and the sports fields along Middlesex Avenue. An overlook area has also been cleared and new guardrail installed along Middlesex Avenue, to provide panoramic views of the Connecticut River, the Brownstone Quarry National Landmark and the Arrigoni Bridge.

The Project was a cooperative effort between the Portland Public Works Department, Town Engineers Nathan L. Jacobson and Associates, Inc. of Chester and Nutmeg Gravel and Excavating, Inc. of Colchester. The Portland Public Works Department performed all of the preliminary site work, removing brush, trees, and stumps from the hillside near Middlesex Avenue. Nathan L. Jacobson and Associates, Inc. performed all of the project engineering. Nutmeg Gravel and Excavating, Inc. was selected as the general contractor to complete the project.

2009 Planning & Zoning Department Activity Report

Despite an unprecedented national recession, the Portland Planning Department was a busy place during the last calendar year. The Planning & Zoning Department is responsible for the coordination, review and processing of all development applications submitted before the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Inland Wetlands Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals.

During the 2009 calendar year, the Planning Department issued 44 zoning permits. The uses for the permits issued included occupancy for new businesses, expansion of existing businesses, new business signage, and signage changes for existing businesses. In addition, the Planning and Zoning Commission granted approvals for 14 projects ranging from the 150, 518 square foot **Portland Town Place** commercial and residential mixed use development to the expansion of a deck for outdoor dining at the **Quarry Ridge Restaurant**. The Zoning Board of Appeals granted eight variances, of which six were for Department of Motor Vehicle K-7 automotive repair facilities.

The Planning & Zoning Department also works with non-regulatory commissions, including the EDC and Conservation Commission. The department is responsible for the production, implementation and update of the Plan of Development and all land use codes, as well as the monitoring/tracking of land use, land use applications, and zoning enforcement.

The Economic Development Commission meets the second Thursday of each month at 7 pm at the Portland Library, 20 Freestone Avenue.

News From the Building & Planning Departments

The offices of Building, Planning, Zoning & Health are located on the 1st floor of the Town Hall located at 33 East Main Street.

Office Hours:

Monday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
 Tuesday 8:30 a.m. - 7 p.m.
 Wednesday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
 Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
 Friday 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Considering a New Business?

The Economic Development Commission employs a part time consultant available Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm to assist you. Contact Mary Dickerson, EDC Consultant, at 342-7302 to discuss your ideas.

Planning a Project?

Tuesday nights are a great time to meet with the Development Team at the Town Hall to discuss plans that you may have for business expansion or a prospective new business idea. You will receive an overview of the approval process and the technical information required to complete your project. To schedule a meeting with the Development Team, including the Fire Marshal, Building Official, Planner, Director of Public Works, Sanitarian and Economic Development Consultant, contact Deanna Rhodes, Planning and Land Use Administrator at 342-6720.

Important Contact Information for the Building and Planning Department

Planning & Land Use Administrator

Deanna Rhodes drhodes@portlandct.org
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Linda Manchester
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EDC Consultant

Mary D. Dickerson
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Liberty Bank Named 2009 Portland Business of the Year by the Economic Development Commission

Liberty Bank's Portland office was named Portland's "Business of the Year". The award was announced at a November 4 ceremony held at the Bank's 245 Main St. location, and attended by representatives of the Bank and the town's Economic Development Commission. **Liberty Bank's** Portland office was the bank's first branch location and just celebrated its fifty-first anniversary in town.

Each fall, the "Business of the Year" award is given to a Portland business that has made a significant contribution to the community through public service, customer service, and business advocacy.

Liberty Bank President & CEO Chandler J. Howard attended the presentation. "As a community bank, our entire focus is on sustaining meaningful relationships with our local customers," he said. "It's great to know that we are making significant progress and have been successful in our mission in Portland." "We're thrilled with this special recognition," said Laurie Peterson, branch manager. "We take pride in being a local community bank."

Liberty Bank's Portland office is a long-time supporter of financial education for local students. It has hosted the town's kindergarten tour and the Youth Services Life Skills summer tour. It also sponsors many local groups and events, including the Portland Little League, Shakespeare on the Green, the Portland VFD Golf Tournament, the Portland Road Race, and Project Graduation. Over the last two years, the Liberty Bank Foundation has donated over \$18,000 to support programs serving low-income Portland children, such as Wesleyan University's Upward Bound, the Community Renewal Team, Oddfellows Playhouse, and the Northern Middlesex YMCA.



The Portland Economic Development Commission presents the town's Business of the Year Award to Liberty Bank. Pictured are staff of the Portland office along with: Liberty Bank President & CEO Chandler J. Howard; Mary Dickerson, EDC Consultant; Laurie Peterson, Liberty Bank Portland branch manager; Dave Rintoul, EDC; and Fred Knous, EDC.

Community Partners 2010 Awards Scheduled

The Community Partners Program will hold its second annual Awards Ceremony on Thursday, March 18, 2010 at 10 a.m. at the Portland Senior Center 7 Waverly Avenue. Last year 109 Portland businesses were recognized for donating more than \$250,000. to local community programs. Applications are now available for businesses to apply for recognition as part of the 2010 Community Partners Program.

The 2009 Community Partners Program Decal can be found on the windows and doors of more than 100 Portland businesses. The decal indicates that the member business supports a wide variety of activities, including educational programs, recreational programs, religious organizations, organized sports programs, community outreach programs and nonprofit groups. Portland residents are urged to look for these decals and support our local businesses that so generously support the community.

The Community Partners Program Member level recognizes businesses for donations of goods or services of up to \$5,000 in value during the previous calendar year. The Gold Member level recognizes business for donations of goods and services in excess of \$5,000 during the previous calendar year. The 2010 Program Applications are available in the Planning Office at Town Hall and on line at www.portlandct.org.

Completed applications should be sent to The Portland Economic Development Commission c/o Portland Town Hall, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480.

PORTLAND TOWN PLACE ENTERS FINAL STAGE OF APPROVALS

The final step in moving forward with the construction of **Portland Town Place** has been taken. The developers of the **Portland Town Place** project have submitted an application to the Connecticut Traffic Commission (CTTC). The application was received on December 3, 2009 and the CTTC now has 120 days to review the information and make a decision on the application. The **Portland Town Place** project plans to construct a mixed use development at the intersection of Route 66 and Route 17a. The CTTC must approve a traffic plan and award a certificate of it's' approval for the project to move into the next phase of development.

Bruce Hillson of **Traffic Engineering Solutions PC** of Glastonbury, has been contracted to serve as the traffic engineer for the Town of Portland. Mr. Hillson will compile a written summary of the traffic and safety concerns regarding the development. Those concerns will be sent to the CTTC for review and consideration as they assess the application submitted by the **Portland Town Place** developer.

ABA Luncheon Scheduled

The **Arrigoni Business Alliance, ABA**, will hold a quarterly luncheon on Thursday March 11, 2010 at **Farrell's Restaurant**, 245 Marlborough Street, beginning at 1 pm. The **ABA** is an organization comprised of business owners from Portland and East Hampton. The group provides networking opportunities, participates in and sponsors community activities and programs and works to support new and existing businesses.

Representatives of **Morgan Stanley** will present a brief overview of retirement and succession planning for small business owners followed by a question and answer period. For more information, contact Dr. John Mormile, Chairman for the March meeting at (860) 342-7277.

The **Portland Business Journal** is a quarterly publication of the **Economic Development Commission**. Issues are published in March, June, September and December. If you have ideas for future articles, notices for meetings or events, or would like to be placed on the email distribution list for the **Portland Business Journal**, please contact Mary D. Dickerson, EDC Consultant at 342-7302 or by e-mail at marydickerson@yahoo.com.

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