



## Economic Development Session October 23, 2017

### Goals and Objectives

- ❖ To present an overview of economic development on the state, regional and local level in Western Connecticut and also the role of professionals and nonprofessionals in the economic development field.
- ❖ To use moderated panels and presentations to illustrate the importance of economic development issues.
- ❖ To create awareness about opportunities available to towns and municipalities to encourage job growth.
- ❖ To motivate those attending the program to engage in the local economic development of their towns and cities through sharing their time and talent.

### Important Session Information

#### Session Leaders

Karen Reddington-Hughes, *WCL '16*  
Ellen "Dede" Baker, *WCL '16*

#### Advisor

Josh Carey, Director of Grantmaking, *Connecticut Community Foundation*

#### Session Attire

Dressing for comfort is appropriate.  
**Comfortable shoes are recommended for a short walk to lunch.**  
**If rain is forecasted please bring an umbrella or rain jacket.**

#### Venues

**19 Main**  
19 Main Street, New Milford

**Community Culinary School**  
7 Whittlesey Ave.  
New Milford

**Makery Coworking**  
20 Bank Street  
New Milford

#### Directions & Parking

For GPS directions, use the address: 11 Railroad Street, New Milford. Parking is available at the large, free town parking area accessed after coming in to New Milford from Route 67. After Crossing the railroad tracks on Bridge Street as you are driving towards Veterans Bridge, make an immediate right turn into **Patriots Way** parking lot. [Click here](#) for a map and directions to 19 Main Street from Patriots Way parking lot.



## Agenda

- 8:30-8:45           Arrival, Light Breakfast
- 8:45-9:00           **Welcome and Overview**  
Karen Reddington-Hughes, *WCL '16* and Dede Baker, *WCL '16*
- 9:00-9:45           **The State of Economic Development in CT**  
Tim Sullivan, *Connecticut Deputy Commissioner of Community and Economic Development*
- 9:45-10:30          **Driving Economic Development in Western Connecticut**  
Courtney Hendricson, Vice President of Municipal Services, *CT Economic Resource Center*
- 10:30-10:45        Break
- 10:45-11:15        **Role of Tourism in Connecticut's Economy**  
Randy Fiveash, Director, *CT Office of Tourism*
- 11:30-12:20        **Facilitating Economic Development**  
Kevin Bielmeier, Economic Development Director, *City of New Milford*  
Tim Good, President, *Kent Chamber of Commerce*  
Kimberly Parsons Whitaker, Associate Director, *CT Main Street Center*
- 12:20-12:30        **Foundation Bite: Community Philanthropy**  
Julie Loughran, Director of Development and Communications, *Connecticut Community Foundation*
- 12:45-1:45         **Lunch**  
Dawn Hammacott, Executive Director  
Justin Elander, Chef Instructor  
*Community Culinary School of Northwestern CT*
- 2:00-2:30           **Innovation and Ideas for Building Our Economy**  
Kip Bergstrom, Economic Strategy Consultant
- 2:30-3:20           **How small towns transition to a 21st century economy**  
Tony Vengrove, Owner, *Makery Coworking*  
Ben Paletsky, Owner, *South Farms*  
Paul Chayka, Director and Co-founder, *Robotics and Beyond*
- 3:20-4:00           **Tour of Makery Coworking**
- 4:00-4:30           **Alumni Partner Program**



## Speaker Biographies

### Tim Sullivan

*Connecticut Deputy Commissioner Community and Economic Development*

Tim Sullivan joined the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) in January 2014, and became Deputy Commissioner in January 2015. Tim oversees several key components of Governor Malloy's economic development strategy, including tourism, brownfield redevelopment, transit-oriented development, and waterfront initiatives. He also manages the state's "still revolutionary" branding effort, which raises awareness about Connecticut as a great place to visit and grow a business.

Prior to joining DECD, Tim served as Chief of Staff to the New York City Deputy Mayor for Economic Development during the administration of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. In that role, Tim focused on key areas of city policy including transportation and transit-oriented development; brownfield redevelopment; waterfront and maritime/port redevelopment (serving as the citywide waterfront policy coordinator); public and affordable housing policy; small business support; infrastructure finance; and public/private partnerships. He played a critical role in several noteworthy initiatives of the Bloomberg administration, including the engineering and applied science campus being developed by Cornell University on Roosevelt Island, major brownfield/waterfront development projects in Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island, the restructuring of the New York City Housing Authority, implementation and expansion of the East River Ferry, efforts to expand the #7 subway line to New Jersey, and the Citibike bike sharing program.

Prior to joining city government in 2010, Tim worked at Barclays Capital in New York as Chief of Staff to the Head of Global Investment Banking (a position he also held at Lehman Brothers prior to its acquisition by Barclays in 2008). He began his career in investment banking at Lehman Brothers in 2003 as a healthcare banker, focusing on mergers and acquisitions and capital markets transactions for leading companies in the managed care, biotechnology, and healthcare services sectors.

Tim is a graduate of Georgetown University and recently moved to Coventry, CT.

Contact info: [tim.sullivan@ct.gov](mailto:tim.sullivan@ct.gov)

### Courtney Hendricson

*Vice President of Municipal Services, CT Economic Resource Center*

Courtney Hendricson specializes in designing and implementing economic development strategies. As part of CERC's strategic direction to improve economic development performance in Connecticut, she drives CERC services to municipalities, such as improving the town's regulatory process, analyzing commercial real estate mix, and providing targeted networking and communication among the local business community.



Western Connecticut  
Leadership

A Program of



Prior to joining CERC, she served as Assistant Town Manager for Enfield, CT and Economic Development Director for Farmington, CT, as well as Director of Community Development for Connecticut Main Street Center. She began her career in Austin, Texas, working on large scale economic development projects for the city manager's office.

Ms. Hendricson received her Bachelor's in Government and Sociology from Connecticut College and her Master's in Public Affairs from The University of Texas at Austin, and is a graduate of Leadership Greater Hartford's "Quest" leadership development program. She is the board vice president of the Connecticut Economic Development Association (CEDAS) and president elect of the Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW CT). She is also a past Chair of MetroHartford Alliance's Regional Economic Development Forum (REDF), and a sustaining member of the Junior League of Hartford.

Contact info: [chendricson@cerc.com](mailto:chendricson@cerc.com)

### **Randy Fiveash**

*Director, CT Office of Tourism*

Randy Fiveash was appointed the Director of the Connecticut Office of Tourism in November, 2008. Fiveash has over 30 years of proven leadership in tourism, convention and visitor bureau industry and association management, and strategic planning with additional emphasis in organizational and marketing development and management.

Prior to becoming Connecticut's Director of Tourism, Fiveash served as Commissioner of Tourism for the Commonwealth of Kentucky's Department of Tourism. Fiveash has also served as Executive Director of the National Tourism Foundation and served in CEO positions of Convention and Visitor Bureaus in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Arlington, Texas, Gatlinburg, Tennessee and Branson, Missouri.

Fiveash was a Delegate to the White House Conference on Travel and Tourism and has served in leadership positions on the Boards of the International Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus, Travel South USA, South Carolina, Tennessee and Missouri Convention and Visitor Bureau Associations, the Southeast Tourism Society, National Tourism Foundation and the Mississippi River Development Association, Discover New England, among others.

Randy is originally from Macon, Georgia and is a graduate of Mercer University. His wife, Shari, is a Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Executive; they have three children and one beautiful granddaughter. Their oldest son is a successful screenwriter in Hollywood, CA; their daughter is with the Disney Corp in New York City; and their youngest son is a senior at the University of Missouri.

Contact info: [randall.fiveash@ct.gov](mailto:randall.fiveash@ct.gov)



Western Connecticut  
Leadership

A Program of



### **Kevin Bielmeier**

Economic Development Director, *City of New Milford*

Kevin Bielmeier is the Economic Development Director for the Town of New Milford, charged with improving the economic well-being and quality of life of a community he has lived in since 2002. Prior to this, Kevin managed Corporate Relations for Ability Beyond, developing supportive partnerships with businesses, large and small, in CT & NY, for six years. Kevin also spent a decade at Ethan Allen Headquarters in Danbury, managing & producing marketing & internal/external communications under the advertising department; collaborating with virtually every aspect of this vertically integrated business.

Kevin's diverse job experience ranges from *boots-on-the-ground* business development and sales in Manhattan, to cruise directing high-end luxury liners around the world, to recording U2 on their 1988 'Rattle & Hum' tour (a story for another discussion).

But first and foremost: Kevin is a family man, just celebrating 30 years of marriage to his wife Josie, they have two remarkable daughters, one in college and the other at the high school. Additionally, he serves on the board of Village Center for the Arts, a non-profit he chaired for six years, and is an active member of the Rotary Club.

Contact Info: [kbielmeier@newmilford.org](mailto:kbielmeier@newmilford.org)

### **Tim Good**

President, *Kent Chamber of Commerce*  
Owner, *The Good Gallery*

Contact Info: [tim@thegoodportfolio.com](mailto:tim@thegoodportfolio.com)

### **Kimberly Parsons Whitaker**

Associate Director, *Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC)*

Since 2000, Kimberley Parsons-Whitaker has worked closely with municipalities and downtown organizations throughout Connecticut, assisting local leaders and citizens in their efforts to bring their Main Streets back to life. She networks with State officials and experts in placemaking and economic development in efforts to bring much needed resources and expertise to Connecticut's Main Streets.

In her 17 years with the organization, Kim has been a key figure in the planning, development and evolution of CMSC to an award-winning statewide economic and community development organization, which has grown participation by 760% since 2005. Currently she oversees CMSC's member services program, the Main Street Forums for the 21st Century educational programming, and the CT Main Street Awards program. In 2013-2014, Kim project managed the



Western Connecticut  
Leadership

A Program of



Economic Recovery for Sandy Hook Village consultancy, assembling a team with expertise in market analysis, branding & marketing, organizational capacity building and operational planning. The consultancy provided a small but active volunteer group with strategies and tactics to become an economic development engine for the community.

Kim has been a guest speaker for the Urban Land Institute, the American Planning Association, the League of Women Voters, New London Landmarks, University of Hartford's Barney School of Business, various educational institutions, and numerous Connecticut municipalities and regional planning and economic development organizations.

A professional opera and concert singer, Kim holds degrees from New England Conservatory of Music and Boston University. She has performed extensively throughout North America and the Far East and continues her performing career, though closer to home. Kim, her husband Bill Whitaker, a Broadway musician, and their daughter Alexandra, a senior at American University in Washington DC, and their 5 year-old border collie mix, Henry, reside in West Hartford, Connecticut.

Contact info: [kim@ctmainstreet.org](mailto:kim@ctmainstreet.org), [www.ctmainstreet.org](http://www.ctmainstreet.org)

### **Julie Loughran**

Director of Development and Communications, *Connecticut Community Foundation*

Julie oversees the Foundation's work in helping donors reach their charitable goals. She works closely with donors and their professional advisors to craft giving strategies that make people's charitable visions reality. She also oversees the Foundation's communications.

Julie spent her early career as a nonprofit and campaign communications strategist, working for a range of candidates and organizations working on civil rights, economic development, environmental and other public policy issues. She also spent twelve years working as an attorney in the public and private sectors. Among other positions, Julie served as an Assistant Solicitor General for the State of New York, where she litigated appeals that addressed a range of issues, including environmental protection, education, civil rights and mental health policy. She also worked as a litigator at Wiggin and Dana LLP in New Haven, where she was recognized for her commitment to pro bono work.

Julie earned a bachelor's degree from Stanford University and a law degree from Stanford Law School. Julie lives in Washington with her husband, Brendan Foulois, and their daughter, Fiona.

Contact info: [jloughran@conncf.org](mailto:jloughran@conncf.org), [conncf.org](http://conncf.org)



Western Connecticut  
Leadership

A Program of



### **Dawn Hammacott**

Executive Direction, *Community Culinary School of Northwestern CT*

Dawn is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America with a specialty in Baking and Pastry Arts. She has extensive restaurant management and culinary experience and was the owner of a popular local bakery, Grand Patisserie. When the bakery was sold, after 13 successful years in business, she began work on the development of the Community Culinary School of Northwestern CT which she co-founded with Peg Molina, LCSW, Director of Social Services, Town of New Milford.

Contact Info: [culinaryschool@sbcglobal.net](mailto:culinaryschool@sbcglobal.net), [www.communityculinaryschool.org](http://www.communityculinaryschool.org)

### **Justin Elander**

Chef Instructor, *Community Culinary School of Northwestern CT*

Justin is the Chef Instructor for the Community Culinary School of Northwestern CT as well as a graduate of the School. He has extensive experience in the food service industry including restaurants, catering, healthcare, country clubs, and as a private chef. He also oversees the school's catering program.

### **Kip Bergstrom**

Economic Strategy Consultant

Kip Bergstrom brings a wealth of knowledge to the field of economic development. Kip's recent consulting work includes developing the economic strategy for the New England Powerhouse, an initiative aimed at building high speed rail between New York City and Boston. He also has assisted in the launch of Innovation Places, which aims to foster dense concentrations of entrepreneurs starting in the communities of New Haven, Stamford, Hartford and New London. Kip worked with the Connecticut senate in drafting *An Act Concerning Innovation, Entrepreneurship and the Future of the Connecticut Economy*, providing outreach for SB1's Innovation Program, which aims to help area entrepreneurs and innovators, and helped to create Discovering Amistad, the new nonprofit organization created to operate the Amistad vessel.

As deputy commissioner, Kip was instrumental in the development of the innovation economy, statewide branding and the arts and culture, historic preservation and tourism functions. He has held executive positions in the private, public and nonprofit sectors, including serving three mayors and three governors. His interests, writings and accomplishments span the full spectrum of economic development, including: the power of storytelling in defining identity; branding and marketing; tourism; education and talent; transportation; entrepreneurship; technology commercialization; business recruitment and retention; urban design and real estate development; and the interface of the human network and the natural system. He was one of the pioneers of place-centric economic development, which he defines as succeeding economically without losing our soul.

Contact Info: [Kip.Bergstrom@ctinnovations.com](mailto:Kip.Bergstrom@ctinnovations.com)



Western Connecticut  
Leadership

A Program of



## Tony Vengrove

Owner, *Makery Coworking*

Tony Vengrove is a marketing and innovation veteran with over 25 years' experience leading innovation and change. His firm, Miles Finch Innovation®, is located in downtown New Milford and serves its market by providing innovation and marketing consulting services to clients up and down the east coast. In addition, the firm trains organizations and individuals on the principles of Creative Leadership, utilizing its proprietary Idea Climate Equation® and Seven C's of Creative Leadership frameworks. Tony's client experience ranges from the startup to the Fortune 500 including: Pepperidge Farm, General Mills, Permatex, Revolv, iHire, ClearFarma, Planet Fuel, Litchfield Distillery, Mine Hill Distillery and more.

Tony recently launched Makery Coworking located on Bank Street in New Milford. The innovative space invites Litchfield County's freelance and solopreneur residents to form a creative community that can instigate creative change in the region.

He is a sought-after advisor among Connecticut nonprofits and serves on the Board of Directors for ASAP! in Washington, CT. He also serves as a Mentor for Westport's The Refinery, a business accelerator that helps women-owned startups in CT accelerate growth of early stage ventures. He serves on the Management Department Advisory Board for the Ancell School of Business at Western Connecticut State University. He is co-author of, *Energize Your Leadership* and writes a regular "Food Entrepreneurs" column for *Edible Nutmeg*.

He began his career working at New York City global ad agencies Grey Advertising and Saatchi & Saatchi. He left the agency business for a marketing and innovation career with Boehringer Ingelheim, UST, Inc and eventually Altria, where he served as the Director of Innovation tasked with innovating less harmful nicotine delivery systems. He earned his Economics Degree from the University of Rochester and is set to complete a Masters Degree in Leading Innovation and Change from York St. John University in 2017.

Contact Info: [tony.vengrove@milesfinchinnovation.com](mailto:tony.vengrove@milesfinchinnovation.com)

## Ben Paletsky

Owner, *South Farms*

Recently profiled in *Edible Nutmeg* as the "Farm Entrepreneur," Ben Paletsky is working on all fronts to redefine what it means to be Connecticut's modern-day farmer. Ben's deep family roots in Connecticut agriculture has brought him back to the state to revitalize his family's multigenerational 150-acre dairy farm where he has successfully launched a promising agri-tourism endeavor known as South Farms. South Farms blends real working farmland, hosts The Morris Marketplace— an access point for farmers to connect with customer—and the White Barn, a unique barn events venue, recently awarded as a top Connecticut wedding location by the *Venue Report*.



Western Connecticut  
Leadership

A Program of



Ben has successfully blended his acumen in farming with his seasoned experience in the tech sector where he still consults on product marketing and branding, business strategy, and new product development. His ability to understand product value and simplify the complexity of markets, enables him to successfully help businesses align and commercialize their offerings into markets where they can thrive.

Over his career Ben has been awarded Connecticut Governor's Tourism Rising Star Award, Connecticut Magazine's 40-Under-40, a seat on Litchfield County's 50 Most Influential Individuals list, and the Connecticut Award of Merit for Historic Preservation. Within his community he serves as chairman of Morris' Economic Development Commission.

Contact info: [bpaletsky@southfarms.org](mailto:bpaletsky@southfarms.org), <https://www.southfarms.org>

### Paul Chayka

Director and Co-founder, *Robotics And Beyond*

Early interests in high school, in math, science and ceramic art, led Paul to study ceramic engineering and obtain B.S. and M.S. degrees from Alfred University in NY. In a 25+ year career, he was fortunate to gain insight to many fields and careers of engineering and science, education paths within those fields, product innovation and the patent process. Those fields included aerospace engineering, glass science, thin films and physics of color, power generation, semiconductors and electronics, organic chemistry, alternative fuels and even gene sequencing.

A lack of meaningful summer activities for youngsters in STEM and design led to the 2004 creation, with co-founder Mike Morrissey, of the Robotics And Beyond summer camp. The use of real-world applications and career-relevant skills and tools proved tremendously successful and has remained the basis for all of our programs since then. The camp also integrated broad ranges of topic, equipment, student age and ability in one physical area, much like an art-room environment.

In 2012, Paul turned his full attention and time to education. Robotics And Beyond now impacts over 300 students a year in year-round programs including summer camps that serve 200+ k-12 students from a 60 mile radius. A small army of devoted adult professionals and student volunteers and parents has enabled what Robotics And Beyond is today. "Graduates" are showing tremendous success in their post-high school education and careers in a wide range of fields. The goal is to create a model for an approach that can spread to many other communities.

Contact info: [pchayka@roboticsandbeyond.org](mailto:pchayka@roboticsandbeyond.org), [www.roboticsandbeyond.org](http://www.roboticsandbeyond.org)



Western Connecticut  
Leadership

A Program of



## Opportunities for further exploration and engagement

### Connecticut Main Street Center

Working to bring downtowns to life all across Connecticut, by helping to revitalize them as the social and economic heart of the community. CT Main Street Center welcomes industry professionals from many disciplines to be members of the CT Main Street Professional Affiliate network. They work to connect experts in land use, planning, design, transportation, marketing, real estate, law, and other industries with communities across the state that need expertise in bringing their Main Streets back to life. CMSC also has a limited number of seats available for dynamic individuals who are interested in serving on our board of directors. Find out more at [ctmainstreet.org](http://ctmainstreet.org).

### Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC)

CERC is a nonprofit coporation and public-private partnership that provides economic development serves, leveraging Connecticut's unique advantages as a premier business location. Find out news, events, and more info at [www.cerc.com](http://www.cerc.com).

### Community Culinary School of Northwest CT

The Culinary School seeks volunteers as board members, to help with fund development, events and the annual gala. There are also opportunities for individuals with expertise in graphic design and the food service industry.

Find out more by contacting Dawn Hammacott [culinaryschool@sbcglobal.net](mailto:culinaryschool@sbcglobal.net).

### Makery Coworking

Litchfield County's first coworking space offers curated programs for members and the greater New-Milford community. Sign up for the monthly newsletter and find out about events [www.makerycoworking.com](http://www.makerycoworking.com).

### Robotics And Beyond

Robotics And Beyond is in a transition period of identifying and planning its long-term goals, while continuing to provide valuable programs for youth and adults. There are many opportunities for volunteers including: program coordinator and scheduler, program coordinator for special-needs students, topic instructors for weekend, evening or summer programs (volunteer and paid), marketing coordinator for email, print and on-line media, employee advocates at companies for corporate grants, employee giving programs, equipment donations, providing program updates and volunteer opportunities to HR departments for dissemination to employees, and resident advocates in various towns to distribute information materials to libraries and schools. Find out more [www.roboticsandbeyond.org](http://www.roboticsandbeyond.org).