



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Department
Office of Housing and Economic Development
Press Release**

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Patrick Administration Designates MetroWest Tourism and Visitors Bureau and 495/MetroWest Partnership to the Creative Economy Network

NATICK – Wednesday, March 12, 2014 – The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development today announced that it has designated the MetroWest Tourism and Visitors Bureau and the 495/MetroWest Corridor Partnership as part of the newly established Creative Economy Network. The network is a regional effort to accelerate the economic growth of the Commonwealth’s creative industries across the state.

Established by the Patrick Administration in August 2012, the Creative Economy Network will help support and grow the creative industries statewide. The creative industries include the many companies pushing the limits of creativity in the marketplace, including innovative video game companies, cultural non-profits, design, marketing and architecture firms, and also the people who write books, shoot movies, make art and record music.

This past fall these two organizations in partnership with the Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce, CommCreative, the Corridor Nine Area Chamber of Commerce, Dean College, the Town of Framingham, the Framingham Downtown Renaissance, Framingham State University, the Town of Franklin, Hopkinton Center for the Arts, the City of Marlborough, the Marlborough Economic Development Corp., the Marlborough Regional Chamber of Commerce, the MetroWest Chamber of Commerce, the Town of Natick, Natick Center Associates, and Partnerships for a Skilled Workforce submitted an application to the Patrick Administration’s Creative Economy Industry Director and the Creative Economy Council, and was unanimously selected to be one of the first entities in the Network. As part of the Network, these partners will coordinate resources, track progress, and promote efforts to support the creative industries on the local and regional level.

“With over 100,000 workers and a \$1 billion statewide impact, the creative industries in Massachusetts are an important part of the Massachusetts economy,” said Helena Fruscio, Massachusetts Creative Economy Industry Director. “This new coordinated system will help us support the growth of these vital industries in every corner of the Commonwealth.”

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“Because the MetroWest Visitors Bureau grew out of a years-long volunteer effort called the Creative Economy Task Force, this designation as co-lead is a perfect fit for us,” said MetroWest Tourism and Visitors Bureau Executive Director Susan Nicholl. “With our large network of arts and culture organizations--for-profit and nonprofit--the MetroWest Visitors Bureau is excited about this opportunity to connect them with the resources and strategies of the statewide Creative Economy Network.”

“Since the 495/MetroWest Partnership was formed a decade ago by our business leaders, municipal officials, and key regional institutions as the voice for our growing regional economy, we’re honored to be a co-lead in establishing this Creative Economy Network,” said 495/MW Partnership Executive Director Paul Matthews. “We applaud Governor Patrick and Secretary Bialecki for their vision in organizing these networks across the state, and look forward to ensuring that the 495/MetroWest region will be part of statewide conversations on bolstering our creative economy in such areas as marketing, advertising, architecture, design, film and media, digital games, music, and publishing.”

The Network will help implement the Commonwealth's Action Agenda to support and grow the state's creative economy industries. Based on the findings of the 2012 CreativeNEXT Listening Tour, the Action Agenda identifies Five Areas of Action as key to the success and expansion of these industries:

- **Business Development:** Increasing coherence and integration of the available state, regional, and local resources to help generate new opportunities for businesses, organizations, and individuals and improve access to technical assistance, expertise, mentorship and training for creative industry companies.
- **Access to Capital:** Increasing access and removing barriers to direct financial support for creative industry organizations and businesses.
- **Visibility:** Developing opportunities to connect, feature, and highlight the creative industries through events, campaigns, and content generation in traditional and social media to help bring awareness to the value and quality of these industries.
- **Talent:** Generating initiatives for the creative industries to access, attract and retain entry level, middle, and upper level talent.
- **Space:** Surveying the existing and developing convening, incubator, and working space resources available for the creative industries and working to increase available space for the creative industry businesses and entrepreneurs.

Each region across the Commonwealth will have a Network dedicated to the success and growth of the industries in its respective region. A region will cover at least 10 contiguous municipalities with one or more Lead Organization(s) responsible for coordinating and reporting of the Network activities in a given region. This is the first of five scheduled designation announcements.

"MetroWest is home to many innovative arts and cultural organizations, and these creative industries are key components of economic growth and development in our region," said Senator Karen Spilka (D-Ashland), co-chair of the MetroWest Legislative Caucus. "The MetroWest Tourism and Visitors Bureau and the 495/MetroWest Partnership are the ideal organizations to lead this effort, which will be a great resource for artists, non-profits and businesses in the community and allow more individuals and families to benefit from the cultural experiences MetroWest has to offer."

"The MetroWest region is fertile ground for advancement, growth and enhancement of these important businesses that generate opportunity for new jobs and revenue in our region," said Representative John Fernandes (D-Milford), who serves as co-chair of the MetroWest Legislative Caucus. "I applaud Secretary Bialecki and his staff for recognizing this opportunity and designating this partnership as a leader in the statewide creative economy network."

"This is great news for the MetroWest and especially for the town of Natick. Natick has a vibrant arts and cultural community in the downtown area and this designation will further enhance the economic growth and cultural development in the area," said Representative David Linsky (D-Natick).

"One of the main goals of a Massachusetts Legislator is to promote the economic growth of his or her particular district which in turn promotes the economic growth of the Commonwealth's economy," said Representative Jeffrey Roy (D-Franklin). "This partnership of the 495/MetroWest region with the Creative Economy Network will help incorporate the unique group of innovative companies and educated workers that the MetroWest area has to offer with the rest of the Commonwealth."

In October 2008, the Patrick Administration created the Massachusetts Creative Economy Council, an advisory council to the Legislature and the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development designed to develop a statewide strategy for the enhancement, encouragement, and growth of the creative economy in Massachusetts. Their report, "[Supporting the Creative Industries of Massachusetts](#)" was released in December 2012 and details the next steps for continuing to advance the sector based on feedback from creative industry leaders.

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