

## **Editorial for Fall 2001 Preview**

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Businesses are finding that the excellent transportation network in and around Newtown provides ease of access for their employees and to their northeastern markets. Newtown's location in northeastern Fairfield County is convenient to New York City and Boston with less road congestion than lower Fairfield County and Hartford. Newtown is an easy commute for employees who may come from three labor markets including the Danbury, Waterbury and Bridgeport Labor Markets. Transportation and a diverse and available work force contribute to the advantages of a Newtown location.

Several new commercial and industrial projects were initiated over the summer with construction planned for completion this fall or early winter. The Savings Bank of Danbury has a new branch office under construction in the Borough of Newtown. A fall opening is planned. The Savings Bank of Danbury is the second new bank that expanded into Newtown since the opening of the CFS Bank in the Big Y in 1998.

Charter Communications is expanding into a new 18,000 square foot office building that is under construction on Commerce Road. Charter will use the added space for their administrative offices. International Fiber Systems expanded into a second building which adds capacity for their manufacturing facility. A new 20,000 square foot warehouse and distribution facility is under construction in Hawleyville. This project marks the development of the last parcel on Barnabas Road. Phase I of a 50,000 square foot self-storage facility on South Main Street is nearly complete and a new office building is planned in Sandy Hook on Route 34.

Newtown moved forward with an agreement to purchase the 185-acre Fairfield Hills Hospital campus from the State of Connecticut. The Town Meeting approved the municipal purchase of the property and the Town will begin work on a master plan this fall. The Town hopes to develop a plan that will provide a range of reuse options. Many residents are supporting community uses for the campus. Such uses may include municipal offices, recreational fields, a future educational element and open space. Any commercial use of the campus will be determined during the development of the master plan. Last spring, in an attempt to find a partner to assist them in the development of a reuse plan, the Town issued an RFP. This process was not successful in finding a partner therefore the Town will move forward on its own. The RFP is available from the Economic Development Commission's web site [www.newtown.org/FHH](http://www.newtown.org/FHH). The Commission will continue to add updates concerning this important development as they unfold.

The Curtis Corporate Park is under construction in Sandy Hook. The park is located within a one-half mile of exit 11 off I-84. Twelve new lots are approved and will range in size from 1 to 4.7 acres. The new industrial subdivision offers a range of options for Newtown businesses seeking to expand and for new businesses seeking a Newtown location. The park is adjacent to the headquarters of the Curtis Corporation who anchors this new development. Currently, there are no plans on file for any new buildings in this area. No public utilities are planned to service this development.

The Hawleyville area of Newtown, located on its western boundary, has over 140 acres of land available for development. The land is zoned to permit the construction of a corporate campus and has the potential for development of close to 1 million square feet. The first phase of the sewer project that will service the future development has already been completed in conjunction with the Homesteads of Newtown, an assisted living community. The Hawleyville area has access immediately off exit 9 and is one of only a few development areas left along the I-84 corridor.

Newtown looks forward to the fall and is prepared to work with its business residents who wish to expand in the community and to welcome new businesses. Newtown is an attractive location to live and work and businesses already located in Newtown are excellent candidates to grow in place. The Economic Development Commission feels that the strong local housing market will continue to expand the local labor force and will encourage future business growth in the community.