## Perfectly Centered

Triannual Newsletter of the Kenosha Area Business Alliance(KABA)

**FALL 2024** 

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#### Lilly acquires Nexus Pharmaceuticals' Pleasant Prairie manufacturing facility; plans long-term commitment to the village

Eli Lilly and Company and Nexus Pharmaceuticals, LLC announced in April a definitive agreement for Lilly to acquire a manufacturing facility in Pleasant Prairie from Nexus, a leading sterile manufacturer in the pharmaceutical industry.

The acquisition of the 100,000 SF FDA-approved facility will further expand Lilly's global parenteral (injectable) product manufacturing network and support increased demand for the company's medicines.

"We are excited to welcome a world-class company like Lilly to Kenosha County, With its four higher education institutions, robust infrastructure and transportation network, skilled workforce, and proximity to major metro areas, Kenosha County is an ideal location for this type of manufacturing. Family-owned Nexus Pharmaceuticals had the vision to build in the Prairie Highlands Corporate Park, and we are grateful for their past investment and community support and wish them well in their future endeavors."

- Nicole Ryf, KABA President

Edgardo Hernandez, Executive Vice President and President of Lilly Manufacturing, expressed optimism about this facility's new opportunities.

"Integrating this advanced facility into

our network will enhance our ability to produce life-saving medicines more efficiently and at a larger scale," Hernandez stated.

The acquired facility will solely focus on Lilly's production, with no contract manufacturing involved. Lilly estimates that production at this facility could begin at the end of 2025.



part of a long-term commitment to the village.

nce our ability to produce life-saving medicines

At a recent Village Planning Commission Meeting,

Lilly's executive director of manufacturing John Cook

said Lilly has "a lot of things in the works" for its newly

acquired Pleasant Prairie plant and that the facility is

Archives of *Perfectly Centered* can be found on our web site:

www.kaba.org



KABA is the lead business organization that drives economic development throughout Kenosha County and supports and provides services to its members and the community, helping to ensure growth, a robust economy, and a positive business climate for the Kenosha Area.

### From the President...

After working and living outside of Wisconsin for almost ten years, I was reminded of just how strong our workforce is when we moved back to the area. In Texas, we touted the sheer number of people living in - and moving to - the state. In Wisconsin, I'm proud we can talk about our workforce in a more meaningful way. Our labor force's work ethic and productivity is unmatched.

I believe a key factor driving this is Wisconsinites join the workforce at a young age. How many of us started babysitting, cutting grass, working on a family farm, being a camp counselor before we were teenagers? If you go out to eat or go shopping, the person helping you is generally someone in their teens or early twenties. In other markets, those jobs are generally filled by adults.

Wisconsin's labor participation rate amongst youth is DOUBLE the national average. That leads to Wisconsinites developing a strong work ethic at a young age while also freeing up adults to work in higher skilled jobs in manufacturing, professional services, healthcare, and other key industries.

KABA has a long history of recognizing that our talent pool – over 3.5 million people within a 45-minute radius – is our biggest advantage and also the most important asset for our employers. Our talent development and attraction initiatives are one of the service areas that differentiate us from other economic development organizations.

We are focused on continuously building and adapting programs and services to meet the evolving needs of our existing and prospective businesses. Unique examples of ways in which we support talent development and attraction include:

- > Our Life Balanced Kenosha County initiative serves as a comprehensive resource for anyone looking to move to the area, with information about housing, recreational and cultural amenities, education and healthcare institutions, and employment opportunities. The site hosts our hyper-local jobs board, which is a free resource for KABA investors to post open positions.
- > Facilitating engagements with education partners. We like to think of Kenosha as a college town, boasting five institutions of higher education in our community. While higher ed grapples with changing demographics, we are fortunate that Gateway Technical College, UW-Parkside, Carthage College, Herzing University, and the Marquette

School of Nursing have strong leadership that is focused on preparing their students for future careers and expanding opportunities for people in the workforce to have access to instruction.



We serve as the conduit to connect existing and prospective companies with their customized, innovative workforce development and talent pipeline opportunities.

- > Familiarization tours for potentially relocating employees. We recently hosted 60+ employees from Concept Laboratories, a manufacturer relocating from Chicago. These employees had the opportunity to learn more about the community and understand the many benefits of living here.
- > INSPIRE, our innovative leadership conference, is coming up on October 11. We have an incredible lineup of speakers that will resonate with anyone looking to build their leadership skills and take their career to the next level.

Please consider KABA your partner when it comes to accessing unique and timely talent attraction and development opportunities.

Nicole Ryf President, Kenosha Area Business Alliance



#### WHAT'S HAPPENING AT KABA?

#### Upcoming events: Don't miss Google's Chief Strategist at INSPIRE 2024

- > Friday, October 11 INSPIRE 2014
- > SAVE THE DATE! Wednesday, December 4 KABA Holiday Social
- > SAVE THE DATE! Thursday, February 6 Ovation Awards

If your company or organization is interested in supporting an upcoming KABA event, please contact Becky Noble at bnoble@kaba.org.



INSPIRE 2024 | Date: Friday, October 11

Time: 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Cost: \$250 | Location: Journey Church Perks to attend: A copy of a *The Medici* Effect; INSPIRE journal; light lunch & refreshments; an amazing speaker lineup; one-of-a-kind networking opportunities Learn more/register at InspireKenosha.com. Provide your team with access to thought leaders and experts who can equip them with the latest research, inspiring content, and emerging leadership trends at INSPIRE 2024!

INSPIRE is a premier one-day leadership development experience located centrally in the Chicago-Milwaukee corridor, featuring high-caliber national and regional speakers and experts providing inspirational content to elevate your personal and professional leadership journey.

Attended by more than 600 people and growing, the event benefits the KABA Education Foundation.



#### Tekla Kilpatrick joins the KABA team

Tekla Kilpatrick has joined the KABA team as a Project Coordinator. In her new role, Tekla will support economic development efforts including corporate attraction, retention, and expansion. Tekla's love for Wisconsin businesses began in her hometown of Appleton and in working for small businesses in Manitowoc. In wanting to create impact beyond starting her own business, Tekla began looking into the field of community and economic development.

Before starting at KABA, she completed her Masters of Urban Planning while interning for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's department of Downtown Development. She's excited to explore the relationship and ecosystem between small businesses and corporate businesses. Tekla is likely to be found in a local coffee shop, hiking, or cliff jumping near Lake Michigan.

#### Thank you to the following companies for their investment in KABA

ASSOCIATED BANK associated bank.com

LILLY lilly.com IRON MOUNTAIN REFRIGERATION ironmountainrefrigeration.com

MISSION94 FIREARM EDUCATION CENTER mission94firearms.com

SALES PRO IMPACT salesproimpact.com

SCHAEFFER FINANCIAL GROUP LLC theschaeffergroupllc.com

## WestRock holds groundbreaking at the site of its new corrugated box plant in Pleasant Prairie

WestRock held a formal groundbreaking ceremony in June to commemorate the start of construction on its new \$140 million plant in Pleasant Prairie.



WestRock CEO David Sewell described Pleasant Prairie as a strategic location for building a new box manufacturing facility, the company's second highly automated "superplant."

Atlanta-based WestRock plans to occupy a 593,564 SF building within LogistiCenter at Pleasant Prairie, the former site of a We Energies power plant. The new facility, expected to be complete April 2025, will employ more than 175 people.

The new plant will be a highly automated "superplant," one of a handful the



LogistiCenter at Pleasant Prairie is a planned three-building logistics center being developed by Dermody Properties. The development will total 2,384,765 SF of building space with flexibility to accommodate build-to-suits from 250,000 SF to 1.8M SF. This logistics facility offers Wisconsin's newest and only rail-served buils-to-suit site with robust power capabilities.



#### Wisconsin cities, including Kenosha, leading a rust belt renaissance, according to study

Wisconsin is leading the pack of Rust Belt cities that boast thriving industrial and commercial real estate markets today. Two of its cities – Madison and Kenosha – are cited

in a recent study from CommercialCafe, which has been tracking the recovery stories of cities across the country's Rust Belt.

CommercialCafe's latest study, released in August, looks at improvements across 12 metrics in this region's big and mid-size cities from 2017 through 2022.

Kenosha notched the largest expansion of

commercial real estate inventory among Rust Belt cities with less than 200,000 residents. This Wisconsin city added roughly 10 million SF of industrial, retail and office space from 2017 through 2022, an increase of 67%.

Madison's industrial, office and retail inventory expanded by 34 million square feet from 2017 through 2022, an increase of 13%.

Nearby Chicago had an 8% jump from 2017 through 2022,



Chicago also notched the sixth-highest jump – 4% – in the number of housing units built between 2017 and 2022, with 49,500 new units being delivered in the market.



These two Wisconsin cities aren't alone in the study. Chicago is on the list, as are Fort Wayne, Indiana; Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Columbus, Ohio.

#### Iron Mountain building new HQ, production facility in Kenosha

Iron Mountain Refrigeration & Equipment is building a new headquarters and 99,000 SF industrial facility at a site in Kenosha near the Kenosha Regional Airport. The company is currently located in Pleasant Prairie's LakeView Corporate Park.

Family owned and operated Iron Mountain Refrigeration & Equipment is a commercial and industrial refrigeration products distribution company. The company supplies beverage coolers, commercial refrigerators, back bar coolers, display coolers and freezers in several sizes and styles to restaurants, bars, retail shops and homes. According to founder and CEO Trevor Crivello, the company needs more space to expand its product lines and increase the size of its inventories.



The new headquarters building will include 5,500 SF of office space and 94,000 SF of space for refrigeration equipment storage. The general contractor for the project is Salem Lakes-based Hagen Homes.

#### PurposeBuilt Brands expands its productions operations into Kenosha County; leases 250,000 SF building in Somers



"Our plan to relocate our manufacturing facility to Wisconsin was not just about moving buildings; instead it was about paving the way for future enhanced capabilities and growth for our business. This strategic move enables us to better serve our customers, improve operational efficiencies and continue our commitment to success. The state of Wisconsin and support from Kenosha County enabled this move to be seamless, and one that ensured the transition was a success."

- Mike Ragen, CFO & COO, Purpose Built Brands

In July, PurposeBuilt Brands cut the ribbon on their latest facility in the Village of Somers. The 250,000 SF plant features advanced powder blending, tablet pressing, and warehousing facilities. It's equipped with powder filling lines, tablet filling lines, and capabilities for capsule (K-Cup) filling, pressuresensitive labeling, and small bag filling. They plan to employ 100 people by 2026.

CEO Chris Bauder said, "We are thrilled to announce the opening of our new manufacturing facility in Somers, Wisconsin. This investment underscores our commitment to innovation, sustainability, and contributing to the economic growth of our community in the southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois areas."

PurposeBuilt Brands is a global company with sales in 72 countries. The company builds high performing products to tackle challenges with specialty surfaces. Its brands include Weiman®, Goo Gone®, Biokleen®, Gonzo®, Magic®, Stone Care International®, and Urnex®. PurposeBuilt Brands is headquartered in Gurnee, IL, and the company employs more than 400 people nationwide.



## Uline starts construction on another HQ building in Kenosha County

Uline broke ground in June on their HQ4 building in the Village of Pleasant Prairie. The shipping and business supplies provider plans to build a three-story, 325,000 SF office building on a 45-acre site in the Prairie Highlands Corporate Park, which they recently purchased from the Village. The company now has nearly 10,000 employees across the country, including more than 3,800 in Kenosha County.

## National developers buy 100 acres in Kenosha for residential, industrial developments

Chicago-based commercial real estate investment firm Matterhorn Venture Partners and Wichita, Kansas-based acquisitions and development company Petra announced that they have acquired about 100 acres of land in Kenosha, which they plan to develop for residential and industrial use.

The land is located north of 67th Street and south of 60th Street, west of Green Bay Road and east of a Union Pacific railyard.

The firms say they "plan to sell or build with developers a range of mixed-use projects incorporating build-to-rent, senior living, and small bay industrial spaces" at the Kenosha site.

"This acquisition aligns perfectly with our investment strategy of identifying high-growth markets and delivering exceptional returns to our investors," the firms said in their news release. "Kenosha's dynamic economy and demographic trends create a compelling opportunity for residential and commercial development."

"The site's strategic location in between A-94 and Lake Michigan, and near major employment centers makes it an ideal location for residents and businesses alike"

— Scott McKibben, CCO, Matterhorn Venture Partners

# Centrisys/CNP is expanding again at its corporate campus in the Business Park of Kenosha

Kenosha-based Centrisys/CNP plans to expand with an addition to an industrial building next to its HQ in the Business Park of Kenosha. The company would occupy a 55,767 SF space that would be added to an existing 36,865 SF industrial building, where Centrisys has multiple other buildings.

Centrisys builds centrifuges that are used in water and wastewater treatment, oil processing and recovery, food processing and biofuel plants throughout the world.



Read more about these stories—and more—in the news section of the KABA website > kaba.org/news/list.

# Microsoft makes huge investment in nearby Mount Pleasant

Microsoft announced in May plans to construct a \$1 billion data center at the Foxconn Campus in the Village of Mount Pleasant in Racine County, immediately north of Kenosha County. The facility is expected to have 200 employees in its first phase. When fully developed, the data center is expected to have 460 jobs.

The entire investment by Microsoft is approximately \$3 billion. Included in that number is an expansion of the company's data center in Mount Pleasant, an AI coinnovation lab at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and a statewide initiative aimed at training more than 100,000 state residents in AI.

The massive project is expected to add 2,000 union construction jobs by the end of 2024. A project overview on Microsoft's website shows that the tech giant believes work will be complete by fall 2026.

"Microsoft is a blue-chip corporation that recognizes the strength of Wisconsin's workers, infrastructure, economy, and our quality of life. Microsoft has chosen to locate and invest here because they know the future is here in Wisconsin," said Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers in a press release.

#### Pleasant Prairie creates new TID District to spur development

Pleasant Prairie approved Lake View East, and State Trunk Highway 31 Area Project (TID 12). The new District will promote mixed-use projects and aims to attract new businesses and developers to spur economic development, create jobs, and bring public improvements to the area. It covers approximately 946 acres of land, generally located south of 93rd Street, west of Green Bay Road, north of 128th Street, and east of 88th Avenue.

The TID 12 Project Plan anticipates a mixed-use development consisting of 86% Industrial, 4% Commercial, and 10% newly platted residential.



#### Kenosha County maintains top tier AAA bond rating

In August, S&P Global Ratings renewed Kenosha County's AAA bond rating. This is the fourth consecutive year the county has received the AAA designation – the highest rating possible.

The S&P report states the AAA rating reflects its view of the county's:

- > Optimal location as a Gateway to Wisconsin with access to major transportation systems along Interstate 94 and participation in the broad and diverse Chicago metropolitan statistical area.
- > Steady budgetary results with strong reserves.
- Exceptionally well-managed finances, with forward-looking budget assumptions supported by comprehensive longterm planning for operations and capital needs.

Kenosha County is one of just seven Wisconsin counties that holds an AAA rating with the major rating agencies. The others are Brown, Dane, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Washington and Waukesha counties.

KABA President Nicole Ryf spoke on the local economic development landscape as part of the recent rating presentation to S&P analysts and congratulated the county for its AAA renewal. "This is a testament to the county's high standards of fiscal responsibility, which is one of the assets we tout to businesses considering investing in the area," Ryf said.

"As the S & Preport notes, we are the Gateway to Wisconsin, with a strong economy and a bright future ahead. Our continued AAA rating is a reflection of the outstanding work of the county's fiscal team and our ongoing partnerships with the County Board, our municipalities, the Kenosha Area Business Alliance, and other community stakeholders. I look forward to continuing this success in the years to come."

– Kenosha County Ejecutive Samantha Kerkman

#### LET'S TALK TALENT

## Kenosha Area employers: Have you considered using youth apprenticeship as a talent acquisition strategy?

Youth apprenticeship is a statewide initiative providing real ROI for local employers. The Kenosha Unified School District (KUSD) is preparing high school juniors and seniors for a one- or two-year apprenticeship that provides students the academic and technical skill sets needed for local industry.

Youth Apprenticeship (YA) is a one- or two-year program that gives juniors and seniors in high school the chance to explore a career area of interest. Students spend part of their school day earning credit and wages while they gain valuable industry experience under the guidance of a local business mentor.

Youth apprentice students are now seeking placement at local businesses for the 2024-25 school year in one of 13 program areas -- from health sciences and IT, to construction, manufacturing, and logistics. If you would like more information, please reach out to Brooke Infusino at binfusino@kaba.org.





### AS SEEN ON SOCIAL: @RileyConstructionCompany

For the third consecutive year, we teamed up with Kenosha Unified School District to host the Construction Careers Exploration Camp! We've seen a growing interest in the camp, with over 90 students applying for the opportunity to join. Students had the chance to dive into masonry, concrete, carpentry, tools, and drywall stations with guidance from our expert team at Riley.

Special thanks to Pieper Electric, Lee Mechanical, and the Riley trade leaders and office staff for their support in making this camp possible!

## Kenosha Area Employers: Don't miss the Fall 2024 Internship & Career Fairs with all four Kenosha Area colleges

Employers from a wide variety of career industries are invited to UW-Parkside's Student Center Ballroom for a day of networking and promoting internship and career opportunities to students from University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Carthage College, Gateway Technical College, and Herzing University - Kenosha.

There are two consecutive events: October 23rd is Healthcare Careers Day; October 24th is the Fall Internship & Career Fair with Kenosha area colleges.

Learn more at https://bit.ly/3Xrw6ZG



OCT 24 | 11 am-3 pm UW-Parkside, Student Center Ballroom



#### ON LEADERSHIP

#### Developing Talent: A Strategic Approach to Retention of Key Leaders | by Aleta Norris

"I don't know who else to go to. I've talked to my manager, and I've talked with HR. I want further development, and no one is listening to me."

This struggle was shared recently by an extremely passionate, dedicated mid-level leader of a fast-growing organization. The challenge for her is that she is being lost in the chaos. Everyone is running so hard; they're not taking time to develop people.

In today's competitive business landscape, attracting and retaining top talent isn't just about offering competitive salaries and benefits. It's increasingly about providing opportunities for personal and professional growth. Employees today prioritize development opportunities, viewing them as crucial to their long-term career success and satisfaction. As an employer, investing in your employees' growth isn't just good for them—it's essential for the vitality and success of your organization.

The desire for development isn't limited to acquiring new skills. Employees want to feel valued and understood, with clear pathways for advancement within the company. This involves more than just formal training programs; it includes mentorship, cross-departmental projects, and continuous feedback. When employees see that their company is committed to their growth, they are more likely to feel engaged, motivated, and loyal.

Moreover, investing in employee development fosters a culture of continuous improvement. It encourages innovation as employees feel empowered to bring new ideas to the table. It also prepares your workforce for future challenges, making your company more adaptable in a rapidly changing business environment. In essence, by nurturing your employees' talents and ambitions, you're also securing the future of your company.

When considering developmental opportunities for your leaders, in particular, here are three areas to consider:

- 1. Self Awareness: Ensure your leaders know their strengths, weaknesses, tendencies, preferences, and impact on others.
- 2. Leadership: Develop your leaders' skills in areas like coaching others, building teams, resolving conflict, involving others, providing feedback, having difficult conversations, and treating others respectfully.
- 3. Management: Develop your leaders' knowledge of your business and industry, their technical knowledge in the disciplines they lead, and their managerial skills in areas like staffing, budgeting, employment law, and human resources.

Ignoring the need for development can have detrimental effects. Employees who feel stagnant are more likely to seek opportunities elsewhere, leading to higher turnover rates and the loss of valuable institutional knowledge. In contrast, a robust development program can be a key differentiator, setting your company apart from competitors.

Fostering an environment that prioritizes employee development isn't just a nice-to-have—it's a business imperative.

By investing in your employees' growth, you're not only enriching their lives but also building a stronger, more resilient organization.

Aleta Norris provides an ongoing column about leadership. She is a leadership expert and Principal at Living as a Leader LLC.



## ANYONE can be a leader.....and EVERYONE can be a leader | by Mark Molinaro

I am sure there are more than a few leaders out there who would disagree with this statement. And if you had asked a young Mark if this premise was true, I am not sure I would have answered in the affirmative. But the reality is that each of us is presented with opportunities to lead, or be a leader, on a daily basis - in business; through public service; in school; and in line at the bank (does anyone still stand in line at the bank other than me?). And what makes one a leader is how one responds to these opportunities - big or small.

If those of us in leadership positions accept this premise as

true, then it is incumbent upon each of us to be aware of the many opportunities throughout each day to "teach" others to be the best version of the leader within themselves.

Within our organization, we have created a culture around collaboration and encourage everyone on our team, from the intern in their first professional role to the principals of the firm, to look toward opportunities for meaningful contributions on any task, project or goal. I am amazed how our culture of collaboration has created a quiet "call to action" that everyone

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### # COMMUNITYDEVELOPMENT

## Construction continues on LakeView Technology Academy and the Kenosha Innovation Center at the KIN

There is lots of activity at the Kenosha Innovation Center (KIN)!

The KABA Foundation is constructing a new building for LakeView Technology Academy in cooperation with the City of Kenosha. The new 48,602 SF facility will be the first development at the KIN. The project broke ground in October 2023.

KABA is working with Partners In Design on architectural services and with Riley Construction for the build.

Construction also continues for a new \$23.5-million Kenosha Innovation Center which broke ground in February.

The City is using Milwaukee-based Eppstein Uhen Architects (EUA) on the design and Neenah-based Miron Construction for the construction.

Learn more about the KIN at www.kin-kenosha.org.

"KABA believes economic development is not just adding jobs and investment - it's about making Kenosha County a vibrant, growing place where companies want to do business and people want to live and work. KABA is proud to be a part of the KAN project and looks forward to being a partner going forward."

#### - KABA President Nicole Ryf

The 48,000+ SF LakeView Technology Academy (pictured right) is on track to welcome students in January 2025.



Construction is moving along as scheduled for the three story, 64,000 SF Kenosha Innovation Center (pictured above). The facility is expected to be completed in September 2025 and will include leasable tenant space, as well as event and meeting space open for community use.







#### #QUALITYOFLIFE

#### Site work begins on the first residential building of the Kenosha Harbor District development



Grading and demolition has begun on the first phase of the Kenosha Harbor District development - a multi-phase, \$450 million redevelopment in Downtown Kenosha. The first building, at 5506 7th Ave., will be five stories and have 158 apartments - a mix of studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom units. The second building - which has yet to begin - will be a ten-story tower with 188 apartments, ground-floor retail and coworking, and seven townhomes.

The City is partnering with Cobalt Smith on the development, which is a collaboration between Milwaukee-based Cobalt Partners and Fond du Lac-based general contractor C.D. Smith.

#### Lakefront Brewing acquires Public Craft Brewing Co.

The iconic, Milwaukee-based Lakefront Brewery officially purchased Public Craft Brewing Co. in Downtown Kenosha in August. Now called Public Brewing Co., they closed for just a short time for some light reorganizing and training, and is now open and offering exciting events and delicious brews. Lakefront Brewery President Russ Klisch said about the acquisition, "Kenosha is an up-and-coming area with many businesses moving in. The population is growing with housing being developed and it is a good time to become established."



#### ANYONE can be a leader....and EVERYONE can be a leader

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strives to be a part of. We are reminded through this approach that leadership is not always about directing the "music". Just as often it is about showing up, listening and respecting that what makes you a leader is not what makes someone else a leader.... but both can make a significant difference in moving the needle and growing leaders.

I encourage you to say yes to having a middle or high school student in the office for a shadow day. Participate in local school Career Days. And when you do, speak to the young students as though they know exactly what you are talking about. I recall sitting my then 4 year old daughter on the counter at the bank more than 20 years ago now. She asked me about the transaction I was making and I recall answering her as I would have answered any adult asking me the same question. No doubt she did not fully comprehend the information but what I took away from that exchange was the response from the teller who stated "that was great that you did not dismiss her question and responded to her as though she were your peer". I believe

my daughter is the leader she is today, and anyone can be the best version of their own leader, if we take this approach in all that we do.

Anyone can be the catalyst for putting a smile on someone's face, or a feeling of acknowledgement in their heart, or a sense of worth in their mind. The ability to do so is a learned skill and ultimately a choice that leaders make consciously every day.

Who can be a leader? Anyone.

Mark Molinaro is principal and vice president at Partners in Design Architects, Inc. and the Town of Somers Chairman.





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