



*The vessel Ultra Heavy Lift at the mouth of the Thames River
with the first delivery of offshore wind turbine blades.
David Tranchida/Quinn & Hary*

seCTer

Annual Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, November 29, 2023

Panel Discussion:
**Transforming an Economic
Strategy into Action**

**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

**CT APEX
ACCELERATOR**

**SMALL BUSINESS
LENDING PROGRAMS**



**SOUTHEASTERN
CONNECTICUT
ENTERPRISE REGION**

AGENDA

Annual Board of Directors Meeting

1. Registration / Sign In / Breakfast
7:30AM

2. Welcome / Call to Order / Roll Call
Sean Nugent / Chair

3. Introduction of Panel:
Transforming an Economic
Strategy into Action
Sean Nugent

4. Panelists:
Sandra Allyn-Gauthier
Jim Bellano
Kevin Brown
Moderated by:
Sean Nugent

5. Approval of 10/25/23
Board Meeting Minutes*

6. Committee Reports
 - a. Audit Committee - Mark Light*
 - i. Annual Audit Report / Auditors
 - b. Nominating Committee - Wendy Bury*
 - i. Reappointment of Current Board Members
 - ii. Farewell and Thank you to Current Board Members Leaving the Board
 - iii. Nomination and Appointment of New Board Members
 - iv. Nomination and Appointment of Board of Directors Officers

7. Executive Director Report / Comments
Paul Whitescarver
 - a. seCTer Programs
The Year in Review

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

Dear Board and Committee Members and Guests,

What a great year it has been for seCTer! The seCTer team put forth a fully approved municipal, state and federal government Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Southeastern CT, maintained efforts to build a nascent offshore wind industry, promoted small business-government matchmaking, provided low-interest loans to small businesses, and commenced a grant program aimed at promoting the success of diverse and underserved business communities within our region.

The CEDS process is one of the most time-intensive processes local stakeholders and municipal leaders participate in every five years. seCTer staff, and participants of the Economic Development Committee, have provided a strategy that can move the region forward and maintain our resilience in battling future shocks to our economy. I encourage each of you to visit the interactive CEDS on our website. The ability to manipulate municipal data is a “game changer” in itself.

Since being a recipient of the EDA's Build Back Better Regional Challenge Grant, seCTer has forged ahead in several areas of the offshore wind industry. seCTer maintains local expertise in the industry, assisting the state in developing its Offshore Wind Strategy, building a network by attending national conferences, and maintaining our membership with the Business Network for Offshore Wind, now Oceantic. In the past month, we partnered with the state to create the Connecticut Wind Collaborative, a nonprofit organization that will move our region closer to future investment in the Blue Economy.

As the host for the CT APEX Accelerator, formerly the CT Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), we cannot say enough about the success of the Northeast Matchmaker event held here in Groton in August. The event brought over 800 participants from across the country seeking to forge relationships with New England government prime contractors. Our APEX team is doing a phenomenal job of showing CT businesses the art of the possible in supporting our defense contractors and growing the supply chain. APEX-assisted state businesses won over \$323M in government contracts, retaining 5,000 jobs this year alone. APEX activity is key to building our small businesses.

In addition, with the aid of the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and National Development Corporation (NDC), seCTer provided low-interest loans totaling roughly \$1.5M to the local business community to date. seCTer has also provided over \$500K in small-business grants across our region. Each of these programs, low-interest loans and grants, are targeted toward underserved communities.

All of this progress is the result of hard work and commitment from the seCTer staff, our Committees, and APEX Accelerator, and we extend our sincere gratitude to all for your dedication to building a stronger region and state.

Southeastern CT is poised to see exponential growth with existing and new businesses and the continued expansion of blue tech opportunities led by offshore wind. We can't wait to be a part of it.

Sincerely,

Paul Whitescarver, *Executive Director*
Sean Nugent, *Board Chair*

Partnership seeks to strengthen region's healthcare workforce

seCTer was instrumental in launching the Eastern Connecticut Healthcare Regional Sector Partnership at the start of 2023. This Regional Sector Partnership is part of an industry-led collaborative established by The Governor's Workforce Council to align stakeholders in key industries throughout Connecticut.

Drawing on the expertise of more than 30 healthcare leaders across the full spectrum of care, member businesses and non-profits are working collaboratively to address common challenges and strengthen the industry as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members identified common trends affecting their organizations and agreed to pursue the following goals as they seek to grow the healthcare field and improve care for the communities across the region:

- Attracting more people to healthcare careers
- Improving the quality, quantity, and accessibility of training programs
- Improving the quality of life for employees
- Using the collective voice of the partnership to promote policies that benefit patients
- Addressing the costs of labor and services provided



Key additions to staff provide expanded services to business owners

With the addition of two staff members in the first half of 2023, seCTer was able to increase its outreach efforts to small and medium-sized businesses throughout the region.

Joseph K. Violette, Business Retention and Expansion Specialist, was hired to provide guidance to business owners as they seek to expand and strengthen their businesses or negotiate challenges. Joe's focus is on businesses of 5 to 99 employees. In addition, Violette is responsible for encouraging business owners to make use of seCTer's training services and to assist with grants and low-interest loan programs.



Thomas Caliento, an accounting and finance professional, was hired as seCTer's Business Adviser. With broad experience in public and private finance positions, Caliento is responsible for providing technical assistance to new and established businesses through sector analysis, financial planning, regulatory requirements, and resources for loan programs.



PANEL DISCUSSION: Transforming an Economic Strategy into Action:

seCTer's role in addressing housing issues, advancing growth, and fortifying sustainability across the region.

MODERATOR:



SEAN NUGENT
Chairman
seCTer Board of Directors and Chairman, Redevelopment Agency, Preston

PANELISTS:



SANDRA ALLYN-GAUTHIER
First Selectwoman, Preston



JIM BELLANO
Director, Economic and Community Development, Windham



KEVIN BROWN
President, Norwich Community Development Corp.

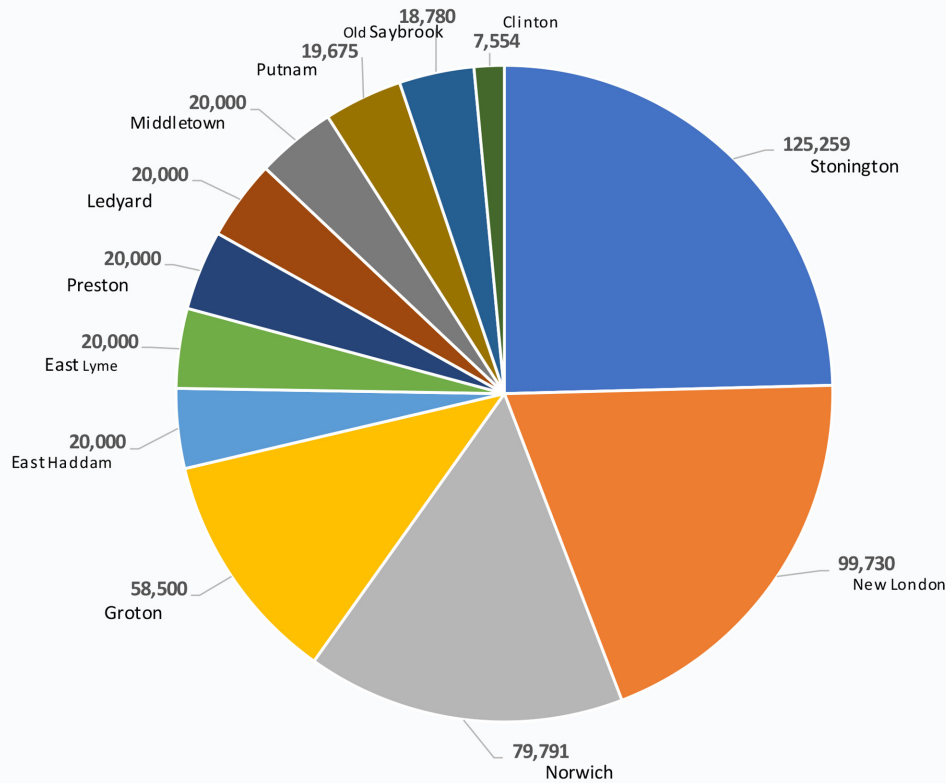
Panelists will discuss the differences in how rural and urban leaders approach opportunities and challenges.

seCTerRise BY THE NUMBERS

Total amount awarded: \$509,289

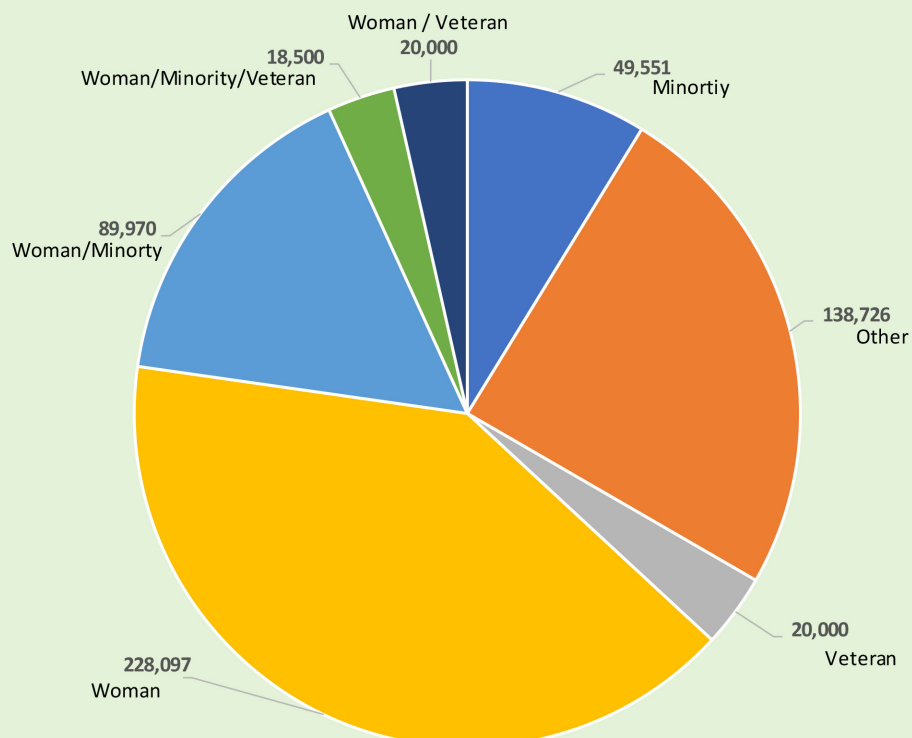
seCTerRise - Total Grant Amounts Awarded By Town

From May thru November 2023



seCTerRise - Total Grant Amounts Awarded By Ownership Type

From May thru November 2023



seCTerRise:

PROVIDING THE TOOLS FOR GREATER SUCCESS

SeCTerRise is a competitive grant program, funded through the Department of Economic and Community Development, designed to help small businesses grow. Grants will be awarded to businesses for projects that will have a measurable impact on the business, its growth and profitability. Businesses may apply for a grant of up to **\$20,000**.

50% of seCTerRise awards will be made to businesses that are minority, disabled, veteran, or women-owned, and / or businesses located in a distressed municipality.

860KOMBUCHA

860Kombucha is a family-owned, minority-owned, veteran-owned, kombucha brewery located in Mystic. As a beverage manufacturer, the company produces kombucha fermented tea flavored with ingredients from Connecticut farms and sold to customers through partnerships with local businesses and farmers markets.



With a focus on growing production and distribution operations, 860Kombucha was awarded a seCTerRise grant. This allowed them to purchase equipment needed to expand operations and install a canning system. Previously, the business distributed its product via kegs at various locations and consumers needed to bring their own growler to be filled. Cans of 860Kombucha will be available in stores in early 2024.

"We've been busy wrapping up our farmers market season and getting ready to launch our cans starting in December. The seCTerRise grant has had a huge impact on our business this year. It's completely opened up our business by allowing us to get into canning!"

— Michael Brannan, owner

STELS BEAUTY WELLNESS AND MED SPA

Stels Beauty Wellness and Med Spa is a start-up medical spa located in Niantic. Stels provides several services focused on wellness and medical aesthetics. Wellness services include Vitamin IV Hydration and Injections, Weight Loss Management, Sudatonic Wraps, and Immune System Support and Enhancements. Med Spa treatments will include Cosmetic Post-Op Care, Laser Hair Removal, and Non-Invasive Body Contouring services.

Stels received a seCTer loan to assist the launch of the business. Stels expects to hire two additional full-time positions and one part-time position within the next two years.



EPICURE BREWING

Epicure Brewing is an independently owned craft brewery and taproom in Norwich. The brewery has become a mainstay in downtown and has grown a loyal following throughout the region.

Recognizing the need to expand its reach to adapt to changing consumer preferences, Epicure applied for and was awarded seCTerRise funds to support a dedicated marketing campaign. The campaign included search engine optimization, social media advertising, influencer collaboration, packaging design and printing, and more.

"Thanks to seCTerRise we are able stand out on store shelves and continue to establish a strong brand identity. This dedicated marketing effort allows us to reach a wider audience and enhance our presence in the market."

— Jobina Miller, owner

seCTerRise:

PROVIDING THE TOOLS FOR GREATER SUCCESS



FLAVOURS OF LIFE

Flavours of Life is a premier retail store in New London with quality products from certified fair-trade organizations. Flavours of Life promotes fair trade, an international movement, that is a force for change affecting local and inter-global communities. This minority-owned, woman-owned business is located on Bank Street in New London.

After working at Flavours of Life for about 2 years, Lakisha Lee was able to purchase the store, becoming the owner and operator. A seCTerRise award afforded her the opportunity to modernize and streamline the point-of-sale system and accounting practices within the business.

“seCTerRise has allowed us to implement a seamless check-out process and software to better organize bookkeeping and business management. With these updates, I can focus on growing the business and fulfilling our mission as a certified fair-trade organization. I am so grateful to be a recipient of this grant!”

– Lakisha Lee, owner

FORGE 41

Forge 41, a startup manufacturing company in Moosup received a loan from seCTer through Connecticut’s Boost Program for equipment and operating capital. Forge 41 produces custom specialty metal products for clients in multiple industry sectors performing short runs as well as production runs on everything from commercial to military components. Forge 41 is a service disabled veteran owned small business.



Visit our website
secter.org/secterrise
to learn more



APEX SUCCESS STORY:

HUBBELL HEATERS

Hubbell Heaters is a third-generation family business with a product line comparable to a large manufacturer, but with the customer service of a small family run business. Hubbell’s roots date back to the late 1800s when an entrepreneur and inventor named Harvey Hubbell began designing and producing electrical products, most notably the plug receptacle and the pull chain light socket, in addition to electric water heaters. Working with CT APEX Accelerator, Hubbell Heaters has been able to access 53 government contracts representing \$12 million in revenue.