



Six Connecticut Companies Rank in ICIC/Inc. Magazine's Inner City 100 National Contest

On April 26 in Boston, six Connecticut companies were presented with the prestigious ICIC/Inc. Magazine Inner City 100 award for 2001.

The ICIC/Inc. Magazine Inner City 100 award identifies and celebrates the 100 fastest growing companies in America's inner cities. Connecticut's Rego Realty ranked in the top 10 nationally - placing ninth out of 100. A total of 11 Connecticut companies won awards at the 2001 ICIC/Inc. Magazine Inner City 100 award ceremony. While six Connecticut companies ranked in the top 100, five companies received Honorable Mentions.

The Connecticut companies that ranked in the top 100 are: Rego Realty and Central Auto & Transport, both of Hartford; Horizon Services, East Hartford; Prime Resources and Innovative Display & Design, Bridgeport; and Space-Craft

Manufacturing, New Haven. Companies that received Honorable Mentions are: ACA Foods and Quintana Supply, Hartford; Archives One, Waterbury; Roman Realty, Stamford; and Computer Resolutions, Bridgeport.

In February, Governor Rowland, DECD and ICIC selected 11 companies as the first recipients of the Connecticut Inner City 10 Entrepreneurship Awards. This year's extremely competitive applicant pool led to a tie between two companies for 10th place. The 11 winning companies were Connecticut's top candidates in the ICIC/Inc. Magazine Inner City 100 national contest.

New Plastics Cluster Funded

DECD has committed \$135,000 to help launch the Connecticut Plastics Cluster and underwrite its first-year activities. The cluster will match DECD funds by more than two to one and the plan calls for it to be self-funding in 2003.

The Connecticut Plastics Cluster aims to make the state's plastics companies more competitive by enhancing its workforce, implementing advanced manufacturing and business practices, fostering regional growth and helping cluster members share services to reduce costs.

Plastics manufacturing is important to Connecticut's economy. In 1999, it represented more than 23,000 jobs and contributed significantly to the state's Gross State Product.

Maritime Cluster Up and Running

With more than 250 miles of coastline and several major waterways, it's no wonder that Connecticut has a rich maritime history. Now there's an official industry cluster working to make sure it has a bright future, as well.

The Connecticut Maritime Cluster was officially launched in January. It encompasses transportation, manufacturing and services, recreation, and commercial fishing and environment. Its 21 member organizations are already at work on issues such as relieving I-95 congestion through the use of barges, capitalizing on the potential of Connecticut's deep-water ports, and the environmentally appropriate disposition of dredged materials.

More than 12,000 people work in Connecticut's maritime industry, which generates annual revenues in excess of \$2.6 billion.



CLUSTER
ACTIVATION

In Bridgeport: CONnECT-ing with Opportunity

A unique Bridgeport-based partnership known as CONnECT has received a \$155,000 commitment from DECD to grow the city's arts, entertainment, tourism and commercial services industry and create economic opportunity for local residents and businesses.

CONnECT, which is matching 100% of DECD's funding, will focus on developing or expanding restaurants, fostering

collaboration among city commercial services companies, helping inner-city contractors compete for large projects, expanding retail offerings in the central business district, and helping arts organizations and performance venues work together to reduce costs and attract even more visitors.

CONnECT grew out of recommendations made by the Bridgeport Inner City Business Strategy Initiative.

INNER
CITY
BUSINESS
STRATEGY

Youth Entrepreneurship Training Underway (NFTE)

Connecticut may soon have itself a bumper crop of savvy young entrepreneurs.

One hundred fifty-six urban high school students are learning the skills they need to start and run small businesses as part of Connecticut's new Youth Entrepreneurship Training program.

The program is part of Connecticut's Inner City Business Strategy. It uses an in-depth entrepreneurial training program developed by the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE), which has been successful in both the U.S. and abroad in teaching inner-city students how to launch and grow their own companies.

In January, 18 teachers from eight urban school systems participated in a BizTech training program sponsored by NFTE,

Microsoft Corp. and the State Department of Education. Six new programs were launched early this year:

New Haven – Wilbur Cross High School, 25 students;
Hill Cooperative Youth Service, 20 students

Norwalk – Saturday Academy, 20 students

Waterbury – Crosby High School, 40 students; Granville Academy, 40 Students

Bristol – Westwoods Alternative Education High School, 11 students

Additional schools systems are expected to launch NFTE programs in September.

INNER
CITY
BUSINESS
STRATEGY

Executive Education Alliance Program Launched

About two dozen Connecticut inner-city business leaders will take part in some of the country's most prestigious executive-education programs, thanks to a public-private initiative launched in late March.

The Connecticut Inner City Executive Education Alliance program provides resources to help CEOs and senior managers from inner-city companies attend leadership workshops offered by nationally acclaimed schools of business. The workshops give participants the chance to learn advanced business and leadership skills and network with other top executives.

A key component of Connecticut's Inner City Business Strategy, the alliance is a joint effort of the Department of

Economic and Community Development (DECD), FleetBoston Financial, the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC) and participating colleges and universities.

Under the program, the participant pays one-third of the course fee, the school absorbs one-third and FleetBoston pays the remaining third. Fleet has committed \$50,000 to the program.

The Columbia University Business School, the Darden Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of Virginia, Harvard Business School, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania and Yale University School of Management are the participating schools to date.

INNER
CITY
BUSINESS
STRATEGY

You Belong in Connecticut Campaign Wins Top Honors

The state's *You Belong in Connecticut* marketing campaign received the coveted "Best of Show" award from the Connecticut Valley Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) at the presentation of its Mercury Awards on April 3.

The annual awards recognize quality and creativity in public relations. In singling out *You Belong* for the top honors, judges called the campaign "clever, innovative and ... unique," and praised it for casting the Governor as "hip, happening and appealing."

The campaign received two other Mercury Awards as well: one

in the category of public affairs and community relations, and another in the video category for commercials featuring Governor Rowland. The commercials were aired on national television in 2000.

Recently, the Connecticut Chapter of the American Marketing Association honored the *You Belong in Connecticut* campaign with its Mark of Excellence Award.

The campaign was developed at the recommendation of the Governor's Council Marketing Advisory Board.

MARKETING