



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
GOVERNOR DANIEL P. MALLOY

**GOV. MALLOY: SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM ASSISTS EXPANSION
& JOB GROWTH**

*Small Businesses in Bridgeport, Cheshire, Marlborough, Middletown, Mystic
Receive EXP Grants*

(HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Dannel P. Malloy today announced that five more small businesses in Bridgeport, Cheshire, Marlborough, Middletown and Mystic have qualified for grants through the state’s Small Business Express Program (EXP) to expand their businesses and create jobs. EXP was created as part of the bipartisan jobs bill that was passed during the October Special Session.

“Connecticut must support its small businesses,” Governor Malloy said. “They are the foundations of local economies, helping to improve the quality of life for thousands of Connecticut residents. State investments through programs like this not only help the businesses on Main Street grow, they also aid in the state’s economic recovery.”

In total, EXP will provide \$100 million to help the state’s small businesses hire more employees and fund capital investments. The program, administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), offers loans and matching grants to Connecticut companies with fewer than 50 employees.

The five small businesses announced today are:

- **SolarChange LLC** of Bridgeport designs, manufactures and sells solar hybrid and solar thermal appliances and building products for both residential and commercial use. DECD has awarded the company a \$100,000 matching grant and a loan of \$250,000 to boost its operations and hire employees. SolarChange will create 31 full-time jobs. The project, moreover, will have a multiplier effect, as SolarChange will distribute its products through four other companies in Connecticut and will generate new installation and servicing jobs.

“Job creation is a top priority in this tough economy, and the manufacturing, installation and servicing jobs this grant will provide are exactly what Bridgeport needs. Manufacturing these solar panels in Connecticut will also support growth in the renewable energy industry, which is more and more important as our climate warms,” State Senator Ed Gomes (D-Bridgeport) said.

“I am very pleased that SolarChange will soon be expanding their business and hiring new employees in Bridgeport,” State Senator Anthony Musto (D-Trumbull) said. “Our focus for the last year has been on job creation and business expansion, and this shows that we are headed in the right direction. Connecticut can be a leader in the field of renewable energy by creating more these kind of green, local jobs over the coming years.”

“This is a great example of government at work and a positive result of our focus on jobs. We are well on our way to providing good jobs in Bridgeport. I want to thank Governor Malloy and the administration and look forward to working with other Bridgeport small businesses,” State Representative Andres Ayala (D-Bridgeport) said.

“As we look forward to new and greener technologies to provide alternatives to fossil fuels, it is great there are those working on the residential side of the energy use equation. This is money well spent in the creation of 31 full-time jobs – we will get many returns on this investment,” State Representative Don Clemons (D-Bridgeport) said.

“This is a great step forward and opportunity for Bridgeport to engage in the burgeoning new field of renewable energy. Bridgeport is leading the way for a green, sustainable future,” State Representative Jack Hennessy (D-Bridgeport) said.

“Like all of our major cities, Bridgeport has been hard-hit with loss of jobs in this ailing economy,” State Representative Charlie Stallworth (D-Bridgeport) said. “Anything we can do to increase gainful employment is a worthwhile effort and this grant/loan combination for SolarChange, LLC will create jobs. I look forward to many more such support packages for our small business enterprises as we continue on the road to economic recovery.”

- **Cheshire Fitness Zone** is a complete physical, occupational, and speech therapy center designed specifically to meet the needs of children and adolescents of all ages and abilities. The fitness zone has a full array of exercise equipment biomechanically designed to fit children. The company was awarded a matching grant of \$100,000 and a loan of \$250,000, which will go toward the purchase of property so it can build a larger facility. Fourteen jobs will be created and nine retained as part of the \$1,500,000 project.

“This is terrific news for Cheshire Fitness Zone,” State Representative Alfred Adinolfi (R-Cheshire) said. “The bipartisan jobs bill puts small businesses first by providing much needed assistance for companies wishing to expand and hire more employees. This announcement is a perfect example of how the policies we create in Hartford can keep and grow jobs right here in Central Connecticut. I hope many more jobs grow out of this grant as this small business continues to thrive.”

“The ability to assist children with special health care needs and create jobs in the process is a win for the children, the town of Cheshire and Connecticut,” State Representative Vickie Nardello (D-Prospect) said.

- **Marlborough Plastics Inc.** has specialized in plastic injection molding and engineered thermoplastics in aerospace, computer, defense, electronic, engineering, health care, OEMs and sporting goods application for more than 40 years. Marlborough Plastics, which recently built a new 11,250-square-foot facility in Marlborough, will receive a \$100,000 matching grant to purchase new machinery and equipment. The project will retain 6 jobs.

“Marlborough Plastics is investing in Connecticut because Governor Malloy and the legislature are working for Connecticut, as evidenced by our jobs bill and our investments in high-tech manufacturing and bioresearch,” State Senator Steve Cassano (D-Manchester) said. “This matching grant – made possible by our jobs bill – preserves the kind of quality jobs that make Connecticut a great state to live and work in, and which make Connecticut one of the most productive states in the nation.”

State Representative Pam Sawyer (R-Andover, Bolton, Hebron, Marlborough) said, “Marlborough Plastics Inc. has had an increase in business and with this grant to purchase new machinery they will need more employees with a manufacturing background. It’s what this grant was meant to do.”

- **Centerplan Construction Company** of Middletown was established in 2008 to serve the construction needs of its sister company Centerplan Development. Since then the company has grown, and is now planning to expand its space and operations. DECD has awarded Centerplan a \$100,000 matching grant for the build-out and fit-out of additional office space and for equipment. An additional \$500,000 loan was awarded through the Small Business Revolving Loan Fund. The company plans to add five employees to its 31-member staff in 2012 and 20 to 25 in the next five years.

“Centerplan Construction Company is a real success story here in Middletown. This grant and loan will allow Centerplan to build on that success and hire more employees,” State Senator Paul Doyle (D-Wethersfield) said. “I am thrilled to see more local

businesses benefiting from the jobs legislation we passed in October and creating good jobs for Connecticut residents.”

State Representative Christie Carpino (R-Cromwell, Middletown, Portland) said, “I am happy the bipartisan jobs bill I voted for and that passed in October is doing what it is intended to do, which is help small businesses like Centerplan Construction Company.”

“Small business expansion and jobs creation in Middletown are most welcome,” State Representative Gail K. Hamm (D-East Hampton, Middletown) said. “Making Connecticut a business-friendly state involves both attracting new business and assisting those who have already invested here.”

“I want to thank Governor Malloy for supporting a great small business in Middletown,” State Representative Matt Lesser (D-Durham, Middlefield & Middletown) said. “Small businesses are the engines of economic growth, and I wish Bob Landino and Centerplan much success.”

“Centerplan has developed into an important part of Middletown’s business community and has earned this support of the state,” State Representative Joseph Serra (D-Middletown) said. “Because these incentives will be used to help jump-start job creation and encourage long-term economic growth, they are also good investments for taxpayers.”

- **Fields of Fire** is currently building an outdoor paintball facility on 50 acres in Mystic. Additional activities such as rock climbing and zip lines will be added as the company grows. A \$100,000 Small Business Express Grant will be used to buy equipment and materials to create paintball battlefields. As part of the project three full-time employees will be hired, as well as 20 or more seasonal positions.

“A small business that focuses on recreation is the perfect fit for promoting the Mystic area as a great place to live as well as a great place to vacation,” State Representative Diana Urban (D-Stonington, North Stonington) said. “Recognizing that small business is so important to our local economic web is the cornerstone of the Small Business Express Program and I am very happy that this grant will help grow the local Mystic economy by assisting Fields of Fire.”

“This grant announcement and the facility to come represent another step forward as Connecticut gets back to the important work of stimulating small business growth within a successful economic development strategy,” State Representative Elissa Wright (D-Groton) said.

For more information on EXP or to apply for the program, [visit the Small Business Express Program website](#) or contact Michelle Lugo at DECD at 860-270-8052 or Michelle.Lugo@ct.gov.

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