

September 2026 Community Relations Update

September begins with an important opportunity for civic engagement, as Tuesday, September 1 is Primary Election Day across Massachusetts. Greater Cape Ann voters have a full slate of races to consider ahead of the General Election on November 3. We encourage everyone who is eligible to make their voice heard and participate in the election process.

As the busy summer season begins to wind down, the Chamber is looking ahead to fall and the holidays. We're excited to announce a new regional marketing campaign, *Harvest to Holidays*, designed to showcase Greater Cape Ann throughout the shoulder season and encourage visitors to extend their stay while experiencing the abundance of activities, attractions and events our region offers throughout the fall and holiday season. Stay tuned for more information as the campaign rolls out. As part of this effort, we're encouraging members to submit their fall and winter events to the Chamber calendar so they can be included in the promotion. Submitting events was also the topic of last month's *Your Membership at Work* series and is available on the [Greater Cape Ann Chamber blog](#).

We're also excited to launch Season 3 of the Cape Ann Conversations Podcast, providing another opportunity for members to share the stories behind their businesses, special events and community initiatives. With new host Jim Unis and our continued partnership with Streamography Studios, the podcast offers listeners a chance to get to know the people behind the businesses while providing promotion, information and inspiration to our members and the community at large. It's another way we can highlight what makes Greater Cape Ann such a vibrant place to live, work and play.

There are several opportunities for members to engage with Chamber programs this fall. Our Health & Wellness Committee is relaunching the Member Wellness Benefits program, and wellness-related businesses — including pet services — are encouraged to participate by offering a benefit or special promotion to fellow Chamber members and their employees while gaining additional exposure to local customers. Our Business Education Collaborative is also partnering with area high schools for the annual [Greater Cape Ann College & Career Fair](#), giving local businesses an opportunity to introduce students to their company, industry and the many career paths that exist right here in our region.

Our Small Business University series resumes this month with a September seminar focused on [Increasing the Value of Your Business](#). The series continues to provide practical information and resources that small businesses can put to use as they plan for both their immediate needs and long-term success and remains free for members to attend.

Advocacy remains an important part of our work as well. The Chamber attended the recent Gloucester City Council Tax Classification Workshop to ensure the business community had a visible presence as councilors heard from the City Assessor and began reviewing options ahead of their annual tax classification decision later this fall. The Chamber will continue to advocate for movement toward parity

between commercial and residential tax rates and for policies that support a healthy and competitive business environment in Gloucester.

We're also creating opportunities for businesses to have a direct voice in conversations about their communities. On September 15 from 8:30–9:30 a.m., the Chamber is collaborating with Discover Gloucester and Ward 2 City Councilor Dylan Benson to host a [Downtown Gloucester Listening Session](#) at the Cape Ann Savings Bank Community Room. All downtown businesses are encouraged to attend, share their experiences and help identify priorities and opportunities for the area.

In Essex, the Chamber is collaborating with the Town to host a [Downtown Visioning Forum](#) on September 29 from 6:30–8:00 p.m. The goal is to facilitate conversation and gather input from both residents and the business community about the future of downtown Essex. By developing a clearer picture of community priorities, we hope to help better align future planning and initiatives with the needs and vision of those who live, work and do business downtown.

And finally, “trash talk” has quite literally been front and center around Greater Cape Ann. Several communities are adjusting to new waste collection systems and providers, with Manchester-by-the-Sea and Ipswich working through their recent transition to automated collection that began this summer and Gloucester preparing for its own change beginning October 1. Meanwhile, Rockport has reminded residents that use of the Town transfer station is reserved for Rockport-generated waste, warning that access may be revoked for those disposing of trash brought in from outside the community. It's a reminder that even the most routine municipal services can have significant impacts on residents and businesses, and we'll continue to keep an eye on these transitions across the region.

As always, the Chamber will continue advocating for policies that support our business community, monitoring municipal and state initiatives that affect our members, and working to provide timely updates as these important issues continue to evolve.

Please feel free to reach out if you're interested in any of the updates provided here or have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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GREATER CAPE ANN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Serving Essex, Gloucester, Ipswich, Manchester-by-the-Sea, and Rockport

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