

Cotton Mill Incubator Helping Businesses Grow

The Brattleboro Development Credit Corp has converted The Cotton Mill into the area's premier business incubator space.

The complex provides commercial space for a wide variety of start-up businesses needing a low cost rental facility.



BDCC's offices are also located here affording easy access to its many business-related services.

Currently the mill is home to 43 companies employing a total of 300 people.

These business range from an insurance company, food companies, wood workers, to a

massage therapist and gym.

Our 145,000 square foot, five building complex can provide a business as little as 180 square feet of space for a small office. Larger spaces are also available.

We are conveniently located just a mile from downtown Brattleboro. Our complex has

ample parking facilities.

In our five years of operation, we at Cotton Mill have provided the necessary growth stimuli to help 13 occupants build their company to the point where they were able to purchase their own facility elsewhere.

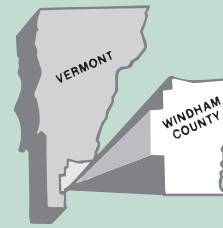
At the Cotton Mill we offer a variety of business services to our tenants including fax machines, copy machines, secretarial support, bookkeeping, financial packaging and financial and engineering consulting.

We can be reached at 257-7731 or email BDCC@sover.net

Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation

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Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation Newsletter

Volume One

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FiberMark Brattleboro's Quiet Company

For a company that employs 258 people in Brattleboro and 1500 worldwide, FiberMark has kept a surprisingly low profile in the Brattleboro community. Probably, that is because the company does not sell a lot of its products locally, said spokeswoman Janice Warren.

"While we are a leading employer as a public company we are surprisingly low-key," she adds.

FiberMark, a manufacturer of fiber-based materials with 10 plants worldwide and expected sales of \$350 million in 2000 is headquartered on Wellington Rd. near Route 5, just north of the I-91 Exit 3 interchange. Here, along with corporate offices is the company's Technical Office Products Division.

"We are a global company with global issues," says Warren.

Fully 30 percent of the company's products are made overseas. At its Brattleboro plant, which operates around the clock seven days a week, FiberMark makes the cover materials for a variety of products including the base materials for ring binder notebook covers, and presentation covers. Other base materials for sand paper, datebook cover materials, and mattboard base materials are produced at the



plant.

Here, in a huge plant that appears to be several football fields long, the company turns recovered paper materials into the paper products that will eventually wind up in its product mix.

Warren, a long time FiberMark employee who lauds the Brattleboro area for its commitment to culture and the arts, said the company is a significant contributor to the local and state economy.

With its employee base, which Warren says is stable, the company has an annual payroll of \$11 million and pays \$250,000 in property taxes. It contributes \$60,000 to the Vermont Sales/Use tax and \$600,000 to income taxes.

The company also purchases in excess of \$5 million in Vermont products and services.

Additionally, it is a destination point for a large number of vendors and customers who stay at area hotels and eat at local restaurants. The company, which trades on the New York Stock Exchange under the FMK symbol, has had a presence in the

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COMPANY NEWS

Do you have news of interest to the Brattleboro area business community? Has your company expanded, introduced a new product, won an award?

Send your information to:

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Or fax it to us 257-0294 or email us BDCC@sover.net

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

News From BDCC

By Bill McGrath

In the current economic cycle, with employment nearing all time highs and workers at a premium, we at BDCC are focusing more than ever on retaining local companies and assuring their continued health and growth.

Much of my time as executive director is spent on issues of workforce training, permit applications, financial aide issues and business expansion. I see workforce training as an extremely important issue as we delve deeper into the available workforce.

Our local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) meets this month to discuss our Year 2000 goals. I'd like to see several adult basic education courses developed for implementation in September. We also need software development courses to meet the growing needs of this expanding segment of the economy.

BDCC is currently forming a union with Marlboro College around e-commerce. We expect to recruit e-commerce companies from out of state. Marlboro will supply and train this high tech workforce which I expect will be a highly paid and flexible workforce.

Currently the Brattleboro area lacks sufficient industrial space. We are working on developing two new industrial parks at the north and south ends of the

county. I hope to be more specific about this in our next newsletter.

We have several specific items in our 2000 legislative agenda. Foremost is the passage of legislation that will permit 72-foot long trucks on our national highways system. This includes Interstate 89 and 91 and Routes 7, 103, 2 and 9.

We see the need for Act 250 reform with more restrictions placed on third party status in the permit process.

We believe there is a need for adjustments in the drug testing laws. We support a policy of no prior notification or a maximum 24-hour notification of testing. We believe drug testing is important to

insure work safety, in general, and specifically for long haul drivers and heavy machine operators.

Workers Compensation laws must be written so injured workers can not sue their co-workers and management as well as the company they work for. We want the company to carry the sole liability in claims.

We also are strongly in favor of electrical restructuring measures. We all know that Vermont's electricity costs are too high and must be kept in check and lowered. We believe restructuring is the best means to achieve this goal.

Our door is always open here at BDCC. Feel free to call or email me.



FiberMark Con't

area since the mill was built in 1961 by the Case brothers. In 1967 Boise Cascade purchased that company. Next, the Specialty Paperboard Division of Boise Cascade formed the basis of the company that became independent in 1989, with a name change to FiberMark in 1997.

Vermont's high quality workforce receives praise from FiberMark. "We are very happy with our employees," said Warren.

We have a low turnover at the plant and thus we retain an experienced workforce." The paper industry, said Warren, is healthy in general. "We continue to expect to grow by acquisition." She predicts, "modest growth in Brattleboro." There is also "the potential for expansion in the area." As FiberMark looks to its future in Brattleboro, Warren points to concerns the company has. "We want to see strong education and want to see continued improvement in basic skills."

"We have concern about the future of downtown. We want to see the continued richness of culture in the area," she added. "We also have great concern about the cost of power," she said. (FiberMark is located on the world wide web: www.fibermark.com)



FiberMark's headquarters and Technical products division are located near Wellington Rd.

Peter Shumlin outlines the 2000 legislative agenda



The 2000 legislature will grapple with several difficult issues says Senator Peter Shumlin, (D-Windham) Senate President Pro Tem.

Health care costs top his agenda of MUST issues to be addressed.

"I feel strongly about reducing the

cost of drugs for Vermonters," said Shumlin. "Health care costs are rising at a rate that is not sustainable." Shumlin wants to reduce the cost of pharmaceuticals. "We're paying 40 to 60 percent more than the rest of the world for US made drugs.

The rest of the world regulates the price they are willing to pay for those items," he noted. Shumlin chaired the special Senate Committee on Prescription Drug Prices this summer. He does not see the US Congress capping drug prices. "The states have to do it," he explained.

Shumlin sees two areas of the state budget 'rising at uncontrollable rates.' They are the cost of prisons and the cost of health care.

"Vermont is the only state that insures every child has health insurance thus employers' health insurance goes up," he said. "It is going to be a contentious budget year when funds are tight. We are trying to live within a 2-3 percent annual budget increase," Shumlin explained. The cost of prisons "is a huge problem" said Shumlin. "The country has moved to a much less tolerant (crime) policy.

We have the largest prison population per capita in the world,

and taxpayers seem eager to continue that policy. The dropping crime rate appears to show these policies to be a success."

Shumlin agrees with the recent Vermont Supreme Court decision on Gay Marriage. "I think the court has

identified a group whose civil rights have been abrogated. We need to respond with a thoughtful bill to give same gender couples the same protection as married heterosexual couples."

Don't expect a Gay Marriage bill Shumlin cautioned. "I don't think Vermonters are ready for a marriage bill, but anything is possible."

"I hope something gets passed," he added. "The longer we pontificate the more painful it will be."

Shumlin wants to see a "significant overhaul of banking statues." The bill before the legislature, "has a likely chance of passage."

He also wants "to find ways to improve the Act 250 permit process." "We don't want to weaken the act but want to make it more predictable," he said.

In issues of direct importance to the Brattleboro area, Shumlin wants the sales tax on clothing reduced to zero by July 1 of this year instead of the scheduled July 1, 2001 date. Also, he said, "we're going to work hard to get another \$150,000 to support the Bob Gibson Memorial River Garden project."