



**IMPACT  
REPORT**



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# Shaping a Stronger Economy

**B**usinesses thrive on predictability and stability. 2025 was anything but predictable.

Global volatility, federal policy shifts, and key state decisions created a complex and uncertain economic environment—marked by rising costs, talent shortages, and competitive pressures.

Yet amid these challenges, there are many bright spots.

Connecticut rose to number 28 in CNBC's 2025 America's Top States for Business rankings, powered by strengths in workforce, quality of life, and education.

That study confirms what we know—Connecticut is home to one of the nation's most skilled, highly educated workforces.

However, the study also underscored some of our state's persistent challenges—the high costs of living and doing business.

Our 2025 Survey of Connecticut Businesses found that more than 90% of employers face rising costs—driven by labor, healthcare, energy, taxes, and compliance.

Additionally, 76% struggle to find and retain talent—a trend that threatens Connecticut's economic growth and competitiveness.

This year, policy decisions added another layer of complexity for businesses.

Lawmakers passed a state budget that circumvented the fiscal guardrails and missed critical opportunities to address energy, housing, and healthcare costs in a meaningful, lasting way.

Despite these headwinds, Connecticut employers continue to innovate—investing in their businesses and workforces.

They are embracing technology, rethinking operations, and building cultures that attract talent.

Through their efforts, they are improving productivity and modernizing to meet the demand for products and services.

It is critical that the state does its part—carrying out policies that make Connecticut a more affordable and attractive place to live and work.

Through our ReimagineCT policy campaign, we advocate for solutions that lower the cost of living, empower companies to grow, and expand career opportunities while defending proposals that increase burdens on employers.

We cannot do this alone. It's only through the support, engagement, and—most

importantly—collective voice of the business community that we can build a stronger, more resilient Connecticut.

That's why CBIA's advocacy team launched a series of legislator tours, connecting more than a dozen businesses with policymakers facilitating important conversations about issues, challenges, and opportunities their companies face.

Research and data guide our vision for Connecticut's economic future—and the CBIA Foundation continues to expand its mission and mandate to chart that course.

As part of that mission, the foundation released *By the Numbers: Tracking Connecticut's Economic Competitiveness*. The reference guide details key economic data points and trends and will be published annually, supported by a regularly updated online dashboard.

And with the support of JPMorgan, the foundation is developing a workforce blueprint—informed by a series of stakeholder forums across the state—that will share recommendations for better aligning our education system with employer needs.

It's this kind of research and analysis that will help us understand where we are as

## 2026 CBIA executive committee:

Left to right: Brian Montanari, chair; Chris DiPentima, president & CEO; Michael Brooder, vice chair; Leander Dolphin, vice chair; Marietta Lee, immediate past chair; Chris Allen; Michele Etzel; David Fiereck; Meg Galistinos; Matt Hummel; Rick Iovanne; Jill Mayer; Moy Ogilvie; Frank Reynolds; Ben Towne



## CHAIR & PRESIDENT'S REPORT ■

a state and build a path forward to achieve our goals.

We are living through a pivotal time for our state, national, and global economies—full of both challenges and opportunities.

It takes all of us, working together, to turn those challenges into opportunities.

That spirit of collaboration is helping us reimagine what's possible for Connecticut's economy.

Through our affiliation with ReadyCT, we are doubling down on workforce development.

Together, we are launching a student advisory group to better understand how to retain more young people in Connecticut.

And working with CONNSTEP and a dedicated team of manufacturers, we launched the CBIA Manufacturing Coalition.

This initiative is designed to unite manufacturers and sector leaders to address challenges, amplify the industry's voice, and expand growth opportunities.

We will launch new policy councils in the coming year, focusing on high-growth, high-demand sectors of Connecticut's economy.

Energized about the year ahead, we're bringing more people together to navigate Connecticut's challenges and unlock opportunities, working with a diverse range

of groups to realize a common vision for our great state.

From in-person events to webinars, networking events, happy hours, and more, CBIA hosted almost 60 events this year.

We again partnered with stakeholders from across Connecticut's public, private, and educational sectors, leading the discussion on critical issues facing our state and highlighting solutions and best practices to address challenges and capitalize on opportunities.

As we look ahead to an even more ambitious year, we're building on our programming to highlight a broader range of issues and provide even more opportunities to learn, connect, and grow together.

There is much to celebrate.

The CBIA Foundation partnered with CONNSTEP to host the second annual Coolest Thing Made in Connecticut, with tens of thousands of people casting votes for their favorite Connecticut-made product.

The partnership also produced the second statewide manufacturing tour, a week-long bus tour of 20 manufacturing companies and workforce development organizations.

As we celebrate the best of Connecticut, we're also committed to supporting businesses and their employees.

CBIA's next-generation Health Connections program continues to expand—addressing a critical need in Connecticut—making quality, affordable healthcare more accessible for small and mid-size businesses.

As electricity costs rise, our Energy Connections team is helping more businesses optimize their energy strategies.

And our HR compliance resources help you stay ahead of Connecticut's complex employment regulations, reducing legal risk while allowing your team to focus on growth.

Together, we are reimagining what's possible—investing in talent, embracing innovation, and ensuring Connecticut remains a place where businesses don't just survive, but thrive.

On behalf of our board of directors and staff, we want to thank you for your ongoing support of CBIA as we look to the next generation and work to shape the future of Connecticut's economy.

Sincerely,



**Brian Montanari, Chair**



**Chris DiPentima, President & CEO**



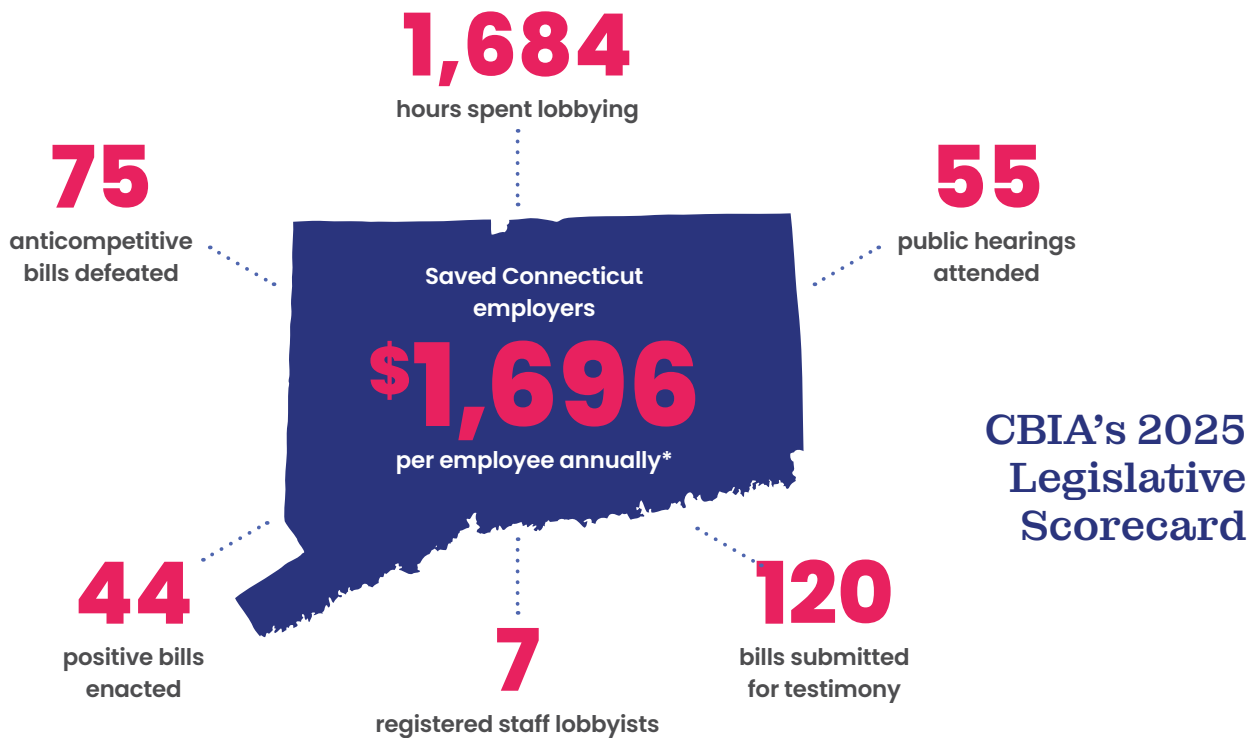
# Reimagine Connecticut—2025 Session

The 2025 legislative session marked the first year of CBIA's ReimagineCT policy solutions agenda—a bold, two-year effort to address Connecticut's workforce crisis and affordability challenges. Seventy three current lawmakers signed the pledge, along with hundreds of businesses. Building on that support, CBIA advanced a series of transformative proposals designed to strengthen the state's economic competitiveness.

Given the political imbalance in both chambers of the legislature, success can prove challenging, but CBIA's public policy team expanded its efforts to forge lasting relationships with members of both parties to advance policies that lower the cost of living and encourage greater opportunities for all residents.

CBIA advocated for policies during the legislative session that expand the

workforce and improve employers' abilities to grow while fighting proposals that drove up the costs of employment, created new mandates and burdensome regulations, or weakened the state's economic competitiveness. In all, CBIA's public policy team covered hundreds of bills across more than 1,600 hours of lobbying, saving CBIA members an average of \$1,696 per employee annually.



*\*Savings per employee calculated by annual cost savings realized or cost increases avoided through lobbying for or against bills including SB 10, HB 6863, and HB 7196 during the 2025 General Assembly session. As of July 2025, there were 1.48 million private sector employees according to the Connecticut Department of Labor.*

## Positive Legislative Outcomes

CBIA advanced proposals that are reimagining Connecticut's economy, with the legislature approving a number of positive measures, including:

- ▶ **Worker's compensation fix:** Saved employers from \$300 million-plus annual workers' compensation cost hikes
- ▶ **Transfer Act sunset:** Adoption of transformational release-based cleanup regulations unlocks billions of dollars in economic development
- ▶ **Energy bill:** First step toward lowering costs, with long-term reforms still needed
- ▶ **Apprenticeship ratio reform:** Expands opportunities for skilled trades and workforce development

CBIA also worked tirelessly to protect employers from harmful proposals,

successfully urging the governor to veto legislation that would have extended unemployment benefits to striking workers.

The policy team also successfully lobbied the governor to veto a measure granting local options for referendums to approve or deny Department of Energy and Environmental Protection permits, which would have added uncertainty and delays to critical projects.

## Concerns and Challenges

Despite these successes, CBIA raised significant concerns about adjustments to the state's fiscal guardrails that increase spending by \$2 billion and divert over \$1 billion of volatile revenue away from state debt payments. Additionally, new corporate tax increases totaling \$357

million over two years were enacted to help fuel this spending increase, posing risks to Connecticut's business climate.

This mixed result during the session led to a decline in legislators from both parties receiving 100% scores on our legislative scorecard.

However, by continuing to build a coalition of moderate members of the legislature from both parties, CBIA has established a strong advocacy platform to continue to promote a better climate for employers across the state.

We will continue to advocate strongly for employers of all sizes and from all industries, pushing lawmakers to address the challenges facing Connecticut to help the state unlock its full economic potential. ■

reimaginet

CBIA's public policy team testifies on key bills during the 2025 legislative session.



# Research to Results

As it enters its third year, The CBIA Foundation for Economic Growth & Opportunity is shifting from planning to implementation. The 2024 release of the foundation's Opportunity Connecticut report contained nearly 60 recommendations to improve the state's competitiveness. 2025 saw the foundation begin to realize that change.

The foundation's primary role is to research the challenges and opportunities facing Connecticut's economy and translate those insights into action. In 2025, the foundation demonstrated its growing in-house research capabilities by tackling one of the state's most pressing issues: housing. Following a roundtable discussion at M&T Bank headquarters in Bridgeport with nearly 30 stakeholders—including businesses, developers, and government officials—the foundation released *The Economic Impact of the Connecticut Housing Shortage* in May. Lawmakers and advocates frequently cited the paper in the ensuing months, underscoring both the salience of the issue and the foundation's emerging role as a trusted source of economic analysis.

In addition to longer research reports,



the foundation stayed on top of a rapidly changing news cycle, providing valuable insights on how national developments impact Connecticut's economy. Whether

analyzing the state's exposure to tariffs or co-hosting a webinar on the impacts of the One Big Beautiful Bill,

the foundation has aimed to stay ahead of key events for the benefit of members and policymakers alike.

## Understanding Connecticut's Economic Landscape

To understand where to go as a state, we need to understand where we have been. A major focus this year was the creation of *By the Numbers: Tracking Connecticut's Economic Competitiveness*. This data initiative was designed to help businesses and policymakers understand Connecticut's economic standing in real time. Covering topics from energy costs and housing production to infrastructure investment and workforce trends, *By the Numbers* provides accessible, actionable data to inform decision making. The foundation is also creating an online dashboard to further

enable fast analysis of economic trends, allowing the state to identify challenges early and respond strategically to remain competitive.

## In the Community

Beyond its research and analysis efforts, the foundation expanded several initiatives to spotlight good things happening in the community.

The Coolest Thing Made in Connecticut and Manufacturing Tour returned for successful second years. These initiatives highlight the state's strong manufacturing

base and gather insights to inform future research and recommendations.

The single-elimination, bracket-style Coolest Thing Made in Connecticut allowed residents to vote on their favorite out of 16 Connecticut-made products.

After more than 35,000 overall votes, the final round between Ensign-Bickford Aerospace & Defense's frangible joint and Munson's Chocolate's pecan

caramel patties came down to less than 40 votes. In the end, the frangible joint was crowned the winner.

"This recognition highlights not only the innovation and quality behind our product, but also the dedication and expertise of the EBAD team who make it possible every day," said Ensign-Bickford vice president and general manager Edris Raji.



The 2025 Manufacturing Tour brought dozens of business leaders and public officials to 15 manufacturers and five workforce development programs across the state on a hard-to-miss bus over the course of a week in October.



“We’re not just visiting factories or facilities—we’re shining a light on what’s possible when our vision, skill, and partnership come together,” said Connecticut Chief Manufacturing Officer Kirti Patel.

The competition and tour provide fun and engaging ways to touch every corner of Connecticut and foster the connections and relationships that make the manufacturing ecosystem here so unique.

The foundation also hosted its second annual Civics Bee Connecticut State Finals. The competition for middle school students reinforces the importance of civic education as a cornerstone of an informed and engaged citizenry—critical to Connecticut’s long-term economic vitality. In just two years, the Civics Bee has expanded to more districts and showcased the talent, knowledge, and community engagement of Connecticut’s rising leaders.



The team from Ensign-Bickford Aerospace & Defense celebrates after winning the 2025 Coolest Thing Made in Connecticut challenge.

### From Recommendations to Results

Since the release of Opportunity Connecticut, state leaders, businesses, or community organizations have acted on two-thirds of the plan’s 57 recommendations—a testament to the plan’s relevance and the foundation’s collaborative approach. To sustain this momentum, the foundation’s three pillar committees—business climate, workforce and education, and housing—continue to convene diverse stakeholders to develop implementation strategies and guide future research priorities.

Department of Labor data projects that through 2032, 55.7% of all job openings in Connecticut will

be available to individuals with a high school degree. To address the gap between what employers need and what schools produce, the foundation, in partnership with the JPMorgan Chase Foundation, launched the Workforce Blueprint initiative. Scheduled for release in 2026, the report will draw on feedback from stakeholders across Connecticut and provide recommendations for building more work-based learning opportunities for young people.

As the foundation continues to mature, it remains focused on its core mission to conduct rigorous, independent research that informs policy, engages stakeholders, and creates opportunities for all Connecticut residents. With each day, the foundation expands its research capacity, deepens its partnerships, and grows into its role to serve as Connecticut’s leading voice on economic competitiveness and opportunity. ■

# Empowering Connecticut Employers

**S**ucceeding in today's business climate takes more than determination—it requires a strategic partner who can help you overcome obstacles, seize opportunities, and ensure your voice is heard.

That's what CBIA delivers. Membership that goes beyond resources—a complete toolkit built to power your business growth.

From advocacy to everyday business solutions, Connecticut companies trust CBIA to help them grow stronger and go farther.

## Business Champion

CBIA is a trusted advocate for Connecticut businesses, shaping policies that drive growth, foster innovation, and create a business-friendly environment. We also oppose measures that harm businesses and increase costs for employers.

Our expert policy team advocates on behalf of members to lawmakers and

regulatory agencies, mobilizes grassroots campaigns, and delivers research and analysis to inform decisions.

As members, you can track legislation, engage directly with policymakers, and join policy councils to shape CBIA's legislative agenda ensuring your voice is heard, and your business interests are protected.

## Where Leaders Connect

CBIA events connect you with peers, industry leaders, and decision-makers. From roundtables to conferences, these gatherings create opportunities to share ideas, gain insights, and expand your professional network.

CBIA hosted nearly 60 events this year. From roundtables to trainings and

conferences, CBIA events are designed to foster connections, form new partnerships, and showcase your expertise.

At CBIA events, relationships are built, and business success begins.

## Collaboration in Action

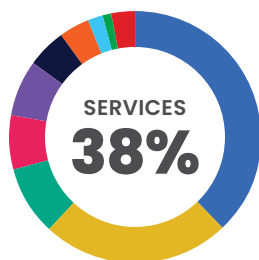
As part of our commitment to membership growth, CBIA launched the Manufacturing Coalition—an exclusive network for manufacturers across Connecticut.



Developed in partnership with CONNSTEP and industry leaders, the Manufacturing Coalition helps

manufacturers to share best practices, address common operational challenges, and collaborate on workforce and innovation initiatives.

## CBIA Member Demographics



### Industry Sectors

- Services (38%)
- Manufacturing (24%)
- Construction (9%)
- Finance, insurance, and real estate (7%)
- Retail trade (7%)
- Wholesale trade (5%)
- Transportation, communications, electric, gas, and sanitary services (4%)
- Not classified (3%)
- Agriculture, forestry, and fishing (2%)
- Public administration (1%)



Advocacy



Energy Purchasing



Events & Networking



Health Insurance & Employee Benefits



HR, Employment Law, Safety



Member Resource Center

By connecting peers and providing actionable insights, the coalition delivers tangible value beyond advocacy—helping members strengthen their competitive edge, improve operations, and tackle real-world business challenges together.

**Support for Success**

CBIA gives members the tools to save time, reduce costs, and operate more efficiently. From discounts on office essentials to training programs, every resource is designed to help your business thrive.

Get expert guidance from our business community in finance, HR, marketing,

and more through our Member Resource Center, where practical solutions support your business at every stage.

**Membership Pays Off**

CBIA membership provides practical tools that help your business succeed. Members gain access to resources, guidance, and connections that make running a business easier, smarter, and more cost-effective. From money-saving programs to expert advice on HR, safety, and compliance, CBIA helps you work efficiently while staying ahead of the curve.

**What Members Gain:**

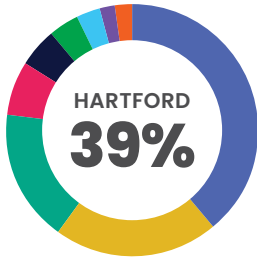
- ▶ **A Seat at the Table:** CBIA fights to reduce regulatory and business costs, protecting your bottom line.
- ▶ **Networking and Learning:** Connect with peers, develop your team, and take advantage of expert training.
- ▶ **Better Benefits and Insurance:** Competitive packages that save money and attract talent.
- ▶ **Expert Guidance:** Quick, reliable answers on HR, safety, and regulatory challenges plus access to employment law attorneys through CBIA’s HR Hotline.

Every membership dollar is an investment into your business—unlocking savings, new opportunities, and stronger connections. ■



**Employee Size**

- 1-5 (24%)
- 6-10 (22%)
- 11-25 (22%)
- 26-50 (14%)
- 51-100 (7%)
- 101-300 (4%)
- 301-1,000 (2%)
- 1,001-3,000 (1%)
- Unknown (3%)



**Membership by County**

- Hartford (39%)
- New Haven (21%)
- Fairfield (17%)
- Middlesex (7%)
- Litchfield (5%)
- New London (4%)
- Tolland (3%)
- Windham (2%)
- Out-of-state (2%)

# Efficiency Made Simple

**M**anaging operations, staying compliant, and controlling costs can drain time and resources. The CBIA Member Resource Center simplifies these tasks with resources designed to help your business operate more efficiently.

## What You'll Find in the Member Resource Center:

- ▶ **Financial Tools:** Simplify accounting, payroll, payment processing, and telecom services to save time and reduce costs.
- ▶ **HR Support:** Access expert advice on hiring, compliance, benefits, and workplace safety, plus discounted background checks, outsourced HR services, and targeted employee training.
- ▶ **Safety and Compliance:** Strengthen workplace safety with guidance, training, and resources that meet regulatory standards.
- ▶ **Sales and Marketing Tools:** Strengthen your business presence with website design services, SEO resources, lead management tools, and sales training.
- ▶ **Office Discounts:** Save on office supplies, shipping, technology, and more through exclusive member offers.
- ▶ **Employee Perks:** Extend special benefits to your workforce, including discounted cell phone plans, travel deals, and technology products to boost satisfaction and retention.

Beyond discounts, the Member Resource Center equips you with the tools to run your business smarter and stronger. ■

### CBIA Membership Provides

### You Save

<b>Free HR, safety, and compliance advice</b> (Versus three calls to other HR resources @\$400/hour)	<b>\$1,200</b>
<b>Affordable solutions with Energy Connections</b> (Assuming 250,000 KWh per year and a one-year contract versus utility price)	<b>\$8,850</b>
<b>Advocacy efforts at the state Capitol</b> (per employee, based on 2025 legislative session)	<b>\$1,696</b>
<b>Discounts on Staples office supplies</b> (Assuming \$600 annual office supply expenses)	<b>\$275</b>
<b>Savings on events and professional development</b> (Assumes two events versus nonmember prices)	<b>\$130</b>
<b>Employee training for under \$200</b> (Versus nonmember price; for companies with fewer than 100 employees)	<b>\$2,200</b>
<b>Total Annual Savings</b>	<b>\$14,351</b>



Finance



Human Resources



Office Services



Safety



Sales & Marketing



Savings for Employees



Specialized Services

# Power Your Business

**E**nergy is one of the most critical and costly inputs for any business. Managing energy costs and risks requires a comprehensive and proactive approach that considers the complex and volatile energy markets, the evolving regulatory environment, and emerging technologies and opportunities.



For businesses, energy is one of the largest and most complex expenses. Managing costs, navigating market volatility, and staying ahead of regulatory changes requires expertise and strategy. That's where CBIA Energy Connections comes in. This independent program provides CBIA members with tailored guidance to develop electricity and natural gas strategies that fit their needs.

Since 1999, Energy Connections has helped thousands of member companies across deregulated markets secure competitive contracts, optimize usage, and reduce financial risk. The program works with multiple vetted suppliers to ensure you see the best options available.

## What Members Gain:

- ▶ **Customized Energy Procurement:** Flexible contracts designed for your business size, usage, and risk preferences. Small businesses can also join aggregation programs to benefit from greater buying power.
- ▶ **Insights and Education:** Stay informed on trends, policy changes, and best practices so your energy decisions are smart and strategic.
- ▶ **Data and Reporting Tools:** Track energy usage, costs, and performance, with bill auditing and demand management to reduce peak charges and improve efficiency.
- ▶ **Clean and Renewable Options:** Integrate renewable energy solutions, from green credits to onsite solar, and access ESG planning and reporting support.

With CBIA Energy Connections, members gain confidence, control, and clarity—ensuring energy costs and strategies align with business goals. ■

“

**We're able to get some big savings that CBIA's Energy Connections told us about—things that were happening. They pointed out details that we were not aware of.**



**Jacob Long**  
President, American Woolen Company, Inc.

”



**Energy Procurement**



**Clean Energy Sourcing**



**Energy Analytics & Reporting**



**Onsite Solar & Storage**



**Demand Management**



**Energy Bill Auditing**

# Healthcare Solutions That Work for Your Business

**C**BIA Health Connections helps small and midsize businesses compete with larger employers by providing affordable, comprehensive healthcare plans that keep employees healthy and protected.



## Why Members Choose CBIA Health Connections:

- ▶ **Smart, Level-Funded Plans:** Coverage includes stop-loss protection with any surplus claims dollars returned annually.
- ▶ **Cut Pharmacy Costs:** Innovative strategies reduce prescription expenses compared to national averages.
- ▶ **Nationwide Provider Access:** Employees have access to a broad network of quality healthcare providers.
- ▶ **Simplified Support:** A single point of contact for benefits and claims makes life easier for employees and employers alike.

With CBIA Health Connections, you can offer competitive benefits that attract and retain top talent, without breaking the budget.

## Comprehensive Coverage Options Include:

- ▶ **Medical Plans:** HSA and PPO options with access to a nationwide provider network.
- ▶ **Dental and Vision:** Affordable plans to ensure complete care for your team.
- ▶ **Supplemental Benefits:** Optional disability, life insurance, and other voluntary add-ons to protect your employees and your business. ■

**Free services make managing your benefits program even simpler.**

### Online Portal

View and pay your monthly invoice, and complete open enrollment efficiently.

### COBRA Administration

We handle all your COBRA paperwork so you can focus on running your business.

### HR Hotline

Free, expert guidance on employment law, HR policies, terminations, leave management, and compliance issues.

### Local Service

Get personalized support from our Connecticut-based team: real people who understand your needs and go the extra mile.



Medical



Dental



Life &  
Disability



Vision



Identity  
Theft



Supplemental  
Health



Workers'  
Comp

# Safety Meets Savings for Connecticut Manufacturers

**M**anaging workplace safety and controlling insurance costs are critical challenges for manufacturers in Connecticut.

For Connecticut manufacturers, keeping employees safe while controlling insurance costs is a top priority. CBIA's Workers' Compensation Program delivers competitive coverage tailored specifically for metal, plastic, and electronics manufacturers, combined with expert guidance to reduce risk and protect your workforce.



## Key Benefits:

- ▶ **Loss-Sensitive Dividend:** Reward your strong safety record with cost reductions.
- ▶ **On-Site Risk Management:** Professional guidance to identify hazards and improve workplace safety.
- ▶ **Training and Planning:** Resources to strengthen safety initiatives and prevent incidents.

By focusing on prevention and proactive risk management, the program helps manufacturers minimize costly accidents, create a safer workplace, and reduce overall insurance expenses while keeping operations running smoothly. ■



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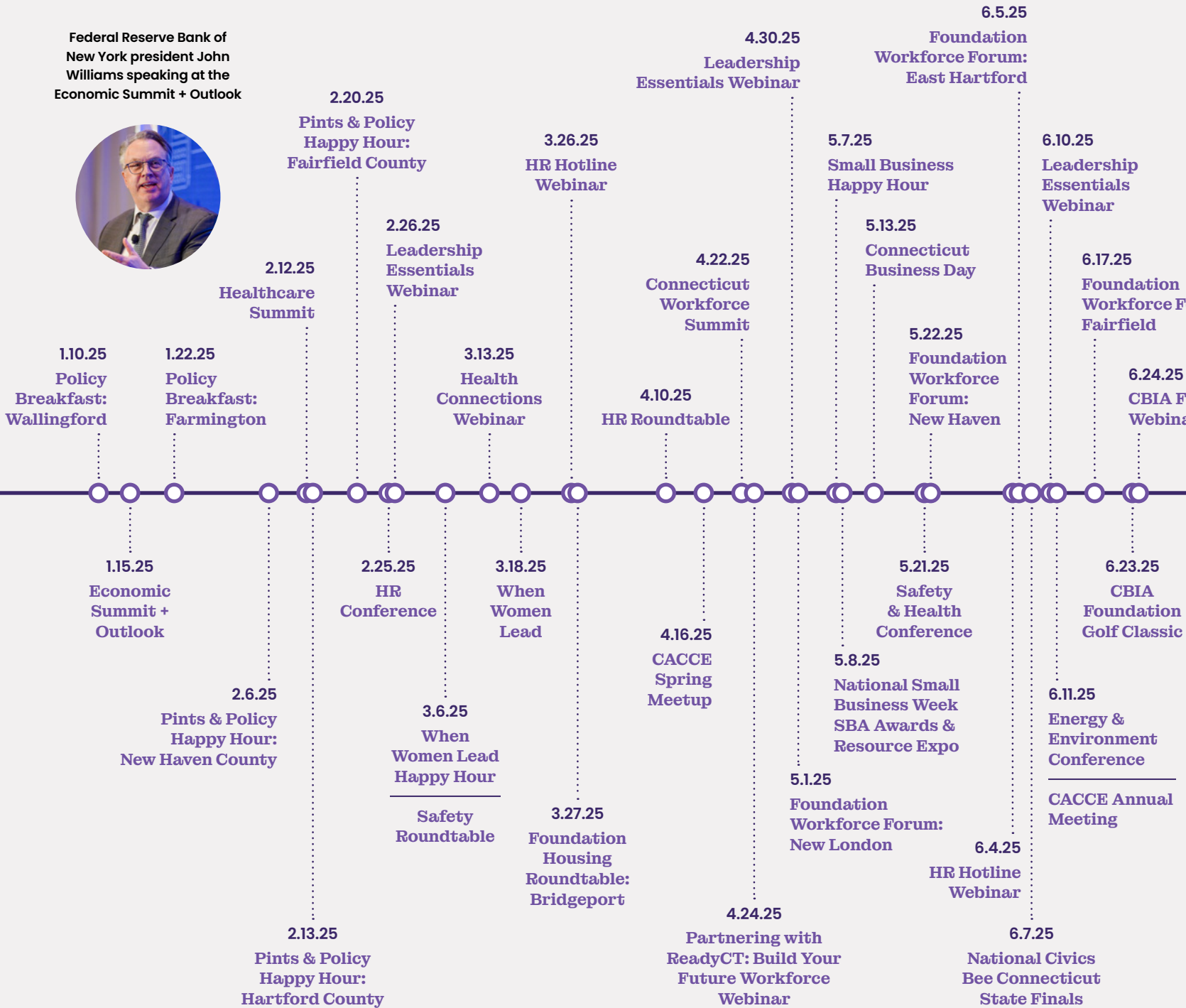
We use all the services of CBIA; we utilize them all to grow our company and stay here in Connecticut. Our workers' comp insurance comes from CBIA. One of the questions I always ask myself is, why is everybody I know not using the workers' comp services? When we get that rebate check every year, I'm pretty excited about it.



**Doug Johnson**  
President, Marion  
Manufacturing

”

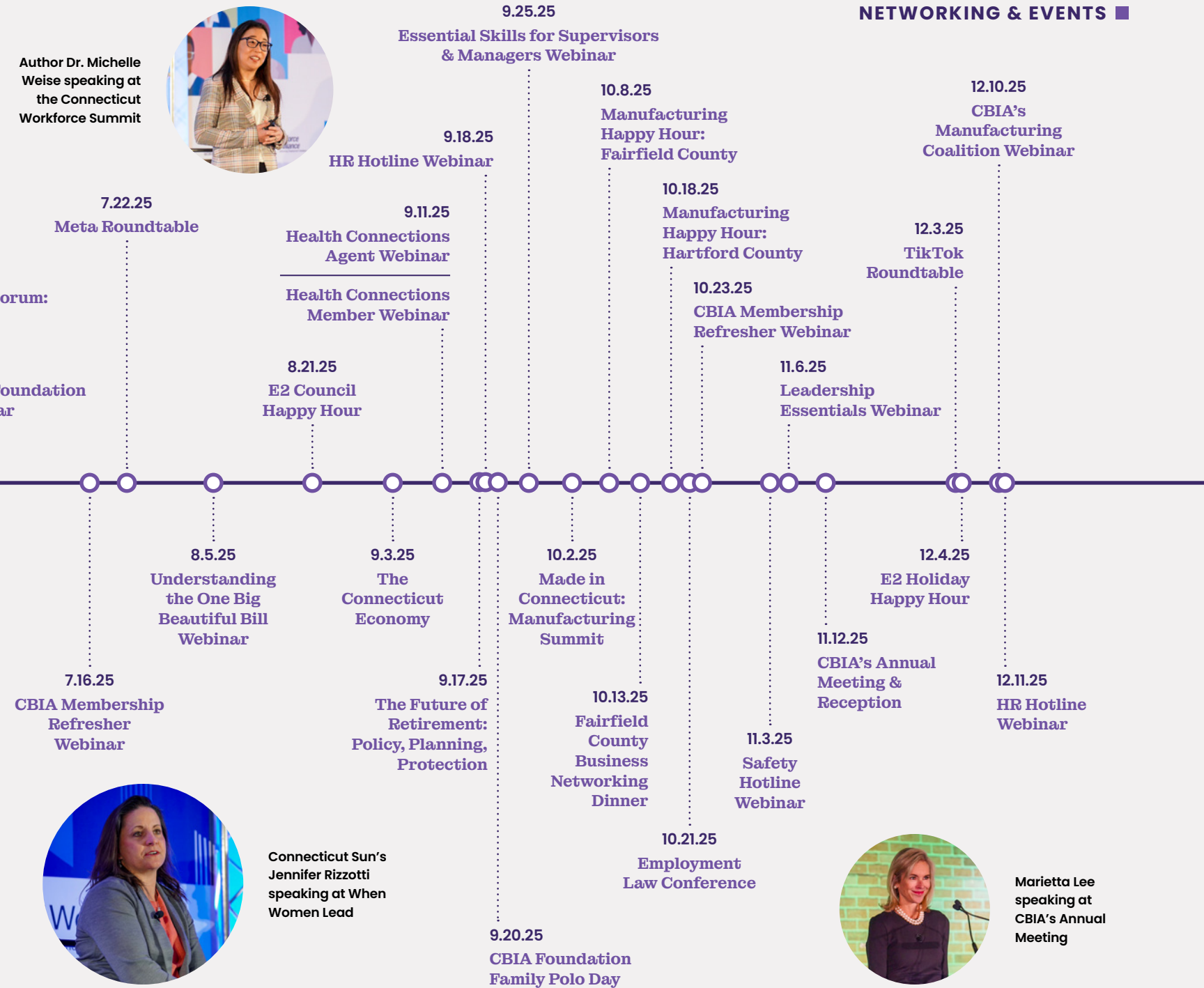
Federal Reserve Bank of New York president John Williams speaking at the Economic Summit + Outlook



**NETWORKING & EVENTS ■**



Author Dr. Michelle Weise speaking at the Connecticut Workforce Summit



Connecticut Sun's Jennifer Rizzotti speaking at When Women Lead



Marietta Lee speaking at CBIA's Annual Meeting

Our events keep attendees up-to-date on the latest economic, business, policy, tax, employment law, and HR trends while connecting them with their peers through invaluable networking opportunities.

Whether you're looking to get HR credits, stay current on the latest laws and trends in tax, employment law, and safety, our programs and events are designed to help you.

CBIA events exceeded all expectations in 2025. Our calendar expanded to nearly 60 events with several of our conferences—including Connecticut Business Day and the Annual Meeting & Reception—moved to bigger spaces to accommodate the interest. Look for even more opportunities to learn and connect in 2026!

Event sponsorships are available and are a valuable opportunity for a business to increase its brand awareness and reach new customers. ■



NETWORKING & EVENTS ■



# Making News

**C**BIA's communications activities focused heavily on member companies in 2025, leveraging messaging platforms to feature member news and stories highlighting Connecticut business leaders through the BizCast podcast.

We also drove broad media coverage of critical business, policy, and economic

competitiveness issues throughout the year, supplementing that coverage with the growing reach of our website and social media platforms.

Our outreach efforts, including media releases, briefings, editorial board meetings, op-eds, and interviews, generated a record 2,095 media mentions during the year.

CBIA's website hosted 795,000 visitors in 2025—up 29% over the previous year—with more than two million pageviews, while site engagement improved 10%.

Social media platforms also played an important role in our communications activities, with followers increasing 25% and engagement rates rising 15% across all accounts. ■



Chris DiPentima discusses the 2025 Survey of Connecticut Businesses on WFSB's CT '25 with Eric Parker.



Dustin Nord kicks off the 2025 Manufacturing Tour on WTNH's CT Buzz with Natasha Lubczenko.



The Lee Company's Marietta Lee talks about leading with authenticity on the CBIA BizCast.



Chris Davis breaks down the state's economy on NBC Connecticut's Face the Facts with Mike Hydeck.

**CBIA's 2025  
Media Impact**

**2,095**

media reports

**795,000**

website visits

**2.05M**

website pageviews

**1.31M**

LinkedIn impressions

**+15%**

increase in social media  
engagement

**HARTFORD**  
**HBJ BUSINESS JOURNAL**

**CT lawmakers eye first-time homebuyers savings account and tax deduction**

**Hartford Courant**

**AI considered key to future business growth. Many CT companies say they're unsure how to use it**

**GT NEWS**  
**JUNKIE**  
BECAUSE YOU NEED IT, BAD.

**CT Manufacturers Profiting, But Healthcare Costs, Tariffs Are Concerns**

**ctmirror**

**Lamont proposes loosening guardrails, boosting child care in \$55.2B budget**

**ctpost**

**Connecticut's 'critically important' manufacturing sector highlighted by bus tour, 'Alive and thriving'**

**Wf Westfair**  
**Business Journal**

**CBIA: End of the de minimis exemption puts huge strain on small businesses**

**INSIDE INVESTIGATOR**

**CT job growth goes stagnant; business blames cost of living**

**BUSINESS INSURANCE**

**Businesses rally against court ruling analysts say could increase comp costs 265%**

# Connecting Students with Career Opportunities

**R**eadyCT—the K-12 workforce development affiliate of CBIA—continues to focus on connecting students with the wide range of exciting career opportunities available in Connecticut manufacturing.

The approach is multi-modal, with an “early and often” emphasis.

“Building a meaningful and lasting manufacturing talent pipeline means we have to avoid the one-and-done approach,” says ReadyCT executive director Shannon Marimón.

“Remember, we’re talking about young people, so students must first understand the maker sector and then have the chance to see themselves in the world of manufacturing.

“If we want to make things here, we must make the workforce here, too. And we can.”

Building the workforce runs through strategic investment, notably from the Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund. With MIF support, last year over 6,200 students were reached through two ReadyCT maker-related efforts alone: robotics and manufacturing career roadshow stops throughout the state.

The key stakeholders—manufacturers, students, and educators—agree that these

programs are having the intended impact.

Mary Planeta Fitzgerald, president of Stonington-based Acme Wire Products Co., participated as a roadshow exhibitor and sees the value to manufacturers. The roadshows cater to students as young as 11 all the way up to 18-year-old high school seniors preparing to graduate—and enter the workforce.

“Students are not aware of the opportunities available in manufacturing, and unless they see what is locally available, they may choose other opportunities,” Fitzgerald said.

“By continuing

to promote the message that careers in manufacturing are available, engaging, and financially rewarding, we hope to expand and enrich our workforce.”

Educators, who arrange for students to attend the roadshows, point out that the bus rides back to school are filled with lively conversations as they recount all the things to see and do at a roadshow—from welding simulators to virtual reality headsets to connecting with Connecticut residents who actually make things of interest to youth: cosmetics packaging, airplane engines, chocolate, and soccer nets, just to name a few.

Indeed, educators say that manufacturers are making an impression on attendees.

“Many of our students are unaware that these manufacturing companies and career opportunities exist, so this kind of exposure is incredibly important,” said Barbara Beebe, director of guidance for Northwestern Regional High School.

“The hands-on activities are very engaging, and students are eager to try as many different things as possible.”

Similarly, educators point out how their students are making the connection between robotics and manufacturing careers.

“Without [robotics], our students would not have the opportunity to realize these career paths exist—let alone view them as viable options,” said Mike Merati, supervisor of career and technical education for Waterbury Public Schools.

Of course, knowing how students themselves experience these programs is essential to determining whether robotics and manufacturing career roadshows are having the intended effect: generating students’ interest in manufacturing careers.

“I wasn’t thinking at all about manufacturing before coming today,” said Dwayne R., a high school sophomore from New Haven, “But I liked it, and I learned I could have a good income doing it.”

Andrew P., an 8th grade student from Southington, said that after attending a roadshow, he wants more math and



**ReadyCT's  
2024-2025  
Impact**

**2,900+**

students who participated in one or more work-based learning experiences

**1,500+**

students who participated in career readiness training

**520+**

students who experienced paid, high-quality internships

**250+**

employers that offered students engaging, high-quality work-based opportunities

**4,400**

students who participated in robotics learning and/or competition



**FIRST Robotics gives students critical STEM, problem-solving, teamwork, and collaboration skills that prepare them for their future careers.**

science classes so that he can work in the manufacturing sector. His one complaint about the roadshow? He would have liked even more companies to explore!

Robotics participation is also helping students see what manufacturing really is, and those a-ha moments are informing their academic and postsecondary decisions.

“I like all the things about robotics,” said Olivia R., a senior from Hartford. “I’ve had five years of robotics, and I’m mentoring the younger kids now. I see myself doing this and building things and helping others build things.”

Alia R., a 9th grade student from Monroe, said she joined robotics because she knew she’d learn things, including teamwork.

“I don’t know much about robots,” she said, “And I’m new

to high school and to working with older kids, but I know I need to know how to do that and I’m going to learn a lot.”

From three key populations—manufacturers, teachers, and students—it is clear that these career-connected learning opportunities are creating a new and dynamic appetite for Connecticut manufacturing careers among the state’s youth. With sustained partnerships, ReadyCT expects to continue connecting students to their manufacturing sector options.

Other ReadyCT efforts—including manufacturing career pathways, paid internship programs, and coding challenges—run concurrently to robotics and roadshow programming.

**Learn more at [readyct.org](https://readyct.org). ■**



**Manufacturing roadshows help students interact with employers and explore career opportunities.**

# The Power of Manufacturing Partnerships

**W**hen Connecticut manufacturers need help reaching their goals, they choose CONNSTEP to provide customized solutions to their unique challenges.

Whether they are looking to accelerate strategic growth, develop people and culture, achieve operational excellence, drive digital transformation, or navigate compliance and risk management, CONNSTEP's clients know they are working with a team of advisors they can trust.

"CONNSTEP has been a valuable resource to Beekley over the years and has provided great service and support to ensure we continue to achieve our goals," said Kate Chase, director of quality and regulatory at Beekley Corporation.

A company's investment in CONNSTEP yields measurable returns, boosting the bottom line and establishing the process improvements necessary for sustainable, successful operations.

That success has impacts that stretch beyond the manufacturing floor, rippling out into our communities, which is why Connecticut's economy benefits significantly from CONNSTEP's work with the state's manufacturers.

From fiscal year 2019 through fiscal

year 2023, for every dollar the state of Connecticut invested in CONNSTEP, it saw a return of \$70 in GDP.

Over those five years, manufacturers generated \$826.5 million in sales, contributed \$432.6 million to Connecticut's GDP, paid \$218.8 million in wages and benefits to workers, and supported 2,994 jobs.

State economic impacts resulting from CONNSTEP's work are derived from the NIST MEP survey data.

These figures are compiled using IMPLAN, an Input-Output modeling system, to accurately project the resulting indirect and induced economic effects.

Behind the numbers are the people—the critical components of the manufacturing ecosystem—and the valuable relationships developed while collaborating closely with clients on every project.

For CONNSTEP, the opportunity to witness the transformation, growth, and tangible success achieved by the manufacturers they serve is a rewarding outcome of their work.

Equally as important are the client partnerships that endure after a project is completed, as exemplified by South Windsor's Siftex Equipment Company.

Under the leadership of general manager



**CONNSTEP**

*Grow. Improve. Succeed.*



**Scan to learn more about CONNSTEP's economic impact!**

“

**Penn Globe consistently relies on CONNSTEP to both grow and stay competitive in the lighting market. We consider them to be a critical partner to our future success.**



**Marcia LaFemina**  
President & CEO,  
Pennsylvania Globe  
Gas Light Co.

”

**CONNSTEP  
partners with  
Connecticut  
manufacturers  
to achieve  
measurable  
results**

**\$220.5M**

total increased &  
retained sales

**\$27.4M**

new client investments

**\$9.4M**

cost savings

**1,060**

new & retained jobs

*As reported in client  
surveys in 2024.*

Katty Garcia, Siftex has been on a three-year journey with CONNSTEP, creating a culture of continuous learning and improvement, successfully adopting lean manufacturing practices, and developing employees' leadership skills through programs such as Supervisor Bootcamp.

"The changes you can see in our company from when we began to where we are, are fantastic," said Garcia.

"CONNSTEP Supervisor Bootcamp has definitely taught me to be the supervisor my team needs me to be, to be the leader that they expect me to be," said Siftex sewing department supervisor Yailyne Hurtado.

Forum Plastics in Waterbury has also demonstrated its commitment to staff development by sending several new supervisors and managers to Supervisor Bootcamp, yielding tremendous results.

"Since completing the training, we have observed a significant improvement in team dynamics and productivity," said human resources manager Lisa Leonard.

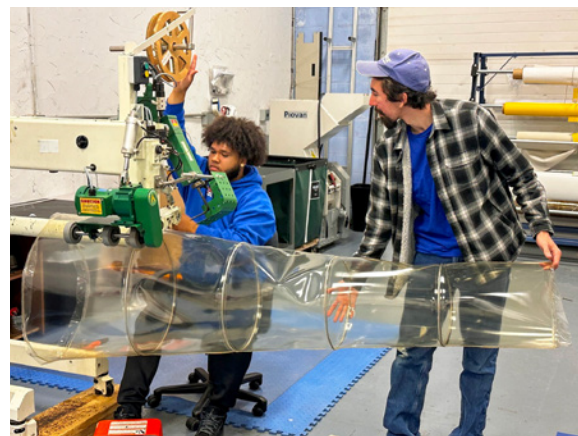
"The benefits are tangible and have made an impact on our company."

"They will provide you with an extremely personalized and customized service," said Garcia.

"And that is the magic that has happened to Siftex." ■



Siftex Equipment Company general manager Katty Garcia (far left) with several of her team members.



Siftex welding supervisor and CONNSTEP Supervisor Bootcamp graduate, Dominic Amagliani (right) assists on the shop floor.

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ReadyCT

# CBIA's Next Generation

**2**025 saw a changing of the guard at CBIA. Chief financial officer Mary Bergamo and CBIA Service Corp. president Ken Comeau both announced their retirements after 36 years with the organization.

"Mary and Ken were instrumental to CBIA's growth and success," said CBIA president and CEO Chris DiPentima.

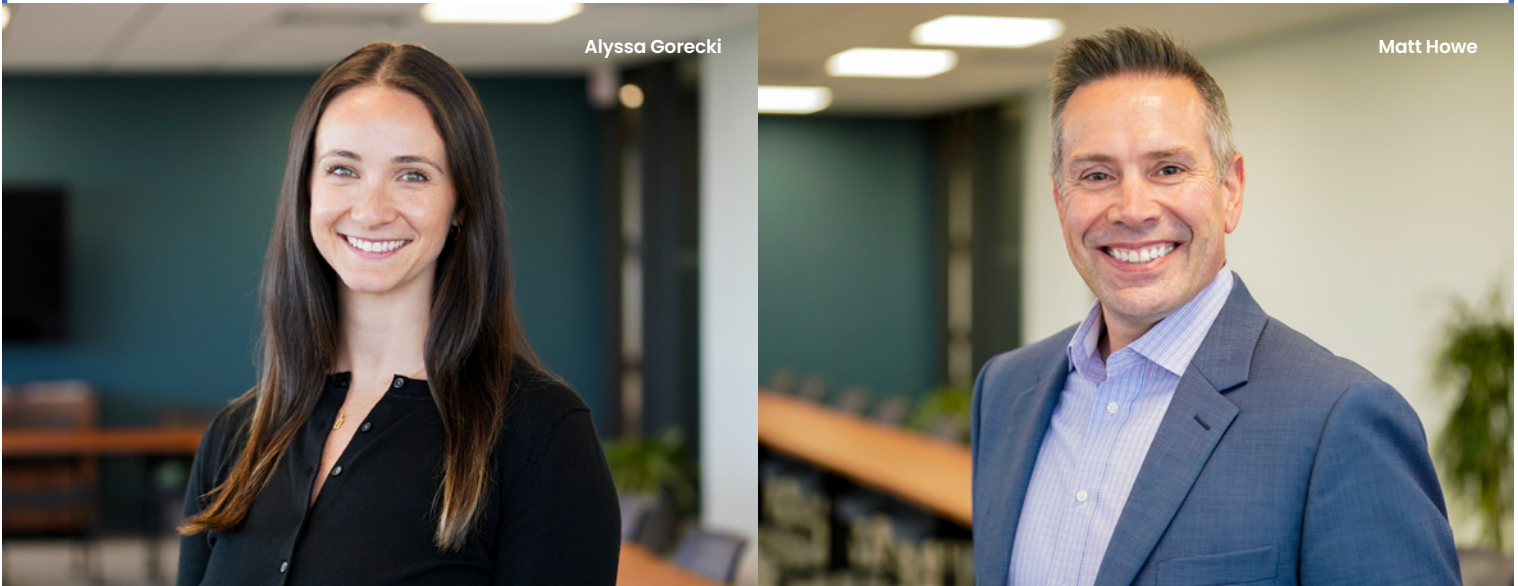
"They were trusted mentors, leaders, and friends for our entire organization and they left big shoes to fill."

Filling those shoes are CFO Alyssa Gorecki and senior vice president of products and services Matt Howe.

Gorecki brings nearly a decade of experience in financial oversight, operational insight, compliance, and risk management.

Howe most recently served as CBIA's vice president of marketing, working to elevate CBIA's brand and market presence.

"We're thrilled to have Alyssa and Matt—they are carrying on the legacy of their predecessors and bringing dynamic new ideas and energy to lead the next generation of CBIA," DiPentima said. ■



Alyssa Gorecki

Matt Howe

# CBIA Is the Leading Voice for Connecticut Business

We fight to make Connecticut a top state for business, jobs, and economic growth: driving change, shaping legislative and regulatory policy, and promoting collaboration between the private and public sectors.

We support the innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders shaping a vibrant, dynamic Connecticut with opportunities for all—and connect business leaders with each other and with legislators.

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## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

CBIA respects and acknowledges all aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion, recognizing how different viewpoints foster teamwork and innovation—cornerstones of our values.

We are committed to being a workplace that reflects the unique experiences and perspectives of the business community we serve, and by welcoming all voices, we further our mission of making Connecticut a top state in which to live and work.

## Stronger Together

The CBIA, CONNSTEP, and ReadyCT strategic alliance combines expertise and resources, providing businesses with effective solutions to their biggest challenges—building a skilled workforce, driving growth, and staying competitive in a fast-changing global economy. This alliance is committed to strengthening every business and resident in Connecticut.

# CORE VALUES



## TEAMWORK

We are one team, working in a fun, positive environment where open communication and empathy drive successful collaboration.



## RESPECT

We value the diversity of all stakeholders across all roles, ensuring all voices are heard, all ideas are valued, resulting in success for all.



## **CUSTOMER FOCUS**

We work for our members and do what it takes to exceed their expectations.



## **INTEGRITY**

We are honest and accountable—taking ownership of our actions and results, trusting and supporting our colleagues to do the same.



## **INNOVATION**

We embrace challenges and opportunities with open minds, encouraging creative new ideas to develop solutions and accomplish goals.

