

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



PRESS RELEASE

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Portsmouth Partnering with UNH Cooperative Extension in Business Retention Program

PORTSMOUTH, NH – The City of Portsmouth has been accepted to the Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Visitation Program, a state economic development program developed by the University of New Hampshire’s Cooperative Extension designed to engage with local businesses and gather an in-depth inventory of the current economic climate. The City’s Economic Development Commission (EDC) is partnering with UNH on the project.

The main objective of the BR&E program is to assist existing businesses within Portsmouth to become more competitive and to provide guidance to the local economic development program. For the next two years, City officials will be working alongside the UNH Cooperative Extension to survey businesses and analyze resulting data to develop long-range economic plans for businesses in all City districts. Project feedback from a broad range of businesses throughout the City will identify successes and trends or barriers that may challenge current business expansion or operations. City Councilor and EDC member Joshua Cyr stated, “The project will enable the City to get a pulse on local business diversity which can be used as an intelligence tool to make policy decisions for our economic landscape.”

To gather data from businesses and better understand their Portsmouth experience, volunteer visitors who are selectively recruited and trained on the program will visit local businesses. The volunteers will use a prepared survey to identify, among other items, the businesses’ needs and concerns about the local economy. This information, which remains confidential, is reviewed by a local task force

of community leaders, stakeholders and economic development professionals to develop effective strategies for smart growth in all areas of Portsmouth.

According to Nancy Carmer, Economic Development Program Manager for Portsmouth, the program is an action-oriented process for learning about the concerns of local businesses and setting priorities to address these needs. “Our City is very fortunate to have a diversified economy of large, small, corporate, entrepreneurial, national and international businesses that represent a broad spectrum of commerce. The City wants to do all it can to retain these companies, be responsive to their needs and devise strategies that create a business environment that allows them to thrive. The BR&E Program will allow us to identify ways to improve the economic opportunity, and to connect with these businesses on a more personal level as we meet with them to discuss their experiences.”

A volunteer team is currently being assembled to outreach to interested survey participants. If interested in participating in the BR&E Program, businesses and individuals can visit the City’s Economic Development website at <http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/economic/> for an application to the program and additional information on the survey and leadership team organizing this process.

For more information, please contact Nancy Carmer at 610-7220 or nmcarmer@cityofportsmouth.com.