



The Research Bureau



2013 Annual Report



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As part of our commitment to the Commonwealth's well-being, we are proud to support The Research Bureau in its continued efforts to research public policy issues and maintain its position as a leading source of information for government, business and society.

Our investment as this year's Presenting Sponsor emphasizes this commitment and salutes The Research Bureau's dedication to outstanding work and collaboration.

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A Message from the President and the Chairman of the Board

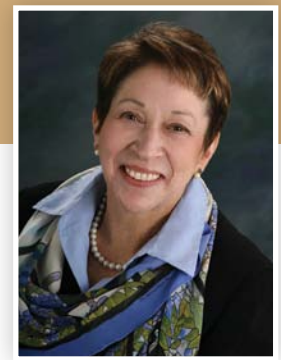
It is hard to believe that about eighteen months have passed since The Research Bureau re-located to the campus of Assumption College. This annual report provides a fitting occasion to illustrate through photographs and text the nature of the partnership that is developing with the College.

First, we have established an internship program with the College and initiated a new series of reports to be researched and written by student interns. During the first full year of operation, our intern has been working on this new series, called "Worcester by the Numbers," which was requested by the City of Worcester's Chief Development Officer. These reports, covering topics such as Worcester's demographics, economy, jobs, employment, and school-age population, provide important data about Worcester for inclusion on the City's website. These data will be easily accessible to the public and should be especially useful to businesses interested in opportunities in the City, to non-profit organizations applying for grants, to the academic community for research, to college students seeking to learn more about the City in which they are residing, as well as to other citizens.

Second, as part of the Bureau's annual series of public forums on local and regional public policy issues, we have co-sponsored several forums with different college departments. They have been held at Assumption, and while open to the public, have been directed primarily toward educating students about current public policy issues. The two forums held during the past academic year were co-organized and co-sponsored with Assumption's MBA program. Both of these, one on public employee unions and the other on public sector budgeting, were designed to give business students a broader understanding of the public-sector environment within which they can be expected to operate.

Third, the Bureau is working with the Director of the Assumption MBA program to secure year-long, 20-hour-per-week internships for students enrolled in the "early career" MBA program. A number of the internships that have been arranged are with companies headed by Research Bureau Board members, and we are pleased and grateful for their cooperation. The ultimate goal of these internships is to introduce students to employment opportunities in the Worcester region in the hope that they will choose to remain here after graduation.

Fourth, The Research Bureau is currently working with an Assumption faculty member to assess the need for a graduate program for those who are planning or have already embarked upon a career in public service. Because of a predicted shortage of town managers, we are also considering a program for those interested in that career path. We are interviewing local town managers, and then plan to survey public employees to determine whether the College can offer a program that is distinctive and valuable to their education and that will improve government administration, thus benefiting the citizens of this region.



We are gratified by the success we have had thus far and look forward to developing additional partnerships with Assumption. We also note that these activities are in addition to the Bureau's usual schedule of researching and writing reports, organizing forums, and participating in a multitude of civic activities.

We also want to use this occasion to recognize two individuals who, before they passed away this year, made major contributions to the work of the Bureau. John Nelson served as a member of the Board of Directors from 1989 to 2003, several of those years as a member of the Executive Committee, and as Chairman of the Board from 1998-1999. During that time, he was an active and thoughtful contributor and shaper of policy. His grace and humor always elevated our discourse. Bill Densmore was a true friend of the Bureau since its founding. Everyone knows of Bill's ability to generate ideas and think of new projects to do. He was no different with the Bureau. But the most significant project on which he suggested that we work together was the closing of Worcester City Hospital in the early 1990's and its conversion to a primary-care facility. We are grateful that both men were part of the Bureau's life, and we will miss them dearly.

In conclusion, we want to acknowledge all those who contribute to the success of the Bureau. We extend special thanks to the Bureau's Executive Committee, which spends countless hours setting our agenda and promoting our work. We are also deeply indebted to the Board of Directors, the corporate and foundation communities, and individuals from all walks of life for their support. These contributors, as well as those who have provided in-kind services and financial sponsorship of forums and other events, are listed at the end of this report. We are extremely grateful to all of them for their generosity. The media coverage, especially from the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*, is highly valuable in extending our reach and educating the public about the issues we research. We again thank our staff members for their boundless enthusiasm, hard work, and commitment to promoting a healthier, more prosperous climate for the region's citizens and businesses.

Our sincerest thanks to you all.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michael J. Mulrain".

Michael Mulrain
Chairman of the Board

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Roberta R. Schaefer".

Roberta Rubel Schaefer
President & CEO

The Year in Review



Raising Student Achievement in Worcester Public Schools (WPS)

Improving academic success has been a long-time focus of the Bureau. One way of addressing that goal might be establishing a separate high school/program for academically talented students. After many years of discussing this proposal, Mayor Joseph Petty appointed a committee of school committee members and a cross-section of Worcester residents to study the question. At the same time, The Research Bureau undertook a study of the history of Worcester's Classical High School and other schools for academically gifted students across the nation to understand its possible impact on student achievement.



Based on our research, the Bureau concluded that WPS should establish a school for academically talented students. Some of the reasons include the following:



- Students with high academic potential deserve a course of study that meets their needs, and WPS has an obligation to fully develop the capacities of gifted students no less than of less talented ones.
- By offering the opportunity for gifted students to excel, WPS will be doing its part to promote economic growth and prosperity at the local level, as well as nationally.
- Establishing a school for talented students is essential to Worcester's ability to induce professional and executive families - often the highest earners and residential taxpayers - to move here.
- There are ample examples of recruitment and outreach programs and methods that ensure that qualified students, regardless of socio-economic background, have access to schools for academically-gifted students.

The Mayor's committee completed its report outlining the pros and cons of such a school. The Worcester School Committee must now make a decision on whether to proceed with this project.

The Bureau also organized a panel to discuss some of the successes and challenges of the WPS. One of the successes has been the expansion in the number of AP courses offered, a substantial increase in the number of students taking them, and in passing the AP exams at a level deserving of college credit. This program is offered through the Mass Math and Science Initiative.

“P

lain and simple: The Worcester Regional Research Bureau does important work that matters. Through their independent, fact-based research, they provide information that's critical to the type of informed decision-making expected of and needed by city officials and business and community leaders. They never shy away from their responsibility while always keeping in mind the best interests of this great city and its residents.”

**Patrick Hughes, President and CEO
Fallon Community Health Plan**



Balancing Public Employee Benefits and Municipal Services

For about two decades, The Research Bureau has been studying the public employee benefit structure in Worcester, in the Commonwealth, and in other communities and states. Our purpose is to determine how, given the increasing cost of benefits, they can be preserved for current and future employees while continuing to provide taxpayers with the services they expect to receive for taxes paid. Over the years, we have addressed the cost, benefits, and liability of pensions and the cost and benefits of health insurance for current employees. This year, we studied OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits), primarily health insurance for municipal retirees. In order to address Worcester's \$656 million liability, the Bureau suggested the following:

- The City Manager should negotiate a reduction in the portion of premiums the City pays for retiree benefits to 50 percent (from 75%), the minimum required by law.
- The City Manager should negotiate an increase of the years of service (from 10 to 20) required for employees to qualify for health benefits in retirement.
- The City Manager should pro-rate the level of coverage based on length of service and the number of hours worked per week (similar to the pension system).
- The City Manager should increase the minimum age (from 55 to 60) at which employees become eligible for health benefits in retirement.
- The City Manager should require that workers eligible for health benefits be in the employ of the City at the time of their retirement.
- The City Manager should consider decreasing benefits for surviving spouses.

All of these suggestions require changes in state law that have been proposed by the Governor and are under consideration by the state legislature.

- The City Manager and employees should also explore and support the creation of retiree medical trusts (RMTs) that will provide tax-free health benefits for retirees in a manner similar to defined-contribution pension plans.

The Research Bureau has always produced extremely credible public policy-related information which has benefited our municipal governments by way of cost savings and greater efficiencies in delivering public services. Their background research and fact-based recommendations are a vital source of information given today's fiscal uncertainties. The Research Bureau works to inform both the private and public sectors in ways that help them develop their respective strategies. The Research Bureau has been not only useful, but has been an inspiration to community leaders both in the private and public sectors in order that more effective solutions can be conceived of and implemented.

Dr. Abraham Haddad



Promoting Economic Development

The Research Bureau continues to focus on economic development – expanding the tax base, narrowing the gap between the two tax rates, increasing the number of jobs, building on Worcester’s strengths in higher education, healthcare, and biotech/bioengineering - to have the revenue for services that will make Worcester an attractive place to live, work, and play. We have been told that the proposed slots parlor “is an economic win for the city.” The Bureau’s research questions that assertion.



- The gambling or “gaming” industry has not been known to develop the local economy beyond itself. “Casinos don’t grow skills. They don’t nurture talent.”
- Casinos seem hardly compatible with the Governor’s stated goal of improving Massachusetts residents’ skills so as to prepare them for jobs in the Commonwealth’s high-tech, engineering, bio-medical economy.
- Casinos divert consumer spending from other, more productive local enterprises.
- Much of the money generated by casino revenues goes to regions outside the local community – unlike lottery proceeds that are returned to cities and towns.

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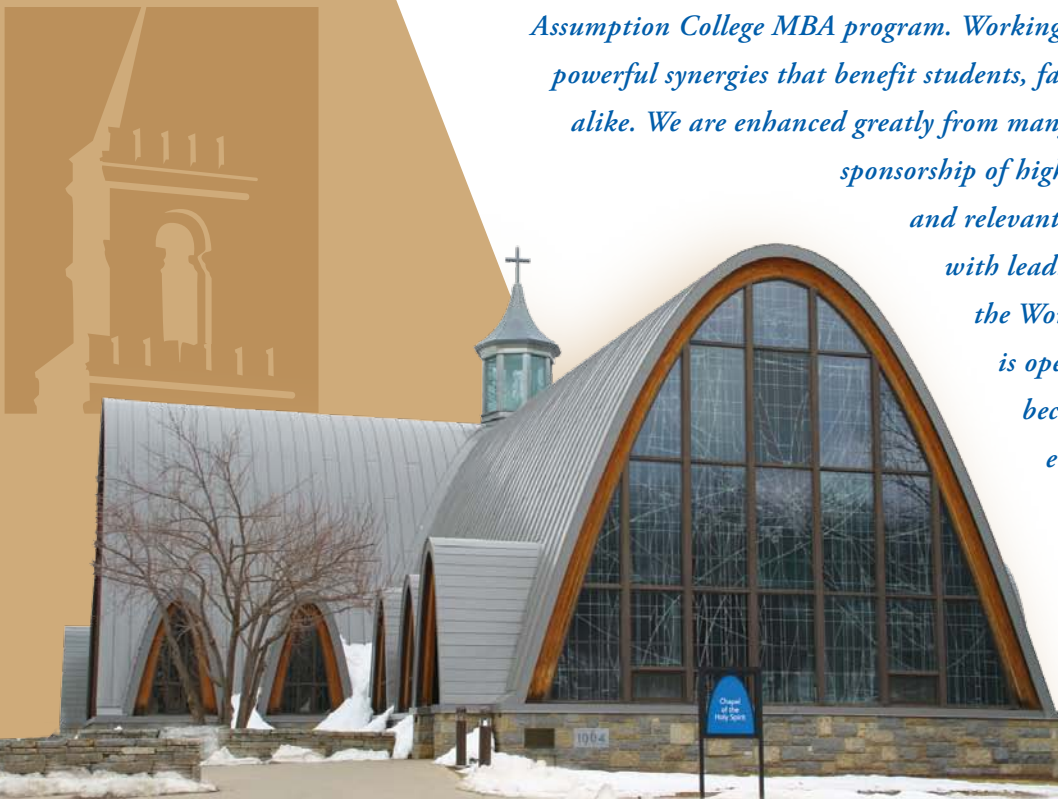
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- As the number of gaming establishments proliferates nationwide, their profits inevitably decline, as their business increasingly depends on “cannibalizing” one another. Casino revenues have been declining for the past six years, and the newest casino in Atlantic City went bankrupt a year after opening.
- Casinos disproportionately attract lower-income individuals, thus depriving the neediest families of assets that would enable them to maintain their financial independence and advance their life prospects.
- Casinos lead to an increase in the number of pathological gamblers. Rates of pathological gambling addictions doubled among populations that live within 50 miles of a casino.
- The proximity of casinos is also strongly correlated with an increase in personal bankruptcies, crime rates, and suicides.

To make Worcester more competitive for attracting economic development, The Research Bureau organized a panel of experts to discuss opportunities for entrepreneurship, investment, and real estate development. How does Worcester promote its assets and its vision as a place whose reputation and growth are tied to its investment in higher education, healthcare, and biomedical research – as well as its status as a desirable place to raise families?

It is difficult to overstate how much The Research Bureau has enriched the Assumption College MBA program. Working as true partners, we have generated powerful synergies that benefit students, faculty, and the larger community alike. We are enhanced greatly from many collaborations including co-sponsorship of high impact forums around timely and relevant topics and connecting students with leading organizations in all sectors of the Worcester community. Our program is operating on a much higher plain because of the Bureau. As a result, our entire community is well-served.

J. Bart Morrison, Ph.D.
MBA Director
Assumption College





The Research Bureau prepared the following reports:

Worcester's FY14 Budget: Making Ends Meet – May 2013

Worcester by the Numbers – Economy & Jobs – May 2013 – Sponsored by MassDevelopment

A Prescription for Retiree Health Care: How Worcester Can Vanquish its OPEB Liability While Keeping its Workforce Happy and Healthy – April 2013

Should Worcester Welcome a Slot-Machine Casino? – March 2013

Worcester's Demographic Trends: 2010 Census – February 2013

Academically Selective High Schools: Should Worcester Public Schools Have One? – December 2012

Fare Play? Regulating Worcester's Livery Vehicles and Taxis – October 2012

Worcester's FY13 Budget: Post-Recession Observations – June 2012

“With multiple facilities in Massachusetts and in particular Worcester County, we place a high value on the fact-based analysis of key issues conducted by The Research Bureau. They are consistently able to frame critical issues facing companies operating in the region, and they have been an important resource for us in both tactical and strategic decisions. Worcester County is a much stronger business environment and a more attractive option for us long-term because of their efforts which we are grateful for!”

Nicholas Smith
President, Rand-Whitney Container

May 30, 2012

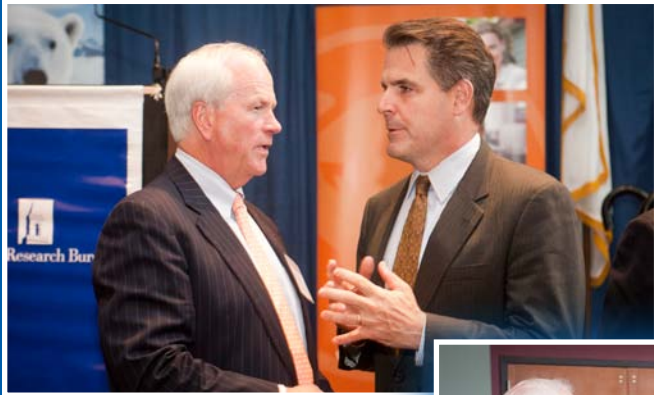
27th Annual Meeting of The Research Bureau

with Featured Speaker **Eric S. Rosengren,**
President & CEO, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston



The Research Bureau is one of the Worcester organizations that make Worcester a unique and special place. They provide very valuable and insightful information on public and municipal issues that have significant impact on and relevance to private industry. The Research Bureau also fosters collaboration and engagement between the public and private sectors. It has been providing this service to Central Massachusetts for over 25 years. We are very fortunate to have them here.

**Russell H. Vanderbaan, Vice President, Human Resources
Siemens**



Thomas S. Green Public Service Awards

Each year, The Research Bureau recognizes the “unsung heroes” in municipal government who are committed to making Worcester and nearby communities better places to live and work. The 2013 Thomas S. Green Public Service Award recipients, honored at a ceremony and reception at Assumption college on March 20, 2013, were as follows:

Jenna Alimberti
Worcester Police Department

Michael Masley, Jr.
Oxford High School

Kevin Chviruk
*Worcester Public Schools,
Custodian Services*

Patricia Ryan
Worcester Public Schools



Forums & Board of Directors Meetings

Board of Directors Meeting
September 27, 2012
Featured speaker Federal Judge Timothy S. Hillman



Can Municipalities Afford Public Employee Contracts?
October 23, 2012
Sponsored by Commerce Bank and Polar Beverages



Why Are Public Employee Unions Making Headlines?
October 23, 2012
Co-presented with Assumption College MBA Program and
Sponsored by Commerce Bank and Polar Beverages



Meeting the Bottom Line: How do Public- and Private-Sector Budgeting Differ?
March 12, 2013
Sponsored by Fallon Community Health Plan



Worcester Public Schools: Successes and Challenges
January 30, 2013
Sponsored by The Hanover Insurance Group, Inc.



Board of Directors Meeting
January 23, 2013
Featured speaker Maurice O’Connell, Vice President, CSX



Fiscal Fitness: What’s the Regimen for FY14?
March 12, 2013
Sponsored by Fallon Community Health Plan

Improving Worcester’s Competitiveness for Attracting Development
May 23, 2013
Sponsored by Harvard Pilgrim Health Care



The
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Annual Meeting Speakers

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| <p>2013 Edward Glaeser, Fred and Eleanor Glimp Professor of Economics, Harvard University</p> <p>2012 Eric S. Rosengren, President & CEO, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston</p> <p>2011 Senator Scott Brown</p> <p>2010 Lisa A. Mancini, Senior Vice President, CSX Corporation</p> <p>2009 Amity Shlaes, Bloomberg News Columnist, Political Economist</p> <p>2008 John W. Rowe, Chairman, President & CEO, Exelon Corporation</p> <p>2007 Dr. Thomas Payzant, former Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools and senior lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education</p> <p>2006 Dr. David Driscoll, Commissioner of Education, Commonwealth of Massachusetts</p> <p>2005 Tamar Jacoby, Author and Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute</p> <p>2004 John Gannon, Staff Director, U.S. House of Representatives, Select Committee on Homeland Security</p> <p>2003 Governor Mitt Romney, Commonwealth of Massachusetts</p> <p>2002 Fred Siegel, Professor of History, The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, New York City, and Senior Fellow, Progressive Policy Institute</p> <p>2001 Heather MacDonald, Senior Fellow, The Manhattan Institute</p> | <p>2000 Rev. Dr. Floyd H. Flake, Senior Pastor, Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church and former U.S. Representative to Congress</p> <p>1999 Howard Husock, Director of Case Studies in Public Policy and Management, Kennedy School, Harvard University</p> <p>1998 Myron Magnet, Editor, City Journal</p> <p>1997 Thomas Birmingham, Senate President, Commonwealth of Massachusetts</p> <p>1996 Glenn C. Loury, Professor of Economics, Boston University</p> <p>1995 Peter Harkness, Editor and Publisher of Governing</p> <p>1994 James Q. Wilson, Author and Professor of Political Science, UCLA</p> <p>1993 Robert Poole, President, Reason Foundation</p> <p>1992 William Hudnut, former Mayor of Indianapolis</p> <p>1991 David P. Forsberg, Secretary, Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Commonwealth of Massachusetts</p> <p>1990 Bruce Carnes, Director of Planning and Budget, Office of National Drug Control Policy</p> <p>1989 Edward J. Logue, CEO, Logue Boston, former Director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority</p> <p>1988 Raymond Flynn, Mayor of Boston</p> <p>1987 William Bulger, Senate President, Commonwealth of Massachusetts</p> <p>1986 Ira Jackson, Commissioner, Department of Revenue, Commonwealth of Massachusetts</p> |
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Dynamic Worcester

Report shows city remains a destination

An analysis of the 2010 Census prepared by The Research Bureau shows that Worcester continues to be a dynamic city, one that grew in size, youth, and diversity between 2000 and 2010. The report, "Worcester's Demographic Trends: 2010 Census," provides the kind of fundamental, unvarnished and unbiased data that can help inform and shape public-policy discussions.

To our eye, the report both reaffirms the historical trends that have long characterized Worcester as a gateway city of immigrants in a nation of immigrants, while highlighting some challenges that must be met.

The first and best news is that Worcester's population grew by 4.9 percent over the decade ending in 2010, to 181,045 people. Any discussion of urban life must begin with the fact that it takes people — residents, whether homeowners or renters, business owners, white- and blue-collar workers, shopkeepers, artists, visionaries and even a few hangers-on — to provide a city with the human capital it needs.

In that respect, Worcester compares very favorably to many other mid-sized U.S. cities, such as Albany, Hartford, and Portland, whose growth was more modest, and others, including Syracuse, Grand Rapids, and Day-

ton, who lost population.

In short, people from elsewhere continue to find Worcester an attractive destination. Immigrants continue to lead the way to the Heart of the Commonwealth. Those constituting at least 5 percent of the city's population hail from Brazil (9.63 percent), Vietnam (9.51 percent), Ghana (8.64 percent), the Dominican Republic (7.15 percent), and Albania (5.28 percent). Look around Worcester's neighborhoods: The shop signs and churches, the aromas wafting from restaurants and clubs, the faces and the voices — all speak of the economic and social impact of immigrants and send a message that Worcester is alive, well, and open to the world.

Those arrivals also present challenges, including a sharp increase in linguistic isolation, defined as households where everyone age 14 or older has at least some difficulty speaking English. This matters, because linguistic integration is key to economic progress. Younger immigrants who grow up here will acquire English more readily. Getting their parents and even their grandparents to learn more English would, however, expand their social and economic opportunities and build a greater sense of community.

Fortunately, Worcester is well-

equipped with the kinds of social-service agencies and educational institutions that can help meet the need. But, as the study shows, greater focus is needed to ensure that English fulfills the unifying role it has long played in the city.

By age, Worcester remains young relative to other places. About a quarter of residents are between 20 and 34, the third largest total of any city in New England. That, too, represents great potential for the future, provided those young people can obtain the education and skill training they need. Again, the city has the institutions it needs, even though matching people to skills and jobs remains a challenge here, as it is across the nation.

Worcester has long since emerged from the demographic slump it endured between 1960 and 1980. Thirty and more years on, our city continues to grow and change. By helping to clarify who constitutes Worcester and what they need, The Research Bureau has with this report once more pointed the way to a bright future for the city.

The full report is available at www.wrrb.org

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We view our commitment as a leadership sponsor of The Research Bureau as a way to say thank you to bureau staff members and board of directors for their dedication to the long-term, well-being of our community.



Ralph D. Crowley, Jr.
President and CEO
Polar Beverages



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Worcester Regional Research Bureau
500 Salisbury St.
Worcester, MA 01609
508-799-7169

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