





# Commerce Bank Congratulates The Research Bureau on 30 Years of Outstanding Work.

Commerce Bank is proud to be this year's Presenting Sponsor of The Research Bureau's 30th Annual Meeting. This important milestone reflects The Research Bureau's efforts and solidifies its position as a leading source of information for government, business and society.

Like The Research Bureau, Commerce Bank has a strong commitment to the communities we serve. From volunteering time to investing in neighborhoods, our employees believe in building a better future, and we are proud to support The Research Bureau for 30 years of outstanding work.

Since our founding in 1955, Commerce Bank has become one of the largest independent banking companies in the region. And as we continue to grow, we remain a strong, local bank committed to supporting the needs of the people and businesses we serve through our adherence to core principles and our ability to deliver the innovative products, services and capabilities our customers need and deserve.

Again, I would like to congratulate The Research Bureau on 30 years of outstanding work and dedication to researching public policy.

Brian W. Thompson

President and Chief Executive Officer Commerce Bank



# CHAIR OF THE BOARD AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Dear Friends of The Research Bureau:

Thirty years ago, the City of Worcester government adopted a new Charter and hired a new City Manager. While municipal resources were in high demand to address significant social and economic change, the municipal budget labored under the limitations of the Commonwealth's Proposition 2½ and the decline in Federal funding for cities. The Research Bureau's establishment in 1985 represented a joint commitment by the civic and business communities to maintaining smart, efficient government focused on promoting sustainable economic growth, educating our children, protecting our residents, and maintaining our infrastructure.

In our initial year, The Research Bureau published three major reports, the first focused on the loss of Federal General Revenue Sharing Funds (one part of the Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction law), the second focused on revenue and expenditure trends highlighting an increasing dependence on State aid, and the third focused on the long-term needs, and costs, of the City's water and sewer system. A special report was prepared at the request of the City Council's Housing Committee on the arguments for and against rent control. The Bureau held one forum that first year, entitled "The Financial Plight of our Cities."

The Research Bureau has expanded its focus from the City of Worcester to the region, but often the same issues consume local leadership in both urban and rural communities. Continued stress on local budgets from a challenging tax structure, unpredictable State and Federal aid, and increasing operational costs and post-employment obligations mean an ongoing desperate need to prioritize efforts and identify efficient, cost-effective delivery of government services.

The Research Bureau's mission – conducting independent, non-partisan research and analysis of public policy issues to promote informed public debate and decision-making – remains as necessary today as it was in 1985. A new City Manager balances public priorities with limited resources. The City and the region seek to tap economic growth by redeveloping public and private property, providing business and real estate incentives, and promoting the arts, culture, and tourism. Communities look to strengthen partnerships with neighborhood stakeholders to create jobs and develop affordable workforce housing. Greater Worcester municipalities struggle to increase funding for public education without negatively impacting local services. The City of Worcester works to curb violence in schools and neighborhoods and address the issues of substance abuse.

The Research Bureau has a well-earned reputation as a respected advocate of responsible government and a resource for financially-challenged municipalities seeking public policy guidance. For thirty years, The Research Bureau has worked to protect the public interest in Greater Worcester by identifying issues, investigating impacts, and

educating the public and government officials about opportunities and best practices. The Bureau is committed to building a factual basis for discussion. The *Worcester Almanac* and our reports and briefs lay a foundation for discussion about managing municipal resources and assets and prioritizing municipal activities. We remain a strong voice for excellence in government and in public policy.

Many thanks to all who contribute to The Research Bureau's success. The diversity of our support reflects the continued generosity of Worcester's civic, business, and philanthropic communities. The dedication of our Board of Directors, past and present, who have given time, money, and insight, shaped our storied history and ensure a strong future. We are deeply grateful to the corporate and foundation communities, as well as individual supporters, who provide valuable resources to further good public policy in Worcester. We thank our friends in government and the non-profit sector who offer invaluable insights into issues and opportunities. Finally, we thank the dedicated staff of The Research Bureau for their enthusiasm, diligence, and commitment to building a healthy and successful region. Sadly, we highlight the passing of our good friend Christo Cocaine of Table Talk Pies. A member of The Research Board for two decades, Chris was stalwart in his support of our efforts. He is a clear example of the civic pride that runs through Worcester's corporate leadership.

In our inaugural annual report in 1986, then President George W. Tetler, III wrote "A solid foundation for the Bureau has been laid and its future is promising. I hope you will join us in fulfilling the Bureau's promise in the years to come." Like The Research Bureau's original mission, these words remain so very true today.

On behalf of The Research Bureau, we thank you for your continued friendship and support and look forward to your partnership in the decades to come.



Sincerely,

Karen E. Suffy

Karen E. Duffy

Chair of the Board



Turothy / M Lowthy

Timothy J. McGourthy

Executive Director

# The Year In Review 30 PEARLS OF WISDOM



### A THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY is

traditionally celebrated by the gift of pearls. As evident from our many reports and forums, The Research Bureau has been providing pearls of

wisdom to the Greater Worcester community every year for thirty years. From an early focus on public finance, the Bureau has expanded its purview to include best practices in public administration, education, economic development, safety, and community engagement. Like the oyster crafting a gem, The Research Bureau identifies nagging issues, isolates facts, wraps them in layers of analysis, and puts forth for consideration rare insights into the issues of the day.

The past year has been no exception. Since our last annual meeting in 2014, The Research Bureau has been actively engaged on a broad agenda. We have reconnected with civic, business, and political leadership to identify challenges and develop new areas for consideration. We have built new partnerships, working collaboratively with local and regional entities to highlight pressing public concerns. We have expanded our influence, embracing new formats and technologies to engage new audiences. We are working diligently to fashion new pearls for The Research Bureau's already long strand.

During this time, we have embraced our 30th Anniversary with enthusiasm. Since our founding in 1985, The Research Bureau has held over 200 public forums and released more than 225 reports and briefs. These efforts, supported by business, civic, and philanthropic partners, have led discussion locally on key issues of municipal importance. In recognition of these accomplishments, we hosted a reception at the Worcester Art Museum in honor of our Board, highlighting the long history and bright future of the organization. We have also worked with our college and university partners to host the Fairman Cowan Collegiate Lecture Series – an opportunity to highlight the groundbreaking research underway on local campuses. From indexing the Worcester economy to understanding global migrations, the twelve higher education

institutions in Greater Worcester have each partnered with The Research Bureau to showcase their valuable contributions to world knowledge and to Worcester's role as an intellectual capital.

Our core work, however, remains and The Research Bureau continues to inform key issues.

### **Public Finance**

In 2014, The Research Bureau initiated its "Breaking Down the Budget" series, to annually highlight the operating and capital budgets of the new fiscal year and review the financial strength of the City. In conjunction with the Worcester Education Collaborative, the Bureau held a series of forums including the Mayor, City Manager, and Superintendent of Schools among others to improve public understanding of the Massachusetts Chapter 70 funding formula and its impact on State and Local budgets. The panel focused on the challenge of balancing the needs of an urban education system with the demands of an active municipality. In anticipation of the Worcester City Council's discussion of the topic, we also released a Bureau Brief on Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) and the staggering (and increasing) \$727 million liability the City currently faces.

## Public Administration

2014 was an important year for the City of Worcester as a permanent City Manager was identified and appointed. The Research Bureau released a Bureau Brief highlighting best practices from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and hosted a discussion with three experienced City Managers from the Massachusetts Gateway Cities of Chelsea, Lowell, and Worcester. The Bureau also offered briefs outlining the process for modifying the City Charter and explored non-profit exemptions to municipal taxation and local regulation. In recognition of The Research Bureau's important work, the Bureau's Executive Director was appointed to Governor Charlie Baker's

The Aftermath of Proposition 2½:
Shrinking Revenues and Increased Dependence

Real Estate Transfer Tax: The Case for and Against

1987

Is There Still a Housing Problem in Worcester? Getting In and
Out of Worcester:
Our Regional
Transportation
Network

1989

Worcester City Hospital, Part I & Part II

1990

Transition Team focusing on government best practices. The Research Bureau has also worked closely with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) on the Central Massachusetts DataCommon initiative – an effort to build an online, public repository for data on Worcester and the region to improve the understanding and administration of local government objectives.

# Economic Development & The Changing City

Economic development has been an important component of The Research Bureau's mission for decades. As the national and regional economies improve, The Research Bureau has highlighted key opportunities for Greater Worcester over the last year. The Worcester Almanac: 2015 included significant information about the strength and growth of the Central Massachusetts economy. The Research Bureau has been vocal on embracing the potential of new, diverse populations and the City's local college-based talent. The Fall 2014 Bureau Brief on demographic change, together with the Worcester Almanac, are frequently cited in the media and in conversations about Worcester's population changes. As a result, the City asked The Research Bureau to provide the factual basis for the City's Dialogues on Race, resulting in four summaries focused on representative government, economic development, youth and education, and public safety. The Bureau also explored the impact of immigrants and refugees on the City, including their economic prospects. The Research Bureau's report Central Massachusetts Talent Retention Project: A Survey

of the Class of 2014 was widely referenced in the media and the associated discussion forum at Assumption College was very well attended. The Research Bureau also informed the City and Worcester Redevelopment Authority urban renewal initiative, hosting a panel of leading experts on local urban renewal authority from across the Commonwealth. The Research Bureau's Executive Director was invited to serve on the Governor's Economic Development Advisory Council, charged with crafting an economic development plan for the Commonwealth.

# Citizen Engagement

A disturbing trend nationally is the decline of civic engagement. The Research Bureau explored that concern in Worcester with its report Don't Boo. Just Remember to Vote. A healthy government requires an active electorate. In the 2013 municipal election, however, 86% of registered voters in Worcester failed to vote. The Bureau makes recommendations to increase voter turnout, build civic awareness, promote community understanding with public education, and explore the inclusion of residents through the potential of neighborhood councils and participatory budgeting. Engagement requires a broad-based community approach. Worcester, as the center of a region and host to diverse interests and organizations, needs many partners to engage. The Bureau held a series of forums with educational institutions, locally-based businesses, and multi-national businesses to discuss the role of private entities - like schools, colleges, universities, and corporations – in contributing to community life in Worcester. The Research Bureau brought

For those who want to get a good snapshot of where Worcester stands today, in a variety of areas, check out "Worcester Almanac: 2015," a first-of-its-kind effort by The Research Bureau to capture key data points about the city and the region.

In releasing the almanac last week, The Research Bureau said the compendium includes the most recent information available on government, demographics, the economy, education, public safety and more, from the best available sources. The almanac shines a light on the many positives in Worcester and provides some insight on what issues may lie ahead.

Worcester Telegram & Gazette 2/15/15

1991 1992 1993 1993 1994 1994

Thinking About School Choice

Recycling in Worcester: Some Proposals to Implement the Mandate The Education Reform Act of 1993

Union Station and Washington Square: What is the Scope of the Project?

# The Year In Review 30 PEARLS OF WISDOM (continued)

"The commitment to strong communities, strong communities and strong businesses, goes together," said Bradley H. Johnson, Vice President and General Manager of Abrasives in North America for Compagnie de Saint-Gobain, a Paris-based materials and building products company. "I don't think one can exist without the other."

Worcester Telegram & Gazette 6/9/15



members of the media together to discuss the civic responsibilities of news organizations – television, print, radio, and web-based – in coverage of City Hall and local public policy. The Bureau, in cooperation with the Worcester Business Journal, also hosted March Municipal Madness - an opportunity for residents and business leaders to select their own public priorities through a bracket-based competition like that of the NCAA basketball tournament. Questions for the 2015 Candidates for City Council and School Committee in Worcester laid out the key public policy questions for candidates and voters in advance of the Preliminary and Municipal elections. Together with the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce and in partnership with Mechanics Hall, The Research Bureau also hosted a series of debates for candidates for School Committee, Mayor, At Large City Council, and District Council. The Research Bureau also undertook efforts to expand its own engagement. The Bureau launched a new series, beginning with "Wait, wait...don't tell me it's Worcester?!?" in 2014 and "Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grade Standardized Test?" in 2015 to draw visitors to the Downtown on a summer evening and introduce residents to The Bureau, its mission, and key issues in the community in a light-hearted way.

### **Public Education**

The Research Bureau seeks to promote informed public debate and decision-making, and the foundation for that success resides in the public schools system. The Worcester Public Schools champions the creation of "productive citizens." Informed citizenry is founded in respect for

society and self-governance, and the analysis of public policy and political choice requires the ability to gather and understand facts. In addition to its work with the Worcester Education Collaborative on public education funding, The Research Bureau has continued its examination of the public schools with its review of the Common Core State Standards, hosting a forum at Worcester Technical High School that included Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary & Secondary Education Mitchell Chester and Superintendent of Schools Melinda Boone among others. The panel highlighted the importance of the new standards, which were incorporated into the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in 2011. The discussion also focused on the opportunities and challenges facing the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a possible replacement for the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS).

"MARCH (MUNICIPAL) MADNESS: It's March, which means Worcesterites will be filling out their tournament brackets. No, not the NCAA tournament the March Municipal Madness tournament, sponsored by the Worcester Regional Research Bureau. The tournament pits different government initiatives and policies against each other, and residents can pick their favorites. Unfortunately, the winning policy will not actually become law – hot button topics like 'increase police presence in schools' and 'establish a single tax rate' are available as choices - but five winners will receive tickets to the WRRB's 30th anniversary meeting."

Worcester Magazine 3/19/15

EMS in Worcester: Who Should Provide It?

Facilitating the Cleanup and Development of Worcester's Brownfields

Farewell to **Worcester County** Government

1998

EFECTOR

### **Public Health**

The Research Bureau expanded its review into public health in the face of rising public concern regarding Ebola in the Fall of 2014. While calls for border closings and the imposition of quarantines dominated newscasts, Worcester lacked good information about the likelihood of outbreak and its own

mission, and look forward to celebrating many more events with you in the future.

potential response capacity. With the generous support of the DCU Center, The Bureau hosted a panel discussion with representatives of Worcester's medical community, highlighting the region's capacity to address a local Ebola outbreak and the impact of the disease on local residents with ties to West Africa.

# WHILE WE CELEBRATE THE RESEARCH BUREAU'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY, we recognize that we are a rare institution, reflective of a unique city. Our anniversary is really about the commitment of the community to support and promote good government and healthy public debate. Pearls are rare and hence valuable. We treasure our existence, are committed to continuing our



With Special Thanks to Worcester Business Journal.

1999 2000 2001 2003 Promoting **Charter Schools:** Worcester New England's Regional

Other College Town

Economic Development

The Use of Project Labor Agreements on **Public Construction** Projects: The Case for and Against

**Regional Airport:** Will It Take Off?

Their Future in Massachusetts

# REPORTS AND BRIEFS

# Since our last annual report, The Research Bureau prepared the following reports and briefs:

Breaking Down the Budget: Questions to Consider, City of Worcester & Worcester Public Schools FY15

Central Massachusetts Talent Retention Project: A Survey of the Class of 2014

Annual Meeting Notes from The Research Bureau

Bureau Brief: Urban Renewal

Bureau Brief: Charting Worcester's Course

Bureau Brief: The Changing City – Starting a Conversation

Worcester Almanac: 2015

Bureau Brief: Non-Profits and Municipal Authority

Bureau Brief: The Role of Media in Civic Life

Bureau Brief: Worcester's Unfunded OPEB Liability 2015: \$727,823,149

Don't Boo. Just Remember to Vote. Civic Engagement in the City of Worcester

Bureau Brief: Immigrants & Refugees in Worcester

Bureau Brief: Community Dialogues on Race - Representative Government

Bureau Brief: Community Dialogues on Race - Public Safety

Bureau Brief: Community Dialogues on Race - Youth & Education

Bureau Brief: Community Dialogues on Race - Economic Development

Bureau Brief: Flag Etiquette

Breaking Down the Budget: Questions to Consider, City of Worcester &

Worcester Public Schools FY16

Questions for the 2015 Candidates for City Council and School Committee in Worcester



Are You Smarter than a 5th Grade Standardized Test?



Worcester Economic Index Assumption College

2004

2005

2006

2007

2008

Will PILOTs Fly in Worcester? Taxing Nonprofits and Other Options Condition Serious, Prognosis Uncertain: The Impact of Municipal Employee Health Insurance in Massachusetts

The Education Gender Gap: Why are boys not making the grade? Benchmarking Municipal Finance in Worcester: Factors Affecting the City's Bond Rating Where Have all the Bidders Gone?: The Impact of "Responsibility" on Public Construction

# FORUMS AND EVENTS

# The Research Bureau organized the following forums and events:

- Wait, Wait... Don't Tell Me It's Worcester!?!?
- Urban Renewal: An Owner's Manual
- Degrees of Separation: Retaining College Graduates in Greater Worcester
- Funding Public Education Part I: Chapter 70 and Local Education Funding
- Off Campus: Institutional Neighbors in the Worcester Community
- Public Health in the News: Central Massachusetts and the Ebola Crisis
- Funding Public Education Part II: Balancing the Needs of Schools and the Needs of the City
- Digging into the Common Core: Education Standards and Testing in Massachusetts
- Worcester Economic Index Assumption College
- Impact of Domestic Violence Anna Maria College
- Video Gaming Industry Becker College
- Research that Impacts Our Community Clark University
- The Role of Media in Civic Life
- Assessing Technology: What's New, What's Not. College of the Holy Cross
- Acting Locally: Central Massachusetts Businesses & Community Engagement
- Thinking Globally: National/Multinational Corporations & Central Massachusetts
- Pharmacogenomics & Bioinformatics MCPHS University
- Millennial Workforce Readiness Nichols College
- Are You Smarter than a 5th Grade Standardized Test?
- Public Policy and Race Relations Quinsigamond Community College
- Regeneration Medicine Tufts University, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine

"Massachusetts needs
Worcester to be successful,"
Frederick H. Eppinger, Jr. of
Hanover Insurance Group
told a small crowd assembled
at the DCU Center. "You
can't put everybody in
Cambridge."

The President and Chief
Executive Officer of the
Worcester-based insurance
giant was one of four speakers
Wednesday at "Acting
Locally," a discussion
on business-community
engagement hosted by The
Research Bureau.

Worcester Telegram & Gazette 6/17/15



Acting Locally: Central Massachusetts Businesses & Community Engagement



Impact of Domestic Violence Anna Maria College



Video Gaming Industry Becker College

2009

2010

2011

2012

Municipal Elections in Worcester 2009:

Questions for the Candidates

Top Ideas for Revitalizing Cities Public Employment Pensions: Is the Current System Sustainable?

Fare Play? Regulating Worcester's Livery Vehicles and Taxis

# FORUMS AND EVENTS

Ms. (Dianne) Williamson lamented, "I was told there wouldn't be any sports questions," after getting a few wrong, including mixing up Boston University and Boston College and forgetting about the Worcester Tornadoes repossession debacle. But she managed to zing Worcester Regional Airport Director Andy Davis as he came up to answer a few questions ("I'm surprised you could get away, with all those... planes flying out of Worcester Airport.")

Worcester Telegram & Gazette, 7/18/14, describing The Research Bureau's summer event "Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me It's Worcester!?!"



Wait, Wait... Don't Tell Me It's Worcester!?!?



Research that Impacts Our Community Clark University



Public Health in the News: Central Massachusetts and the Ebola Crisis



Millennial Workforce Readiness Nichols College



Thinking Globally: National/Multinational Corporations & Central Massachusetts



Funding Public Education – Part I: Chapter 70 and Local Education Funding



Assessing Technology: What's New, What's Not. College of the Holy Cross



Digging into the Common Core: Education Standards and Testing in Massachusetts



Off Campus: Institutional Neighbors in the Worcester Community



Urban Renewal: An Owner's Manual



Degrees of Separation: Retaining College Graduates in Greater Worcester



JUNE 5, 2014 DCU CENTER WORCESTER, MA





Bernard F. Lynch Founder, Community Paradigm Associates, LLC



Michael V. O'Brien Executive Vice President, Winn Development















"It would be easy to give in to the weather and to conclude that Worcester is a bleak winter wasteland with nothing going on but the sounds of snow-removal operations that will last for what feels like 30 more years.

But a far brighter light has been shining on Worcester for literally the past 30 years. It's The Research Bureau, and when it comes to gaining insight into the best minds the city has to offer, on topics in politics, economics, health, science, and much more, it's hard to top the remarkable output that The Bureau offers each year."









# 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 2015 Thomas S. Green Public Service Award recipients, honored at a ceremony and reception at Assumption College on March 24, 2015, were as follows:

### Michael Ferguson

City of Worcester Department of Public Works and Parks

### Pamela Callahan

City of Worcester Department of Human Resources

### Patricia Bruchmann

City of Worcester Department of Public Health

### James Robbins

Town of Westborough Planning Department

### Michael Lyons

Worcester Public Schools



# **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS**

# March 12, 2015

Featured speaker **Edward M. Augustus, Jr.** *Worcester City Manager* 

# **September 23, 2014**

Featured speaker **Gary Gemme** 

Worcester Police Chief







# ANNUAL MEETING Speakers

2015	Jonathan Kraft, President, The Kraft Group	2001	Heather MacDonald, Senior Fellow,
2014	Jay Ash, City Manager of Chelsea		The Manhattan Institute Rev. Dr. Floyd H. Flake, Senior Pastor, Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church and former U.S. Representative to Congress Howard Husock, Director of Case Studies in Public Policy and Management, Kennedy School, Harvard University Myron Magnet, Editor, City Journal Thomas Birmingham, Senate President, Commonwealth of Massachusetts
	Bernard F. Lynch, Founder, Community Paradigm Associates, LLC	2000	
	Michael V. O'Brien, Executive Vice President, Winn Development	1999	
2013	Edward Glaeser, Fred and Eleanor Glimp Professor of Economics, Harvard University	1998	
2012	Eric S. Rosengren, President & CEO, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston	1997	
2011	Senator Scott Brown	1996	Glenn C. Loury, Professor of Economics,
2010	Lisa A. Mancini, Senior Vice President,	1990	Boston University
2009	CSX Corporation Amity Shlaes, Bloomberg News Columnist,	1995	Peter Harkness, Editor and Publisher
2009	Political Economist		of Governing
2008	John W. Rowe, Chairman, President & CEO,	1994	James Q. Wilson, Author and Professor of Political Science, UCLA
	Exelon Corporation	1993	Robert Poole, President, Reason Foundation
2007	Dr. Thomas Payzant, former Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools and senior lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education	1992	William Hudnut, former Mayor of Indianapolis
		1991	David P. Forsberg, Secretary, Executive Office
2006	Dr. David Driscoll, Commissioner of Education,		of Health and Human Services, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Bruce Carnes, Director of Planning and Budget, Office of National Drug Control Policy Edward J. Logue, CEO, Logue Boston,
2005	Commonwealth of Massachusetts  Tamar Jacoby, Author and Senior Fellow at the	1990	
2004	Manhattan Institute	1989	
2004	John Gannon, Staff Director, U.S. House of Representatives,		former Director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority
	Select Committee on Homeland Security	1988	Raymond Flynn, Mayor of Boston
2003	Governor Mitt Romney,	1987	William Bulger, Senate President,
	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	1907	Commonwealth of Massachusetts
2002	Fred Siegel, Professor of History,	1986	Ira Jackson, Commissioner,
	The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, New York City, and	2,00	Department of Revenue,
	Senior Fellow, Progressive Policy Institute		Commonwealth of Massachusetts
	,		

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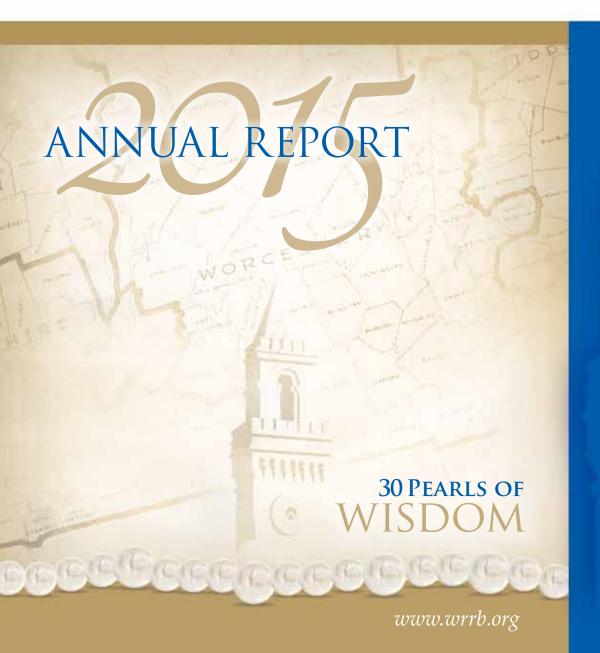
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