

TOWN OF VERNON

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Tolland County Chamber of Commerce Honors Town of Vernon with 'Corporate Citizen' Award for Nationally-Recognized Vaccination Program

(VERNON, Connecticut) – The Tolland County Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday honored the Town of Vernon with its "Corporate Citizen" award for the Town's nationally-recognized COVID-19 Vaccination Program.



Vernon Mayor Dan Champagne, holding certificate, stands with members of the Town of Vernon Vaccination Team and Tolland County Chamber of Commerce officials.

The Chamber's Chris Wardrop described the evolution of the Town's vaccination program, from small-scale clinics in churches to large clinics at the Vernon Senior Center and then mobile clinics that went into the community to reach people who had a difficult time accessing COVID-19 vaccine.

“And then they continued to innovate and moved to something very relevant to the chamber – their *Getting Vax to Business* campaign,” Wardrop said. “Vernon officials spent so much time and energy with their colleagues coming up with creative and effective ideas that helped to save many lives.”

Mayor Dan Champagne accepted the award on behalf of the Town and praised the staff who carried through on his directive to expand Vernon’s pandemic response plan to include a community vaccination component. “This was a great team effort,” Mayor Champagne said. “From the very beginning, we looked at the problem and we came up with solutions. I have a great team.”

The Town of Vernon joined with Dr. Daksh Rampal of Priority Urgent Care, Vernon Public Schools, the North Central District Health Department, the Connecticut Department of Public Health and an army of volunteers to form its vaccination team. The team engaged churches, businesses and other community institutions to deliver vaccine to those who wanted to receive it, Mayor Champagne said. “We did everything we could to help.”

Thousands of doses of vaccine were delivered to the community through Vernon’s vaccination efforts.

The Town of Vernon’s Community Vaccination program was recognized by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for its work to reach at-risk and underserved communities. The effort to reach underserved populations was also featured on the NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt. In addition, the Town of Vernon in partnership with the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities led a unique statewide program to administer vaccine to people with developmental disabilities.

The Chamber honored the Town of Vernon at its 65th Annual Meeting at the Lodge at Crandall’s Park in Tolland.

Several Vernon businesses were honored by the Chamber Wednesday, including:

- Dipen Shah, the owner of three Subway stores and Lafayette Wine & Liquors, was honored as a “Corporate Citizen” for his community involvement and work to build teamwork and collaboration on the Rockville Downtown Association board.
- Economy Express Car Wash owner Gerry Gallo was honored for “Economic Development” for building a thriving business that has enhanced the community at a former gas station site.
- Jessica Mattson and Diane Cyr of Get Fresh Laundromat were honored for “Economic Development” for investing in downtown Vernon and providing a much-needed service to the community.
- Primitive Renditions and owner Lisa Stevenson were honored as “Best New Business.” The store relocated to the Shops at 30 earlier this year.

About the Town of Vernon

The Town of Vernon is a celebrated place to live, work and visit. From its beautiful parks and lakes, to its vast trails and historic homes and buildings, Vernon is a resilient and thriving community that promotes the health and wellbeing of its residents and values the natural environment. With a resident population of approximately 30,000 and occupying 18.03 square miles, Vernon combines a balanced appreciation of history, and a strong economic base for growth, both residential and commercial.

Located 15 minutes east of the Connecticut capital of Hartford, and 25 miles from the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, the Town of Vernon is strategically located in “New England’s Knowledge Corridor” with close proximity to some of the top colleges and universities in the country. Designated a certified Sustainable Community, the Town of Vernon offers a wide range of benefits and services to its residents. The Town of Vernon is a full-service municipality that practices a management philosophy of continuous quality improvement. To learn more about the Town of Vernon, please call (860) 870- 3670 or visit www.vernon-ct.gov.

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