

## INNOVATION VALLEY (ivalley.org)

# When two pioneers partnered in Oasis business continuity emerged

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INNOVATION VALLEY/PATRIOT COLUMNIST

The future of Haverhill's downtown is at a critical juncture. Hundreds of new residential units, mostly apartments, are complementing longstanding stylish restaurants and shops in the downtown. Yet, there are still missing pieces to the puzzle that must be solved before critical mass can be reached in the downtown.

A market analysis and strategic action plan for downtown Haverhill was completed by Gruen Gruen + Associates, urban economists and market strategists from Chicago, in June 2007 for the City of Haverhill. It cited these two primary disadvantages amongst others currently in downtown Haverhill: "(downtown) currently lacks a concentration of either major office space users or an established base of market rate residential units." The report is available at [http://www.ci.haverhill.ma.us/departments/econ/gruen\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.ci.haverhill.ma.us/departments/econ/gruen_final_report.pdf).

It is obvious that you need both market rate residential units and major office space users, as well as a variety of other recommendations offered in the Gruen Report for Haverhill's downtown to succeed in a sustainable manner. For this article, we focus on creating jobs with pizzazz for knowledge workers and the trades in the Downtown.

Two downtown pioneers are not waiting for help; they are pressing forward to help draw the next generation of jobs as both a feeder to Haverhill's industrial parks and an incentive to encourage the future work force to live in downtown Haverhill.

Bill Nofsker's Building

William "Bill" Nofsker of Kifor Development Co., who developed and manages the Burgess-Lang Professional Center at 143-145 Essex Street (<http://kifordevelopment.com/>), agrees that jobs are a key ingredient for the downtown to realize its potential, "The Burgess-Lang Professional Center will be an oasis among the residential developments in the downtown because people need a place to work."

Mr. Nofsker's versatile, customizable and "best value per square foot space in the Merrimack Valley" is now being marketed as professional office and data center space for the service and emerging technology industries, in addition to light manufacturing, distribution and

warehousing. An example of a hot emerging technology industry is renewable energy, which offers the hope of creating jobs for both knowledge workers and the trades. Both our newly elected President and our Governor are pushing renewable energy. Lawrence and other surrounding cities has been successful in this market

Community involvement and business development in the downtown have been Mr. Nofsker's cornerstones since he arrived in Haverhill more than two decades ago.

Dave Spaulding's Business

Enter Dave Spaulding, President of USAi.net (<http://www.usai.net/>), an outgrowth of MVA.NET, which he started in the late 1990s as a Mom and Pop dial-up Internet Service Provider (ISP) based on Washington Street in downtown Haverhill. During the .com bubble, then bust, the industry analysts predicted that the Mom and Pop ISPs would get swallowed up by the big regional and global ISPs. Not so in Mr. Spaulding's plan.

In fact, he has transformed his business into a regional wireless Internet services provider, specializing in high availability for customers that need to be "always-on." Key regional customers include the Boston Public Library network, Bay State College, Gordon College and Independence Investments. USAi.net provides primary and backup Internet services for the entire Boston Public Library network, which entails 28 buildings.

Mr. Spaulding has also been synonymous with community commitment and business development in the downtown. When he first started his business, the downtown did not have an Internet infrastructure, only an outdated telephone infrastructure. He teamed with the Telephone company to install the first broadband infrastructure in the downtown. He has also been an active participant in the community, again teaming with the Telephone company in the 1990s to provide free computers and free internet access for inner city youth in Haverhill.

When Dave Met Bill – Business Continuity Emerged

Mr. Spaulding's success led to a need for a larger facility. He said, "We recently moved our nine employees from 2000

Top right photo: One Boston Place located at the north end of the Boston Financial District is one of our primary wireless nodes. From there we provide wireless access to The Boston Public Libraries, Bay State College, Gordon College and many others. Photo on the left is the

installation of the link from Boston place to Gordon College. This link provides the school with 150mb of Internet connectivity. Photo on the bottom is the Gordon campus. To the left of Chase Hall just above the tree line is the receiver aimed back at Boston.

square feet of office and data center space on Washington Street to 6000 square feet of space in Mr. Nofsker's Burgess-Lang Professional Center. USAi.net broadcasts from more than 30 locations across Boston. Our new facility includes an office and a data center, but it also includes space dedicated to our next business endeavor, which is business continuity or disaster recovery."

USAi.net is now ready to provide business continuity to companies of all sizes. Since 9/11, business continuity has become a national priority. Companies need to quickly recover and restore critical business functions that have been interrupted after a disaster or extended disruption. This includes virtual restoration of a company's Information Technology capability and a Hot Standby office for workers at a remote location.

This capability will be provided in the Burgess-Lang Professional Center in Haverhill and another facility in Westminster, MA. If there is a disaster at a company in Boston, Route 128, or anywhere in the region, their customer's critical business functions will switchover to USAi.net's facility and the workforce will re-locate there. Mr. Spaulding is already proposing his new services to a consortium of Colleges and Universities.

According to Bill Nofsker, "This is a business strategy whose time has come." In fact, Mr. Nofsker likes the idea so much he has agreed to partner with Mr. Spaulding on future endeavors, if USAi.net succeeds in the disaster recovery market. It seems that the two pioneers are at it again!



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The Innovation Valley initiative seeks to help stimulate economic growth and quality-of-life enhancements in the Merrimack Valley. Every month we will report on innovative businesses, practices, and ideas that are helping to make Merrimack Valley the place to be. Look for our article in print media and online at [www.ivalley.org](http://www.ivalley.org).

## NECC makes changes toward climate change neutrality

Ride sharing, buying Energy Star rated equipment, not mowing designated areas on the Haverhill campus, contracting with an energy resource firm, and expanding recycling efforts are just a few of the measures being taken at Northern Essex Community College to reduce its carbon footprint on the planet as recommended by the NECC Environmental Impact and Sustainability Committee (EISC).

The EISC, created in September of 2007 shortly after NECC President David Hartleb signed the President's Climate Commitment, has accomplished a number of its goals in its mission to reduce greenhouse gasses.

In 2007, EISC estimated the college produced 29,000,000 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub> from electric and natural gas usage, student, faculty, and staff commutes to work and class and plane travel for conferences and meetings.

In an effort to encourage car pooling, several parking spaces have been set

aside in the main parking lot on both the Haverhill and Franklin Street campuses in Lawrence.

College-wide, all new appliances, computers, and monitors will be Energy Star rated.

In addition, two acres of land located between the Technology Center and the Sport and Fitness Center on the Haverhill campus will not be mowed and will be allowed to return to its natural state - which means the college will not produce 2,050 lbs. of

When construction begins on the new Allied Health and Technology Building in Lawrence, it will meet at least the minimum of the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Silver standard.

The college has made other changes as well. While the college has recycled its

paper and cardboard for years, it has expanded its efforts and now recycles

plastic, cans, and glass containers, with 10 new collection containers located throughout the campus.

Furthermore, NECC has also entered into a contract with EnerNoc, an energy savings resource firm that in turn contracts with National Grid to monitor the consumption of energy in the northeast. When a brown out or grid overload is predicted,

NECC is asked to reduce its electricity consumption for a prescribed period. The college benefits by receiving a reduction in the electric rate.



With support from state and federal grants, NECC is developing innovative science programs at the K-12 and the associate degree levels to encourage interest in science/IT careers and to promote sustainability.

A new Green Technology course has been approved by academic affairs and will be offered in the spring of 2009.

The EISC's goals for 2009 include creating a target date for achieving climate neutrality and deciding upon the actions the college will take to accomplish this, that may include:

Purchasing "renewable energy credits", seeking funds for solar and wind turbine technology, initiating energy smart policies, increasing MVRTA busses to the college, improving NECC shuttle runs, and conducting an energy audit.

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