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STIMULUS **SNAPSHOTS**

Highlights From the Past Two Years

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Two years ago, Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to provide much-needed resources to strengthen our economy during the worst recession since the Great Depression. With the help of the Recovery Act, we have invested in our long-neglected infrastructure to create jobs today and platforms for long-term growth, and in job training to prepare our workforce for the jobs of tomorrow. We have also invested in our students, supporting public education at the highest level in history despite serious budgetary challenges. And winning the national Race to the Top Competition – a Recovery Act program – has given us new tools to close the achievement gap and support classroom innovation.

We have continued to invest in health care, using increased federal Medicaid funds to ensure that our most vulnerable citizens were cared for during tough times. And with the help of the Recovery Act, we have invested in our young people, increasing access to the summer jobs and training opportunities that bring at-risk kids off the streets and onto a path to a better future. We have managed through the crisis by making the right choices and working, with optimism and effort, to strengthen job growth and expand opportunity. By responsibly investing Recovery Act funds we have supported the Massachusetts economy during tough times and helped build a better, stronger Commonwealth for us and future generations.

The Massachusetts Recovery & Reinvestment Office (MRRO) was established by Governor Deval Patrick to oversee the state's implementation of the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act which was enacted in February, 2009. The 24 projects in this book are a commemoration of the second anniversary of this stimulus program. Many of the projects in the Boston area were photographed by students of the Massachusetts College of Art and Design which collaborated with MRRO, via the Center for Art and Community Partnerships at the college, to highlight the impact of stimulus awards on programs in their area.

Please see the back page for further descriptions of these offices.

Action for Boston Community Development Graduation

At Action for Boston Community Development, an anti-poverty agency, 14 graduates completed a training course in Elder Care, one of four certification programs within the agency's New Careers initiative, which is wholly funded by stimulus grants. One of the graduates, Michelle Marshall, a single mother, said she always wanted to work with seniors and she needed a job. "This program changed me into the person I want to be," she said. Thanks to the course, Marshall got a job at the Goddard House, an assisted living center. Toni Raye, another graduate, had been laid off from the state lab and was down to the last of her savings when she heard about the course. "It was a great opportunity," she said. Melissa Shedd, a single mother of two children, agreed. "I'm building a better future for my children. Now I feel like I have hope. My kids will thank [the stimulus program] in the future," she said.

Associates for Human Services

Associates for Human Services in Taunton is an agency that provides, among other things, an Early Head Start program and an Early Intervention program, both of which received help from stimulus. Most of the families in Early Head Start are at the federal poverty level and are struggling with issues that make parenting a challenge. These are families like Kellie's, a mother of five, whose two-year old son is learning to communicate with sign language, is overcoming his fear of water and is learning to sing. "He's learning so much and it's because of Early Head Start. It's not easy to be low income. But I get so much support from Early Head Start," she said. The Early Intervention program is helping kids like Angelo, who is autistic. "He wouldn't be where he is today – smiling, expressive, signing – if it wasn't for the therapies he is receiving," said his mother, Shiobhan. Yvette's two-year old daughter Olivia was born with spina bifuda and she said that thanks to the services from Early Intervention Olivia was nearly walking without her walker.

Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School

The Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School in Cambridge received a $400K stimulus award which was used to provide its students -- most of whom are African American and second generation immigrants from Haiti and the Caribbean – with comprehensive tutoring services, special education services, counseling and psychological evaluations. According to Banneker executive director, Marlon Davis, the students in the tutoring programs have not only achieved measurable gains on their MCAS scores but they also have greater self-esteem. "The stimulus funds were a breath of fresh air. These kids started off with 'needs improvement' and they are now 'proficient'," said Davis.

photo credit: (Ariel Kessler)

Blessed Sacrament Campus Affordable Housing Project

The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation's (JPNDC) plan, in partnership with the New Atlantic Development Corporation, to develop affordable housing projects on the 3.2 acre Blessed Sacrament Campus in Jamaica Plain was stalled for over a year because of the recession. According to Richard Thal, executive director of the JPNDC, the market for investing in affordable housing projects shrunk drastically and suddenly it was difficult to get investors. But thanks to a $9.75 million stimulus award, the two projects – one for 36 units, the other for 29 – was able to move forward. "These are 65 homes that are being created," said Thal.

photo credit: (Ross Donahue)

Boys & Girls Club of Brockton

The Boys & Girls Club of Brockton is a haven for kids in this city. The center serves about 800 kids a year. The Club provides afterschool programs, including dinner, and in the summer, a full day program. Brockton is home to a diverse population and it struggles with the issues of many inner city neighborhoods, such as poverty, drugs and gangs. The Club tries to combat these forces with additional programs like "Brockton after dark" that run every evening for teens and midnight basketball games. The Club received $42,500 in stimulus funds which it used to run an art program and an information technology program. Danny Dacruz, the teacher hired to run this program introduces the kids to business sites and teaches them applications like Power Point and Publisher. These are skills that will stay with these kids long after they leave the Club.

Elder Services of Berkshire County

Elder Services of Berkshire County received $114K in stimulus funding for its kitchen, which is responsible for creating and delivering 1,000 meals a day and a wellness check, to the homes of seniors throughout the county. These visits provide the seniors with a meal and a lot more. "For some people this is what they need to be able to stay in their homes," said Elder Services executive director Bob Dean." The recession nearly knocked the wind out of this program – Dean said it relies on a combination of grants, United Way and other organizations, all of which were stretched to their funding limits -- and thanks to stimulus it can continue to help the seniors of Berkshire County.

Employment and Training Resources

The stimulus-funded National Emergency Grants (NEGs) were implemented to help those workers who lost their jobs because of mass layoffs or business closures. Many of those men and women had been with their companies for a long, long time. John Hampe is one of them. He worked for DHL as a driver for 15 years, before he was laid off. Hampe went to Employment and Training Resources (ETR) which has branches in Norwood, Marlborough and Newton, and received $1.9 million in stimulus funds as well as a total of $7.1 million in NEGs. Hampe received a stimulus-funded NEG grant to go to a program from which he graduated with three certifications. Four weeks later he was offered a full time job as an information technology coordinator with ETR. "Mine is a great story," said Hampe. "I was looking at the big picture and the resource center provided the grants and the guidance."

Foster Grandparents Program

Action for Boston Community Development received $9.6 million in stimulus funding. This enabled the agency to address unmet needs as well as develop innovative initiatives including a Foster Grandparents program that integrates older, low-income residents into the neighborhoods of Boston and Quincy to help in the growth and development of children. One participant, 65-year old Flossie Parker (not pictured) said she puts extra time in because she loves the kids. She credits this volunteer position with helping her get over the deaths of her loved ones. "One little boy is so attached to me, when he comes in, he cries and then he sees me and he stops crying," she said.

photo credit: (Natalie Rose)

Green Energy Projects

The Green Energy Projects in Fairhaven received approximately $7.9 million in stimulus funding and demonstrate the Recovery Act at its very best: the projects involved will enable the town to generate power from waste, upgrade to solar energy and, just as importantly, they are putting people back to work. The town is constructing an "anaerobic sludge digestion system" which will process, or digest its sludge and grease and transform it into methane gas which will be used as fuel for the generator that produces power and heat for the waste water treatment plant. The town will save two thirds of its sludge disposal costs and will generate up to a third of its own power. Fairhaven is also putting in solar panels at town facilities. Significantly, these projects are employing about 30 people from the various building trades in the region.

photo credit: (Bill Needle)

Hampshire Street Bridge Rehabilitation

It is fitting that a bridge first built in the 1930s under the Work Project Administration as part of the New Deal –what some refer to as the first stimulus program – should be rehabilitated under the current stimulus program. It is especially fitting because the heavily traveled bridge on Hampshire Street in Lawrence was in desperate need of repairs. "The old bridge was rotten," says Gary Jackson, of LM Holdings, who is superintendent on the project. "The deck was so brittle, it could be dangerous." But the $1.8 million in stimulus funds not only rebuilt this outdated bridge, it also put people to work. One of those workers, Todd Allen, 23, said that he couldn't find an entry level job after he graduated from college last year. "I really wanted a job," he says. "I'm happy stimulus put me to work."

Home Energy

John Call has been in the weatherization business since 1978, when he founded his company, Home Energy Inc. Two years ago, his business employed six people and was doing a million dollars worth of business. Last year Call had to lay off four of his employees and by the end of the year he had no work scheduled. After over 30 years, Call thought he would have to close his business. But thanks to the Recovery Act, which increased the Weatherization Assistance Program in Massachusetts to $122.1 million, there was enough work to put many companies like Call's back in business. Home Energy is now back up to five employees and Call anticipates that this year it will have done $700 K in business – double the amount they took in the previous year. "Stimulus kept contractors like us in business," he said.

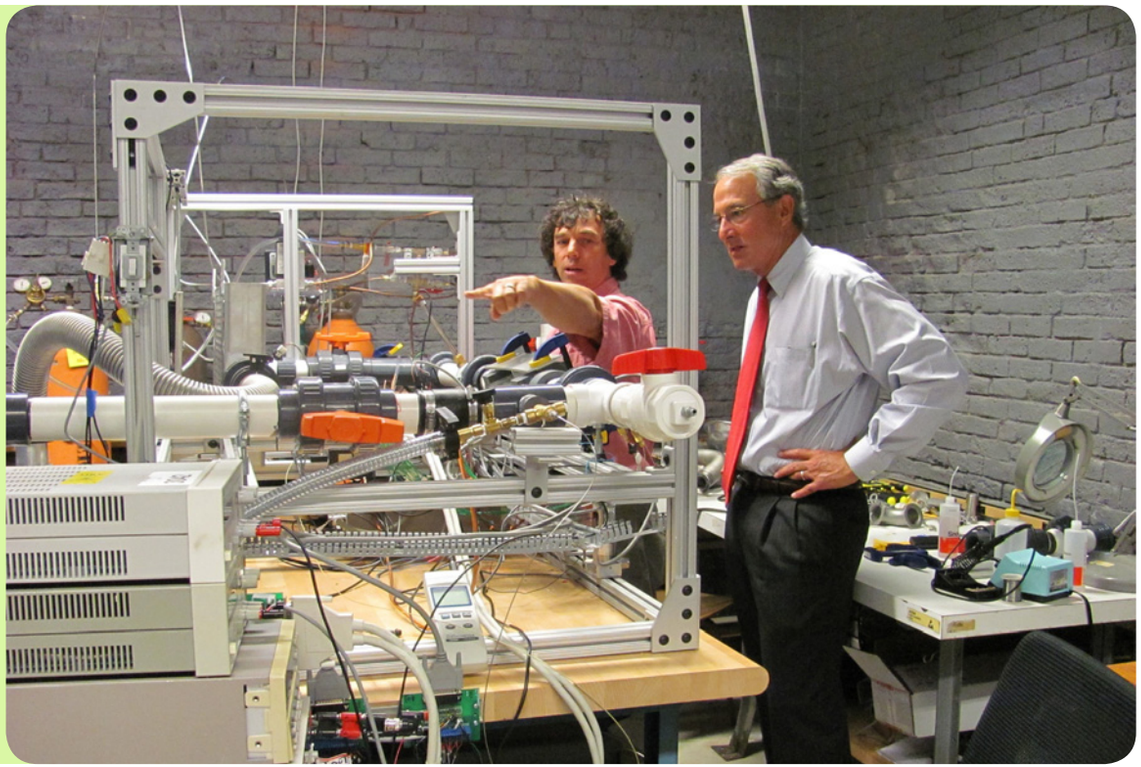
Mattapan Community Health Center

For the Mattapan Community Health Center, stimulus awards mean a new home and a revitalized community. The Health Center received three awards: $171K in increased demand for services, which was used to hire clinicians and support staff; $491 in capital improvement construction program which was used to repair the current facility; and, $11.5 million in a facility investment construction program which will be used to relocate the health center to a new building in Mattapan Square. "The stimulus awards mean the world to the health center as well as to the community," said Azzie Young, President and CEO of the Health Center. "It will help us with community development and economic development. It's a project like nothing we've had in our community before. It's transformational in that it will improve access to health care and create jobs in the community.".

photo credit: (Sarah Skwira)

Machflow Energy

For many small, green energy companies, Recovery Act funding has come to mean the difference between ensuring that their innovative green technology makes it out to the marketplace or not. Machflow Energy Inc. is one of those companies and its Recovery Act awards totaling $1.15 million are helping this small Worcester-based firm translate its technology into a practical, environmentally friendly use. Machflow, which is located in Clark University, has developed a green air conditioning technology that replaces toxic chemicals with inert gases as the coolant. "The stimulus funding Machflow Energy received will help move our technology forward in the short term, and help build a base of technology innovation in Massachusetts in the long run," said Charles Agosta, CEO of Machflow and a professor of physics at Clark.



Milford Police

For years the police department in the town of Milford struggled with an antiquated communications system frustrating Milford Police Chief Tom. "We need the technology to do that." Now they have it, thanks, in part to stimulus. The force's new $500K communications systems was facilitated by three stimulus grants: a $42K award that helped with the purchase of the radio communication system; a $10K award that went towards the purchase of an automated fingerprint scanner; and, a $10K award that went towards the wiring upgrade that was required for the new system's installation. "Now our police have the assets to do their jobs in an effective way," said Chief O'Loughlin. "I wouldn't have been able to pull this off without the stimulus awards."

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

Baystate Health in Springfield, with over 10,000 employees, serves the healthcare needs of the people of western Massachusetts and is committed to hiring employees reflective of the communities they serve. A stimulus-funded on-the-job training program with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) helped the healthcare system fulfill its commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce. The program provides training to people with disabilities in virtually anything its hospitals need support in - food preparation, data entry and retail, are just a few of the areas - and it has been so successful, that it is being replicated across the state. "We are talking about real people with real jobs in the real world,"Terry Hodur, a job placement specialist with MRC, said."These are people who now have a skill,with many hired into their first jobs."

Nexamp

A little over three years ago, Nexamp, a clean energy company, had three employees and a lot of interest in making its mark on the solar industry in Massachusetts. These days, Nexamp has 70 employees thanks in large part to a stimulus-funded contract the company won in partnership with Taunton-based Florence Electric to install 13 solar array projects – totaling 4.1 MegaWatts of solar installation- across the state at public water and wastewater treatment facilities. The contracts, worth approximately $20 million, represent the state's largest-ever award for solar installation at public facilities. "Stimulus is keeping the solar industry thriving," said Will Thompson, Nexamp's senior vice president in charge of construction.

People Acting in Community Endeavors

People Acting in Community Endeavors (PACE), an anti poverty agency in New Bedford, is an organization that people in the South Coast area call when they need help. The agency received two stimulus grants - $775K for housing and $114K for child care - and they could not have come at a better time. It means that people like Sam, who has COPD and is awaiting a lung transplant, are not living in the streets with his son. It also means that Juan, who has a wife and four children, did not lose his home. PACE is demonstrating how social service agencies across the state are using stimulus funding to do all they can to prevent a difficult economic situation from getting even worse.

Plymouth School System

Gary Maestas, superintendent for the Plymouth school system, is participating in a one-man bike marathon from Washington DC to Plymouth – 600 miles – to highlight the importance of government support for his school system. For Maestas, that is not just talk. His school system received $707k in stimulus funds for improving basic operations; $2.1 million for the education of children with disabilities; $20K to serve preschool children with disabilities and $4.1 million as part of the state fiscal stabilization fund. "Stimulus has saved us," said Maestas. "We are still in existence today because of stimulus funds." The school system also received a $5 million Investing in Innovation stimulus grant, one of only 50 school districts to qualify for the funding.

University of Massachusetts Amherst Researchers

For researchers at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, the impact their stimulus awards will have on the future of this country in terms of energy, fighting disease and the environment is incalculable. For instance, Paul Lahti, a professor of Chemistry and Tom Russell, a professor of Polymer Science and Engineering, were awarded a $16 million stimulus grant to pursue their research on developing advanced solar cell technology. Lila Geirasch, a professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at UMass Amherst, received a $2.5 million stimulus award to pursue her research on proteins and its implications for diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. George Huber, a professor of chemical engineering at UMass Amherst, received $4.1 million in stimulus awards to pursue his research on developing cheap biofuels production processes. All these ideas start in university labs, but can lead to breakthroughs that can change the world.

Washington Beech Housing Development

Over the years, the Washington Beech Housing Development in Roslindale has fallen into disrepair. The Washington Beech community has been dreaming of a redevelopment for years. Thanks to a $10 million stimulus award coupled with a $20 million Housing and Urban Development grant, the dream is becoming a reality. The funding will enable the Boston Housing Authority to demolish the existing 266 units and replace them with 342 new affordable housing opportunities, 206 onsite and 136 offsite. The redevelopment plan includes 15 newly constructed affordable homes for purchase and a first-time homebuyer assistance program. "It's a welcome change for so many people," said Meena Carr, a resident of the development.

photo credit: (Matt Duckett)

Weatherization Program

Mary Reynolds watches her three grandchildren every day after school, and in the winter it would get pretty cold in the unit she rents on Linnet Place in Gloucester. But Reynold's landlord, a widow who lives in the downstairs unit, could not afford to weatherize the house. She applied for assistance through Action, Inc., the Gloucester-based social services organization that received $8.5 million in Recovery Act funds. After an energy audit was done on the house, it was determined that the house needed air-sealing, insulation, and window replacement -- an estimated $6,900 worth of energy services, that was covered under Action's Recovery Act award. The weatherization improvements will save the landlord at least 30 percent on her energy bills. "This is not something my landlord can do. It felt like a prayer being answered," said Reynolds.

photo credit: (John Steck)

Whittier Street Health Center

The Whittier Street Health Center received $12 million in stimulus grants which will help fund its new 78,000-square foot building in Roxbury. The new site will have expanded medical care capacity, mental health and substance abuse care, fixed mammography screening and cancer care services in collaboration with Dana Farber. "The new building will increase health care delivery efficiencies, establish our permanency in the community, and act as an economic boon to the Roxbury community," said Frederica Williams, President and CEO of the Health Center.

photo credit: (Lara Morgan)

Wonderland Parking Garage

A $22.7 million stimulus award was the key ingredient in reviving a stalled parking garage project near the MBTA Wonderland station in Revere – a project that is crucial to enabling a $500 million beachfront development to move forward. "This parking garage was the critical piece that we could never finance. The stimulus program made it possible for us to develop this project," said Revere Mayor Tom Ambrosino. The large scale project involves a combination of hotel, office and residential space to be developed on 10 acres of beachfront property on the eastern side of the train station.

photo credit: (Natalie Rose)

YouthBuild Fall River

For teens raised in poverty, it is difficult to find opportunity -- or hope. YouthBuild Fall River, a job training youth development program, aims to address that by targeting those teens -- many of whom have to contend with homelessness or unstable households and the allure of gangs -- and providing them with education, hands-on training and informal counseling and mentoring. The organization's $1.1 million stimulus award is enabling the agency to help these kids. The agency also received another $100,000 stimulus award to develop a green building curriculum, which is the basis of the training program. "If it wasn't for us, these kids would have nothing to do," said Terry Moran, coordinator of YouthBuild Fall River.

The Massachusetts Recovery & Reinvestment Office (MassRRO)

The Massachusetts Recovery & Reinvestment Office (MassRRO) is responsible for all aspects of the state's stimulus program, including project prioritization, communications and civic engagement, federal and state reporting and transparency, state agency coordination, and compliance and oversight management, including fraud, waste, and abuse awareness and prevention.

The Center for Art and Community Partnerships(CACP) at MassArt

The Center for Art and Community Partnerships(CACP) at MassArt cultivates innovative, sustainable relationships with the broader community to explore and expand the relevance of art in public life. CACP matches MassArt faculty, students, staff, and alumni who want to complete community-based projects with neighborhood organizations, schools, corporations, and institutions to create mutually beneficial, sustainable partnerships in the visual arts. The center uses art as a catalyzing force for citizens to act creatively together.

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