

Community Partner

Year End

Fulfillment Report



December 2012

THE MILFORD IMPROVEMENT TEAM
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(left) Carole Whittier, owner of Carole's Cake Creations, at the Taste of Milford on June 1. (above) Poster for the Keyes Art Show by Milford student Elizabeth Noble.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Six events in 2012, serving a total of 35,000 attendees.
- 1962 Volunteer hours given to Milford Improvement Team events /activities in 2012
- 666,243 impressions total media
- Return on \$1,500 investment = 443:1
- \$93,243 Total Value Earned Media

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The Milford Improvement Team is a new name for a 20 year old organization and dedicated commitment to the Town of Milford. Begun in 1992 as a grassroots effort to address the decline of our historic downtown, the Milford Downtown Ongoing Improvement Team (DO-IT) was one of the first New Hampshire communities accepted into the National Main Street Program in 1998. In 2002, DO-IT and the Town of Milford was awarded the prestigious Great American Main Street Award for our efforts in revitalizing the downtown with a new streetscape design that included brick lined sidewalks, traffic islands, period lighting, undergrounding utilities and the green space design for the Oval.

Some of the highlights of our 20 years working for the betterment of Milford include:

- Cumulative Private/Public Reinvestment in Milford Initiated by DO-IT 1992-2010: **\$6.6 million**
- Received the 1993 federal grant for physical improvements to the Downtown, a **\$600,000** project that installed pedestrian and handicapped accessibility, undergrounded utilities, brick-banded sidewalks, period lighting and created the appealing Downtown of today.
- Total value of grants for local projects applied for by DO-IT in 2009-2010: **\$295,000**
- Received grant to build bridge from Keyes Field to Boys & Girls Club
- Received grant to restore the Oval Bandstand
- Coordinated repainting of Oval lights poles in 2009
- Assisted Milford Conservation Commission with applying for TE Grant for Granite Town Rail Trail in 2009 and continues support of project
- Received grant for downtown banners
- Received **\$50,000** HUD grant to establish Revolving Loan Fund
- Assists and partners with other groups such as Milford Farmers Market, Garden Club, Lions Club for downtown beautification.
- Annual coordinating The Milford Pumpkin Festival which brings annual revenue of over **\$2 million** to the Milford economy and 35,000 visitors to Milford.

To celebrate our 20th Anniversary in 2012, the DO-IT Board of Directors decided that the time was ripe to apply our methods and efforts outside the Downtown to Milford's gateways. Rebranding ourselves **The Milford Improvement Team** to reflect the expanded nature of our mission, we are already working

diligently toward promoting a Milford that is sustainable and thriving for both businesses and residents throughout its borders.

Our Goals:

- Promote Milford as a vibrant cultural, retail and entertainment destination in the region;
- Encourage a variety of local and independent businesses and activities that will both serve and employ residents;
- Preserve where feasible Milford's historic buildings and encourage sympathetic new development;
- Make Milford's gateway streetscapes attractive and engaging;
- Continue to maintain downtown Milford as the attractive, pedestrian-oriented center of our community;
- Foster cooperation among residents, business owners and property owners;

Why Now?

The last few years have been challenging for Milford businesses with the economic recession. However, in spite of the economy, Milford has retained a 98% occupancy rate of available retail/commercial space in the downtown. Our events continue to grow and attract new visitors to town that solidify Milford as a destination in the region. Our continuing efforts to make downtown Milford attractive with plantings, banners, period lighting and maintenance of historic structures such as the Oval bandstand help to maintain property values of residential and commercial buildings, as well as make Milford an attractive town to reside for those who work in local industries. Now with the added challenges of the economy, the Milford Improvement team wishes to apply our methodologies outside of the downtown and make all of Milford a vibrant, sustainable and desirable destination.

The Milford Improvement Team (MIT) is already working hard on behalf of our members, stakeholders and constituents.

To date we:

- Have developed a **website to serve as a resource** for Milford community organizations as well as a resource and invitation to encourage Milford residents and those from other communities to visit Milford.
- Through the MIT Design Committee, **begun a gateway signage project** that will install 5 'Welcome to Milford' signs on our gateway streets.
- Created a Revolving Loan Fund to provide local businesses with niche financing for special projects.
- Promote town events and happenings – both our own events and those by other groups located in Milford.
- Researching potential new events that will be town-wide and encourage residents and visitors to shop/dine/support Milford's local businesses such as the **Snow Ball Drop** in December 2012.
- **Continue our signature events** such as the Milford Pumpkin Festival which brings 30-35,000 people to Milford annually, as well as the Taste of Milford and Jingle Holiday Stroll.

MILFORD: THE HUB OF THE SOUHEGAN VALLEY

Bordering the picturesque Monadnock Region, close to the urban centers of Nashua and Manchester and an hour's drive from the Seacoast, White Mountains and Boston, the Souhegan Valley is conveniently located to all. And within the heart of the valley lies the Oval, Milford's historical and charming town center.

As the most populated town in the valley and home to the 5th largest employer in the State, Hitchiner Manufacturing, Milford draws commuters and shoppers from over 19 surrounding towns. A new store opening in downtown Milford has immediate access to **64,287** potential customers residing in the primary trade area and an additional **83,438** potential customers living in the secondary trade area.

Primary & Secondary Trade Area Defined By Commuting Patterns

	Milford	Primary Trade Area (including Milford)	Secondary Trade Area (including Primary Trade Area)	Hillsborough County	State of NH
2010 Population	15,115**	64,287	147,725	401,397	1,315,000
2020 Projected Population*	15,188	70,880	170,460	446,590	1,470,012

* "Municipal Population Projections 2010 to 2030," NH Office of Energy & Planning, January 2007. ** 2010 Census.

Primary Trade Area - Defined as 40% or more of the total commuting population who commute to Milford**

Secondary Trade Area- Defined as 10 to 39% of the total commuting population who commute to Milford**

2012 PROGRAMMING

EVENTS

The Milford Improvement Team held several events throughout the year.

The purpose of special events is to provide visibility for the Town of Milford and help foster civic pride and a positive image of the community as a whole. The “ripple-effect” or multiplier benefits of community events including several positive elements to local businesses, government and supporters. These include:

- Increased awareness of the greater Milford region as a travel/tourism destination
- Increased knowledge concerning the potential for investment and commercial activity in the region
- Increase in interest and participation in the types of permanent level activity associated with event
- Strengthening of regional values and traditions
- Increased local pride and community spirit
- Increased awareness of non-local perceptions (i.e. visitors from regions outside of the immediate area)

Milford Winter Farmer’s Market

The Milford Improvement Team started an indoor farmer’s market during the winter months in 2011. The Winter Market, located inside the Milford Town Hall, was one of a handful of winter markets throughout the State and was met with much anticipation in the region. This year, MIT worked with the Milford Farmer’s Market Association to merge MIT’s Milford Winter Farmer’s Market with the long-running Milford Farmer’s Market, which agreed to take on the Winter Market and now operates on a year-round schedule. The Winter Market is held twice monthly in the Town Hall Auditorium from October 20 to the end of April and features locally produced products such as produce, milk, eggs, honey and maple products, and baked goods. Besides great foods, the market had entertainers and children’s activities. The market regularly attracts approximately 200 shoppers per market and provides a means of local producers to reach a growing customer base year-round.



The Milford Winter Farmer’s Market displaying wares for the holidays.

A Taste of Milford

The 3rd A Taste of Milford takes place on the first Friday of June and showcases Milford's restaurants to the region. This year's event featured 25 Milford eateries hosted by downtown businesses. The event brought 550 people to the Milford Oval to sample the food and browse the shops. Although a fundraiser for MIT, the event has the additional purpose of promoting the variety of Milford's restaurants and as a traffic-building event for downtown shops.



Scenes from the 3rd Taste of Milford: Giorgio's serving inside Lisa's Sweets, the Pasta Loft serving inside the Frame Depot, and the Trombly Farm serving locally grown beef sliders outside Equilibrium on Middle Street.

Milford Keyes Art Festival

Working in partnership with the Keyes Art Group, the Milford Keyes Art Festival takes place the Saturday & Sunday following A Taste of Milford. The festival features a stage and musical entertainment on the Oval as well as artist demonstrations, children's activities, and of course the art show.

Summer Lunchtime Concert Series

Throughout Thursdays in July, Milford Improvement Team held our 15th Annual Lunchtime Concert Series, bringing music and sometimes impromptu dancing to the Oval every Thursday. Sponsored by Edward Jones Investments and St. Mary's Bank, approximately 500 people attended the concerts, listening to a variety of great music that included folk group Deep Hole Road, country music favorite Rob Oxford, jazz group Sylvan Roots, and balladeer Marlena Phillips.



PB&J Jammin Jazz Band performs at the Milford Keyes Art Festival.

The Milford Great Pumpkin Festival

The Milford Great Pumpkin Festival celebrated its 23rd anniversary on October 5-7 and was hugely successful. Approximately 32,000 attended the festival over the three day period. Over the years, the Great Pumpkin Festival has become a highly anticipated regional and statewide event. Most of the attendees come from the Souhegan Valley, Monadnock Region, Nashua, and Manchester areas but also from Boston area, greater New England and many other locations in the United States. Despite these numbers, the Milford Great Pumpkin Festival maintains its small town festival feel and family friendly orientation.

Traditionally, the Festival takes place on Columbus Day Weekend and occurs in Downtown Milford on the Oval, the Community House Lawn, Emerson Park and South and Middle Streets, Milford Town Hall and the Amato Family Performing Art Center on Mont Vernon Street.

Our 23rd year saw a return of our signature popular events: the great pumpkin weigh-in, pumpkin painting, pumpkin sales, the pumpkin catapult, an arts & crafts show, scarecrow making, a haunted trail, face painting, two stages of music and entertainment, food vendors, a chili contest and the very popular Talent Show. Overall, it's a weekend packed full with fun for the young and young at heart.



The festival is targeted as a “traffic-building event,” focused on providing a multitude of fun, family activities and venues. The Festival brings the community together and creates a sense of place. In addition, the Festival allows nearly **40** Milford area non-profit and civic groups to participate and raise funds to support their own endeavors. These monies are reinvested back into our community in the form of band uniforms for the high school, ambulance & fire equipment, athletic programs for our youth, and numerous other programs. In years past, groups associated with area schools, scholarship programs, church groups, support services, the local library, and businesses have all joined MIT in helping to make the Great Pumpkin Festival a successful event.

Over 200 volunteers participate in the three-day event with many of them contributing time throughout the year to prepare for events. The investment in community spirit and time is huge – volunteers provided 670 hours of volunteer time to the festival alone. At the current value assigned to a volunteer hour of \$21.36, that is an investment of \$14,311 in volunteer time.

Some statistics from the 2012 Festival:

- Festival attendance estimated at 32,000.
- 670 hours of volunteer time, valued at \$14,311 invested to the Festival and community.

- Brings an estimated \$2 million of revenue into the Milford region.*

**Institute of NH Studies, Plymouth State University.*

Some comments from the Milford Pumpkin Festival's 2399

Facebook fans:

"We just added The [Milford Great Pumpkin Festival](#) to the [Macaroni Kid Merrimack Valley NH Event Calendar](#)! What an AWESOME Event :)"

Saiya Sok – "Home bound this weekend! The [Milford Great Pumpkin Festival](#), Saturday night is where its at."

Cliff Hilton – "Milford Great Pumpkin Festival Rocks!!!"

Susan Taylor, Executive Director Souhegan Valley Boys & Girls Club – "What a great community event! Thank you for all your hard work!"

Wendy Costanza Ayotte – "Our favorite weekend of the year - always!! Thanks for another great Fest. So glad the weather cooperated!!"

Hippo's Best Of NH Awards, Best Community Event 2010, 2011 and 2012

Subject: Re: Pumpkin Festival

From: "Toivo Goldberg"
<chick@oldetymearmynavy.com>

Date: 9/2/2012 2:29 PM

To:
<director@milfordmainstreet.org>

Dear Tracy:

Just wanted to share something very positive with you:

I noticed that in the past 2-3 years our store's revenues have increased dramatically during Pumpkin Fest. It seems that every year the attendance is up as well as our bottom line.

We were also thinking about extending our hours on Friday and Saturday evening. However, after careful consideration, we will not be doing so because of the huge crowds that the Milford Pumpkin Fest attracts. Our small store would become unmanageable with that many people coming through our door.

To sum up, I am letting you know of our appreciation for your Pumpkin Fest promotions for the past several years which has been drawing more and more people to the Oval (Downtown Milford) and obviously your efforts are working.

Thank you!

Chick Goldberg, Olde Tyme
Army Navy Store

The Jingle 'Bout Milford Holiday Stroll and 1st Annual SNOW BALL Drop

The Milford Improvement Team added a new event this year, the first SNOW BALL Drop to take place in New Hampshire. With ping pong balls standing in for snow balls, Santa and Mrs. Claus were hoisted above a crowd of 250 courtesy of a lift by Classic Signs' truck. Each 'snow ball' was numbered and corresponded to a deal, discount or prize given by a Milford business. Twenty-three businesses from all over Milford participated. After the drop, a small tree was lighted with caroling by the Souhegan Valley Chorus. The tree was donated post-event to a local family in need. The event was sponsored by the



Cabinet Press.

The Snow Ball Drop is an event designed to encourage shopping locally for goods and services throughout the holiday season and beyond. It is conducive to promoting many varieties of businesses – this year, an insurance company, automotive repair business, salon, two restaurants, toy store, bookstore, fitness center and a heating/hvac company were among the participants. We anticipate that this event will continue to grow in popularity both with participating businesses and the public.

PROJECTS

Beautification/Streetscape

Milford Improvement Team continues to head the beautification efforts in downtown Milford, a role that we began in 1992 with our inception. MIT coordinates the maintenance of the Oval bandstand, seasonal flower plantings on the bandstand, the Oval perennial flower beds and the seasonal banners displayed on the period lightpoles throughout the downtown. In addition, MIT decorates the Oval for the holidays with roping and lights on street poles and procures and lights the Town holiday tree.

The Milford Improvement Team was responsible for the \$4 million federal Transportation Enhancement grant received by the Town in 2006 that will be for improvements to South Street in Milford including the undergrounding of utility poles, installing period light poles to match those on the Oval and widening the street for better traffic flow. This project is slated to begin construction in Spring 2013.

Economic Development

The MIT Executive Director sits on the Milford Economic Development Advisory Council (EDAC), as well as serves on or chairs several committees including the hotel feasibility study committee, town branding committee, and town website committee. Milford Improvement Team is also an active member and supporter of the Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Revolving Loan Fund

The Milford Improvement Team Revolving Loan Fund was established in 2011 from funding by a federal HUD grant. Currently, MIT has \$30,000 of the fund's total \$50,000 to relend and is actively seeking applications from Milford businesses.

Promotion

MIT strives to promote the Town of Milford to the region and State as a destination for starting or relocating a business, tourism, as well as encouraging residents to support their local businesses and organizations. MIT added an events calendar to our website that is open to other community organizations and regularly assists other community groups with promoting their events through our website, social media, press releases, and networking. Our goal is to be a clearing house of information for organizations within Milford, as well as a point of contact for media, or organizations within the greater Milford region.



A crowded Oval at the 23rd Milford Great Pumpkin Festival.

VALUE TO COMMUNITY

The taxpayers of Milford generously support the Milford Improvement Team by voting in favor of a \$20,000 warrant article for the MIT operating budget and a \$20,000 warrant article that offsets town expenses (police, fire, public works) of the Pumpkin Festival.

The return on investment to Milford taxpayers is significant. When the value of all direct and indirect investment is quantified due to MIT's events, programs, marketing and volunteer time, Milford taxpayers realize **\$137 in reinvestment for every \$1 approved for MIT Warrant Articles.**

MARKETING VALUE TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The logos of the Community Partners appeared on all emails sent from Milford Improvement Team, e-newsletters, facebook, press releases and collateral material for events.

Collateral Material

Taste of Milford – 600 programs distributed. An ad was inserted into the Milford Cabinet.

Posters for all events.

Pumpkin Festival:

Flyers were distributed to the Shaws, Stop N Shop and Market Basket grocery stores in Milford and were stuffed into the bags of shoppers the week prior to the Festival.

An ad was inserted into the October issue of NH To Do Magazine, circulation 35,000 monthly and distributed in tourist information areas in 11 states.

The Festival program was inserted into the direct mailed publications Hollis-Brookline Journal, Merrimack Journal, Bedford Journal as well as the subscriber/newsstand based Cabinet newspaper. Total circulation 31,000. Community Partner logos appeared on the front page and in the editorial.

By The Numbers

Volunteer hours * given to Milford Improvement Team events /activities:
1962 hours, **\$42,752**

Volunteer hours given to the Pumpkin Festival:
890 hours, **\$18,957**

Sponsorship Investment to the Community Due to MIT Activities: **\$47,810**

Funds Raised for Other Community Groups at MIT Events: **\$42,311**

Total Economic Impact of Milford Pumpkin Festival on Town Economy: **\$2.6 million**

Sources of Milford Improvement Team's Income:

Pumpkin Festival 54% Town Government 17%

Events/Fundraisers 11% Grants 6% Private Contributions 8% Other 4%

*Current Value of A Volunteer Hour \$21.79/hour

Electronic Media

Email- 1085 emails displaying the Community Partners' logo were sent in 2012.

E-newsletters – 21 e-newsletters were sent to 946 subscribers in 2012. Total impressions were 19,545 with an average open/click rate of 42%, which is double than the nonprofit industry standard open/click rate of 20%.

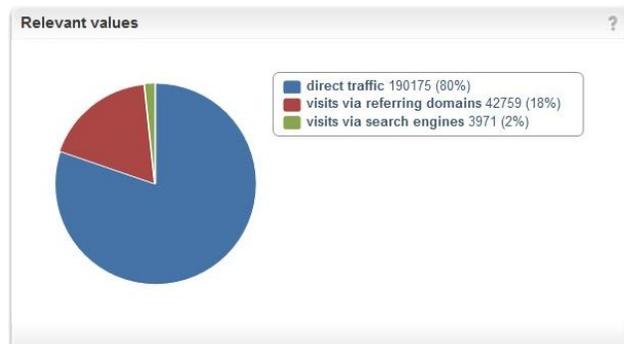
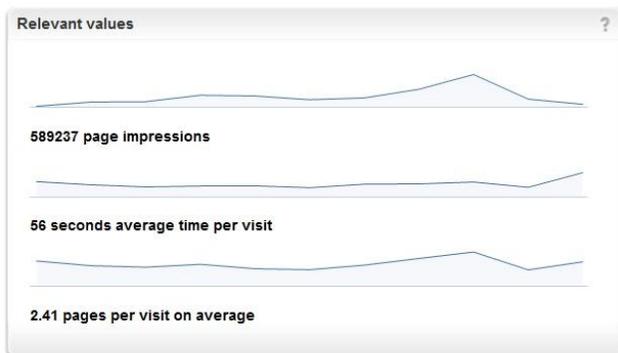
Social Media –Milford Pumpkin Festival Facebook page currently has 2399 fans and the Milford Improvement Team Facebook page has 1000 fans. The Milford Improvement Team sees an average of 6 new fans per week. Other social media utilized to promote the festival include Twitter, Flickr, Youtube and Pinterest.

Milford Pumpkin Festival Website – www.milfordpumpkinfestival.org. Sponsor logos were displayed on the Festival website. The website statistics:

- 55,376 total visits between September 1-October 7
- 230,740 page impressions
- 1:1 minutes average time per visit
- 3.42 pages on average were viewed per visit
- 60% (33,944) visits were direct traffic
- 38% (21,432) visits were referring domains
- 1% (757) visits were referred from search engine

Milford Improvement Team Website – www.milfordimprovementteam.org. Community Partner logos are prominently displayed on the homepage of the website. Website statistics:

- 232,934 total page visits between February 1- December 5
- 2.41 pages visited on average
- 589,237 page impressions



Earned Media

The Milford Improvement Team events, notably the Milford Pumpkin Festival which is by far the event with the most name recognition, received numerous feature articles, mentions, print and online calendar listings, blog/social posts, print, radio, television and online media (partial list below). Total marketing value of all earned media is estimated at \$82,000 for the Pumpkin Festival alone and \$11,243 our other events (**\$93,243** annual total).

Sunday Boston Globe	Union Leader	Nashua Telegraph
Milford Cabinet	Merrimack Journal	nhevents.com
Bedford Journal	The Hippo	nhtodo.com
Concord Monitor	The Broadcaster	yankeemagazine.com
Amherst Citizen	Monadnock Ledger-Transcript	nhpr.com (NH Public Radio)
Hollis Brookline Journal	Keene Sentinel	Lowell Sun
Neighborhood Publications	NH Magazine	nh.com
NH To Do Magazine	Monadnock Living Magazine	Whofish.com
Yankee Magazine	WMUR TV	NH Business Review
TV 13 Nashua	WCVB TV Boston	WZID 95.7 FM/ The Mill 96.5 FM
92.5 The River	WOKQ FM	WSMN AM / WHOB FM
WHDH TV Boston	NECN TV	WBZ TV Boston
Nh365.org	Amherst/Milford Patch	Boston.com
Nashoba Valley Publications	Rockingham Grapevine	Chefgeek.com
East Coast Biker Magazine		

Community Partners and Event Sponsors

The Milford Improvement Team is very grateful for your generous sponsorship. Your support of our organization allows us to continue the revitalization and economic development of Milford and the region. Our events and programs strengthen the local economy and increase the livability of our community – which in turn helps to maintain property values, create strong networks between service organizations and attract new business.



According to a 1991 economic development study, a community's economic strength is directly related to the perception of its livability: "High environmental quality, culturally desirable working and living conditions, and convenient local amenities are believed to be vital to foster economic growth and job creation by retaining local businesses and attracting inward investment. (Cecilia Wong, "The Relationship Between Quality of Life and Local Economic Development," 1991).

Our Community Partnership Program was fortunate to have three strong partners in 2012: Centrix Bank, Hitchiner Manufacturing and Public Service of New Hampshire.

Many local companies and organizations have supported our events throughout the year with sponsorship funds or in-kind services. These funds are important to our organization in helping us to defray expenses of coordinating these community events.

Sponsors of Milford Improvement Team events include The Milford Masonic Association, Edward Jones, St. Mary's Bank and St. Joseph's Hospital. The Pumpkin Festival sponsors include primary sponsors Kokko Real Estate, the Milford Odd Fellows Custos Morum Lodge 42, Centrix Bank, and Atlas Pyrotechnics, as well as the businesses listed below.

Amigos Restaurant	First Colebrook Bank	Maplebrook Dentistry	St. Mary's Bank
Bellavance Beverage	Granite State Credit Union	Martha's Exchange	Souhegan Valley Motorsports
Cabinet Press	JP Pest Services	Milford Lumber	Sweet Baby Vineyard
Chappell Tractor	Labelle Winery	Peters of Nashua	Triangle Credit Union
Ciardelli Fuels	Lake Sunapee Bank	Sap House Meadery	Trombly Farmstand
College Bound Movers	Ledgewood Bay	Spinal Corrective Center	Toyota of Nashua
Contemporary Chrysler-Dodge			Tuckerman Brewing

We look forward to continuing our partnership in 2013. We welcome all comments and suggestions for events, programs and information in this report. Please feel free to telephone Tracy Hutchins, Executive Director at 603.249.0676.

Thank You for Your Support!