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INFORMATION FROM THE
CAPE COD COMMISSION
BARNSTABLE COUNTY



CAPE COD
COMMISSION

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Barnstable County designated federal Economic Development District

Barnstable County is now designated an Economic Development District by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce, opening the door to new funding opportunities to address long-standing structural issues in the Cape's economy.

The designation is an outgrowth from the EDA-certified Cape Cod Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, or CEDS. Active implementation of the CEDS over the past four and a half years was instrumental in demonstrating the County's commitment to economic development. EDA strongly supports regional planning stating in their mission that "regional collaboration is essential for economic recovery because regions are the centers of competition in the new global economy and those that work together to leverage resources and use their strengths to overcome weaknesses will fare better than those that do not."

The federal designation, made official on Dec. 19, 2013, was sought by the Cape Cod Commission in an application filed in February 2013. The application was submitted in partnership with the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Nation and supported by all 15 Cape towns and Gov. Deval Patrick. The application provided background on the Cape's structural distress factors and other regional benchmarks that set it apart from the rest of the commonwealth. These include an aging population, lower income and wages, lack of housing affordability and susceptibility to natural disaster/sea level rise.

An Economic Development District is a regional geographic designation by the U.S. Department of Commerce for the purposes of economic development planning, funding, and implementation. The designation opens up new channels of federal economic grant assistance for regional innovation, public/private partnerships, environmentally-sustainable development, and economically distressed and underserved communities, among others.

In his letter announcing the designation, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development and Chief Operating Officer Matthew S. Erskine wrote, "I trust that this designation will strengthen the economies of the Cape Cod region and wish you every success in carrying out your economic development activities."

"The opportunities this designation brings to the region come at an important time for the Cape's 15 towns and the Tribe," Cape Cod Commission Executive Director Paul Niedzwiecki said. "Our unique and special geography are matched by the unique challenges of our economy and demographics."

"Having the entire County designated as an Economic Development District from the U.S. Department of Commerce adds a new arrow to our quiver to spur desired economic development in the region," said Felicia Penn, chair of the Cape Cod Economic Development Council. "It will be of considerable assistance in implementing economic change, as it opens the door for the possibility to leverage grant funds."

The CEDS is the region's economic development roadmap, providing an annual plan of work for the economic development activities of the Cape Cod Commission. The Economic Development Administration previously granted \$60,000 in each of the past three years for implementation of the CEDS. The CCEDC serves as the required CEDS Strategy Committee.

The Commission plans to organize a workshop on the designation, regional opportunities and the application process.

ABOUT THE CAPE COD COMMISSION:

Cape Cod Commission is the regional land use planning, economic development, and regulatory agency for Barnstable County, Massachusetts. It was created in 1990 to serve the citizens and 15 towns that comprise Cape Cod. The Commission works toward maintaining a healthy balance between economic progress and environmental vitality. "Keeping a special place special" describes the agency's mission to protect the region's unique qualities. The 19-member volunteer Cape Cod Commission board represents a wide spectrum of the community and provides oversight for a staff of 40 professionals. The Commission is responsible for regional planning, policy, and regulations to help manage growth, and the agency supports the Cape's 15 towns with cost-effective planning and technical services. For more information, visit: www.capecodcommission.org.

