

Annual Report

FY24



Letter from the CEO

This year, the Chamber has continued its work to address the changing needs of our region's post-COVID business environment. "Business as usual" hasn't been the practice for the Cape business community since before the pandemic and, much like the businesses we serve, the Cape Cod Chamber is adjusting to an economy that is very different from the one we knew several years ago.

To meet this critical moment, the Chamber is tackling big, regional priorities that affect the very viability of our region as a place to live, work, and run a business. This year, we have strategically built capacity within the Chamber to create programs that satisfy foundational needs for the business community – from our J-1 housing and CDL training programs, to the Cape & Islands Bridges Coalition.

We offer our appreciation to the many members and supporters who helped make this work possible. Comprised of nearly 1,000 businesses of all sizes and industries, the Chamber's membership base represents a diverse set of needs and priorities. These member priorities directly inform the work of the Chamber and reinforce our role as a regional leader on behalf of the business and nonprofit community.

Perhaps the biggest accomplishment, though, is the incredible team we have built here at the Chamber. The Chamber was named a "2023 Best Place to Work" by Cape & Plymouth Business Media, and this is due in large part to our staff. This impressive group of professionals brings diverse expertise and an infectious, positive energy to everything they do.

There is much work ahead, but I am incredibly proud of everything we have accomplished in the last 12 months, and how our team has and continues to work each day to make Cape Cod a better place.

Paul Niedzwiecki
Cape Cod Chamber CEO



OVERVIEW

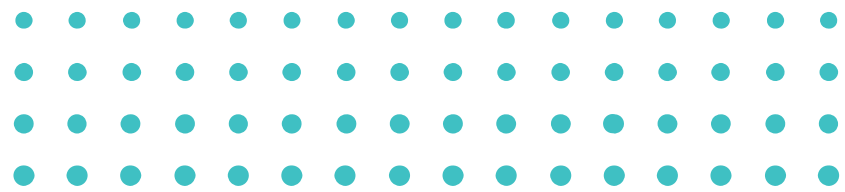
The Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, established in 1921, operates as a non-profit, membership-based organization serving nearly 1,000 businesses, civic groups and educational institutions. We are the third largest Chamber of Commerce in Massachusetts, with significant presence and influence statewide. The Cape Cod Chamber is also a state-designated Regional Tourism Council and Regional Economic Development Organization.

VISION

We are a catalyst and advocate for a vibrant economic community in order to create a better Cape Cod.

MISSION

We advocate on behalf of business to strengthen and promote regional economic vitality while addressing related cultural, environmental and community concerns.



Board of Directors FY24

Officers:

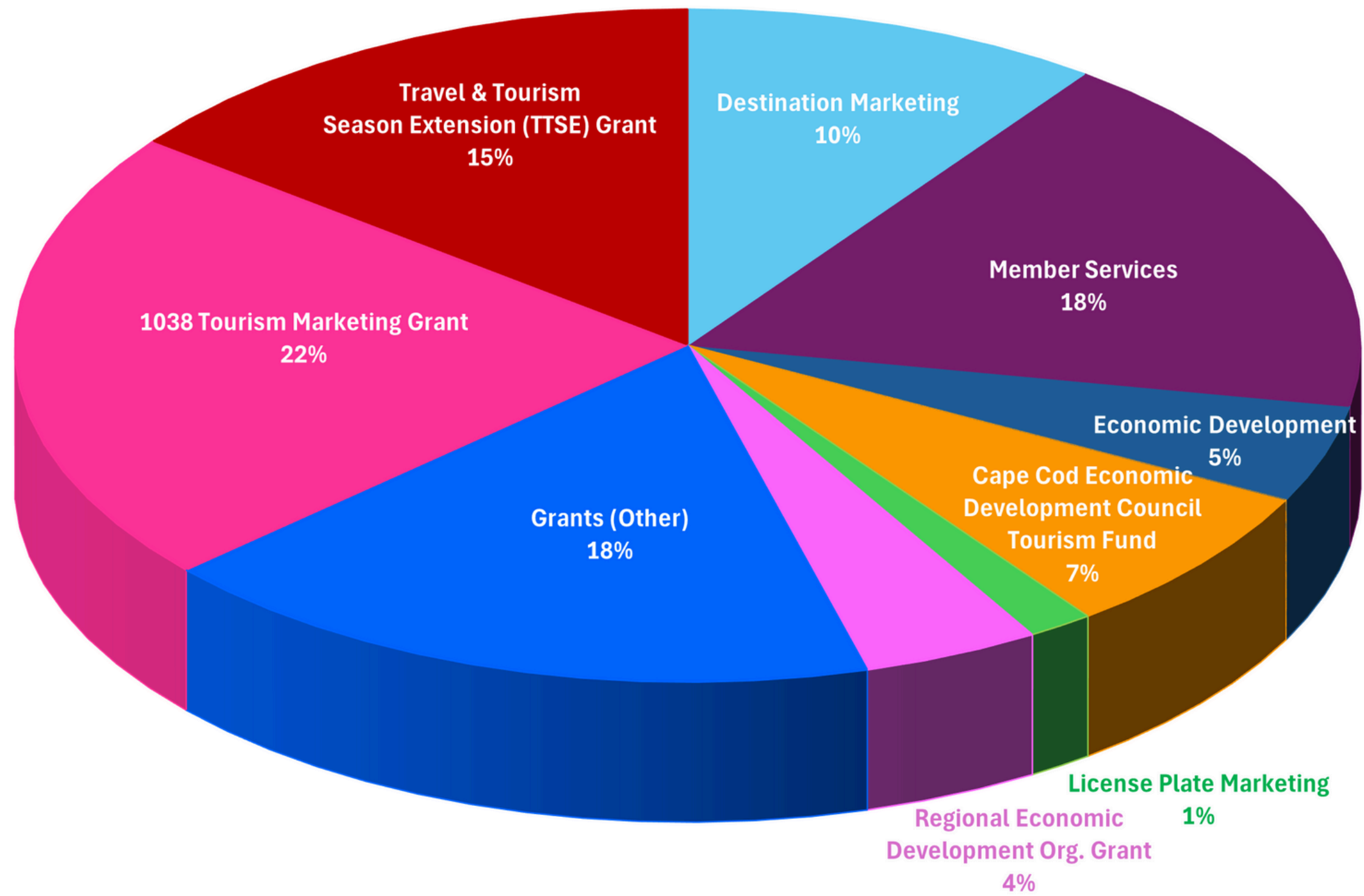
Chair: Jim Tenaglia
Vice Chair: Lisa Oliver
Treasurer: Mike Migliore
Clerk: Paulo Paraguay
Imm. Past Chair: David Troutman

Alisa Magnotta	Jim Connolly
Andrew Gottlieb	Joe Perkins
Anne Scott-Putney	John McCarthy
Betsy Rich	Jon Hagenstein
Carol Edmondson	Kevin Skrickis
Chris Lawson	Lindsay Cole
Ed Harper	Lisa Parenteau
Gail Knell	Marty Bruemmel
Gary Thulander	Sarah Chace
James Barnes	Sarah Lapsley-Martin
Jamie Veara	Scott Vandersall
Jeff Watson	Tammi Jacobsen

Chairman’s Circle Supporters



OPERATING BUDGET



MEMBERSHIP

By the Numbers



982 Active Members



24 New Members



89% Retention Rate



**12 Networking Events
719 Attendees**



**18 Ribbon Cuttings &
9 Workshops**

MEMBERSHIP

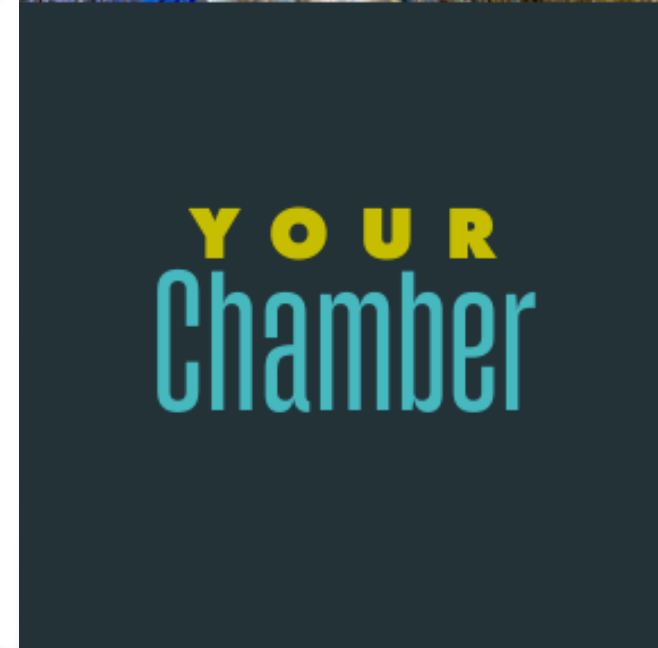
Membership Tiers

Over the last year, our membership team has focused much of their efforts on retooling our membership offerings to add enhanced value to our current member businesses and reach new organizations looking for greater involvement in the Cape community. We are set to launch our new tiered membership model in July 2024. Memberships will range from \$355 up to \$12,000, with customized packages available. New programming accessible to members will include a leadership workshop series, career signing day, and Chairman's Circle receptions.

As part of our new tiers rollout, we produced member testimonial videos. **A compilation of these testimonials can be seen [here](#).**



YOUR
Cape Cod



Cape Cod's most
influential business
organization since 1921.



COMMUNICATIONS

The Collective

Our communications team began sharing highlights of the Chamber's work in what has become our popular biweekly newsletter, The Collective. The Collective continues to attract high levels of readership and has an above-industry average open rate of **47%**.

Additionally, the Chamber maintained a strong social media presence this year, promoting our members and highlighting all they offer the region to an audience of over **14,000** followers on Facebook and more than **6,500** followers on Instagram.



The Collective



CEO CORNER

Change by Chance or by Choice?

Ask any resident, business owner, or visitor what they love most about Cape Cod, and you are likely to hear a lot about our region's natural beauty, ample access to ponds and beaches, and abundant outdoor recreation options. These features make Cape Cod the truly unique and special place it is, but they also factor into major economic decisions for employers and families, such as where to open a business or raise their children. As we saw during the pandemic, Cape Cod's proximity to environmental resources is an asset when it comes to attracting visitors and residents. This has impacted everything from year-round population growth, up 7% regionally since 2019, to the prevalence of short-term rentals, which have increased by 47% since 2021.

With more visitors and residents comes economic opportunity, as businesses see increased demand for goods and services. However, these opportunities are directly tied to the state of Cape Cod's natural environment - and that outlook has not been good.


Missed a
Collective email
or want to read
previous CEO
Corners?

[View them all](#)

[Read more](#)

DESTINATION MARKETING

2023 Marketing Recap



**5.7M Unique Sessions
on CapeCodChamber.org
(+ 83% over 2022)**



**Expedia Campaigns:
10.3K Room Nights Booked,
\$3.3M in Booking Revenue**



**1.1M Engagements
in Influencer Marketing**



**121K @VisitCapeCod
Followers**



**Cape Cod Travel Guide:
Awarded Gold MarCom
Award for Excellence
in Publications**

DESTINATION MARKETING

Cape Cod Rebrand

As the Cape's Regional Tourism Council, the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce strives to market the Cape as a year-round destination across the globe. In this post-COVID economy, being more competitive is necessary to achieve long-term sustainability for our region. We recognized our 20-year-old branding needed a contemporary revamp in order to sustain the Cape's vibrant tourism economy, so we undertook a year-long process with consultant Fuseideas to update our destination marketing. What became the goal: capture the deeply personal nature of a Cape Cod visit – how everyone's unique experience here, and the warmth of those memories, is what keeps them coming back.

In February, during a celebration held at the Pelham House Resort, we were thrilled to unveil the new "Cape Cod: Truly Yours" brand. **Learn more about the story behind "Truly Yours" in our [brand video](#).**



DESTINATION MARKETING

Signature Events



Cocktails & Connections

It was a *white-out* at our 2024 Cocktails & Connections event, hosted by the Chamber's Wedding Committee. On January 11th, the new Dune building at Wychmere Beach Club transformed into an extravagant setting. Guests, dressed in white, were treated to over 200 local wedding vendors showcasing their services.



Travel & Tourism Forum

Nearly 200 attendees gathered to hear Massachusetts Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll and Kate Fox, Executive Director of the Mass. Office of Travel & Tourism, address the latest issues and opportunities facing our region's hospitality businesses at the Chamber's 2024 Travel & Tourism Industry Forum. Held on March 27th at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Hyannis, the event also saw our CEO, Paul Niedzwiecki, give an update on the state of the Cape's tourism economy.

DESTINATION MARKETING



Quahog Day

Our mascot and meteorological mollusk, Doug the Quahog, revealed his prediction for the number of beach days this summer at the 16th Annual Quahog Day, held at The Chart Room in Cataumet on the first day of summer, June 20th, 2024. Guests were treated to Doug's grand arrival by boat and watched in awe as the Quahog Whisper (i.e. our very own CEO, Paul Niedzwiecki) interpreted Doug's prediction of 72 beach days to Master of Ceremonies Eric Fisher of WBZ-TV.



Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival

In July 2023, we celebrated the 9th year of the Chamber's popular Cape Cod Hydrangea Fest. This year the event benefited 30 local nonprofits and raised over \$90,000 during the week-long festivities, which includes garden tours, workshops and other special events.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CDL Pilot Program

From November 2023 to January 2024, we ran a four-person, Cape-based Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training program with CMSC Parker Professionals Driving School. All four trainees completed the program and acquired their CDLs, and, through grant funding, the Chamber covered the training costs for the four participants.

In May 2024, we were awarded \$500,000 from the Commonwealth Corporation's Workforce Training Fund Program toward a multi-year CDL training program with Parker Professionals. Cohorts are currently being planned for the Fall of 2024. The program directly address the region's need for CDL drivers in industries including waste management, coastal construction, moving and storage, public works, public transportation, and aquaculture.

A promotional video about the CDL program can be found [here](#).



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

J-1 Housing Program

The Cape Cod Chamber is helping the county reach pre-pandemic J-1 Visa summer worker numbers through community engagement to secure safe and reliable housing for this critical segment of our seasonal workforce. Within the first year of creating a Workforce Housing Coordinator position, we expanded Cape Cod's J-1 host family network by **62 new families** and helped **over 100 students** find safe homes and, in some cases, better working conditions.

This spring, our Housing Coordinator worked with another **40 businesses** hiring J-1 student workers and helped coordinate several community events to benefit hosts, students and businesses.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Blue Economy Foundation

The Cape Cod Blue Economy Foundation, Inc. was established in 2017 to provide support for the Cape Cod Blue Economy Project. Launched in 2015 by the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, the Blue Economy Project is a regional initiative to promote and sustain a maritime-focused economy on Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and Plymouth.

The mission of the Cape Cod Blue Economy Foundation is to grow the region's economy in a sustainable and balanced way, focusing on protecting and promoting our water and coastal resources.



Blue Economy Foundation Signature Events



WaterWORKS is a hands-on career showcase connecting local high school students to blue economy and STEM career opportunities in our region. WaterWORKS 2024, held on January 16th and hosted in partnership with the Cape Cod Chamber, Cape Cod Community College, Cape Cod Regional STEM Network and the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance, saw 60 blue economy/STEM businesses and around 300 (out of 400 registered) junior and senior high school students, with featured speakers from Vineyard Offshore.



The **Big Blue Conference** is the Blue Economy Foundation's two-day forum curated to spark conversations and inspire actions relevant to the vitality of Cape Cod and the surrounding blue economy. Year two of Big Blue was *electric* – held at Aloft Aviation at Cape Cod Gateway Airport on April 30th and May 1st, 2024, this year's presentations were focused on the electrification of transportation, as well as coastal resiliency efforts. Big Blue's 218 attendees heard from two celebrity emcees (Rhondella Richardson of WCVB-TV and Eric Fisher of WBZ-TV) and 32 esteemed speakers over the two days. The conference speaker presentations can be viewed on the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce's public YouTube channel.



PUBLIC POLICY

Overview

Having added a full-time Government Relations position, the Chamber has been working to strengthen relationships with local, state, and federal partners, while formalizing a legislative agenda that will allow us to proactively advocate for the unique business interests in our region.

Throughout the year, we submitted written and oral testimony to state and federal decision-makers covering issues like replacement of the Bourne and Sagamore Bridges; attainable workforce housing; employee business ownership; tourism and visitation; and early education and childcare. We collaborated with the Healey-Driscoll Administration and the Cape & Islands legislative delegation to include Cape Cod-specific housing policies in the Governor's landmark \$4.1 billion Affordable Homes Act. Our CEO Paul Niedzwiecki also served on the Commonwealth's Economic Development Planning Council, which worked to develop a new four-year, statewide Economic Development Plan, signed by the Governor in December 2023.



PUBLIC POLICY

Cape & Islands Bridges Coalition

In January 2024, the Chamber launched the Cape & Islands Bridges Coalition (CIBC), a group of nearly 40 individuals representing businesses and organizations from across Cape Cod, the Islands, South Shore, and Boston. The CIBC is committed to supporting full funding and replacement of both the Sagamore and Bourne Bridges to ensure the future economic viability of Cape Cod & the Islands. This June, we traveled with founding members of the CIBC to meet with House and Senate members in D.C.

These efforts will continue in the upcoming year as we further develop the work of the CIBC, serving as a resource for decision makers on Beacon Hill and in Washington as they work to move the Canal bridges project – one of the biggest in the nation – forward.



PUBLIC POLICY

Childcare

Our advocacy focused on securing permanent funding for the C3 grant program, a \$475 million annual investment that has helped stabilize the childcare sector and drive its first period of growth in decades. We are also monitoring the Northern Central Massachusetts Early Childhood Support Project (NCM ECSP), a pilot program using matching grants to incentivize employers to create new early education slots (especially for low-income families and childcare deserts), as a potential model for similar efforts on Cape Cod.

In June 2024, the Chamber awarded 15 grants to new family childcare providers on Cape Cod, helping fund critical operational needs such as CPR and first aid certification, licensing fees, and educational supplies, equipment and technology.

Additionally, our Early Education and Child Care Task Force continues to meet regularly to engage key stakeholders at the local and state level on regional early education needs.



ANNUAL MEETING



On June 12th, 2024, over 200 business and community leaders came together for our 102nd Annual Meeting at the Wychmere Beach Club in Harwich Port. We were honored to be joined by Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey, who commended Cape leaders for their community-focused efforts to address the Cape's most pressing needs. From housing and the workforce to our blue economy and climate resiliency, "You have a partner in this administration," Gov. Healey said.



Our CEO Paul Niedzwiecki also spoke of how the Chamber is adapting to meet the needs of residents and visitors alike, highlighting our destination rebrand as well as our J-1 housing and CDL programs.



Board appointments included new Chair Lisa Oliver of The Cooperative Bank of Cape Cod, as well as new members voted to the board: Jamie Bohlin (Cape Cod Celebrations), Tim Lus (The Flagman Store & Cape Cod Youth Sports), Molly MacGregor (Sun Self Storage), Abby Our (Robert B. Our Company), Parth Patel (Freebird Motor Lodge), Rick Penn (Puritan Cape Cod), and Courtney Lowe (Chatham Bars Inn).



cape cod
CHAMBER of COMMERCE