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ACCIDENT

One dead following motorcycle crash

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BELCHERTOWN – A 34-year-old Belchertown resident was tragically killed over the weekend as the result of injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident.

Officers with the Belchertown Police Department, Fire Department and paramedics were called to Mill Valley Road (Route 181) in Belchertown at around 7:45 p.m. on Saturday, June 22

See **ACCIDENT**, page 7 •

SELECTMEN

Marijuana growers seek town OK

BY STEPHEN C. HILL
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – A Chicopee company is hoping to establish a marijuana growing facility on Mill Valley Road, but has to iron out some details with town officials and receive state approval before bringing its plans to fruition.

R & J Supply, LLC, is owned by partners Emory Snell and Justin Nevins, both from Chicopee. They have leased about 6,500 square feet of 401

See **SELECTMEN**, page 7 •



While the evening was far from sweltering patrons none-the-less were eager to cool down with a sampling of Batch Ice Cream.

PHOTO CREDIT KELSEY HALEY MEDIA

Food Truck Friday draws out the munchies

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BELCHERTOWN – Drove of hungry locals descended upon the Belchertown Town Common last week to sample some of the best food that the region has to offer in the first of three planned events set to take place this summer.

The Food Truck Friday event returned with a tremendous showing of support on Friday, June 21 with over a dozen ven-

dors arriving to the common to serve up hundreds of locals who came to dine between 4 and 9 p.m. that evening.

Hosted and sponsored each year by the Belchertown

See **FOOD TRUCKS**, page 5 •

At the Holyoke Hummus truck staff worked to make delicious wraps featuring their signature ingredient to hungry customers.



TURLEY PUBLICATIONS STAFF
PHOTO BY WYATT ALOISIO



TURLEY PUBLICATIONS STAFF PHOTO BY WYATT ALOISIO
Ann Genero and Betty Lannon celebrated with other residents. The pair were the first two residents to come live at Christopher Heights following its opening.

ANNIVERSARY

One year down, many to come

Christopher Heights celebrates first anniversary

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BELCHERTOWN – In the short time since first opening their doors Christopher Heights has become more than just the local assist-

ed living facility. For the many people who call it their home, the staff that work there and the town officials who helped to facilitate its creation, Christopher Heights embodies a success story and an integral part of Belchertown and the former state school property.

Joining dozens of residents in the building's Pub Room last Friday, June 21, staff and administrators with Christopher Heights celebrated a successful inaugural

first year with an afternoon of birthday cake and music.

It was a momentous opportunity for reflection for not just the many residents who had moved in over the past year, but for those involved in the multi-year design and construction effort and the first foothold for the community in rejuvenating the state school property.

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Left to right: project executive director Dale Proulx, Grantham Group senior Vice president Walter Ohanian, and town administrator Gary Brougham cut the cake.



Christopher Heights residents Lenore Hill, Sandra Smith, Monica Ouelette, and Mildrid Gerow-Christiensen celebrate the one year anniversary of the assisted living facility's opening.

Residents and staff celebrate *First Anniversary*



Laura and Peter Hicks provide a musical duet for attendees.



Staff at Christopher Heights celebrate a successful first year of operations.

HEIGHTS • from page 1

"It's been an amazing experience in such a short span of time," said Lorna Stone, director of marketing and admissions with Christopher Heights. "It's been a really worth while endeavor to see everything come together. Meeting with people and taking them on tours you can really see first hand that this has become the sort of place that a lot of people can call home."

The 83-unit, three-story facility was developed by Grantham Group, LLC., of Boston and worked closely along side the selectmen-appointed Belchertown Economic Development Industrial Corporation as well as numerous other town departments and MassDevelopment to help facilitate the creation of the facility, which first broke ground for construction in June of 2017. In that

short time and with just 2 residents first moving in at their opening the population at Christopher Heights has grown drastically with efforts underway to finalize work on several apartments on the third floor that will be open and available in the coming months.

The level of cooperation between the town and the facility has, for those closest to the project, been the greatest factor in yielding its success.

"The Belchertown community could not have been more supportive in seeing this happen," said project Executive Director Dale Proulx. "From the police to the senior center and on and on. Every department has given us their full support." Proulx said that the effort was a long time coming with more than 2 years of work put in to drafting the plans for the site before the first shovel entered

the ground. Now years later dozens of residents are enjoying the amenities of the location including walking the grounds of the new common area and finding a place to call home.

"Looking at all the faces here in this room shows us just how far we've come in just 1 year," said Proulx. "There's so much more life and vitality here this summer than last year. The building has come a long way in that year and so have we."

Grantham Group Senior Vice President and CEO Walter Ohanian said congratulated both the residents and the staff on reaching the hallmark occasion.

"When we started building this facility 2 years ago and to see what it has become today, it's really a tribute to every single person in this room with us today who have come to call it a home," said Ohanian. "It's caring, loving. Its some place that is safe and secure and a place that we all can cherish."

Grantham Group manages six other Christopher Heights assisted living facilities throughout Massachusetts including in Northampton, Worcester and Marlboro. Ohanian noted that while many staff often leave in that first year of being open from attrition that to date all members of the management team in Belchertown have remained.

Following a celebratory cake meal entertainment for the afternoon was brought to the group by



Grantham Group senior vice president and CEO Walter Ohanian.

Peter Hicks, who sang assorted tunes and songs in a duet performance with wife and Christopher Heights Activities Director Laura Hicks.

Belchertown Town Administrator Gary Brougham was also in attendance for the ceremony and said that for several residents living at the facility the experience was a particularly unique one as they had come to return to the same property that they had worked for many years when it functioned as part of the state school.

"This exact location is where the hospital and some of the cottages was," said Brougham. "It took nearly 20 years for this project to

break ground. There were a lot of setbacks and for many of us here I'm sure we thought that the day may never come."

Brougham said that the facility had become a major part of his day-to-day work over the past decade and that like many present he was glad to have the opportunity to be present in sharing the occasion and the hard work that went into making it happen.

Christopher Heights is just the beginning for the former state school property as well according to Brougham, who told attendees that future endeavors for the remainder of the property include possible construction of a new Belchertown Day School building, a microbrewery operated by Arcpoint Brewing Co., and possible commercial and professional space among other projects under being considered through negotiation.

"Over the past several years there has been tremendous investment. This property alone was in excess of \$15 million, the extension of the town road was over \$1 million, the road being constructed out to Jackson Street is \$3.2 million, and those additional facilities that we're hoping to break ground on soon will come in somewhere around \$6 million additional," said Brougham who said that in building the infrastructure of the property that they hoped to make it as appealing as possible for prospective developers.

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