

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 10, 2007**

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MAYOR WILLIAM MANZI, FELLOW REGIONAL LEADERS AND MERRIMACK VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT JOSEPH BEVILACQUA ANNOUNCE MAJOR MASSACHUSETTS MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION AWARD

Mayor William M. Manzi III, along with Lawrence Mayor Michael J. Sullivan, Andover Town Manager Buzz Stapczynski, North Andover Town Manager Mark Rees and Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce President Joseph Bevilacqua, are pleased to announce that the Cities of Methuen and Lawrence and the Towns of Andover and North Andover have been selected to receive the prestigious Kenneth E. Pickard Municipal Innovation Award at this year's Massachusetts Municipal Association's Annual Meeting. The award will be presented at a special reception during the conference, held at the Sheraton Boston on Saturday, January 13th.

The Kenneth E. Pickard award recognizes the collective effort of all four communities in implementing the *Merrimack Valley Means Business* web site. This award specifically recognizes municipalities that have demonstrated a dedication and commitment to increase the effectiveness of local government by successfully implementing a unique and creative program.

The *Merrimack Valley Means Business* project teams the four communities with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission and the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce, to produce an interactive web site (www.merrimackvalleymeansbusiness.com). This innovative portal provides a complete inventory of all businesses and parcels of commercial and industrial land in Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, and North Andover. The data available on this web site provides for easy viewing and downloading with no login procedure and at no cost.

In addition to business and parcel information, customized demographic, consumer expenditure, business and workforce, and surrounding business counts reports for each property can be obtained, with accompanying GIS maps and detailed Pictometry aerial images. With its completely unique aerial image capabilities, this interactive web site is the first regionally based business informational Web tool of this caliber in the country.

"On behalf of the City of Methuen, I am pleased and proud to be honored with such a prestigious award," stated Mayor Manzi. "We are happy to participate with our fellow communities in a regional effort that will yield a variety of short- and long-term economic development benefits."

Chamber President Joseph Bevilacqua added, “This prestigious award is recognition of the economic development work the Mayors and Town Managers and state officials of Andover, Lawrence, Methuen and North Andover have and can accomplish working together with the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce, which has been recognized as the Merrimack Valley’s proactive leader for business and commercial development. This approach of working together to promote economic growth and job creation offered by the Merrimack Valley Chamber’s program is yet another example of the chamber’s leadership in bringing together government and the business community.”