

THE MONTHLY TEA

The Official Monthly Newsletter for
Employees of the Town of Bloomfield



**JANUARY 2025
VOLUME 13**

CELEBRATING 1 YEAR OF "THE MONTHLY TEA" AND LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025!

Hey Team Bloomfield,

As we welcome the new year, let's take a moment to celebrate a special milestone: the 1-year Anniversary of "The Monthly Tea"! Over the past year, this publication has become a cornerstone of our internal communications, providing updates, sharing successes, and fostering positivity across all town departments.

Your engagement and contributions have made this newsletter a success. By staying connected, we strengthen the teamwork and spirit that make Bloomfield such a remarkable place to work. Clear communication is the foundation of progress, and together, we've built a channel that keeps us informed, inspired, and aligned in our mission to serve the community.

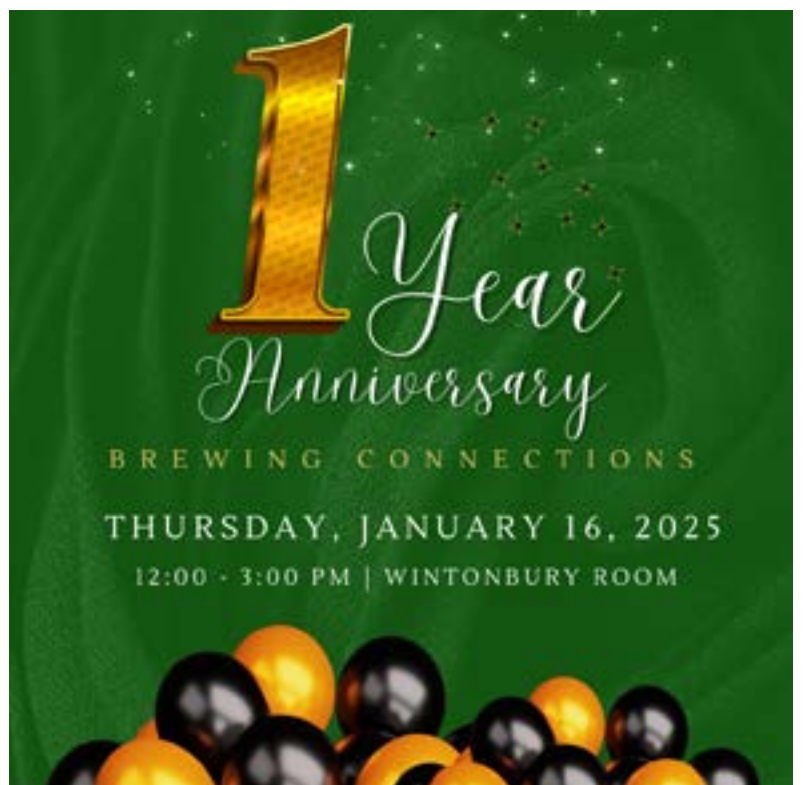
As we step into 2025, I encourage each of you to embrace this new chapter with a renewed sense of purpose and enthusiasm for personal and professional growth. Bloomfield is more than just a municipality; it's the best municipality in the State of Connecticut, and that's because of you—our dedicated team.

Let's press forward together, building on our successes, supporting one another, and making a lasting impact for our residents and colleagues. Here's to a year filled with positivity, progress, and pride in all that we accomplish.

Wishing you and your loved ones a Happy New Year!!!

Thanks,

India M. Rodgers, MFP
Director of Strategic Communications
& Government Affairs



MESSAGE FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

Hello Team Bloomfield,

Happy New Year! As we roar into 2025, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible work we accomplished together last year. Your dedication, resilience, and commitment to the Town of Bloomfield have set a strong foundation for what promises to be a year of new opportunities and continued growth.

This year we will build on our successes and face challenges with the same spirit of collaboration and innovation that defines our team. Together, we will continue to deliver excellent services to our residents and make Bloomfield a thriving and connected community. I encourage each of you to:

Set personal and professional goals for the year ahead.

Encourage collaboration and cross-departmental teamwork to drive creativity and efficiency.

Promote wellness and work-life balance to ensure a happy, healthy workforce.

Remember, even small steps forward can lead to meaningful progress. Let's support one another in these efforts and celebrate every achievement along the way.

As we step into a new year, it's the perfect opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments and set our sights on the goals we want to achieve in the months ahead. Personal goal setting is not only a way to grow as individuals but also a chance to align our efforts with the collective success of our organization.

Here are a few tips to inspire your journey:

Define Your Goals Clearly: Be specific about what you want to achieve. Whether it's learning a new skill, improving a process, or balancing work and personal life, clarity is key.

Break It Down: Large goals can feel daunting. Break them into smaller, actionable steps to make progress feel achievable.

Stay Positive and Motivated: Challenges will arise, but maintaining a positive outlook and seeking support when needed will help you stay on track.

Celebrate Success: Every milestone, no matter how small, deserves recognition. Celebrate your progress and use it as fuel to keep going.



Thank you for all that you do to make our town a wonderful place to live and work. Here's to a bright and successful 2025!

Warm Regards,
Alvin D. Schwapp, Jr.
Town Manager

As a team, we are stronger when each of us is striving toward personal and professional growth. I encourage you to take a moment to reflect on what motivates you and how you can make 2025 your best year yet. Together, we can achieve remarkable things!



CERTIFIED CONNECTICUT MUNICIPAL OFFICIAL



Congratulations to Human Resources Director Rosa Matias, a 2024 graduate of the Certified Connecticut Municipal Official program

CCM understands how valuable professional development can be. Continuing education is not only important for your current position, but also to your career path. Under the advisement and direction from experienced staff at Trinity College, the Certified Connecticut Municipal Official (CCMO) program was developed.

Our training is intended to teach you how to work collaboratively, solve problems, build partnerships, and work across political and organizational boundaries. CCM encourages elected and appointed officials to utilize municipal training workshops, conferences, special meetings, and other educational opportunities to expand their knowledge and enhance important leadership skills through education.

To reward your commitment to furthering your education, CCM proudly offers the CCMO program. Now, you can become a Certified Connecticut Municipal Official.

Name	Graduation Year
Rosa Matias	2024
India Rodgers	2023
Brian Wolff	2023
Terri Blasso	2022

MORE INFORMATION: <https://www.ccm-ct.org/Member-Benefits/Education/CCMO>



We are excited to announce the launch of **The Kudos Corner**, starting in February 2025!

The Kudos Corner will be a dedicated space for employees to recognize and celebrate the incredible contributions of their fellow co-workers. Whether it's going the extra mile, lending a helping hand, or finding ways to make the Town of Bloomfield even better, this is your chance to give them a well-deserved shout-out!

Use the link below to nominate your fellow co-workers. Let's continue to uplift and inspire one another as we work together for our amazing community.

<https://bloomfieldct.gov/FormCenter/General-Forms-4/Employee-Recognition-Accomplishments-78>

MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION (MFA) UPDATE

To improve security and meet State and Federal recommendations, the Town of Bloomfield will enable Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) on all employee email accounts starting Monday, January 6, 2025.

What is MFA?

MFA adds an extra layer of security when logging into your email. You'll need more than just a password—like a security code or a physical device (YubiKey).

How to Access Your Email with MFA:

- 1. If You Have a Department-Issued Computer

Log in to your computer using your network account.
Open Microsoft Outlook 365 as usual.

- 2. If You Use a Personal Computer (Anywhere)

Go to www.outlook.com.

Log in with your full email address and network password.

Example:

Username: Tom Langley

Full Domain Logon: tlangley@bloomfieldct.gov

Using the YubiKey

If you do not have a Town-issued cellphone, you will be assigned a YubiKey. Here's how it works:

Plug the YubiKey into a USB port on your computer.
A pop-up message will appear asking you to insert the USB device. Follow the instructions.
Enter the PIN provided by IT, then click OK.
You'll see a request to Touch the YubiKey. The 'Y' on the key will blink.
Gently touch the blinking 'Y' with your finger (no need to press hard!).

Important Notes:

You may need the YubiKey more often when accessing email via www.outlook.com outside the organization.
If you access Munis, you will also need to use the YubiKey, as Munis is connected to your email account.

For Users with Town-Issued Cellphones:

You will use the Microsoft Authenticator App instead of a YubiKey for MFA.

No Personal Cellphone Access


Accessing email accounts from personal cellphones is not allowed at this time.

Need Help?


If you have a Town of Bloomfield email account but haven't received your YubiKey, email IT Support immediately.
Remember: Don't smash the YubiKey—just lightly touch the blinking 'Y'.



Congratulations to the Division of Public Works and the Bloomfield Police Department as they were each recognized with the Community Service Award presented by the Blue Hills Fire Department.




Freedom of Information Training



Why is FOIA important?

- Provides the public access to and copies of government records
- Promotes transparency and accountability of government actions
- Guarantees the public access to meetings of boards and commission
- Helps build a better community based on a strong foundation of trust

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
3:00 PM



Health & Wellness

To: All Benefited Employees

From: Human Resources

Subject: Employee Wellness Program 2024-2025

All benefited employees are invited to participate in the Town's Wellness Incentive Program. Participation in this program is voluntary and confidential. The incentives are based on what healthcare plan you choose.

CIGNA OPEN ACCESS PLUS (PPO) PLAN

If you are in the PPO plan, you can earn up to (2) \$50.00 checks from Accounts Payable. You must complete these steps:

- Get a yearly checkup with your doctor and earn one \$50.00 check.
- Fill out a Health Assessment form on CIGNA's Website and earn another \$50.00 check.

CIGNA CHOICE FUND (H.S.A/HRA) PLAN

If you are in the CIGNA CHOICE FUND H.S.A/HRA Plan, you can earn up to \$250.00. You must complete these steps:

- Get a yearly checkup with your doctor and receive a \$125.00 deposit into your account.
- Fill out a Health Assessment form on CIGNA's Website and receive an additional \$125.00 into your H.S.A/HRA account.

The deadline for completing this process is June 30, 2025.

If you have questions about this program, you may contact Human Resources at (860) 769- 3544.

[hr/wellness program/wellness 2024-2025wellness incentive cover sheet](#)

Effective January 1, 2025, Public Act 24-8 revises Connecticut's paid sick leave law. Employees will accrue one hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours annually. Part-time employees now have the same accrual rate as full-time employees, who continue to follow their collective bargaining agreement (CBA) or Town policy.

- Up to 40 hours of sick leave per fiscal year may be used for:
- 1. The employee's or a family member's illness, injury, medical diagnosis, treatment, or preventive care.
 - 2. Mental health wellness days for the employee or family member.
 - 3. Closures due to public health emergencies.
 - 4. Health risks related to communicable illnesses.
 - 5. Family violence or sexual assault-related needs, excluding perpetrators.

NEW

for

2025

Sick time can be used in one-hour increments. Usage beyond 40 hours per year must comply with CBAs or Town policy. "Family member" includes a spouse, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, or a close associate equivalent to family.

Further details are available in Connecticut General Statutes §§ 31-57r–31-57w or the Paid Sick Leave poster in the Human Resources Department. For questions, contact Human Resources.

Please see below information in regards to Retirement Plan Contribution Limits for 2025. If you would like to change your contributions to your 457 Deferred Compensation plan, either stop by the HR Dept. for a form or email Rosa Matias at rmatias@bloomfieldct.gov.

2025 Retirement Plan Contribution Limits (401k, 457(b) & More)

The information below summarizes the retirement plan contribution limits for 2025.

Plan	Normal Limit	Age 50 Catch-up Limit	Pre-Retirement Catch-up Limit	Age 60-63 Catch-up Limit*
457(b)	\$23,500	\$7,500	\$23,500	\$11,250
401(a)	\$70,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
401(k)	\$23,500	\$7,500	N/A	\$11,250
403(b)	\$23,500	\$7,500	\$15,000 lifetime cap	\$11,250
IRA	\$7,000	\$1,000	N/A	N/A

N/A = Not applicable

*As per a change via SECURE 2.0, a higher catch-up contribution limit applies for employees aged 60, 61, 62 and 63. For 2025, this higher catch-up contribution limit is \$11,250. This option is effective as of January 1, 2025 for plans that elect to adopt it. Limitations may apply as defined by the plan. Please contact your plan administrator should you require additional information.

MissionSquare
RETIREMENT

Invest in a shared sense of service™

HAIL WELCOME TO THE TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD

New Employee

Biography

ZACHARY STRANGMAN

Information Systems Technician

Information Technology

December 30, 2024 - We are pleased to welcome Zachary Strangman to the Town of Bloomfield Information Technology Department as the new Information Systems Technician. Zack brings over fifteen years of experience to the team. Before joining, he served as a Wireless Network Engineer at Keene State College in New Hampshire. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Management with a focus on Economics from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

“I have extensive experience supporting a diverse range of users and technologies, from small companies with just two employees to large organizations with campuses of up to 20,000 individuals. I am eager to bring this experience and expertise to contribute to the success of Bloomfield. My passion for civil and community service stems from a deep commitment to helping others which was instilled by my family. I take great pride in ensuring that everyone feels safe, valued, and heard.”

WELCOME TO TEAM BLOOMFIELD!

New Employee

Biography

ANNA POSNIAK

Town Clerk

Town Clerk Department

December 8, 2024 - We are pleased to welcome Anna Posniak to the Town of Bloomfield's Town Clerk Department as the new Town Clerk. With thirty years of experience in the administrative and clerical roles, Anna brings an abundance of expertise to the position. She previously served as Town Clerk for the Town of Windsor and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Western New England University. In 2020, Anna was awarded CTCA Town Clerk of the Year and the Above and Beyond Award in 2023.

“As a 30-year public servant, Albert Einstein's timeless wisdom, "Try not to be a person of success, but a person of value." is what drives me professionally. Success is not defined by wealth, titles or recognition. It's about enriching your life and those around you with qualities of kindness, empathy and authenticity.” - Anna

WELCOME TO TEAM BLOOMFIELD!

New Employee

Biography

LORI MYERS

Administrative Aide

Senior Services

December 9, 2024 - We are pleased to welcome Lori Myers to the Town of Bloomfield Senior Services Department as the new Administrative Aide. Lori brings over three years of diverse experience in the human services field. Prior to joining, she served as a Child Care Referral Specialist with United Way. Lori holds a Bachelor of Science in Sociology and Early Childhood Education from Eastern Connecticut State University, as well as a Master's in Elementary Education from Central Connecticut State University.

“I have been a resident of Bloomfield for the last 11 years and love all of the opportunities and activities that are available to both myself and my almost eleven year old son. I enjoy volunteering and have been fostering dogs for the last four years with Dog Star Rescue located within Bloomfield. I am looking forward to being able to contribute to the Senior Services department in the years to come.” - Lori

WELCOME TO TEAM BLOOMFIELD!

New Employee

Biography

NICOLA HAYNES

Administrative Analyst I

Building & Land Use

December 2, 2024 - We are pleased to welcome Nicola Haynes to the Town of Bloomfield's Building and Land Use Department as the new Administrative Analyst I. She brings six years of experience in the administrative services field. Nicola previously held the position of Senior Administrative Assistant with the City of Hartford. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Connecticut and is a proud inductee of the National Society of Leadership and Success.

“I am thrilled to be a member of an organization that is in pursuit of building the best team with the most talented and happiest people. The Town's purpose and ethical principles align with my core values as they relate to customer commitment and integrity. Therefore, as an employee with the Town of Bloomfield, I will have the opportunity to promote the health, safety, and wellbeing of my community.” - Nicola

WELCOME TO TEAM BLOOMFIELD!



CHRIS CEGLIA NAMED
EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

Chris Ceglia from facilities was named the Employee of the Quarter at the most recent staff meeting and holiday luncheon.

Attached are excerpts of a letter from Senior Services, about the actions of Chris to go above and beyond his roles and responsibilities: On November 27, shortly before the office closed for the holiday, a man entered Senior Services, distraught over alleged fraudulent charges and claiming his phone was stolen. He grew increasingly agitated, mentioned memory loss, and theft by a neighbor, and expressed violent and suicidal thoughts. Chris Ceglia from Facilities, overhearing the police call, came to the office, offering support until officers arrived. The situation was tense and frightening, especially considering the potential risk if staff had been alone during the encounter!

**TIPS & IDEAS FOR
NEWSLETTER CONTENT**

Have a great idea for an upcoming newsletter?
Please let us know by submitting the webform by
clicking this link:

[https://ct-bloomfield.civicplus.com/FormCenter/
General-Forms-4/The-Monthly-Tea-Employee-News-
letter-Cont-72](https://ct-bloomfield.civicplus.com/FormCenter/General-Forms-4/The-Monthly-Tea-Employee-News-letter-Cont-72)

Or contact India Rodgers at irodgers@bloomfieldct.gov
or Brian Wolff at bwolff@bloomfieldct.gov

WORK ANNIVERSARIES

NAME	YEARS OF SERVICE	DEPARTMENT
Virginia Monteiro	1/3/17 - 8 years	Assessor's Office
Adilen Valentina	1/8/24 - 1 year	Human Resources
Thangu Narasimhan	1/3/05 - 20 years	IT
Jenna DiScipio	1/25/21 - 4 years	Leisure Services
Gabriella Boulanger	1/6/20 - 5 years	Police
Roy Clemons III	1/10/23 - 2 years	Police
Paul Hammick	1/3/11 - 14 years	Police
Rachmiel Moise	1/8/18 - 7 years	Police
Henry Rodriguez	1/2/13 - 12 years	Police
Anthony Traniello	1/3/23 - 2 years	Police
Brianna Vega	1/8/18 - 7 years	Police
Robert Wilkins	1/18/12 - 13 years	Police
Michael Tobia	1/23/13 - 12 years	Library Services
Timothy DeCarish	1/15/08 - 17 years	Public Works
Ryan French	1/7/09 - 16 years	Public Works
Sharon Gentles-Harris	1/23/19 - 6 years	Risk Management
Julia Gonvalves	1/5/24 - 1 year	Social & Youth Services
Terri Blesso	1/2/08 - 17 years	Tax Office



Q: What's a spider's New Year's resolution?

A: To spend less time on the web.

Q: Why don't ants get sick?

A: Because they have little antybodyes.

Q: Did you hear about the guy who invented the "knock-knock" joke?

A: He won the "no-bell" prize.

WALK LIKE A PENGUIN

Winter Walking Safety Tips

- Take shorter, shuffle-like steps, to maintain balance.
- Walk with your arms at your sides.
- Keep your center of gravity over your front leg.
- Wear appropriate footwear like boots or other slip-resistant footwear.

RECIPE CORNER

Creamy Chicken and Wild Rice Soup

Warm up your January with this comforting and hearty soup that's perfect for chilly days. Packed with tender chicken, earthy wild rice, and a creamy base, it's sure to be a crowd-pleaser!

- Ingredients**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
 - 1 medium onion, diced
 - 2 carrots, peeled and diced
 - 2 celery stalks, diced
 - 3 garlic cloves, minced
 - 6 cups chicken broth
 - 1 cup wild rice, rinsed
 - 2 cups cooked, shredded chicken
 - 1 teaspoon dried thyme
 - 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
 - 1 bay leaf
 - Salt and pepper, to taste
 - 1 cup heavy cream or half-and-half
 - 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour (optional, for thickening)

- Directions**
- Sauté the Vegetables**
Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onion, carrots, and celery. Sauté until softened, about 5-7 minutes. Add garlic and cook for another minute.
 - Simmer the Soup**
Add chicken broth, wild rice, shredded chicken, thyme, rosemary, bay leaf, salt, and pepper to the pot. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 40-50 minutes, or until the rice is tender.



- Make it Creamy**
Stir in the heavy cream or half-and-half. For a thicker soup, whisk flour with a few tablespoons of cold water to make a slurry and stir it into the soup. Simmer for another 5 minutes until slightly thickened.
- Serve and Enjoy**
Remove the bay leaf and ladle the soup into bowls. Serve with crusty bread or crackers for a satisfying winter meal.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Town of Bloomfield will be celebrating it's 190th anniversary since its incorporation



TRIVIA QUESTIONS ABOUT BLOOMFIELD'S HISTORY

1. Town Founding

What year was Bloomfield officially incorporated as a town?

2. Historical Figures

Who is the Town of Bloomfield named after?

3. Iconic Landmarks

What is the name of the historic church located on Bloomfield Avenue that dates back to 1819?

4. Famous Residents

Which legendary jazz saxophonist called Bloomfield home?

5. Cultural Significance

Bloomfield is often referred to as the "Gateway to the _____."

6. Population Growth

In the early 20th century, what was Bloomfield's primary industry?

7. Local Government

When did Bloomfield adopt its current Town Manager-Council form of government?

THE FIRST PERSON TO E-MAIL US WITH THE CORRECT ANSWERS WILL BE PRESENTED A GIFT AT OUR 1-YEAR MONTHLY TEA CELEBRATION ON JANUARY 16. SEND ANSWERS TO INDIA RODGERS AT IRODGERS@BLOOMFIELDCT.GOV OR BRIAN WOLFF AT BWOLFF@BLOOMFIELDCT.GOV

8. Modern Development

What year was the Bloomfield Town Hall completed in its current location?