



Essex Merchants Group was established in the Spring of 2008 to increase and support business in the Town of Essex, Massachusetts through promotion of Essex as a destination for shopping, dining, recreation, services, accommodations and appreciation of its rich history, bountiful open space and natural beauty. Open to all Essex businesses, EMG currently does not require membership dues. Now in our 11th year, the following is an overview of our accomplishments through June 2019.

List of Accomplishments

Essex Merchants Group	Online Promotions
www.VisitEssexMA.com	Hired Artfluence, an Essex web and print design company, to develop and design the website, www.VisitEssexMA.com . Our website currently includes 80 paid business listings. Membership on the website has raised funds for creating the site and has financed many Merchants Group promotions of Essex over the years. Our website received 52,358 Page Views in the past two years; 10,164 New Users in the past year; and 9,462 Page Views since January 1, 2019. A new, mobile-friendly version of our website is in production to launch in Summer 2019.
Essex Videos	Hired Jon Cooney Productions to create five professional videos to get to know Essex: Visit Essex MA, Essex Antique Shops, Dining in Essex, Essex Arts & Culture, and Stay & Play in Essex, promoted through our website, social media, VisitEssexMA YouTube channel, Essex brochure/map/rack card, Cape Ann TV, North of Boston Visitors Center in Salisbury, MA and the Town of Essex website Visitors page.
Bridge Cape Ann Videos	Hired the Bridge Cape Ann to create short videos of Essex merchants, promoted through our website, social media and VisitEssexMA YouTube channel.
Town of Essex Website	Our website and videos are linked from "Visitors" page on the Town of Essex website, www.essexma.org .
YouTube Channel	Created a "VisitEssexMA" YouTube Channel linked to our website.
Facebook	Created a Facebook page to promote Essex news, events and videos. The page has 3,932 Likes (followers) www.facebook.com/VisitEssexMA Facebook advertising campaign to promote Essex's open space organizations and historical museums.

Facebook advertising through ongoing boosting targeted to specific audiences 2015 – 2019.

North of Boston Facebook North of Boston Member Monday Facebook feature about Essex Merchants Group and upcoming events, posted August 2015.

Twitter Developed a Twitter page and following with an average of 9,950 impressions per month from February 2019 – May 2019:
www.twitter.com/VisitEssexMA

Instagram Developed an Instagram page that currently has 1,034 followers:
www.instagram.com/visit.essexma

Email Marketing Created a Constant Contact email promotion program, including monthly newsletters from “Visit Essex, MA” sent to 1,535 contacts and promoted through Facebook and Twitter to thousands more each month through Facebook paid boosting to targeted audiences.

seARTS Promotion of arts-related Essex events on seARTS website and email newsletters.

Online Media Coverage Helium.com, A Boston Food Diary, Wicked Good Travel Tips, About.com Senior Travel, New England Home Magazine, Design New England, Yankee Magazine, VisitingNewEngland.com, Chronicle TV, North Shore Magazine (May 2019 issue).

Essex Brochure / Map / Rack Card Published an expansion of our rack card in 2015, 2016 and 2018 with 50,000 distributed throughout Cape Ann by Promotions Express, with additional distribution to Maria Miles Visitors Center in Salisbury and the Route 128 Service Plaza in Beverly. The original 2010 brochure was created in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce. The 2016 brochure was printed locally, supported in part by MOTT and North of Boston CVB grant. The current 2018 – 2019 brochure includes 67 Essex merchants.

Cape Ann Guide Sponsored in part, a full spread ad featuring 15 Essex merchants in Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce’s Cape Ann Guide 2015 – 2019. Also provided 1-page article, photos of Essex and a 2/3 page ad. The Guide is also read online at the Chamber’s website.

North of Boston Visitor’s Guide Full page ad in North of Boston Visitor’s Guide 2015 - 2019.

Essex Heritage Map Visit Essex, MA ad in Essex National Heritage Area Map 2017 - 2019.

Discover Gloucester Visitors Guide	Full page ad in Discover Gloucester (now Gloucester Tourism Alliance) Visitors Guide 2015 – 2018.
Cape Ann Summer Guide	Full page ad in Cape Ann Summer Guide 2016 – 2018.
Cape Ann Plein Air	Ad in Cape Ann Plein Air Program Guide 2017 – 2018.
Essex Bicentennial Calendar	Ad in Town of Essex Bicentennial Calendars 2018, 2019.
Essex Postcard	Created and mailed to all Essex residents a glossy promotional postcard to drive traffic to our website and promote a Buy Local theme.
Promotional Button and Bumper Sticker	Created a number of promotional tools, i.e., Ship pin button and “www.VisitEssexMA.com” bumper sticker.
Window Cling	Created “Thank you for enjoying Essex” window cling.
Street Pole Banners	Created several street pole banners to enhance visibility of Essex events to those traveling along the causeway.
Music at Eden’s Edge	Created an Essex Merchants ad in Music at Eden’s Edge programs 2013, 2014.
North Shore Magazine	Sponsored an Essex Merchants ad in North Shore Magazine’s “Best of the North Shore” July/August 2010.
Cape Ann Beacon / Wicked Local	Sponsored in part, a full page ad featuring a number of Essex Merchants in the Cape Ann Beacon. The ad also ran online at Wicked Local Essex.
Summer on Cape Ann Publication	Promoted Essex through a one-page introduction to the Historic Essex Walking Tour in 2013.
Print Media Coverage	Created and paid for several local newspaper ads to promote the Essex business community.
Brimfield Ad	Created and paid for a full page color Essex Merchants ad in the Brimfield edition, Antiques Journal, Spring 2010.
Newspaper Ads	Boston Globe Travel, Cape Ann Magazine, North Shore Magazine, AAA Horizons Southern New England, Yankee Magazine.

Paint Essex	Promoted and produced a Plein Air Day and Wet Paint Auction fundraising event in conjunction with Eventide Fine Art Gallery annually in 2012 – 2016.
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Our 5th Annual Paint Essex was part of the Cape Ann Plein Air week-long event October 10 – 16, 2016.

Banks of Cape Ann Campaign

Raised over \$5,500 through a “Celebrate Essex 2012” campaign sponsored by Cape Ann Savings Bank, Bank Gloucester, First Ipswich Bank, and Rockport National Bank (Institution for Savings).

Raised \$5,000 each year in the 2013 and 2014 campaigns sponsored by Cape Ann Savings Bank, Bank Gloucester, First Ipswich Bank, and Rockport National Bank (Institution for Savings).

Raised \$7,000 in 2015 and \$7,500 in 2016 campaigns sponsored by Cape Ann Savings Bank, Institution for Savings, Bank Gloucester and First Ipswich Bank.

Raised \$4,500 in 2017 campaign sponsored by Cape Ann Savings Bank, Bank Gloucester and First Ipswich Bank.

Raised \$7,000 in 2018 campaign sponsored by Cape Ann Savings Bank, Institution for Savings, Bank Gloucester and First Ipswich Bank.

Fall Mums Festival

Created the annual town-wide Fall Mums Festival where over 2,500 Mum plants adorn the causeway and town 2009 – (Fall) 2019.

Best of Essex Online Auction

Created the Best of Essex Online Auction in 2014. A second auction took place in June 2017 and our third auction in June 2018. The 2019 auction is scheduled for November 2019.

Essex Antiques Appraisal Night

Created Essex Antiques Appraisal Night in cooperation with Cape Ann Cable TV in 2009.

Essex Holiday Shopping Weekend

Organized the first Essex Holiday Shopping Weekend in 2009 to promote Essex as a destination for holiday shopping and dining.

Shop Stroll Explore

Organized the first Shop Stroll Explore: Riverside Craft Festival 2013.

Cape Ann Plein Air

Gave promotional and financial support for Cape Ann Plein Air 2017-2018. In 2017 and 2018, sponsored the \$500 prize for the “Best Essex Scene” and another “People’s Choice” prize.

Essex Bicentennial Celebration

Sponsorship and promotion for the Town of Essex Bicentennial Celebration events held throughout the year in 2019.

Essex Events Support Sponsor town events with “Essex” in their name such as the Essex Lion’s Club Turkey Trot, Essex Youth Triathlon, Essex River Race, Essex Holiday Festival, Essex River Day, and Essex ClamFest sponsored by the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce.

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Additional Projects

- Essex Heritage Scenic Byway Kiosk** Collaborated with Essex Heritage to develop content and obtain site location for a 2018 installation of a visitor information kiosk on the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway in Essex, next to 99 Main Street.
- Essex Beautification** Organized and financed cleaning, planting and maintenance for the Town of Essex’s pocket parks and planting strips through 2018.
- Essex Slogan** Created, with an involved Essex community, an Essex branding slogan *“Essex, Massachusetts - The river calls you... the town keeps you”*.
- Essex Directory for Motels & Inns** Created 25 full-color informational binders containing our website’s business listings, our social media links and events to distribute to Cape Ann motels and inns informing visitors of things to see and do in Essex.
- Promotional Marketing Packet** Created a promotional marketing packet, personally distributed to Essex merchants to introduce them to the Essex Merchants Group and encourage them to join our website and participate in meetings and events.
- Intern Program / Blog** Developed an Intern Program with Endicott College in 2014 to assist with promotion and organization of Essex Merchants Group events, and develop an intern-authored Blog.
- Historic Essex Walking Tour** Initiated and coordinated a sub-committee to create 16 walking tour interpretive signs, a full color brochure with map, and a website for additional history online at www.essexwalkingtour.com. Ribbon Cutting held September 2013. Helped secure majority of initial funding in 2012 through Town vote of Community Preservation Funds. Helped secure funding in 2019 through the Town of Essex Historical Commission to reprint 15,000 additional brochures.
- Survey Card** Created a survey card in 2013 to begin gathering demographic information from merchants’ customers - adding several hundred contacts to our email list. Survey cards are being revived in 2019.

Essex River Cultural District	Partnered with the Essex Historical Society and Shipbuilding Museum to receive this designation by the Mass Cultural Council in October 2012. Significant benefits include promotion of Essex by the Mass Office of Travel and Tourism and media recognition for Essex with other Cape Ann and state cultural districts. Our cultural district designation was renewed by the MCC in 2018.
Public Radio Announcements	Essex River Cultural District was singularly featured in Massachusetts Cultural Council’s public radio campaign, airing multiple times on WBUR’s Morning Edition in April 2017 and March 2018.
Cape Ann Cultural Districts Mobile App	Partnered with the other Cape Ann Cultural Districts to develop and fund the creation of a Mobile App launched in Spring 2014.
Public Relations	Hired Matter Communications, a professional Public Relations firm, to promote Essex in print and online publications from March – October 2012 and 2013.
Movie / TV Production Assistance	Assisted with Chronicle TV segment in 2012 and 2019. Assisted with This Old House in 2012 – 2013. Assisted with Larry David’s Clear History in 2013. Assisted with the needs of Grown Ups Hollywood movie production in 2010. Assisted with televised production of the Fox Zip Trip to Essex in 2010.
Radio Ad Series	Continue to supply set decoration props to locally filmed productions in 2019. Created radio ad series with WBOQ.

Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce	Continue a positive working relationship with the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce to promote Essex individually and as part of greater Cape Ann. Our website is the official representation for Essex and Essex events are promoted through the Cape Ann Chamber.
Town of Essex	Liason with the business community.
Essex Development Committee	Member participation (four, including Vice President) on Economic Development Committee, part of the new Essex Strategic Planning Committee.

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Memberships / Affiliations (continued)

Essex Bicentennial Committee	Member participation on the Town of Essex Bicentennial Committee.
North of Boston CVB	North of Boston Membership 2014 – 2019.
Gloucester Tourism Alliance (formerly Discover Gloucester)	Discover Gloucester/GTA Membership 2013 – 2018.
seARTS	Society for the Encouragement of the Arts (seARTS) Membership.

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Advocacy

Publicist for Essex	Act as a publicist to promote the business community and town events in an effort to keep Essex “in the news”.
Business Community Liaison	Act as an advocate and central clearing house, along with the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, for the business community and liaison with town officials, state and federal government on issues affecting Essex businesses.
Road Construction Coordination	Worked as liaison between the business community, town government, Marchese Construction Company and Mass DOT on the Route 133 reconstruction project 2010 - 2012. In 2018, liaison for causeway bridge repair and replacement and related roadway issues impacting the business community.
Communication to Government Representatives	Coordinated, along with the Cape Ann Chamber, a series of meetings with Senator Bruce Tarr, Representative Ann Margaret Ferrante and various state officials to raise awareness regarding the negative impact on Essex businesses created by multiple years of Route 133 road construction prior to its completion in 2012.
Town of Essex Fin Comm Liaison	Helped to establish liaison for EMG with the Town of Essex Selectboard / Finance Committee in 2019.

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Infrastructure

Non-Profit Status	Essex Merchants Group became a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization in March 2015. Board of Directors elected/subcommittees established.
Town of Essex Funding	Proposed and received funding to promote Essex from the Town’s Restaurant Tax Funds beginning in 2014. \$23,500 was designated to Essex Merchants Group in 2018.
Essex Merchant Group Meetings	Hold bi-monthly meetings and additional “After-Hours” mixers. All Essex businesses and nonprofits are invited to participate in a free exchange of ideas for promoting Essex through marketing and events. Outreach to other Essex merchants and organizations to join our website is encouraged.