

American Wire celebrates landmark mixed use project with ribbon-cutting event



Donald R. Grebien

Mayor

City of Pawtucket

Developers, guests and city officials celebrated the mixed-use conversion of almost 300,000 square feet of former mill space in a ribbon cutting event on Thursday, June 12 at the former American Insulated Wire facility at 413 Central Ave.

Now known as American Wire, the project includes about 40,000 square feet of first level commercial space and 143 residential rental units of one, two or three bedrooms.

The project, a joint partnership of Starr Development and Brady Sullivan Properties, which also redeveloped the Slater Cotton Mill for residences, used federal and state historic tax credits that partner Chris Starr said were crucial to its success along with support from the city and others.

With 65 percent of the units now leased, the event was held “to say thank you to as many people as possible and celebrate the end of a great project,” Starr said from a landing above a common area where original mill flooring was sanded, stained and authentically preserved. “This project, probably more than any project we’ve ever done, really brings you back to the mill yard feel.”



Guests gather in common area of 278,000 square foot mill conversion of former American Insulated Wire facility at 413 Central Ave., now home to 143 residential units and 40,000 square feet of commercial space.



Mayor Donald R. Grebien (right), who worked at American Insulated Wire for 16 years, praised the mill conversion project and presented a congratulatory proclamation on behalf of the city during grand opening event held Thursday, June 12. From left are project principals Shane Brady, David Brady and Chris Starr and state preservation official Virginia Hesse.

Starr credited Mayor Donald R. Grebien as “a great supporter of the project” from the outset, and said state historic planning and city planning and zoning officials as well as the City Council were all important contributors to its success. “The city has been absolutely terrific to work with and we hope can find another (Pawtucket) mill building to tackle soon,” said Starr, who also praised Teknor Apex and other neighbors for their patience during construction.

“We’re truly committed to support you any way we can and hope to work with you again,” Grebien said in brief remarks while also presenting a congratulatory proclamation from the city. Grebien, who was a supply chain manager for AIW where he worked for 16 years, recalled that he once unloaded supplies outside the nearby door from what was then a loading dock.



Virginia Hesse, principal historical architect for the state Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, told the audience gathered Thursday for the ribbon cutting at the American Wire mill conversion project that state historic tax credits sparked \$2 billion in investment from 2002 to 2013 in Rhode Island.

Among numerous other guests, several planning and zoning officials and City Councilors John Barry, Jean Philippe Barros, Albert Vitali Jr. and Mark



Mayor Donald R. Grebien reads giant gold scissors to cut red ribbon for grand opening event Thursday, June 12 at American Wire mill conversion project in Pawtucket with (from left) Virginia Hesse of the state Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission and project principals David Brady, Shane Brady and Chris Starr.

Wildenhain attended the ribbon-cutting, as did Virginia Hesse, principal historical architect for the state Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission who worked with the developers on the project.

Hesse said that from 2002 to 2013 state historic tax credits were responsible for \$2 billion in investment in Rhode Island,

along with 20,000 construction jobs and 6,000 permanent jobs and total wages exceeding \$800 million.

Among those in the audience invited for the occasion and remarking about the high quality of the mill conversion was Trudy Galkin, widow of the late AIW President Herbert Galkin whose father Ira Galkin was a company founder. She said a bronze plaque dedicated to the achievements of Ira Galkin, who died in 1989, that had been in the possession of the family was donated by them and now hangs on a wall of the renovated facility.

Starr noted that the architect for the project was Pawtucket firm Architectura, Inc.



Exterior of former American Insulated Wire mill, its name preserved on the aerial bridge between buildings, converted for 143 residential units and 40,000 square feet of commercial space in mixed use project at 413 Central Ave.



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