

PRESS RELEASE



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Devens Enterprise Commission Celebrates 30 Years of Sustainable Growth and Innovation

On Tuesday, June 24, 2025, almost 100 people braved the heat to celebrate the Devens Enterprise Commission's (DEC) 30th Anniversary. Attendees included legislators, military, residents, businesses, past and present commissioners, as well as consultants from throughout the last 30 years, all gathered to celebrate the organization's pivotal role in transforming Devens into a leading center for economic development, business innovation, and sustainable practices.

Neil Angus, Director of the DEC kicked off the celebration with a look back at June 22, 1995, the first official meeting of the DEC. Three decades and over 30 commissioners later, Devens has grown from a few new businesses in the mid 1990's, to an internationally recognized eco-industrial park, recreation destination, and home to more and more residents. It is a project that continues to grow and serve as a model for sustainable military base redevelopment. Neil discussed the regional collaboration and partnerships with surrounding towns, residents, businesses and many organizations, in addition to the leadership, vision, and direction that the DEC continues to provide to make Devens a better place for all. DEC Chairman William Marshall, who has been leading the Commission since its inception, thanked all the current and past commissioners for their service and spoke about the partnerships that led to the creation of the Commission under then Governor Weld. Mr. Marshall noted how the DEC's expedited and unified permitting system continues to serve as a model for the commonwealth, adding: *"The comprehensive Reuse Plan and the consolidation of local permitting boards has made the permitting system, shorter, less complicated, and more transparent"*. This has helped attract and retain businesses in Massachusetts, bringing billions of dollars of investment to the region and making Devens *"a model for the most successful conversion of a closed military installation in the United States"*.

The DEC, sharing its 30th anniversary with the Army's 250th anniversary, was honored to have Lt. Colonel Carlos Poventud-Estrada, commander of Devens Reserve Forces Training Area Garrison speak at the event. LTC Poventud-Estrada said *"what makes Devens exceptional isn't just its history —*

it is the strong bond we share with the surrounding community. Our relationship with local partners are the cornerstone of our success....our partnership is one built on trust and mutual respect.”

Navjeet Bal, MassDevelopment President and CEO spoke at the event as well and said: *“Since 1996, MassDevelopment has been charged with redeveloping this area, previously part of the Army base, into a thriving mixed-use community. We are so proud of where Devens is today and we thank our partners at the Devens Enterprise Commission for their ongoing commitment to fostering sustainable business development here.”*

Senator John Cronin and Representative Danillo Sena discussed the importance of Devens redevelopment to the region and the role the DEC has played. Bianca DeSousa, District Director from Senator Eldridge’s office also presented a Senate Citation to DEC Chairman Marshall and Director Neil Angus to commemorate the occasion.

Laura Scott, the Chair of the Devens Committee, representing the residents of Devens, praised the DEC for its openness and active engagement with residents. Chris Sellew, Manager of Little Leaf Farms in Devens, spoke about their experiences working with the DEC and how their company’s mission for sustainably grown products aligns with Devens sustainable redevelopment mission.

As a unified permitting agency, the DEC wears multiple hats, serving as the local Historic Commission for Devens. The “FORT DEVENS” shrubs off of Jackson Road just north of the former Jackson Gate near Route 2 have been a natural historic monument for years, greeting soldiers and now civilians as they enter Devens. Over the years the shrubs aged and deteriorated and were in dire need of replacement. The DEC wanted to do something special for its 30th Anniversary celebration so they designed a re-planting plan and purchased over \$10,000 worth of shrubs and partnered with MassDevelopment, the Army, the Federal Bureau of Prisons to restore this iconic piece of Devens History. DEC Staff and the Devens Department of Public Works team prepared and planted over 120 shrubs to re-create this natural monument. The beautifully restored shrubs provided a great backdrop for the event.

As a tribute to the restoration of the Fort Devens shrubs, the DEC partnered with Devens’ own Bandoleros Restaurant to create a special “DEC 30th Anniversary Fort Devens Shrub” (nonalcoholic), strawberry and blueberry-based drink for all attendees to enjoy. A much-needed extra touch of refreshment on a 100 degree day! Attendees left the event with a DEC 30th anniversary native pollinator seed mix as a tribute to the continued sustainable growth in Devens – something for them to grow in their own yard in celebration of this occasion.

This celebration kicks off a year of celebrations in Devens as MassDevelopment prepares to celebrate its 30th anniversary of taking title to the land in Devens in 1996.

Link to Photos from the event: [Press Photos](#) (courtesy of MassDevelopment)

About the Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC):

The Devens Enterprise Commission was established in 1993 to oversee the redevelopment of the former Fort Devens military base into a regional economic center. Its role is to administer and enforce the reuse plan, by-laws, regulations and sustainability vision within the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone. Today, DEC continues to permit growth in industries such as biotechnology, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing, while prioritizing sustainable development, environmental stewardship, and community engagement.