

BUSINESS WEEK IN REVIEW

A summary of notable local and regional business news in last week's Republican-American:

Monday, July 5

■ The **Tomasso Group**, the New Britain-based firm involved in the federal investigation of contract steering by the Rowland administration, says it retains lucrative development rights at **Bradley International Airport** and may build a second hotel on state-owned property.

Tomasso executives were among former Gov. John G. Rowland's biggest campaign contributors and provided him with cut-rate vacations and expensive gifts. Rowland has resigned but still faces a federal corruption investigation of his administration, including a \$37 million parking garage at the airport. Tomasso companies received more than \$233 million in state contracts during Rowland's tenure. Nonetheless, Bernard Sullivan, who has run the Tomasso Group as its executive vice president since the federal investigation was disclosed last year, confirmed that the airport parking deal also guaranteed the partnership the opportunity to develop a hotel nearby.

The five-level, 3,500-space parking garage was built and operating by September 2001, but the company's plans for further development at Bradley were set back last March after Rowland's former deputy chief of staff, Lawrence Alibozek, admitted that he took bribes of cash and gold to steer state contracts. (Published Tuesday, July 6)

Tuesday, July 6

■ **General DataComm Industries Inc.** borrowed yet another \$250,000 from its chairman, pushing to nearly \$1.4 million the loans taken from its directors in the last six months. The Naugatuck-based telecommunications company borrowed \$250,000 June 30 from Howard S. Modlin, the chairman of its board, according to a filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. It marked the fourth time since Dec. 30 that GDC borrowed from one of its directors. Company officials could not be reached for comment, but GDC's previous loans were taken to help the company meet monthly \$250,000 principal debt payments.

To avoid a default, which could force foreclosure and conceivably trigger another bankruptcy filing, GDC needs to stay current with its debt payments and meet other conditions. (Published Wednesday, July 7)

Wednesday, July 7

■ The state's real estate industry isn't happy with the legislature's decision to keep real estate conveyance taxes at current levels, despite a prom-

ise to "sunset" an increase June 30.

"Obviously, the state needs the money," said Norm Krayem of Realty Estates in Groton, who served this past year as the industry's legislative chairman. "But they keep hitting the same people. We favor a more broad-based tax" to raise revenue.

The real estate conveyance tax, which sellers of property pay local cities and towns, for years was \$1.10 per \$1,000 of the sales price. But in an effort to balance state finances, the legislature approved an increase in the tax to \$2.50 per \$1,000 of sales price. Despite voting last year to "sunset," or remove the increase, a majority of lawmakers voted in May to reauthorize the \$2.50 conveyance tax for all towns and cities for another year.

In addition, the state allows an additional \$2.50 levy per \$1,000 of the sales price charged by 18 distressed cities and towns, including Bristol, Bridgeport, Hartford, Meriden, Southington, Waterbury, New London and Norwich. And the state also charges a separate conveyance tax of \$5 per \$1,000 of sales price. (Published Thursday, July 8)

Thursday, July 8

■ A three-year-old Oxford company has claimed the top prize in an entry-level quality program patterned after the nation's most prestigious quality award.

Oxford Science Inc., which designs and manufactures units veterinarians use to analyze blood drawn from animals, topped the list of 111 applications for the **Connecticut Quality Improvement Award Innovation Prize**. Modeled after the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award program, the "innovation prize" provides a stepping stone to the rigorous state-level awards that recognize Connecticut companies excelling in quality improvement.

In addition to Oxford Science, three other area organizations took home innovation awards this year, including gold-level winner **FuelCell Energy Inc.**, and silver-level winners **Basement Systems Inc.** and Waterbury-based **Telkyo Post University**. Danbury-based FuelCell, which manufactures its power plants in Torrington, was recognized for the fuel cell unit installed in December at Yale University. Telkyo Post developed a program designed to educate corporate and community leaders, as well as emergency agencies and local citizens about the ramifications of a terrorist attack before the event occurs, while Seymour-based Basement Systems has won more than 10 innovation prizes in recent years and a Connecticut Quality Improvement Award in 2002. (Published Friday, June 9)

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