



State economic development boss to visit North Andover Friday afternoon

By Paul Tennant
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NORTH ANDOVER — They're making it in North Andover.

Elite Manufacturing, which recently moved from Newburyport into a building at 400 Willow St., has electronic machinery that makes LED lights and transponders, among other devices. The company now employs about 20 workers, but the owners are confident they will increase that number when other businesses find out what they can do, according to Michael Gorman, a business development consultant who represents Elite.

Liam Holt and Richard Flynn are the entrepreneurs who started Elite Manufacturing. They moved from Newburyport when they outgrew their space in that city, Gorman said. The building on Willow Street proved to be just what they need, he said.

"They're believers in making things in Massachusetts," Gorman said.

Elite Manufacturing is among the companies state Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Jay Ash will be visiting when he comes to North Andover on Friday afternoon. Ash will also visit the East and West mills on High Street, which for many years housed the Davis & Furber Machine Co.

RCG Development, which purchased the East Mill in 2007 and the West Mill in 2014, has renovated the buildings into offices, research and development space and apartments. Three restaurants are also located in the former Davis & Furber property.

"We have been pleased to see the number of businesses that have flourished and grown in the space," said Seth Zeren, spokesman for RCG Development.

Gov. Charlie Baker has often said he wants to promote economic development and expand manufacturing in Massachusetts. Baker named Ash, who served as city manager of Chelsea for many years, to his current post in January 2015.

Ash, who presided over an economic revival in his hometown of Chelsea, was Baker's first Cabinet appointment. He will be accompanied Friday by the legislators who represent North Andover in the Legislature: Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr, R-Gloucester, Sen. Kathleen O'Connor Ives, D-Newburyport, and Reps. Diana DiZoglio, D-Methuen and James Lyons, R-Andover.

They will be joined by Town Manager Andrew Maylor, who worked closely with Ash when he served as chief financial officer of Chelsea.

Ash and the officials accompanying him are expected to tour Elite Manufacturing from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. They will then head over to the former Davis & Furber Machine Co. mills, where they will meet at 3 p.m. in the Good Day Cafe, 21 High St.

State and federal tax credits have aided the renovation of the East and West mills, Zeren said.

“The tax credits will allow us to continue our work to strengthen the economy of downtown North Andover and the region with new walkable, mixed-use commercial spaces and residential options that can compete with other regions,” he said.