BOUNCING BACK BIG IN THE WESTERN SUBURS

Whoever said the outer suburbs were over must have forgotten to tell Marlborough. The city of about 60,000 on the western rim of Interstate 495 is enjoying an economic renaissance. In the last few years, it has attracted a string of leading tech and corporate tenants, from Boston Scientific to TIA Cos. One of the biggest fish Marlborough landed was the headquarters of GE Life Sciences Division, which moved from New Jersey and is building out 140,000 square feet for hundreds of people to work.

Those firms have brought 5,000 new jobs to Marlborough since 2012, when Fidelity Investments moved a big campus out of town and many questioned how communities in its outer belt would bounce back from the housing downturn.

Up next, the development of the APEX Center, a 42-acre project slated to be approved by city officials in late May, which would bring two hotels, office buildings, and live-work-play amenities (a bowling alley) aimed at housing today’s younger employees and the employees that come with them. After that, a delegation from China is working on a deal to build a business park and establish a foothold in an East Coast tech hub.

When all that comes together, at least one outer suburb will be right back in the thick of things.

— TIM LOGAN

T IS FOR TRANSPARENCY AT THE MBTA

No news is not always good news. Just ask riders and taxpayers who support the MBTA. Years of less-than-discouraging reports about the transit authority’s finances merely clouded the reality that money problems were piling up.

Peter Brief Shutterstock

Brief last summer by Governor Charlie Baker as chief administrator of the T, Brief’s is nothing if not unflinching. Monthly financial reports, conducting weakly upticks with reports, and the dangling of pages of detailed analysis.

“If a commitment to real, extreme transparency has been a part of what we’ve done since July,” says 45-year-old Shortliffe, whose time as a venture capitalist and Bain & Co. consultant, “I seriously didn’t praise him for public scrutiny. Now, he aims to push out information “about every element of our performance.”

We owe it to the board and the governor.”

While working to tame expenses in the 768 million budget for next year, Shortliffe has overseen a decrease in the authority’s projected deficit for fiscal 2017 from $242 million to $86 million.

Shortliffe has promised more rigorous audits after a key element of the T’s annual report was found to have been cooked since 2006. Shortliffe has also pressed for a public conversation about the future design of the $1.6 billion MBTA pension fund, which he calls “one of the fastest-growing elements of our expenses.”

— BETH HEALY

OUT OF THE MUSEUM, INTO THE SKIES

THE WORLD IS LOOKING UP AT JANET ECHELMAN’S LIVING SCULPTURES.

By Megan Woolhouse

In January, Janet Echelman stood among the crowd at Oxford Circus in central London that had come to see her latest work, a massive weaving of illuminated fiber strands suspended high in the air between two buildings. As the sculpture moved and billowed, the crowd began to hang in the street to watch. Echelman says she felt a surge of joy taking in the scene; she, too, lay down, on the cold sidewalk. “Art can have the traditional confines of the gallery or museum,” says Echelman, who lives in Brookline. “It can go beyond the walls, so that increasingly everyone feels a part of it and entitled to an opinion.”

To make and install Echelman’s sculptures takes a host of aeronautical and structural engineers, industrial craftsmen and women, artists, and software designers. The finished public art—there are more than 35 installations in Boston and beyond—has stopped people in their tracks around the world.

In West Hollywood this September, her permanent sculpture Odyssey Catcher will be suspended between two towers along the Sunset Strip. The piece is the mapping of human brain waves during deep sleep. In progress is Pulse, next to Philadelphia’s City Hall, a fountain with lights and mist that will track trains moving underground on subway lines. Around here, Echelman may be best known for her giant netted installation As If It Were Already Here that floated above the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway last summer and, though it has since been taken down, remains woven into the city’s collective memory.

— BETH HEALY

THE BANKRUPTCY TRUSTEE WITH NEARLY 2 MILLION CLIENTS

Nearly 2 million people from some 240 countries and territories piled money into Telexfree Inc., a Ponzi scheme that affected more people than any other. The individual amounts were often small, but together they added up to $83 billion.

Now, imagine creating an online system that could handle incoming claims from all these alleged victims. Oh, and it needs to be in three languages—English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Boston bankruptcy trustee Stephen Derr is in charge of that daunting task. He’s tapped a California software firm to build a system that can log each file’s current information, send verifying e-mails, and allow people to dispute transactions that allegedly occurred in their accounts. Although an April launch proved too ambitious, Derr is hopeful the system will be up and running by the end of this month.

So far, US authorities have set aside more than $150 million related to Telexfree, but Derr says he’s working to raise more funds for victims. He has sued 15,000 people in this country and 78,000 overseas. The most important of those defendants are 150 “biggest winners,” promoters of the former Marlborough company who reaped inflated gains that were really other people’s money, Derr says.

The two US heads of Telexfree, one of whom has fled to Brazil, face criminal charges in Massachusetts. A third executive is also in Brazil, where a judge recently ruled that the three owe tens of millions in fines. But Derr doesn’t expect that ruling to water down the victims’ payoffs. “That’s just a technicality,” he says. “I don’t think there’s a whole lot of money from these guys to pay Brazil.”