



Regional Employment Board, Inc.

*the Local Workforce Investment Board*

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**For Immediate Release**

**11 December 2013**

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**WORKFORCE LEADER ANNOUNCED**

The Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board recognized **Fitzgerald Fences, Inc.** as its **2013 “Workforce Development Leader”** December 5<sup>th</sup> at its 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Legislative Breakfast at Yankee Candle’s Chandlers Restaurant in South Deerfield.

The award was established by the REB in 2002 to single out employers who have a reputation for investing in their workers, and who are visible and active in community affairs.

“That can mean different things,” notes Executive Director Patricia Crosby. “In this case it means a company that goes out of its way to utilize the public workforce system, such as the One Stop Career Centers or the REB School-to-Work programs. And a company reliably known as a great place to work.”

Fitzgerald Fences, Inc., founded in 1955, is located at 344 Bridge Road in Northampton, and serves Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden and Berkshire counties with affordable fence installations and sales. Company owner Rick Fitzgerald was pleased to be recognized as a workforce leader. “We value our employees and we recognize that Fitzgerald Fences Inc is only as good as its employees,” he notes. “We have always committed to providing a productive and solid work environment. We practice teamwork and we consider those who work for, associate with, or supply Fitzgerald Fences Inc. as members of our team.” The company is a member of the American Fence Association, the Northampton Chamber of Commerce and the Florence Business and Civic Association, and is accredited by the Better Business Bureau.

Ann Deres, Franklin Hampshire Career Center Business Service Representative, notes that Rick Fitzgerald lists jobs consistently with the FHCC Business Team, and Melissa Rustemeyer, Sales/Office Administrator, attends Workforce Training

Fund seminars to learn about and utilize some of the business resources offered. As part of their commitment to community service, the company is open to hiring job seekers with barriers to finding work, such as long-term unemployed, youth with little work experience, and others having a hard time finding employment.

Jim Parcels, Youth Programs Director at the Franklin Hampshire Career Center notes that this year Fitzgerald Fence was one of the first private sector employers to host a youth in the YouthWorks – Northampton program, paying for a portion of the subsidized work-experience and ensuring the youth received mentoring and skill training as part of their summer job.

When the young person returned to school, the company learned her mother was also looking for work, and she was hired to take her daughter's place.

“This has been a great job for me,” says Toni Dolan of Northampton. Employed as an office assistant and looking forward to learning more about sales, she praised the company's family-friendly policies and described her employer Rick Fitzgerald as “generous, supportive, professional and a great businessman.”

Past recipients of Workforce Leader recognition by the Franklin Hampshire REB include Innovative Business Systems, the Packaging Corporation of America, Chartpak, and Millitech, LLC. Nominations can be made year-round by members of the public by submitting the form at [www.franklinhampshirereb.org](http://www.franklinhampshirereb.org) under Workforce Leaders.