

CRIME
Lowell man among 5 arrested in fraud scheme
 Local News » A3



D. SMITH

FAITH IMPACT
As UFO talk grows, faith leaders weigh implications
 Lifestyles » B4



SUNNY
 High: 80
 Low: 53



VOTE **DAILY**
THE SUN
2026 BEST READERS' CHOICE
VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITES NOW!



THE SUN

Tuesday, June 16, 2026 \$2.50 FACEBOOK.COM/LOWELLSUN X.COM/LOWELLSUN **lowellsun.com**

COMMUNITY TEAMWORK

Affordable senior housing development opens in Dracut

The Avenue at Greenmont reflects public, private partnerships

By **Melanie Gilbert**
 mgilbert@lowellsun.com

DRACUT » Common Ground Development Corporation, the affordable housing development affiliate of Community Teamwork Inc., cut the ribbon on The Avenue at Greenmont, a new 56-unit affordable senior housing community located at 144 Greenmont Ave. on June 11.

and consists of a three-story building with 56 one-bedroom, one-bath rental units for people aged 62 and older and non-elderly disabled. In addition to residential units, the building provides community rooms, shared laundry on each floor and tenant storage. The site also includes outdoor seating areas, walkways and a fenced-in pet area.

ity, and dignity for seniors and people with disabilities who wish to age and thrive in communities they helped build," CTI CEO Carl Howell said.

It is the first senior housing built in Dracut in 35 years, and represents more than 10 years of planning, collaboration and investment by local, state, federal and private partners committed to addressing the growing



The ribbon-cutting for The Avenue on Greenmont, an affordable senior housing development in Dracut, held June 11, 2026.

AVENUE » PAGE 8

GREATER LOWELL PRIDE

'YOU GOT TO STAND UP AND SHOW UP'



AARON CURTIS — LOWELL SUN

Landa Plenty energizes the crowd at Lowell Heritage State Park during the Greater Lowell Pride Festival on June 13, 2026, an event organized to celebrate Pride Month and the LGBTQIA+ community.

Lowell celebrates Pride with color, community and solidarity



AARON CURTIS — LOWELL SUN

The New England Pride Colorguard performs during the Greater Lowell Pride Festival held at Lowell Heritage State Park on June 13, 2026.



AARON CURTIS — LOWELL SUN

At left, Holly Hillhouse, of Exeter, New Hampshire, offers free hugs during the Greater Lowell Pride Festival in Lowell on June 13, 2026, a Pride Month event celebrating and supporting the LGBTQIA+ community.

By **Aaron Curtis**
 acurtis@lowellsun.com

LOWELL » Among the crowd of smiling faces, rainbow clothing, and energized music at the Greater Lowell Pride Festival on Saturday, Holly Hillhouse stood holding a cardboard sign that read "Free Hugs" and "Love Wins."

health as a therapist, and said this wasn't her first time bringing a sign like that to a Pride celebration.

She first carried a smaller "Free Hugs" sign a few years ago at a Pride event in Manchester, New Hampshire, an experience she said became emotional.

"There would be some people who would come up for a hug," she said, pausing to hold back tears, "but then there would be

people who would come up, and they'd be weeping in my arms."

As she spoke, people continued approaching her for embraces.

She said the hugs often become cathartic moments, with some attendees sharing stories of being disowned by family or forced to leave home.

"I think it's a vulnerable place for some people to even just show up here, so I just want

them to know that they're welcome and I want them to feel warmth and love, and I'd be lying if I said this wasn't also cathartic for me, too," she said, emphasizing the importance of community and human connection.

Hillhouse added that visibility is part of why she keeps showing up. She noted that she

PRIDE » PAGE 2

LEGISLATION

Healey signs \$1.56B spending, disabilities language modernizing bills

Surtax law keeps spinning off money for education, transportation

By **Sam Drysdale**
 State House News Service

Gov. Maura Healey on Friday signed a \$1.56 billion transportation and education spending bill and legislation updating disability-related language in state law.

The supplemental budget directs surplus revenue generated by the surtax on wealthier households toward major investments in the MBTA, special education reimbursements, child care and relief from the costs of clearing municipal roads this winter. Healey also approved a separate bill replacing hundreds of outdated references to people with disabilities in Massachusetts statutes, culminating a legislative effort that supporters said stretched more than two decades.

The spending package marks another major deployment of revenue generated by the voter-approved constitutional amendment imposing an additional 4% tax on annual income above \$1 million. The new tax continues to spin off large amounts of revenue for education and transportation, while other areas of state spending are dependent on slower growing tax revenue sources.

The law appropriates roughly \$1.35 billion in surtax revenue, including about \$780 million for transportation and \$574 million for education initiatives. The compromise emerged from weeks of negotiations between House and Senate leaders, who had differed on how heavily the money should be concentrated on MBTA investments versus broader regional transportation and education priorities.

The largest single investment is \$595.5 million for the MBTA. The funding is intended to rebuild operating reserves, support infrastructure improvements, expand low-income fare discounts and bolster workforce and safety initiatives. The package also provides \$35 million for regional transit authorities and \$5 million for grants supporting micro-transit and last-mile transportation services.

Municipal leaders had closely watched negotiations because of a proposed snow and ice relief program after a winter marked by severe storms. The law makes about \$101 million available to cities and towns to offset winter maintenance expenses.

Education spending includes \$152 million for special education and circuit breaker reimbursements, a priority for local officials facing growing special education costs. The package also dedicates \$150 million to early ed-

BILL » PAGE 5

Avenue

FROM PAGE 1

need for affordable housing across the Merrimack Valley, and specifically, Dracut.

State Rep. Colleen Garry, who represents Dracut, said the project creates community and connection for seniors.

It also means that seniors are able to sell their homes which may have become difficult to maintain, which, in turn, opens up the opportunity for new young families to move into Dracut, helping to expand and grow the overall community, she said.

All units will be affordable and available to households earning 60% or less of the area median income. Prospective residents must have a minimum yearly income of \$43,170. The maximum income limits are \$58,000 for a one-person household and \$66,000 for a two-person household.

Funding for the development was provided through

a partnership that included the state Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation, Massachusetts Housing Partnership, Citizens Bank, Boston Financial, the town of Dracut, and the Charles H. Farnsworth Trust.

The project received nearly \$9 million in state subsidies, \$2.5 million in state tax credits, a \$650,000 MassWorks grant and previously approved Community Preservation Act monies of \$3 million.

“This project is a testament to Common Ground’s development model — working in partnership with municipalities and local government to create affordable housing in our communities,” Common Ground Director Rachely Bartolotto said.

The Avenue on Greenmont was designed by BWA Architects and constructed to high-performance energy standards, with Consigli Construction as the construction manager.

In addition to new housing, residents will have access to supportive services through partnerships with Peabody Properties, AgeSpan, CTI and the Dracut Council on Aging.

Peabody Properties will manage the property and provide a service plan to address the needs of the elderly population through Peabody Resident Services.

Massachusetts continues to face a significant need for affordable housing, particularly for older adults seeking to remain in communities they call home. Massachusetts will need to build more than 220,000 units by 2035 to meet housing needs.

This latest housing project is part of a broad vision by Lowell-based CTI to provide affordable housing in the 70 different communities they serve.

The community action agency was established in 1965 under the Economic Opportunity Act to serve low-income people in the community. It was established as part of President Lyndon Johnson’s War on

Poverty under his “Great Society” program. There are 1,000 Community Action agencies across the country, with 23 of them in Massachusetts.

In 2024, it opened a building with 19 new permanent supportive housing units in Lowell’s Back Central neighborhood to serve the area’s unhoused residents.

CTI is currently developing a 50-bed emergency

shelter for homeless women at the corner of Church and Warren streets in Lowell.

It’s one of many housing projects the agency has undertaken to address the housing crisis.

“Across Massachusetts, the shortage of housing continues to place tremendous pressure on seniors living on fixed incomes as well as households that need more accessible spaces,” Howell said. “Developments like

The Avenue at Greenmont demonstrate what is possible when local leaders, state partners, lenders, and community organizations come together with a shared commitment to solving one of our region’s most pressing challenges. We are proud that Common Ground Development Corporation is helping lead that effort.”

Applications continue to be accepted at livetheavenuedracut.com.



COURTESY CTI

An example of a living room at The Avenue at Greenmont, an affordable senior housing development in Dracut. A ribbon-cutting was held June 11, 2026. The project was developed by Common Ground Development Corporation, the affordable housing development affiliate of Community Teamwork Inc.

A TALK ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

HOW SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION BRINGS HEALING

We are not stuck! Understanding more clearly our relationship with God, infinite good, ends fear and leads the way forward.

Monday, June 22, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION
195 Andover Street, Lowell, MA 01852
Parking Lot behind the church

CONTACT
978-453-6302 • <https://cslowellma.org>
e-mail: christiansciencelowellma@gmail.com

Alexandre Fischer, CS
Christian Science practitioner
Member of the Christian Science Board of Lectureship

HOSTED BY
First Church of Christ, Scientist, Lowell, MA

SCAN FOR MORE INFO

We're Not Just a NEWSPAPER

WE ARE A MEDIA POWERHOUSE FOR YOUR BUSINESS!!

HERE'S WHAT WE CAN DO FOR YOU

- Reach a local audience and deliver advertising that attracts attention.
- Send your message via email to a targeted group by geography, age, interest, income or target audiences of your choice.
- Creating new and engaging content.
- Help your business build top of mind awareness using SEO, SEM and social campaigns.
- Help you to recruit that perfect candidate using our many job boards and packages.

CONTACT US FOR A FREE MARKETING CONSULT
617-619-6213
advertising@lowellsun.com

THE SUN

SUMMER KICKOFF SALE!

TRANSFORM YOUR BATH IN JUST 1-DAY!

BEFORE → **AFTER!**

As Low As \$149/Month

Plus! Your First 6 Payments are FREE!*

Google Yankee Home
4.8 ★★★★★ (1.2K)

4,035+ 5-Star Reviews

Lifetime Guarantee

BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS A+ Rating

A+ Rating with the BBB

CUSTOMIZE YOUR DREAM BATH WITH 50+ DESIGNS

ENDS 6/30/26 CALL NOW: 978-829-5579

Offer expires 06/30/26. Valid on qualifying purchases only. Advertised payments as low as \$149/month are estimates based on approved credit. Example monthly payment is based on a representative project cost, financing term, and approved credit; actual payments will vary based on project size, financing terms, and creditworthiness. Valid on new orders only; not valid on prior sales or estimates. Promotional offers are available only during the initial in-home consultation with a Yankee Home representative. We will cover the first six monthly payments, up to a maximum of \$900 total; offer is provided in the form of an additional discount off the total project price and is not a direct payment to any lender. Offers cannot be combined with other promotions or discounts. Financing is subject to third-party credit approval; not all applicants will qualify. Additional terms and conditions may apply. Calls and communications with Yankee Home may be recorded for quality and training purposes. MA Lic. #160584 | CT Lic. #HIC.0673924 | NH Lic. #611475.

