

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Massachusetts' Devens Community Achieves a 4-STAR Community Rating *Recognized for National Excellence*

Devens, Mass. – STAR Communities announced today that Devens, Massachusetts, has been awarded a 4-STAR Community Rating for national leadership in sustainability. The community is the 70th in the nation to receive recognition from STAR Communities for its participation in the STAR Community Rating System (STAR), which evaluates the livability and sustainability of U.S. communities.

STAR is the nation's leading framework and certification program for evaluating local sustainability, encompassing social, economic and environmental performance measures. STAR helps communities evaluate their strengths and weaknesses across seven areas: the built environment; climate and energy; economy and jobs; education, arts and community; health and safety; and natural systems. For instance, communities get credit for reductions in energy use or increased transportation access. STAR Communities provides support as localities benchmark progress, and a robust third-party verification process ensures accountability.

Communities pursuing STAR certification accumulate points for their achievements across the seven goal areas, which are used to determine their rating. There are three STAR certification levels: 3-STAR Community (250-449 points); 4-STAR Community (450-649 points); or 5-STAR (650+ points). Devens received a score of 530.8, which qualifies them as a 4-STAR Community, recognized for national excellence in sustainability.

"The Devens Reuse Plan called for the redevelopment of the former Fort Devens to become a model of sustainable development. A 4-STAR community rating provides additional confirmation that MassDevelopment, the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center, and the Devens Enterprise Commission's collaboration continues to achieve the goals established by our host communities of Ayer, Harvard, and Shirley along with the Legislature," said Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC) Chairman William P. Marshall.

"We entered into the STAR program in order to better understand our strengths and areas that need improvement. The process succeeded in doing just that," said DEC Director Peter Lowitt.

Several efforts stood out among Devens' sustainability initiatives:

- **Built Environment:** There are more than 900 acres of parkland per 1000 residents, well over the 20.3-acre STAR threshold. In addition, 100 percent of residents are within half-mile of a park and three-miles of an off-road trail.
- **Climate & Energy:** Devens demonstrated its commitment to diversifying its energy supply by maintaining a renewable portfolio standard of 10.5 percent for its municipal utility, and by installing several electric vehicle charging stations.

- **Economy & Jobs:** Devens supports a strong business environment. There was an 8.3 percent increase in the number of business from 2013-2016 and employment increased by 10 percent, while unemployment decreased by 20 percent from 2013-2015. In addition, Devens’ workforce is on track to have 45 percent attainment of post-secondary degrees by 2025.
- **Education, Arts & Community:** The Devens Eco-Efficiency Center provides educational forums and services to help establishments implement sustainable business practices. There is a clear commitment to historic preservation in Devens. In recent years, 80 structures have been rehabilitated, including the adaptive reuse of structures for the United Native American Cultural Center, private residences, the Dragonfly Wellness Center and Natural Cafe, and more.

“We are proud to contribute to the sustainability of Devens by continuously engaging the businesses, schools, and nonprofits in trainings and collaborative efforts that deliver social, environmental, and economic benefits,” said Devens Eco-Efficiency Center Executive Director Dona Neely.

“MassDevelopment and our partners are committed to making Devens an economically and environmentally sustainable hub for the Nashoba Valley, and this 4-STAR rating shows that we are on the right track,” said MassDevelopment Senior Vice President for Devens Thatcher Kezer. “We remain grateful to all of the Devens residents, businesses, and stakeholders who have worked with us to make the community a model for sustainable development.”

Devens is one of more than 70 local communities that have participated in the year-long leadership program with STAR Communities. Today, hundreds of communities participate in STAR. Other STAR-certified communities in the region include Cambridge and Northampton in Massachusetts, and Burlington in Vermont.

“The STAR rating process gives cities a roadmap for how they can refine and improve their operations to drive continuous improvement,” said Hilari Varnadore, executive director of STAR Communities. “Devens should be applauded for its commitment to sustainability, and for the clarity and transparency provided while achieving its goals.”

To view Devens’ full report, go to <http://www.starcommunities.org/certification/certified-star-communities/devens-massachusetts/>

To view the full list of communities involved, go to <http://www.starcommunities.org/certification/certified-star-communities/>.

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About STAR Communities

STAR Communities advances a national framework for sustainable communities through the delivery of standards and tools built by and for local governments and the communities they serve. The organization administers the STAR Community Rating System, the nation’s first framework and certification program for local sustainability. For more information, visit <http://www.STARcommunities.org>. Like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on Twitter [@STARCommunities](#).