

BIZ BRIEFS

FED WON'T RAISE INTEREST RATES

WASHINGTON – The U.S. economy still isn't healthy enough to grow at a consistently strong pace without the Federal Reserve's help, said Chairwoman Janet Yellen.

Yellen said that despite a steadily improving job market and signs of creeping inflation, the Fed sees no need to raise short-term interest rates.

The Fed will further slow the pace of its long-term bond purchases.

MAY HOME SALES IN MASS. DOWN FROM 2013

Pending home sales in New England in May were up 3.7 percent on average and inventory was down compared with May 2013, according to the RE/MAX of New England monthly housing report.

Overall home sales increased 26.2 percent month over month, an expected trend at this time of year.

Massachusetts' year-over-year transactions decreased 7.7 percent. The median price increased 6.5 percent. Pending sales were down 7.6 percent over May 2013.

I.T. SECURITY SESSION FOR BUSINESS LEADERS

ROCKLAND – The South Shore Chamber of Commerce will host an information session on IT security and data protection July 9 from noon to 1:30 p.m. at its headquarters.

Led by experts in IT security from the South Shore, the session is suited for business leaders and IT professionals.

The cost is \$25 for chamber members and \$50 for general admission.

Register at southshorechamber.org.

CONWAY LAUNCHES PAPERLESS SYSTEM

NORWELL – Jack Conway, Realtor has launched the SkySlope system, an integrated platform for paperless real estate transactions.

The system offers access to online forms, digital signatures and cloud-based document storage.

Conway was recently named the country's Most Innovative Brokerage by the Leading Real Estate Companies of the World network.

HP HOOD TO MATCH FOOD BANK DONATIONS

LYNNFIELD – HP Hood will match donations of milk to area food banks. The company will match up to 1,000 gallons donated and deliver a total of 2,000 gallons of milk. Consumers can donate to the Great American Milk Drive at www.DoSomeGoodWithHood.com.

PLYMOUTH FESTIVAL SEEKS VENDORS

PLYMOUTH – Organizers of the Downtown Plymouth Waterfront Festival scheduled for Aug. 23 are accepting applications for vendor, crafter and food truck/food reservations. The deadline is July 23.

For information visit plymouthwaterfrontfestival.com or contact the Plymouth Area Chamber of Commerce at 508-830-1620.

SOUTH SHORE INSIDER

JEANNETTE LANZA



GARY HIGGINS/THE PATRIOT LEDGER

■ Jeannette Lanza of Kingston is president and owner of H.J. Knight International Insurance in Braintree.

A full-service insurance agency

Braintree firm's primary clients are those serious about risk management

By Genevieve Olson
THE PATRIOT LEDGER

BRAINTREE

We're focused on our clients and we work hard to protect their assets and earnings powers," says Jeannette Lanza.

President and sole owner of Braintree-based H.J. Knight International Insurance, Lanza, of Kingston, was recently named "Woman of the Year" by the National Association of Professional Women (NAPW) for her commitment of leadership to her company and profession.

Primarily responsible for acquiring other agencies and selling the firm's insurance products, Lanza, of Kingston, has tripled her business's revenue and staff in just two years, she says.

Today she works alongside her husband, Matt, executive vice president of the firm, and a staff of 11.

Why and when did you start your own business?

Knight International has been around for 25 plus years, but I took it over in 2012.

I've always wanted to run my own agency and my own business, and my last employer provided me the opportunity to acquire it.

Have you always worked in insurance? Describe your background.

I've been in the insurance industry for 25 plus years. I worked at Amity Insurance in Marina Bay before this.

What are your company's products?

We offer commercial insurance, captive and alter-

native, risk management, employee benefits and personal financial planning. We're a one-stop shop.

Who are your primary clients? And where are they located?

We have 200 clients right now. Our primary clients are people who take risk management seriously. We want to minimize their claims. We have clients all over the United States because we're licensed in 33 states.

Speak to the benefits of being a member of NAPW.

I'm new to the association because I joined at the end of 2013, but I think it's a great networking solution and a way to get to know other professional women. I'm looking forward to working with it more.

Is this a male dominated field? How is that for you?

Yes, and I'm trying to change it (she laughs). It's definitely male dominated and I think it's hard for women to go out there and sell something, but NAPW and other centers of influence are resources for women like myself.

What's the biggest challenge of being in the insurance industry?

Our number one challenge is finding the best talent. It's finding people who are skilled and can provide the best customer service, which is and always will be our top priority.

Genevieve Olson may be reached at golson@ledger.com.

GOOD WORKS

Corporate contributors to the community

HINGHAM BUSINESSES, ORGANIZATIONS HOST FUNDRAISER FOR VETERANS

Reebok CrossFit Bare Cove, Wahlburgers, Hingham Veterans, Hingham Youth Football and the Hingham Sports Partnership partnered to host a fundraising event in Hingham to benefit The New England Center for Homeless Veterans (NECHV). One hundred athletes participated in the event's "Murph" challenge, which commemorated Navy Lt. Michael Murphy, who was killed in Afghanistan in 2005.

The event raised \$10,000 for the NECHV.

BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD SUPPORTS FATHER BILL'S & MAINSPRING

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts announced that Quincy and Brockton's Father Bill's & Mainspring is one of 11 nonprofit organizations selected as partners in this year's Skills-Based Volunteers program.

The initiative allows BCBSMA to collaborate with Father Bill's & Mainspring on developing a comprehensive tracking and reporting system for its programs and assets throughout the community.



ELIZABETH BRABANTS OF REGAN COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

■ From left, Mike LeJeune of Hingham, co-owner of Reebok CrossFit Bare Cove; C. Andrew McCawley of Hingham, president and CEO of the New England Center for Homeless Veterans; Gabriel Gomez, former Navy Seal; and Sharon and Chris Froio of Hull, co-owners of Reebok CrossFit Bare Cove.

Amazon unveils its smartphone

AT&T reportedly is only carrier for Fire Phone

SEATTLE (AP) – Amazon's new smartphone will serve as your eyes and ears.

Snap a photo of a book title, and it'll show you where to buy it. Listen to a song playing in the background, and it'll direct you to that tune on Amazon.

It can even direct you to knowledge: Snap a shot of a painting, and it'll pull up a Wikipedia entry on it.

The new Firefly feature also lets you snap bar codes, phone numbers and more. It's part of the new Fire Phone, which Amazon.com Inc. unveiled Wednesday.

Specs and features

■ The phone's screen measures 4.7 inches diagonally. Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos says the size was chosen to be ideal for one-handed use.

■ Bezos touts the camera on the new phone. He says it has image stabilization to counteract shaking as people take shots.

■ The phone will have features familiar to users of other Amazon gadgets. Besides X-Ray and Mayday, there's access to e-books to borrow for members of Amazon's \$99-a-year Prime program.

■ A new Firefly feature will let you snap bar codes, phone numbers, book titles and more with the camera. Firefly will then guide you to, say, buy a physical book or an e-book through Amazon. Firefly also has audio recognition, so it can listen to a song and direct you to buy it later.

■ Media reports have pointed to having multiple cameras to produce 3-D images. It wouldn't be the first 3-D phone, but it would set it apart from leading phones such as Apple's iPhone and Samsung's Galaxy S5.

■ Amazon's Kindle tablets run a highly modified version of Google's Android system, and it's likely an Amazon phone would do the same. That means apps for the phone would be limited to what's available through Amazon's own app store.

Availability

■ The Wall Street Journal has reported that AT&T will be the exclusive carrier for the new phone. If that's true, it would be a similar approach to what Apple took when it unveiled its first iPhone in 2007. AT&T had exclusive rights to the iPhone in the U.S. until 2011.

SCITUATE FARM DONATES FLOWERS TO PLANT SALE

Scituate's R & C Farms donated flowers to the Norwell Public Library's plant and yard sale. The library celebrated the opening of its gently used bookstore, Fred the Shed, during the sale.

ENTERGY'S PILGRIM STATION IN PLYMOUTH SUPPORTS VOLUNTEERISM

Entergy Corp.'s Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station in Plymouth awarded Mayflower RSVP, the retired and senior volunteer program serving Plymouth County, with a \$2,500 grant to assist with the program's increasing number of requests for skilled volunteers from nonprofits it serves.

Mayflower RSVP consists of 400 volunteers ages 55-plus who assist 60 organizations throughout Plymouth County.

WHO'S DOING GOOD WORK?

■ Is your company or a co-worker giving something back to the community? Help us recognize them every Wednesday by sending information for our Good Works column to biznews@ledger.com or fax us at 617-786-7384.