

# Montigny and AHA! New Bedford to host Community Conversation Series, Thursday March 9th

Senate Assistant Majority Leader Mark Montigny (D-New Bedford) is pleased to announce that on Thursday, March 9th he will host, alongside AHA! New Bedford, a community forum at the Star Store from 4:30 to 5:30p.m. to discuss how we can build upon New Bedford's recent success to foster a more unified, livable community.

This keynote session will feature Prabal Chakrabarti, Senior Vice President & Community Affairs Officer at the Boston Federal Reserve Bank. Mr. Chakrabarti is responsible for designing and implementing the Working Cities Challenge, which awarded \$1.8 million in grants in 2014. His work has also focused on affordable housing, venture capital in secondary cities and urban business development. Following the keynote session, there will be six "Our Story" dinner conversations around downtown New Bedford where local participants will discuss their vision for the future of New Bedford.

"Over the past 20 years downtown has experienced an immense cultural renaissance and revival of galleries, shops and restaurants," said Senator Montigny, who championed legislative efforts to secure funding for the Star Store transformation, support for local arts and cultural institutions and the redevelopment of Route 18. "We must continue to build upon this success and seek every opportunity possible. We are pleased that Mr. Chakrabarti will join us in New Bedford to share his experience and perspective."

"This year is the 20th Anniversary of the Regional Community

Congress in New Bedford, which created the AHA! program,” said Lee Heald, Executive Director of AHA! New Bedford. “Marking how far New Bedford has come since then, this “pilot” program of Community Conversations offers an opportunity to be back in an engaged discussion about our community and to hear about the relevant work of the Working Cities project. Working together as a community is particularly relevant in a time of national divisiveness.”

The six dinner conversations will take place starting at 6pm around downtown New Bedford:

- Whaler’s Tavern
- Greasy Luck Brewery
- Tia Maria’s European Cafe
- Freestones City Grill
- dNB Burgers
- YMCA

Following the keynote session, those interested are welcomed to join in on the conversation held at the downtown YCMA. Refreshments will be served.