

Owner of New Bedford seafood processing business sentenced to prison for tax evasion

A Rhode Island man was sentenced to three years in prison today for tax evasion, announced U.S. Attorney Aaron L. Weisman, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Richard E. Zuckerman of the Justice Department's Tax Division, and Special Agent in Charge Kristina O'Connell of IRS Criminal Investigation.

According to court documents, for more than ten years, Billie R. Schofield attempted to evade his federal income taxes. Schofield partly owned and worked for Northern Pelagic LLC, a seafood processing business located in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Despite earning hundreds of thousands of dollars in income, Schofield failed to pay taxes owed and, beginning in 2009, stopped filing income tax returns.

Between 2008 and 2018, Schofield obstructed IRS efforts to assess and collect his taxes by filing fraudulent forms, advancing frivolous tax arguments, creating and using a nominee entity and bank account, negotiating income checks to cash, and creating and submitting fraudulent checks to the IRS in an attempt to extinguish his tax liabilities. Including penalties and interest, Schofield caused a tax loss of more than \$350,000 to the United States.

In addition to a term of imprisonment, U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith sentenced Schofield to three years of supervised release, a \$5,000 fine, and ordered him to pay \$364,200.22 in restitution to the IRS.

Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Zuckerman and U.S. Attorney Weisman commended special agents of IRS-CI, who investigated the case, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Sandra

Hebert and Trial Attorney Christopher P. O'Donnell of the Tax Division who prosecuted the case.

Massachusetts Governor Baker signs health care legislation

Today, Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito joined Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders to participate in a ceremonial signing of S.2984, An Act Promoting a Resilient Health Care System That Puts Patients First.

Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito were also joined by Senator Cindy Friedman, Senator Julian Cyr, and Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr to participate in the ceremonial signing. The Governor also acknowledged the work of Speaker of the House Ronald Mariano, Senate President Karen Spilka, and other legislators for their work in advancing this comprehensive health care legislation.

The new law increases insurance coverage for telehealth services, expands the scope of practice for nurse practitioners, other specialized nurses, and optometrists, and takes steps to protect consumers from surprise medical bills. Recognizing the continuing impacts of COVID-19, the law also extends requirements for all insurance carriers in Massachusetts to cover COVID-19 testing and treatment.

In addition, the legislation takes several steps to increase MassHealth member access to urgent care sites, including eliminating referral requirements before urgent care visits and requirements for care coordination with the member's primary care physician.

New Bedford High School awarded \$250,000 grant for marine technology program

New Bedford High School has been awarded a \$250,000 grant through the Massachusetts Skills Capital Grant Program, the Baker-Polito Administration announced recently. The grant funding will be used to construct a state-of-the-art Marine Technology Laboratory to support New Bedford High School's Career Vocational Technical Education programming in maritime industry skill training. The new facilities will prepare students for careers in marine and maritime industries.

The NBHS Marine Technology Laboratory will be outfitted with welding training equipment, virtual welding and diesel engine training equipment. To date, New Bedford High School has been awarded \$650,000 in Skills Capital Grants since 2019. Previous awards include \$125,000 for the school's finance lab and \$275,000 for robotics logistics equipment.

In announcing the awards, Governor Charlie Baker said, "At a critical time in our Commonwealth, these Skills Capital Grants will increase flexibility and support for schools and educational institutions to launch new programs and help more students develop important technical skills and prepare them for high-demand industries."

Superintendent Thomas Anderson stated, "We commend NBHS staff for their work on this project, which has resulted in the award of this competitive grant. It will increase the high school's capabilities in preparing students for an expanding range of careers and post-secondary educational opportunities."

Thanks, too, for the support of our partners, including the Community Boating Center, New Bedford Port Authority, Quinn Fisheries/East Coast Fabrication and MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board.”

New Bedford High School’s Marine Technology Lab, which will include training systems connected to vessel construction and diesel engine technology, will support career pathway development for students interested maritime industry. The new laboratory and equipment will address the training requirements of the maritime industry sector. Also known as the “Blue Economy”, this sector is identified as an emerging growth career area by the MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board’s regional labor market blueprint.

“We are delighted to receive this third Skills Capital Grant Award to support the expansion of our Career Vocational Technical Education program, and grateful for Governor Baker’s continued support for NBHS”, said Bernadette Coelho, headmaster of New Bedford High School. “As the City of New Bedford has a rich history in the marine industry, it is only appropriate that NBHS serves as a career training center for new opportunities in the field”.

The planned marine technology lab compliments New Bedford High School’s growth in career technical education, as it has committed to fostering new vocational programming and supplementing its existing technical training offerings. The high school has offered marine construction programs in partnership with the Community Boating Center in New Bedford and plans to expand maritime offerings as a result of the new equipment.

“Our career technical students will be well positioned to obtain maritime industry careers with the training they will receive in this advanced technical laboratory”, said Christopher Cummings, Manager of New Bedford High School’s Career Vocational Technical Education program, who noted that

NBHS will engage its existing maritime industry partners and MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board to implement the new laboratory. “It is our goal to maximize the opportunities in the emerging Blue Economy by being the flagship training center for marine careers.”

New Bedford High School offers a broad range of Career Vocational Technical Education programming and is affiliated with the National Academy Foundation. In addition to marine programs, the school offers career pathway programs in Instructional Technology, Digital Media, Health Sciences, Engineering, Early Childhood Education, Criminal Justice, Finance, Business Technology, and Hospitality. For more information about Career and Technical Education at New Bedford High School, please contact Christopher Cummings, Manager of CVTE at 508 997 4511, ext. 20799.

Massachusetts sees single-day record of 7,136 new coronavirus cases

Chris Lisinski
State House News Service

Massachusetts public health officials on Thursday reported the highest one-day total of newly confirmed COVID-19 infections since the pandemic began, though the rolling average positive test rate declined slightly.

The 7,136 cases in Thursday’s update lagged only the number of new infections in Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 daily reports – 7,424 and 8,542, respectively – both of which covered two days of data

because they immediately followed holidays when reports were not published.

While new cases have skyrocketed in Massachusetts in recent months, far more tests are being performed than during the first surge in the spring, and the DPH counted 108,412 new tests in Thursday's report. The seven-day average percent positivity rate dropped from 8.25 percent on Wednesday to 7.83 percent on Thursday. With 71 more fatalities among those with confirmed COVID-19 cases, the cumulative death toll in Massachusetts increased to 12,634 on Thursday, or 12,909 when counting those who died with probable infections.

Thirty fewer patients in Massachusetts hospitals had COVID-19 Thursday as a day earlier, but the state's health infrastructure remains enormously strained, and only about 11 percent of all non-ICU beds were available in Thursday's report.

No children died in fires in Massachusetts in 2020; first year no one under 18 died in fires

State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey announced that for the first time on record, no children died in fires in Massachusetts in 2020. Historically, children and seniors have been most at risk of dying in fires. "To have no children, no one under the age of 18, die in a fire in Massachusetts is an amazing accomplishment. Through the 26 years of the Student Awareness of Fire Education Program (S.A.F.E.), firefighters

and classroom teachers have been helping to raise a fire safe generation of children.”

Saugus Fire Chief Michael C. Newbury, president of the Fire Chiefs’ Association of Massachusetts, said, “This milestone speaks to the hard work of firefighter-educators to teach children what to do to save themselves in a fire. We find fewer children hiding under beds or in closets, because they know how to use their home escape plan.”

State Fire Marshal Ostroskey said, “Ultimately, responsibility for home fire safety rests with the adults in the home, but the S.A.F.E Program has brought key safety information on maintaining smoke alarms, practicing home fire drills, cooking, heating, candle and match and lighter safety home to those adults. Goodness knows there’s nothing like being nagged by a 3rd grader to test your smoke alarm.”

“Just after this new year began, a child did suffer serious burns in an Oxford house fire. That reinforces how vigilant we must be to keep our children safe from fires and burns,” said Ostroskey.

39 Deaths in Massachusetts in 2020

Preliminary data from the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS) indicates that there were 39 fire deaths in 2020, down from 42 in 2019. The deaths were all adults and 15, or nearly 40%, were older adults over the age of 65. The majority, 31, died in the so-called safety of their own homes. Half of these deaths occurred in homes where there were no working smoke alarms. “Working smoke alarms give you the one thing you don’t have in a fire – time – time to escape,” said Ostroskey. There is only 1-3 minutes to escape the average house fire in a home without fire sprinklers.

Massachusetts Governor Baker signs police reform legislation

Today, Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito joined legislators and public safety officials to participate in a ceremonial signing of S.2963, An Act Relative to Justice, Equity and Accountability in Law Enforcement in the Commonwealth.

Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito were also joined by Senate President Karen Spilka, Speaker of the House Ronald Mariano, Senator William Brownsberger, Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz, Representative Claire Cronin, Representative Russell Holmes, Representative Chynah Tyler, MA Chiefs of Police Association President Ed Dunne, and former MA Association of Minority Law Enforcement Officers President Larry Ellison to participate in the ceremonial signing.

The legislation will create a mandatory certification process for police officers, increases accountability and transparency in law enforcement and gives police departments a greater ability to hire or promote only qualified applicants. The new law also identifies the general circumstances under which police officers can use physical force, and places strict limits on the use of so-called 'no-knock warrants.' In addition, the legislation requires law enforcement to seek a court order when conducting a facial recognition search except in emergency situations.

[Click here to learn more about the new law.](#)

Massachusetts State Troopers arrest two for weapons and other offenses; trooper injured when cruiser struck

A response to a crash overnight in Medford led to arrests of the car's occupants for illegal possession of a rifle and other crimes and resulted in injuries to the first-responding Trooper after his cruiser was hit by an SUV while on scene.

At approximately 1:20 a.m., a Trooper on patrol out of the State Police-Medford Barracks responded to a report of an erratic driver who had crashed into the median on Route 93 northbound near Exit 33 in Medford. The crashed vehicle was a white 2013 Toyota Corolla with two male occupants.

While the Trooper was about to exit his cruiser to check on the occupants of the Corolla, the cruiser was struck from behind by a white 2017 Volkswagen Tiguan sport utility vehicle operated by a 28-year-old Haverhill man. The impact of the crash pushed the cruiser into the Corolla in front of it.

The Trooper, whose name is not being released, suffered upper body injuries and was transported by ambulance to Massachusetts General Hospital, where he was treated and released at about 5:25 a.m.

Meanwhile, Troopers Jorell Berberena and Harold Sousa responded to assist in the moments after the cruiser was struck. The investigation into the Corolla that had crashed – and which had been reported by a witness as having been operated erratically prior to its crashing – resulted in the arrest of both occupants.

When Troopers approached the Corolla they observed an odor of

alcohol emanating from the car and from both occupants. The driver additionally showed physiological signs of alcohol impairment, and was given several field sobriety tests, leading to the determination that he was impaired.

During an inventory search of the Corolla, Troopers located a plastic bag containing 126 Xanax pill and 12 additional pills shaped like mushrooms, four-leaf clovers, and sea shells. The bag was sticking out of the pocket of a pair of jeans behind the passenger seat that belonged to the passenger. In a second plastic bag, Troopers located approximately 3.5 grams of a substance believed to be marijuana.

Troopers also located in the vehicle a black backpack that contained a Kel-Tec Sub-2000 collapsible rifle, three large capacity magazines, 33 nine-millimeter rounds and 12 .40-caliber rounds. The serial number of the rifle had been scratched off. Neither occupant of the Corolla are old enough to be eligible for a license to carry to a firearm in Massachusetts (both are 18).

The driver of the Corolla, ABRAHAM ESTRADA, 18, of Lawrence, and the passenger, GERALDO COSTA MARIANO Jr., 18, of Framingham, were both charged with the following offenses:

1. Illegal possession of a large capacity weapon;
2. Illegal possession of a large capacity feeding device (3 counts);
3. Possession of a firearm without a Firearm Identification Card;
4. Possession of ammunition without a Firearm Identification Card; and
5. Possession of a firearm with a defaced serial number.

Troopers also charged the driver, ESTRADA, who holds a learner's permit but not a driver's license, with the following offenses:

1. Operating under the influence of liquor;

2. Negligent operation of a motor vehicle; and
3. Unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle.

Troopers additionally charged the passenger, COSTA MARIANO (who is not old enough to legally possess marijuana in Massachusetts) with the following offenses:

1. Possession of a Class E narcotic; and
2. Possession of a Class D narcotic.

Both defendants were booked at the Medford Barracks and were expected to be arraigned today in Somerville District Court.

Additionally, Sergeant Robert Navas conducted an investigation of the 28-year-old Haverhill motorist who struck the cruiser. As a result of that investigation, that driver was cited for a move over violation. That driver was not injured.

New Bedford roadwork sites for the upcoming week of January 11, 2021 – January 15, 2021

The City of New Bedford has roadwork sites for the upcoming week of January 11, 2021 – January 15, 2021 and they are as follows:

Eversource:

- No work scheduled.

Other:

- Contractor (North Turf) will be on site at Hazelwood Park installing the gutter system for the new bowling greens. Field lighting to be installed (weather permitting).
- The City will be working on a sewer service and site cleanup at the Victory Pond warming house. Final restoration of the grass area will be in the Spring of 2021.
- Department of Public Infrastructure will be filling potholes city-wide on a continuous basis.
- The contractor (Revoli Construction) is scheduled to repair traffic signal sensors and perform general clean-up of the work area along King's Highway between Tarkiln Hill Rd and Route 140 overpass. There will be temporary lane closures during working hours. Traffic signage will be posted, and police details will be on-site. Access will be maintained to all businesses during construction.
- The contractor (Baystate WinSupply) is scheduled to continue large water meter replacements at various locations throughout the city. There are no anticipated traffic controls for this work.
- Due to ongoing construction at the High Hill Reservoir residents may experience discolored water. The water is safe, and the discoloration will be temporary. We recommend allowing the water to settle for a few hours and then flushing your service line by letting the bathtub run for a few minutes until the water clears.

*** Please note: Contractors will continue to follow guidelines and protocol regarding COVID-19 social distancing while conducting work in construction zone.*

Due to the current COVID-19 situation the Department of Public Infrastructure will be closed to the public entry. Office staff is available to assist by email and telephone.

City of New Bedford and Police Department will adopt recommendations of Commission on Police Use of Force Policies

Mayor Jon Mitchell today announced that the City and New Bedford Police Department will implement the recommendations of the Commission on the New Bedford Police Department's Use of Force Policies, consistent with state law and the NBPD's collective bargaining agreement.

The members of the Commission were drawn from a variety of professional backgrounds and lived experiences. Together they met weekly over the course of six months, held two public hearings and made ongoing requests to the public for feedback on the policies.

In its report, the Commission recommended measures in the Department's policies that would strengthen the following concepts across all three policies by:

- Providing substantive guidance on de-escalation for tense situations throughout the Department's policies
- Including a 'duty to report' clause in the Department's use of force policies, whereby officers must report violations of the policy and other appropriate actions during their duty
- Including a 'duty to intervene' obligation, whereby officers must intervene in any instance of excessive force by a fellow officer
- Requiring training and demonstrated proficiency on use of force policies, as well as training on implicit bias, cultural competency, and working with individuals with mental illness

and autism

- Providing an annual analysis and summary of use of force instances that is made available to the public

The Commission was established by Mayor Mitchell in June; at that time, the Mayor signed on to the Obama Foundation's Mayor's Pledge, which called on mayors across the United States to commit to reviewing use of force policies, engaging the community for its input, reporting the findings of the review, and reforming community police use of force policies. The Commission's recommendations, as well as related recommendations, observations and concerns made by the Commission, will be adopted by the Department consistent with the Department's collective bargaining agreement and state law.

On a related note, Chief Joseph Cordeiro has announced that he is rescinding the former High Energy Patrol Initiative directive, superseded by the Department's Walk and Talk directive and community policing philosophy, effective today.

Mayor Jon Mitchell noted, "I am grateful to the members of the Commission for their time and dedication in reviewing the Police Department's use of force policies. NBPD is an effective police department, whose work in recent years has led to significant reductions in crime and a strengthening of the public's trust. But we know that trust requires continuous nurturing, and that a successful police department is one that seeks always to improve itself. The Commission's recommendations will enable the Department to upgrade its use of force practices and will bolster its legitimacy in the eyes of the public."

"The success of modern policing is dependent on positive collaboration and an inclusive partnership with the community. This is a continuum in relationship-building and mutual trust, which is a foundational tenet of our community policing philosophy," said Chief Cordeiro.

The Commission's members included:

- City Councilor Brian K. Gomes (Chair), Chair of the, City Council Committee on Public Safety
- John G. "Buddy" Andrade, Director of the Old Bedford Village Development Corp.
- Marcus Brito-Barros, an organizer of the Black Lives Matter protests in New Bedford
- City Councilor Naomi R. A. Carney
- Helena DaSilva Hughes, Executive Director of the Immigrants Assistance Center
- Chuck DiChiara, Massachusetts Police Training Institute
- Hon. Armand Fernandes, retired Associate Justice, Massachusetts Trial Court
- Gail Fortes, Executive Director of the YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Rev. Ramiro Monteiro, International Church of the Nazarene, New Bedford
- Deputy Chief Paul Oliveira, New Bedford Police Department
- Marcelina Pina-Christian, Chair of the New Bedford Human Relations Commission
- Rita Ribeiro, retired New Bedford Police Department sergeant and School Committee member for Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School
- Maria Rosario, Executive Director of Northstar Learning Center
- Bruce Rose, former President, New Bedford Branch of the NAACP
- Robert Schilling, criminal defense attorney
- Andrea Sheppard Lomba, Director of United Interfaith Action of Southeastern Massachusetts
- Peter Silva, designee of the New Bedford Branch of the NAACP
- Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Sowa, Bristol County District Attorney's Office
- Hank Turgeon, President of the New Bedford Police Union
- Noah Williams, New Bedford High School Class of 2017 alumnus and current student at Georgetown University

Moving Out: Massachusetts top ten in 2020 outbound migration

By Matt Murphy

State House News Service

More people moved out of Massachusetts than relocated to the Bay State in 2020, with retirees and people seeking a change in lifestyle driving the overall migration out of the state, according to a recent study by a national moving company.

United Van Lines found Massachusetts to be one of the the top 10 states in the country that people were moving from as the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated people's decisions to relocate and the years-long trend of people moving south and west continued.

Idaho topped United's survey for inbound moves, followed by South Carolina, Oregon, South Dakota and Arizona as popular destinations.

New Jersey, New York, Illinois, Connecticut and California saw the greatest percentage of movers leaving, with Massachusetts ranking eighth.

"United Van Lines' data makes it clear that migration to western and southern states, a prevalent pattern for the past several years, persisted in 2020," said Michael Stoll, an economist and University of California, Los Angeles professor, in a statement released by the company.

"However, we're seeing that the COVID-19 pandemic has without

a doubt accelerated broader moving trends, including retirement driving top inbound regions as the Baby Boomer generation continues to reach that next phase of life,” Stoll said.

United reported that 56.6 percent of its Massachusetts business was from customers leaving the state, while 43.4 percent of moves were people and family relocating here, primarily for work or family. The company tracked 3,355 moves in and out of Massachusetts in 2020.

The Boston metro area did not make United’s list of Top 25 urban areas for inbound or outbound migration, but the Worcester-Fitchburg-Leominster area ranked 18th on the outbound list with 64 percent of movers leaving the region on a United van.

Customers cited work as the most common reason for moving to Massachusetts, with 40.4 percent of inbound moves related to a job, followed by family at 30.6 percent, retirement at 12 percent and lifestyle at 10.4 percent.

However, the survey doesn’t necessarily reflect overall population trends.

With the 2020 Census concluded, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated in December that as of July 1 the state’s population had held steady in 2020 at close to 6.9 million residents, down by about 1,300 people from its 2019 estimate. The full decennial Census count will not be available until later in 2021.

Of those leaving Massachusetts, 35.2 percent of United customers surveyed said it was because of work, while equal numbers of people (24.2 percent) said they were leaving to retire or for family. Another nearly 20 percent said they left for a change in lifestyle.

Retirees moved in the biggest volume to Delaware, according to

the United Vans survey, followed by Florida and South Carolina.

Minnesota was the most popular destination for people moving for family, and movers decided Wyoming offered the best change of pace for their lifestyle. Nebraska boasted the highest percent of people moving in for jobs.

In New England, states saw different moving patterns over the past year.

Vermont, Maine, Rhode Island and New Hampshire all witnessed more moves into the state than out, with the numbers almost split in New Hampshire, while the two higher-cost states – Massachusetts and Connecticut – experienced the reverse.