Milford, New Hampshire

The town of Milford is located in Hillsborough County and is where approximately 15,500 people call home. It is the retail and manufacturing center of a six-town area known informally as the Souhegan Valley, located at the meeting point of New Hampshire Routes 101, 13 and 101A. It is nestled fifty-five miles north of Boston and a short drive to the state’s largest city of Manchester.

Milford was once home to numerous granite quarries, which produced a stone that was used, among other things, to make the pillars for the U.S. Treasury, in Washington, D.C. still seen on the American $10 bill. It moved on to textile mills in the 19th century, which closed after WWII, but Milford remains the commercial and retail center for surrounding towns. The historic downtown is the heart of the community boasting numerous businesses and shopping opportunities. The town has a total area of 25.3 square miles, with its downtown considered a regional commercial destination in the Manchester-Nashua metro area. A short drive to Manchester-Boston Regional Airport or Boston's Logan airport the city has convenient air travel to most any location in the US and Canada. State Highway Route 101 and 101A connect the community to points east and west and Route 13 allows access to destinations north and south of town.

Driving distance to select cities:

- Manchester, NH 17 miles
- Portsmouth, NH 63 miles
- Concord, NH 35 miles
- Boston, MA 55 miles

History and tours of Milford

Since 1794 the Town of “Millford” has been a busy hub for surrounding communities. The falls and dams along the river provided early power for Shephard’s grist and lumber mills, soon followed by the Cotton and Woolen Mills. Other manufacturing soon followed including furniture companies French & Heald and McLane Manufacturing, Granite quarries and many more mills and business all drew people here to work and shop along with our own residents. Farms moved from subsistence to producers of dairy, poultry, wool and orchard produce. Railroads allowed crops, goods and granite to be shipped from Milford to far flung markets Early on oxen and horse power were the main supply of energy and strength to get the job done locally. Rivers Roads and Rails all formed a hub of interconnections in Milford. Stores and Services soon served many of the surrounding communities who were too small to support such diverse activity. Milford’s schools became a source of community pride and played host for many years for high school students from surrounding towns.

Today we are an evolving community – the Oval Area contains many restaurants, gift and service related businesses. It remains the hub of activity both social and business wise for Milford and the surrounding towns. Band concerts, festivals and other activities bring tourists and residents to shop and socialize. Milford’s commitment to excellence in education provides us with a dynamic Academic and Vocational high school along with highly rated sports teams. We still have World Class employers here including Manufacturing and Technology companies but many residents commute out of town for their employment but choose to live here for the quality of life that this community provides. Milford hosts a major farm and equipment dealer along with several other recreational and automotive sales and service organizations. We still have a great farming community with many CSA’s and a year round farmer’s market. We are a town of many more small home and cottage industries, along with trades like plumbers, electricians and computer businesses. Milford has a very active Conservation Commission which maintains miles of hidden trails for you to explore all seasons of the year.
Tours of Milford

1. **QR Code Tour— take a tour on your phone!**

After many months of research and website development, the Milford Improvement Team launched the Milford NH QR Code tour in 2014! This project was a joint effort between the Milford Improvement Team, the Milford Historical Society, the Milford Heritage Commission, and the Milford Conservation Commission. Generous grants from Keyes and Marchesi Trusts, and the Milford Conservation Commission, turned an idea into a reality. Daryl Johnson of SvenGrafik designed the website for us.

We hope that this QR tour will give you an idea of where we came from, what we are today and where we are going in the future.

To get started, download the QR code app to your device:


2. **The Milford Historical Society:**


**Virtual Tour of Milford**

Many points of historical significance and general interest are highlighted on this Google® map by map bookmarks. Click on a bookmark to see photos of the site and find out more about its history.

Walk from site to site on a relaxing and informative stroll through our town. There are plenty of restaurants and friendly shops along the way. Bring the kids, and be sure to bring a camera!

Click and drag the map to see all the points of interest, or click the virtual tour link under the map.
The town of Monson chartered in 1746, lasted only 24 years due to infertile land and the inability to build a meeting house. In 1770, Monson’s charter was surrendered and the land was divided between Amherst and Hollis and later, Milford. It had been settled before the charter in 1737. Monson’s corporate existence lasted for twenty-four years, during which it regularly held its annual town meetings, elected its moderators, town clerks, selectmen, tithingmen, hogreeves, deerkeepers, and other town officers, but there is no evidence that it ever had a school, school house, meeting-house or a minister. The only public structure ever owned by the town was a pound, built for the confinement of disorderly cattle.

The French and Indian War petition for soldiers for a guard was signed by only 14 names. Six years later in 1753 Monson asked that it might be excused from payment of Province taxes. At that time there were 21 house and the petition notes that the inhabitants are living in a very plain way and with difficulty. Several times the town warrant asked for building of a school or a meetinghouse, but they were not passed. In 1767 the census found the population as 293.

Finally in 1770 the people of Monson seemed to abandon hope and petitioned the General Count to end their corporate life and repeal their charter. This is unique in NH. They stated a reason: “That the Land in and about the Center of Monson is so very poor, Broken, Baron and uneven, as cannot admit of many Settlers, so that those Families that are in Town, are almost all planted in the Extreme parts of it. We have no prospect of ever Building a Meeting-House in the Center or elsewhere, any ways to accommodate us, by which Difficulties we think the Gospel will not be settled among us while in the present situation. We therefore pray, &tc. “

Since its corporate death it has been divided into four pieces: the largest is in Milford, smallest in Brookline and the rest about equally divided between Amherst and Hollis.

BUT, Monson has another story. Monson Center which might have gone to development of 28 luxury homes in 1998 was the subject of a concerted effort of citizens and neighbors in both Hollis and Milford led by a couple living near the center of Monson, Russ and Geri Dickerman, who have given land and made it their life work to adopt Monson. The NH Society for the Protection of Forests and Inherit NH purchased 200 acres. Mr. Dickerman and his wife have restored the one remaining building from shambles. Trails are now marked where the cellar holes of Monson Center tell an old story with the history of those who lived in each posted. Archeological studies have been made and hopes are that there will be more study. State historian Gary Hume says Monson is among the most archeologically significant sites in New England. This unusual town can be visited by appointment and on special days when tours are held.

Tips for Visiting Monson:

Bring bug spray and wear long pants to avoid poison ivy.

Tricky directions. While Monson is in Milford, NH it can only be accessed through Hollis, NH. Off 101 in Milford, take 122. Follow this road out of Milford to Hollis. About a mile down the road take a right on Hayden Rd. A mile later take a right on Federal Hill Rd(not marked). This will be a dirt road that turns into a blacktop again. Look for Adams Road. Look for an unassuming turn-off with an iron gate. Park here and walk down the path. The entrance gives no clue to what lies beyond. This is hidden gem, a great place for a picnic. If you are someone interested in New England colonial history this is a must see.

REMAINS: There is one restored colonial house, the "Gould" house. Here there are some maps to the abandoned town. At this house there is an operational antique well pump. There are half a dozen colonial cellar holes. Each one has a posted sign with the history of the occupants. There is also a small graveyard next to one of the cellar holes. At the far corner of the area is a stone marking the "town center."
Top Things to Do in Milford, New Hampshire

There's no place like historic Milford, New Hampshire! Come visit us and see what makes living and working here so special.

*The majority of these activities cost little or nothing!*

**Hike Milford’s Trail System:**

1. **Emerson Park Trail:** Short trail along the Souhegan River beginning in Emerson Park located beside the Milford Post Office running west along the Souhegan River and ending in the grounds of the American Stage Festival. A very easy walk and delightfully pleasant.

2. **Mayflower Hill Trail:** Identified by signs, the two entrances to this 42 acre conservation land provides access to well used trails. One entrance is on Shady Lane and the other is located at the end of Falconer Avenue Extension. The main trail is circular and leads to Look-Out Point and passes an old granite quarry operation. The area provides a leisurely walk in a quiet setting in spite of being surrounded by development and very close to the town center.

3. **Hitchiner Town Forest Trails:** This property is located at the end of Mullen Road off Osgood Road. A large pavilion stands near the parking lot. The well-marked trail includes Burns Hill. The top of the hill is not on town property but forms part of the trail with permission of the owner and provides for excellent views. There are several old logging roads and skimobile trails which add to the accessibility of the land. This land is classified as Town Forest. Further trail expansion is planned with monies coming from the sale of timber.

4. **Tucker Brook Trails:** This 258 acre conservation property provides good hiking opportunities. An excellent map of Tucker Brook Town Forest is available free of charge in the Milford Town Hall. The map includes a description of the location of the three entrances to the trails, namely off Boulder Drive, Savage Road and Whitten Road. The property contains forest, pine groves, beaver ponds, large wetland areas and Tucker Brook Falls, located on Tucker Brook which runs through the property. There is also the remains of an old mill along this brook. An orienteering trail exists on this property offering a fun opportunity to hone your map & compass skills.

5. **Souhegan River Trail:** Beginning at the Milford Fish Hatchery Land on North River Road, this trail follows the Souhegan River for about 7/10 miles. A map of this trail is available at no charge at the Milford Town Hall.
6. Mile Slip Town Forest Trails: Directions to mile slip town forest: Head west off the Oval and make the immediate left onto Union St., drive 0.6 miles and turn right onto Osgood Rd. Continue 0.7 miles and turn right onto Mason Rd. (Osgood Pond will be on your right). Drive 2.3 miles, turn left onto Mile Slip Rd. The parking lot for this town forest is just over 2 miles on the right. [All trails remain closed to motorized wheeled vehicles indefinitely.]

The Mile Slip Town Forest is as close to wilderness as you can get in Milford. This area has many natural resource features in addition to being a great place to recreate. Wildlife, including bears, bobcat and moose, use this part of town. It connects to nearly 7,000 acres of undeveloped land in Brookline, Mason, Wilton and Milford. On March 8, 2005 the 75% of citizens voting in Milford agreed to purchase this 452 acre parcel. The closing on the property was August 24th of 2005.

7. Granite-Town Rail Trail: This nearly 3 mile trail runs from the DPW Garage on South St., crosses Union St., goes under Rt. 101, across Armory Rd., Melendy Rd. and on to the Brookline Town line. The trail continues another 4 miles in Brookline. There are 2 parking areas in Milford, South St just north of the DPW garage and on Armory Rd. Brookline built a parking lot on Rt. 13.

2. See the Flowers and Foliage in Full Bloom
Come check us out Spring, Summer and Fall! Milford has a very active Garden Club turning our parks and public spaces into a visual feast for the eyes! www.milfordnhgardenclub.org

3. Hit the Antiques Trail
A cornucopia of collectibles can be found in Milford!

http://www.nhantiquecoop.com/
New Hampshire Antique Co-op | 323 Elm Street | PO Box 732 | Milford NH 03055 | 603-673-8499

http://www.milfordantiqueshows.com/
Milford Antiques Shows
at the Hampshire Hills Athletic Club
50 Emerson Road, Milford, New Hampshire 03055
http://www.poorhouseantiques.com/

Poor House Antiques & Estate Sales
355 Nashua Street
Milford, NH 03055

http://www.robins-egg.com/
326 Nashua Street
Milford, NH 03055

http://www.consigningforgood.com/
172 South Street
Milford, NH 03055
603-249-9481

Consigning for Good
Consignment Shop
4. Attend our Annual Milford Festivals and Events:

**Annual Taste of Milford** - MAY/JUNE: Come enjoy what makes Milford unique as a food and shopping destination all in one night!! At the Annual A Taste of Milford, coordinated by the Milford Improvement Team, 30 restaurants, caterers, local food vendors, and cottage businesses will showcase their specialty foods: from Mediterranean to New England, to Burgers, Desserts, gourmet teas and coffees, to everything else in between, you will not walk away hungry!! Each food enthusiast participating in the Taste is paired with a shop or business in and around the Milford Oval and Town Hall! There is also live music throughout the evening! Come enjoy great food, great shops, and a great night out with friends or your family -- new this year: kids' prices! This event tends to sell out early, so buy your discounted tickets in advance on-line www.milfordimprovementteam.org

**Milford Arts Festival** - MAY/JUNE: Held the same weekend as a Taste of Milford, the Milford Oval is transformed into a colony of artists. This event, presented by the Milford Improvement Team, shows the Milford area’s artistic beauty, by showcasing Fine Art from area artists, Contemporary Crafts, Live Music, Two Performance stages, Kids Activities, Face Painting, Bouncy Houses, and of course, the Unique Dining and Shopping Experience that attendees of the Milford Arts Festival will enjoy In and Around the historic Milford Oval. www.milfordimprovementteam.org

**4th of July Family Fun Day and Fireworks** – JULY: Each 4th of July, the Milford Recreation Department coordinates this annual community event at the Keyes Memorial Field. Attendees enjoy a Patriotic Bike Parade, Field Activities, a town officials belly flop/cannon ball contest, free admission to the town pool, live entertainment, food, and spectacular fireworks! http://www.milford.nh.gov/departments/recreation

**Milford Rotary Swim Meet** - JULY: Working with the Milford Recreation Department and Commission to put on this two-day event each year, the Milford Rotary Swim Meet started in 1966 as a way to celebrate the opening of the then "new" Keyes Memorial Pool. This event has grown from 5 to 6 local teams with a few hundred athletes to 16 to 18 teams with well over 550 athletes from across New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts attending each year. 2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Keyes Memorial Pool and the 50th time that Milford Rotary put on a swim meet! The tradition continues, come join the fun! Information at: http://portal.clubrunner.ca/2944

**Labor Day Parade** - SEPT: Each year, hundreds of spectators line the streets of Milford for the annual Labor Day Parade, bringing summer to a close in a patriotic fashion. The 90-plus minute parade features creative floats, great marching bands, the Shriners clowns driving their little cars, town organizations as well as just about every politician running for office and their supporters. The annual parade is a draw for politicians as it is the largest Labor Day parade in the state! In certain years, you can shake hands with many Presidential Candidates. Also featured are an abundance of fire engines, both new and antique with sirens blasting, the Milford VFW Color Guard, and always, the governor marches at the head of the parade. In addition, the parade the parade features unique treats such as characters from Star Wars and R2-D2 rolling down the street. Cheerleaders and karate kids provided a demonstration of their talents. www.milford.nh.gov

**The Milford Pumpkin Festival** - OCT: One of the most anticipated festival in New Hampshire each year, and is held over the 3-day Columbus Day Weekend each Fall. Organized by the Milford Improvement Team on behalf of the Town of Milford, the event promotes the historic, natural, social, and economic vitality of the town. In 2014, there were over 35,000 attendees over the 3 day event. 1000s of volunteer hours go into putting on this event, with people working months in advance. Many Milford non profits and community based groups participated with fundraising or awareness activities that raised substantial monies that will be reinvested back into the Milford Community. Signature Festival events include: the Great Pumpkin Weigh-in, Pumpkin Painting, Pumpkin Sales, The Pumpkin Catapult, an Arts & Crafts Show, Scarecrow Making, The Haunted Trail, Face Painting, two stages of LIVE Music and Entertainment all weekend, Great Restaurants and Food Vendors galore, the Talent Show, a Zombie Walk, The Beer and Wine Tasting Tent, bounce houses, Carnival rides by Fanelli Amusements, and a scholarship contest. www.milfordpumpkinfestival.org
Southern NH Business Expo at The Hampshire Dome - NOV: Sponsored by the Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce,

The Hampshire Dome, largest indoor sports complex in northern New England is a “big draw” venue that allows for larger booths, better visibility and more demonstration / performance area. With over 200 vendors and 25 restaurants participating, attendees of the SNH Expo are treated to the talents of local musicians, student activity groups, entertainers food, and a peak at what our businesses are all about.

Holiday Craft Fairs - DEC: Held annually, Milford’s Annual Holiday Craft Fairs are hosted by 13+ Milford non-profits, churches, and community groups. Usually held on the first Saturday of the month of December, the event also features the Milford Indoor Farmers’ Market, held in the historic Town Hall Auditorium from 9 am to 2 pm. An annual shopping tradition for residents and visitors alike, this event features beautiful crafts, food and other holiday giftware – all while supporting local charities.

Other local community events held annually/weekly in Milford: there are a slew of Rec events like the annual Daddy-Daughter dance in February
MCAA has a variety of tournaments
Summer and Winter Farmers’ Markets
Link to the Library’s calendar with its many many programs including Acoustic Café
Contra Dances that occur on a regular basis at Town Hall
Free Dinners at UU Church (? one Wed per month) and at SHARE weekly on Tuesdays
Masons, Grange and VFW regularly have dinners and the Mason’s sponsor breakfasts
Not sure about the American Legion
Conservation Commission Saturday Trail Hike series
Lions Club does an annual Penny Sale - not sure of details - ask Paul Dargie, Don Jalbert or the current Club President
Souhegan Valley Chorus and Nashua Orchestra do annual events at Town Hall

January -
annual Lions Club Holiday dinner for Senior Citizens

May -
Milford Rotary Club’s annual Senior Citizens’ Chicken Barbeque - 2015 was the 37th annual bbq - 1st Wed in May
Memorial Day Parade

June -
annual Boy Scouts two day yard sale on the Community House Lawn - ask Paul Dargie

Milford Rotary 100 Holes of Golf in One Day Tournament now in its 21st year http://www.golf100holes.com/ @ Amherst Country Club (still worth a plug :))

Sept -
Milford Rotary Pancake Breakfast - always the Sunday after Labor Day - 47th annual event on Sept. 13, 2015
Places to Shop around the Oval:

Pastiche Boutique

JM Princewell

Stork Organic Baby

The Garden Party

Flipz Silly Jilly

Lemondrops and Lollipops

The Verizon Wireless Store

Frame Depot

Antiques on the Oval (not positive of its name — new consignment place)

Coffee: Union Coffee

Breakfast :Café on the Oval, Union Street Grill, Riverside Café, Red Arrow

Lunch: Amigos Cantina, Pasta Loft, Barkin’ Monkei, Café on the Oval, Union Street Grill, Riverside Café, Red Arrow, Foodees, Swirl and Serve (has Pho)

Dinner and Drinks: Pasta Loft, Amigos Cantina, J’s Tavern, Barkin Monkei

Pizza: Foodees, Bravo Pizza

Ice cream: Swirl and Serve, Foodees