

COMMERCIAL ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY

Maine has the smallest electronics industry in New England.

Of all the companies producing electronics and related products, the largest are Shape Ind. (video/audio cassettes), National Semiconductor (employees 1500 and manufactures digital semiconductors), and Vishay Sprague (electronic component including capacitors).

One major change in the industry was the sale of operations at Waldoboro and Bangor, Maine by GTE to Osram/Sylvania. Another division of GTE in Standish was purchased by an investment group and now operates as Control Devices Inc.

In addition to the rapid transition from boom to near bust for the computer industry, the state has had to encounter the perils of shrinking defense/transport programs. Although the impact on California and Connecticut of defense downsizing are well publicized, Massachusetts has seen as great an influence from these changes. The state has been the afflicted thanks to the continued growth of new technology companies and a number of defense products manufacturers whose defense products are only a small portion of their business. Massachusetts state government has also been more successful than Connecticut in assisting companies in diversifying or maximizing their defense profit potential.

The state has long been an international trade center and both the Port of Boston and Logan International Airport continue to grow. Since the mid 1980's there has been an aggressive move by the state to promote and assist the state's products in foreign markets.

There are two somewhat distinct parts to Massachusetts: the eastern part of the state including the Boston area, and as far west as Worcester, and the western part of the state "Worcester West". The western part of the state has had a higher economic lull than the rest of the state (even in the early 80's). The major cities in this region are Worcester, Springfield and Pittsfield were the early heavy industry areas including metal working and finishing. There has never been development in these areas of a new product focus, although Pittsfield has at one point becoming a textiles industry center.