

Community Bridge: NMDC News

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Summer 2013

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Russell joins NMDC

BANGOR — Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) is pleased to announce Joanna Russell of Bangor has been hired as Tri-County Workforce Development Director. In this role, she will also

serve as the Executive Director of the Tri-County Workforce Investment Board (TCWIB) serving



Penobscot, Piscataquis and Hancock counties.

Russell has served as the Executive Director at TCWIB at Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC) since 2007 and previously served as Director of Career Services at the Metropolitan College of New York. On July 1, NMDC replaced EMDC as the fiscal agent for TCWIB.

“Joanna brings extensive years of experience in workforce development and career services, said NMDC Director of Economic and Workforce Development Ryan Pelletier. “She has done an exceptional job in her role as Executive Director of the Tri-County Workforce

Russell continued on pg. 3

Executive Board and NMDC members gather in St. Agatha

ST. AGATHA — The Executive Board of the Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) has given approval to two grant applications which, if awarded, would be a boost to manufacturing in the region and fund an aggressive “Education to Industry” initiative spearheaded by the Aroostook Partnership for Progress (APP).

Meeting in St. Agatha Thursday, June 13, the board unanimously approved a \$50,000 dollar grant application to the Bangor Savings Bank Foundation.

“The ‘Education to Industry’ initiative is a fundamental component to growing our 18- to 44-year-old workforce here in Aroostook County,” said Ryan Pelletier, NMDC director of economic and workforce development. “The proposal we have submitted to the Bangor Savings Bank Foundation will be pivotal to our success by leveraging public and private resources to do marketing and outreach; hosting mentorships, job shadowing and intern programs to County youth and engaging our business community to ensure success.”

“This initiative will take significant time and resources to change the way education and businesses are working together and make it a standardized process over the next few years,” said APP President Bob Dorsey.

The Executive Board also authorized a \$200,000 grant proposal to the Economic Development Administration for an Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP)

Grant. This proposal will develop a strategy to advance the design and manufacture of biomass heating appliances in northern Maine. The strategic process will focus on two options: the ability to accomplish research and development of more affordable heating devices in the region and the likelihood of attracting a European manufacturer to perform fabrication and assembly activities here.

“This dovetails well with our recent meeting with Schmid Energy in Switzerland,” said NMDC Executive Director Bob Clark. “Part of this whole application is to find manufacturers of biomass boilers and appliances and Schmid would be a perfect fit for that.”

The annual meeting of the members followed the Executive Board session, where Clark gave an overview of the NMDC operating plan for 2013-14. Clark said for the ninth consecutive year NMDC has not increased dues to the members, noting that most municipalities recoup the cost of dues by savings received through NMDC’s cooperative road salt purchase. He also indicated staff is working to find other cooperative opportunities to save members even more in the future.

Also at the annual meeting the slate of officers for the fiscal year were selected. Don Guimond of Fort Kent will serve as chairperson, replacing Jim

Tweedie. The other officers are Christy Sirois of St. Agatha, vice chair; Christina Therrien of Madawaska, treasurer; and Austin Bless of Caribou, secretary. Also elected to Executive Board two-year terms were: Don Adams, Patten; Jim Bennett, Presque Isle; Ralph Dwyer, Ashland; Jon Frederick, Castle Hill; Denis Gagne, Bridgewater; John Herold, Fort Fairfield; Max Lynds, Littleton; Ray Mersereau, Mars Hill; Patricia Pelletier, Allagash; Sirois; Therrien; and Barb Pitcarin, Portage Lake. Elected to one-year terms were Bless and Gene Conlogue of Houlton.

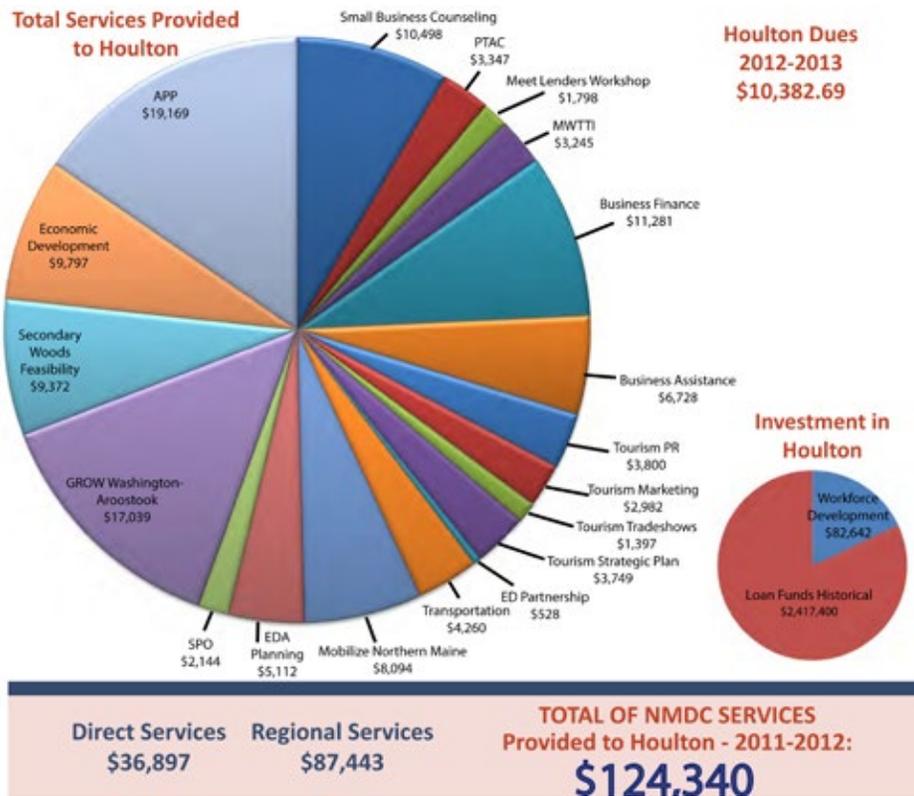
Two employees were lauded for employment milestones with NMDC. Leslie Jackson, regional tourism and IT design developer, has been with NMDC for 10 years and Dave Spooner, business and workforce development specialist and PTAC coordinator, has 15 years of service.

Also at the annual meeting, Eric Scott, a loan officer in the business finance division, was presented with several retirement gifts. He is retiring in July after 14 plus years with NMDC.



NMDC Business Finance Director Duane Walton presents a retirement gift to Eric Scott.

Your dues at work: Houlton ROI and salt buy



Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) is organizing its annual purchase of road salt as part of our Cooperative Purchasing Program. Our goal is to save participating municipalities as much money as possible in the winter road maintenance budget. We continue to use the Maine Department of Transportation's latest specifications for road salt. These specifications include that the vendor ensure low moisture content, anti-caking, and prompt delivery. We have worked with Cargill Deicing Technology to obtain a price of \$66.29 per ton delivered. This is over \$10 per ton less than the Maine Department of Transportation's price offered to communities. In 2013, communities have committed to purchase 13,195 tons of road salt, for a savings of \$131,950 dollars for 37 municipalities.

Community guided planning and zoning process continues

Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) has submitted the process document developed for the Aroostook County Community Guided Planning and Zoning Project to the Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC) for their review and approval. In the spring of 2013, staff from LUPC and NMDC met and determined that it was necessary to set up a steering committee to design the planning process. NMDC staff recruited nine members for the steering committee, each representing important groups of stakeholders in the unorganized townships of Aroostook County.

The steering committee met three times. In the first meeting, the committee discussed the opportunities and risks that the planning project might present. The opportunities included creating more predictability in regulation, and new and creative ideas through the collaboration of diverse interests. The risks included stalling due to conflict and the committee overextending itself due to the size and scope of this project. At the second and third meetings, the steering committee developed and approved the process document included with this letter. Their intent was that this process document would be approved by NMDC's Executive Board and the LUPC during the summer, and that the regional land use planning work can begin in September. This process document was approved by NMDC's Executive Board of Directors during their June 13, 2013 meeting and later by the LUPC.

SBDC helps establish 53 new businesses in Maine in 2012

The Maine SBDC provides no-cost, comprehensive business management assistance through its network of certified business counselors at offices around the state. Business owners and entrepreneurs can request advice and get answers to the myriad of questions that are part of running or starting a successful business, including:

- Financial analysis
- Projecting cash flow
- Business plan development
- Financing and loan packaging
- Management and operations
- Sales and marketing strategy

In 2012, counselors worked hand in hand with entrepreneurs and helped establish 157 new businesses in Maine. Rod Thompson, Maine SBDC counselor at Northern Maine Development Commission in Aroostook County, helped create 18 of these businesses by sharing his expertise and giving clients solid advice, at the right time.

Established in 1977, the Maine SBDC is a program of the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development and the University of Southern Maine. For more information or to request a business counseling appointment, visit www.mainesbdc.org or contact Thompson at 207-487-8736. Or via email at rthompson@nmdc.org.

Comprehensive economic development strategy grant awarded

CARIBOU — The Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) continues to work toward a comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) for Aroostook and Washington counties and is being assisted by a \$60,000 grant, awarded last month, from the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

The funding will be used to establish an economic development planning framework, process and strategy that supports private capital investment and job creation.

The CEDS project brings together public and private sectors in the creation of an economic development roadmap to diversify and strengthen the regional economy.

The Mobilize Northern Maine asset based strategic planning initiative is the process from which the CEDS is being developed using six pillars as a foundation. They are asset based cluster development, entrepreneurship and innovation, education and workforce development, access to capital, infrastructure and environment and leadership.

The 380 Economic Development Districts (EDDs) throughout the U.S. regularly develop and update CEDS as a part of their work to help communities.

Many states, including Maine, Oklahoma, Florida, New Mexico, Idaho, Arkansas, Minnesota, North Carolina and Tennessee, are pursuing Statewide CEDS. Some of these states are actively planning, while others are still in the discussion stage.

This statewide approach helps states to address larger, common needs and priorities.



Lorraine Pelletier, Maine Regional Coordinator for the World Acadian Congress, talks to some potential tourists at the annual Vacationland RV and Camping Show in Portland.



Staff at NMDC recently gathered to wish Brian Longstaff well, as he moves on to a new challenge in southern Maine. Longstaff has been with NMDC for almost 14 years. He begins his new post with the city of Scarborough later this month. Pictured are from left, back row: Judy Dinsmore, Ryan Pelletier, Dana Delano, Jay Kamm, Ken Murchison, David Spooner, Alain Ouellette, Mike Eisensmith, Duane Walton, Bob Clark, Natalie St. Pierre and Rod Thompson. Front row: Tracy Tweedie, Leslie Jackson, Longstaff, Eric Scott and Connie Akerson.

Russell

Investment Board under the previous fiscal agent. She is highly regarded in the tri county region as a dedicated, hard working individual. We are delighted to have her join the NMDC staff and look forward to more collaboration between our two regions.”

Russell has been engaged in workforce development her entire career and said she looks forward to continuing her work with TCWIB.

“I get the greatest satisfaction when systems are successfully built to accommodate educators, businesses and job seekers within the same framework,” said Russell. “This requires that all entities speak the same language and follow the same guidelines. The task is easier said than done. In local area two, we have made great strides to see this come to fruition to the extent that all three entities understand the importance of having a ‘WorkReady’ community.”

Under the direction of the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEO’s) and the Tri-County Workforce Board, the TCWIB Executive Director position provides professional management and administrative services at the board level in directing fiscal planning, budgeting, contract development and assessment of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs in Hancock, Penobscot and Piscataquis service delivery area. The position is responsible for developing a budget from multiple funding sources and budget preparation for a wide variety of grants, contracts and reimbursable agreements. Work includes developing recommendations for the Tri-County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) in areas such as service strategy, program planning, design and operation, performance standards and other duties needed as related to the workforce development needs of the Tri-County region.

Russell began her employment with NMDC July 2, based out of a new Bangor location at 26 Franklin Street. She can be reached at jrussell@nmdc.org.

World Acadian Congress: Excitement Growing

The World Acadian Congress in Maine is underway with great plans for 2014. Maine, in the area of Acadian Land & Forest within the 16 municipalities from Hamlin to Portage Lake to Allagash, has over 70 community activities planned and organized. Events such as the Whoopie Pie Festival in Portage Lake, to Ferry boat crossings in Grand Isle, to the Moosestock Event in Allagash, to Historical guided motor coach bus tours; you will find

something for the whole family to enjoy.

We encourage everyone in Aroostook to mark your calendar from August 8 – 24, 2014 and take part of this once in a lifetime event and a taste of culture like you’ve never seen.

The Major pillar days are August 8th, Opening Ceremony in Edmundston, New Brunswick, August 15th in Madawaska, Maine and August 24th in Temis Sur la Lac, Quebec.

ACT Network

In an effort to increase communications and strengthen collaborative efforts in Aroostook, an ACT Network is being established that will provide the opportunity for people within the tourism industry to share information and be regularly informed of tourism promotional efforts of Aroostook County Tourism (ACT), the Maine Office of Tourism and other organizations performing tourism related efforts.

For more information, contact Regional Tourism Developer Leslie Jackson at ljackson@nmdc.org.

ACT, a standing committee of NMDC, is dedicated to improving the economy of northern Maine through its tourism efforts. Working under the brand Aroostook "the Crown of Maine," ACT promotes some of the regions greatest assets like its pristine beauty, diverse culture, storied history and wonderful people to potential visitors from around the world.

To receive this newsletter electronically, please send your email address to jgulliver@nmdc.org

Brownfield assistance available from NMDC

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines Brownfields as "abandoned, idle or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination." Many communities throughout Aroostook County have properties that are for sale, vacant, or underutilized because of suspected or known contamination. With the long history of industry and manufacturing in Aroostook County, business often used hazardous substances and petroleum products in their day –to –day operations. There is a possibility that the materials used then are now considered to be hazardous and may have inadvertently been released during the course of everyday business operations and contaminated the property.

Making smart, sound business decisions, particularly when considering purchasing a property that has had an industrial history, requires research and as much useful, reliable information as possible. Phase I and II environmental site assessments (ESAs) are an important part of that research; they provide data and recommendations indicating the environmental risk of a given piece of property. In today's world nearly every property is subject to environmental risks. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment can help determine if a property is or may have been contaminated by current or previous activity.

Phase I ESAs help protect the purchaser of a property and limit liability by discovering potential environmental concerns prior to purchase. Lenders often require a Phase I ESA as it helps evaluate if environmental risks could devalue property or impact the borrower's finances. The Phase I ESA is generally considered the first step in the process of environmental due diligence.

NMDC has received a Brownfields Assessment Grant from the EPA where funds are utilized to complete Phase I and Phase II ESAs. This program is free of charge to qualified municipalities and property owners and can result in a savings of between \$2,500 and \$25,000. It should be noted that NMDC's program can add an additional 3-6 months to a real estate transaction. Properties must be nominated by the owners and approved by NMDC's Brownfields Steering Committee.



This potential Brownfields site in Caribou at the former Birdseye facility recently received a Phase 1 ESA. If you would like to have a potential site surveyed please contact NMDC.

For more information or to nominate a property, please contact Senior Planner Jay Kamm, jkamm@nmdc.org or by phone at 498-8736.

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