

Pine Tree Zone: Aroostook

Maine's Pine Tree Zones offer competitive business incentives to qualified businesses locating in designated areas throughout the state. The Pine Tree Zones include more than 100 properties with total area exceeding 30,000 acres in 130 Maine communities.

Maine is open for business.



Combined with municipal and state financing, tax reimbursements, credits and exemptions, Maine's Pine Tree Zones offer new and expanding businesses benefits few states rival.

Maine offers businesses a high quality of life, affordable cost of living, a skilled and productive workforce, and an attractive wage base.

Employers praise the state's customized worker training programs and academic partnerships tailored to support specific business needs.

Maine has invested heavily in research and development, establishing a web of technology incubators to deliver services, information, training and technology to the private sector.

Aroostook County

Bordered to the east, west and north by Canada, Aroostook is Maine's northernmost Pine Tree Zone. Twenty-two Aroostook County communities also are part of a federal rural Empowerment Zone, one of only ten nationwide.

The Zone is supported by two University of Maine campuses in Fort Kent and Presque Isle, Northern Maine Community College and the satellite campus of Husson, a private business college.

Northern Maine Regional Airport in Central Aroostook provides daily non-stop flights to and from Boston's Logan Airport. Rail service and an intermodal facility in Presque Isle facilitate the movement of freight in and out of the region. Major seaports in Eastport,

Searsport, St. John, New Brunswick, and Rivière-du-Loup, Quebec, serve the county.

Interstate 95 meets the Trans-Canada Highway and U.S. Route 1, the county's major north-south arterial, in the Southern Aroostook community of Houlton, the seat of county government. Just west of the New Brunswick border, Houlton is served by a general aviation airport, a regional hospital and a University of Maine outreach facility offering classroom and video-linked instruction.

The Upper St. John Valley is home to the Allagash Wilderness Waterway and the St. John River, which forms the international boundary with Canada. Four-fifths of Aroostook's five million acres are forested.

Maine Pine Tree Zone benefits

- ETIF equaling 80% of net new employee state income tax withholdings for 10 years
- 100% state corporate income tax credit for 5 years; 50% credit for subsequent 5 years
- 100% sales tax exemption on building materials and personal property (effective 7/05).
- Reduced electric rates

Examples of qualified businesses include for-profit businesses in financial services, manufacturing or a targeted technology sector:

- Biotechnology
- Aquaculture and marine technology
- Composite materials technology
- Environmental technology
- Information technology
- Advanced technologies for forestry and agriculture
- Precision manufacturing technology

Pine Tree Zones may be layered with other incentives:

- Municipal TIFs
- Federal New Markets Tax Credit
- Community Development Block Grants
- Maine Technology Institute seed grants
- Maine Seed Capital Tax Credit
- Maine Small Enterprise Growth Fund

For more information on Maine's Pine Tree Zones, contact: Andrea Smith, Maine Office of Business Development: (207) 624-7457 or e-mail andrea.smith@maine.gov

"We must all share the same goal: to create a strong sustainable economy in which our businesses thrive and our people prosper."

— Governor John E. Baldacci



Maine has

- 64 public airports
- Major seaports located in south, central & northern coastal regions
- Modern telecommunications: statewide ATM fiber optic based network, 100% digitally switched
- 7 business incubators supported by the University system
- A low violent crime rate
- The lowest average home prices in New England
- Top-ranked K-12 schools
- An in-migration rate that ranks 4th in the nation
- An unemployment level that is a full percentage point below the national average
- Population of 1.3 million
- 33,215 square miles
- 17 million forested acres
- 5,500 miles of coastline
- 2,000-plus coastal islands
- 6,000 lakes and ponds
- 5,100 rivers and streams

Aroostook Pine Tree Zone

- Thousands of acres have been set aside in many locations including the communities of Ashland, Caribou, Easton, Fort Fairfield, Fort Kent, Houlton, Limestone, Madawaska, Mars Hill, Masardis, Nashville Plantation, Presque Isle/Mapleton, Sherman, Van Buren and Washburn. It also includes land reserved for the Aroostook Band of Micmacs and the Houlton Band of Maliseets. Additional sites may be added in the future.
- Partners include Northern Maine Development Commission and the Aroostook Partnership for Progress.
- Northern Maine Empowerment Zone benefits.
- Loring Applied Technology Center, a business incubator, assists companies in the early stages of formation, enabling entrepreneurs to refine their product, conduct research and develop markets for their product or service.



Major Industries: Paper manufacturing, agriculture, tourism and recreation, health services, information services.
Major Employers: Fraser Papers Inc., The Aroostook Medical Center, Burrelle's/Luce and McCain Foods.

For more information on the Aroostook County Pine Tree Zone, contact: Northern Maine Development Commission, (800) 427-8736, Alain Ouellette, aouellette@nmdc.org or Brian Longstaff, blongstaff@nmdc.org, or for latest parcel listings, www.mainebiz.org

ATX Forms, Inc., Caribou An Aroostook County Success Story

More than 70,000 tax professionals use software developed by ATX Forms, Inc., of Caribou, making the 12-year-old company an industry leader in tax preparation and tax research software. William Tasker, ATX customer service manager, attributes the company's success to offering a "comprehensive package for a lot less money than our competitors."

Steve and Glynn Willett, the brothers who founded ATX, avoided deep debt by locating the business in Northern Maine. They capitalized on the region's low labor and property costs to craft a competitive business. Maine's first-in-the-nation investment in a statewide ATM fiber-optic-based network was instrumental in making

Maine a viable location for the business.

"It wouldn't have been possible without the Internet," Tasker said. "Maine was early to recognize the infrastructure needed for Internet commerce."

Tasker was the company's fifth employee when he joined its ranks a decade ago. ATX now employs about 200 people in Caribou, and about 70 in Fort Pierce, Florida, where the company develops the thousands of calculating and linked forms used in ATX software. "The first year I was here, sales were \$270,000. Now they're over \$30 million," he said.

Sales, marketing, financial management, IT services and primary pro-



ATX employees take breaks to play games, which in turn stimulates their creativity. Photo by VOSCAR.

gramming functions operate out of Caribou. ATX has been able to attract programmers from throughout the country to Caribou in part because of its quality of life. "For the right kind of person, it's a great place to raise a family and not have all the scary aspects of urban life," Tasker said.