



Community Bridge: NMDC News

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Inside

- CGPZ pg. 2
- NADO Video pg. 2
- BFD News pg. 3
- APP BOD Meets pg. 3

Tompkins hired as NMDC accountant

CARIBOU — Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) is proud to announce the hiring of Matt Tompkins as accountant.

Tompkins, of Fort Fairfield, graduated from the University of Maine Presque Isle with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration with a concentration in accounting. He was the recipient of the Outstanding Achievement in Accounting award in the 2013-14 academic year. Tompkins also served as treasurer of the UMPI Business Club and was a Junior Achievement mentor at the most recent Titan Challenge business competition.

“Matt is a great example of a local person who availed himself of a quality education at one of the region’s four institutions of higher learning and found a career right here in Aroostook County,” said NMDC Executive Director Bob Clark. “We are pleased to have Matt on staff and look forward to his contributions to the

See MATT continued on pg. 2

Executive Board approves grant application for pilot project in Van Buren

CARIBOU — The Executive Board of Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) has approved a nearly \$100-thousand grant application to conduct a pilot project in Van Buren to protect valuable water resources.

Meeting Thursday, Jan. 8, in Caribou, the board approved a \$99,951 application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a Source Water Protection mapping and emergency planning pilot project to inventory and map potential contamination sites, both inside and outside of the district boundary. This would provide information to first responders (MDEP, fire, police) concerning potential resources that could be impacted by a spill.

“For example, should a tanker truck roll over and spill petroleum products into a road ditch, district personnel and emergency responders would be instantly able to know that the ditch flows into a stream that is upstream from a public water source intake or impacts a critical natural resource such as endangered species habitat,” said NMDC Senior Planner Jay Kamm.

In addition to the pilot project, NMDC would work with the 15 water management districts in the region to develop an Asset Management Plan for water districts and departments. The objective is to develop a 10-year plan that identifies infrastructure needs, costs, and potential funding sources for communities with water and wastewater departments.

Kamm estimates the USDA will decide on this application by May.

The board also ratified a service contract for \$2,500 for administration of a 2014 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Economic Development Project in Wallagrass. A \$120,000 CDBG was awarded to purchase a florist/greenhouse business, provide working capital and purchase inventory. Hilltop Florists will create four full-time jobs.

The board also received several informational briefings. Kamm presented on changes to the Community Guided Planning and Zoning Process (see page 2), and Bob Dorsey, President of Aroostook Partnership for Progress, discussed potential jobs and recent investment in Aroostook County.



2017 Goals Progress

My Goal: \$500M Investment & 1000 New Jobs
Mob N Maine Goal: 3000 More Employed

- 2012: \$ 39.1M Investment
- 2013: \$ 77.2M Investment & 107 New Jobs
- 2014: \$199M Investment & 237 New Jobs

Sub Total: ~\$315M 344 New Jobs

“In 2014, more than \$199-million was invested in new construction, expansions, maintenance, renovations and more in Aroostook County,” said Dorsey. “That investment resulted in more than 165 jobs. We’ve seen a lot of progress in 2014, but I’m even more excited about our future. There is truly the potential for more than 1000 new jobs and in excess of \$100-million of economic activity with a new industry at Loring, mining activity at Bald Mountain, increased manufacturing activity and more profitably small and medium sized farm activities over the next four years.”

The board also welcomed Matt Tompkins of Fort Fairfield to the NMDC staff as accountant. (See adjacent story)

The next Executive Board meeting will be Thursday, February 19, at 12:30 at the NMDC boardroom in Caribou.

CGPZ process undergoing revisions

In lieu of a December Community Guided Planning and Zoning (CGPZ) meeting, each Steering Committee member was contacted by NMDC staff and the CGPZ chair. Many stated that a successful first project would serve as a model for and help build capacity for future land use planning efforts in the unorganized townships of the region. Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) and the Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC) are committed to making this process work and have discussed a plan on how to move forward.

We are now beginning Phase II, which will focus on the development of a product that refines the information gathering completed by the Steering Committee. To expedite this process, NMDC and LUPC have partnered to develop products and

topics as well as supporting materials. LUPC staff will be taking a more active role during this part of the process and provide a greater level of technical assistance as we work through questions relating to land use regulations and economic development. NMDC will continue to host and run the meetings, engage stakeholders and the public, and ensure that the final product ultimately benefits the region.

During the calls, many Steering Committee members stated the difficulty in finding a topic to rally around. As one member stated, there does not appear to be that "one golden nugget." However, all of the members contacted felt that the topics of small business development, home occupations, and agricultural processing were important to the region and areas where the CGPZ Committee could

make land use regulations more predictable.

NMDC and LUPC staff has also worked on a revised timeline in order to complete this project in a timely fashion as well as allow for meaningful public input. We believe that this project should have a 6 to 7 month completion date. Steering Committee meetings have been scheduled for the third Wednesday of each month through the projected timeline. Meetings will be held from 9 a.m. to noon at pre-determined locations (Caribou area or others as deemed appropriate). We believe that if we move some of the steering committee meetings around to southern and northern Aroostook County, we could dedicate a portion of each meeting to public input and advertise those meeting as such. The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 21, 2015 at NMDC's Office in Caribou.

NMDC employee featured in NADO video

GROWashington-Aroostook
 Location: Northern Maine
 Counties: Washington and Aroostook counties
 Population Served: 104,120
 Grant type/year awarded: Regional planning / Fiscal Year 2010



"[The planning process] has allowed us to bring housing, transportation, economic, and workforce development entities that knew of each other, but never really collaborated, to the table to discuss our future as a region."

- Ryan Pelletier, Director of Economic and Workforce Development
 Northern Maine Development Commission



Matt Tompkins

MATT ——— Continued from pg. 1
 organization."

"The opportunity to work for NMDC was one I could not pass up due to their commitment to serving and bettering Aroostook County, an area I have grown up in and want to see prosper," Tompkins said.

Tompkins is a member of the Fort Fairfield Lions and Fort Fairfield Fish and Game Club. He is also active as a coach, of baseball and basketball, at both the recreation department and middle school levels.

Tompkins's first day at NMDC was Dec. 1.



APP board of directors discuss Nordic Heritage Center and proposed National Park

CARIBOU — The future of the Nordic Heritage Center in Presque Isle and the possibility of a National Park near Baxter State Park dominated the latest Aroostook Partnership for Progress board of directors meeting held Friday, Jan. 9, in Caribou.

Representatives of the Nordic Heritage Sport Club addressed the board about two options for funding the Nordic ski facility in the future. The first option would be to continue to attract World Cup Biathlon events, like one already on the books for 2016, and the second option would be to downsize the facility to be more of a community venue, but still attract smaller regional races.

Paul Towle said reductions in funding from the Libra Foundation are the driving force behind the close examination of operations at the Nordic Heritage Center (NHC). He said to continue to be a world-class venue would require about \$50,000 annually to be raised locally and a community-based model would

be \$30,000 to \$40,000. This first figure does not include significant additional sponsorship dollars for major events.

Jane Towle added the World Cup events do bring funds into the clubs coffers, but require a massive volunteer effort and in the case of the 2016 event a new \$100,000 media building.

“Sometimes you have to spend money to make money,” said Towle.

Officials said this decision on future operations is too big for the steering committee to make alone, so input is being collected from the community.

“Many of the investors in the Partnership donate to the NHC, sponsor events, or allow their employees to volunteer in support of major events,” said APP President Bob Dorsey. “We heard from the board that there is value in having the NHC, but the CEOs really needed to know exactly how much financial support was being asked of their companies.”

Jane Towle asked that any inputs

from APP investors be channeled to Dorsey to collect then forward them to Nordic Heritage in the next few weeks. She stated that the decision on the future scale of NHC operations would need to be made in the next few weeks.

An advocate for the Katahdin Woods and Water National Park plan also addressed the board Friday. Lucas St. Clair, who also spoke at the Southern Aroostook Development Corporation’s annual meeting the day before, spoke of the economic benefits to the Millinocket region and beyond.

“I envision Bangor and Houlton as being gateways to the visitors to the park,” said St. Clair. “Houlton is a prime location to receive the tourists from Atlantic Canada and provide them with services before they reach the north end of the park, which is just south of Patten.

St. Clair also used his presentation to distance the proposal from one forwarded years earlier by the group

RESTORE. He made it very clear they are two different plans, and the park and land to be donated from a foundation formed by Roxanne Quimby would be only 75,000 acres on the one side of the East Branch of the Penobscot River and a 75,000 acre National Recreation Area on the other side.

St. Clair, who is Quimby’s son, said in addition to the land, the foundation would set up a \$40-million dollar endowment to fund maintenance and operations at the park.

According to a report from Headwaters Economics, a new National Park and Recreation Area in northern Maine would create 450 to 1000 jobs and attract younger workers and entrepreneurs to the Katahdin region. Read the full report at <http://headwaterseconomics.org/land/reports/katahdin>.

The APP board of directors is scheduled to meet in March (TBD) at TAMC in Presque Isle for a strategic planning and visioning session.

Busy December for Business Finance Division

Below is a list of loans completed by the NMDC Business Finance Division in December.

Red Sands, LLC – This is a \$29,000 Washington Hancock Community Agency RMAP loan which leveraged an additional \$128,000. The funds were used to purchase the real estate and for working capital. This loan will create 4 new jobs. Red Sands, LLC purchased the former Mike’s Country Store located at 92 Water Street, Ellsworth. The store is located within walking distance of City Hall, the library, the movie theatre and the downtown area. It will offer convenience and deli items. This store has been around for over 100 years and it is a favorite among the locals.

Allison Wheeler d/b/a All Star Gymnastics – This is a \$39,000 FAME loan which leveraged an additional \$8,500. These funds were used to purchase real estate. This

loan will retain 3 jobs and create 2 new jobs. Allison Wheeler d/b/a All Star Gymnastics purchased a facility located at 5 Military Street, Blaine. This is one of three locations that they are currently operating in. All Star Gymnastics was started in 2008 as a hobby business and has since continued to grow. They currently have 290 children registered to participate at their three locations in Presque Isle, Blaine and Houlton.

Muskie Moose, LLC – This is a \$22,817.76 DDLP/IRP loan which leveraged an additional \$14,597.74. The funds were used to purchase equipment, to restructure debt and for working capital. This loan will retain 2 jobs and create 3 new jobs. Muskie Moose, LLC is located at 516 Main Street, Madawaska. The company was formed in 2010. The company needed to restructure debt and purchase a new compressor for its hydrographic printing process which helps produce a better more consistent

final product. They also purchased a 220 volt Cerakote forced air oven so they could expand their services to include the Cerakote baking process. Both the hydrographic printing and the Cerakote baking processes are used to customize designs and colors on outdoor products and sporting equipment.

Autotronics, LLC – This is a \$54,000 RMAP/FAME loan which leveraged an additional \$216,000. The funds were used to purchase inventory. This loan will retain 12 jobs. Autotronics, LLC is located at 129 US Rt. 1, Frenchville. The company was formed in 2012 as a means to give a new start to a once proud and prosperous company, FND, Inc. This action was necessitated by a critical health condition suffered by Ferdinand Paul Daigle III, the original company’s founder and president for over 20 years. Autotronics, LLC is a full service ambulance and ADA

See LOAN

continued on pg. 4

Upcoming Events

Jan. 21 9:00 a.m.
CGPZ Steering Committee meeting
NMDC office in Caribou. Contact Jay Kamm, 498-8736, for more information.

Feb. 11 5:30 p.m.
Aroostook Day at the Legislature, Senator Inn Augusta, Maine. Contact Judy Dinsmore, 498-8736 or by email jdinsmore@nmdc.org, for more information

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

Cooperative purchasing survey soon to be sent out to municipalities

NMDC will be surveying municipalities in the very near future in an attempt to develop a new and improved cooperative purchasing program.

As you may be aware, NMDC has been trying to add items to our cooperative purchasing program for several years. In the past, we purchased weight limit signs, computers and software, culverts, office paper, and street signs.

Except for road salt, participation in those programs declined to the point where municipalities were able

to obtain equal or better prices on their own through vendors that they routinely worked with. We have come up with a list of potential products and services to include in the survey.

Cooperative purchasing works best with commonly purchased items.

Look for a survey in the next few weeks.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Jay Kamm, Senior Planner, at jkamm@nmdc.org.

LOAN

Continued from pg. 3

vehicle franchised dealership.

G-Force Laser Tag Corp. – This is a \$35,000 RMAP loan which leveraged an additional \$55,000. The funds were used for working capital. This loan will retain 4 jobs. G-Force Laser Tag Corp is located at 233 Sweden Street, Caribou. The company was started in 2008 offering mobile laser tag services. They have since added inflatables and a DJ service. They do birthday parties, project graduations, fairs and group events.

Dunntown Automotive Services, LLC – This

is a \$23,000 SBA Micro loan. The funds were used to purchase new equipment. This loan will retain 2 jobs and create 1 new job. Dunntown Automotive Services, LLC is opening up a new location at 1094 Washburn Road, Washburn. The company was formed in 2007 and began operating out of their home garage. In 2011 they moved to a location in Caribou. The addition of this second location will increase the potential customer base.

For more information on loans with NMDC, contact Duane Walton at dwalton@nmdc.org or by phone at (207) 498-8736.

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