



Community Bridge: NMDC News

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Nadeau receives certification

The Maine Small Business Development Centers (Maine SBDC), a state-wide program that helps entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses, recognized business advisor Joshua Nadeau who received his Core Competencies Professional Certification from the New England Professional Development (NEPD) group on Wednesday, May 11, 2016.



Josh Nadeau

Nadeau is a center director and certified business advisor in Caribou and has been with the Maine SBDC at the Northern Maine Development Commission for nearly a year. He provides no-cost, confidential business advising to small businesses and entrepreneurs in Aroostook County.

NEPD is a professional

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Executive Board approves investment requests for tourism and agriculture

CARIBOU — Northern Maine Development Commission is looking to help tourism based businesses, new entrepreneurs and agricultural producers with three projects approved by the Executive Board at its most recent meeting Thursday, May 12th in Caribou.

The NMDC Executive Board approved grant applications to the Maine Office of Tourism for tourism marketing, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service for local food promotion and an online food hub and the Economic Development Administration for Venture Development Organization capacity building.

For more than a dozen years, NMDC has supported Aroostook County Tourism (ACT), which 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.

NMDC is seeking a \$125,000 investment from the Maine Office of Tourism to support paid advertising, social media efforts, trade show attendance, visitor guide production and other marketing activities.

“Tourism in Aroostook

Why Tourism Is So Important To The County?

2014 Data Report

- Over 1.3 million visitors to The County
- Visitors spent \$144 million dollars (+7.8% over 2013)
- Tourism in The County supported 2,477 jobs
- \$44.8MM in Total Earnings
- \$12,231,683 in Total Taxes

County is a \$144-million boost to the region’s Gross Domestic Product according to 2014 data,” said NMDC Planning and Development Division Director Alain Ouellette. “That represents two percent of all tourists coming to the state, just a one percent increase would be significant for the region.”

The board also authorized the Great Regions’ Healthy Communities – Virtual Food Hub application in the amount of \$65,000 to explore creating a virtual food hub for Aroostook, Washington and Piscataquis counties. The goal of the Great Regions’ Healthy Communities Project is to assist local livestock and vegetable producers become self-sustaining and thrive economically. It will also educate residents on the benefits of healthy, local foods.

The Executive Board approved a \$150,000 investment application to the Economic Development Administration

for seed fund support to explore establishing a Venture Development Organization (VDO) to assist entrepreneurs in forest products and agriculture.

“Although this will be the primary focus of the VDO, no good idea will be turned away,” said Jon Gulliver, Director of Investor and Community Relations. “NMDC has done considerable work researching the benefits a VDO in the Aroostook Washington Economic Development District would have, now the steps toward implementation need to happen.”

This grant will primarily focus on planning and implementation of the project, by engaging potential entrepreneurs, potential investors, locating and coordinating with partners (such as the Small Business Development Center, New Ventures Maine, financial institutions, etc.), creating a VDO

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Rural Business Development Zone adopted by state for portions of Aroostook County

AROOSTOOK COUNTY – The Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC) recently adopted zoning rules that provide opportunity for rural businesses to locate and grow in new areas of Aroostook County. The rule changes establish a rural business development zone that can be used by businesses and property owners to accommodate business development in 30 towns, townships and plantations across Aroostook County that are part of the unorganized and deorganized areas of the state. The changes are a product of the LUPC's Community Guided Planning and Zoning (CGPZ) initiative, which joins with

local partners to help regions identify their land use needs and plan for the region's future.

“This is an example of how state government can assist local communities in strengthening rural economies by removing regulatory hurdles that impede economic development,” said Governor Paul R. LePage. “The LUPC's work with local partners in Aroostook County demonstrates that a pro-job planning approach can be taken without adversely impacting Maine's environment.”

“The Governor has been very clear since day one that he wants to create more jobs

and economic opportunities in rural Maine,” said Commissioner Walt Whitcomb. “I commend the hard work of our Aroostook County partners and the Land Use Planning Commission. Their work promotes a more user-friendly model for activities that impact unorganized and deorganized areas in Maine.”

In Aroostook County, Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) and a citizen steering committee worked with the LUPC to develop new zoning opportunities and improve the business climate in the county.

“We recognize that home-based and other rural businesses are an important part of the economy in Aroostook County,” said Nick Livesay, Director of the LUPC. “The dedicated residents and other stakeholders who served on the steering committee, with support from NMDC and the Commission, have developed regulatory changes that give new opportunity for business growth in rural northern Maine.”

The rule changes developed in Aroostook County are the first to come out of the LUPC's CGPZ initiative and became effective on May 9. Efforts to improve the effectiveness of land use planning and provide for economic development opportunities in the unorganized and deorganized areas of Maine have focused, in part, on the need for more locally guided and proactive planning for these areas. This is a result of 2012 legislation that called for more prospective zoning and emphasized the LUPC's role in honoring the rights and participation of residents and property owners in the areas of the state that it serves. The LUPC will continue to collaborate with partners in Aroostook County to plan for future land use needs, and is working with local and regional partners on similar CGPZ projects in other regions including, Franklin, Somerset, and Washington counties.

For more information about these and other projects, please visit the LUPC website: <http://www.maine.gov/dacf/lupc>.

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business plan and developing a sustainability plan for the VDO.

The annual meeting date, time and location was also set by the board. The Board set June 23rd at 4 p.m. at the Caribou Inn and Convention Center for the meeting. Further details will be sent to municipal, board and committee members closer to the date.



Members of the Community Guided Planning and Zoning Steering Committee review maps at the group's first meeting at the Caribou Inn and Convention Center. Through their hard work, new rules to allow business growth in Aroostook County have been adopted by the state.

NBRC app deadline June 17

AROOSTOOK AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES — The deadline for submitting a Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) grant application is June 27th.

NBRC was created as a federal-state partnership under legislation approved in the 2008 Farm Bill, with the aim of addressing the economic and community development needs of severely distressed areas in the Northern Forest region.

NBRC provides assistance for projects in seven priority sectors: basic public infrastructure; transportation infrastructure; telecom infrastructure;

workforce training and business development; renewable and alternative energy sources; resource conservation, tourism, recreation and preservation of open spaces; and health care and public services in distressed communities.

Since its inception, NMDC has played a critical role in promoting, disseminating information and providing guidance to applicants in both Aroostook and Washington Counties.

For more information on NBRC, contact Alain Ouellette at NMDC at aouellette@nmdc.org.

Entrepreneur of the Year nominees announced; awards banquet May 26

AROOSTOOK COUNTY — Ten nominees are vying for the title of Aroostook Entrepreneur of the Year for 2016.

The long-time LEADers Encouraging Aroostook Development competition is now sponsored by the Aroostook Partnership, which was formed in November of 2015, by combining LEAD and Aroostook Partnership for Progress.

The nominees will be honored and a winner announced at an awards dinner Thursday, May 26, at Northern Maine Community College.

A panel of judges, representing the supporting organizations Husson University, Northern Maine Community College, the University of Maine at Fort Kent and the University of Maine at Presque Isle reviewed the nominees Wednesday, May 10, but the name of the winner, first and second runners up will not be announced until the May 26 event.



2014 winner Corey LaPlante, left, with 2015 winner Josh McLaughlin at the awards banquet last year.

“The selection committee was very impressed with the level of ingenuity, creativity and entrepreneurial foresight shown by this year’s nominees,” said Scott Voisine of UMFK. “While there were many great applicants, the finalists quickly rose to the top of the list during scoring and deliberation and the committee quickly came to a consensus on the winners. It is exciting to see entrepreneurialism is alive and well in The County.”

The nominees are Alete Salon and Spa

owner Jenney Dionne; Rodney McCrum of Pineland Farms Potato Company; Steve Adams of Boondocks Grille; Jacob, Joshua, Jared, Bruce, Brent and Barry Buck of Maine Malt House; North Country Auto owner Randy Norsworthy; Justin and Alicia Burby of Reliant Repair; Leisure Gardens owner Albert Cyr, Tristan and Jonathan Noyes of GroMaine; Patrick Vaillancourt of Northern Turf Management; and Stairs Welding owner Roger Larson.

“The Aroostook Partnership is about fostering prosperity,” said Partnership Chairperson Chris Anderson. “Prosperity occurs when organizations grow and employ people. Communities thrive when prosperity occurs. Entrepreneurs create new organizations therefore; the Aroostook Partnership celebrates our entrepreneurs as catalysts for our communities’ future prosperity.”

Previous winners include David Harbison of Bison Pumps in Houlton, Matt Bell of Northeast Pellets in Ashland, Northern Maine Distilling’s Jessica Jewell and Scott Galbiati (formerly of Houlton), Troy Haney of Haney Building Specialties in Caribou, Corey LaPlante of Northern Prosthetics in Presque Isle and Josh McLaughlin of J. McLaughlin Construction in Houlton.

The nominees, finalists and winner will be celebrated May 26 at the Edmunds Conference Center at Northern Maine Community College. The Aroostook Entrepreneur of the Year dinner will feature local produce, products and highlight the cultural diversity of the region. There will also be a vegetarian option. Prior to the meal and program, a social hour with hors d’oeuvres and drinks will be held starting at 5:30 p.m. The price per person is \$45. Pre-registration is required by 4 p.m. May 20. To register, contact Jon Gulliver at 493-5851 or by email at jgulliver@nmdc.org.



NADEAU — Cont. from pg. 1

development collaboration of the Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island Small Business Development Center (SBDC) programs. NEPD provides a comprehensive, core knowledge training program that business advisors must complete to receive certification.

Although most advisors come to the SBDC with solid business experience and advanced degrees, this professional development is the key to enhancing the value and quality of the services delivered to clients and stakeholders. The training required for this certification is comprised of four elements - participation in specified online technical content, a facilitated online discussion, a webinar, and, finally, an in-person intensive group session.

To maintain certification, the advisor must complete a minimum of 24 hours of professional development each year.

The Maine SBDC provides no-cost, comprehensive business advising to small businesses throughout Maine through its network of certified business advisors. It is a program of the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development and the University of Southern Maine and accredited by America’s SBDC Network. For more information or to request a business advising appointment, visit the website: www.mainesbdc.org or call 207-493-5754.

Upcoming Events

May 26
Entrepreneur of the Year Banquet, NMCC

May 30
Memorial Day
NMDC office closed.

June 23 4 p.m.
NMDC Annual Meeting
Caribou Inn and Convention Center.
For more information, contact Judy Dinsmore at 493-5752 or by email at jdinsmore@nmdc.org

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

Highway safety initiative proposed

A relatively new safety issue for this region is the increased population of Amish and their mode of transportation. The Amish's use of horse drawn carriages and bicycles along state and local roads has the potential to create traffic conflicts. Although the use of lights and reflectors is increasing among the Amish community, not all means of transportation contain sufficient safety warnings. Heavy truck traffic, large community events, and general pass thru traffic has, at times, conflicted with the numerous carriages and bicyclists that utilize Routes 1-A, 10, 163, Conant Road, Maple Grove Road, and Ladner Road. While no deaths have occurred, several accidents have happened.

NMDC and town officials will work with MaineDOT's Safety Office and Regional Office staff to complete a safety audit in Easton, Fort Fairfield, Caribou and Presque Isle to review issues relating to horse drawn carriages, bicycles, and vehicular traffic concerns. NMDC will work with the Maine Department of Transportation's Safety Office to identify safety issues and potential roadway improvements associated with Amish traffic in the above referenced communities. NMDC will complete research of other states, with large Amish populations (Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan), solutions to traffic safety concerns.

This safety audit will potentially develop 1) a signage program that warns motorists of different vehicle types; 2) work with the major employers to develop an educational program informing employees of potential conflicts and safety issues; 3) a list of prioritized projects to be included in Capital Work Plans designed to improve safety along major transportation routes; and 4) work with the Amish Elders to identify means for additional safety measures/markings of horse drawn carriages. This research will lead to projects that can be implemented in Maine.

One of the major issues identified in Easton's comprehensive plan is the increasing traffic conflicts with the Amish community. There is a general feeling that the amount of heavy truck traffic serving Huber, McCains, and ReEnergy is increasing, as is the likelihood of an accident. Town officials in Fort Fairfield and Presque Isle have voiced similar concerns. The issue of transportation safety in regards to the Amish community was also addressed in questions to Commissioner David Bernhardt at a Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce business breakfast on Wednesday, February 17th. At least two audience members inquired about what MaineDOT or its partners are doing to ensure the safety of the Amish and motorists on corridors like Route 1A from Easton to Fort Fairfield.

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