

2023-24



ANNUAL REPORT

ABOUT NMDC

Northern Maine Development Commission is a membership organization comprised of participating communities and counties in the Aroostook-Washington Economic Development District.

NMDC provides federal and state services at the regional and local levels. NMDC also provides management and support for Aroostook County Tourism (ACT), Aroostook Municipal Association (AMA), and Aroostook Partnership (AP).

Partners

Lending



Business Advising & Assistance



Planning



Partner Organizations



Executive Board

Officers

Sandra Fournier, Chair – Mapleton
Suzie Paradis, Vice Chair – Fort Kent
Steve Pelletier, Treasurer – St. John Plt.
Michelle Bernier, Secretary – St. Agatha

Members

Cheryl Clark – Easton	Royden Hunt – Island Falls
Dave Cyr – Frenchville	Max Lynds – Littleton
Kim Denbow – Houlton	Cyr Martin – Ashland
Martin Dionne – Unorganized Territories	Alan Mulherin – Limestone
William Dobbins – County of Aroostook	John Sutherland – Eagle Lake
Luke Dyer – Van Buren	Patricia Sutherland – Chapman
Norm Fournier – County of Aroostook	Penny Thompson – Caribou
Kevin Freeman – Presque Isle	Donna Turner – Washburn
Kelly Garrison – Mars Hill	Lana Voisine – Wallagrass
James Gehring – Bridgewater	Vann White – Reed Plantation

Designations

Certified Community Development Financial Institution – CDFI Fund | U.S. Treasury

Aroostook-Washington Economic Development District – Economic Development Administration

Intermediary Lender – Finance Authority of Maine

Regional Planning Commission – Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry

Small Business Development Center & Microlender – Small Business Administration

Rural Empowerment Zone & USDA Great Region – U.S. Department of Agriculture

Designated NBRC Local Development District – Northern Border Regional Commission

Micro Enterprise Development Organization – U.S. Department of Agriculture | Rural Development

APEX Accelerator Host – U.S. Department of Defense

NMDC Team

Administation



Robert Clark
Executive Director



Judy Dinsmore
Office Manager



Shawn Manter
Finance Director



Athens Sanchez
Finance Operations
Representative



Mark Boucher
Accountant

Planning & Economic Development



Jay Kamm
Senior Planner



Jon Gulliver
Director of Economic &
Community Development



Dana Delano
APEX Procurement
Counselor



Brandon McDonald
Economic Recovery Hub
Coordinator



Jacob Pelkey
Entrepreneur Program
Manager/Tourism Developer



Jared Tapley
Broadband Navigator



Kristen Henry
Project Manager/Community
Development Specialist



Hana Boucher
Marketing Specialist



Barbara Turner
Resident Recruiter
(Contracted)

Business Finance



David Spooner
Loan Officer/Business
Development Director



Josh Nadeau
Commercial Loan Officer



Craig Lincoln
Compliance and Risk
Manager



Paul Terrill
Commercial Loan Officer -
Washington County



Dan Umphrey
Small Business Development
Center Advisor



Neal Haines
Business Advisor



Chase Nelson
Business Advisor -
Washington County



Heather Mladek
Business Finance
Representative

BUSINESS ADVISING



APEX ACCELERATOR

The APEX Accelerator program, formerly known as PTAC, is a free training and technical assistance program available statewide to assist businesses in finding, winning, and performing on government contracts. NMDC is proud to host the APEX program on-site for Aroostook County businesses. APEX Advisor Dana Delano is the longest-tenured Apex Advisor in the State of Maine!

- 178 Active Clients in Aroostook & Millinocket
- 35 Nonclient Companies Assisted with UEI
- 604 Hours of Advising
- \$32,666,887 in Contract Awards
- 6 Workshops & Webinars

Dana Delano also participated as a judge in the Top Gun Machias event, and attended several outreach events.

"Dana assisted SFE with obtaining over \$1.3 million in subcontracting awards for the Madawaska Land Port of Entry project, we really appreciated his help!" - Doug Morrell, Owner, SFE Mfg Inc.



MAINE SBDC

The Maine Small Business Development Center network allows access to free technical assistance to individuals looking to start or scale their businesses. The program offers confidential, one-on-one advising and provides entrepreneurs with the resources they need. NMDC proudly hosts two SBDC Certified Business Advisors out of Caribou & Eastport!

- 115 Clients Served
- 900 Hours of Advising
- \$3,697,930 Capital Raised
- 67 Jobs Retained
- 5 New Business Starts

Other initiatives the SBDC team has participated in include the 2024 Top Gun Cohort!

Chase Nelson - SBDC & Katherine Swann - Pen & Cob Farm | Loan Client/Top Gun Participant

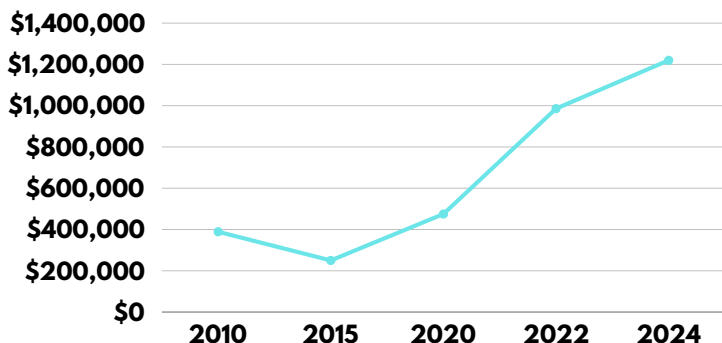


BUSINESS FINANCE

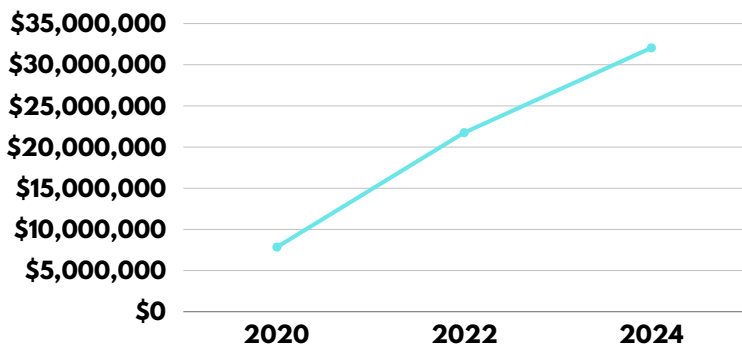
CONTINUED GROWTH.

Our team has been fortunate to continue to have continued demand to both grow access to low-interest capital in Northern Maine, but also expand our financial footprint. Utilizing continued interest revenue growth, we are able to keep our rates low, while continuing to grow our portfolio.

INTEREST REVENUE/YEAR



TOTAL PORTFOLIO SIZE/YEAR



"NMDC has counseled our business through growth & success. Without their guidance, we could not achieve what we've done today."

Candace Edgecomb
W.E. Family Farm
2024 Maine SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year

David Spooner - BFD & Candace Edgecomb - W&E Farm & Events

Our commitment to small businesses doesn't end with advising.

**5.25%
AVERAGE INTEREST RATE**

ACROSS NMDC LENDING PORTFOLIO

"NMDC facilitated every step of my loan! Thanks to them, I expanded my business and added employees!"

Marci Wilde
Wilde Recreation LLC

Josh Nadeau - BFD & Marci Wilde - Wilde Recreation



NMDC Receives 4th SBA Award

NMDC has been recognized with a 4th award by the Maine Small Business Administration. This is our second consecutive award as Maine's Microlender of the Year!



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CENTER FOR BUSINESS GROWTH



The NMDC Center for Business Growth is our resource for bridging larger investment partners, along with other private and public organizations to allow access to programming in Aroostook & Washington Counties. This year, we breathed new life into the region by awarding \$1.4 million dollars in brand new grant capital to over 140 businesses through the Maine Hub and CDBG Microenterprise fund.

TOP GUN

The inaugural 2024 Top Gun class brought entrepreneurial resources, professional advisors & cash prizes to a cohort of 14 total businesses in Aroostook and Washington Counties. Our regional winners were WAVED Medical of Presque Isle, and Nautical Farms of Machias!

The two pictured entrepreneurs, along with the runners up, were invited to pitch in Portland at the Maine Center for Entrepreneurs event, where they made connections with investors, venture capital, and potential funding avenues!

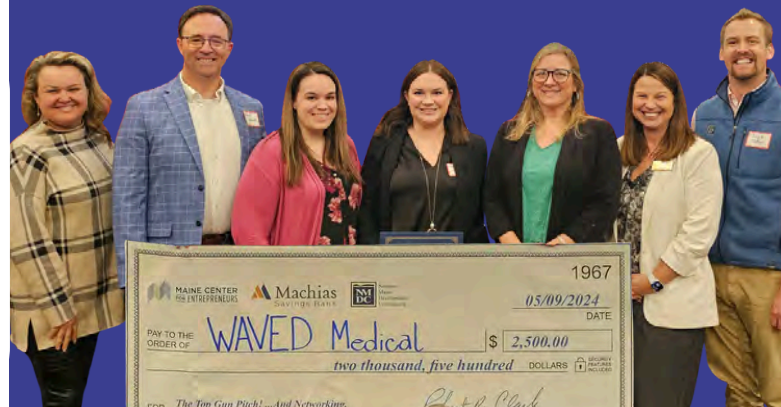
YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

We are proud to continue offering youth entrepreneurship classes to students through the University of Maine's Upward Bound program. Through their rigorous summer curriculum, high school juniors & seniors are matched with expert coaching and guidance, along with gaining valuable leadership experience!

Caitlyn MacPherson, Upward Bound Student, pitches her cafe concept to judges at the 2023 UB Summer Pitch Competition.

Kendra Batchelder, center, of WAVED Medical, with NMDC, SADC, and regional pitch judges recognized as winner of the 2024 Top Gun Houlton event.

WAVED Medical is a Biotechnology startup out of Presque Isle which specializes in diagnostic imaging for mammography, allowing quicker detection of cancer cells.



Morgan Lea-Fogg, center, of Nautical Farms, with NMDC, SCEC, and regional pitch judges recognized as winner of the 2024 Top Gun Machias event.

Nautical Farms of Machias is a regenerative health & food brand which utilizes seaweed grown in Washington County.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

\$13 MILLION IN NEW GRANTS TO THE REGION

We have been proud to assist communities with securing funds to expand and serve their residents. In the past year, over \$13 million in Economic Development Administration and Northern Border Regional Commission investments were recorded in the region, including:

- Infrastructure upgrades for Big Rock Mountain
- Fishery improvements - Mi'kmaq Nation
- Water & sewer improvements - Eagle Lake
- Downtown upgrades - Madawaska
- New aerospace company - Presque Isle

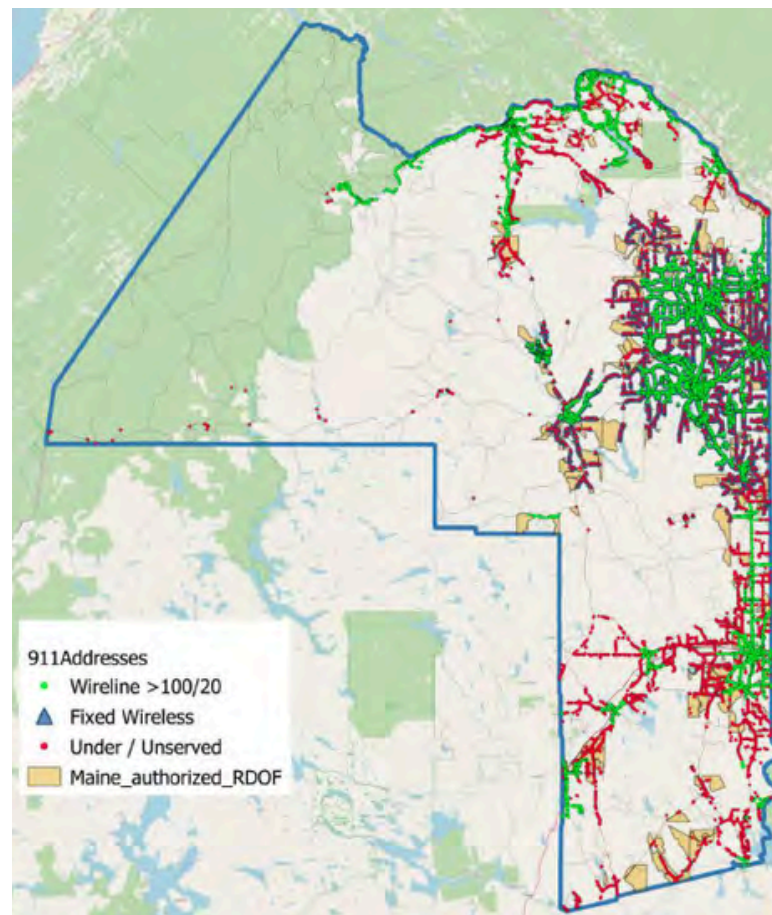


BROADBAND INITIATIVES

NMDC hosts two broadband initiative employees on-site, including one through a partnership with the National Digital Equity Center.

Together with our partnering Digital Navigator, we bridge access to over 30 course topics available, both at physical locations in Aroostook County and taught live online on a monthly basis.

Along with this, municipalities can work directly with our broadband planning team to help them prepare for broadband funding rollouts, and to help their residents become better connected.



2022 Mission Broadband map of Aroostook County's broadband infrastructure

PLANNING

AFFORDABLE HOUSING RESOURCES

We are committed to bridging the housing gap in Aroostook County. In 2024 we released our Affordable Housing Toolkit to municipal stakeholders, businesses, and other interested individuals and organizations to empower their communities to think about the future of housing.

This toolkit is designed to guide conversations about local housing policy, and help provide an understanding how government decisions directly impact housing affordability. It addresses comprehensive planning, land use regulations and zoning, and identifies potential funding sources for creating affordable housing.

Together with the Aroostook Partnership, we continued this pledge by assisting in organizing the Aroostook County Housing Development Conference in May 2024, bringing partners together to create real solutions to housing shortages.



VILLAGE PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE

In partnership with Maine DOT, Caribou, Presque Isle, Van Buren, Madawaska, and Fort Kent, we are identifying ways to improve safety & accessibility for all forms of transportation, while improving Northern Maine's transportation infrastructure in downtown regions. This study will not only consider roadway safety & mobility issues, but also improve transit in the region.

With each individual community comes their own look, feel, and character of their downtowns. This project allows municipalities to keep their image, while accessing funding and guidance for future improvements to their infrastructure.

REGIONAL CODE ENFORCEMENT

NMDC will partner with Maine Emergency Management Agency and Kennebec Valley Council of Governments to create a pilot program to place a regional Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) into their organizations. This position would be an NMDC employee and provide participating municipalities with the necessary expertise to handle code enforcement, along with working with stakeholders, agencies, and landowners to administer necessary codes, regulations, & statutes. This program will assist communities without dedicated CEO staff to create stronger comprehensive plans and allow them to tackle greater issues utilizing this new office hosted at NMDC.



BUDGET INCREASES ALLOW ACT TO PROVIDE GREATER SERVICES

We are proud to continue to provide the services of Aroostook County Tourism (ACT) to stakeholders free of charge! Our organization is led by a 13-person volunteer board, along with two part-time program staff members.

We are excited to note that this year, the Maine Office of Tourism has provided \$250,000 toward marketing Aroostook County, marking a 114% increase in the operating budget since 2020. With these funds, we will reframe the way information is shared with visitors & stakeholders to create a truly unique experience!

VISITATION NUMBERS ARE UP

With a 17.5 increase in overall visitation, Aroostook County is continuing to grow its base of dedicated visitors to the region.

This year alone, visitors have directly spent nearly **\$170 million** in the region, with an economic impact of over **\$255 million!**

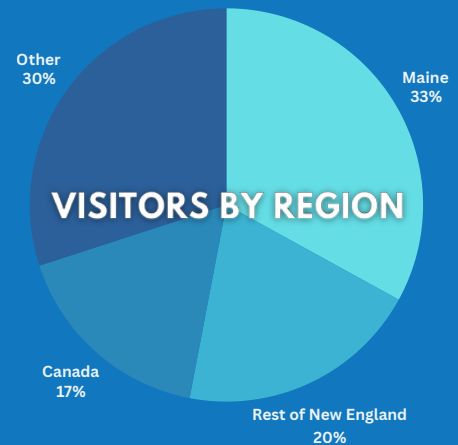
LOOK FOR OUR NEW CONTENT

This year, we've reframed and built new Visit Aroostook content, including planning the launch of our new website dedicated to re-engaging with businesses and stakeholders, empowering them to highlight their businesses through our content & messaging.

2024 ECLIPSE

ACT facilitated open forums for area businesses and organizations to plan for the eclipse, including connecting State and Federal resources with municipalities to ensure a safe event!

In partnership with 6 Aroostook communities and 19 designated eclipse viewing Star Parks, we promoted the region as the premiere destination for the 2024 Solar Eclipse, bringing an estimated 20,000 visitors to the region.



#VisitAroostook





INTRODUCING PRESIDENT DIONNE

We are delighted to welcome Scott Dionne into his role as Aroostook Partnership's President & CEO! Scott brings a wealth of knowledge in the world of leadership, construction, and collaboration, along with an understanding of the vast resources available to Aroostook County.



SPOTLIGHT ON HOUSING

Aroostook Partnership's dedicated housing committee, along with several stakeholders and partners hosted the Aroostook Housing Development Summit in March. Featuring a filled room with government officials, and the banking and construction industries, the group convened to determine how to best tackle the issue of housing in the region, along with showcasing the achievements of the regional partners who are creating solutions.



LEADERSHIP AROOSTOOK GRADUATES 13

Continuing the partnership with Husson University and other local employers, 13 graduates of the Leadership Aroostook program were recognized in May 2024. Graduates collaboratively tackled both housing and transportation challenges in the region, creating foundations for government officials and future Leadership Aroostook classes to utilize.

Leadership Aroostook Graduates
Left to Right:

Jonathan Thompson, Janet Bosse, Jared Tapley, Jasmine Rockwell, Ben Willey, Abbey Clair, Corey Pelletier, Jessica Atkinson, Eva Hayes, Hana Boucher, Nicole Cote, Daniel Kim, Kayla Brown

