

Maine Town & City

The magazine of the Maine Municipal Association

February 2020

Bicentennial Bash

Auburn, Lewiston host
state parade this May



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Burning for You



It's no secret that recruiting firefighters and first responders is tough. Turn here to learn how some communities are getting creative.

The Limestone Water and Sewer District embarked on a relatively small-scale solar project in 2018. The results are impressive. [Page 23](#)

Summer intern help: As part of our Hometown Careers project, the Maine Municipal Association will help fund four municipal internships. [Page 5](#)

ABOUT THE COVER: Ben Thomas, MMA's website and social media editor, took this photo near downtown Auburn last month.

Technology & New Energy Conference

This April, MMA expands our annual tech conference with workshops on solar energy, electric vehicles and more. See the complete program. [Page 19](#)

Communication Success

Technology offers ways that local government can communicate directly with citizens on important issues and marketing initiatives. [Page 11](#)

Bicentennial Series

Our year-long series highlighting ways that municipalities recognize the Maine Bicentennial focuses on Lewiston-Auburn's parade plans. [Page 7](#)

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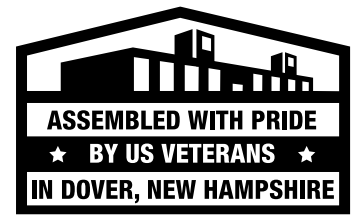
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A MESSAGE FROM MMA

BY ERIC CONRAD / EDITOR

MMA internship help grows in 2020

Now in its third year, the Maine Municipal Association's Municipal Intern Award Grant program will expand in 2020, thanks to the support of our 12-member Executive Committee.

This year, MMA will award four \$2,000 grants to member municipalities that commit to hire a summer intern through the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center's Maine Government Internship Program. That program, which dates to 1967, was originally set up to help state government and agencies hire interns and, possibly, one day turn them into full-time state employees.

The program was expanded to include municipal internships as well and, starting in 2018, MMA offered grants – chosen via a random drawing – to members. This year, the drawing will work like this:

- One \$2,000 award will go to a member which has committed to hiring a summer intern through the center, with a population greater than 7,500.
- Two \$2,000 awards will go to members from communities with fewer than 7,500 residents.
- And one, final \$2,000 award will be drawn from all the remaining entries after the first three awards are drawn.

The deadline to apply, via a letter to MMA, is Wednesday, March 18, 2020.

Our Executive Director, Stephen Gove, explained in announcing the 2020 grant program that this is part of MMA's effort to help municipalities recruit and retain employees. MMA knows that, like many other employers in Maine, towns and cities are having a tough time finding employees to fill vacant positions, especially in certain professional fields.

Gove noted that interns certainly benefit from their internships, but towns and cities also "gain from the opportunity to hire students with fresh perspectives, who can contribute to the community."

In reviewing the feedback from the municipally employed Margaret Chase Smith Center interns of 2019, two things stood out: 1. Municipal employers were quite

pleased with the caliber of the students they hired last summer. 2. Student experience was good too, although some wished they could have done more. In other words, they wanted more work, not less, and meaningful work at that.

MMA also launched our Hometown Careers website and digital recruitment campaign in 2018, promoting municipal jobs and the ability for Mainers – and others – to find quality, fulfilling careers right here in the Pine Tree State. We work with Burgess Marketing & Advertising of Falmouth on this program and will launch a new round of social media and digital ad buys promoting municipal jobs this month.

We have more in store. Right now, we are talking to the presidents of several key municipal professional groups to assess their biggest training challenges, and see how MMA can best address them. Expect to hear more about this later in 2020.

To learn more about the internship grant program and Hometown Careers, visit our website: www.memun.org.

New Energy Conference

Please turn to page 19 of this magazine to view the program for our expanded 2020 Municipal Technology & New Energy Conference. The one-day event will be held on April 28 at the Augusta Civic Center.

The 2020 conference will see a big change. For many years, MMA has run a successful Technology Conference, partnering with the Maine GIS User Group and ConnectME Authority and tackling topics from credit card transactions to cyber security. Both of our partner organizations are back with us in 2020.

However, seeing the explosion of interest in "new energy" issues across the state, MMA broadened the program this year. Along with traditional technology subjects, expert speakers will cover emerging issues such as solar power, wind power, electric fleet vehicles, LED lighting conversion – and much more.

It's another example of how MMA tries to keep abreast of emerging issues that our members face, and meet your needs. We'd love to see you in Augusta on April 28.

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Auburn, Lewiston excited to host Maine Bicentennial parade

Auburn Mayor Jason Levesque and Lewiston administrator Denis D'Auteuil outline the Twin Cities' aspirations – and planning work that's been done to date.

By Janine Pineo

If you love a parade, then Auburn and Lewiston are the places to be on Saturday, May 16.

If you love to be in a parade, then Auburn and Lewiston want you, your town and whomever else you can round up to get involved in this once-in-a-lifetime event, the State of Maine Bicentennial Parade.

"We wanted it," said Jason Levesque, mayor of Auburn.

"We are more than ready to host," said Denis D'Auteuil, deputy city administrator for Lewiston. "Join us with a float."

The event comes on the heels of Auburn's sesquicentennial celebration in 2019, marking its incorporation as a city from a town in 1869. Last year was studded with celebratory events for the community, and Levesque said that helped lay the foundation for this year's role as host.

It was about the time of Auburn's Sesquicentennial Memorial Day Parade, Levesque said, that thoughts turned to the bicentennial and "the desire to bring back the Maine state parade." Only a couple of days later, they got the call from the Maine Bicentennial Commission about the parade, Levesque said.

A number of years ago, Auburn and Lewiston hosted the annual State of Maine Parade. At its peak, the event drew 28,000 spectators to the cities, D'Auteuil said. Levesque said Auburn's sesquicentennial parade drew 8,000 last year, and he thinks it is reasonable to expect 55,000 people along the parade route for one of the state's



Police Chief Jason Moen (on the motorcycle) and the Auburn Police and Fire Department Honor Guard lead Auburn's Sesquicentennial Memorial Day Parade in 2019.

signature celebratory events.

"I think drawing 20,000 plus (would be) a win," D'Auteuil said.

The Androscoggin County cities are well into the planning and organizing stages of the parade, which was announced in mid-December at the Poland Spring Museum in Poland. The company, which is marking its 175th anniversary this year, is the presenting sponsor and has donated \$50,000 designated for the parade, and an additional undesignated \$50,000 for the bicentennial.

Levesque and D'Auteuil said that the parade committee is looking for other businesses to contribute to the

parade fund. "We've been soliciting contributions," Levesque said. "Marketing potential for corporate sponsors is huge."

The major costs for the event, Levesque said, are logistics and marketing. Worst-case scenario for the logistics would be \$40,000, he said, while the marketing will be between \$35,000 and \$70,000.

"I'm putting together the marketing," Levesque said. The goal is to get word of the parade to as many places as possible to draw not only Maine residents to the celebration but also tourists to the Twin Cities and the state.

"This is a time to celebrate

Janine Pineo is a freelance writer from Hudson and regular contributor to Maine Town & City, jepineo@gmail.com.

(Maine),” he said. It also is an opportunity to showcase the state, its history and what it has to offer now.

Building the parade

The two-mile long parade route will start in New Auburn and wend its way across the Andro-



BICENTENNIAL SERIES

Throughout 2020, Maine Town & City will feature articles about municipal efforts to celebrate Maine’s 200th birthday, written by freelancer Janine Pineo of Hudson. The Maine Municipal Association also wants to highlight your community events at the special Bicentennial area of our website: <https://memun.org/bicentennial>. Please email information about your happenings to me at: econrad@memun.org. We hope you enjoy our articles and featured website offerings. Let’s party.

Eric Conrad, Editor

scoggin River to end in Lewiston.

Levesque said the push is on to add participants in the parade. The goal is to have all of Maine’s 16 counties represented, he said. As of mid-January, there were 25 units signed up to participate.

The target is 100 to 125 units, he said, and have the parade last more than two hours. The parade committee is accepting applications for floats and other units on the parade website, www.maine200parade.com.

Levesque said early signups include the Knox County Historical Society and the Town of Poland. Poland not only is home to Poland Spring, the parade’s corporate sponsor, but back in the late 1700s, when settlements in the not-yet-state of Maine were first being created, Poland was the name given for a large swath of territory that included current-day Auburn.

Other municipalities already signed up are Brunswick and Orono, which plans to partner for a float with the University of Maine. The Orono campus will be the site of the Maine Statehood and Bicentennial Conference, just two weeks after the parade. That conference will be a three-day event with panels, presentations and concerts that celebrate Maine’s history through its peoples, culture, politics, art and music. (For more on the con-

ference, visit: umaine.edu/mhc/me-bicentennial/.)

Municipalities are being encouraged to team up with their neighbors and submit a county float as another way to take part in the parade.

“I’m going to be making personal calls to other mayors,” Levesque said, to encourage them to sign up for the event. “Right now, it’s word of mouth.”

Another piece of the parade is up in the air. Levesque is working to secure a military flyover above the Androscoggin River. He said he isn’t sure what group might be available, but the request has been made.

Another big component of the parade will be the Bicentennial Band, a traditional marching band that is looking not only for those who play instruments but also color guard and drum majors.

John Neal, director of music at the Maine Arts Academy and director of the Bicentennial Band, said the band is an attempt to give every Mainer a chance to participate in the parade. “We’re trying to make it easy to do,” he said.

Participants need to be at least 13 years old and be able to walk two miles and attend at least one regional rehearsal. Two “easy” pieces of music have been selected and can be downloaded off the website (“Military Es-



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cort” and “Stars and Stripes Forever,” if you were wondering). Regional Saturday rehearsals will be staged around the state with a final rehearsal the day before the parade when all the participants come together to practice. Everyone will receive a bicentennial T-shirt and hat for their “uniform.”

The parade is up against the All State Music Festival the same weekend, but the hope is that those who don’t attend that event will put their efforts into the Bicentennial Band.

“I hope everybody in Maine who can do it, does it,” Neal said.

The deadline to sign up online at www.maine200parade.com/bicentennial-band has been extended through the end of February.

Preparing for the parade

“I’ve got to give my compliments to staff on both sides of the river,” D’Auteuil said.

The prep work behind the scenes is crucial to pulling off an event of this magnitude, and the Lewiston official praised the collaboration with Auburn.

In addition to the parade route itself, he said, the Twin Cities need to consider detour routes, public safety, business accessibility, pedestrian traffic and all the normal activities that take place along and near the route.

D’Auteuil said that while parking is always a concern, it should be easier than in the past because there are now five parking garages all within walking distance of the parade route.

There also will be established viewing areas, he said, and the plan is to have amenities along the Lewiston portion of the parade.

With today’s technology, D’Auteuil said, and the access to the parking garages, he thinks it is much easier to plan for something this big.

Levesque said there will be welcome packets created for all the events held, as well as detailed parking maps made with all the best places to see the parade along its route.

Auburn plans to have food trucks and other vendors along the way, he said. An arts festival is scheduled for the same weekend as the parade, to be held at the park adjacent to the parade route at Great Falls.

The goal is to be “very family friendly,” Levesque said.



Jason Levesque, mayor of Auburn, and Denis D’Auteuil, deputy city administrator for Lewiston.

Beyond the parade

The bicentennial is a yearlong commemoration across the state, and both cities intend to participate.

Lewiston is encouraging a bicentennial spin for events that will be held over the year, D’Auteuil said, whether it is city-sponsored or not. “We’re certainly trying to incorporate this theme” in the city events, too, he said.

Auburn is segueing from its sesquicentennial last year to the state’s bicentennial this year by adding to Anniversary Park with a tricentennial pine grove later this year. The park was a key component of the city’s 150th anniversary celebration because of the plan to construct a bell tower to house the “Bells of St. Louis Church.”

Levesque said the tower will be the second tallest monument in the state once finished, reaching a height of 40 feet 9 inches. The historic bells graced the gothic tower of the church for nearly a century before the Catholic Diocese decommissioned the Auburn church and sold the bells. Cast by the Paccard

Foundry in France, the bells are believed to be the only ones in the state made by the famous bell maker other than the Liberty Bell replica located on the Maine State House grounds.

The tricentennial pine groves are another signature piece of the state’s bicentennial celebration, where municipalities are asked to plant three eastern white pine and erect a plaque to commemorate the planting, with the idea that the trees will be a living link to 2020 when the state’s 300th anniversary rolls around.

The city also will have community dinners, Levesque said, which is another feature of the bicentennial. As part of the actual bicentennial weekend in March, the commission has been encouraging communities to hold dinners such as traditional bean suppers as a way to bring people together for the bicentennial.

The parade will be another way to do the same in May, and Levesque had one thing to say: “Reach out. Sign up. It’s very easy.” ■

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As local newspapers fade, leaders provide information options

Online polling services, video streaming meetings and community Facebook sites help fill the void. The efforts generally pay off, but they do take time and staff resources.

By Lee Burnett

In an era of declining local news coverage, how does a community inform itself?

Newspaper closures have been a national phenomenon unfolding for two decades. The latest to fall in Maine was the Journal Tribune in Biddeford, which closed in October 2019. There's been a corresponding rise in live-streaming of meetings, municipal Facebook pages, e-newsletters and more useful websites.

The terms of engagement have changed, though. Debate has shifted to less controlled venues. Attendance at meetings is no longer a prerequisite for participation. Telling your big story to a wider audience sometimes means eliciting smaller stories from the home audience.

Several towns are wrestling with these new tools of communication.

Worth the effort

Sanford officials faced a new reality this fall in pushing for approval of an important bond issue: There would be no local news coverage, but there also was a freewheeling community Facebook group with 19,000 members.

The closing of the Journal Tribune had left the city with an independently moderated Facebook group – “Sanford Springvale: The Happening” – as the sole forum for political discussion. Sanford has its own Facebook page with 1,400 followers, but the community page is where the action is. The November ballot featured a \$17 million package of bonds to catch up with road deterioration, finish school construction projects and buy land for

a new fire station.

“My biggest worry was if we didn't step in with factual information, some data, Facebook would be flooded with all kinds of inaccurate information,” explained City Councilor Ayn Hanselmann.

A small group of city and school officials organized to disseminate information via printed flyers, a televised presentation at a candidates evening, the school department e-newsletter, and Facebook. The group was wary of The Happening, where discussion runs hundreds of comments deep on postings about favorite whipping boys, such as pay-per-bag trash collection, immigrants and potholes.

“It's not a controlled environment. It can go sideways. I think that scares people,” said Hanselmann. “It can be very negative, but we can impact a much wider group of people.”

Hanselmann weighed whether she could afford to engage in Facebook debates, given the demands of her family, business and volunteer responsibilities.

“It takes vast amounts of time,” she said. In the end, she and other individual city councilors decided to make a concerted effort to be responsive on Facebook. “We need to go to where the people are, and people are on Facebook,” said Hanselmann. “If we're responsive to them, then maybe they'll visit our website or come to a meeting. It has to be a two-way thing.”

As things heated up, an active video poster challenged city officials to respond in kind and Hanselmann accepted. Despite her discomfort in front of a camera, she made several short videos explaining the rationale and implications of the bonds. “People were so appreciative. People came

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE

The Maine Municipal Association wrote and adopted its Communication & Social Media Policy and Guidelines in 2012, before launching our social media efforts. The document has been updated twice, in 2016 and 2018. Approximately 30 towns and cities have used it as a resource in developing policies of their own. The document is available online at: www.memun.org (Click Training & Resources, then Social Media Policy.)

up to me, ‘Oh my god, thank you so much. I didn't comment (on Facebook) ... But I read it all.’”

Further validating her decision, Sanford voters approved two of the three bond issues. Hanselmann continues to post short videos summarizing city council meetings with a link to the full meeting video.

Three years ago, Bar Harbor decided its civic culture needed rejuvenation and the usual tools of communication were deemed insufficient. There was consensus that decision-making suffered from low community participation. That was the conclusion even though there were ample information outlets: live streaming of meetings, Facebook postings, a decent website and regular coverage in the weekly Mount Desert Islander.

Bar Harbor town council launched a civility initiative that included off-site community engagement workshops, a code of conduct and formal public opinion polling. Eventually, the town hired a part-time engagement coordinator and the relationship with Polco, an online polling service based in Wis-

Lee Burnett is a freelance writer from Sanford and regular contributor to Maine Town & City, leeburnett_maine@hotmail.com.

consin, deepened from a willingness to “give it a try” to steady reliance.

“We use it pretty regularly,” explained Town Manager Cornell Knight. Polling data has been used to build consensus on ferry terminal upgrades, marijuana dispensaries, housing, recycling, and traffic patterns. The polling has been especially useful “to develop the final decision and tell us when something needs tweaking,” said Knight. “It’s helpful.”

Bar Harbor develops polling topics and questions through a five-member group that includes Knight, the town

planner, a town councilor, the head of the Chamber of Commerce and engagement coordinator Nina St. Germain. Polco provides guidance on framing questions.

Local polling

The polling service has multiple benefits. It widens participation in decision-making. Regularly, 400-500 people participate, according to Knight. It reveals complexity in the electorate with the amount of demographic data available.

The demographic breakdown was

especially helpful in informing the city council’s position on marijuana legalization, explained engagement coordinator St. Germain. Overall polling data suggested townsfolk were solidly in favor of legalization. But that obscured a gender divide (men were in favor, women opposed) and a generational divide (baby boomers and young people favored legalization while the oldest cohort and middle-aged folk opposed legalization), said St. Germain.

Complicating the decision was the town’s status as a tourist center,

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GOING PRO

At least a half dozen Maine communities have hired communications professionals, including Portland, Saco, Cumberland, Falmouth, Bangor and Westbrook. Augusta is considering it. Responsibilities typically include writing newsletters, updating website content, communicating through social media channels, shaping messages in crises and sometimes managing branding efforts. Their hiring is an acknowledgment that maintaining a healthy dialogue with citizens takes time and talent.

Maine Town & City asked Jessica Grondin, communications director for Portland, where things are headed. Perhaps not surprisingly, she sees current trends will deepen.

“The public looks at our website and sees all this information. We want to make it more digestible.” In particular, she is working to making planning processes and construction projects easier to follow by laying out timelines, sequences and engagement points, where people can have the most impact. “I think so many people find out (about projects) at the end. So, I hope to get people involved earlier.”

Portland council members Kim Cook and Pious Ali said they would like to see more citizen engagement. Ali has proposed another position – “engagement coordinator.” The position could be evaluated by measuring website and social media click and sharing rates, and by outreach to churches, synagogues and other places where people gather.

surrounding towns' opposition to legalization and Bar Harbor's shared policing arrangements with Acadia National Park, federal property where marijuana is illegal. Ultimately, the town council decided: "You know what, we're not ready for this."

Perhaps just as importantly, polling allows town leaders to communicate that projects are still being worked on even though they haven't been discussed at meetings.

"It's a great way to remind people of the conversation," St Germain said. "It keeps the idea fresh in their heads."

Millinocket's emergence a center of vitality has been a big story statewide. Five years ago, a group of ex-pats returned to their mill-less milltown and started moving and shaking. A bootstrap tale has spooled out in many installments on TV and newspapers throughout the region. A December marathon now draws upward of 1,500 runners. Recreational trail development has exploded. The former Great Northern Paper Co mill site has been cleared of back tax liens and is poised for redevelopment as a hub of forest product innovation.

Thinking 'smaller'

Less well known are the small stories that Millinocket tells itself. Not in the weekly Katahdin Times, which closed in 2009, but on the website of Our Katahdin, a non-profit, economic and community development organization formed by the ex-pats. Each story is a crowd-funded community project. The smallest (\$150) funded the purchase of kayak paddles for an after-school class; the largest (\$5,000) was to develop a communal garden and improve a neighborhood park. To date, 35 projects have been completed. Together, the thumbnail photos, each emblazoned with a green "funded" banner, form a mosaic of

small-town pride.

The small stories are how Millinocket-area communities got themselves unstuck and how they keep themselves working together, explains Lucy Van Hook, director of community development for Our Katahdin.

Millinocket folks had heard so many "false promises" of mill revitalization that they were deeply cynical that any progress was possible. Neighboring communities were conditioned to view each other as rivals. A consulting firm brought in to help the communities look at themselves honestly delivered a "bitter pill" message: "If you want others to invest in you, you have to invest in yourselves," she said.

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Millinocket, East Millinocket and Medway pooled some matching money and brought in GrowSmart Maine to facilitate a grassroots momentum-building exercise called Making Headway. The first step was hosting a movie night. Two weeks later, came a pitch night.

“It’s not a visioning. It’s not a charrette. We hold events, not meetings. Nobody wants to go to meetings anymore,” explained GrowSmart Executive Director Nancy Smith. “People who are engaged in their community are already busy with family and jobs. When you add to that a requirement that they attend your meeting to engage in your program, you’re not going to get the kind of engagement needed.”

Six community projects were funded with participation by all three towns. Each was a “tangible project” that could be completed in a few months. Later in the summer, an ice cream social was held to celebrate the completion of the projects: the Penobscot River Fest, a regional tourism map, backpack program, an introduc-

tory class in youth entrepreneurship, a storytelling project and an arts festival.

The small projects continue and have triggered a larger initiative. Katahdin Collaborative is an eight-town economic development initiative involving not just Medway, Millinocket and East Millinocket, but five other towns as well: Mt. Chase, Patten, Island Falls, Stacyville and Sherman. They’ve produced a 122-page action plan called the Katahdin Gazetteer. “That never would have happened

(without the small project initiative),” said Van Hook.

“There’s a lot going on,” said Rep. Steve Stanley, D-Medway, who has been involved in community affairs since the 1980s.

Is a theme emerging: Debating on less controlled turf, widening the conversation, telling the small stories? These efforts suggest that municipal leaders are responding to demands for more dialogue and more information, but they do take effort. ■

WESTBROOK VIDEOS

The 2019 Westbrook ice disk phenomenon probably would have gotten famous without any help from the city’s communications department. However, the city jumped on the opportunity to market the city with a two-plus minute Youtube video that combined drone footage, city branding and urgent music. It’s been viewed more than 30,000 times.

Westbrook often uses video for communication. The city has a full-time communications and marketing manager who was trained in video production while working for the city’s public access cable TV channel. Westbrook owns some “pretty high-quality equipment,” said Communications Manager Tina Radel, including a drone.

The city uses video for public service announcements, event promotion, new business openings and coverage of happenings, such as a river cleanup and inauguration festivities. The city has channels on Youtube and Vimeo and share video on Facebook, Instagram and Facebook.

“We found video to be much more engaging. People are more likely to click on it or share it,” said Radel. “We’re able to put a lot more in the message.”

Some videos are attempts to market the city to outsiders, while others are aimed the hometown audience. In one video, police Captain Steve Goldberg explains Maine’s new “hands-free” cell phone law. In another, elementary school students explain the consolidation of polling into a single site at the Westbrook Community Center.

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New Presque Isle development director likes what he sees

Galen Weibley, a 28-year-old who moved to Maine from Pennsylvania, hopes his background as an elected official and with agriculture will pay off for Aroostook County.

By Susan Cover

Saying Aroostook County has a “fantastic pioneering spirit,” Galen Weibley is ready to dive into the work of leading Presque Isle’s economic and community development efforts.

The 28-year-old started his new job on Dec. 2, relocating from southeastern Pennsylvania. One of his first duties will be to work with City Council to develop a recreational marijuana ordinance. Weibley said his experience with hemp growers and CBD researchers in Pennsylvania could be an asset, should local farmers decide to launch those types of ventures.

Maine Town & City magazine posed a series of questions to Weibley in January to get his take on everything from his decision to move to Maine to his interest in drawing younger generations to the region and to the potential he sees in working with Canada.

Q. At this point in your life, age 28, you could have decided to go many different directions with your career. What made you want to become director of economic and community development in Presque Isle?

A. My decision to move to the City of Presque Isle is in part due to my positive experience promoting the economic vitality of Hellam Township (in Pa.). When I applied for the position, I was drawn to the area for the many amenities currently offered by the community as well as exciting opportunity of promoting our region as the economic center for Northern Maine.

Q. You moved to Maine from Hellam Township in York County, Pennsylvania. How is that similar and/or different from Aroostook County?



Galen Weibley

A. Surprisingly, when researching Aroostook County and later meeting with area residents, York and Aroostook Counties share so much in common. Our shared connection to the land, sense of community service and strong family ties are all values we share in common. In addition, both counties have a great agricultural and sportsman heritage, although they differ in the types of crops grown and animals raised. When my parents helped me move, they commented on how similar the County’s rolling hills and Aroostook River compare with the Hellam Hills and the Susquehanna River. One area where Aroostook County differs greatly from my hometown is the amount of annual snowfall which I anticipated. However, I am thrilled for the opportunity to learn and take part in the winter recreational offerings of Northern Maine.

Q. Population-wise, York County, PA has 450,000 people and is within driving distance of Philadelphia and Baltimore vs. Aroostook County with about 68,000 people. Bangor is about 2 ½ hours away from Presque Isle. Did this play into your thinking when you decided to move to Maine?

A. In researching and comparing the market demographics of my hometown and the County, I did consider the economies of northern Maine with Presque Isle’s inventory of existing infrastructure. York County’s economy has been influenced by Baltimore and Philadelphia, given the two-hour travel time between both markets. I see a similar untapped potential for Presque Isle and the surrounding communities given comparable driving times from Bangor and Fredericton respectively. Just as in Hellam, I believe Presque Isle can serve as a major distribution and economic hub for Northern Maine given our high-speed internet connectivity, active commercial rail, one of the longest runways and strategic northeastern airports on the East Coast. The County also boasts multiple institutions of higher education to aid in workforce development as global markets shifts in the skills businesses require. If the cards are played right, Presque Isle has the potential to be a leader in distribution and market innovation.

Q. Your background includes experience as an elected official, serving on the local board of supervisors. In what ways will that benefit you as an economic and community development director?

A. My experiences as a locally elected township supervisor and former legislative staffer provided me with the leadership skills necessary to develop the Department’s strategic plan for

Susan Cover is a freelance writer from Augusta and regular contributor to *Maine Town & City*, mainefreelancer@yahoo.com.

the future. The County has a fantastic pioneering spirit and its people are second to none, the best in combining their ingenuity and workmanship in all projects they undertake. I believe my communication skills can help the County share its story and work ethic with the rest of the United States. Our shared message should be to encourage folks to, "Arrive for a lifelong adventure in Aroostook County!"

Q. Last March, the struggling Aroostook Centre mall on U.S. Route 1 was sold. At the time, it had many empty storefronts but also a Harbor Freight, JC Penney and Dollar Tree. Can you update us on what the mall looks like now and how you see it fitting into the overall economic development

plan for Presque Isle?

A. When walking around the Aroostook Centre Mall, memories of the West Manchester Mall in York County play vividly in my mind. West Manchester lost its Macy's, Value City, Bon-Ton, restaurants and many other small vendors, resembling vast emptiness of its former glory. The trend and structure of malls are changing across the country as retail stores adapt to the age of Amazon. Fortunately, West Manchester was sold to M&R Investors who restructured and rebranded itself as a new retail destination with front facing store fronts. Today, the mall is vibrant with DWS, Kohls, Kirklands, Regal Theaters, Home Goods and

Burlington, just to name a few of its new stores.

The positive for Aroostook Centre Mall is that many of the same type of large retail anchors went out of business because they did not adapt to changes in the market of online orders/sales. I believe Aroostook Centre Mall can restructure itself and sell its market potential to interested anchors and specialty retail vendors given the city's geographic location between the Bangor and Fredericton metros.

Q. Even though it's the largest municipality in Aroostook County, Presque Isle is still dealing with population loss and an aging workforce. What are your plans to address those issues?

A. While Presque Isle has its challenges of a declining population with an aging workforce, I believe you will start seeing demographic shifts as office cultures change with an influx of younger workers. Millennials and Generation Z workers are tending to be more focused on personal well-being and connection with local communities and nature than previous generations. As more employers are offering workers the ability to work from home, Presque Isle and Maine are in a unique

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Jonathan A. Pottle

Jon provides legal services to both public and private sector clients in the areas of environmental law, land use law, municipal law, utilities law, economic development, project development and finance, renewable energy, real estate, timberlands, and natural resources law. Jon's practice in these areas helps clients with their strategic and tactical planning, day-to-day operations and troubleshooting, project development and financing, real estate and business transactions, municipal and utility district governance, and resolution of related legal disputes, including representation before Maine and Federal Courts as well as Local and State administrative boards and agencies.

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position to capitalize on this change in office culture with our beautiful landscape, lower cost of living compared to other areas of the country, good school districts in which to raise a family, and connectivity to high-speed internet. Presque Isle can also boast a new public transit service (PI Loop) and a close working relationship with our higher education institutions to offer businesses opportunities to attract, transport, and educate new employees for their operations. In addition, the city offers many amenities to individuals in their early thirties with young families including a new splash pad, recreation center, and local farmers markets. My plan is to work in a collaborative effort with our neighboring towns and cities to share our story to other markets as a fantastic place to live, work, and play.

Q. Five years ago, Presque Isle offered \$5,000 for people to relocate from another area and \$10,000 if they were building a new home. Is this the type of program something that's worth trying again or do you have different strategies for drawing new residents, particularly millennials, to the area?

A. I believe the city is looking for

fresh ideas to help draw new residents to the County. The city has a number of tools including an underutilized Development Fund. I am looking forward to researching creative ways to repurpose the fund to maximize a positive impact on the city's future. Promoting Presque Isle's story and amenities should be a primary focus to recapture millennials' interest in moving and investing into the area.

Q. One local official once described Presque Isle as an "extreme corner of the U.S." How do you turn that from a potential liability to a strength?

A. Given our strategic location in the north-eastern corner of the United States, Presque Isle is blessed to have one of the largest runways in the continental 48. This runway was of strategic importance during WWII as the shortest distance to Europe. I believe our international airport, supporting commercial rail, and U.S. route infrastructure can serve as a hub of distribution and services for the region's future.

Q. You have a strong background in agriculture, from growing up on a farm to your college degree in horticultural science to helping farmers as a member of the board of supervisors. Tell us how you plan to use your experience to help farmers in Presque Isle.

A. Farmers are quintessential partners to rural communities and economies throughout the United States. I am excited to join the city to develop an open dialogue between our research institutions and local farmers to explore new potential cash crops to help diversify our farmland production. With my understanding of horticultural sciences and my knowledge of the agricultural challenges facing farmers in the Mid-Atlantic

region, I see growth opportunities for Presque Isle farmers to apply their climate into a unique competitive advantage.

Q. Presque Isle City Manager Martin Puckett told Maine Town & City last year that having a regional mindset is important. What are some of the regional opportunities you see in Aroostook County and New Brunswick, Canada?

A. Communication is essential in building a more prosperous Presque Isle. Regional planning with our Canadian neighbors should be focused on developing a renewable energy strategy and joint-tourism plan. Presque Isle is interconnected with Canadian energy markets. It only makes sense that Presque Isle and the New Brunswick communities develop a common goal and strategy of reducing our carbon footprint by promoting a renewable energy portfolio which can offer new jobs to area residents. Because of the close proximity to the Canadian border and the vast distance separating Presque Isle from Portland, it would be worth exploring a regional tourism plan with our Canadian friends for promoting our region's natural scenic beauty and vast opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Q. You'll undoubtedly be very busy the first few months on the job, but hopefully you'll have some free time. What are some of the things you look forward to enjoying in Maine?

A. I am very much looking forward to learning how to operate a snowmobile, trek out snowshoeing, try ice and fly fishing during my free time. It will also be a fun opportunity to explore more of Aroostook County with my German Shorthair Pointer and go hunting for partridge this year. ■



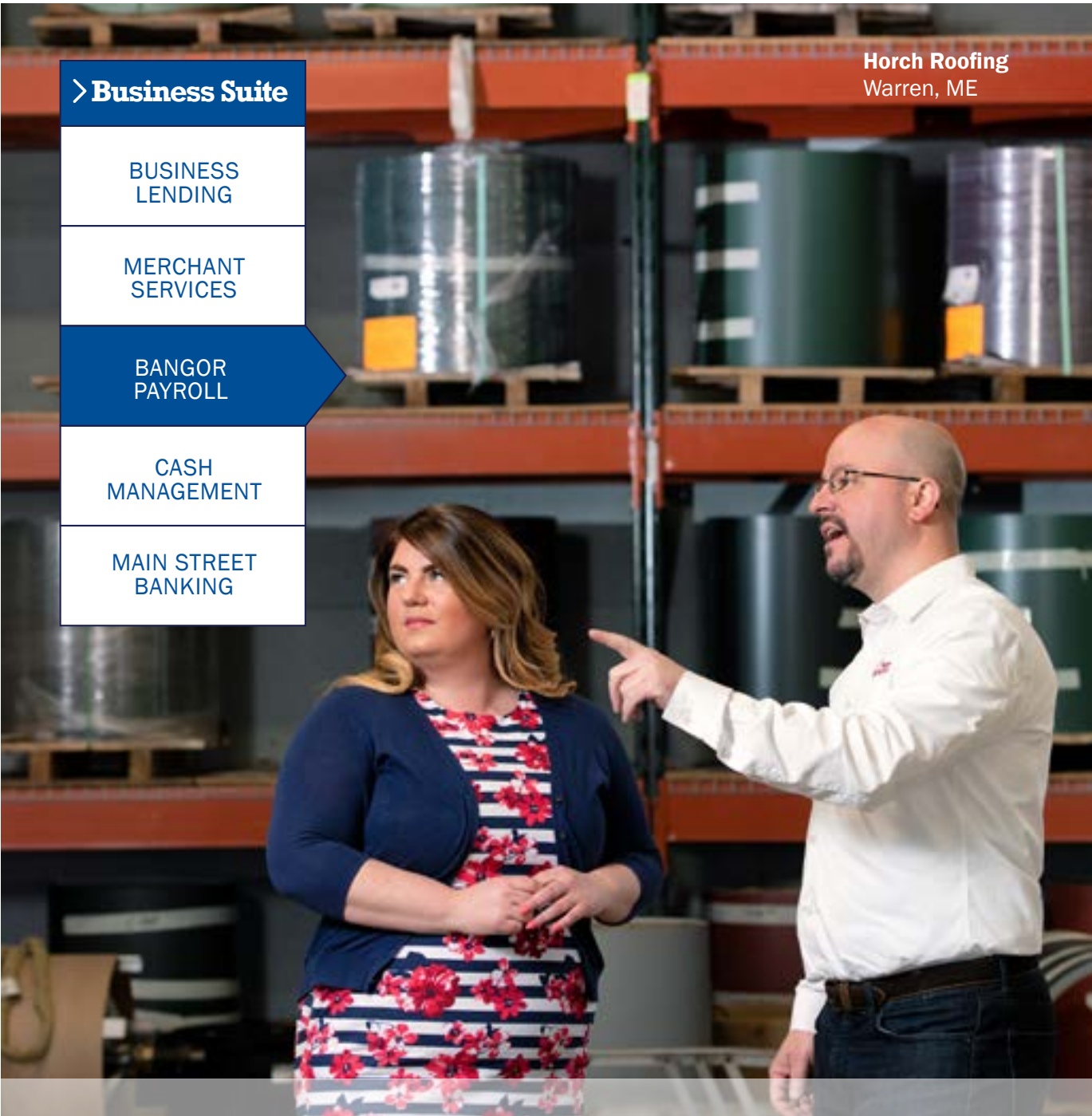
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2020 Keynote Speaker

Nick Battista, ConnectME Authority & the Island Institute

The State of Broadband in Maine

The issue remains a high priority: The quality of broadband Internet service remains pivotal throughout the state, as Maine competes in the global economic development marketplace. So, how's it going? How are Mainers being served in cities like Augusta, Bangor and Portland, but also in rural areas and on island communities? What new idea and projects are out there to serve as educational examples?

2020 MUNICIPAL TECHNOLOGY & NEW ENERGY CONFERENCE

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.

Registration & Continental Breakfast/Visit with Partners

8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Welcome - Stephen W. Gove, Executive Director
Maine Municipal Association

9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS – THE STATE OF BROADBAND IN MAINE

The issue remains a high priority: The quality of broadband Internet service remains pivotal throughout the state, as Maine competes in the global economic development marketplace. So, how's it going? How are Mainers being served in cities like Augusta, Bangor and Portland, but also in rural areas and on island communities? What new idea and projects are out there to serve as educational examples?

Presenter: Nick Battista, Senior Policy Officer, Island Institute and ConnectME Authority Board Member
MTCMA Certification – .75 points Leadership category

9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Morning Break/Visit with Partners

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions

WHY YOUR TOWN SHOULD CONSIDER STREAMING MEETINGS

Attend and learn how technology can help provide one of the answers as towns and cities strive to improve citizen awareness of municipal meetings and issues, enhance government transparency and record and provide historic access to meetings and data.

Presenter: Eric Spenlinhauer, President, Town Hall Streams
MTCMA Certification – 1 point Elected Relations and Leadership categories

MAKING SOLAR WORK IN YOUR MUNICIPALITY

As solar power advances and economies of scale trend downward, many small and midsized communities are looking into solar power as a way to generate electricity for municipal use, save taxpayer money and even make a few bucks.

Presenters: Danny Piper, Co-Owner, Sun Dog Solar;
John Melrose, Selectman, Town of Vassalboro
MTCMA Certification – 1 point Finance/Budget category

CONSIDERING ELECTRIC VEHICLES

This workshop is aimed primarily at municipalities with city- and town-owned vehicles, including police and fire-rescue vehicles, but also fleet vehicles, buses and commercial vans. The marketplace for automobiles, trucks and vans is changing. Electric-powered vehicles have become economical to operate and environmentally friendly, at the same time.

Presenter: Cornelius Willingham, Manager, Electric Vehicle Fleet Business Development, Nissan North America
MTCMA Certification – 1 point Finance/Budget category

11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Morning Break/Visit with Partners

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

TRIO TOOLBOX

Harris Local Government's TRIO software suite is a popular package that many small to large municipalities and water and sewer districts in Maine rely upon. This session is designed to help TRIO users understand the tool better, know where to turn for help – and ask questions of the Harris experts themselves.

Presenter: Ben Clairmont, Technical & Product Consultant, TRIO/Harris Local Government
MTCMA Certification – 1 point Finance/Budget category

THE SMART CITY CONCEPT

This presenter, an entrepreneurial leader who previously worked for Honeywell, has overseen projects in communities of all sizes. He will provide the most up to date information on automation controls, enterprise software, lighting controls – and how the "Smart City" concept can benefit your community.

Presenters: Mark Carter, Vice President, Smart Solutions, RealTerm Energy
MTCMA Certification – 1 point Leadership and Finance/Budget categories

HOW TO PERFORM AN IT AUDIT (WHY YOUR TOWN SHOULD)

We all know we need technology to do even basic municipal work in 2020. But have you taken the time to inventory your municipality's computer hardware and software? When was the last time you truly evaluated your communications platforms? Two of Maine's

2020 MUNICIPAL TECHNOLOGY & NEW ENERGY CONFERENCE PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

leading experts will walk attendees through the “IT audit” process and help you prepare for the years ahead.

Presenters: Krystal Martin and Zachary Porter, Risk & Business Advisory Managers, Baker, Newman & Noyes
MTCMA Certification – 1 point Finance/Budget category

12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Buffet Luncheon

12:45 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Luncheon Address – TBA

1:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Afternoon Break/Visit with Partners

1:45 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

TIGHTENING YOUR FINANCIAL SECURITY

Fraud schemes can fly under the radar until it is too late, resulting in costly remediation for the organizations affected. Data from the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners shows that organizations lose approximately 5% of revenue due to fraud. This presentation will discuss fraud prevention from an organizational level down to individual employees, touching on risk assessment, internal control, and types of fraud, ending with a live demonstration of creating a realistic phishing email.

Presenters: Nicole Pellenz, SVP, Deposit Relationships, Machias Savings Bank; TBD, Information Security Officer, Machias Savings Bank
MTCMA Certification – 1 point Finance/Budget category

LED LIGHT CONVERSION: THE MUNICIPAL EXPERIENCE

Municipalities now have options for how they manage, maintain and pay for street lights. Hear from two larger municipalities that have converted to LED street lights, using two different companies, on their experiences and the options available to you, which could help you save money and reduce energy consumption.

Presenters: Brian Phinney, Chief Operating Officer/ Technology Director, City of Biddeford; Ralph St. Pierre, Assistant City Manager, City of Augusta
MTCMA Certification – 1 point Finance/Budget category

2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Afternoon Break/Visit with Partners

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

WIND POWER'S PIONEER

Oh, the lessons learned! The Town of Mars Hill became Maine's “granddaddy of ‘em all” in 2006, when First Wind Holdings built 28 wind turbines in this Aroostook County town of 1,410 people – the first major wind project in our state. Come listen as the town manager who helped guide his community's historic foray into wind energy updates the project and explains the finances behind wind power in Mars Hill, then and now.

Presenter: David Cyr, Town Manager, Town of Mars Hill
MTCMA Certification – 1 point Finance/Budget and Leadership categories

THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF SOLAR POWER

This session will explore a variety of legal issues that municipalities may face when exploring the idea of municipal solar energy projects - from requests for proposals (RFPs) and power purchase agreements (PPAs) to land use issues and “solar ordinances.” A leading municipal attorney will lead you through a discussion of these and other topics.

Presenter: Mark Bower, Attorney, Jensen, Baird, Gardner & Henry
MTCMA Certification – 1 point Legal category

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Maine GIS User Group Board Meeting

PLEASE NOTE: Sessions sponsored by the Maine GIS User Group will be announced at a later date. Check www.memun.org for updates.

CERTIFICATION

MTCMA (Maine Town, City and County Management Association) is offering points toward MTCMA certification for attending select sessions. See session descriptions for more information. Certificate of attendance or proof of registration and payment required.

MMTCTA (Maine Municipal Tax Collectors' and Treasurers' Association) is offering 10 points for attending the full conference toward certification as treasurer.

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DIETARY REQUIREMENTS: We do our best to plan meals according to general dietary guidelines. If you have a specific dietary restriction, please call our office at least 5 business days prior to the start of the event. Please note that we are not able to accommodate onsite requests, as catering planning happens in advance of the event.

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Limestone district goes solar, early results are encouraging

The Limestone Water and Sewer District project dates to 2018. Here's how a relatively small operation expects to benefit from new energy technology.

By Janine Pineo

More than 1,700 solar panels have been racking up savings for the Limestone Water and Sewer District since the switch was thrown on Dec. 19, 2018.

The \$1.1 million project has cost the district and its ratepayers nothing thus far because of an agreement hammered out last year between LWSD and a Maine-based solar company that includes a plan to buy the array at a significantly reduced price after five years.

"Our long-term plan is to own it and pay it off," said Chuck Kelley, an LWSD trustee.

As projects go, this one moved along quickly, spurred by a government deadline for eliminating savings incentives for solar projects at the end of 2018. Kelley, who has his own solar array, said he was talking to people at LWSD about solar power in 2017. "I'm a pretty strong advocate of solar," he said.

To get started, a number of things needed to be considered, including



costs, potential savings and a physical location.

The district ran the numbers to determine a five-year average of how much it paid for its annual kilowatt hours. Kelley said the average was 755,854 kWh per year at an annual cost of \$98,979.

The district also would need to establish a net-metering agreement with the utility, Emera Maine. Net metering is the method used to give credit to a customer that is producing electricity, which may exceed its need at the time the electricity is generated. This allows the customer to offset the cost when the renewable energy source is not producing electricity.

"If we make more than we use, then we start our credits," Kelley explained. LWSD cannot make money from the credits, he said, but it can offset costs when the solar array is not producing enough to meet the need.

There is a catch. "If you don't use credits within a year, you lose them," Kelley said.

'Perfect plot'

The project also would need a piece of land. Kelley described what they found as the "perfect plot of land," a parcel that was part of what once was designated by the town for an industrial park. The site is "right out by the water plant," Kelley said, and there was access to utility poles across the road, necessary for connecting to the grid for net metering.

Another bonus for the land was a limit for what was allowed on the parcel given its location in the protected wellhead zone. Solar panels were an allowed use.

Since the town had some control of the parcel, LWSD, which is a quasi-municipal entity, would work with the municipality once the project was de-

NEW ENERGY CONFERENCE

The Maine Municipal Association this year will expand our annual Technology Conference to become the Technology & New Energy Conference. Timely topics such as solar power, wind power, LED lighting, electric vehicles and others are on the program, as are classic technology topics like purchasing computer hardware/software and cyber security. The conference will be held on Tuesday, April 28 at the Augusta Civic Center. To register, please visit our website: www.memun.org.

terminated, Kelley said.

By March 2018, LWSD was seeking proposals for the project and decided on ReVision Energy Inc., a Maine-based solar company offering a unique plan that would leverage money from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development that the district could not apply for, but a third party could.

ReVision partnered with Aligned Climate Capital LLC, an investment adviser with a commitment to solving climate change by deploying capital into climate infrastructure. Its focus, according to a ReVision statement on its website, is “solely on renewable energy and other sustainable real assets.”

Together, ReVision and Aligned structured a solar power purchase agreement with no upfront costs and electric rates below what would be paid to the utility. According to ReVision, “Under this specific program, Aligned combines tax-efficient equity with long-term, low-interest loans from the USDA to provide cost-effective financing for rural-eligible sites in Maine and New Hampshire.”

That’s what was offered to Limestone. “We were looking at savings up front,” Kelley said. “We have no investment in this.”

The LSWD Solar Project design

Janine Pineo is a freelance writer from Hudson and regular contributor to Maine Town & City, jepineo@gmail.com.

doesn’t produce 100 percent of expected need. Instead, the goal was about 85 percent of its five-year average, partly because the district had changed a portion of its equation. “The 85 percent production target was more conservative because we had just completed an LED lighting upgrade at all of our facilities and we didn’t know how much our yearly usage may drop from the five year average on which the 85 percent was based,” Kelley said. “We didn’t want a system sized larger than what we could recover through net metering.”

The negotiated agreement is specific to LWSD’s needs, Kelley said. “These terms are really based on what your priorities are.”

For the district, they are:

- Fixed rate
- 25-year term
- Scheduled buyout
- Land-lease agreement

The fixed rate is crucial, and Kelley said for anyone working on a plan such as this: “They need to negotiate rates.”

In the agreement, the fixed rates remain stable for the first two years, then increase 2 percent every year thereafter that it is in place. “It’s all locked right in,” Kelley said. The district pays the PPA provider up front as the electricity is produced while “banking the credit” with Emera. “We’re going to get every bit of savings we can out of it,” he said.

The 25-year term with the provider includes two additional terms beyond that, both five years each, Kelley said. Within that part of the agreement is a single, scheduled buyout opportunity after the fifth year. It will offer a 40 percent discount on the installation, setting the price tag at about \$660,000 for the district to buy the project.

Pay off period

Kelley said this is the intention, using the savings generated each year along with reserve account funds to make the purchase. Once they buy the array, he said, it will probably be close to a seven-year period to pay it off.

The installation of the array began in October 2018. Stretched over four acres are nine rows containing 1,728 solar panels. A rack-mount, or ground-mount, system was built instead of a tracking system which has moving parts that can fail, adding cost.

Kelley said anticipated costs could happen around year eight or nine, when inverters may fail and need to be changed. The cost for those, he said, are between \$7,000 and \$8,000 each, with one installed on each of the nine rows. The plan is to keep them going until they fail.

Right now, Kelley said, the only cost to the district is keeping the field mowed around the array.



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The estimated output of the 1,728 panels is 667,238 kWh, roughly 85 percent of the 765,854 kWh five-year average. As the first anniversary approached, Kelley checked the output of the project, given in real time through a computer-based dashboard connected to the array.

“As of today (Dec. 16), we are at 635,126 kWh, which is just under our first-year production target of 667,238 kWh,” he said. “We will be pretty close to the \$10,000 savings mark for the kWh that we used in 2019.”

As for the credits, with Emera going into 2020, Kelley said, “We just received our latest set of bills today and our carry-over is down to about 120,000 because of the drop in production last month, so we have already started using the credits. I expect we will be between 90,000 and 100,000 at the end of December.”

The goal of all this work, Kelley said, is to keep utility rates down for the customers. He said the district always has tried to avoid increases and had stagnant rates prior to the massive wastewater project 10 years ago. The project funders told the district it

had to increase rates, he said, or there would be no money for the project. At that time in 2009, he said, the district made a “pretty substantial” rate increase, but there has been none since.

“We’re trying to hold the line,” Kelley said.

Meanwhile, the district is sharing information with the town and the school system about solar options. “Both entities are very interested,” Kelley said.

Limestone Interim Town Manager Vicki Page said the town is beginning to collect information on how much electricity it uses and how much it pays for that electricity, adding that

there is no timetable yet to pursue any arrangement.

There are five “needers,” she said, that are part of the town’s electric consumption: the Town Office, library, fire department, public works and the Trafton Lake Campground.

Kelley said he’s waiting on numbers from the town and the school system so he can do what he did for the LWSD.

Meanwhile, he can watch the district’s array accumulate the kilowatt hours.

“All in all, I would say that this was an excellent year for the LWSD to go solar,” Kelley said. ■



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In January 2018, MMA launched a statewide social media and web advertising campaign designed to make people - especially young people - more aware of the exciting career options available within municipal government.

That effort drives people to our interactive website, www.maine-hometowncareers.org. Upon arrival, readers learn what local government does, they see and hear real Mainers talk about the rewards of municipal employment. And, they have searchable access to MMA's municipal Job Bank, the most extensive listing of local government job openings in Maine.

For MMA members, even more tools are available. The Members Area of the MMA website provides handouts that municipal employers can use, logos and instructions about how to promote Hometown Careers on municipal websites and Facebook pages.

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Hope in Hope, and elsewhere, to build firefighter ranks

Local fire chiefs view recruiting and retaining first responders as a central part of their responsibilities. Tactics, and challenges, vary across the state.

By Steve Solloway

Clarence Keller, chief of the Hope Fire Department, sees the numbers and knows the score. He and his fellow Maine chiefs must recruit and retain new firefighters to replace aging veterans and those lost to simple turnover. Few deny the problem.

The rosters of on-call firefighters have dwindled to nearly half of what they once were in Maine and throughout the country. The hiring of paid career fighters is challenged by a tight labor market where open jobs are going unfilled for longer periods of time.

The primary goal of fire chiefs in Maine's cities and small towns is to restore firefighter numbers and decrease the average age.

Keller thinks he has one solution: "We need to shake the bushes harder," he said. "I think sometimes people who want to join think we're a closed group. We need to do a better job asking people (to serve). They don't just walk in the door anymore."

He wasn't being glib or flippant. He knows the reasons why fewer men and women decide to serve their communities can get complicated fast. In our high-tech world, where people can feel alone in a crowd, Keller believes simplicity has a new role. Recruiting means asking at the personal level.

Firefighting recruiting videos produced by city or volunteer departments can be found on the internet. Keller went low-tech recently, making a scarecrow and dressing it in firefighters' gear. Hanging from one arm are the words, "Sound the Alarm," with



a poster announcing a recruitment open house for the Hope Fire Department.

Keller brings the scarecrow to community events or to the polls on Election Day. People respond to it. Sometimes Keller will direct potential firefighter candidates to neighboring towns if those departments are closer to their homes. He sees the greater good of recruitment.

Keller was named the new fire chief of the department in the mid-coast town of Hope some 27 years ago. He was only 23.

"It wasn't because I knew everything," he said, between a dry chuckle and a cough he was fighting. "I got the

job because I didn't know enough to say no."

Small department's progress

Hope is a small community in Knox County, in some ways overshadowed by nearby Camden to the north up Route 1 and Rockland to the south. Rockport is a neighbor. Keller manages a locally owned hardware store in Camden. He grew up mostly in the rural Waldo County town of Palermo. Like Hope, it has a population of about 1,500.

Social media came to the Hope Fire Department, like so many others in Maine, more than a few years ago. Hope has its own Facebook page. Interestingly, it's not limited to the milestones and accomplishments of its own firefighters. Towns that form a mutual aid compact with Hope also can see their fire departments on Hope's page.

Hope can seem a world away from Maine's cities, where fire departments consist of paid career firefighters who many times do double duty as EMTs. But Keller hasn't escaped notice. John Duross, Saco Fire Chief and president of the Maine Fire Chiefs Association, was asked for a success story in the fight to transfuse new blood into the state's fire service.

Duross thought for several long seconds. "Have you talked with Hope? Chief Keller gave a short presentation in front of all attendees at the MFCA Membership Meeting. Clearly, the chief was proud of his department's success in recruiting new members.

"Given that it was a little while ago,

Steve Solloway is a freelance writer from Hallowell and regular contributor to *Maine Town & City*, ssolloway@roadrunner.com.

Collaboration Corner is a regular feature in *Maine Town & City*, highlighting ways that municipalities work together to become more efficient and better serve citizens.

I would be curious on the retention success of those new members. That, in some cases, is the other side of the story. Often getting them (recruits) in the door is not as hard as keeping them.”

Hope has hosted the MFCA’s membership summer meeting for the past 10 years. “It’s also a summer picnic, a barbecue,” said Keller. Hope’s new fire station opened in December 2009 and someone thought it would be a good

idea to host the meeting and show off the new facility.

“Seriously, I do it because I cannot commit to going to the (MFCA) meetings on a regular basis so it’s my way of supporting the organization.”

Yes, Keller has personality. People tend to gravitate to him. Volunteer fire departments are not unlike any organization that attracts new members because they find something in common with leadership.

Hearing the call

Keller says he has gained firefighters and kept them. Sometimes the number of names on a fire department roster can be deceiving. How many answer a call? Earlier in the decade Keller saw the average dip to five or six per call. Now that number is up to 12 out of a department of more than 20.

There is no blueprint or playbook to firefighter recruitment and retention. Geography can be a big challenge, said Duross. Aroostook County’s population is aging and it loses high school and college graduates to job opportunities elsewhere. Declining enrollments in school districts are a stark and visible reminders, especially during high school basketball tournaments. Teams that once competed for state championships against the largest schools in places like Portland, Augusta, and Bangor have dropped down a class or two.

Darrell White, the Presque Isle fire chief and MFCA vice president, laughed when he was called. Did he know of any communities in the county that had creative answers to stop the shrinking of fire station rosters.

“Answers? If you can give me answers, I’d be a rich man,” said White. With solutions he could command consultant fees.

Presque Isle pays for full-time firefighters who double as EMTs. White also has a complement of volunteers that are needed.

“We go to job fairs and career days,” he said. “We do get new people. But if they want to make this their career and go away to school (for advanced firefighting training), they’ll find better-paying jobs elsewhere.”



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For more information visit the MMA website: www.memun.org

HOMETOWN CAREERS

Maine Municipal Association's Hometown Careers recruitment campaign, which began in 2018 to encourage people to consider careers in municipal government, is again being actively promoted across the state via social media and websites. First responders from Bangor and Biddeford are among those featured. To learn more about the project, please visit our special website at: <https://www.mainehometowncareers.org/>

White grew up in a family of firefighters. His father was chief in the small Aroostook County town of Easton. His brothers were firefighters. As a young boy, he knew he would be a firefighter. Men and women from firefighting families are more apt to be among the recruits, said both White and Duross.

But 20 or 30 years ago, fire departments mostly fought fires. That has changed dramatically. "Fire prevention programs have done their job," said Duross. "Eighty percent of our calls are now medical related."

"I see applicants who want to fight fires and don't want the emergency medical part," said White. He also sees the flip side – people who want to respond to medical emergencies, but don't want or won't go into a burning building.

The time commitment can seem overwhelming to new volunteers. White tries to condense training sessions from two hours to one, for example, by more efficient use of time. He does get a few students from the University of Maine-Presque Isle who are interested in serving.

"They're a big help. We really appreciate their work. But once they graduate, they're gone."

Municipal collaboration

White has seen more cooperation with fire departments in Aroostook County. There is a greater awareness in pooling resources with personnel being the most important.

"This is physically hard work," said White. As is the case nearly everywhere, recruits don't fully understand

the work involved cleaning equipment, drying hoses after returning to the fire station following a fire.

"There are new firefighters who realize they may not be cut out for this work," said Duross. "We lose them and I understand."

Job satisfaction can be very strong. "I love the job," said White. "We're protecting the community. But I understand. There can be other ways to give back."

In the Kennebec County Town of Farmingdale, the fire department hosted a two-day open house to show its new fire station. The digitized message sign alongside Route 201 blinked several messages. One read: "Interested in joining? Meetings are 1st Tue. of the month at 7 p.m."

Fire Chief Dana Mealey hopes the \$16,000 sign pays off with new recruits. "I think the new building will attract new firefighters." He was thinking of the cramped space they just left. Farmingdale's numbers are healthy. Recent high school graduates and junior firefighters still in high school helped by taking visitors on tours.

"We have five juniors right now. Maybe we'll keep three," said Mealey. "They want to be part of something, but don't know why." The chief knows that is his responsibility, to expose the juniors to the "why" of being a firefighter. Actually, everyone in the department shares that duty.

Farmingdale, like many small town fire departments, does not go out on medical calls. And, like most departments in Maine, volunteers do get paid. Mealey and LaPlante earn stipends. Firefighters are paid for the time they're called to the station.

"It's about minimum wage for many departments," said Mealey. "There's still a few in Maine that are purely volunteer."

Collegial allure

Why join a fire department? The team aspect can be a strong allure. Mealey and his assistant chief, Mike LaPlante, talked of the success story in nearby Monmouth. There were so many junior firefighter candidates, the number accepted had to be capped.

Why the interest? The personality of the fire chief can be another reason. Chief Daniel Roy, Jr. in Monmouth has fostered an inclusive environment, from juniors to the older veterans, say Mealey and LaPlante.

Back in Hope, Keller is optimistic. "I'm trying to be proactive. We're focusing on working together now. In training, sharing equipment, strengthening mutual aid agreements. We're really starting to have some cohesion that's going to blossom into something."

As the sign hanging from the arm of Keller's scarecrow reads: "Who will answer the call? If not you, who?" ■



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Elected Officials Workshops

This four-hour course is presented by MMA and is a must for newly elected and veteran officials - councilors & selectpersons. Topics include Understanding Your Role in the Community as an Elected Official, Public Meetings, Freedom of Access and Freedom of Information, Liabilities and Immunities, Media Relations and Conflicts of Interest. This course meets state FOAA training requirements.

- What are our rights and duties as officials?
- Can we hold multiple offices?
- Which of our meetings are open to the public?
- Must we have an agenda and take minutes?
- What ordinances can we enact?
- What are our liabilities and immunities?
- What is a disqualifying conflict of interest?

Managing Freedom of Access Requests

This two-and-a-half-hour course is presented by MMA and is designed to help municipal "Public Access Officers," municipal staff and elected and appointed officials understand Maine's Freedom of Access Act, why FOAA requests are filed and how to handle them properly. This course meets state FOAA training requirements and applies to the Maine Town, City and County Management Association Certification Program as 2.5 credits in the Elected Relations category.

How to Lead Effective Meetings

This workshop is designed to help everyone, from municipal staff leaders to elected officials, prepare for, run and conclude effective meetings. It does not provide legal advice. It is not meant to help attendees learn about the legal requirements of running public meetings. It will advise attendees on the best ways to deal with complicated subjects, troublesome interrupters – and more. This course applies to the Maine Town, City and County Management Association Certification Program as 6 credits in the Leadership category.

Roles of Elected Officials & Municipal Managers

This workshop is geared for municipalities with Manager/Administrator form of government. Councilors, selectmen, managers and administrators: this workshop will focus on the differing roles and responsibilities of elected officials (selectpersons/councilors) and appointed officials (managers and administrators), including key responsibilities, legal requirements, personnel issues, communication and goal setting. It will help elected and appointed officials run an effective hiring process and understand their respective roles, their differing needs and how to work smoothly together. It will provide insight and understanding as well as specific ideas and tools to bring back to your municipality.

Spurring Civic Engagement



There are many ways in which people participate in civic, community and political life and, by doing so, express their engaged citizenship. From volunteering to voting, from community organizing to political advocacy, the defining characteristic of active civic engagement is the commitment to participate and contribute to the improvement of one's neighborhood, city or town – and nation. But, how can municipal leaders energize citizens in productive and positive ways? This new workshop looks at motivations for civic engagement and the tools to use to help bring it on.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

TUESDAY, MARCH 17TH
Lewiston - Ramada Inn & Conference Center

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15TH
Portland - Clarion Hotel

THURSDAY JUNE 11TH
Machias - Lee Pellon Center

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 19TH
The Rangeley Inn & Tavern

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14TH
Orono - Black Bear Inn

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8TH
Augusta - Maine Municipal Association
**with live video conference to Caribou*
Caribou - Northern Maine Development Commission

MANAGING FREEDOM OF ACCESS REQUESTS

TUESDAY, MARCH 31ST
Orono - Black Bear Inn

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH
Portland - Clarion Hotel

HOW TO LEAD EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

TUESDAY, APRIL 7TH
Freeport - Hilton Garden Inn

ROLES OF ELECTED OFFICIALS & MUNICIPAL MANAGERS

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20TH
Augusta - Maine Municipal Association

SPURRING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT (NEW!)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH
Freeport - Hilton Garden Inn



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2020 MMA & AFFILIATE TRAINING SCHEDULE

KEY TO GROUPS/WORKSHOP SPONSOR

MMA	Maine Municipal Association	MFCA	Maine Fire Chiefs' Association
MACA	Maine Animal Control Association	MLGHRA	Maine Local Government Human Resources Association
MAAO	Maine Association of Assessing Officers	MMTCTA	Maine Municipal Tax Collectors' and Treasurers' Association
MBOIA	Maine Building Officials & Inspectors Association	MSFFF	Maine State Federation of Firefighters, Inc.
MCAPWA	Maine Chapter of American Public Works Association	MTCCA	Maine Town & City Clerks' Association
MCDCA	Maine Community Development Association	MTCMA	Maine Town, City and County Management Association
MeWEA	Maine Water Environment Association	MWDA	Maine Welfare Directors Association

DATE: **DAY:** **COURSE NAME:** **LOCATION:** **SPONSORED BY:**

FEBRUARY				
2/4	TUE	MWDA GA Basics	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MWDA
2/5-6	WED-THU	MeWEA/MWUA Joint Conference	Augusta - Augusta Civic Center	MeWEA
FEB	TBD	MBOIA 2015 IBC Fire & Life Safety Principles	Brewer - Jeff's Catering	MBOIA
2/12	WED	MTCCA Title 30A - Town Meeting and Local Election Law	Caribou - Caribou Inn & Convention Center	MTCCA
2/13	THU	MFCA Legislative Breakfast	Augusta - Senator Inn	MFCA
2/20	THU	Planning Board/Boards of Appeal	Belfast - Hutchinson Center	MMA
2/25	TUE	MTCCA Title 30A - Town Meeting and Local Election Law MTCCA Title 30A - Town Meeting and Local Election Law - Video Conference	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association Machias - University of Maine at Machias	MTCCA
2/25	TUE	MBOIA 2015 IBC Fire & Life Safety Principles	Portland - Fireside Inn & Suites	MBOIA
2/27	THU	MeWEA Legislative Breakfast	Augusta - Senator Inn	MeWEA

MARCH				
3/11	WED	MWDA Advanced GA	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MWDA
3/16	MON	 TRIO Toolbox (NEW!)	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMA
3/17	TUE	MTCCA Records Management	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MTCCA
3/17	TUE	Elected Officials Workshop	Lewiston - Ramada Inn & Conference Center	MMA
3/20	FRI	MTCMA 41st Annual Statewide Manager Interchange	Bangor - Hilton Garden Inn	MTCMA
3/24	TUE	MTCCA New Clerks	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MTCCA
3/25	WED	MFCA Membership & Joint Membership Meeting	Newry - Sunday River	MFCA
3/26	THU	MBOIA March Membership Meeting & Training	Newry - Sunday River	MBOIA
3/26-27	THU-FRI	MFCA Professional Development Conference	Newry - Sunday River	MFCA
3/27	FRI	MeWEA Ski Day with NHWPCA	Carrabassett Valley - Sugarloaf Mountain	MeWEA
3/27	FRI	Verbal Judo - Tactical Communication for the Public Employee	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMA
3/31	TUE	Managing Freedom of Access Requests	Orono - Black Bear Inn	MMA

APRIL				
4/2	THU	MCAPWA Annual Spring Meeting	Waterville - Elks Banquet & Conference Center	MCAPWA
4/3	FRI	MeWEA Spring Conference	Orono - Black Bear Inn	MeWEA
4/3-4	FRI-SAT	MACA Annual Business Meeting & Training	Augusta - Senator Inn	MACA
4/7	TUE	MMTCTA Tax Liens Workshop	Orono - Black Bear Inn	MMTCTA
4/7	TUE	How to Lead Effective Meetings	Freeport - Hilton Garden Inn	MMA
4/9	THU	MLGHRA Spring Training #1 - Mental Health Challenges for First Responders	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MLGHRA
4/14	TUE	MMTCTA Tax Liens Workshop	Portland - Fireside Inn & Suites	MMTCTA
4/15	WED	Elected Officials Workshop	Portland - Clarion Hotel	MMA

*Please note that the listings with a  symbol are new courses!

2020 MMA & AFFILIATE TRAINING SCHEDULE

4/22	WED	Basic Municipal Budgeting	Portland - Fireside Inn & Suites	MMA
4/24	FRI	MAAO Northern Maine Spring Workshop	Caribou - Northern Maine Development Commission	MAAO
4/27-28	MON-TUES	MWDA Spring Training Seminar	Bangor- Hollywood Hotel & Casino	MWDA
4/28	TUE	MUNICIPAL TECHNOLOGY & NEW ENERGY CONFERENCE	AUGUSTA - AUGUSTA CIVIC CENTER	MMA
4/28-29	TUE-WED	MCAPWA Supervisory Leadership in Public Works Program - Part I	Augusta - City Center Plaza	MCAPWA

MAY

5/5	TUE	Personnel Practices	Bangor - Hilton Garden Inn	MMA
5/11-13	MON-WED	MCAPWA Supervisory Leadership in Public Works Program - Part II	Augusta - City Center Plaza	MCAPWA
5/13	WED	MTCCA Vital Records	Portland - Fireside Inn & Suites	MTCCA
5/13	WED	MAAO Board of Assessment Review MAAO Board of Assessment Review - Video Conference	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association Caribou - Northern Maine Development Commission	MAAO
5/13	WED	Regulating Vacation Rentals	Portland - Holiday Inn by the Bay	MMA
5/14	THU	MMTCTA Annual Conference	Waterville - Elks Banquet & Conference Center	MMTCTA
5/18-19	MON-TUE	MBOIA 11th Annual Maine Code Conference	Sebasco - Sebasco Harbor Resort	MBOIA
5/19	TUE	MTCCA Licensing	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MTCCA
5/22	FRI	MLGHRA Spring Training #2 - Employee Recruitment, Hiring & Retention	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MLGHRA
5/27	WED	Planning Board/Boards of Appeal	Bar Harbor - Atlantic Oceanside Hotel & Event Center	MMA
5/28	THU	 Community Risks of Inland and Coastal Flooding (NEW!)	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMA

JUNE

6/2	TUE	New Managers Workshop	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMA
6/4	THU	MCAPWA Highway Congress	Skowhegan - Skowhegan Fairgrounds	MCAPWA
6/11	THU	MMTCTA Cash Management	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMTCTA
6/11	THU	Elected Officials Workshop	Machias - Lee Pellon Center	MMA
6/23	TUE	MTCCA Municipal Law for Clerks MTCCA Municipal Law for Clerks - Video Conference	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association Caribou - Northern Maine Development Commission	MTCCA
6/26	FRI	MUNICIPAL HUMAN RESOURCES & MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE	WATERVILLE - THOMAS COLLEGE	MMA
6/30	TUE	 Municipal Leadership: How to Achieve Results When Your Teammates Can Tackle You (NEW!)	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMA




JULY

7/9	THU	MFCA Membership Meeting & Networking	Hope - Hope Fire Station	MFCA
7/9	THU	 Drones: Legal Update (NEW!)	West Kennebec Fire Station	MMA
7/13	MON	Verbal Judo - Tactical Communication for the Public Employee	Bangor - Hilton Garden Inn	MMA
7/14	TUE	MMTCTA I've Got The Job - Now What? Workshop	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMTCTA
7/15	WED	MMTCTA Introduction to Governmental Accounting	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMTCTA
7/16	THU	MBOIA July Membership Meeting & Training	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MBOIA
7/21	TUE	 Diversity Immersion (NEW!)	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMA
7/22	WED	MTCCA New Clerks	Orono - Black Bear Inn	MTCCA
7/30	THU	Planning Board/Boards of Appeal	Houlton - Fire Station	MMA
7/30	THU	MMTCTA Basic Excise Workshop	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMTCTA

AUGUST

8/5	WED	MTCCA Vital Records	Orono - Black Bear Inn	MTCCA
8/12-14	WED-FRI	MTCMA 75th New England Management Institute	Carrabasset Valley - Sugarloaf Mountain	MTCMA
8/19	WED	Elected Officials Workshop	Rangleley - The Rangleley Inn & Tavern	MMA
8/20-21	THU-FRI	MMTCTA Governmental Accounting	Waterville - Elks Banquet & Conference Center	MMTCTA

2020 MMA & AFFILIATE TRAINING SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER				
9/1	TUE	MTCCA Voter Registration	Orono - Black Bear Inn	MTCCA
9/2	WED	MTCCA Title 21A - State Election Law	Orono - Black Bear Inn	MTCCA
9/3	THU	MMTCTA Payroll Law	Waterville - Elks Banquet & Conference Center	MMTCTA
9/9	WED	Planning Board/Boards of Appeal	Greenville - Bartley's Center Cove Events	MMA
9/10-11	WED-FRI	MAAO Fall Conference	Sebasco - Sebasco Harbor Resort	MAAO
9/11	FRI	Labor & Employment Law	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMA
9/11	FRI	MCAPWA Golf Tournament	Cumberland - Val Halla	MCAPWA
9/11-13	FRI-SUN	MSFFF Annual Convention/Meeting	Rockport - Samoset Resort	MSFFF
9/15	TUE	MTCCA 25th Networking Day & Annual Business Meeting	Waterville - Waterville Elks Banquet & Conference Center	MTCCA
9/16	WED	MEWEA Golf Tournament	Newry - Sunday River	MeWEA
9/17	MON	MWDA GA Basics	Orono - Orono Town Hall	MWDA
9/17-18	THU-FRI	MeWEA Fall Convention	Newry - Sunday River	MeWEA
9/18	TUE	MWDA Advanced GA	Orono - Orono Town Hall	MWDA
9/22	TUE	MTCCA Voter Registration	Portland - Fireside Inn & Suites	MTCCA
9/23	WED	MTCCA Title 21A - State Election Law	Portland - Fireside Inn & Suites	MTCCA
9/24	THU	MBOIA September Membership Meeting & Training	Portland - Fireside Inn & Suites	MBOIA
OCTOBER				
10/3	SAT	MSFFF Firefighters Memorial Service	Augusta	MSFFF
10/7-8	WED & THU	84TH ANNUAL MMA CONVENTION	AUGUSTA - AUGUSTA CIVIC CENTER	MMA
10/7	WED	MFCA Membership Meeting	Augusta - Augusta Civic Center	MFCA
10/14	WED	Elected Officials Workshop	Orono - Black Bear Inn	MMA
10/20	TUE	Roles of Elected Officials & Municipal Managers	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMA
10/22	THU	MMTCTA Municipal Law for Tax Collectors & Treasurers	Orono - Black Bear Inn	MMTCTA
10/27	TUE	MBOIA DECD & Fire Marshal's Office Training	Portland - Fireside Inn & Suites	MBOIA
10/28	WED	MBOIA DECD & Fire Marshal's Office Training	Brewer - Jeff's Catering	MBOIA
10/29	THU	MBOIA DECD & Fire Marshal's Office Training	Waterville - Elks Banquet & Conference Center	MBOIA
10/29	THU	Legal Update on Recreational Marijuana	Bangor - Hilton Garden Inn	MMA
10/30	FRI	MBOIA DECD & Fire Marshal's Office Training	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MBOIA
NOVEMBER				
11/5	THU	Managing Freedom of Access Requests	Portland - Clarion Hotel	MMA
11/12	THU	MMTCTA Municipal Law for Tax Collectors & Treasurers	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMTCTA
11/13	FRI	 Women in Leadership Symposium (NEW!)	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMA
11/16	MON	 Spurring Civic Engagement (NEW!)	Freeport - Hilton Garden Inn	MMA
11/18	WED	Planning Board/Boards of Appeal	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMA
DECEMBER				
12/2	WED	 Workplace Active Threat Defense (NEW!)	Saco - Ramada Inn & Conference Center	MMA
12/4	FRI	MWDA Winter Issues Training	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MWDA
DEC	TBD	MTCMA/MMANH Joint Workshop - Leadership Exchange	Portland - TBD	MTCMA
12/8	TUE	Elected Officials Workshop Elected Officials Workshop - Video Conference	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association Caribou - Northern Maine Development Commission	MMA
12/10	THU	MBOIA Annual Membership Meeting & Training	Lewiston - Green Ladle	MBOIA
12/15	TUE	MMTCTA Small Claims - <i>Snow date 12/17</i>	Augusta - Maine Municipal Association	MMTCTA
12/15	TUE	Planning Board/Boards of Appeal	Saco - Ramada Inn & Conference Center	MMA

*Please note that the listings with a  symbol are new courses!

PEOPLE



Sandra Fournier

Aroostook County Deputy Administrator **Sandra Fournier** is the new manager of Mapleton, Chapman and Castle Hill, where residents of each town elect their own select boards, but otherwise function essentially as a collaborative community.

Fournier, who also works as the county finance director, was expected to start her new job on Feb. 17. Fournier has worked for the county since July 2018, after serving as Eagle Lake manager from 2014 to 2018. She served as administrative assistant for Presque Isle from 2011 until leaving for Eagle Lake. She has extensive experience in finance, grant-writing, public relations and working with the state, among other skills.



Steve LaVallee

Many Maine cities and towns have someone who has worked nonstop for decades and, in Gray, that would be Public Works Director **Steve LaVallee**, who retired on Jan. 9 after 50 years with the town. LaVallee,

a lifelong Gray resident, said it was time for someone younger to take over, noting the job was becoming stressful. LaVallee, 66, started plowing roads for the town as a teenager, before there was even a public works department. LaVallee's father, **Neal LaVallee**, was named the town's first public works director and retired in 1994. The son succeeded the father. More than 150 people attended his retirement party last month. In an emotional presentation, town officials announced the public works facility would be named the LaVallee Public Works Garage.

Bruce Cook, who served as a Norway selectman for nine years, died Jan. 13 at the age of 83. Cook served two stints on the select board, the second ending last June. A Massachusetts native, Cook earned both a bachelor's and master's degree in business. He moved to Norway 20 years ago to take a job at the local hos-

pital. During his tenure, he was pivotal in the successful renovation of the town's historic Opera House, a long-term effort that culminated in a re-opening celebration in early 2013. Cook also served on a half-dozen public and private boards, including as a former board member and treasurer of the local chamber of commerce. He is survived by his wife, Patricia, four daughters and seven grandchildren.



Paula Scott

Paula Scott is the new town manager of Hampden after serving six months as interim manager. She replaces **Jim Chandler**, who resigned last July after one year. The council voted unanimously to ink

a three-year contract with her. Scott has served as Hampden town clerk since 2016 and was given more responsibility as assistant town manager in December 2018. Scott, who studied public administration at the University of Maine, also worked as Newport town clerk, registrar of voters, deputy tax collector and deputy treasurer for 17 years.

Falmouth town and school officials bid goodbye to school resource officer **Rob Susi** in late December after 30 years of service. Initially a part-time D.A.R.E. officer focusing on drug abuse resistance programs, Susi was assigned to the elementary and middle schools in the mid-1990s. In 2002, Susi was named full-time resource officer for the high school. Susi said his work, over time, became focused on public relations, problem-solving and counseling students. Upon his retirement, Susi said the school job was his favorite and best job as a police officer.



Paul Thompson

Camden police officer **Paul Thompson** was set to receive the bravery award from the Maine Chiefs of Police Association during the group's annual awards banquet on Feb. 7 in South Portland.

Thompson was nominated by his chief, **Randy Gagne**, for two acts of bravery in early December 2019. Thompson, who has worked for the department for two years, rescued an unconscious man from a smoke-filled motor inn room on the afternoon of Dec. 2. He had been alerted by a resident of the inn that thick black smoke was pouring out of a second-floor room. After ensuring the door was not hot, Thompson kicked it in, found the unconscious man in the dark haze, and carried him out the door just as the room lit up in flames. Once Thompson had carried the man away from the building to a safe area, he and the female resident worked together trying to resuscitate the man. The pair worked nonstop to help the man until EMS arrived and pronounced him dead. Chief Gagne said Thompson and his helper were not sure whether the man was alive as they continued trying to revive him. Just two hours earlier, Thompson and another officer saved the life of an overdose victim, using Narcan to save his life. It took two doses of the antidote to save the man. The chiefs association presents awards to police personnel who have shown "extraordinary courage or heroism" that ranks above the typical "call of duty."



Michael Weston

Former Kennebunkport Selectman **Michael Weston** won a run-off election on Jan. 7, defeating challenger **Charles Sullivan**, also a former selectman, by a vote of 315 to 279.

In voting on Nov. 5, the two candidates each received 352 votes after invalid ballots were discarded. Despite recounts, the result did not budge. Weston will complete the term of Selectman **Stuart Barwise**, who resigned last fall when he moved out of state. Weston served on the board from 2007 to 2013; Sullivan served in the early 1970s and again in the early 1990s. Weston is a Bangor native who moved to Kennebunkport in 2000 and who has served on the town's planning and growth planning committees, among several others. He will serve until June 2021.

BANGOR

For the second straight year, the Bangor International Airport set a record for passengers, serving nearly 606,000 travelers. Airport officials credit support from area communities for its success. The Portland International Jetport boasted 2.1 million passengers in 2018, up from 1.8 million in 2017. Numbers for 2019 are not yet available, but are expected to set more records. Both jetports added new flights and carriers last year.

FALMOUTH

The town fire chief told councilors in January that the department is struggling to keep up with its mission because of a hefty increase in calls and a drop in the number of on-call firefighters who are available to respond. The department has added more per diem shifts, but still lacks ample personnel to respond to a scene. The chief said responding effectively is especially hard when there are multiple calls. He said that issue vexed the department 29 times last December alone. The council was expected to receive the results of a study of the department's needs this month before making changes.

FRENCHVILLE

Five St. John Valley towns in northern Aroostook County are being urged to use the Valley Recycling Facility's free composting service. The coalition includes the towns of Frenchville, Fort Kent, Grand Isle, Madawaska and St. Agatha. The facility is located in Frenchville. Maine towns and cities are trying various ways to reduce solid waste tipping costs, most by removing recyclables from the trash stream. A study by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, however, concluded that nearly 25 percent of all food waste can be composted. In addition to food waste, dead leaves and manure can be added to the mixture. Once ready, the compost will be offered free to residents of the five towns.

GREENVILLE

A controversial project to develop the Moosehead Lake area has effectively been withdrawn by Weyerhaeuser, a large timber company headquartered in Seattle that had proposed building two resorts, a golf course and 1,000 second-home lots over 17,000 acres. The proposal was unveiled in 2005 and took years for

NEW ON THE WEB www.memun.org

Highlights of what's been added and updated at www.memun.org since the last edition of *Maine Town & City*.

- **Summer Interns.** Once again, the Maine Municipal Association will support members who plan to hire summer interns through the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center Maine Government Internship Program. In 2020, MMA will make four grants of \$2,000 to municipal members that commit to hiring a summer intern (or more than one). This is part of MMA's Hometown Careers program, which encourages people to consider municipal employment.
- **Wage & Hour Issues.** MMA's Legal Services staff is reminding municipal employers that Maine's minimum wage increased to \$12 an hour on Jan. 1. Also effective Jan. 1 are new federal regs revising the overtime pay exemption under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act.
- **Newly Elected Officials.** MMA produced a five-minute, animated video offering advice and tips for recently elected, local officials. Portland City Councilor Jill Dudson is the narrator.

a majority of residents to support. Now, property owners and businesses are torn over the decision, with many hoping the project would have made the region a tourism hub and others who never supported the development. Weyerhaeuser bought Plum Creek Timber Co., which originally sought permits for the development, for a reported \$8.4 billion. The company's new plan features wood harvesting, and setting aside three areas on the west side of the famous lake for a possible wind power development. The remaining swath of land will be preserved and undeveloped, opening the forestland for public use and recreation via a legally binding conservation easement.

KENNEBUNKPORT

Town officials said a property revaluation scheduled to start on Feb. 1 should be completed in time for the 2020 tax commitment. It is the first revaluation since 2009 and the real estate market has changed significantly over the past decade, town officials said in a statement. The revaluation will focus on market sales from January 2018 through this April. Some homes bought during that period will be inspected both from the exterior and interior. The town has developed a detailed plan to ensure the inspections are done and homeowners are notified. All other properties will be inspected from a vehicle. After the revaluation, which is expected to show an uptick in overall values, some property owners will see reduced tax bills and others will need to pay more. The revaluation will be tax-

revenue neutral to the town while more fairly assessing the value of properties.

MACHIAS

The Sunrise County Economic Council has joined the nonprofit Mano en Mano to build or buy affordable housing for both year-round and seasonal agricultural workers who want to settle in small towns in the Down East area. The program is called the Welcome Initiative and is in response to the growing population of Washington County. Municipal governments, nonprofits and employers are also joining in the effort, which will include buying and renovating existing homes. As its first effort, the economic council and others plan to begin buying and rehabilitating up to eight homes this year in Milbridge, Harrington, Cherryfield and Steuben. The council plans to hire a project manager as the initiative work continues to grow.

PARIS

Voters last month narrowly rejected a proposed \$4 million bond to repair a badly crumbled road, among other work. The special town meeting vote was 49 to 47. A resident of King Hill Road told the meeting and the select board that his road is so bad his friends and family don't want to visit him and his wife. He said several years ago an ambulance nearly crashed driving to his home to help his wife. Select board members hope to call another special town meeting to give voters multiple bond proposals. According to the warrant article, the bond would have been paid off in seven years.

MUNICIPAL BULLETIN BOARD

FEB. 20

Planning Boards/BOA: Belfast

Attorneys from MMA's Legal Services Department will host a session for local Planning Board and land use Boards of Appeal members from 4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Feb. 20 at the University of Maine's Hutchinson Center in Belfast.

The workshop is designed as an introduction for new or less experienced members, but veteran board members may find an update useful as well. Among the topics to be covered: jurisdictional issues; public notice requirements; site visits; procedure for decisions; and, variances. The cost is \$65 for MMA members and \$130 for non-members.

FEB. 25

Town Meeting & Local Election Law: Augusta (Machias via video)

The Maine Town & City Clerks' Association will hold a workshop on Title 30A, Town Meeting and Election Law, on Feb. 25. The workshop will be held at the Maine Municipal Association's Christopher G. Lockwood Conference Center in Augusta, with a live video feed to the University of Maine-Machias campus. It will start at both sites with registration at 8:30 a.m. and will conclude at 4 p.m.

The program is designed primarily for town clerks (including deputies and assistants), select board members and town meeting moderators. It will cover many aspects of town meeting and election procedure. Speakers will be: Merton Brown, clerk in the Town of Kennebunk; and, staff attorneys from MMA. Cost is \$60 for MTCCA members; \$80 for non-members.

MARCH 11

Advanced General Assistance: Augusta

The Maine Welfare Directors Association will hold a one-day workshop on Advanced General Assistance issues, at the MMA Conference Center in Augusta, on March 11. The workshop is designed for people who have completed the GA Basics training and seek certification.

Among the topics to be covered: advanced application; disqualifications; fair hearings; and, residency. The workshop will begin with registration at 8:30 a.m. and will end at 3 p.m. Cost is \$45 for MWDA members; \$65 for non-members.

SPECIAL SESSION!

MARCH 16

TRIO Toolbox: Augusta

Harris Local Government's TRIO software suite is a popular package that many small to large municipalities and water and sewer districts in Maine rely upon. This workshop is designed to help TRIO users understand the tool better, know where to turn for help – and ask questions of the Harris experts themselves. Officials from small towns, who use TRIO only occasionally throughout the year, may find this offering especially valuable.

The afternoon workshop will be held on March 16 at the MMA Conference Center in Augusta. It starts with registration from 1 to 1:30 p.m. and ends at 4:30 p.m. Cost is \$55 for MMA members.

MARCH 17

Elected Officials Workshop: Lewiston

Attorneys and staff from MMA's Legal Services and Communication & Educational Services departments will lead a workshop for Elected Officials on March 17 at the Ramada Inn and Conference Center in Lewiston. The evening workshop begins with registration at 4 p.m. and ends at 8:30 p.m., including a light dinner. Officials who attend will receive a certificate showing they have met the state's Freedom of Access training requirement.

The workshop is designed for newly elected officials, but veteran councilors and select board members will benefit from the refresher and legal updates as well. Topics include: open meeting and records; roles and responsibilities; effective communication; media relations; and, conflicts of interest, among others. Cost for the workshop is \$65 for MMA members and \$130 for non-members.

SPECIAL SESSION!

MARCH 27

Verbal Judo: Augusta

One of MMA's most popular programs – Verbal Judo: Tactical Communications for the Contact Professional – returns on March 27. The all-day workshop will be led by Joel Francis, National Director/Trainer for the Verbal Judo Institute. It begins with registration at 8 a.m. and will be held at the MMA Conference Center

in Augusta. It is scheduled to conclude at 4:30 p.m.

Boiled down, Verbal Judo teaches employees who have contact with the public how to calm difficult people who may be acting out of emotional stress or other influences. Cost is \$120 for MMA members and \$240 for non-members.

MARCH 31

Managing Freedom of Access Requests: Orono

Sometimes FOA requests come in slowly. Sometimes they come from serial requesters, and they keep coming for a while. Either way, Maine law requires that all FOA requests be handled properly, fairly and in a timely manner. That's what this March 31 workshop – to be held at the Black Bear Inn and Conference Center in Orono – will address.

The program will be led by MMA Legal Services Attorneys Richard Flewelling and Michael Lichtenstein; Union Town Manager Jay Feyler; and, Eric Conrad, MMA's Director of Communication & Educational Services. The afternoon workshop begins with registration at 1:30 p.m. The program runs from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Cost is \$45 for MMA members and \$90 for non-members.

SPECIAL SESSION!

APRIL 7

How to Lead Effective Meetings: Freeport

Portland meeting facilitator extraordinaire Nancy Ansheles returns to lead this highly regarded workshop on preparing for, organizing and running effective meetings. The session is designed for many people in municipal government, from elected officials who handle large and sometimes boisterous groups to deputy department heads who lead small staff meetings, and want them to be as effective as possible.

The day-long meeting will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Freeport. It starts with registration at 8:30 a.m. and will conclude at 4 p.m. Cost is \$85 for MMA members and \$170 for non-members. MTCMA (managers) members who attend can receive six credits in the Leadership Category.

LEGAL NOTES

School Board Vacancies

Question: How do unanticipated school board vacancies occur, and how are they filled?

Answer: Regardless of the type of school administrative unit (e.g., municipal school unit, regional school unit, school administrative district, etc.), an unanticipated school board vacancy occurs (1) when a member changes residency from the municipality or subdistrict from which the member was elected, (2) when a member dies, (3) when a member resigns, or (4) except in municipalities with a charter, when a member is absent without excuse from three consecutive regular board meetings, and the board has declared a vacancy (see, e.g., 20-A M.R.S. §§ 2305, 1474, 1254).

As for how unanticipated school board vacancies are filled, it depends on the type of school administrative unit. In a municipal school unit, a vacancy on the school committee (the school board in a municipal school unit is called a “school committee”) may be filled by appointment by the committee within 30 days; the term of the appointee expires at the next annual municipal election, at which time a special election must be held to fill the vacancy for the balance, if any, of the original term. If the school committee fails to appoint someone within 30 days, the vacancy may be filled by a special election for the balance of the term (see 20-A M.R.S. § 2305(4)).

In a regional school unit, however, a vacancy on the school board must be filled by appointment by the municipal officers (selectmen or councilors) of the municipality in which the director (school board members in an RSU are called “directors”) resided; the interim director serves until the next annual municipal election, at which time a special election must be held to fill the vacancy for the balance, if any, of the original term (see 20-A M.R.S. § 1474(3)).

Similarly, in a school administrative district, a vacancy on the school board must be filled by appointment by the municipal officers of the municipality in which the director (school board members in an SAD are also called “directors”) resided; the interim director serves until the next annual municipal election, at which time a special election must be held to fill the vacancy for the balance, if any, of the

MUNICIPAL CALENDAR

BY MARCH 1 – Solid Waste and Recycling Municipal Reporting forms are due to the Maine DEP (38 M.R.S. § 2133(7)).

APRIL 1 – Municipal property tax assessments are controlled by this date (36 M.R.S. § 502).

- Monthly/Quarterly expenditure statement and claim for General Assistance reimbursement to be sent to Department of Health and Human Services, General Assistance Unit, DHS #11, Augusta, ME 04333 (22 M.R.S. § 4311).

APRIL 20 – **Patriot’s Day** – third Monday in April, is a legal holiday (4 M.R.S. § 1051).

ON OR BEFORE APRIL 21 – Every employer required to deduct and withhold tax shall, for each calendar quarter, file a withholding return and remit payment as prescribed by the State Tax Assessor (36 M.R.S. § 5253).

original term (see 20-A M.R.S. § 1254(3)).

For filling unanticipated vacancies in other, less common types of school administrative units (community school districts, for example), the applicable law should be consulted.

For how vacancies occur in other kinds of municipal offices, and for how those vacancies are filled, see “How Vacancies Occur,” *Maine Townsman*, Legal Notes, July 2007, and “How Vacancies Are Filled,” *Maine Townsman*, August 2007. (By R.P.F.)

Updated List of Municipal Officials Required by Law

Over 20 years ago we published a list of municipal officials required by State statute (see “Municipal Officials Required by Statute,” *Maine Townsman*, Legal Notes, June 1999). That list, in alphabetical order and with legal citations and other basic information, has now been updated and is available in Appendix 1 to our recently updated *Town Meeting & Elections Manual*. All of our manuals are available free to members at www.memun.org.

It’s worth noting that in order to hold any of these offices, a person must be a resident of Maine, at least 18 years of age, and a citizen of the United States (30-A M.R.S. § 2526(3)). But except for municipal officers and school board members, a local official need not be a resident of the municipality unless local residency is required by charter.

Also, before assuming the duties of any of these offices, a person must be sworn (take an oath) before the municipal clerk or a dedimus justice, notary public or attorney (30-A M.R.S. § 2526(9)).

Incidentally, while some of these offices

may be held simultaneously by the same person, others have been deemed legally incompatible with each other, either by statute or case law, and cannot be held by the same person at the same time. Examples of incompatible offices include municipal officer and school board member, assessor and tax collector or treasurer, and code enforcement officer and board of appeals member. Before electing or appointing someone to multiple offices, it is advisable to check to be sure that that combination of offices can lawfully be held by the same person since the legal consequences of incompatibility can be severe. (By R.P.F.)

Board Meetings on Weekends, Holidays

Question: Can a municipal board lawfully meet on a Saturday or Sunday? How about on a legal holiday?

Answer: There is no statute prohibiting municipal boards or committees from meeting on either weekends or holidays. (A municipal charter, ordinance, or board bylaws could do so, but we don’t recall ever seeing such a restriction.) Nevertheless, calling a board meeting on any of these days could invite criticism, since governmental business is not customarily conducted on weekends or holidays. Calling a meeting on Saturday, Sunday, or a religious holiday could also interfere with religious practices, either of board members or of members of the public wishing to attend.

Still, we can imagine circumstances where an emergency board meeting is an imperative and meeting on a weekend or a holiday could be warranted for the

LEGAL NOTES

limited purpose of addressing the emergency. There would be nothing illegal or improper about this, but these occasions should be kept to a minimum. Notice of an emergency meeting, including time and place, must be given to representatives of the media, whenever practical, by the same or faster means as used to notify board members; this is the only public notice required (see "Emergency Meeting Notice," *Maine Town & City*, Legal Notes, July 2019).

Incidentally, there is also no statute prohibiting a town meeting or a municipal election on weekends or holidays, except for school budget validation referendum elections, which cannot be held on a Sunday or legal holiday (see 20-A M.R.S. § 1486(2)). In fact, Saturday town meetings, at least for annual meetings, are a time-honored tradition in many towns. (Setting the date for a town meeting is within the sound discretion of the municipal officers, unless otherwise specified in a municipal charter, see "Date of Town Meeting," *Maine Townsman*, Legal Notes, May 2013.)

Also noteworthy is that municipal offices are not required to be closed on legal holidays (although they usually are). The only legal holidays mandated by State law are court holidays (4 M.R.S. § 1051), school holidays (20-A M.R.S. § 4802) and bank holidays (9-B M.R.S. § 145(1)). Courts, schools, and banks must be closed on these legal holidays, but the statutes are silent with respect to municipal and State offices (except for the courts). Whether municipal employees are entitled to the day off and to be paid for it are also local decisions.

The court holidays are New Year's Day (January 1st), Martin Luther King, Jr., Day (the 3rd Monday in January), Washington's

Birthday (the 3rd Monday in February), Patriot's Day (the 3rd Monday in April), Memorial Day (the last Monday in May or May 30th if so designated), Independence Day (July 4th), Labor Day (the 1st Monday in September), Indigenous Peoples Day (formerly Columbus Day, the 2nd Monday in October), Veterans Day (November 11th), Thanksgiving Day (as designated), and Christmas Day (December 25th). (By R.P.F.)

Toilet Law

All the while we've been writing this column (20+ years), we've never had call to write about toilet law. But times change (and so must we), so here goes.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2020, the Maine Human Rights Act requires all newly constructed public buildings, including municipal buildings, with a maximum occupant capacity exceeding 100 individuals to include single-occupancy toilet facilities that meet accessibility standards (see 5 M.R.S. § 4594-G(12)). Prior to construction, plans must be submitted for review and approval by the State Fire Marshal's Office, which must also provide educational and technical assistance to owners, design professionals, and builders. The failure to meet these and other requirements for new construction under the Act constitutes unlawful discrimination.

Also, effective Sept. 19, 2019, it is unlawful discrimination under the Act for any public accommodation, including a municipal building, to designate a single-occupancy toilet facility as for use only by members of one sex (see 5 M.R.S. § 4592(9)). A single-occupancy toilet facility may be identified by a sign as long as the sign does not indicate that the facility is for use only by members of one

specific sex. A "single-occupancy toilet facility" is a restroom for use by one user at a time or for family or assisted use and that has an outer door that can be locked by the occupant. This provision applies to existing buildings and facilities as well as new and proposed ones.

A word-search of Maine statutes using the term "toilet" uncovers a variety of other toilet mandates – for certain eating establishments, retail establishments, manufacturing facilities, and schools, for example. But the two laws described above are the only ones we know of that apply specifically to municipal buildings, so we'll close the lid on the subject for now. (By R.P.F.)

Maximum Interest Rate for 2020 Delinquent Taxes: 9%

The State Treasurer has established 9% as the maximum interest rate that municipalities may set for delinquent property taxes committed during calendar year 2020.

However, as anyone familiar with delinquent taxes knows, interest does not accrue on unpaid taxes unless a municipality, by vote of its legislative body, establishes the rate of interest and the date or dates after which interest will accrue. This must be done at the meeting at which the body votes to raise a tax or at any subsequent meeting prior to commitment of the tax (see 36 M.R.S.A. § 505(4)). This rate then applies to all delinquent taxes committed that year until they are paid in full.

For details on how to calculate interest on delinquent taxes, see MMA's *Municipal Liens Manual*, available free to members at www.memun.org. (By R.P.F.)

The Maine Municipal Association (MMA) is a voluntary membership organization offering an array of professional services to municipalities and other local governmental entities in Maine.

MMA's services include advocacy, education and information, professional legal and personnel advisory services, and group insurance self-funded programs.

For more information visit the MMA website: www.memun.org



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