

AROOSTOOK *Partnership for Progress*

Annual Report 2013-2014



*Nashville
Plantation
\$35 million*

*Fort Kent
\$14.7
million*



*Mars Hill
\$8.5
million*

“Investment in The County”

Education to Industry

The “Education to Industry” initiative has been a cornerstone to all the work done by APP over the past year. Growing the 18- to 44-year-old workforce is imperative for County businesses to grow and in some cases survive.

The “Education to Industry” working group organized another summit, where more than 60 educators, business people, economic development officials and workforce specialists gathered at the University of Maine at Presque Isle Campus Center Thursday, August 7, to discuss outmigration and how to better connect students with emerging jobs.

Aroostook Partnership for Progress President and CEO Bob Dorsey said the first summit last summer brought awareness about the growing need for skilled workers in Aroostook, especially in the 18- to 44-year-old demographic, and the second summit expanded on ongoing efforts and highlight best practices.

Another focus on the “Education to Industry” effort is the creation and launch of Opportunities Aroostook, which has a social media component and a newly launched job listing/resume posting website.

Also, the adoption of internships and job shadowing by area businesses grew. Katahdin Trust Company instituted an internship program for the first time and even APP and LEAD hired summer interns.



APP summer intern Lucas Anderson.



Education To Industry Initiative

Objective: *To Increase the Availability & Quality of
Aroostook's Workforce To Meet Growing Needs*

Goals:

1. Increase Awareness Of Our Workforce Challenge
2. CALL TO ACTION For Education & Employers To Engage
3. Increase Student Awareness Of Emerging County Jobs
4. Increase Job Awareness By Offering Job Shadow/Internship Opportunities For High School & College Students
5. Increase **RETENTION** Of Our Students To Fill Local Jobs
6. **ATTRACT** Former County Folks To Fill Emerging Jobs

Growing Jobs Can Only Be Successful With Qualified Workforce

2014 has been a very productive year overall for Aroostook County and the Partnership as we have made definite progress and seen some significant growth in our four focus areas of Education to Industry, Energy, Forestry/Manufacturing and Diversified Agriculture.

This year has seen over \$100M of investment in Aroostook County with new businesses emerging (wind, automotive, & motels), new manufacturing plants (Irving & Ecoshel), existing firm expansion, new banks, wellness centers and new infrastructure in the form of bridges and rail. From this investment and the host of supporting efforts across the County including our new Workforce Center of Excellence training collaboration, hundreds of new, good jobs have emerged and been filled with quality workers.



Kris Doody

Our unique Partnership engages economic development in many ways - out front by sponsoring awareness events (energy, education, & export), spearheading collaboration and positive actions through the use of working groups, and securing grants to support Mobilize Northern Maine based initiatives, or working behind the scenes with new or growing businesses on business plans, securing capital, pointing them to the right assistance agency, or working with our communities to secure Tax Increment Financing options from the State.

Our President, Bob Dorsey, has continued to work tirelessly to increase County awareness of our challenges and describe potential solutions through the media, discussions with service organizations, communities and educators and especially through engagement with a wide variety of subject matter experts that make up our working groups. These key working groups have developed strategies and specific actions that are yielding true results, whether in the Forestry/Manufacturing sector assisting workforce training, in the Education communities expanding job awareness/exposure programs, in the Energy arena exploring alternatives or in the Agriculture community supporting diversification efforts or new businesses such as Food Cooperatives.

Perhaps our most significant progress in 2014 has been in our Education to Industry initiative where we have made tremendous progress by supporting and promoting the Aroostook Aspirations Initiative Program which selected their first 16 scholarships, by advancing the Junior Achievement (JA) program and by launching the “Opportunities Aroostook” website to promote job awareness and more efficient hiring practices. This year, JA reached almost 850 students in Middle/High Schools and County students won the statewide Titan Challenge business game and received \$1000 scholarships each for doing so. Also, paid internships and job shadow opportunities increased throughout the County, and with the exceptional help from LEAD, we are expecting excellent results from the Opportunities Aroostook website as County businesses use this free service to post their job openings and our social media tools help spread the word across Aroostook and the nation.

The Aroostook Partnership is truly a special team and again, I’d like to thank all of our private sector investors, our colleges, NMDC and LEAD for all their hard work in support of our important efforts. I’d also like to thank our President, Bob Dorsey, for his continued leadership and passion in leading the charge to grow our economy.

Sincerely,



Kris Doody
2013-14 Chairperson

APP Officers and Board Members



Kris Doody, Chair
CEO
Cary Medical Center



Sylvia Getman, Vice-Chair
President & CEO
The Aroostook Medical Center



Robert P. Clark,
Vice-Chair (Public)
Executive Director
NMDC



Larry Shaw, Treasurer
CEO and President
MMG Insurance



Cal Deschene, Secretary
Sr. Vice President
United Insurance



Kim Wadleigh
Vice President T&D
Operations
Bangor Hydro/MPS



Richard Daigle
President
Daigle Oil Company



Jim Davis
LEAD President

2013-2014 Investors

Acadia Federal Credit Union
Aroostook Aspirations Initiative
Cary Medical Center
County Federal Credit Union
Daigle Oil Company
Dead River Company
Emera Maine
F.A. Peabody Company
First Wind
Griffeth Ford/Griffeth Honda
Husson University
Katahdin Trust Company
Key Bank
K-Pel Industrial Services
Lynox Welding Supply
MMG Insurance
Northern Maine Community College
Northern Maine Development Commission
Soderberg Construction
S.W. Collins
The Aroostook Medical Center
United Insurance
University of Maine at Presque Isle
WAGM-TV
York's of Houlton



Jon Prescott
President & CEO
Katahdin Trust Company



Chris Anderson
President
F.A. Peabody Company



Cheri Doak
Senior Vice President
KeyBank

Ex-Officio Members



Timothy Crowley
President
NMCC



Linda Schott
President
UMPI



Wilson Hess
President
UMFK

Guiding Document adopted by Forestry Working Group

The Aroostook Partnership for Progress forestry working group adopted a guiding document to lay the groundwork for efforts to grow the forest products and manufacturing economy of northern Maine.

As part of the Mobilize Northern Maine strategic planning initiative, the forestry sector was identified as one of Aroostook County's largest strengths with a huge asset base. It then became a key focus area for APP, which formed a working group to identify strategies to grow the industry, concentrating on value added processing/manufacturing initially for Aroostook and ultimately statewide.

Meeting early this year, the group, which consists of governmental representatives, forestry experts, the banking sector and others, adopted a vision and guiding document to help prioritize its efforts going forward.

The mission of the initiative is for Aroostook and Maine to develop a more vibrant, competitive and sustainable forest economy that will provide greater prosperity in the forest industry.

The guiding document calls for five strategic components: provide for workforce development to support the mission; create new value added processing and products utilizing available forest resources; encouraging Maine to provide a consistent policy and regulatory platform enabling growth of the forest economy; for Maine to develop an long range economic development platform that is competitive to other states and regions; and for the group to develop a comprehensive communications plan to support this effort.



Loggers and off road truckers spend a day during the mud season to learn better business practices during a workshop in St. Agatha this spring.

The Partnership continued efforts to better train those who make a living in the woods. Following up on a very successful logger business training program in 2013 at the University of Maine Fort Kent, Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) with assistance from APP, conducted a one-day seminar to help loggers and off road truckers become more profitable. The workshop, at the Lakeview Restaurant in May, was attended by almost 40 individuals.

The Partnership also worked with NMDC on several grant applications to assist the forest industry.



Forestry, manufacturing, agriculture and other industries in Aroostook were on display at the World Acadian Congress Export Conference at the University of Maine at Fort Kent on Aug. 19 and 20. APP and NMDC served as sponsors of the event, which brought together more than 70 businesspeople to explore new opportunities.

Letter From the President & CEO

2014 has been another busy and productive year for APP. We have seen a tremendous amount of investment in the County (>\$100M), several new firms opened or expanded, a significant number of new jobs (>300) materialize and certainly progress in all four of our Mobilize Northern Maine based focused economic sectors. We've sponsored or organized three major county events, held numerous working group meetings and worked with multiple firms and individuals who were engaged in or contemplating new or expansion opportunities.

Our most important effort continues to be our "Education To Industry" initiative to focus the retention & attraction efforts vital for increasing the number and quality in our County workforce. In that effort, we held our second Summit, significantly expanded the Junior Achievement program, and increased the number of internship programs throughout the County. We also launched the "Opportunities Aroostook" website combined with a social media campaign as a singular vehicle for employers to post all jobs across the County and for individuals looking for employment to post their resumes.

In the Forestry & Manufacturing sectors, outstanding progress occurred in 2014. Our Forestry working group finalized a "Guiding Document" prioritizing workforce training, value added processing, regulatory policy and economic development priorities. The newly created Workforce Center of Excellence (WCOE) was able to help multiple companies such as Irving and Ecoshel in recruitment and training for their new workforce in the two new mills which combined represent >\$42M in new investment. We also engaged in an extensive effort in submitting a bid to be identified as an "Investing in Manufacturing Community Partnerships" recipient coordinating with >40 local businesses to improve gaps in our Forest Industry workforce training. And although we did not get the designation, the government said we had a very strong application, suggested approaches to improve it and strongly encouraged us to resubmit in the next round. And for the World Acadian Congress, APP spearheaded the Export Seminar held at UMFK that allowed ~85 business folks to gather and learn about products and discuss exporting potential as well as potential future collaboration.

In the Diversified Agriculture effort, progress was made in several areas. We assisted and promoted the two new Food Cooperatives that opened in Fort Kent and in Houlton. We met with Buck Farms to discuss strategy and business plans as they prepare to open a state of the art malting company and have encouraged the Maine Department of Agriculture to support this key new effort. We assisted in the Tax Increment Financing effort to help Naturally Potatoes and Mars Hill in their \$8.5M expansion. And, in a critical effort to better connect Aroostook potential to southern Maine markets, we've engaged with the Maine Food Strategy Steering Committee, hosted the Muskie School as they met with local farmers to discuss the results of the 2014 Maine Food Consumption Survey, and were contacted by the Greater Portland Council of Governments, recently designated a "Manufacturing Community Partner" who strongly desire to "better connect northern (supply) and southern (demand) Maine through expanding collaboration with us in their Food System endeavor."

I'd like to thank my board of directors, our executive committee and all of our partners/investors for their valuable support, energy and guidance as we strive to advance our region's economy. I'd also like to thank all the members of our community that helped in our working group efforts for their time, ideas and energy to further our objectives and ensure progress in the areas that are vital for our success.



Robert D. Dorsey
Pres. and CEO APP



Bob Dorsey

For more than a decade the Aroostook Partnership for Progress has been a champion for economic development in the region. In addition to that goal, workforce development has played a big part in APP activity in 2013-14.

Three new investors have signed onto the Partnership, which leverages the financial resources and expertise of the private sector with the in-kind services provided by Northern Maine Development Commission to generate business opportunities and grow the economy. New investors to the Partnership include County Federal Credit Union, Soderberg Construction and Husson University. The previous year saw eight new and returning investors join. APP staff continues to conduct outreach to potential investors and hope to attract at least \$20,000 in new investments in 2014-15 and retain current partners.

Marketing Activities and Initiatives have included:

1. Addressed numerous civic organizations and briefed town and city managers
2. Personal contact with dozens of business developers and CEO's
3. Participated in trade fairs and other events to spread APP message and highlight investors in APP
4. Increased newsletter frequency and distribution, on any given week total reach of more than 1,000
5. Secured news coverage in local and statewide media

Alternative Energy

Promoting Biomass and other alternative energy options



Randy Richards of Daigle Oil Company talks to visitors at the APP Alternative Energy and Biomass Fair at Northern Maine Community College in May.

“I went to an alternative energy fair APP held at NMCC in early 2014. I talked with Matt Bell, of Northeast Pellets, who hooked me up with Maine Energy Systems.” -- Mapleton Town Manager Jon Federick quoted in the Star Herald on how the Mapleton Fire Department converted to a biomass boiler to save on heating costs.

Diversified Ag effort gaining traction

There is some exciting work going on with agriculture in Aroostook County and Maine. Locally the Aroostook Partnership for Progress assisted in an application for \$100,000 grant proposal to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Farmers’ Market Promotion Program to strengthen local farm connections through local food co-ops in northern Maine.

NMDC, in partnership with the County Co-op & Farm Store in Houlton and the Market Street Co-op in Fort Kent, proposes to encourage and promote direct marketing of agricultural commodities to local consumers.

“Each of the Co-ops has recently been incorporated and in need of financial and technical assistance in the areas of local farm connection and coordination, marketing and promotion (advertising, website design, social media, etc.), guidance in cooperative

operations and Board development, and initial/upgraded equipment,” said Mike Eisensmith, NMDC Director of Regional Planning.

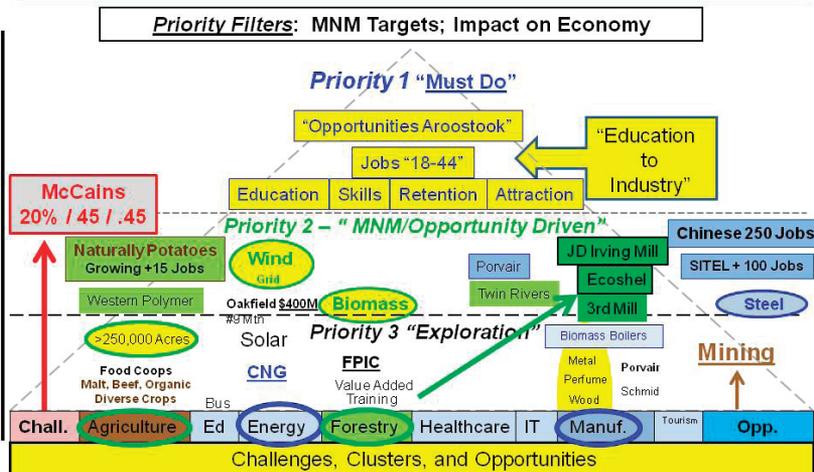
In 2013, APP identified diversified agriculture as an area of potential growth during the Mobilize Northern Maine asset based planning process. Through the initial work of the group, it became clear marketing help would benefit all small farming operations.

The grant application is a result of work being done by the APP Diversified Agriculture working group.

APP President Bob Dorsey added, “Food co-op and food hub efforts are growing all across Maine and our two in the County are a great start that will hopefully lead to more demand for produce and products from local area small farmers as well as encourage others to come to the County and conduct profitable farming operations.”



Effort Prioritization





Aroostook Partnership for Progress



APP ON THE ROAD — *The APP board of directors has been recently taking its monthly meetings on the road. The June 2014 meeting was held at Katahdin Trust Company's Operations Center in Houlton.*



RENEWABLE ENERGY — *The APP Renewable Energy working group gathered this spring at UMPI to hear about new trends in energy. Solar is becoming more of a player, with the Loring Commerce Centre expanding the number of panels at the facility. Biomass has continued expanding in the region as well.*

AROOSTOOK Partnership for Progress



Northern
Maine
Development
Commission

Private Investors

Education

- UMPI
- UMFK
- NMCC
- HUSSON

LEADERS

Encouraging Aroostook Development

The Small Business Advocacy Arm



AROOSTOOK DAY — *Maine School of Science and Mathematics Executive Director Luke Shorty presents at the annual event in Augusta.*



AROOSTOOK ASPIRATIONS — *APP Chair Kris Doody presents Ray and Sandy Gauvin an investor plaque at the 2012-13 annual meeting.*

Message from LEADers Encouraging Aroostook Development

It is my pleasure to offer a summary of our activities this past year at LEAD. LEAD was created nearly 30 years ago to provide business and economic development advocacy for our member businesses. Throughout the years, our projects may have changed, but our core mission has remained always to increase opportunity and prosperity for Aroostook County business interests.

Highlights in 2014 include:

Aroostook Day at the Legislature

This event is typically held in January at the Senator Inn and we usually have a dozen or more legislators present and another 60-70 Aroostook County business owners for an evening program highlighting important activities for the legislative agenda. We sponsored the annual Aroostook Day at the Legislature event where we showcased and advocated for mining as well as provided an opportunity to educate our legislators about the Maine School of Science and Math.

Entrepreneur of the Year

We continue to sponsor the Entrepreneur of the Year event, held in May to recognize and celebrate a business owner in Aroostook County. A panel of judges receives nominations and selects one winner that is recognized at an evening gala event. This event is to promote the entrepreneurial spirit in Aroostook County and recognize all small business interests.

Legislative Advocacy

Throughout the legislative session, we frequently provide testimony before committees on legislation that would impact our business climate and members.

Legislative Conference Calls

Also during the legislative session, we engage closely with the Maine State Chamber of Commerce and hold monthly teleconference calls with the Maine Chamber's Director of Legislative Services. We in turn, host a WEEKLY legislative conference call with our Aroostook County delegation. This call typically happens at noontime every Wednesday. Our County delegation commits to gathering in a room at the State House and we provide five locations in Aroostook County where our members can go and call in to discuss bills, hear about issues, etc. It gives our delegation an opportunity to hear about what is happening "back home" in the County and also gives members a time to let us know where we can be effective on certain advocacy issues.

Business Plan Competition

We were the primary Maine representative to the international business plan competition held in conjunction with the 2014 World Acadian Congress. One new business start up from Aroostook County, one from New Brunswick, and one from Quebec each received a \$5,000 cash prize and additional support to help start new businesses in our region. We plan to continue this event on an annual basis.

In closing, I want to thank the LEAD Board of Directors and each of our members for their ongoing support, time and commitment to LEADers Encouraging Aroostook Development.

Sincerely,



Ryan D. Pelletier
Executive Director

LEADERS 
Encouraging Aroostook Development 

Work Together To:

1. **Grow Aroostook County Economy!**
2. Create Jobs
3. **Provide Skilled Workers To Fill Jobs**
4. Stem Outmigration – Grow Population
5. Attract Outside Interest In The County



APP Goals

- **Champion** effort to connect students & former County members with an awareness of projected and emerging **County jobs**
- **Champion** new business opportunities!
- **Champion** substantial and meaningful **reductions in business energy costs** by promoting/educating the benefits of alternative energy approaches
- **Grow 3000** job opportunities and inject **\$500M** into Aroostook economy by promoting Mining & Mobilize Maine Focused Industry Sector Efforts
- **Facilitate** forums for in-depth dialogue on key development issues in the region
- **Facilitate** forums for Small Business Growth, Business Development Education & Business Acumen Awareness
- **Increase Aroostook County awareness** *throughout the state* among decision-makers involved with business expansion, relocation, and investment
- **Maintain** excellent working relationships with Chambers of Commerce, Aroostook County Delegation, and other key State-level constituents

Aroostook Partnership for Progress

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