



Annual
Report
2022



THANK YOU TO ALL THE MAJOR INVESTORS



Aroostook Partnership (AP), a nonprofit corporation, is a private-public partnership. AP focuses on the economy, jobs, image, promoting new and existing businesses, natural resources and legislation. The Partnership is dedicated to aggressive economic development for the region.

Letter from the President/CEO

To Our Membership:

2022 has shown great promise for Aroostook County as we emerged from a pandemic which brought countless complications and challenges to our businesses, schools, and communities. As we put the pandemic behind us, our businesses are again growing and competing in our state and national economies. Through our many lessons learned and amazing ability to collaborate, we have united to promote and advance our common County interests and AP continues to play an integral role in leading the necessary change.



Paul Towle

AP's Executive Committee met in January to discuss a growing concern impacting nearly all businesses in Aroostook- our shortage of qualified and engaged workers to sustain and grow our businesses. Until we resolve this, we will not be able to fully support the potential within our region. That is why our Executive Committee declared workforce development our #1 priority and organized and executed a Workforce Summit in March. Forty-eight engaged business and education leaders came together to help identify the root causes and establish objectives and goals to address the challenges. From these efforts we developed and are adapting a Workforce Strategic Plan that will incorporate input from a broad representation of Aroostook stakeholders. This strategic plan will focus around our top two strategies initially identified from the summit- 1) branding Aroostook, 2) recruiting workforce talent.

One of the most important components of our strategic plan is to develop a talent pipeline to help us attract our younger generation to our broad range of local careers. The primary mechanism by which we will do this is a strategic partnership with Tallo, a national talent recruitment and retention company. Our Executive Committee met with them four times and determined they are capable and well-equipped to help us achieve our recruitment/attraction goals. We are pleased to have representatives from Tallo with us at our annual meeting to present how their systems and services will help us achieve this.

In addition, AP's 3 working committees continue their important work to ensure we remain focused on programs and activities further supporting Aroostook's economic growth. Our Workforce and Population Growth Committee, led by Todd Saucier, organized virtual business tours for our high school students and is currently in the planning stages with our County Educators for four regional in-person business tour days for 2023. The committee's work also led to the successful graduation of our inaugural Leadership Aroostook class in August where the eleven graduates presented their two final projects, for which you'll hear summary presentations today. The Beta class kicked off earlier this month and has expanded to fourteen participants, offering continued access to high-level professional development right here in Aroostook.

Our Legislative Outreach Committee, chaired by Jason Parent, again hosted AP's weekly legislative calls with our County delegation while the Maine

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Letter from the President/CEO

Legislature was in session. This offered our business leaders the opportunity to communicate their positions on bills being taken up before they reached the floor for vote. Additionally, we provided the questions for, and sponsored the locally televised WAGM candidate profiles of all our County candidates to help focus our legislators on County business priorities while also helping our residents to make more informed voting decisions. Work is also underway now to plan our Aroostook Day at the Legislature event in Augusta to help connect Aroostook with our state government leaders and build/retain relationships to help advance matters of regional importance.

The Business Growth and Expansion Committee, led by Ryan Rogers, continues to assess where our greatest opportunities are to help sustain and grow our existing businesses and attract new investments to the County. Biofuels and renewable energy are still high priorities for investors in Northern Maine with major projects announced in both areas recently. Our natural resources will continue to drive investor interest and AP will continue to be at the table to assist in and promote projects that provide high-paying jobs, local economic benefits, and spur population growth. Ryan's team also works on solutions to help address our decreasing workforce participation rate brought on partially because of the shortage of childcare slots. Our workforce will increase as childcare services increase.

As president of AP, I constantly assess what state and federal funding exists and help direct investments into Aroostook. Adequate access to internet service for healthcare, education, business, and entertainment is essential today to enable our communities to attract new residents and businesses. With over \$460 million coming to Maine to help fund broadband expansion, especially in Maine's most rural regions, AP partnered with the County of Aroostook to lead the County Broadband Initiative, including an engaged committee of thirty-five broadband advocates. Our charter was to assess where our broadband gaps are and compile a report, an operational blueprint, for our 68 communities to help guide them on their best courses of action to mitigate their coverage gaps. Throughout this process, Ryan Pelletier and I developed relationships at the highest levels within the new Maine Connectivity Authority (the funders) and Maine Broadband Coalition, as well as several of the state's regional community-owned broadband initiatives. These relationships and the delivery of our broadband plan this week to our towns, in combination with NMDC's new grant-funded staff positions to support our County broadband projects, will all help ensure the successful deployment of broadband coverage across Aroostook.

As engaged residents and leaders living and working in Aroostook, we have much to be optimistic about. AP continues to speak with one voice for Aroostook to help ensure our future progress on many fronts. Our work remains focused on growing our economy through both traditional and emerging industries and initiatives. AP's Board members have the passion, ingenuity and skills needed to guide our success and it's a pleasure and honor to work with them every day. I have the greatest respect and appreciation for AP's growing family of Officers, Directors, and our supporting Members across the County. Your continued support and belief in the Partnership elevates Aroostook on the larger stage and enables us to be part the conversation everywhere in Maine.

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Letter from the President/CEO

I especially want to thank our outgoing Chair, Matt Nightingale, for his leadership and thoughtful guidance in helping to keep AP laser focused, and I look forward to working with our capable and passionate new Chair, Sam Collins.

Bravo AP, and I look forward to continued success in 2023 and beyond!

Paul Towle
President & CEO
Aroostook Partnership



AP Board of Directors meeting at the Katahdin Trust Operations Center in Houlton.

2023 AP Officers, Executive Committee and Directors

Sam Collins – Chair
Todd Saucier – Vice Chair
Robert Clark - Public Vice Chair
Jennifer Buckingham – Secretary
Greg LaFrancois – Treasurer

ExCom: (9)
Five officers above plus:
Matt Nightingale, Matt
McHatten, Jason Parent, and
Ryan Rogers

Directors:
Matt Nightingale - Katahdin
Trust
Sam Collins - S.W Collins
Todd Saucier – UIG
Jennifer Buckingham - Tempo
Robert Clark – NMDC
Greg LaFrancois - Northern
Light ARG
Matt McHatten – MMG
Jason Parent - ACAP
Ryan Rogers - Dead River

Kris Doody - Cary Medical Center
David Norman – Versant
Chris Anderson - FA Peabody
Steve St. Pierre - Key Bank
Carter Vaillancourt - Daigle Oil
Jason House - TD Bank
Mike Kelly Jr. - Machias Savings
Meg Scott York - Nature's Circle
Farm
Al Martin - Twin Rivers Paper
Nathan Whitney - Louisiana
Pacific
Jared Tapley – SADC
Carl Flora – LDA
Joy Barresi-Saucier - Agency on
Aging
Tim Crowley – NMCC
Ray Rice - UMPI
Deb Hedeem – UMFK
Lynne Coy-Ogan - Husson
Tim Doak - RSU 39
Mark Levasseur - Momentum
Aroostook

Letter From the Chair

To Our Membership:

At our first Executive Committee organizational meeting this past year, the group urgently decided to classify our Aroostook County workforce need as a CRISIS. Since that initial meeting, we have had an all-hands-on-deck approach to developing a strategic plan that would include member and employer feedback from around the County. This plan needed specific action items, including swift deliverables.



Matt Nightingale

We were pleased with all the feedback from members throughout the year as well as those who attended our Workforce Summit in early March. One theme that continued to surface throughout the discussions was the formation of a Workforce Hub that would include much more collaboration than a traditional job bulletin board. While this concept is still ‘under construction’ so to speak, Paul brought to the board’s attention an online workforce and talent development web company named Tallo.

After a thorough subcommittee review of Tallo and a potential Aroostook Partnership led plan surrounding the effort, we are pleased to have engaged Tallo for the next 2 years. Much more will be shared regarding this effort at our Annual Meeting and in the weeks to come.

Aroostook Partnership committees continued their important work throughout the year. The Legislative Committee did an excellent job of connecting the Aroostook delegation with members for the purpose of discussing important public policy legislation. The Education Committee continued its work to develop the next generation of talent within our local school systems. Further, the Education Committee hosted the first Leadership Aroostook class, which included partnerships with Husson University as well as many Aroostook County organizations and leaders. The first year was a great success!

Thank you, Paul, for driving the charge all year. Finally, a big thank you to the membership for your continued collaboration and support of Aroostook Partnership.

I think everyone would agree that there is a huge need to continue to develop and grow the Aroostook County workforce to sustain a viable economic future for generations to come. We all have one huge factor in common: living and working in arguably one of the best regions in the Country. The more we develop and promote opportunities for citizens and organizations to grow and thrive, the better our future will be.

Working together, we can make a lasting difference!

Matt Nightingale
Chair AP

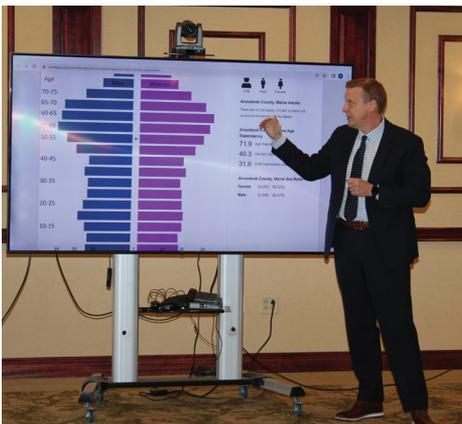
2022 A Look Back



Eleven Aroostook County professionals completed the first ever Leadership Aroostook program and participants and organizers are praising the leadership development initiative and looking forward to a new class.

Leadership Aroostook was created by Aroostook Partnership in conjunction with Husson University's College of Business. The objective is to develop current high potential managers and/or leaders for advanced organizational responsibility, impact and effectiveness in leading teams and departments they oversee.

The inaugural cohort of Leadership Aroostook, from left to right, Clara Collins, Jodi Young, Holly Vining, Jacqueline Martin, Ginger Buck, Shawn Babin, Caleb Buck, Dusty Graham, Casey Gove, Tim Goff, and Jacob Pelkey.



Matt McHatten kicks off the Aroostook Partnership Workforce Crisis Solution Summit, held March 11, 2022, with a look at some demographic information for the region.

The Summit was an opportunity to brainstorm workforce challenges and initiate solutions to add qualified workers to the region. More than 40 business people, economic developers and social services officials attended.

County Broadband Initiative



Look for the Aroostook County Broadband Report, commissioned by Aroostook Partnership and the County of Aroostook, in January. This roadmap to more reliable, faster, and equitable broadband will be released on the AP website and at three regional meetings in Aroostook County.



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