



TWIN CITY TIMES

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A Christmas Carol returns to The Public Theatre!



Dale Place as Scrooge

This holiday season, for one week-end only, The Public Theatre, will present its acclaimed adaptation of A Christmas Carol on Dec 8, 9, and 10th. This inventive version, performed by six actors and a

fiddler, was developed and written for The Public Theatre by Co-Artistic Director Christopher Schario in 1993, and has since been published and performed by theatres around the world and is now a Lewiston/Auburn tradition.

“There’s a great reason why this story is told during the holidays and will never go away”, says author Schario. “It’s unfortunately become too easy for the true meaning of the season to get overwhelmed by shopping sales, but somehow watching Scrooge’s journey in this play always awakens my holiday spirit and gets me ready to celebrate Christmas.”

Another thing worth celebrating, according to Schario, is The Public Theatre’s ticket price of only \$15 for children 18 and under. “With our \$15 youth ticket, we are hoping to introduce today’s children to the magic of professional theatre and give them a gift they’ll have for the rest of their lives.

With all the different versions of A Christmas Carol out in the world, The Public Theatre’s adaptation remains many people’s favorite. “We stay true to the heart of the story, while at the same time

telling it with a sense of playfulness and imagination”, says Schario. “Much of Dickens’ original text is used, as six actors and a fiddler grab a handful of props and your imagination and joyfully bring Dickens’ language and characters to life. Creating a magical atmosphere with live music, a hand-cranked wind machine and a thunder sheet, the audience’s imagination is free to soar, and this classic story comes to life in a way you’ve never seen before.”

The Public Theatre’s version begins with a child reading a copy of Dickens’ novel. As the child reads, five actors and a fiddler magically appear and slowly coax the child into joining the story and becoming the character of Tiny Tim. It’s a marvelous metaphor for the way literature grabs and transforms us.

Leading the cast of A Christmas Carol will be Dale Place in the role of Scrooge. Dale has appeared on Broadway opposite Mary Louise Parker in Heisenberg and Off-Broadway at Lincoln Center, The Public Theatre’s Shakespeare in the Park and Manhattan Theatre Club, among others. He is also a familiar face to Public Theatre audiences having appeared on-

stage in Human Error, Lend Me a Tenor and Deathtrap, among others. The rest of the cast features Russell Berrigan as Marley, Nicholas Perron as Christmas Present, Sheila Stasack as Mrs. Cratchit, McKenna Canty as Belle and local young actor Simon Golob in the role of the child/Tiny Tim. Fiddle music for the production will be performed by local fiddler Beck Well- ing.

With a top ticket price of only \$30 for adults, and \$15 for children 18 and under, it’s professional theatre at a price even Scrooge would love! Gift certificates for any production throughout the remainder of the season are also available for the holidays.

A Christmas Carol will be performed on Friday, Dec 8th at 7 pm, Saturday, Dec 9th at 2 pm and 7pm, and Sunday Dec 10th at 2 pm. For tickets visit thepublictheatre.org or call 207 782-3200.

Season Underwriters are Platz Associates, Sun Journal and Bennett Radio Group, and the sponsors are Evergreen Subaru, Lewiston Pawn Shop, Dirigo Federal Credit Union and Androscoggin Home Healthcare + Hospice.

Androscoggin donates \$2.5K to honor Flight Maine

LEWISTON, ME - Androscoggin Home Healthcare + Hospice proudly announces the success of its AndroGives program, an initiative designed to honor community generosity and maintain trust in healthcare. The program extends support beyond primary health initiatives, with employees selecting a non-profit organization every year to support through drives and fundraisers that align with Androscoggin’s mission.

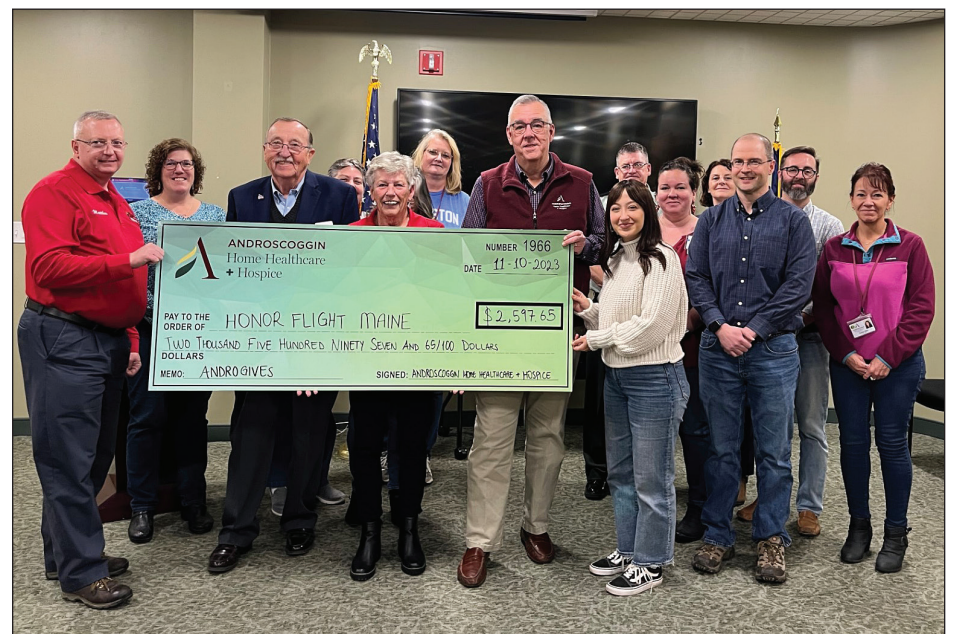
This year, Androscoggin is thrilled to have supported Honor Flight Maine, an organization dedicated to honoring veterans. In a ceremony held just in time for Veterans Day, Androscoggin presented a check of \$2,597.65 to Honor Flight Maine’s board members, Crystal Guerrette, Matthew Mank, and David Patch.

“We are honored to contribute to Honor Flight Maine and support the vet-

erans. AndroGives program reflects our commitment to community engagement and making a positive impact beyond healthcare services,” said Elif Mogensen, Chair of AndroGives program.

The collective efforts of Androscoggin’s employees, who participated through initiatives like Jeans Day and payroll deductions, resulted in this generous contribution. The funds raised will send two veterans and one guardian on a life-enriching journey, aligning with Honor Flight Maine’s mission to recognize and honor the sacrifices of veterans.

Androscoggin Home Healthcare + Hospice expresses deep gratitude to its employees whose generosity made this contribution possible. The success of AndroGives highlights the organization’s ongoing commitment to community service and fostering meaningful partnerships.



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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Maine organizations receive grants for America Recycles Day

BOSTON, MA – In conjunction with America Recycles Day, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that two New England organizations are among 25 selectees to receive a portion of \$33+ million in Recycling Education and Outreach (REO) grants. These grants, which are part of President Biden’s Investing in America agenda, a key pillar of Bidenomics, will expand recycling infrastructure and education for waste management systems across the region.

The local awardees are ecomaine, located in Portland, who were selected to receive \$2 Million for a project called “An Effort to Increase Maine’s Recycling Rate Through Outreach to Stakeholders of Multi-Family Dwelling Units;” and Northeast Resource Recovery Association, located in Epsom, N.H., to receive \$440,000 for a project called “Recycle Right North Country.”

“Today, on America Recycles Day, we are putting historic recycling

investments into communities, made possible by President Biden’s Investing in America agenda,” said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan. “Two years ago today, the President signed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and with it, unleashed unprecedented funding to enable Tribes and communities to update recycling and composting infrastructure, while also advancing education programs to increase recycling rates and reduce waste.”

“Addressing the climate crisis requires many thoughtful and creative solutions. These two projects designed to expand recycling efforts will make a big difference helping Maine and New Hampshire to increase recycling rates and improve sustainability for our communities,” said EPA New England Regional Administrator David W. Cash. “The Recycling Education and Outreach grant projects will help inform the public about local recycling and composting programs and focus on increasing collection rates

and decreasing contamination of recycling streams across the nation.”

The group ecomaine proposes to increase the recycling rate in Maine via a targeted pilot with dedicated educational outreach programming and single-sort recycling strategies in multi-family dwelling units, where access to participation traditionally has been limited. Outreach to residents and property owners, informational materials, social media, and increased access to recycling solutions will help to divert more recyclable material from Maine’s landfills.

Recycle Right North Country will increase residential recycling rates and decrease recycling contamination in thirty disadvantaged, rural, and low-income North Country, NH communities by providing education to both residents and solid waste facility operators. A nine-month campaign will consist of four objectives: Resident Outreach, In-Person Education, Train the Trainers

programming, and a culminating Recycle Right North Country Summit.

Nationally and locally, these recycling grants will help tackle consumer confusion and outdated recycling infrastructure, the largest barriers to proper recycling. Thanks to President Biden’s historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which was signed two years ago today, EPA was provided the largest recycling investment in 30 years that is funding these two new programs.

These grants reflect the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to tackling environmental justice and the climate crisis. Many communities with environmental justice concerns carry a disproportionate environmental and human health burden from waste disposal. As part of President Biden’s Justice40 Initiative, 74% of the funding allocated in the REO grants will benefit underserved and overburdened communities. Increasing recycling is also an important way to reduce pollution

because natural resource extraction and processing make up half of all global greenhouse gas emissions that drive the climate crisis. Recycling reduces the need to extract resources such as timber, water, and minerals for new products.

To learn more about the Recycling Education and Outreach funding, please visit: EPA’s Recipients and Selectees webpage.

America Recycles Day

November 15 marked both the 39th America Recycles Day, the second anniversary of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the second anniversary of EPA’s National Recycling Strategy. The National Recycling Strategy was the first in a series of EPA strategies devoted to building a circular economy – one that reduces material use, redesigns materials, products, and services to be less resource intensive, and recaptures “waste” as a resource to manufacture new materials and products.

To build upon the

goals of the recycling strategy, EPA released the Draft National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution for public comment in April. The Draft Strategy outlines steps to reduce pollution during production, improve management of plastic materials throughout product lifecycles, and encourage actions to keep plastics out of national waterways and the environment. Future strategies will address food waste and electronics.

EPA also recently announced over \$105 million for the selectees of the historic SWIFR grants for states and communities. These improvements will support a circular economy, help lower greenhouse gas emissions, as more efficient waste management systems are key to reducing energy consumption and the need for raw materials, while rebuilding our nation’s infrastructure, powered by well-paying jobs that don’t require four-year degrees.

Visit EPA’s website to learn more ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Art in Architecture unveiled at Madawaska Land Port of Entry



BOSTON, MA - The newest addition of the U.S. General Services Administration’s (GSA) Art in Architecture (AiA) Program, Stella, by Ralph Helmick Sculpture, has been installed at the new Madawaska, Maine Land Port of Entry.

The artwork - a five pointed star rooted in Acadian heritage stands 35 feet high and 17 feet across - can be seen from a distance by visitors when entering Madawaska, Maine, over the new international bridge onto Four Corners Crossing - the new street

named by Madawaska residents through a GSA contest.

Stella can also be experienced up close with access from Main Street, Mill Street and Four Corners Park. At night, the artwork is illuminated offering those crossing through the new port a commanding view. At the same time, the artwork’s lighting design adheres to the International Dark Sky Association’s (IDA) Dark-Sky Compliance to ensure thoughtfulness to the surrounding community and environment.

The five-pointed star design is commonly found on barns and homes around Aroostook County and was depicted on Maine’s original state flag designed in 1901.

“The GSA Art in Architecture program brings local, state and federal entities together with artists to create unique pieces that highlight the vibrancy of the community and federal architecture,” Francis Thomas, Regional Administrator for the New England, Northeast and Caribbean Regions, said.

The GSA AiA Pro-

gram oversees the commissioning of artworks for new federal facilities nationwide. Through the AiA program, GSA reserves one-half of one percent of the estimated construction cost of each new federal building to commission project artists. These artworks enhance the civic meaning of federal architecture and showcase the vibrancy of American visual arts. Together, the art and architecture of federal buildings create a lasting cultural legacy for the people of the United States.



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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

City of Lewiston hosts Holiday at the Plaza

LEWISTON, ME – The City of Lewiston announced today that the annual Holiday at the Plaza will take place on Sat., Dec. 2 (rain date Dec. 3), in Dufresne Plaza, 72 Lisbon Street, from 12 noon to 5:30 PM. Admission is free.

In the wake of the Oct. 25 tragedy, the City of Lewiston decided to proceed with the holiday event to continue to heal. It is the hope for the community to join in the Holi-

day At The Plaza to make memories and establish traditions.

The plaza and adjacent Lisbon Street will be filled with holiday spirit and activities galore complemented by musical entertainment, horse and wagon rides, and the Christmas Tree and Menorah lighting at 5:17 PM. Santa and Mrs. Claus will also be on site ready for photo ops and looking forward to letters children may write to them.

LEWISTON ME

Attendees can also ice skate (free skates available), visit with live reindeer, have fun in a giant snow globe, take a Kiddie Choo Choo ride, play games in the Kid-Zone, play Snow Throw, play Slap Hockey, or take selfies with photo op arctic animal props.

And, there will also be a fishing pond, where children can “fish” for a

toy, reminiscent of the beloved former Peck’s Department Store that countless residents have fond memories of. The Maine Nordiques mascot and the Lewiston High School Blue Devils mascot will also be mingling with the crowd.

At press time, performers booked are Maine Christmas Tree singer Ma-linda Liberty, the Maine

Music Society Chamber Singers, Bates College Crosstones, Josie French of the Monmouth Community Players, local performer Leslie Reed, the Lewiston High School Chamber Singers, and Rabbi Sruli Dresdner and Lisa Mayer from Temple Shalom.

If you are a shopper, we have you in mind as well, as several local crafters will be on site offering many diverse choices for your holiday shopping list.

Area shops and restaurants will also be open for shopping and tasty treats. Food trucks will be at the plaza as well. In addition, Rinck Advertising will host a mitten Christmas tree outside their business at 113 Lisbon Street, and attendees may grab a free pair.

Free parking will be available at the Oak Street Parking Garage, One Oak Street, Lewiston. For more information: www.lewistonmaine.gov/holiday2023

Health Affiliates Maine named Agency of the Year

ROCKPORT, ME – At the annual conference of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Maine Chapter, mental health and substance use agency, Health Affiliates Maine was recognized as the 2023 Social Work Agency of the Year. With more than 1,000 members, the NASW-Maine Chapter is the major professional social work organization in the state working to ensure high-quality social work services, by setting practice standards, enforcing a code of ethics, and working to improve state regulation of professional social workers. The conference and award ceremony took place on October 20 at the Samoset Resort where Maine’s behavioral health community gathered to celebrate the dedication and outstanding contributions of individual behavioral health professionals and organizations.

During the award ceremony, Chris McLaughlin, Executive Director of NASW Maine, shared, “Health Affiliates Maine serves more than 10,000 clients across Maine and has left an incredible mark in the behavioral health sphere of our state. Health Affiliates Maine’s extensive advocacy, training, and direct practice support to countless numbers of clinicians and case managers showcases a long-standing dedication and commitment to providing quality behavioral health supports

to the citizens of Maine.”

As further justification for the award, McLaughlin went on to highlight Health Affiliates Maine’s involvement in legislative efforts that impact the experience of behavioral health clients and the professionals that the agency serves. “The entire leadership team at Health Affiliates Maine was involved in countless hours of advocating for rates both at the legislative level and through the MaineCare rate study process. The organization provided testimony at several legislative hearings this year related to expanding behavioral healthcare in Maine and supporting the work of licensed clinical social workers across the state,” he said.

Health Affiliates Maine provides regular updates to more than 200 licensed clinical social workers keeping them informed of legislative efforts, updates, and changes while also calling them to act by providing testimony on important bills or initiatives. According to McLaughlin, the agency provides their affiliated clinicians and staff members with the tools and resources needed to be effective in social justice, equity, and dignity of every person. Health Affiliates Maine empowers their clients to advocate for the communities they want to live and work in and to be active participants in their care

and recovery.


The award comes after well over a decade of work aimed at reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and empowering behavioral health professionals to build independent practices. “We are thrilled to receive this award from NASW-Maine Chapter. It is a testament to the dedication, compassion, and hard work of our incredible team,” said Andrea Conley, Executive Director of Health Affiliates Maine. “This award reaffirms our mission to support Maine’s behavioral health professionals so that they may help individuals to enhance their own quality of life. We are grateful for the recognition and will continue to serve our communities with excellence and compassion.”



Chris McLaughlin, LCSW, Executive Director of NASW Maine presents Agency of the Year award to members of the Health Affiliates Maine team (L to R: Nina Bartlett, Director of Operations; Kristy Gelinas, Outpatient Therapy Program Director; Andrea Conley, Executive Director; Kate Marble, Case Management Program Director)


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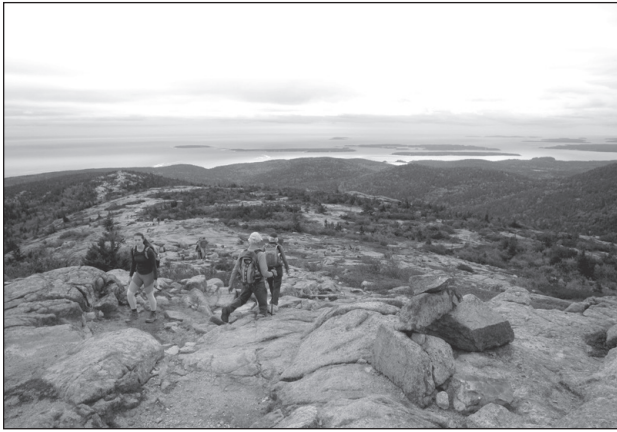
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Climbing a Cadillac of a Mountain



Spectacular views of eastern Penobscot Bay can be seen from South Ridge Trail on Cadillac Mountain



Hikers stop at Eagle's Crag on South Ridge Trail



Crowds embrace the views at the summit of Cadillac Mountain

Cadillac Mountain on Mount Desert Island is the source of many superlatives. At an elevation of 1,532 feet, it is the tallest mountain along the eastern seaboard of the United States. According to Wikipedia, the commanding prominence is the highest point within 25 miles of the shoreline of the North American continent between Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia and Mexican peaks south of the Texas border. During fall and winter, the crest of Cadillac is first to see the nation's sunrise.

Rugged majestic beauty and incredible views make Cadillac one of the premiere New England mountain hikes. However, for mountaineering purists there is a

dark side, a paved road to the top. After an arduous ascent, weary hikers are often greeted by a carnival-like atmosphere when completing the climb. If one wants to avoid the incongruous environment, a winter expedition when the road is closed is an alternative. An interesting snippet of Cadillac history, a cog railway took visitors to a hotel at the summit in the late 19th century. The hotel burned and the train was sold and transported to another consequential New England peak, Mount Washington.

Three major hiking routes lead to the crown of Cadillac: North and South Ridge Trails and Gorge Path. Numerous additional passageways

interconnect with these. All provide remarkable panoramic vistas of the 16 nearby granite-dominated peaks, surrounding islands, and the glaciated coastal landscape.

For many years, the Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society (PPCS) has held a fall gathering on Mount Desert Island. While the underlying purpose is to conduct its annual business meeting, the location is chosen because it offers a multitude of exceptional outdoor activities that include mountain hiking, biking, sea kayaking, flatwater paddling, canoe races, and more.

Again this year, the PPCS scheduled its annual meeting and several outdoor events on Mount Desert Island over a 3-day

period in early October. I announced a climb of Cadillac Mountain via the South Ridge Trail on the first day of activities.

A few days before the planned events, a complication arose. Tropical storm Phillippe was hurtling north off the coast of the eastern United States and predicted to make landfall in Maine on the day of my planned Cadillac Mountain hike. I rescheduled the outing for the day after the storm.

Phillippe was late arriving. Many of us found entertaining abbreviated activities to fill the time. I completed a bike ride on the Acadia National Park Carriage Roads and then my wife, Nancy, and I went for walks in Asticou Gardens and on the Carriage Roads. When Phillippe finally appeared, it struck with a vengeance. Heavy rains and winds caused power outages on much of the island.

By midmorning the following day, the rain had subsided. The hike was on.

Eight of us met at the South Ridge Trailhead on Route 3 near the entrance to Blackwoods

Campground. Although the rain had ended, thick clouds, dense fog, and strong winds lingered. My promised non-stop spectacular views during the hike did not appear likely. I was concerned about a possible mutiny.

Dressed for damp, windy weather, we departed on a wet trail in a heavily-wooded area. As we ascended, the clouds and fog diminished. Partial views were available as we progressed over ledges on Eagle's Crag. From this point on, most of the trail to the summit is an exposed granite ridgeline. When clear, the path offers marvelous views.

After about a mile, we dropped steeply to Featherbed, a tiny scenic mountain tarn. The gusty winds increased as we climbed precipitous ledges back onto the ridgeline. The skies partially cleared, the sun came out, and the views were spectacular.

Shortly after passing West Face Trail entering from the west, we advanced close to Cadillac Mountain Road. Angling northeasterly into a wooded area, the most

rugged terrain of the day was ahead. Soon emerging into the open where crowds of tourists were exploring the summit, we joined them to embrace the phenomenal vistas.

Our return on the South Ridge Trail was a delight. We benefited from glorious panoramic views of the islands of eastern Penobscot Bay for much of the descent. Despite an inauspicious beginning, the trek lived up to our high expectations.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* relates nine more mountain hikes including several winter ascents.

Ron Chase resides in Topsham. His latest book, "Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine" is available at www.northcountrypress.com/maine-al-fresco or in bookstores and through online retailers. His previous books are "The Great Mars Hill Bank Robbery" and "Mountains for Mortals - New England." Visit his website at www.ronchase-outdoors.com or he can be reached at ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net

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Shop local this holiday season

AUGUSTA, ME – The U.S. Small Business Administration Maine District Office is encouraging Mainers to shop small, shop local and dine local November 25th in celebration of Small Business Saturday® and during the holiday season. This year marks the 14th annual Small Business Saturday, held the day after “Black Friday” to help capture a larger piece of the holiday season consumer spending and help small businesses get patrons through their doors. With the holiday season approaching, Small Business Saturday is an opportunity to celebrate and support Maine’s many downtown and Main Street businesses. In recognition of Small Business Saturday, the Maine District Office visited businesses in Skowhegan and Waterville this week to talk with them about their plans for the holiday shopping season, and how the SBA can assist them in pursuing their plans.

Over the course of the day on November 16th,

the SBA visited businesses including Joe’s Flat Iron Café, the Bankery and Skowhegan Fleuriste, Key Appliance, Maine Grains, Crooked Face Creamery, and Thrifty Chic in Skowhegan along with representatives from the Skowhegan Chamber and Main Street Skowhegan. In Waterville, the group visited Friends Consignment, Main Street Provisions, Holy Cannoli, Loyal Biscuit Co., Old Soul Collective, and finished up with a stop at the Bixby Café.

“Every year our office visits businesses ahead of Small Business Saturday, and every year it is always amazing to hear about the great things going on in Maine’s downtowns and Main Streets. Whether it’s an entrepreneur kicking off the revitalization of their downtown, or a business supporting local non-profits, these stories remind us of the importance of shopping local,” said Diane Sturgeon, SBA’s District Director for Maine. “And if we happen to find some great gifts and treats for

ourselves along the way, that’s just a bonus,” she added.

“As local champions of Small Business Saturday and Skowhegan’s Shop Small Week, we were thrilled to host the SBA and showcase our locally owned businesses,” said Kristina Cannon, President & CEO of Main Street Skowhegan. “Skowhegan has such a collaborative business community, and so many of our small business owners have unique and heartwarming stories to tell about how they started their business and why they chose this great community. We loved being able to share those stories with representatives from the SBA, as it highlights how special Skowhegan truly is. We hope shoppers will come out during the holiday season—and always—to support our great local businesses.”

President Biden’s Investing in America economic agenda continues to deliver for small businesses and entrepreneurs across the country. Under

the Biden-Harris Administration, the United States has experienced a historic small business boom and the state of the economy is strong.

Founded by American Express® in 2010 and officially cosponsored by the SBA since 2011, Small Business Saturday is a day dedicated to supporting the diverse range of local small businesses that create jobs, help boost the economy, and enhance neighborhoods nationwide. According to American Express, the projected total reported spending among U.S. consumers who shopped at independent retailers and restaurants on Small Business Saturday last year hit a record high with an estimated \$17.9 billion, and 72 percent of shoppers strongly agree they will continue to shop small throughout the holiday season because of the impact it has on their local community.

To learn more about Small Business Saturday, visit the SBA’s dedicated website at www.sba.gov/saturday.



SBA New England Regional Advocate Louis Luchini (left) speaks with Skowhegan Chamber of Commerce CEO Maygan Dunlap (right) during the tour of downtown Skowhegan businesses



SBA Maine District Director Diane Sturgeon (right) speaks with Matt Dubois (left), owner of the Bankery and Skowhegan Fleuriste about the revitalization of Skowhegan’s downtown

Express Employment launches “No Franchise Fees”

OKLAHOMA CITY— Express Employment Professionals, the leading global staffing provider franchise, announced plans to expand the brand throughout the U.S. by introducing, for the second year, a limited-time development incentive for new franchise owners. Effective immediately, Express will waive the franchise fee in 40 target markets across the country, as opposed to the typical \$40,000 required in its previous sole offering.

This incentive comes at an impressive time for Express. The recent release of its 2022 Franchise Disclosure Document demonstrates the average annual sales for a franchise

in its first year is \$1.08* million, and continues to grow with \$6.4* million in average annual sales in its second year and \$7.1* million in its fifth year, which further solidifies the staffing company as a valuable investment opportunity for prospective franchisees.

As the number-one global staffing franchise, Express Employment Professionals is an essential part of the communities it serves. Express is currently seeking qualified entrepreneurs to help the brand grow its presence nationwide, and has identified the following local markets as part of this special incentive program:

- Augusta, ME
- Portland, ME

“With 2022 being

Express’ highest grossing year on record, the ongoing growth and success of the brand remains evident. We are excited to waive initial franchise-fees in these markets so new franchise owners can take advantage of this valuable investment opportunity in communities that would benefit from our proven approach to staffing,” said Vinny Provenzano, Vice President of Franchising at Express Employment Professionals. “Provided with multiple avenues of support to count on, Express enables franchise owners to be successful in fulfilling the brand’s mission of helping job seekers find work and helping businesses find qualified employees. We look forward

to jumpstarting these efforts in new areas with this attractive development incentive.”

At Express Employment Professionals, franchisees help pair job seekers in their local community with the jobs of their dreams – all while achieving their own. The staffing company boasts more than 860 franchise locations in five countries across the globe, employing 579,000 associates who help job seekers find the right job for their skills and qualifications. This past year, Express set new milestones with sales skyrocketing and awarded 45 franchise development agreements, including locations in British Columbia, Ontario, Texas, and

California.

Express’s long-term goal of putting a million people to work annually is at the heart of its company’s vision: to help as many people as possible find good jobs by helping as many clients as possible find good people. Express continues to be recognized as a leading global staffing provider and standout franchise concept. Most recently, the brand has received World-Class Franchise certification from the Franchise Research Institute for the 18th consecutive year. This year alone, Franchise Direct recognized Express as its 10th top franchise and Franchise Business Review ranked Express as one of its top franchises for 2023.

Express was also recently designated the top staffing franchise in Entrepreneur Magazine’s Franchise 500® list for the 12th consecutive year and the top 50 overall.

To learn more about franchise opportunities with Express Employment Professionals, contact Vinny Provenzano at vinny.provenzano@expresspros.com or www.expressfranchising.com.

* For territories open more than 24 months, average sales in 2022 were \$6,497,275. For territories open more than 60 months, average sales in 2022 were \$7,194,784. First-year offices averaged \$1,080,407 annual sales according to Item 19 in the Franchise Disclosure Document.

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Arts & Entertainment

New director of Bangor Symphony Orchestra announced



BANGOR, ME -- The Bangor Symphony Orchestra is delighted to announce the appointment of Renia Shterenberg as its new Executive Director, effective September 1, 2023.

Ms. Shterenberg brings a wealth of experi-

ence in arts administration and, as a former violinist, has a deep-rooted passion for classical music. In her role with the BSO, she will provide leadership and vision while assuming the role of the organization's strategic and operational leader, overseeing the

artistic, financial, and administrative aspects of the organization, continuing the BSO's long-term goals of artistic excellence, community engagement and educational outreach to ensure its continued success. In her current role as the General Manager of the Britt Festival Orchestra in Jacksonville, Oregon, she has been instrumental in the fiscal oversight of the orchestra's budget, and played a critical role in raising contributions which resulted in growth to the orchestra's dedicated Classical Annual Fund of over 33% in the first year of her tenure. Shterenberg also spearheaded grant-writing initiatives for both the orchestra and educational departments and has collaborated on programming and audience development plans that resulted in increased attendance, revenue, and recognition for the Britt Festival Orchestra.

In addition to her work at Britt, Shterenberg

served as the Executive Director of the Olmos Ensemble in San Antonio, Texas, since 2015. The ensemble is one of the leading chamber music groups in south Texas and has gained national recognition for its world-class performances, recordings, and live broadcasts. Under her stewardship, the organization has expanded its concert offerings and consistently operated with balanced or surplus budgets.

"Renia's profound love for symphonic music, combined with her background in both arts management and as a full-time professional violinist, makes her the ideal choice to steer the Bangor Symphony Orchestra into its next chapter," said Elizabeth Sutherland, President of the Bangor Symphony Orchestra's Board of Directors. "Her ability to manage both teams and

budgets, her deep understanding of classical music and the musicians, and her innovative audience development strategies are sure to reinforce the bright future ahead for our orchestra."

Shterenberg is eager to work in close collaboration with the BSO's Grammy award-winning Music Director, Lucas Richman, and the Board of Directors to continue enriching the Bangor community through high-quality musical performances and educational outreach.

"I am absolutely thrilled to have Renia join me in leading this storied organization" said Lucas Richman, Music Director and Conductor for the Bangor Symphony Orchestra. "Her track record and love for symphonic music and the arts make her an incredible choice as our new executive director.

I am really looking forward to working with her and I'm confident the BSO will thrive with her at the administrative helm."

"The Bangor Symphony Orchestra and Bangor Symphony Youth Orchestra are such deeply meaningful parts of the cultural fabric of this region, I am honored to join this great community and help to spread the joy, love and the unity of music," says Shterenberg. "I am truly inspired by the creative energy here, and I look forward to working and collaborating with long time Music Director Lucas Richman to support his artistic direction and creative vision for the orchestra."

Please join us in welcoming Renia Shterenberg to the Bangor Symphony Orchestra and Bangor Symphony Youth Orchestra family.

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MICHAEL G.

Girl Scouts empowers tomorrow's leaders



BANGOR, ME — Two hundred attendees took part in the 15th Annual Transforming Leadership Conference (TLC) hosted by Girl Scouts of Maine (GSME) at the University of Maine at Orono on November 4th. TLC is an opportunity for Girl Scout members and non-members alike to connect with one another, engage in hands-on activities, and build leadership skills through various 60-minute workshops led by topic experts.

"This year's 'Confidently You' themed Transforming Leadership Conference was the Girl Scout mission in action! Girls leading the way in every way. I left feeling so optimistic and confident that

these girls will certainly make the world a better place," says Donna Watson, Chair of the GSME Board of Directors.

The conference was open to all adults, Girl Scout members and non-members in grades 6-12, looking to broaden their interpersonal and knowledge-based skills. Over a dozen workshop topics ranged from subjects such as STEM, self-care, financial literacy, global issues, outdoor navigation, meditation, cooking, and so much more. At the conference, GSME also successfully trained 14 adults in Youth Mental Health First Aid, contributing to a total of 83 adults trained and certified by GSME in 2023.

During the adult workshop, "Raising Amazing Girls: Navigating Feelings," co-facilitator and GSME troop leader, Courtney Evans focused on teaching volunteers how to maneuver various emotional responses within troops and service units, especially within high stress environments.

"I cried at the Transforming Leadership Conference. After facilitating a lecture, which opened with checking in on everyone to see how they're doing after the horrifying events in the last week, we ended on journeying to joy. [...] What a beautiful, inspirational, and powerful event. Our leaders are amazing—and they are all

volunteers," says Evans.

For one attendee, Molly Graham, Transforming Leadership is a place for career path inspiration. Graham, now Girl Scout Adult who has attended the conference since she was in sixth grade, says she decided on her major and college only after attending a financial literacy workshop at the very same GSME event years ago.

"I found my passion here [...] My second time coming to the leadership conference, KeyBank offered a personal finance course and after talking to the presenter, I went home, looked into it, and really liked what I was reading. Now that's what I'm going to UMaine for,"



says Graham

To stay up to date with other exciting GSME events on our website, and don't forget to mark your calendar for next year's Transforming Leadership Conference.

Send all items for What's Going On to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.



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CMCC offering free Land Surveyor Technician 1 training

AUBURN, ME – The Center for Workforce and Professional Development at Central Maine Community College (CMCC) is partnering with area employers and service providers to recruit candidates interested in becoming qualified Land Surveyor Technicians. Information and registration for the free program is available at centralmaine.cc/workforceapply.

The Survey Technician I course provides preparatory training for a nationally recognized Land Survey Technician certification. The 12-hour course runs in-person on Thursdays, from November 30 – December 21, 2023 at 5:00 PM. The course will cover the setup for surveying stations, sequence stationing, data collection, recording observed angles, recording distances, utilizing point coding, and taking survey notes. The course will also

cover reading topographical maps, CAD software operations, and following safety guidelines in the field.

Students who successfully complete the course will earn a digital Land Survey Technician micro credential signifying successful course completion and be empowered to earn a nationally recognized land survey technician certification through Certified Survey Technician (CST). The average starting wage for a Land Surveyor in this region is \$31,400 with tremendous opportunity for employment.

This program is funded by Maine Jobs and Recovery Program (MJRP). The course materials and exam fee are also covered. Participants must be at least 18 years of age, possess a high school diploma, GED, or HiSet, and be a U.S. citizen and/

or authorized to work in the U.S. A criminal background check may be required. Additionally, candidates in MJRP-funded programs must be a dislocated, unemployed, or underemployed worker, or someone whose job has been adversely affected by COVID-19. Underemployed can be considered as working part-time but looking for full-time work or working in an occupation below one's skillset. Candidates are only eligible to participate

in one MJRP program being offered at any of the seven colleges in the Maine Community College System.

For more information or to register, please contact Central Maine Community College's Center for Workforce & Professional Development at workforcedevelopment@cmcc.edu or 207-755-5280.

Free Construction Education and Research project training offered

AUBURN, ME – The Center for Workforce and Professional Development at Central Maine Community College (CMCC) is partnering with area employers and service providers to recruit candidates interested in becoming qualified Project Supervisors. Information and registration for the free program is available at centralmaine.cc/workforceapply.

The 85-hour course runs in-person on Fridays, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, beginning December 1, 2023 until February 16, 2024. The National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Project Supervision training includes: Orientation to the Job, Human Relations & Problem Solving, Safety, Quality Control, Contract & Construction Documents, Document Control & Estimating, Planning & Scheduling, Resource Con-

trol and Cost Awareness.

Upon completion of each module, learners sit for that particular NCCER exam, which are nationally-recognized certifications and are included in the course. The average starting wage for a Project Supervisor in this region is \$53,000.

This training joins several other free trainings offered by Workforce and Professional Development including Computer Support Specialist featuring CompTIA IT (Information Technology) Fundamental+ and A+, CompTIA Security+, Certified Pharmacy Technician, and the Welding Academy.

This program is funded by Maine Jobs and Recovery Program (MJRP). The course materials and exam fee are also covered. Participants must be at least 18 years of age, possess a high school diploma, GED, or HiSet, and be a U.S. cit-

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For more information or to register, please contact Central Maine Community College's Center for Workforce & Professional Development at workforcedevelopment@cmcc.edu or 207-755-5280.

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New Beginnings funded for warming shelter in Lewiston

LEWISTON, ME -- New Beginnings is excited to announce that it has received a grant from Maine-Housing to operate a new 24-bed Emergency Overnight Warming Shelter for young adults, ages 18-24 in the Rowe Hall gymnasium at its existing 134 College Street location in Lewiston. The warming shelter will be open from December 3, 2023, through March 30, 2024, from 8 pm-8 am, seven days a week. Every evening, a light snack will be served at opening, and every morning, breakfast will be available for shelter guests before departure.

"Access to warm and safe shelter is a social determinant of health, and this grant opportunity expands New Beginnings' capacity to provide safety for young adults who are currently unsheltered, or staying in

unsafe locations," said New Beginnings' Board President Steven McDermott.

During the month of November, which is National Runaway and Homeless Youth Prevention Month, New Beginnings will continue the planning and implementation process. Note that this new seasonal warming shelter will be entirely separate and operated independently from New Beginnings' 12-bed Marian's Place Youth Shelter licensed for 24-hour care of 10-20 year olds which is has operated continuously in Lewiston since the 1980's.

The agency's primary goal while operating the Emergency Overnight Warming Shelter is to ensure the health and safety of its guests, our neighbors, and the community. To meet this goal, New Be-

ginnings has partnered with the City of Lewiston and will staff the shelter with appropriately trained staff, hire security professionals to monitor the property's exterior, and strengthen its collaborative partnerships with local providers to support guests.

"This warming shelter will meet a critical winter need for unhoused young adults in Lewiston who are not being adequately served by existing private adult homeless shelters," said Executive Director Chris Bicknell, "We look forward to serving our community as best we can this winter."

Donations of blankets, waterproof hats, jackets, gloves, boots, scarves, and similar items are also being accepted for our warming shelter guests at our 143 College St. Lewiston address.

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MaineCF raises \$1.8M for Lewiston recovery



LEWISTON, ME – Maine Community Foundation (MaineCF) announced today that it has raised \$1.8 million to date in response to the worst mass shooting in Maine’s history. At a press conference, the foundation said that more than \$1.3 million of the \$1.8 million total has been raised and designated by donors specifically to the Victims & Families portion of the fund, which will be directed by a local steering committee in the weeks and months ahead.

“MaineCF already

works with donors at all levels to collect, direct, and disperse the funds provided by so many generous people from all around the world,” said MaineCF President and CEO Deborah Ellwood. “This is something we can do to help – we are sad that it is needed, but we are glad to serve as an organization that can play a part in the continuum of care that will help Lewiston rise and thrive, following this traumatic time.”

The Lewiston-Auburn Area Response

Fund was created within 36 hours of the October 25 mass shootings that claimed the lives of 18 people, injured 13 more, and traumatized the Lewiston-Auburn community.

Tom Platz, Principal and CEO of Platz Associates, was announced as the Chair of the Victims & Families Fund’s steering committee. “As many of you know, Lewiston is a special place, and we have gathered a special group of community leaders and connected people in the networks impacted,” said Platz. “I am pleased to share that we will hold our first meeting this afternoon, and already, there is so much resolve and drive to help – it is a poignant honor to work with this group to help bring Lewis-

ton back from this terrible mark on our history.”

The steering committee is comprised of the following volunteers:

- Tom Platz (Chair), Platz Associates
- Deborah Anthoine, St. Mary’s Health System
- Kevin Bohlin, Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Marc Frenette, Trafton, Matzen, Belleau & Frenette, LLP
- Meg Greene, Brann & Isaacson
- Laura Lee, Maine Community Foundation
- Neil Kiely, Androscoggin Bank
- Steven Littleton, Central Maine Healthcare
- John Ochira, Maine Community Foundation
- Catherine Ryder, Tri-County Mental Health

Services

Joe Samaha, father of victim in Virginia Tech shooting

Sitara Sheikh, Maine Association for the Deaf

Cara Cookson, Special Liaison to the Office of the Attorney General

Jeff Dion is a nationally recognized fund administrator for victims of mass casualty events, is also working with MaineCF and the steering committee to ensure proper management of the fund.

“Sadly, there are now best practices for tragic events like the one in Lewiston,” said Dion. “The experiences of other communities have shown that it is more important to get this right than do it quickly. It is critically

important to build community consensus on the eligibility and distribution of these funds and ensure that everyone’s voice is heard. With that said, we anticipate that, while final distributions will take a matter of months, we are planning to make advance payments available to the injured and the families of the deceased in the coming weeks.”

Eligibility for the funds will include the families of people killed, those injured, and individuals who were present at the time of the shootings in Lewiston who may have experienced trauma.

Further information about MaineCF’s response to the Lewiston shootings is available at www.MaineCF.org/Lewiston.

Maine McDonald’s donates \$10K in gift cards to impacted families



LEWISTON, ME -- Maine McDonald’s Owner/Operators – multiple local business owners – are donating Thanksgiving meals to the families of the victims and those who were injured in the mass shooting.

In partnership with

Send all items for What’s Going On to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.

the United Way of Androscoggin County, the McDonald’s Owner/Operators will distribute a total of over \$10,000 in Hannaford gift cards this month to the affected families – offering their support with a warm meal this holiday.

Operator Taylor

Goble, who owns the McDonald’s restaurant in Lewiston says: “We are devastated and saddened by the tragic events that took place in our beloved State of Maine. This is our home, and our community is everything to us. On behalf of my fellow Maine operators,

this is a small way to show our families and neighbors they are not alone this Thanksgiving and that our community is here to support them.” Goble also recently donated 50% of sales during the dinner rush at his Windham, ME restaurant to the families impacted.

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DHHS recognizes Maine adoptive families

AUGUSTA, ME—The Maine Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) is recognizing November as National Adoption Month by highlighting the vital role that adoptive parents play in creating safe and stable homes for Maine children. In 2022, 413 children in Maine were adopted and provided

permanency by resource (foster), kin and adoptive parents.

The theme of National Adoption Month this year is "Empowering Youth: Finding Points of Connection," which emphasizes the importance of providing opportunities and services that connect youth to their backgrounds to support meaningful permanent relationships.

Connecting youth to their roots helps them to build a strong identity.

"During this season of gratitude, we give special thanks to those who open their homes to provide safe and loving families for Maine children," said DHHS Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew and OCFS Director Todd Landry. "Working with community partners, we're

connecting Maine people who want to adopt with children who will complete their families. We encourage anyone interested in adoption or fostering to take the next step and reach out to A Family for ME to learn more."

The majority of adoptive families have served as resource families for the children prior to adoption. In 2022, 41 percent of chil-

dren placed in foster care were placed with kin.

OCFS partners with A Family for ME to recruit new adoptive and resource families. A Family for ME provides prospective parents with information regarding licensing, training, and the process overall, including live information sessions. DHHS also partners with Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine

to provide ongoing support and resources for adoptive and resource families, and with Community Health and Counseling to provide liaison services and clinical support for adoptive and foster families.

Those interested in exploring adoption and fostering may contact A Family for ME at (844) 893-6311 or AFamilyforMeMaine.org.

Maine authors join together for Lewiston

OCEAN PARK, ME - Maine Authors for Lewiston, an informal group of more than 70 Maine authors, have banded together to support the victims of the recent tragedy in Lewiston. The group has organized a series of 10 book signings, all free and open to the public, so that people can purchase books and meet the authors. There will be fiction writers, children's book authors, non-fiction writers, and po-

ets among the participants. This is a wonderful opportunity for Maine book-lovers to support local authors, but, most importantly, to help our fellow Mainers as they begin to heal and recover.

All of the participating authors have agreed to donate all, or most, of their proceeds from these events to help the healing and recovery efforts in Lewiston. All are volunteering because they care.

The authors are scheduled to appear at the following venues in the coming days:

Curtis Memorial Library (Brunswick) - Saturday, November 25, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Ellsworth Public Library - Tuesday, November 28, 2023, 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Lewis T. Graves Memorial Public Library (Kennebunkport) - Tuesday, No-

vember 28, 2023, 2:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Baxter Memorial Library (Gorham) - Thursday, November 30, 2023, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Belfast Public Library (Belfast) - Saturday, December 2, 2023, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Patten Free Library (Bath) - Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

McArthur Public Li-

brary (Biddeford) - Thursday, December 7, 2023, 4:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Auburn Public Library - Saturday, December 9, 2023, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Camden Public Library - Thursday, December 14, 2023, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Lewiston Public Library - Saturday, December 16, 2023, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

The libraries have

generously donated space to the cause as they, too, support those impacted by the senseless tragedy. The Maine writing community is a small, but vibrant, part of Maine culture. Some writers have been personally impacted by the events in Lewiston, others simply care deeply about Maine and their fellow Mainers. Most do much of their writing in and about Maine. All want to help.

Over \$3.5M for Maine environmental justice projects

BOSTON, MA — Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced over \$3.5 million to fund six projects across Maine that advance environmental justice as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda. The organizations, which EPA has selected through its Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving Cooperative Agreement and Environmental Justice Government-to-Government programs, will use the funds to ensure disadvantaged communities that have historically suffered from underinvestment have access to clean air and water and climate resilience solutions in alignment with the Biden-Harris administration's Justice40 Initiative.

Thanks to President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act—the largest climate investment in U.S. history—this funding is a part of the largest investment ever announced under these two longstanding EPA programs. This is the first in a series of environmental justice grant announcements the agency will announce before the

end of the year.

"No President has invested more in environmental justice than President Biden, and under his leadership we're removing longstanding barriers and meaningfully collaborating with communities to build a healthier future for all," said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan. "Together, these community-driven projects will improve the health, equity, and resilience of communities while setting a blueprint for local solutions that can be applied across the nation."

"EPA strongly believes that historically disadvantaged and overburdened communities must have a place at the table as we work toward climate and environmental justice. Successful environmental justice programs are built with community collaboration, common goals, and community empowerment," said EPA New England Regional Administrator David Cash. "Across New England, these selectees are poised to catalyze lasting change and make a profound difference, bringing cleaner air and water to

their communities, combating climate change, creating green jobs, and improving environmental health. We eagerly anticipate the enduring impact the grants in Maine will have in our region, advancing our common goal of environmental justice."

"Mainers from the coast to the mountains are already experiencing the impacts of climate change. As the Gulf of Maine warms and more frequent extreme weather events affect our fisheries, farmers, and businesses, federal investments are critical to not only mitigating the climate crisis but making our communities more resilient to its impacts," said Congresswoman Chellie Pingree (D-Maine). "From strengthening working waterfronts and developing a clean energy workforce to improving environmental public health and advancing environmental justice, these significant investments made possible by the historic Inflation Reduction Act will go a long way in helping our overburdened communities and will also help Maine achieve our climate goals."

"Keeping Maine's environment healthy not only benefits our great outdoors, but also strengthens our local communities and businesses," said Congressman Golden (ME-02). "This set of EPA grants will boost severe weather resilience, reduce pollution, and improve food security for families all across the Second District."

The grants announced today deliver on President Biden's commitment to advance equity and justice throughout the United States. The two grant programs directly advance the President's transformational Justice40 initiative to deliver 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

The Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving (EJCPS) Program

EPA's EJCPS program provides financial assistance to eligible organizations working to address local environmental or public health issues in their communities. The program builds upon President

Biden's Executive Orders 13985 and 14008, creating a designation of funds exclusively for small nonprofit organizations, which are defined as having 5 or fewer full-time employees, thus ensuring that grant resources reach organizations of lower capacity that historically struggle to receive federal funding. Eleven of the organizations selected for EJCPS this year are small nonprofit organizations, receiving over \$1.6 million in total.

EPA EJCPS grant selections in Maine:

Gulf of Maine Research Institute in Portland, Maine has been selected to receive \$500,000 for building capacity for disadvantaged working waterfront communities to engage constructively in offshore wind development in the Gulf of Maine.

United Charitable has been selected to receive \$500,000 for supporting the ReTreeUS project in Auburn, Maine to work with 11 partner organizations to develop 8 food forests, providing benefits such as improvement of public and environmental health, while serving communities with high rates of food insecurity.

Maine People's Resource Center in Bangor, Maine has been selected to receive \$500,000 for a community-led program to invest in the workforce development necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants through clean energy projects.

Center for an Ecolo-

gy-Based Economy in the Western Maine Foothills Region has been selected to receive \$150,000 for increasing community resilience across municipalities, schools, and public land through education, planning and technical assistance.

Environmental Justice Government-to-Government (EJG2G)

EPA's EJG2G provides funding at the state, local, territorial, and Tribal level to support government activities in partnership with community-based organizations that lead to measurable environmental or public health impacts in communities disproportionately burdened by environmental harms.

EPA EJG2G grant selections within Maine's boundaries:

The Penobscot Indian Nation has been selected to receive \$1,000,000 for installing a minimum of 150 heat pumps in Tribal housing units and private housing units occupied by Tribal citizens with the greatest need – elderly, veterans, and families with young children.

Greater Portland Council of Governments has been selected to receive \$886,014 for assisting communities in creating and implementing action steps to respond to climate change with a special focus on addressing energy insecurity and climate adaptation for underserved, disadvantaged, and rural populations in Cumberland and York Counties in Maine.

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 VOTED BEST ATTORNEY FALES & FALES, P.A. (786-0606)	192 LISBON ST. LEWISTON	 VOTED BEST TATTOO STUDIO THE CREATIVE EDGE TATTOO & BODY PIERCING (241-0186)	747 MINOT AVE. AUBURN
 VOTED BEST MASSAGE THERAPY REVALATION MASSAGE (376-3233)	577 MAIN ST. LEWISTON	 VOTED BEST WAITSTAFF THE GRIDIRON RESTAURANT & PUB (777-6353)	1565 LISBON ST. LEWISTON
 VOTED BEST ROOFING CONTRACTOR DONALD DARLING & SONS ROOFING	(576-2585) SERVING L/A AREA	 VOTED BEST HAIR SALON ELITE BODY ESSENTIALS (946-2323)	697A. RTE. 202 GREENE
 VOTED BEST HEARING AID CENTER BELTONE NEW ENGLAND (Formerly Shapiro's) (777-1134)	1761 LISBON ST. LEWISTON	 VOTED BEST HAIR EXTENSIONIST CANDACE GRAY @ ELITE BODY ESSENTIALS (946-2323)	697A. RTE. 202 GREENE
 VOTED BEST POOL & SPA COMPANY RICK'S POOLS & SPAS (786-4256)	1057 SABATTUS ST. LEWISTON	 VOTED BEST BODY PIERCING THE CREATIVE EDGE TATTOO & BODY PIERCING (241-0186)	747 MINOT AVE. AUBURN
 VOTED BEST AUTO DEALERSHIP CRAFTS CARS (353-4361)	711 LISBON ST. LISBON FALLS	 VOTED BEST VALUE MEAL GIPPER'S SPORTS GRILL (786-0715)	120 CENTER ST. AUBURN
 VOTED BEST BUILDER BOUFFARD & McFARLAND BUILDERS (783-6224)	1543 HOTEL RD. AUBURN	 VOTED BEST HAIR COLORIST RILEE ELLIOTT @ THE BEAUTY BAR SALON & SPA (640-2277)	36 MILLETT DR. AUBURN
 VOTED BEST TOWING SERVICE LINDY'S AUTO REPAIR & SALES	(946-5650) 518 ROUTE 202 GREENE	 VOTED BEST MORTGAGE COMPANY GUILD MORTGAGE COMPANY (777-1551)	181 CENTER ST. AUBURN
 VOTED BEST DAY SPA REVALATION MASSAGE (376-3233)	577 MAIN ST. LEWISTON	 VOTED BEST GENERAL CONTRACTOR HYLAND CUSTOM INTERIOR & DESIGN, LLC (500-3882)	SERVING THE GREATER L/A AREA
 VOTED BEST AUTO BODY REPAIR ARMAND'S AUTO BODY, INC. (782-7113)	31 BLAKE ST. LEWISTON	 VOTED BEST FOOD TRUCK L/A TACO FOOD TRUCK (754-8431)	SERVING THE GREATER L/A AREA
 VOTED BEST NAIL SALON NAIL JUNKEE (344-5094)	250 CENTER ST. AUBURN	 VOTED BEST COMMUNITY BANK/CU MAINE FAMILY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION (783-2071)	555 SABATTUS ST. LEWISTON
 VOTED BEST TAKEOUT HEATHCO'S PIZZA AND VARIETY (689-9175)	375 COURT ST. AUBURN	 VOTED BEST BUTCHER SHOP/MEAT MARKET WARD'S NEIGHBORHOOD MARKET (784-6321)	208 PINE ST. LEWISTON
 VOTED BEST CHILD CARE/PRESCHOOL DONNA'S DAYCARE CENTER (784-6769)	977 SABATTUS ST. LEWISTON	 INDICATES NUMBER OF YEARS AS WINNER	

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MARKET SURVEYS OF AMERICA, AN INDEPENDENT SURVEY COMPANY, IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE WINNERS OF THE 29th ANNUAL GREATER LEWISTON/AUBURN'S BEST BUSINESSES FOR 2023 SURVEY. THE ABOVE WINNERS ARE THE RESULT OF TALLIED PUBLIC BALLOTS AND INTERNET VOTING FOR THE LEWISTON/AUBURN SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

DHHS distributing \$8.5M to Maine municipalities

AUGUSTA, ME—The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announced today that it will distribute \$8.5 million in one-time funding to municipalities and Tribal Nations next week for General Assistance (GA) costs. This funding, proposed by the Governor and enacted in the biennial budget by the Legislature, will help Maine cities, towns, and Tribal communities offset an historic increase in demand related to the COVID-19 pandemic, higher housing costs, and inflation for the cost of food and other necessities supported through this safety net program. The distribution amounts are based on each municipality's GA costs for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022.

"General Assistance is a critical temporary support for Maine people, but reforms are needed in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the program and to preserve its core mission of supporting basic needs for a short period,"

said DHHS Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew. "This funding will help Maine communities offset increased costs as we continue our work with partners to improve the program into the future."

The Department is committed to working with cities, towns, Tribes, and community partners on long-term reforms to sustain GA and return to its original mission of providing temporary support as a last resort. To that end, DHHS held listening sessions in the spring and summer and posted a report reflecting the views and recommendations gathered. It has initiated some reforms this fall, including work to streamline the GA application, improve training, and develop a better data collection system to improve program administration and reporting.

Developed as a program of last resort over 40 years ago, GA provides temporary assistance to cover basic needs when individuals are not eligi-

ble for other programs or those programs are insufficient. Assistance is provided through vouchers for basic needs such as food, housing, and medication. GA is administered by municipalities and Tribes and overseen by DHHS, which reimburses 70 percent of eligible costs. Maine is one of 25 states that operate a GA program.

Costs for GA increased three-fold between SFY 2019 and 2023, from \$13 million to \$43 million, including both the state and municipal shares. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and rising housing costs caused the temporary housing component of GA to increase over tenfold, from \$2 million in SFY 2019 to \$26 million in SFY 2023.

Some of this increase also relates to a policy change in recent years (PL 2019, Ch. 515), which expanded the definition of a "qualifying emergency" to include homelessness and allows reimbursement for costs exceeding regular

program maximums. The Mills Administration also implemented a 2015 law (PL 2015, Ch. 324), which extended GA to those lawfully present or pursuing a process for immigration relief.

To address needs in the current fiscal year through June 2024, the biennial budget passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Mills includes a one-time, lump-sum supplemental payment of \$8.5 million, to be allocated based on their past GA claims.

Of this, \$3 million is for unanticipated fiscal and operational costs of GA related to various programs that began in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency and are now ending. Its intent is to offset past costs as Maine transitions away from these emergency programs. DHHS also proposed budget language – not accepted by the Legislature -- that would have set maximum hotel costs equal to those

of other federal programs to help limit GA costs.

Another \$5.5 million is for forward-looking costs that address projected municipal and Tribal obligations. Municipalities and Tribes have flexibility in the use of the \$5.5 million and are encouraged to use the funds for purposes that reduce the need for GA in the first place, such as administrative and infrastructure costs for shelters, recovery residences, transitional and affordable housing options, and preventing loss of housing.

While DHHS received an extra \$7.5 million in the biennial budget for the State's share of GA costs, that funding will cover only recent, high GA costs. It will not sustain higher costs moving forward.

Based on SFY 2022 spending, the City of Portland is receiving \$7.46 million, or 88 percent of the total \$8.5 million. The next highest share is South Portland with \$156,000. A table with the full distribution is attached.

This is the second year in which the Mills Administration has provided additional support to municipalities and Tribes for GA. The SFY 2023 supplemental budget allocated \$10 million for the purpose of a one-time supplemental payment to help offset unanticipated fiscal and operational costs of GA during the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds were distributed during the week of August 15, 2022, proportionally based on municipalities' share of GA costs incurred during SFY 2021.

Under current law, municipalities pay out GA assistance to eligible individuals and bill the state for 70 percent of their costs. Municipalities set maximums overall and for different categories of support. Benefits are based on period of up to 30 days that starts with the initial date of application and individuals may reapply each month. Eligible applicants receive a maximum benefit amount per month based on their need and income.

Prepare for the winter season with these tips

PORTLAND, ME – Consolidated Communications, Inc. (NASDAQ: CNSL), a leading broadband and business communications provider, is ready for the upcoming winter season, taking steps to prepare response plans and other protocols in the event of severe weather in its service areas.

"Winter storms are a yearly occurrence in our community, and when severe weather impacts our customers, ensuring the reliability of services for our customers is our top priority," said Ryan Whitlock, senior vice president, operations at Consolidated. "We continually monitor weather patterns and have rigorous emergency response protocols for a va-

riety of potential challenges. Our teams stand ready to respond when needed. Connectivity is vital for our customers and our communities, and we're ready for winter weather."

Consolidated encourages customers and local residents to prepare as well, including:

Plan to stay warm, by winterizing your home making sure you can heat your home safely before winter; stay indoors if temperatures could cause frostbite and hypothermia.

Pay attention to weather reports and storm updates; research and sign up for local emergency warning systems.

Stock up on emergency supplies including bottled water, non-perishable



food, a battery-powered radio, flashlight, batteries and a first aid kit.

Review information from local resources, including Maine Emergency Management Agency.

Early season storms, when wet and heavy snowfall can cause damage to trees, typically have the potential to cause the most disruption to service. In the event of severe impacts from winter storms, Consolidated is prepared to address customer needs while ensuring their safety and

the safety of its employees. Consolidated teams prepare for the potential storms and severe weather that can impact service reliability and dependability, including by:

Ensuring all back-up power supplies and generators are fully operational;

Ensuring availability of fuel for both fleet and emergency generators during and after a storm;

Taking inventory of supplies, including copper and fiber cables, needed for plant and network res-

toration and supplementing where necessary;

Increasing staffing in areas projected to be impacted;

Placing emergency network supplies throughout company facilities; and

Double-checking all safety equipment and supplies that are in place.

During a storm or severe weather event, commercial power outages may interrupt Internet and network services, which are dependent on electricity. As electric service providers begin restoring power, they typically prioritize emergency responders and hospitals ahead of other customers. The company encourages customers to be prepared for interruptions in Internet service

that may be related to commercial power availability.

Recent upgrades to fiber-optic infrastructure in some areas will also be of great benefit amid cold and wet conditions. Fiber-optic cables are more resilient to rain and snow than copper cables since they transmit light signals instead of electrical signals. This resiliency is just one of the benefits that fiber optic infrastructure can provide to a community.

Send all items for What's Going On to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.



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 9-2 at 938 Long Plains Rd,
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Nov 25
BUXTON -- Tired of
 Turkey? Try our delicious
 Haddock Supper Buffet -
 Saturday, November 25,
 2023 - 5:00 pm at Living
 Waters Church, Parker Farm
 Road, Buxton. Suggested
 donation: \$10 Adult, \$5
 Child, \$20 Family. Please
 note: We will offer the op-
 tion of takeout containers
 for those who do not want
 to come inside for seating.
 Wearing of face masks for
 those who wish is optional.
 Hand sanitizer is available
 for those who wish to use it.

Nov 25
BATH -- 7:30 PM
 - 9:30 PM the Chocolate
 Church presents Pat Col-
 well & The Soul Sensations
 Motown Christmas (R&B,
 Holiday). Ticket Prices: \$20
 ADV | \$22 DOS. A beloved
 tradition here at the Choc-
 olate Church Arts Center!
 Pat Colwell and the Soul
 Sensations bring down the
 house with a powerful mix
 of Motown and Memphis
 soul music that's guaran-
 teed to get the party started.
 Get your tickets at chocol-
 atchurcharts.org

Nov 25
BAR MILLS -- ER-
 ICA BROWN AND THE
 BLUEGRASS CONNEC-
 TION - at Saco River The-
 atre, 29 Salmon Falls Road,
 Bar Mills, ME, Nov 25 at

Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

7:30 pm. Tickets: \$15 Gen-
 eral Admission at www.sacorivetheatre.org or call
 207-929-6473 for reserva-
 tions.

Nov 27
AUBURN -- Anime &
 Manga Club 4 PM-5 PM at
 Auburn Public Library. Dis-
 cuss and watch your favor-
 ite anime, or share manga
 with the rest of the group,
 while enjoying some tasty
 snacks.

Dec 1
LEWISTON -- from
 10:00am - 11:30am, the
 Lewiston Public Library
 Children's Department will
 be offering the program
 Little Footprints Keychain
 Keepsake. During this pro-
 gram, caregivers and their
 young children will be able
 to create a keepsake featur-
 ing the unique footprint of
 their child. The program is
 recommended for kids ages
 birth to 5 years and their
 caregivers. Siblings are also
 welcome to attend. Free. In
 person. All material will be
 provided.

Dec 2, Jan 6, Feb 3,
Mar 2, Apr 6, May 4
WESTBROOK --
 Prides Corner Commu-
 nity Church, 235 Pride
 St. Bean Supper \$10 per
 person: Two kinds of
 baked beans, mac and
 cheese, ham, coleslaw,
 bread and brownie. Eat in

at 5:00PM or Take Out from
 4:30-5:30PM. Call 207-
 415-9260 to reserve your
 individual meal today.

Dec 4
LEWISTON -- "The
 Lost Art of Tea Leaf Read-
 ing Workshop" in Callahan
 Hall on the third floor of
 the Lewiston Public Library
 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Dec 4
LISBON FALLS
 -- The Knights of Colum-
 bus Council 10019 will
 be sponsoring a dedicated
 blood drive in memory of
 Tracy Sautter on Decem-
 ber 4th at the parish hall
 of Holy Trinity church 67
 Frost Hill Avenue Lisbon
 Falls from 1:00 PM to 5:30
 PM to make an appointment
 please call 1-800-733-2767
 or visit RedCrossBlood.org
 and enter: HTC

No walk-ins accepted;
 must make an appointment.

Dec 6
LEWISTON -- Author
 talk with Clif Travers at the
 Lewiston Public Library at
 5:30 PM. The event listing
 can also be found on our
 website at <https://lplonline.org/events/author-clif-travers-to-speak-at-lpl/>

Dec 11
LEWISTON -- From
 3:30pm-5:00pm, the Lew-
 iston Public Library Chil-
 dren's Department will
 be offering the program

Kids' Collage Picture
 Frames. During this pro-
 gram, kids will be able to
 create a unique collage
 picture frame using a vari-
 ety of materials, including
 old books, graphic novels,
 wrapping paper, and embel-
 lishments. The program is
 recommended for kids ages
 6-12. Kids under 8 must be
 accompanied by a caregiv-
 er.

This activity is free,
 all materials will be provid-
 ed, and there is no registra-
 tion required.

Dec 11
LEWISTON -- Vis-
 it with Daniel Tiger at the
 Lewiston Public Library
 on Saturday, December 9th
 at 11am in Callahan Hall.
 This event is in partnership
 with Maine Public Radio
 and PBS Kids. Registration
 required on Eventbrite:
<https://tinyurl.com/2vd4k-ftu>
 If you previously regis-
 tered for the canceled event,
 you DO NOT need new
 tickets for this event. You
 are still registered. Free. In
 person.

Dec 13
LEWISTON -- Hiring
 Event on Wednesday, De-
 cember 13th from 10:00am-
 noon at the Lewiston Career
 Center, 5 Mollison Way,
 Lewiston. Bring your best
 self and speak with multi-
 ple employers all offering
 great job opportunities!
 This event is free and open
 to the public. For a list of
 participating employers,
 visit: <https://www.maine-careercenter.com/locations/>

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Jan 20, 21
**LEWISTON, TOP-
 SHAM** -- "Song & Dance
 Music from Around the
 World" Saturday, Jan. 20,
 2024, 7:00 p.m. - Franco
 Center, Lewiston; Sunday,
 Jan. 21, 2024, 2:30 p.m. -
 Orion Performing Arts Cen-
 ter, Topsham

Mar 23, 24
**LEWISTON, TOP-
 SHAM** -- "A New Artistic
 Mélange" - Emily Isaacson,
 Guest Conductor Saturday,
 Mar. 23, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
 - Franco Center, Lewiston;
 Sunday, Mar. 24, 2024, 2:30
 p.m. - Orion Performing
 Arts Center, Topsham

May 18, 19
**LEWISTON, TOP-
 SHAM** -- "Cityscape,
 Seascape, Soundscape"
 Saturday, May 18, 2024,
 7:00 p.m. - Franco Center,
 Lewiston ; Sunday, May
 19, 2024, 2:30 p.m. - Ori-
 on Performing Arts Center,
 Topsham

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 Children's Department

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 the Children's Department
 the first three Mondays of
 each month from 11:15am-
 12:30pm. The activities will
 be a Homeschool Video
 Game Social on March 6th,
 a Homeschool Lego Club
 and Curriculum Swap on
 March 13th, and a Homes-
 chool Storytime and Craft
 on March 20th.

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 meschool families with
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 istration is required. Contact
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Unity in the face of trauma



LEWISTON, ME – After a mass shooting on October 25th left 18 dead and 13 wounded in Lewiston, local community behavioral health organizations rallied together to support victims, families, first responders and affected community members. Tri-County Mental Health Services' (TCMHS) Project Support You (PSY) team, a unique ride-along partnership with the Lewiston Police Department and Auburn Police Department and EMS, responded with law enforcement to provide immediate support. As the search for the suspected perpetrator continued, TCMHS, Sweetser and other local officials collaborated with state and federal officials to activate a community support space at the Ramada Hotel and Conference Center. Here, community members were able to receive support and get information about ongoing resources to help manage the trauma following the mass shooting event. Supportive counseling, triage and certified disaster behavioral health response dogs from across the country came to Lewiston to offer comfort and furry snuggles to those grieving and stressed. "In times of trauma, it is important for

organizations to collaborate with our partners and offer immediate support to our community members," says TCMHS CEO Catherine R. Ryder. "No one person or organization can provide all the support that is needed and will continue to be needed for the months and years to come. We have all unified in the face of this trauma. While it is our sincere hope that no other community has to face such an event, I am heartened to know that our community providers can come together, face this challenge and be stronger together as we move toward healing and recovery."

Community Concepts, TCMHS, Sweetser and other community organizations have been working together with local and State officials to establish the Maine Resiliency Center, which opens Monday, November 13th at noon at 184 Main Street in Lewiston. As the support space at the Ramada closed on Sunday, October 29th, TCMHS provided support at Lewiston City Hall over the next week, as well as established community support space at the Lewiston Public Library and Auburn Public Library from Monday, November 6 through Thurs-

day, November 9. Therapy dogs provided needed comfort at City Hall and both libraries to children and community members looking for hope, healing, and recovery.

"These dogs have provided such comfort to so many who have come to the Ramada, City Hall or the libraries over these last few weeks," says TCMHS Chief Clinical Officer Colin O'Neill. "Some folks cannot find the words to express their feelings of insecurity, grief and trauma. But seeing the joy and comfort that these dogs provide to numerous individuals warms my heart each time. Interacting with these dogs is sometimes exactly what is needed to open a dialogue and get people the support they need."

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