

## Aroostook Partnership for Progress Implements Strategic Plan for Economic Growth

In a few short months, the Aroostook Partnership for Progress has grown from a new concept in economic development to a viable, functioning organization with 11 businesses and organizations acting as partners and champions for economic development. While the organization is still very young, a lot has already been accomplished. Economic development staff from MPSCo and NMDC have been hard at work implementing the APP strategic plan for economic development and are making progress towards accomplishing the vitally important goals of this initiative. The following sections breaks down some of the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan and details how APP has been working towards accomplishing them.

### Mission 1 Enhance Aroostook County's Economy

The primary mission of the Aroostook Partnership for Progress strikes at the heart of almost every issue affecting northern Maine today; the economy. It is a well known fact to all who live in Aroostook County that we are facing a dire situation most notably defined by the out-migration of our youngest and brightest residents. Why are they leaving in record numbers, leaving the County with a declining population that is older and less productive than ever before? The answer is simple. There are not enough quality employment opportunities in Aroostook County to retain and attract talented young people. They must look elsewhere to satisfy the basic need to pursue satisfying and rewarding careers.

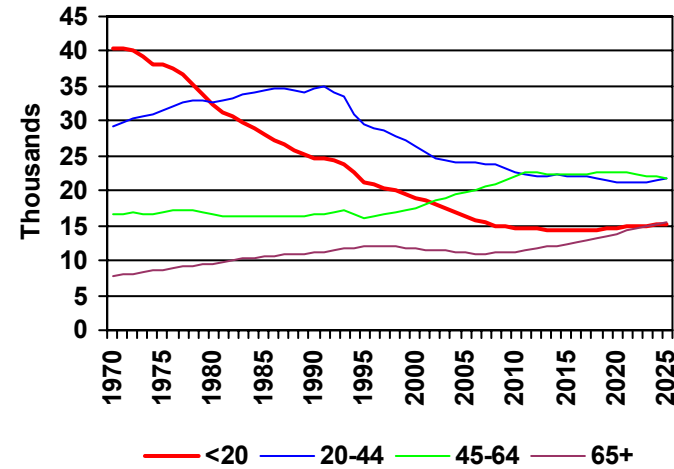
As a response to this problem, the Aroostook Partnership for Progress has set the following goal:

**Facilitate the creation of 1,500 net new jobs and attract at least \$50 million in new capital investments by 2007.**

### Progress is Already being Made!

APP's dedicated economic development practitioners are already working on projects to create economic growth in Aroostook County. A number of avenues are being pursued in order to accomplish the goal of creating jobs and capital investment. Activities already happening include:

- Pursuing Homeland Security initiatives. APP representatives have met with Senators Snowe and Collins, as well as Congressman Michaud and the



*By 2025, there will be more people living in Aroostook County over the age of 65 than under 20. Already, Aroostook has passed into a state of negative natural population growth; that is the number of births outnumber the deaths.*

*Aroostook needs to attract working families, to reverse this economic trend. APP will facilitate the creation of quality employment opportunities, that young workers are seeking.*

Governor, to present proposals for specific homeland security related projects. Our location and existing infrastructure are significant assets that make Aroostook County the ideal location for certain types of homeland security initiatives.

- Building on relationships with northern Europe. Northern Maine has strong historical ties with a number of countries in northern Europe; ties that have recently been strengthened during the World Cup Biathlon. APP is organizing a trade mission to capitalize on the success and publicity of the recent event.

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## Aroostook Partnership for Progress Creates Investment Exchange

Lack of adequate capital is the number one cause of business failure. In addition to time, effort and luck, it can take a great deal of money to transform a business concept from a great idea with potential to a viable and profitable business. Historically, business start-ups in Aroostook County have had limited access to investment capital. The Aroostook Partnership for Progress has identified this need and is developing the solution.

The Aroostook Investment Exchange (AIX) is an avenue to bring investors together with the entrepreneurs in Aroostook County to develop concepts into profitable businesses. Plugging this capital investment gap will enable businesses to utilize new technologies in Aroostook County and make the region more attractive to entrepreneurs.

### We Need Your Help

The Aroostook Partnership for Progress Initiative is already well underway, but there is a lot of work that needs to be done to accomplish our goals. To fully realize our mission of improving the economic condition of Aroostook County, everyone needs to get involved. As Larry Shaw, President & CEO of Maine Mutual Group says, "It is the cumulative creativity of those involved that make the Partnership so powerful."

To learn more about APP or to find out how you can get involved in this vitally important mission, contact the Partnership:

Aroostook Partnership for Progress  
c/o NMDC, PO Box 779  
Caribou, Main 04736-0779  
(207) 498-8731  
www.APPme.org

### Private Sector Support

*Continued from page 1.*

Barry D. McCrum, APP president, says "Combined with NMDC's and MPS Company's initial financial contributions, Katahdin Trust Company, Dead River Company, Maine Mutual Group and FA Peabody have all made significant contributions to the effort. Many other businesses and organizations have made investments bringing the total amount pledged to over \$650,000." Additional contributions are anticipated, bringing the final goal of \$1.5 million within sight.

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## Film Production in Aroostook County



Northern Maine has long been underutilized by the film and television production industry. The region is home to some of the most beautiful scenery in the world and offers a wide variety of landscapes and architectural styles. In addition to our beautiful lakes, forests and

farms, northern Maine is home to some of the friendliest and hardworking people in the world. These are real assets that can benefit the film and television production industry once the word gets out.

The Aroostook Partnership for Progress is already working with the Maine Film Office to see that northern Maine is well represented. We are also developing an inventory of assets to ease the process of working in the area and a marketing program to promote our tremendous assets. Film production in Aroostook County is an attainable goal that can increase investment in the region, provide jobs in the creative economy and promote the region to the rest of the world. We know how beautiful northern Maine is. Let's make sure the world knows, too!

### APP Uses Local Firm to Manage Web Content

The Aroostook Partnership for Progress has contracted with a local information services firm to design and manage its web site. Oak Leaf Systems, Inc. is a Maine-based information technology services company that provides networking and Internet solutions to clients throughout Maine.

The web site is now up and running and will be used as a way to disseminate information to members of the Partnership and others interested in the economy of northern Maine.

Visit the Partnership at: [www.APPme.org](http://www.APPme.org)

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# The Progress Reporter

Volume 1, Number 1—April 2, 2004

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Welcome to the first issue of The Progress Reporter, the Aroostook Partnership for Progress newsletter. APP will be periodically communicating with its members and other interested parties, through this newsletter and email notifications, regarding issues economic development in northern Maine and APP's progress towards meeting the goal of improving the economic conditions in the County. Going forward, we would like to use email as our primary delivery method.

If you would prefer to receive the Progress Reporter as an electronic newsletter, please send an email to: [econdev@mainepublicservice.com](mailto:econdev@mainepublicservice.com)

# The Progress Reporter

Volume 1, Number 1—April 2, 2004

## Aroostook Partnership for Progress Forms as Result of Empowerment Summit

Maine Public Service Company (MPSCo) and Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) have joined forces to create the Aroostook Partnership for Progress (APP). APP is an out-growth of the Rural Empowerment Summit, hosted by NMDC in January, 2003.



The Summit began the process of promoting the creation of a private-sector-led regional economic development collaborative effort to reverse the trends of out-migration by attracting new jobs and investment to the County. Maine Public Service Company accepted this challenge and worked with NMDC to form the Aroostook Partnership for Progress, becoming the Partnership's first "*private-sector champion*."

J. Nicholas Bayne, President and Chief Executive Officer of Maine Public Service Company, considers the Partnership initiative critical to the Regional economy. "We must focus on a regional approach to economic development, ensuring that our emphasis is on people prosperity versus place prosperity," says Bayne.

To implement the area's first comprehensive public-private regional economic development effort, the Partnership has set a \$1.5 million fund-raising goal to be raised from "private-sector champions" and leveraged with \$1.5 million from the public-sector.

To launch the Partnership effort Maine Public Service Company and the Northern Maine Development Commission have each committed \$100,000 to the initiative and will provide in-kind services. MPSCo will loan economic development staff to the four-year initiative and NMDC will act as the lead administrative entity.

## Aroostook Partnership for Progress Receives Support of Private Sector Champions

Fundraising activities have been extremely successful in the first few months of the Partnership. Private businesses have readily expressed their support and have answered the call to become Private Sector Champions.

See "Private Sector Support" on page 5.



Jon Prescott, President & CEO of Katahdin Trust Company presents a \$100,000 investment to the Aroostook Partnership for Progress. Participating in the presentation are: Bob Clark, Executive Director, Northern Maine Development Commission; Jon Prescott, President & CEO, Katahdin Trust Company; Barry McCrum, President, Aroostook Partnership for Progress and J. Nick Bayne, President & CEO, Maine Public Service Company.

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