

The Dispatch

Winter 2009

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2009—2010

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Vic Reinfelds

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Gail Chase

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MacGregor Stocco, Comm. Planner

Fred Snow, Community Planner

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Jayne Riley, Maine MEP

George Gervais – Maine DECD

Executive Director's Annual Report 2008

KVCOG membership stands at 53 municipalities. Eighty-four percent of the municipalities in the region with 96 percent of the 175,000 people who live here belong to KVCOG.

2008 Audit - The FY 2008 Annual Audit Report was presented at the December 10 Board of Directors meeting. The auditors report that KVCOG is solvent. Our revenue side continues to be healthy. We are under the same sort of fiscal pressure as our member municipalities are which is likely to mean that KVCOG revenues will decline in calendar 2009. Our expenses are under control. Our operating reserves meet the standards suggested by our auditors and are in line with our peer group of COG's. The FY 2008 Audit was "clean with no "exceptions".

Annual Membership Fee - KVCOG's General Assembly at the Annual Meeting September 17 voted to set the Annual Membership Fee payable

July 1, 2009 at the same amount for each member municipality as it is currently. Consequently, no member will pay more beginning July 1, 2009 that it paid this fiscal year, July 1, 2008. The decision to keep the fee flat in FY 2010 is in response to the significant financial pressure members are expected to experience going forward.

A Brief Review of Current Projects:

PLANNING: Chris Huck, MacGregor Stocco, Ross Nason and Fred Snow.

- **LAND USE ORDINANCE** drafting and technical assistance is in great demand. Working on projects in Monmouth, Winslow, Skowhegan,

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Thorndike, and Windsor. We are planning a day-long Forum on the Future in May 2. See details below.

- **COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING** continues. Working on plans for Skowhegan and Winthrop. Recently completed plans for China and Winslow.
- Supporting **expanded interlocal cooperation** – Belgrade Lakes Code Enforcement Project. Readfield Regional Public Works Project.
- Expanding **project development review** services. Now performing regular development reviews for Fayette and Skowhegan.
- 48 towns participated in one or more of the four **joint purchases** this year. We estimate that members saved over \$70,000 compared to buying outside KVCOG.
- **TRANSPORTATION PLANNING:** KVCOG is preparing a new corridor management plan for Route 202 from August westward. We are assisting the Skowhegan and Waterville areas in bicycle and pedestrian planning. In October, we will begin assisting DOT in prioritizing projects for its six-year transportation plan.
- **HHW Collections:** KVCOG managed 4 regional household hazardous waste

& pharmaceutical collections over the past year.

The four collection events served 119,214 residents in 25 participating municipalities.

As a result, 3,070 gallons and over 12,280 pounds of household hazardous waste were removed from our communities along with several 55 gallon drums filled with unwanted medications.

The medication collection involved KVCOG, area medical organizations, and state and local law enforcement. Maine Drug Enforcement Agency reported that the “street value” of these unwanted drugs was \$162,900.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION: Gail Chase

- EDA - Produced the 2008 CEDS Annual Report.
- Working with EDA’s EDR, Alan Brigham, on possible projects in Hartland and Pittsfield.

REVOLVING LOAN FUND – RLF: Vic Reinfelds

The RLF Committee met on October 9, 2008 to approve a \$175,000 loan to B&B Precise Products in Benton. EMDC approved a companion loan for \$175,000. The loan proceeds will be used to

purchase a VTL 2.0 Meter Turning Machine costing approximately \$350,000. These two loans are part of a \$3,197,914 project that also includes funds for additional equipment and a new facility funded by Bangor Savings Bank. The RLF Committee also met on November 13, 2008 to approve a \$75,000 loan for Dennison Lubricants, Inc. in Gardiner and a \$60,000 loan for JP Wentworth General Store in Brooks.

The City of Gardiner RLF Committee also approved a companion loan for \$75,000 for Dennison Lubricants, Inc. The total project cost is \$1,660,000 and includes a new building for \$1,300,000 funded by Citizens Bank.

Our loan to J P Wentworth General store has an \$110,000 companion loan for the construction of a small building funded by Damariscotta Bank & Trust Company. Loan demand is very light.

Other Projects of Particular Note:

- Kennebec River Initiative – Council formed, Bill Townsend of Skowhegan elected chair. Reach meetings set for February
- Affordable Housing – Regional Affordable Housing Coalition – Key component of economic development infrastructure, tied directly to

workforce development, and business attraction.

- K-16 Workforce project with MSAD 47 and 49 and Winslow. Partnership with CMGC & MMCC. Co-sponsored a Work Ready Project.
- Biz Attraction – KVCOG played a small but significant role in the decision by Notify MD to open a new, corporate, in-bound call center in Winthrop. The company will

locate up to 250 jobs in Winthrop. Continue to be involved with another ongoing business attraction effort in the region with Maine and Company.

- FairPoint Communications – “Launched” iwantmybroadbandfromfairpoint.com/kvcoq on November 10. This site is FairPoint’s Demand Aggregation Tool. By entering information, FairPoint can “map” the demand for broadband

services and use this information to plan the expansion of its network.

KVCOG is working with FairPoint’s consultant, Vital Economy, to use its Change Management tool to explore options for developing a regional strategic economic development model.

- Fairfield – Will facilitate strategic planning effort in Fairfield starting in January.

Revolving Loan Fund

Vic Reinfelds, RLF Director

Surviving the Recession

Everyone seems to be in agreement that we are in a recession that might last through 2009, or perhaps longer. A wide variety of businesses are experiencing a slowdown in sales and orders. Consumers are not spending much, and big-ticket sales like autos and real estate are at their lowest levels in decades. Many businesses are experiencing cash flow problems, and in some cases, may not be able to make regular loan payments and also pay other bills. If I have just described your business, and you have not already talked to your lender, now is the time to make that appointment. Lenders need to know how your business is doing in order to help you when the need arises. If necessary, a lender may be able to adjust payment amounts and due dates, and in some cases defer payments completely.

Now is also a good time to make critical adjustments to your business to conserve cash flow. Trim overhead where possible, reduce hours if necessary, and curtail those operations that are a major drain of cash. Making these changes can be painful, however, they may make the difference between survival and shut down. If you do not have a budget and a business plan, now is the time to get them done and to use them. A sound budget will alert you

to cash flow problems in sufficient time to enable you to make decisive adjustments to your business. A business plan is your roadmap to the future, and should be updated as your circumstances change.

Now is also a good time to make plans for the future. Interest rates are at their lowest level in 50 years. Commercial real estate is in some cases selling significantly below today’s construction costs. Used machinery and equipment are now at bargain prices. Lenders have money to lend to businesses that are well managed, are not heavily leveraged, have a history of profitability, and a good credit record. The spectrum of available lenders has increased significantly, and now, in addition to commercial banks, includes the U.S. Small Business Administration, Finance Authority of Maine, and the many economic development lenders like KVCOG. KVCOG partners with other lenders to fund projects that will create jobs and stimulate economic development in Somerset, Kennebec and Western Waldo Counties. Please contact Vic Reinfelds at 453-4258 extension 13 to discuss your business plans and to learn more about the financial resources available to you.

Do you have unwanted or expired prescription medicine in your home?

Ross Nason, Environmental Planner

Let KVCOG assist you and your residents year-round!

KVCOG is partnering with Safe Medicine Disposal for ME, a state-wide service providing free-to-user mailers for the return of unwanted meds. Simply stop by KVCOG to pick up your free, postage paid envelopes!

It is important to get rid of your unwanted meds safely. This can help prevent:

- Accidental poisoning of children, grandchildren, and pets.
- Intentional misuse.
- Health problems from taking the wrong medicine, too much medicine, or medicine too old to work.
- Theft of the medicine by drug users who may break into your home. (Law enforcement data shows that prescription drugs are the number one target of home invaders)

You can get rid of your unwanted or expired meds in a way that keeps people safe and helps to keep these drugs out of Maine's water supply and the environment.

Unused medicine is:

An Environmental Health Hazard

- Over half of Americans dispose of unwanted meds in the trash, one-third put it down the sink or toilet.
- Medicine then enters the water through disposal down a drain or from the leaching or leaking of the drugs from septic tanks and landfills.
- Over 80 pharmaceuticals of various drug classes have been found in treated sewage, surface water, and ground water throughout the country.
- Studies have found that exposure to medicine in water has been linked to serious reproductive side effects in fish, and the full effect on humans is currently unknown.

For more information, contact Ross Nason, Environmental Planner @ 453-4258, Ext 24 or email rmason@kvkog.org

Regional Growth Numbers

Chris Huck, Planning Director

Every year, KVCOG collects information from Municipal Valuation Returns for the purpose of estimating new housing construction in our towns. We then use this information to update our population estimates.

The housing data for 2008 has now been compiled (except for half a dozen towns that have not filed their MVR's yet.) Between April, 2007 and April, 2008, the KVCOG region had 658 new year-round homes established. This resulted in an estimated population increase of approximately 600. New homes outpace population growth because of the continuing diminishing of household sizes.

The 658 units represent the fewest new homes per year since 2002. Somerset County is about steady, Waldo County dropped a bit, but Kennebec County saw a substantial decline in new housing. This is not to say that there are not still fast-growing towns. Sidney was at its customary place on top of the heap, with 64 new homes in one year, but closely followed by Litchfield, with 60. Sidney is now estimated to have added over 1,000 in population since the 2000 census.

Kennebec County is estimated to be growing at an annual rate of 2/3 of one percent, or 6.6 percent per ten years. Somerset County is

slightly slower, at ½ percent per year (5 percent over ten years.) In Kennebec County, 14 towns are growing faster than 1 percent per year, with four towns growing at better than 2 percent and three towns losing population. In Somerset County, eight towns are growing faster than 1 percent per year, and four are losing.

The updated population and housing numbers, along with recent updates to vital statistics and unemployment rates, have been transferred to KVCOG's Community Profiles. The Community Profiles are posted on the KVCOG website, individually under the town names from the pull down menu (bottom left of the home page).

Expanded Services at KVCOG

Chris Huck, Planning Director

KVCOG, founded in 1967, is the “go-to” place for municipalities seeking technical assistance with economic development projects, plans and ordinances, and grant-writing. But we have a lot more going on than that. A city or town that wants to “think outside the box” or just move in a new direction should consider some of the following KVCOG services:

- **Facilitators:** KVCOG can assist towns in strategic planning efforts, and has facilitated local discussions ranging from community visioning to organizational evaluations to inter-municipal program development.
- **Hazardous Waste Collections:** KVCOG now organizes and administers Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days throughout the region. The collections have expanded to include prescription drug drop-offs. Though these events are based in central locations for efficiency sake, one of them is close enough that virtually every town in the region can allow its citizens to participate.
- **Computer Mapping:** KVCOG has greatly expanded its GIS mapping capabilities. We can provide data layers or physical maps for a broad range of applications, from shoreland zoning to photo interpretations to transportation analysis.
- **Efficiency Studies:** Towns are rapidly learning that the traditional way of doing things is not always the cheapest. KVCOG recently performed an analysis of solid waste costs for a town, resulting in savings of several thousand dollars. Route planning

in progress for the City of Waterville (trash, snow plowing, and school busses) could result in ten percent or better reductions in fuel and labor costs.

- **Redevelopment:** Almost every town has an abandoned or unused commercial site where the real or perceived threat of contamination is getting in the way of re-use. KVCOG provides access to professional services to evaluate and certify the site through the federal Brownfields Program.
- **Access to Answers:** Sometimes, local boards do not need technical assistance as much as they just need a good, clear discussion of the issues they face and potential solutions. KVCOG staff has written on many of the most vexing of these, and has prepared guidebooks or models on developing “User-Friendly Ordinances”, writing standards for commercial parking lots and traffic impacts, cell towers, and open space subdivisions. KVCOG is currently under contract with SPO to develop the statewide model ordinance for regulation of both commercial and home wind generation facilities.
- **Development Review:** KVCOG has long-term agreements with Skowhegan and Fayette to assist those towns with evaluation of development applications ranging from shoreland zoning permits to major commercial developments. We are also available, on a consulting basis, to assist any planning board or BOA with any large or complex applications, usually at the applicant's expense.

Planning Day

MacGregor Stocco, Community Planner

Forum on the Future

Saturday May 2, 2009

REM Center, Downtown Waterville

Mark your calendars! On May 2, KVCOG will host a “Forum on the Future.” This short-day conference will be your opportunity to engage in a series of facilitated discussions on emerging issues bound to directly affect your town’s future.

Beginning at 8 AM, the morning will consist of a series of topical discussions along two tracks: “Regionalism” and “Energy and the Economy.” In the Regionalism track, panelists will identify ways in which municipalities can take charge of their futures by thinking beyond political boundaries. Panelists will innovative regional projects – some in our own backyard – and participants will be discussing how they can implement or adapt them to our own situations.

In the Energy and the Economy track, sessions will focus on how energy issues affect cities and towns. From energy development, such as wind power and utility corridors, to energy conservation, ranging from green buildings to more efficient transportation systems, expert panelists will lead discussions on the

opportunities and concerns we face. We will also discuss specific actions towns can take now to reduce energy costs and environmental impacts while fostering growth.

A single session after lunch is reserved for a hands-on practical application of our morning conversations. In concurrent workshops, participants can choose to focus on Rural community issues or Urban/Downtown issues. This will be your chance to do a “reality check” on the applicability of the tools discussed in the morning and identify specific actions that you can take to prepare for the future.

The Forum on the Future will take place in the REM Center in downtown Waterville, on Saturday May 2, 2009. We will mail out a specific agenda, including registration information, closer to the event date.

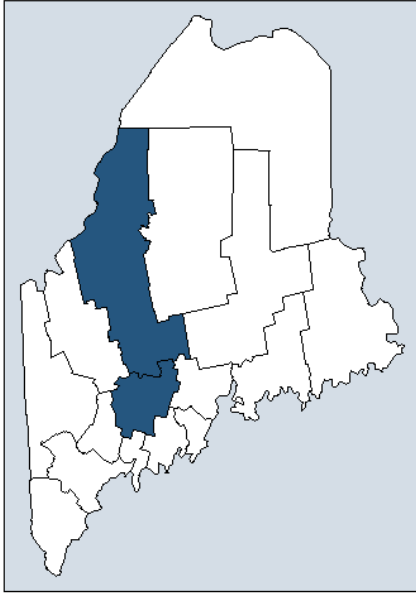
Please contact Community Planner, MacGregor Stocco, AICP for more information: mstocco@kvkog.org or 453-4258 x26.

Maine DOT Releases draft of Six Year Plan

The Maine DOT released a draft list of projects proposed for inclusion in the next three Maine biennial (2 year) budgets. The report contains a town-by-town listing of highway and non-highway projects that are highest on the MDOT priority list. While this plan is no guarantee that the projects will go forward, the listings are divided into “Part A” – those projects for which funding is anticipated at current levels – and “Part B” – projects that could proceed if higher funding becomes available. You can access the online version of the plan at <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/planning-documents/pdf/Six-Year%20combined%202010-2015a.pdf>.

This plan is in draft form and might still be open to change, although the public comment period closed on January 15th. The Part A priorities were all developed on a technical basis, but Part B projects include some based on locally-recognized need, and KVCOG had some input on their inclusion.

KVCOG



**Serving municipalities
and businesses in
Kennebec, Somerset,
and Western Waldo
Counties**

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Member Communities Make it Happen

Member municipalities are the backbone of KVCOG. Membership fees provide matching funds for over \$200,000 of Federal and State grants; make our website, newsletter, data collection, analysis, and other vital services possible; and allow flexibility in creating new programs to respond to specific local needs.

Dedicated municipal officials serve on KVCOG's General Assembly and Executive Board, guiding policies and programs.