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2010

## 2009-2010 Piscataquis County Cooperative Extension Annual Report

Donna Coffin

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## *Piscataquis County Highlights*



PHOTO BY Susan Henner, UMaine Extension

# Making a Difference

For more than 90 years, University of Maine Cooperative Extension has worked with Maine volunteers to offer community-driven, research-based educational programs in every county. Our annual report features highlights of recent accomplishments and the difference we make in the lives of Maine citizens and their communities.



PHOTO BY EDWIN REMSBERG, USDA

University of Maine Cooperative Extension's successful educational programs result from a federal, state and county government partnership. Since 1919, when the Maine Legislature passed the County Extension Act\*, the University of Maine has been in all Maine communities with a county office whose operations are funded by county government. Our educational programs anticipate and respond to local and state needs and issues. We also communicate those issues and opportunities to UMaine faculty to influence their research and development plans.

*A sampling of our educational program areas:*

- Agriculture, Business & Community
- Food Safety & Food Preservation
- Gardening & Horticulture
- Family Resource Management
- Consumer Energy Education
- 4-H & Youth
- Small and Home Based Business

## *Piscataquis County Highlights*

### **4-H in MSAD #41 School District Expands**

**Barb Baker**, Extension Educator and **Linda Whitten**, 4-H Aide started a collaboration with the School Board and Administration of Milo (MSAD #41), the Three Rivers Kiwanis, the Cultural Heritage Eco-tourism group (CHET), AmeriCorps, University of Maine, Sid Stutzman and the Doughty Hill Band and the Town of Milo Recreation Director as a core advisory group to expand learning and enrichment opportunities for youth.

A part of the collaboration's goals include encouraging active citizenship and cultural heritage learning through youth community action. To help meet this goal an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer working through a partnership between the University of Maine and Milo this past year has helped students see their potential, helped residents utilize new technology to the fullest and helped promote Milo through the Internet.

AmeriCorps VISTA is a national service program designed to fight poverty and raise aspirations. **Andrew Barnes**, the local AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer has tried to capture the unique stories of people in the area that will help further the area's economic development. Barnes has helped raise college aspirations of youth, enrich the community through documenting the cultural uniqueness and assisted in developing the area's natural resources.



PHOTO BY Walter Boomsma, Extension Executive Committee

The existing UMaine Extension 4-H after school program in Milo was expanded to LaGrange and Brownville third through sixth grades through Barnes' efforts. The youth had an opportunity to practice their computer skills through online publishing, photography and blogging. He assisted Penquis Valley High School students with information on the college application process by enlisting the help of PVHS students who were currently in college or recently graduated and in the area.

This summer youth in the Milo / Brownville area participated in the 4-H Leaning Garden and 4-H summer day program at PVHS through the efforts of Barnes who

coordinated with the Town of Milo, 4-H Volunteers, local businesses and civic organizations.

### Engaging Youth, Serving Community

**Barb Baker** received \$50,000 in funding for the Engaging Youth, Serving Community (EYSC) to train youth and adults how to hold a community forum where local issues are identified in five rural Maine communities. Teams of youth and adults will plan and carry out community development projects by the end of December with the \$2,000 seed grant funds provided by the grant. The University Core Team is from Milo – teacher: **Katie Joyner-Robertson**, students: **Shelby Patten** and **Alex Drummond** and **Barb Baker** went to the National 4-H Conference Center in Washington, D.C. for training in February.

### Piscataquis 4-H'er Receives Collage Scholarship

**Anne Witick** from Abbot was awarded a post-secondary college scholarship from the Pine Tree State 4-H Foundation. The Pine Tree State 4-H Foundation is a non-profit organization supporting 4-H youth development programming in Maine. The Foundation's Post-Secondary Education Scholarships are awarded based on a combination of demonstrated academic and 4-H excellence.

Anne is a high school senior at Piscataquis Community High School in Guilford, whose goal is to attend college to earn a degree in mathematics. She has been actively involved in the Piscataquis County 4-H program for the past twelve years. Anne represented Piscataquis County and the Maine 4-H Program at the 2008 Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF) Program, a 4-H summer civic education and leadership program for high school youth held at the National 4-H Youth Conference Center in Chevy Chase, Md.

Anne Witick was officially named Piscataquis Community High School's 2010 Valedictorian.

*"I cannot express how the 4-H EDGE and CWF programs so amazingly changed my life for the better. Both programs, but especially CWF, changed my view of the world. Before I traveled to Washington, D.C., I never realized how big cities could be nor how much influence and work our government owns."*

From Anne Witick's 4-H Story

### Family Resource Management

Client calls & emails have been through the statewide electronic Nutrition, Food Safety Call Team network for **Jane Conroy**. Questions have been answered on such topics as: food storage, food preservation (canners, times and procedures), storing of ginger root. There have been general questions and calls regarding work with individuals and budgeting. In the coming year plans include Home Budgeting Clinics to assist county residents to manage their money better.

Winter sessions for the Caring for Kids program taught by **Jane Conroy** prepared 12 area youth to babysit for families. Safety and child development topics were included as well as developing a resume and managing money.

She continues to work with the county food cupboards to access federal funds through FEMA and ARRA sources. An extraordinary amount of paper work is needed to continue to receive these funds to help the less fortunate in our county. In the past year, Extension has assisted in getting \$13,700 for our county food cupboards who have distributed food to an estimated 450 people in their towns.

**Jane Conroy, Donna Coffin** and **Anita Libby-Kain** have been assisting the Healthy Maine Partnership program and Piscataquis Public Health Council in developing and implementing a \$3,500 SNAP-ed project. Currently there is a needs assessment being conducted of providers and consumers of nutrition information through the food cupboards.

The National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) Conference comes to Maine and will feature gifts from Piscataquis County. **Jane Conroy** has been working on the NEAFCS conference planning committee that will be coming to Portland this September. Each of the over 750 registrants, will be getting a piece of Piscataquis County in the form of gifts featuring two small businesses: Mainely Soaps in Greenville and Moonlight Adornments in Dover-Foxcroft.



PHOTO BY EDWIN REMSBERG, USDA

### Eat Well Nutrition Program

**Donna Bucher**, Regional Supervisor reports that **Sue Henner** and **Anita Libby-Kain**, Eat Well Nutrition Associates, have been busy with nutrition programming. For the past program year, **Sue and Anita** saw an impressive number of youth and adults. A total of 1055 youth participated in groups that were organized by the Eat Well program. These youth were seen in schools both during the regular school day as well as in after school programs. They were taught during summer nutrition "camps" and in Head Start programs. **Anita and Sue** work creatively to get the nutrition message out to the youth of Piscataquis County. It is important to note that they work with youth from the following towns: Dover-Foxcroft, Milo, Brownville, Dexter, Atkinson, Derby, Sebec, Abbot, Cambridge (Somerset County

but attending school in SAD 4), Wellington, Parkman, Guilford, Willimantic, Greenville, and Shirley.

Besides the youth in the county, 60 adults were enrolled in the program to receive nutrition education. Education was provided through home visits, group education and through the Eat Well by Mail program. These programs were offered throughout the county with participants in the towns of Brownville, Dover-Foxcroft, Atkinson, Sebec, Milo, Parkman, Guilford, Sangerville, Abbot and Greenville being served. The adults may be heads of households with young children or they may be participating in meal sites with senior citizens. Sue and Anita have the ability to work with limited income individuals and families throughout the life span.

### UMaine Cooperative Extension Helps Home Gardeners Achieve Success!

Remember the Ghostbusters theme song, “Ghostbusters,” by Ray Parker Jr., “If there’s something strange in your neighborhood, who you gonna call? Ghostbusters! If there’s something weird and it don’t look good, who you gonna call? Ghostbusters!”

“Summer is the time of year when that tune runs through my head but with different lyrics,” says **Hannah Todd**. “If there’s something strange in your yard or garden, who you gonna call? Cooperative Extension! If there’s something diseased or being eaten, who you gonna call? Cooperative Extension! We see lots of traditional problems coming into the office, but there are always some unusual specimens that need explanation, too!”

Environmental problems are very prevalent in the spring/early summer because the weather is volatile, plants are young and sensitive to mechanical and environmental damage and there is a certain amount of stress during the transplanting process.



PHOTO BY Donna Coffin, UMaine Extension

Gardeners have noticed that insects love vegetables as much as humans do. Sometimes we can share some of the bounty with them, but above a certain threshold, control methods should be used. Follow Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices to protect your garden from insects like cutworms, striped cucumber beetle, aphids, flea beetles,

squash bug etc. Along with the vegetable insect pests, we have been seeing a lot of ornamental insect pests.

Insects worth mentioning include: Rose Chafer (*Macrodactylus subspinosus*), Blister Beetles (family Meloidae), Larder Beetles (*Dermestes lardarius*), and Whitespotted Sawyers (*Monochamus scutellatus*). Blister Beetles have been brought into the office but they really are an insect that should not be handled due to a chemical they secrete when “crunched”. As their name indicates, they can cause blisters on the skin. Blister Beetles are a general feeder, which means they will feed on vegetable plants as well as ornamentals.

“Knock on wood,” but so far there have not been very many plant disease samples that have come into the office. Fungus favor wet environment so the hot, dry weather helps to keep diseases suppressed. So far, Late Blight (*Phytophthora infestans*), has not been a problem this year, but that could change if we get a spell of wet weather.

It takes a lifetime to learn the plants, insects, and diseases you may find in the yard/garden, so if you find a “sample” of interest please remember the tune from above, and... call Cooperative Extension!

### Master Gardening Program

Gardeners in Piscataquis County completed the popular UMaine Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Volunteers Training course last winter. The Master Gardener program provides participants with more than 40-hours of in-depth training in the art and science of horticulture. Trainees receive current, research-based information from Extension Educators and Specialists under the direction of **Hannah Todd**.



PHOTO BY EDWIN REMSBERG, USDA

Congratulations go to the following participants for their completion of the Master Gardener Volunteers Training Program: **Sarah Burgess**, Sangerville, **Lynn Lubas**, Dover-Foxcroft, **Stacey Lynn**, Dover-Foxcroft, **Karen Mass**, Dover-Foxcroft, **Deborah Parker**, Dover-Foxcroft, **Steve Preble**, Dover-Foxcroft, **Pamela Pultz**, Sebec, and **Judy Raymond**, Dover-Foxcroft.

In return, these trained Master Gardeners volunteer their time and expertise in many diverse ways to benefit the community through programs and activities. As part of a nationwide Cooperative Extension effort, Master Gardeners are recognized as well-trained practitioners who serve and beautify their communities. This past year our Master Gardener Volunteers have given over 190 hours of their time valued at \$3,000, helping others in their communities with gardening questions.

If you would like a “garden expert” for an educational program or event please contact, **Hannah Todd**, Home

Horticulture coordinator, at the Piscataquis County Extension Office (564-3301 or [htodd@umext.maine.edu](mailto:htodd@umext.maine.edu)) and she would be happy to connect you with a Master Gardener volunteer.

### Master Gardener Volunteer Projects:

#### Asian Longhorned Beetle

The Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB) is an invasive wood-boring beetle that attacks healthy hardwood trees and poses a serious threat to the trees and forests of Maine. Master Gardener Volunteer **Sarah Burgess**, attended the USDA APHIS program, New England Forest Pest Survey and Outreach Project. The program aimed to train people to identify ALB damage and give them the skills and resources to educate others about this threat.

#### Butterfly Gardens

Pollination is required for most of the vegetables and fruits the people of the United States depend on in fact "Pollinators are responsible for assisting over 80% of the world's flowering plants." (<http://bit.ly/pollinsource> US Forest service). Master Gardener Volunteer, **Lynn Lubas**, planted two butterfly gardens with the pre-kindergartners' at SeDoMoCha Middle School in Dover-Foxcroft, ME. She taught the children about the importance of pollinators and more specifically the materials butterflies need to survive such as water, shelter, certain flowers, etc. Lynn reported that the children loved the experience and were very enthusiastic about promoting habitats for butterflies.

#### Local Harvest

Master Gardener Volunteers (MGV), **Lynn Lubas, Judy Raymond, Stacy Lynn, and Deborah Parker**, in collaboration with the Charlotte White Center (CWC) helped **Robyn Simmons** (former Master Gardener) in the CWC greenhouse. The greenhouse is used to deliver programs to staff, consumers, and the general public as well as supply seedlings for the CWC outdoor gardens. The goal of the greenhouse is to allow the CWC to become more sustainable and self-serving. This is the second year of operation and already they are seeing the therapeutic effects it has on staff and consumers.

Also, the public has gained gardening knowledge through the greenhouse as well—UMaine Cooperative Extension holds programs at the CWC which always include tours of the greenhouse, most recently there was a "Season Extension" class in which class participants learn how to extend Maine's short growing season.

#### Answering Gardening Questions

**Pamela Pultz**, from Foxcroft Agway, spent some of her Master Gardener Volunteer time at the Extension Office in Dover-Foxcroft. She was available to answer horticultural questions and also help organize the extension publications in the files.

**Paul & Nancy Matulis** will be using the produce from the gardens to participate in the Plant-a-Row (PAR) for the Hungry program. **Judy Merck** will be participating in the

PAR program by donating produce from her garden to the food cupboards.

**Mark Sheriff**, alumni Master Gardener from Somerset County co-hosted the Apple Pruning Field Day at Olmsted's Orchard this spring that attracted over 100 people. (*Mark and his wife Wendy are also members of the Maine Highland Farmers*).

**Pamela Pultz** gave **Hannah** the opportunity to talk with customers at the Foxcroft Agway, in Dover-Foxcroft about proper gardening practices and **Steve Preble & Sarah Burgess** gave a seed-starting talk at the store to 15 people.

**Louis Ritter** has been the "go to guy" for answering a variety of gardening questions for neighbors, friends, and the general public in the Brownville area. He also planted a perennial bed for his elderly neighbor who can no longer plant the bed herself.

#### Home Energy

The three part program **Donna Coffin** and **Kathy Hopkins** developed on Saving Home Energy was National runner-up in the National Association of County Agriculture Agents - Communications Award for Learning Module. They were awarded a plaque and \$250 at the NACAA National meeting in Oklahoma this summer. Information on the various federal and state home energy rebate programs was included. Partial funding for this program was provided by the Maine Public Utilities Commission through the Efficiency Maine Program and Americans Recover and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

**Donna Coffin** created a new half-hour slide program on "Keeping Cool this Summer...Planning to Keep Warm this Winter" that was presented to the Moosehead Kiwanis, Dexter Kiwanis and the Resource Exchange. She is also working on a survey for wood pellet stove users to get some data on quality issues with the pellets that are available. She will be working with university researchers in developing a factsheet on heating with wood pellets.

#### 2010 HEARTH VISTA

"Keeping people safe and warm in their homes during the Maine Winter months is a significant challenge, especially in Piscataquis County" says **Judy Morrison, Hearth Vista Volunteer**. Cooperative Extension in cooperation with an AmeriCorps HEARTH VISTA has supported the creation of three warming centers within Piscataquis County over the winter. Emphasis was on conserving fuel, free nutritious, hot meals and socialization.

Sixty-five consumers participated in three warming centers once a week. Participants were surveyed. 44 indicated that they saved fuel. 100 percent indicated they enjoyed the meals. 94 percent indicated they would come to the warming centers again for socialization.

One consumer stated that coming to the warming center was a positive experience for him as he dealt with unemployment this winter. He stated that he had a difficult time coming to the warming center the first week by himself but that on subsequent visits he became more social and

relaxed. Due to interest of participants, warming centers will continue yearly.

### Sustainable Agriculture

**Donna Coffin**, Extension Educator also assists many new and established farmers with information on their various projects from how to start a new farm operation, rules and regulations for value-added foods, marketing direct to consumer, multi-enterprise projects that include a dairy / beef enterprise, and energy production enterprise with biomass wood to energy pyrolysis unit. She also assists farmers with poisonous plant identification, managing hay and pastures, and livestock management.

She also serves on the Piscataquis County Soil and Water Conservation District that is in the process of submitting grants to build a Natural Resource Based Information Center office at the Law Farm in Dover-Foxcroft to house the SWCD, NRCS and FSA. And she assisted with a Biomass Fuel Grant sponsored by the Maine Forest Service to fund a heating system that utilizes wood pellets.

### Maine Highlands Farmers

The educational program of the Maine Highlands Farmers (MHF) meetings have been organized by **Donna Coffin**. The sessions have included **Michael Cantin**, NOAA meteorologist from Caribou, **Seth Bradstreet**, Commissioner with the Maine Department of Agriculture, **Renee Kelley** with Maine Innovation Center, **Judy Craig**, Dexter Regional Development Corporation – Dexter Community Farmers Market Project and **Gary Anderson**, Animal & BioScience Specialist, marketing milk and milk products by small-scale dairy producers.

Summer meetings of the Maine Highlands Farmers are at the member's farms. Projects that the farmer's group has taken on this year include planning for the September 12<sup>th</sup> "A Taste from the Farm Dinner" at the Winterport Winery Pairings. Tickets are available from the winery or a MHF member. The group is also publishing a cookbook of member's favorite recipes. They are on sale this summer from members. You can find a MHF member near you at [www.MaineHighlandsFarmers.com](http://www.MaineHighlandsFarmers.com)

### Zone Tillage

The Reading the Farm training led by **Ellen Mallory**, Sustainable Agriculture Specialist, assisted the Stutzman's Farm in Sangerville. The team of agricultural service providers used their farm as a training case study and in the process came up with a report that included suggestions to build on the economic and environmental sustainability of their farm. These included redirecting marketing efforts, incorporating cover crops into existing rotations, and reducing soil tillage with the use of a zone till implement. The Stutzman's have since purchased a zone till implement and are trying it out this year.

During a Weed Walk program, sponsored by the Piscataquis County Cooperative Extension and the Maine Highlands Farmers, participants had an opportunity to see the results of the zone tillage on peas that the Stutzman's had planted into a field that had oats harvested the previous year. Only a small area of soil was disturbed so weed seed germination was kept to a minimum. Sid and Rainie were very impressed by the results and are planning to expand the use of this tillage tool.



### Dairy Farm Assistance

**Gary Anderson**, Animal & BioScience Specialist and **Richard Kersbergen**, Extension Educator have worked one-on-one with Piscataquis County dairy farms (both traditional and organic) to develop business plans, milk marketing & equipment marketing plans for their farms. While the plans are not completed, farmers have improved the business management of their farms. Gary also attended a Maine Highlands Farmers Meeting to discuss marketing of milk and milk products by small scale dairy producers.

### Tourism & Economic Development

*Program for Community Improvement: Greenville, Maine*

The University of Maine College of Forest Resources - Community Tourism Planning class did a tourism assessment of Greenville in early 2010. The class, led by instructor **Roger Merchant**, Regional Extension Educator, acted as visitors with the goal of experiencing Greenville and assessing its tourism destination attributes.

The Community Tourism Development (CTD) team found, "Greenville to be a small town with a great sense of community pride. It provides many opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. The restaurants, retail stores, and comforting hospitality that Greenville provides left us wanting to come back for more. With a few small fixes Greenville has the potential to become a stronger destination for tourists, and a perfect place to escape from the hustle and bustle of city life."

They found Greenville has three key strengths as a tourism destination: surrounded by natural beauty, watchable

wildlife and excellent hospitality. The students thought the surrounding landscape has incredible natural beauty. The lake surrounded by scenic mountains is a magnet for nature recreationists. The management and protection of these natural assets is a key to sustaining what Greenville and the Moosehead Lake Region has to offer its residents, and to the visitor market.



PHOTO BY Roger Merchant, UMaine Extension

The students found some ideas that the community as a whole might consider ideas that could better enhance Greenville's presence and appeal as a destination: community heritage, downtown kiosk and signage. The region has great natural beauty and many opportunities. However the town has an untold heritage story, one that's not obvious to new visitors. "How might you tell the story about your town, and your people?" One possibility is to create a community mural on the side of a building, one that visually tells the story of Greenville and its people. This builds community pride and could become a community attraction linked with town and Chamber websites.

A downtown information kiosk could support a self-guided walking tour of Greenville, along with directions to downtown establishments. A walking tour could reveal interesting places like the mural, as well as the Masonic Lodge, one of Greenville's outstanding architectural landmarks.



PHOTO BY Roger Merchant, UMaine Extension

In closing the CTD team said, "You live in an outstanding region with outdoor opportunities that are of interest to our generation. Some of us hope to visit again someday, and look forward to being in Greenville among its friendly, helpful local people."

For a copy of the full report contact Roger L. Merchant, Regional Extension Educator, UMaine Cooperative Extension, SFR-101 Nutting Hall, Orono ME 04469. 207-581-2885 [merchant@maine.edu](mailto:merchant@maine.edu)

### Community Needs Assessment

**Deborah B. Killam**, Extension Educator worked with a group of people from the Milo area last summer. A needs assessment session with a group of 17 people from the Milo community identified possible program related options that would be community based to begin to meet the needs of area teens.

Along with assessing needs and generating alternatives, she facilitated a process where the group prioritized the alternatives and envisioned the future. A smaller core group of people went on to serve as advisors to help move forward with some of the alternatives.

Three possible scenarios were identified - a short term [small], mid-term [medium sized], and long-term [large scale project]. A resource development strategy for the short term project was successful at generating financial resources, interest by selectmen and others, and positive press coverage for a youth center to be open one night a week. Some possible funding sources have been explored for the larger projects.

### Community Outreach



PHOTO BY Donna Coffin, UMaine Extension

As an office we have looked for community events that we can take the office displays to help promote Extension. Five Extension Staff took the Home Energy Display, HEARTH Vista, Home Gardening, Food Safety, Eat Well and 4-H Youth displays to the Monson Snow Roller Days. They talked with a number of folks in Monson. Other events where we have had a presence include: Milo Black Fly Festival, Abbot Family Fun Day, Guilford River Festival, Dover Homecoming, Brownville Days and of course the Piscataquis Valley Fair.

Two staff attended the Valley Grange March Agriculture Month meeting in Guilford and chatted about Extension and HEARTH Vista.



This spring **Kathy Hopkins** and **Donna Coffin** helped to staff the state Home Energy Display at the Hall of Flags at the State House in Augusta. **Senator Doug Smith** stopped by for a short chat. A number of folks were interested in the interior storm window and shutters that do-it-yourselfers can make.

Donna and Judy also presented a slide show about Extension at a Resource Exchange that resulted in a new executive committee member.

### Local Partnership

Our County Extension Association is the vital link between the county, our communities and UMaine. The Association's Executive Committee is comprised of local volunteers who represent community interests by offering advice to UMaine Extension staff on educational programs, advocate for and secure funding from county government to support the county office, oversee the office budget and facilities, and guide UMaine Extension staff in identifying their programming goals.

### 4-H Loses an Outstanding 4-H Aide & Volunteer

**Linda Whitten**, 4-H Aide for sixteen years and 4-H volunteer for over 25 years lost her battle with cancer. She was the one who helped the 4-H youth and volunteers in Piscataquis County with their project work. She assisted a number of youth to apply for and receive out-of-state trips and scholarships to college and post secondary schools.



PHOTO BY Donna Coffin, UMaine Extension

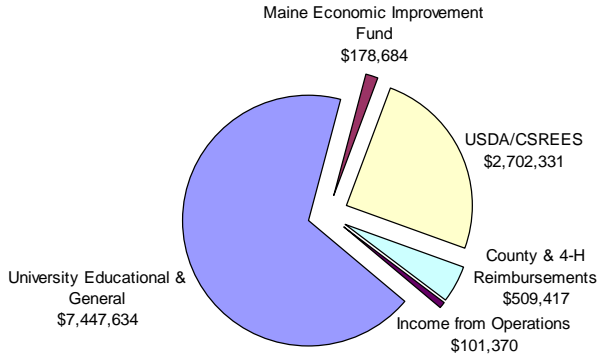
Linda organized the Piscataquis Valley Fair 4-H project judging, fall fest and many 4-H leaders meetings. To say she will be missed is putting it mildly. 4-H and Extension are about coping with change and although we don't like to change we must to continue to offer these valuable programs to our youth.

We can celebrate Linda's life by assuring that youth in Piscataquis County have an opportunity to participate in the 4-H programs both at the state level and county level. Her family has asked that in lieu of flowers contributions be sent to the Pine Tree State 4-H Foundation. University of Maine, 5741 Libby Hall, Orono, ME 04469-5741, Phone: (207) 581-3739, Toll-free in Maine: 1-800-287-0274 <http://extension.umaine.edu/4hfoundation> .

*The Value of Volunteers: As in previous years, Extension's volunteers multiplied the value of our work through the generous commitment of their time and expertise, this year giving more than 151,400 hours to their communities in the name of UMaine Extension. Extension volunteers helped senior citizens maintain their health and independence, grew community gardens, taught people ways to keep warm during the long Maine winter, helped feed the hungry, monitored the quality of our coastal and lake waters, made their communities more beautiful, and maybe most importantly, helped young people in Maine learn skills of living. Volunteer time is valued at \$15.74/hr. by Independent Sector –if paid this reasonable rate for their time, these volunteers would be worth more than \$2.38 million to Maine communities. If we put a value on the affect they had in the lives and future of the people with whom they worked, it would, of course, be invaluable.*



## Statewide Extension Funding



As a unique partnership among federal, state and county governments, UMaine Extension uses funding from Maine counties and the University to match and leverage support from the United States Department of Agriculture, other federal grantors, state agencies and private foundations. Each county UMaine Extension office is also part of a statewide organization and the national Extension system.

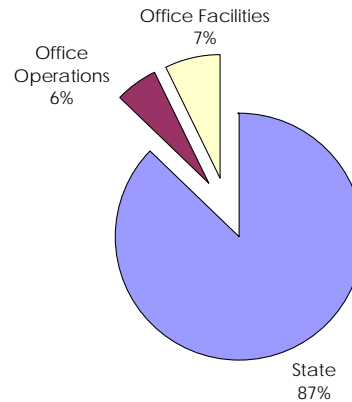
## University of Maine Cooperative Extension Support for Piscataquis

|                                 | 2009           |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Local Salaries and Benefits     | 501,062        |
| Computer Equipment & Networking | 6,272          |
| Publications                    | 830            |
| Postage                         | 3,110          |
| Telephone                       | 1,685          |
| Travel                          | 18,797         |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>531,756</b> |

Without statewide support, UMaine Extension would not be present in this county. Funds for projects are provided through the University of Maine, Federal Formula Funds, grants, contracts, and fees. Dollars from other sources support salaries and benefits for Extension Specialists, County Educators, Extension administration, computer equipment and networking, publications, postage, telephone, and travel.

*Our Mission: To help Maine people improve their lives through an educational process that uses research-based knowledge focused on issues and needs.*

## Piscataquis County Budget



This pie graph illustrates the 2009 financial resources for programs offered, supported and managed out of the Piscataquis County Office.

Each year, Piscataquis County tax dollars support the UMaine Extension with physical office space, support staff salaries, office supplies, equipment and some programming expenses.

## Piscataquis Support for Extension

| Item                           | 2009          | 2010          | Change      |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| Secretary's Salary             | 23,680        | 8274          | -65%        |
| On-call Clerk                  | 1,670         | 0             | -100%       |
| Supplies                       | 2,900         | 1,500         | -48%        |
| Telephone                      | 1,700         | 1,200         | -29%        |
| Postage                        | 200           | 25            | -88%        |
| Equipment                      | 3,050         | 1,500         | -51%        |
| Library                        | 500           | 0             | -100%       |
| <b>Total Operating</b>         | <b>33,700</b> | <b>12,500</b> | <b>-63%</b> |
| County's Stated Building Costs | 44,478        | 49,487        | 11%         |
| Capital Improvement, boiler    |               | 10,000        |             |
| <b>Total Building</b>          | <b>44,478</b> | <b>59,487</b> | <b>34%</b>  |
| <b>Total Costs</b>             | <b>78,178</b> | <b>71,987</b> | <b>8%</b>   |

## County Funding

We have been on a roller coaster ride around funding from the Piscataquis County Commissioners Office that support the local county Extension Office. The commissioners were not able to fully fund the costs associated with the county extension office. In the past they have provide \$33,700 in cash and \$44,487 in-kind for the office space and ancillary costs for a total \$78,178 in support of the county extension office. They estimated that the 2010 expenses for the building (which includes \$10,000 to replace the boiler) would be \$15,000 more per year.

## Steps Taken to Accommodate Reduced Funding

The secretary (**Amanda Miles**) now splits her time between county work (60%) and statewide work (40%) that she can accomplish for the most part from the Dover-Foxcroft office.

One county educator (**Roger Merchant**) was moved to Orono where he provides regional support in economic and tourism development. Another educator (**Donna Coffin**) spends 40% of her time on statewide work in home energy and livestock areas and assists Penobscot County clients with sustainable agriculture & home energy programs. The two VISTA volunteers (**Judy Morrison and Andrew Barnes**) will not be continued beyond their current year of service.

The county newsletters for farming and gardening are available electronically every month, but are only mailed out every-other month to residents without Internet availability. The Piscataquis Gardening Newsletter is received by 257 folks 72% electronically and 28% surface mail. The Piscataquis Farming Newsletter is received by 175 folks 79% electronically and 21% surface mail. We have recently joined with Penobscot County Extension to offer these newsletters to both counties clients. In return the Penobscot office will be doing the surface mailings for both counties.

The phone service was changed to a voice over internet (VOI) and we are using our photocopier to FAX when needed. The secretary scrutinizes every purchase and finds most of the office supplies on sale. Equipment purchases have been curtailed. People willing to provide financial support for the Piscataquis County Extension Office can pledge funds for this purpose.

This table shows the number of contacts we have had in the past year from various towns in Piscataquis County. Contacts include face to face consultations in the office, field or home; attendance at meetings and newsletter enrollment.

With all the changes in funding providing local access to the people of Piscataquis County to the University of Maine Cooperative Extension programs has been the overarching goal of the remaining Piscataquis County Extension staff. We will strive to continue this goal as long as adequate local funding is available.

| Town                  | Total Contacts |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Abbot                 | 195            |
| Atkinson              | 112            |
| Beaver Cove           | 5              |
| Blanchard             | 19             |
| Bowerbank             | 5              |
| Brownville            | 520            |
| Dover-Foxcroft        | 1957           |
| Greenville            | 212            |
| Guilford              | 479            |
| Medford               | 98             |
| Milo                  | 1255           |
| Monson                | 177            |
| Parkman               | 194            |
| Sangerville           | 155            |
| Sebec                 | 165            |
| Shirley               | 13             |
| Wellington            | 27             |
| Willimantic           | 27             |
| Unorganized Townships | 13             |
| Unknown               | 203            |
| Total in Piscataquis  | 5629           |

We are proud of our accomplishments but good management also requires us to disclose that reduced funding is taking a toll and reducing resources to county citizens.

## Piscataquis County Extension Association Executive Committee

The purpose of this committee is to help determine priorities, promote and evaluate the University of Maine Cooperative Extension's educational programs, to address the needs and interests of area residents according to its mission.

### Executive Committee Members

Felix Blinn – Brownville

Walter Boomsma – Abbot

Nancy Matulis – Dover-Foxcroft

Paul Matulis – Dover-Foxcroft

George McKay – Dover-Foxcroft

Judy Merck – Dover-Foxcroft & Blanchard

Walter Sinclair – Brownville

## \*The County Extension Act

*The County Extension Act explains the role of county government in funding local Extension offices:*

Cooperative extension work shall consist of the giving of practical demonstrations in agriculture and natural resources, youth development, and home economics and community life and imparting information on those subjects through field demonstrations, publications and otherwise. For the purpose of carrying out this chapter, there may be created in each county or combination of two counties within the State an organization known as a "county extension association," and its services available to all residents of a county. The county extension is viewed as a unique and important educational program of county government. The executive committee of each county extension association shall prepare an annual budget as requested, showing in detail its estimate of the amount of money to be expended under this chapter within the county of counties for the fiscal year. The executive committee shall submit to the board of county commissioners on a date requested by the county commissioners, and the county commissioners may, if they deem it justifiable, adopt an appropriate budget for the county extension program and levy a tax therefore. The amount thus raised by direct taxation within any county or combination of counties for the purposes of this chapter shall be used for the salaries of clerks, provision of office space, supplies, equipment, postage, telephone, a contribution toward the salaries of county educators and such other expenses as necessary to maintain an effective county extension program.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Excerpted from Title 7, Chapter 7 of the Maine Revised Statutes, §191-§195.

## Statewide Highlights

*A sampling of programs that have statewide and local importance:*

**Extension; A UMaine Priority:** Despite profound shrinkage in State support to the University of Maine, the outreach mission of our institution remains a high priority, and UMaine Extension as its major purveyor remains an important and integrated part of that effort as expressed by the University of Maine President in a recent blog posting:

*In a career spent at land-grant universities, I've been closely involved with a number of Extension operations. None can match UMaine Extension in terms of scope, effectiveness and commitment to the needs of state residents. It is truly a first-class enterprise, which brings UMaine expertise and resources to people in every Maine community. As Extension's role evolves, so does UMaine's impact. UMaine Extension focuses on helping Maine residents work to manage agriculture, natural resources, and the environment; enhance economic opportunity; and encourage lifelong wellness. The widespread effect of work in those areas alone has a tremendous positive impact on communities, families and individuals statewide. Extension is a source of pride for the University of Maine, and it is a real key to the positive statewide identity this institution enjoys.*

Dr. Robert Kennedy, President University of Maine, February 2010

**Maple Grading School:** UMaine Extension worked with the University of Vermont and the Canadian syrup industry to develop an innovative curriculum for consistent grading and best management for producers. The Maple Grading School was established in 2004 and more than 110 maple producers, packers, and USDA inspectors have attended. Producers who attended the Maple Grading School learned and implemented specific grading skills that enabled them to produce more uniform, consistent, and valuable maple syrup and value-added maple products.

Our evaluations show that approximately 75 percent of participants have saved money, increased sales, reduced costs, and increased profits from between 10 and 70 percent, or an estimated \$1.4 million.

**Farming and Gardening, the Value of Asking:** People routinely contact Extension' County offices by telephone, email, or by stopping into an office to ask a simple question about farming or gardening. In fact, we answer tens of thousands of simple questions every year. We recently followed up with a sample of 34 clients to determine the ways in which our answers were helpful, and the value they attributed to the information they were given. Almost everyone (97 percent of those surveyed) found the information we supplied to be helpful in solving their problems. In fact, people saved money as a result of asking for help: 53 percent

(18) benefited economically by growing more or better food, experiencing less pest damage, using fewer pesticides, or saving or making money. When asked how much they had saved or made and using the statistics they supplied, we can assume that for every 1,000 inquiries to our offices there is an average of \$113,800 in economic benefits directly back to clients.



PHOTO BY EDWIN REMSBERG, USDA

One client who participated in this evaluation said: "I couldn't farm without you. I have learned how to spray less and am now 99 percent organic. Extension's advice about pasture grasses have helped eliminate years of trial and error."

### **Weight Control Behavior in Maine Middle School Students:**

In response to the childhood obesity epidemic and its predicted long-term economic and health implications, public health advocates have strived to increase youth awareness of the health risks associated with obesity. Moreover, the media emphasize the aesthetic desirability of being slender. In response to these messages, youth are trying to lose weight but are not necessarily approaching it in the healthiest manner. UMaine Extension recently conducted a study that explored weight control practices of middle school students. We found that the majority of middle school students are aware of the desirability of avoiding excessive weight gain; however, in trying to control weight, they may be unintentionally increasing their risk for obesity:

- ☑ 82 percent of female students engaged in weight control behaviors that studies associate with a three-fold increased risk for obesity five years later.
- ☑ 36 percent of male respondents engaged in weight control behaviors that increase their risk for obesity.
- ☑ 74 percent of females with healthy weights engaged in weight control practices that increased their risk for obesity.
- ☑ 26 percent of males with healthy weights engaged in these activities.

**Decreasing Lobster Pound Mortality:** One of the risks of lobster trading is holding stock to sell during winter months when prices are higher. In recent years, the economic advantage of impounding has been greatly lessened due to "shrinkage," the industry's term for loss due to mortality caused by stress and disease during impoundment. This loss has been reported as high as 20 percent, or as much as \$56 million in Maine. This year our Animal Health Laboratory conducted a large study of stressors in lobster handling. Our research suggested that fast hauling speeds, depth of water, and rough handling does produce a measurable stress in lobsters, leading to mortality losses. We also detected a

microbial agent that appears to have a role in the shrinkage seen in the pounds. Management strategies as a result of our research have the potential to save millions of the crustaceans, improve the quality of lobsters at retail, and minimize the incidence of sick and diseased lobsters going to market.



PHOTO BY EDWIN REMSBERG, USDA

**Entrepreneurship – Small and Home-Based Business:** Small and home-based businesses play a significant role in Maine’s economy, employing an estimated 15 percent of our workforce. Business workshops and consultations are offered to those in the start-up and change phase of a business. UMaine Extension faculty and staff teach business skills and answer questions, which help owners and managers make important decisions about their business concepts and direction. Our one-on-one assistance includes a range of business supports including reviewing a business plan, reviewing marketing materials, identifying market research techniques, and sharing resources. Our consultations helped customers establish clear business goals and objectives, organize their businesses, apply for a trademark, develop customer profiles, research specific markets, create Web sites, establish new pricing policies, and engage in networking opportunities. During 2009, our small and home-based business team helped facilitate the creation of more than 110 new business plans, 70 marketing plans, and 49 financing plans. Partly as a result of our interactions with Maine entrepreneurs, 95 businesses were established, 18 businesses were retained, and 99 new jobs were created.

**The 4-H and Pine Tree State 4-H Foundation Partnership:**

Extension’s 4-H youth programs are enhanced through support from the *Pine Tree State 4-H Foundation*, whose fundraising efforts and endowments support program such as Citizen Washington Focus, National 4-H Congress, and the Eastern States Exposition as well as a college scholarship program for Maine youth. During 2009 there were 30,083 youth enrolled in Maine’s 4-H youth development program through clubs, camps, schools, nutrition education programs, and other programs. Enrollments included:

- 14,510 - Science Engineering and Technology
- 9,122 - Environmental Education

- 2,492 - Animal Science
- 5,707 - Citizenship
- 2,107 - Leadership/Personal Development
- 2,999 - Communications/Expressive Arts
- 15,149 - Healthy Lifestyles



PHOTO BY EDWIN REMSBERG, USDA

**Piscataquis County Staff Members**

Extension Educators

- Barbara Baker \*
- Donna Coffin\*
- Jane Conroy

EatWell Regional Supervisor

- Donna Bucher \*

Program Associates

- Anita Libby-Kain
- Hannah Todd \*
- Linda Whitten
- Sue Henner

VISTA Volunteers

- Andy Barnes \*\*
- Judy Morrison \*\*

Support Staff

- Amanda Miles \*

\*Part-time in Piscataquis County  
 \*\* Completed year of service August 2010

For More Information about Piscataquis County Cooperative Extension contact the local office at:

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*A Member of the University of Maine System*

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