

MAINE DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

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Maine Downtown Center Launches *Green Downtowns!* *Environmental Funders Network Grant Awarded*

Augusta, Maine...October 5, 2009. The Maine Development Foundation, through its Maine Downtown Center (MDC) program, was selected to receive a \$100,000 grant from the Maine Community Foundation's Environmental Funders Network (EFN) to launch *Green Downtowns!* – a project that will strengthen their existing downtown revitalization programs in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Since 1999 when the MDC was established, communities throughout the state have received assistance to preserve and revitalize the economy, appearance, image and pride of their traditional downtown business districts using a range of services, resources and direct assistance. "Maine's historic downtowns and community centers are a cornerstone of the Governor's Council on Quality of Place. EFN funding will provide challenge grants to participating downtowns and provide technical assistance that will enable investment in green building materials, practices and outdoor amenities like trees, plants, parks and trails," stated Kristen Cady, Program Director of the MDC.

EFN funding is also making available two important components of the *Green Downtowns!* project. The first enables the MDC to step up its design and technical services to participating downtowns by contracting with the nonprofit organization Maine Preservation. The second provides planning assistance to participating downtowns to link their historic downtown to surrounding neighborhoods or to a neighboring town through multi-use trails and urban walkways.

The MDC will be working with the University of Maine's Center on Aging to develop the "Maine Senior Environmental Leader Corps." This new leadership program will train and engage 150-200 senior leaders annually and provide them with a special focus on environmental stewardship and provide *Green Downtowns!* with a cadre of volunteers.

For more information on this grant or other activities at the Maine Downtown Center, contact Program Director Kristen Cady or Program Manager, Roxanne Eflin, at (207) 622-6345 or visit www.mdf.org.

The Maine Downtown Center focuses on fostering downtown revitalization that is community-based and results in economic development, business growth, job creation, housing revitalization, historic preservation, and cultural enhancement. MDC houses the Main Street Maine program (Biddeford, Saco, Waterville, Skowhegan, Van Buren, Eastport, Gardiner, Bath, Rockland and Sanford) and the Maine Downtown Network (Augusta, Bucksport, Farmington, Lisbon, Millinocket, Norway and Presque Isle). Main Street is an innovative methodology developed over 30 years ago by the National Trust for Historic Preservation that combines historic preservation with economic development to restore prosperity and vitality to downtowns.

MDC is a program of the Maine Development Foundation (MDF), a private non-profit organization that drives sustainable, long-term economic growth for Maine. MDF does this through a number of statewide programs, including Leadership Maine, Policy Leaders Academy, Maine Economic Growth Council, REALIZE!Maine, and the Maine Employers' Initiative.

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