

Just Imagine a State Where...

Embracing Innovation: Taking Charge of our Future

**Maine Development Foundation's
31st Annual Meeting**

September 25, 2009

SLIDE 1 Introduction

For those of you who have been in attendance in the past four years, you know that we begin this day with the “Just Imagine” theme.

My goal is very simple - I just want people to have pride in this state and hope for the future. If I could elicit just one “Wow, I didn’t know we did that in Maine”, I figure that I’ve been successful.

So frequently, we’re bombarded with messages about all that is wrong with Maine and these are particularly difficult economic times so it is easy to get caught up in the pessimism.

As I look around Maine, however, I see so much opportunity. I see a longstanding ethic of perseverance, a “can do” attitude, a spirit of innovation and a hope in Maine’s future that can not be destroyed by any particular event or series of events – no matter how daunting.

Harvard Professor, Michael Porter, in his book, “The Competitive Advantage of Nations”, found that the single greatest determinant of a region’s prosperity was its capacity for innovation. If Dr. Porter is right, and we hope to move Maine to a better place, then we must get out of our comfort zone and open our minds to entirely new ways of thinking, new approaches, new products, and new partners.

In my mind there are two distinct levels of innovation:

1. The first is innovation within your sector or product line or area of expertise
2. The second is a higher order, crossing boundaries of sectors, products, and services and reaching out to new partners. I’ll refer to this as integrated innovation.

If innovation is an economic driver, integrated innovation puts our progress in overdrive.

Whatever the level, if we truly want to take charge of our future, we must embrace innovation wholeheartedly.

SLIDE 2 **Sebec Lake Fog**

So this morning, I invite you to let your mind go to your happy place – where creativity flows and you are open to all of the possibilities that life has to offer. For me – that place is, and always has been, Sebec Lake

Someone once said – we are only limited by our imagination.

Today – I ask you to take a journey with me – to imagine all that Maine is and all that it could be.

And, once again, I ask every single one of you to take some personal responsibility for moving Maine forward – so that the Maine that we envision is not just a figment of our imagination – but a reality.

Let's begin our journey...

Just imagine a state where

- The people are creative and practical
- The companies are innovative and resourceful
- The culture honors the past, celebrates the present, and engages in shaping the future

SLIDE 3 **Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance**

Creativity and fine craftsmanship have always been the very soul of Maine's people, and nowhere is that more evident than in our Native American Tribes.

Did you realize that Maine's four Indian tribes, the Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, Maliseet and Micmac, have formed the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance to preserve and revitalize the ancient art of brown ash and sweet grass basketry?

These woven masterpieces have won national acclaim, are widely sought after, and have sold for as much as \$6,500.

SLIDE 4 **Brahms Mount Textiles**

You may know that Maine's river banks were once dotted with textile mills, but through the years, low-priced foreign products took their toll on this industry. It may surprise you to find that today, there are fine fabric manufacturers in Maine who have carved a niche for themselves and are prospering by focusing on quality and creativity.

Brahms Mount Textiles in Hallowell has elevated fabric manufacturing to an art form, carefully creating heirloom blankets whose textures, patterns and warmth are widely admired. They are the only 100% linen blanket weaver in North America!

SLIDE 5 Peapod Jewelry

And can you imagine that Maine is home to hundreds of fine jewelry craftsman? These artists, who work with precious metals and gem stones in their craft, are quietly creating in very small studios around the state, but selling their work around the nation and the world.

Ronna Lugosch of Round Pond created a whimsical but strikingly beautiful line of Peapod Jewelry – including the Podster, peapod lobster, the Bumble Pea, the Pine Tree Pod and even a Peapod lighthouse!

SLIDE 6 Daunis

And Patricia Daunis has drawn her inspiration from Maine waters – with tranquil lakes, swirling eddies, and light reflecting on ocean waves. Patty's stunning designs and quality work have earned her prestigious awards and her unique work is worn around the globe.

SLIDE 7 Fluid Imaging

Maine's waters have inspired numerous innovations across many sectors. I've spoken with you before about Fluid Imaging of Yarmouth's FlowCam - an underwater microscope and camera that can simultaneously take digital images and analyze fluids of any sort – testing water for bacteria, oils for contamination, juices for pulp content – you name it! This cutting-edge technology developed in Maine is used on all continents.

SLIDE 8 Gulf of Maine Research Institute

The Gulf of Maine Research Institute has attracted a multi-discipline team of marine researchers from around the world to explore the vast resources of the Gulf of Maine – unleashing the possibilities for new food sources, medicines, fuels and untold innovative products.

SLIDE 9 JAX

I've shared with you that Maine is home to the world's leading mammalian genetic research facility – The Jackson Laboratory – seeking cures and treatments for a variety of cancers, birth defects, diabetes and obesity...

SLIDE 10 Bar Harbor Biotechnology

But did you know that Bar Harbor Biotechnology is Jackson Lab's first commercial spin-off company – developing innovative molecular biology products used to advance life science research and clinical medicines? The innovation is multiplying!

SLIDE 11 Binax

And there are so very many companies that I have never heard of. I knew of Idexx, a leader in the development of veterinarian testing kits, but I hadn't heard of Binax in Scarborough which is an internationally known manufacturer of medical diagnostic tests.

Binax was recently named the 2009 Manufacturer of the Year by the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership – “recognized for its ability to respond to infectious disease outbreaks, such as the recent worldwide influenza pandemic”. Binax had worked closely with the Maine MEP on developing lean manufacturing. The streamlined production process enabled the Company to dramatically improve flexibility and productivity.

They now say that survival of the fittest really means those most able to adapt to changes. If that is the case, then Binax and other companies helped by MEP will likely survive and thrive – which is great news for Maine!

SLIDE 12 Know Technology

And did you know that there is a company in Camden called Know Technology that was recently awarded the coveted Microsoft Partner of the Year Award for Networking Infrastructure Solutions?

A Vice President for Microsoft was quoted as saying, “Know Technology clearly demonstrates its expertise and ability to leverage innovation by creating (IT) solutions” for its customers.

SLIDE 13 Quantrix

And Quantrix is a Maine-based IT company that sells its powerful business modeling and analytics software in 50 countries to 700 customers – including such notables as Sara Lee, John Deere, Revlon and Kraft!

SLIDE 14 FHC

And how many people in this room have ever heard of FHC in Bowdoinham? FHC is a small company in an old school building in rural Bowdoinham, Maine that recently won a Medical Design Excellence Award for its innovative surgical device and planning system that, if I'm understanding it correctly from the article I read, has the potential to transform brain surgery by

planning and validating the most appropriate procedure to perform on the patient prior to the surgery, greatly reducing surgery time and increasing accuracy. WOAHH!

If that's not innovative capacity – then I don't know what is!

SLIDE 15 Backyard Farms

But innovation in Maine is not just taking place in high-tech industries, its also alive and well in our more traditional industries – like farming for example.

Well, while Backyard Farms in Madison could hardly be considered a typical Maine farm – it is truly a model of innovation. This 24 acre, state-of-the-art greenhouse is used to cultivate 17 million pounds of fully vine-ripened tomatoes annually. Would you have ever imagined that for Maine?

SLIDE 16 Tourmaline Hill Farm

Some farms carve out niches that allow them to compete more effectively – like Tourmaline Hill Farm. Lisa McLeod worked with Women, Work and Community and a host of partners to launch a successful goat cheese business – a creative solution to those, like her daughter, who are allergic to cow's milk.

SLIDE 17 Buy Local Maze

Other farms have creatively supplemented their traditional farm business with other offerings – like hay rides, festivals and corn mazes – that transform a farm to a tourist attraction! And in the case of this Sandy River farm – a marketing tool!

SLIDE 18 Washburn Doughty

Boatbuilding is another of Maine's traditional industries that has been under enormous pressure. And tugboat and barge maker, Washburn Doughty of Boothbay, overcame enormous adversity as its main facilities burned flat one year ago.

The company's response to this devastating loss? Rebuild a new facility that has a more efficient design and state-of-the-art equipment to more than double production! Now that's innovation and tenacity – tough as the tugboats themselves!

SLIDE 19 Hodgdon Yachts

And Hodgdon Yachts is an example of the highest-order innovator, partnering with the Advanced Engineered Wood Composites Center to utilize light-weight, ultra-strong composite building materials, high-tech equipment, and artistic design – elevating boat building to an art form!

SLIDE 20 **Sea Bags**

It seems that many Maine companies use innovation to tie their work to some social cause or philosophical stance— making their life’s work more meaningful and attracting a certain customer base.

Sea Bags manufactures bags out of recycled sails! In fact virtually every part of their product is green. They employ women who can do the stitching at home, fisherman to splice rope in the off-season, and women from the correctional facility – believing that every person deserves a second chance.

SLIDE 21 **Coffee by Design**

Coffee by Design opened its community coffee house in the then seedier end of Congress St. in 1994, and is credited for turning that end of town from a pornography district to an arts district. Selling high-quality, fresh-roasted coffee while operating in an environmentally sustainable manner and giving back to the community in a myriad of ways, Coffee by Design is an innovator and a true community contributor.

SLIDE 22 **Baxter Tea Company**

And Lisa Liberatore is “Preserving Maine’s Wilderness One Cup at a Time”. The founder and operator of the Baxter Tea Company donates 10% of her company’s profits to Baxter State Park. And Lisa has found an innovative way of selling her tea and coffee products – as fund raising opportunities for school children! Her creative marketing approach has helped schools around the state with everything from field trips to scholarships.

SLIDE 23 **Planet Dog**

Planet Dog, based in Portland, makes very tough, high-quality dog toys in an eco-friendly manner. Having visited this amazing business – I believe it is one of the most innovative and just plain fun businesses in Maine. Dogs rule! Everybody can bring their own dog to work and if you want a private office with a door – make sure you bring a yappy dog!

They reach out to dog lovers everywhere with YouTube, Flickr and every form of outreach known to mankind! They have puppy play group, parades, Halloween costume events – and over their 12-year history, they’ve donated more than a half million dollars to the Planet Dog Foundation, improving the lives of homeless canines.

This is a must-see treasure for all dog-lovers!

SLIDE 24 **Renys**

And speaking of treasures, Maine recently lost one of its most creative retail geniuses. Robert H. Reny built a retail dynasty in Maine's historic downtowns – going head-to-head with national chain stores and adding shopping to the list of true Maine Adventures!

SLIDE 25 **KSB Anytime**

To provide its customers with full service and complete flexibility, Kennebec Savings Bank has created teller-less, 24-hour electronic banking centers. These KSB Anytime centers use state-of-the-art ATM technology to allow customers to do their transactions anytime – providing maximum ease for busy customers.

SLIDE 26 **LL Bean**

And retail magnate LL Bean uses innovative and grueling product-testing processes to assure quality of brand.

SLIDE 27 **Cony Village**

But do you see innovation in other sectors – like in the delivery of social services? Well, the build out of Cony Village in Augusta brought together Bread of Life Ministries, KV Cap and numerous partners to create low income housing that was built on smart growth principles – energy efficient, economically affordable for the longer term. But the village is also meant to support residents by providing life-skills counseling services and community center events.

SLIDE 28 **The Nezinscot Guild**

The Nezinscot Guild in Turner employs 56 people with developmental disabilities or brain injuries – offering them meaningful job opportunities crafting wooden gift crates and providing repackaging services. The Wood Products Division uses Maine wood to build attractive wooden gift boxes for Maine made products like wine, jams and jellies and lobster products. A great example of integrated innovation – all win in this partnership!

SLIDE 29 **Charlotte White Center**

And innovation abounds at the Charlotte White Center in Dover-Foxcroft, where group home residents and social service clients benefit from the Center's greenhouse project, Christmas Tree Farm, victory gardens and consumer-designed art program and note card project.

SLIDE 30 **I-295 Rebuild**

Innovation is alive and well in even the seemingly most mundane of enterprises – like road construction.

Maine revolutionized its approach to the rebuild of I-295 between Gardiner and Brunswick by actually shutting down the northbound lanes and creating staging sites. This dramatically reduced construction time, costs and, perhaps most importantly, risk of accidents.

SLIDE 31 Bridge in a Backpack

And the University of Maine has developed a bridge in a backpack, using lightweight composite materials to build inflatable bridges in a fraction of the time of traditional construction. The first ever was constructed in Pittsfield and seems to be holding strong!

SLIDE 32 Penobscot Bridge Observatory

And who thought of the idea that a new bridge could be a tourist attraction? A spectacular one at that!

SLIDE 33 Maine Turnpike Stop & Craft Center

And my personal favorite – the new Maine Turnpike rest stop in Gardiner.

Now normally when you take a break from driving – you expect restrooms, gas, coffee and a bite to eat.

But the Maine Turnpike Authority and the Maine DOT partnered with the Maine Crafts Association to build an amazing gallery and store in the rest stop itself – featuring crafts from 300 Maine artisans. The works are of the finest quality and craftsmanship – giving Maine’s amazing artisans venue to thousands of potential new customers each year.

Now this is great thinking!

SLIDE 34 Termite – Safe Handling

Could innovation be the answer to our most pressing economic issues – like energy dependence and prices for example?

Well Ford Reiche and his son drove from Alabama to Maine in their new truck - the Termite – a truck that is fueled by wood chips.

You can go 5,000 miles on a cord of wood. Just Imagine!

SLIDE 35 JS McCarthy Printers

And JS McCarthy Printers boast of 100% wind power printing!

SLIDE 36 Old Town Fuel and Fiber

Old Town Fuel and Fiber is working with the University to extract a biofuel from the wood pulp-making process, making the papermaking process more lucrative, providing hope for an old mill site, and providing a new, clean source of energy!

SLIDE 37 Reed & Reed

And Reed and Reed construction has re-tooled their entire business and workforce, rising to become the leading wind power builder in the northeast. Innovation is preserving and growing jobs right here, right now – and creating renewable energy capacity for Maine’s future.

SLIDE 38 Off Shore Wind Partners

And perhaps the highest level of integrated innovation can be seen in the partnerships that have formed in the exploration of a major build-out of off shore wind power.

The best and brightest minds from two research centers, two construction companies, a shipbuilder and our Maritime Academy have come together to pursue one of the most visionary and compelling energy projects of our lifetime.

So yes – perhaps innovation will help us stand to our energy challenges.

SLIDE 39 Bowdoin Ice Rink

Energy efficiency is also becoming a major strategy across the State.

Bowdoin College has built the country’s first newly constructed LEED certified Ice arena!

SLIDE 40 Hannaford’s Cony Store

And of 85,000 grocery stores in the US, Hannaford’s Cony Store in Augusta is the only supermarket in the nation to achieve Platinum LEED certification.

With vegetation and solar panels on the roof and natural sunlight filtering in, this grocery store is both an environmental education site and a retail destination!

SLIDE 41 LifeFlight of Maine

Can innovation help us overcome our healthcare challenges?

You bet! Investment in LifeFlight of Maine has helped deliver critical medical attention to Maine’s infinite rural locations, transporting patients directly to the trauma facility at a speed of 165 miles per hour, saving time and lives.

SLIDE 42 Health Infonet

Another way to bridge the vast healthcare divide in the second most rural state in the nation is through technology. HealthInfoNet is the nation's largest statewide electronic health exchange – providing secure electronic health records that can be shared quickly and safely in the case of an emergency – increasing both the quality and the efficiency of healthcare services.

SLIDE 43 Jazzy Johnnys

And who would have imagined that the lowly hospital johnny would be subjected to a makeover?

Well breast cancer survivor, Patricia Royal of Richmond, decided that the delivery of healthcare services during a cancer patients darkest hours would be more humane if johnnies were more comfortable and dignified. She created Jazzy Johnnys and actually put on a fashion show at MaineGeneral's Inspiration for Life Cancer Survivor Day two weeks ago in Augusta.

Over 1,000 people attended this inspirational event at the stunning Alford Center for Cancer Care.

SLIDE 44 5-2-1-0

And Just Imagine what can happen when seven leading private and non-profit organizations taking it upon themselves to address one of our state's greatest public health challenges- childhood obesity.

That's what happened when Anthem, Unum, MaineMed, MaineHealth, Hannaford, TD Bank and the United Way of Greater Portland created Let's Go! a program to promote healthy eating and increased physical activity among children and their families in the Greater Portland area.

Armed with a simple mnemonic—5-2-1-0 – reminding us that for good health— every day- we should be eating 5 fruits and vegetables, limiting recreational TV and screen time to 2 hours, engaging in physical activity for at least one hour and limiting sugar sweetened beverages—

This year Let's Go! will be working in 12 communities in Greater Portland with -

- more than 18,000 students in over 50 schools
- 15 childcare sites, covering more than 1,500 children
- 9 after school recreation centers, supporting thousands of youth members
- Statewide training and outreach educating hundreds of childcare providers on the obesity epidemic
- 128 health care providers and residents who are members of the Maine Medical Center Physician Hospital Organization
- 6 of Portland's largest employers with more than 11,900 employees

To engage them in changing policies and the surrounding environment to make it easier to be active and eat right

And the kids are loving it! Now that is innovation overdrive!

SLIDE 45 **Alfond Challenge**

Finally – education is the most important investment we must make in every single man, woman and child – lifting each to their personal potential – if we truly want to increase our capacity for innovation and take charge of our future.

We have to blow the lid off the education box we're in and employ every innovative idea, tactic and partnership we can conceive of.

How do we get more kids to aspire to and actually go to college?

How about changing the mindset to think about the entire lifespan of a child - and start thinking about every child's future at the time of their birth?

Harold Alfond, one of our state's greatest blessings, gave as his parting gift to the state he loved so dearly - the Harold Alfond Challenge – providing every child born in Maine with a \$500 college investment fund.

SLIDE 46 **Educare**

As we learned at last year's Annual Meeting, 90% of a child's brain develops before the age of 5. Why not invest as richly as possible in those formative years?

In June – construction began on Maine's first Educare Center – in Waterville to provide children with a consistent, stimulating, loving environment from birth – setting the stage for them to ultimately succeed in their educational pursuits throughout their lifetime.

SLIDE 47 **GMRI – Education Center**

Perhaps the best training for high-paying jobs in science, technology, engineering and math, begins in Middle School.

Why not bring every single Maine middle-schooler on an excellent bus trip, treat them like rock stars, and introduce them to really cool stuff at the Gulf on Maine Research Institute and excite them about the possibilities?

SLIDE 48 JMG

How about expanding the model and work of Jobs for Maine's Graduates and value every single child's potential through those critical teenage years – giving them the supports they need in every aspect of their lives to succeed?

SLIDE 49 Foxcroft Academy

What about re-thinking the traditional High School approach? A decade ago, Foxcroft Academy's leaders realized that the declining population base of teenage children would eventually put them or other High Schools in the region, out of business. Instead of waiting for this future to unfold, they actively pursued the model of investing in the school and opening up the opportunities for international tuition-paying students.

Now the Academy has 82 boarding students from 11 countries adding rich diversity to one of Maine's most homogeneous, rural areas, and bringing \$34,000 per student in tuition monies into the local economy – making it an economic force! Now that's innovation!

SLIDE 50 NMCC – Wind Maintenance

Higher Ed is stepping up to fuel economic development as well.

Northern Maine Community College launched New England's first and only wind power technology program – anticipating and filling a critical need for technicians to maintain the wind power facilities that are being built around Maine and the region.

NMCC had hoped to attract 18 students for their first class this fall. They got 60 applications and ended up seating 40 in the inaugural session.

Fantastic!

SLIDE 51 UNE

And recognizing an unmet need in the opportunities for pharmacy training in Maine, UNE opened its new School of Pharmacy.

That same innovative spirit can be seen in many of our college's as they redefine post secondary education in our state!

SLIDE 52 MEGC Vision

MDF believes in Maine and Maine's future.

Through every program we run, we strive to move Maine towards the vision of “A High Quality of Life for all Maine People” – recognizing that to attain that vision requires:

- A vibrant economy
- Vital communities
- And a healthy environment

As a small non-profit, we strive to move towards that vision by:

- Empowering Leaders
- Strengthening Communities, and
- Guiding Public Policy with objective information

SLIDE 53 **New website**

MDF is working very hard to constantly re-create ourselves.

This June, we launched a new website to better serve our membership and partners – improving access to our research and programming.

SLIDE 54 **New outreach tools - FACEBOOK**

We’re now on FACEBOOK too and invite each and every one of you to join us as a friend!

SLIDE 55 **Empowering Leaders – PLA Bus Tours**

For over 25 years, MDF has worked with Maine’s Legislators through our Policy Leaders Academy forums and bus tours. This year, about half of the Maine Legislature subjected themselves to an absolutely grueling 6-day bus tour of Maine’s economy.

SLIDE 56 **Empowering Leaders – PLA Bus Tours**

We traveled about 1,200 miles, through all weather conditions to introduce them to innovative companies, colleges, research labs, transportation hubs. And we even took them into the Portland Water District’s wastewater facility – which was an experience in and of itself!

MDF believes that this grounds and enriches the policy making process like no other experience possibly could.

SLIDE 57 **Leadership Maine**

Leadership Maine was based on the belief that if you bring together 1,000 Maine leaders,

- equip them with leadership skills,

- immerse them in the Maine economy,
- excite them about the future, and
- empower them to take action,

they can move mountains.

This is a transformative experience – where

- you challenge your self to get out of your comfort zone,
- to define a clearer vision of how you will help Maine, and
- to surround yourself with a network to support and guide you.

SLIDE 58 Empowering Leaders – Leadership Maine

Where else can you

- get inside a destroyer,
- see cutting edge research,
- dance a friendship dance with the Maliseet's, and
- meet with immigrant broccoli farm workers?

SLIDE 59 Downtown – Strand Theater

MDF believes that vibrant downtowns

- can be an economic engine of growth,
- can serve as an attractant to young people, creative economic ventures, retirees and diverse populations, and
- can mitigate costly sprawling land use development patterns.

That's why we run the Maine Downtown Center so we can access and focus investment dollars from such partners as the State of Maine, the Betterment Fund, and the USDA into Maine's historic downtown communities, and leverage a 25 to 1 return on every dollar.

We now work with 10 Main Street Maine communities and 7 Maine Downtown Network communities all over the state – inspiring innovation in the

- historic preservation of cultural assets and
- festivals and events to draw people downtown

SLIDE 60 Downtown – Walkways - EFN

The Maine Downtown Center was recently awarded a first ever Environmental Funders Network Grant to launch our Green Downtowns Initiative! This will energize the great work that is already going on in this area – and provide new resources to our communities.

SLIDE 61 Downtown – Center of Known Universe

Innovation is alive and well throughout Maine's downtowns.

And let's consider Bucksport – and think big in marketing your community – Did you know that Bucksport is the Center of the known Universe?

SLIDE 62 MEGC – 15th MOG Report

In 2009, the 15th edition of the Measures of Growth was published and widely distributed.

MDF continues to believe that if you provide Maine people

- with objective, non-partisan information about the performance of Maine's economy,
- the level of debate will rise and sounder policies will be developed.

SLIDE 63 2009 Gold Star Award Winners

Over the past year, 11 companies and organizations adopted one or more of the 24 key indicators and agreed to focus, through their work, on taking action to help move Maine towards the benchmark.

Today, I'd like to honor the 9 organizations that adopted one or more of the Growth Council's benchmarks, and have actually documented their actions and progress.

For their commitment, they are receiving a Gold Star Award. While the actual award can be picked up at the display table following today's events, I would ask that the following organizations please stand and be recognized for their commitment to Maine's economic future:

- AEWG – University of Maine
- Burgess Advertising & Marketing
- Finance Authority of Maine
- Greater Waterville Patch
- Maine Technology Institute
- Northeast Bank
- Spurwink Services
- WBRC Architects
- York County Community College

As I mentioned, your awards can be picked up at the MDF display or we can mail them to you.

Thank you all for engaging in our future!

SLIDE 64 MDF Research and Analysis

Over the past couple of years, MDF has greatly expanded its research capacity.

We have

- published two major reports on the importance of transportation infrastructure,
- we have written numerous reports, speeches, and articles on the economy, economic development, early childhood, municipal and school consolidation, and
- we are currently working on adding further insight into the impact of domestic violence on economic productivity.

In addition, MDF is about to launch a huge research project with the Maine State Chamber updating work I had done 8 years ago called Maine's Investment Imperative. I ask you to please work with us in this endeavor as we try to more fully understand the investments that must be made in Maine to secure our future prosperity, and what, exactly, is preventing your company or organization from making necessary investments. Our hope is to guide, inform and focus the gubernatorial debates with your input on what is most critical.

SLIDE 65 REALIZE!Maine

MDF believes that organizing and empowering Maine's young working-age adults will increase excitement and encourage young people to stay and work in Maine.

That's why, 3 years ago, we agreed to champion the statewide REALIZE!Maine initiative.

With the strong financial support and visionary leadership of the Bangor Savings Bank Foundation, we have built a vibrant network of young people across this state.

Three years ago there were 3 separate regional groups with about 300 members.

Now there are 12 regional REALIZE groups all around the state – from Presque Isle to York County and from the Oxford Hills to the mid-coast, actively welcoming and engaging young people in the economies and communities of their areas.

And the network has grown tenfold to 3,000!

SLIDE 66 Entreverge - Turtle Love

We are very fortunate to have some of the most dynamic young entrepreneurs from the Portland region with us today.

Johann Sabbath, who is the incoming Chair of the statewide REALIZE!Maine Steering Committee, worked with PROPEL and it's sponsoring organization the Portland Regional Chamber – to create Entreverge – an award program for young entrepreneurs.

I'd like to introduce you to Johann and this year's winners – if you could please stand.

Adrienne Zahner – from Turtle Love Committee that is a forward thinking, internet-based company that sells, among many things, unconventional wedding and engagement rings for very cool people!

SLIDE 67 Entreverge - Emilie Inc.

Emilie Sommer – of Emilie Inc. is a multi-faceted wedding photography business and Emilie founded – the Pink Initiative – a non-profit to support breast cancer research.

SLIDE 68 Entreverge – Pemaquid Communications

Rob Landry – founder of Pemaquid Communications, a web design studio in Portland, is at the forefront of the progressive “co-working” movement in Southern Maine.

Co-working brings together independent contractors on a project by project basis.

SLIDE 69 Entreverge – Atayne

Jeremy Litchfield started Atayne – which designs and sells high performance athletic apparel that is made from trash and other recycled materials! Now that's innovation for sure!

SLIDE 70 Entreverge – Topline Marketing

And Karen Farrell of Topline Marketing – a South Portland marketing company that exclusively markets natural food and life products

SLIDE 71 Maine Employers' Initiative

MDF believes that the single greatest hope for raising incomes, spurring economic development and supporting the high quality of life that we seek lies in raising the post-secondary attainment of all Maine people.

That is why the Maine Development Foundation, in partnership with the Maine Community Foundation and the Compact for Higher Education, launched the Maine Employers' Initiative.

The Employers' Initiative needs every single employer in this room to step forward and commit to taking just one more step towards encouraging your employees to further their education.

50 organizations have already agreed to do one more thing – from talking with employees, to posting educational opportunities, to providing flexibility – the choice is totally yours.

You can sign up on our website or in the back of the room today! Please join us!

SLIDE 72 Just Imagine – Innovation - Greek

Innovation.

No matter how you spell it, no matter how you say it, embrace it with all the zest you can muster!

Don't let it all be Greek to you!

SLIDE 73 Just Imagine – Sebec Lake Sunrise

Just Imagine if each time that the sun rose over Maine, we awakened to the possibilities of the day rather than the struggles...

SLIDE 74 Just Imagine – Alford Babies

Just Imagine if today, we committed to begin nurturing, inspiring and investing in the human potential from day one – and gave every Mainer the opportunity to meet their full potential...

SLIDE 75 Just Imagine – Strand Theater

Just Imagine if we worked together to understand our rich history and to build our future on a strong foundation of our past...

SLIDE 76 Just Imagine – Offshore Wind

Just Imagine if we have the courage to dream the big dreams and the fortitude to make the dreams come true...

SLIDE 77 Just Imagine – Katahdin

Just Imagine the heights we could scale together if we let our creativity soar...

SLIDE 78 Just Imagine – Fireworks

Just Imagine if each and every one of you and leaders across the state took the personal responsibility to take a positive action to inspire hope in Maine's future – what a spectacular future that could be!

Just imagine!