

Just Imagine a State Where...

Celebrating Amazing Mainers

**Maine Development Foundation's
30th Annual Meeting**

September 18, 2008

SLIDE 1 Introduction

This is only my fourth annual meeting and, for those of you who have been in attendance in the past three years, you know that we begin the day with the “Just Imagine” theme.

When I decided to pull together the Just Imagine talk 3 years ago, my goals were very simple – I just wanted people to have pride in this state and hope for the future. I figured that if I could elicit just one “Wow, I didn’t know we did that in Maine”, I would have been successful.

So frequently, we’re bombarded with messages about all that is wrong with Maine.

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.

I also see amazing people – Maine people. Some are native Mainers, others have joined us a bit later in their lives, some can only break away for parts of the year to be with us – but all share an inexplicable longing to be here, a deep love of this place, its communities and its people.

We are Mainers all.

So who are the people of Maine? What characteristics make us special? When the world hears the words “I’m from Maine” – what do they think? What do they assume about us? How do they react?

And what do they know and appreciate about us that we don’t even know or appreciate about ourselves?

Mainers have touched the region, the nation and the world – and continue to today. Let’s explore who we are and what we contribute to the future – not just of Maine – but of the nation and world.

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 2 Leadership Maine – Pi Class

Last week, as I was feverishly preparing for today's meeting, life took a funny turn - as it sometimes does. The MDF staffer who runs Leadership Maine was called out of state on a family emergency and I was suddenly thrust into the position of having to leave the office for 3 days to help run the Opening retreat of the 16th class of Leadership Maine.

At first it was completely overwhelming and I was panicked – because there was so much work to be done back at the office. But as I met and started to get to know each of these incredible people – I realized that the “disruption” was actually a blessing.

SLIDE 3 Pi Class candid

Through the course of the 3 days, I watched these 31 people from all over the state, from big business and small business, from private sector to non-profit and government, from the far left to the far right, from their birthplace in Biddeford to their birthplace in Nairobi - begin to share their stories, to share why they, from their varied backgrounds and experiences, were willing to challenge themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally to try to make themselves a more effective leader.

As the retreat unfolded, I found myself absolutely amazed at the depth of character, wisdom and experience around me. I was the one saying – “Wow, I didn't know there were people like this in Maine!”

I was blown away by these people, their life work and experiences and their passion for making Maine a better place.

I saw in these people – what others see in us. They are – each and every one – AMAZING!

So let's explore some of what the world sees of us...

Who are some of the most amazing Mainers who have touched the world and, in some cases, changed the course of history?

How do people outside the state know us and what words would they use to describe us?

SLIDE 4 Peary and MacMillan

Perhaps they would know us by our explorers and would describe us as adventurous.

Surely if they know of the arctic explorations of Robert Peary and Donald MacMillan as they made it to the North Pole, they would know of our spirit of adventure.

SLIDE 5 Joshua Chamberlain

Or maybe we are known by our war heroes and would be described as courageous.

Joshua Chamberlain and his small group of soldiers, the 20th Maine, changed the course of history by defending the hill in the battle of Little Round Top.

History now suggests that if the South had taken that hill, they may well have won the war.

Quick thinking and raw courage changed the course of history.

SLIDE 6 Margaret Chase Smith

There may be some who define Maine people by our elected officials – as there are several amazing Mainers who have played and continue to play a national and international leadership role.

The little lady from Skowhegan, Senator Margaret Chase Smith, rocked America when she stood up to the tyranny of Joseph McCarthy and his anticommunist crusade by reading her “Declaration on Conscience” to the US Senate.

It is virtually impossible for us to fully understand the enormity of the courage and inner strength that this woman had – making a principled stand when others chose to hide.

Margaret Chase Smith was the first women to be elected to both houses of Congress and her abilities and independent spirit made her one of the most admired women in America.

SLIDE 7 Edmund Muskie

Maine’s people have long been viewed as caring deeply about our environment and Rumford native US Senator Edmund Muskie is one of the key people earning us that reputation.

So strong was his work, in fact, that Ed Muskie is described as the father of the modern environmental movement.

It is said that: “Before Ed Muskie,

- there was no national environmental policy.
- There was no national environmental movement.
- There was no national environmental consciousness.

SLIDE 8 George Mitchell

And for those who might form their opinion of Maine people based on Senator George Mitchell – the words integrity and diplomat would come to mind.

From his humble roots in Waterville, Mitchell rose to be the US Senate Majority Leader – the second most powerful elected official in America.

For six straight years, George Mitchell was voted “the most respected member of the US Senate” by a bipartisan group.

Interestingly, George Mitchell led the Senate to passage of the nation’s first child care bill.

SLIDE 9 Congressional Delegation

And our current delegation has distinguished themselves as independent thinkers, fair minded and hard-working.

SLIDE 10 Joan Benoit

Perhaps some know of the spirit of Maine through our athletes. When Joan Benoit Samuelson won the first women’s Olympic marathon in 1984, the world witnessed perseverance and true grit – great Maine qualities.

SLIDE 11 Seth Wescott

And with Olympic Snowboarding Gold Medalist Seth Wescott – they see our free spirited, thrill seeking side!

SLIDE 12 Milton Bradley

Just imagine being home to some of the most well-known creators of games and children's books

I never realized that Milton Bradley, who is credited with launching the board-game industry in North America, was a native of Vienna, Maine.

Milton created a number of things that provided family-time entertainment and childhood learning. Milton was one of the first advocates for kindergartens!

He and his family ran the first kindergarten in Springfield MA and Milton developed wooden blocks for the kids to play and learn with.

He also created the first jigsaw puzzle for kids and, can you imagine, the infamous "Mr. Potato Head" has his roots in Maine!

So Maine people may be thought of as playful and family focused.

SLIDE 13 E.B. White

And who's imagination has not been captivated by E.B.White's Children's books – Charlotte's Web and Stuart Little?

White, who is revered as being one of the world's greatest authors of children's stories, drew some of his inspiration from the farm he bought in North Brooklin, Maine, where he lived for 28 years.

SLIDE 14 Stephen King

And speaking of imagination, think of the countless lives that have been touched by the frightful genius of Stephen King. Probably Maine's most

well know modern author – many of whose books have been made into movies.

SLIDE 15 Chester Greenwood and Leon Bean

Maybe people view us by the products we make – like the practical ear muff created by Chester Greenwood, or the quality hunting boot of LL Bean.

SLIDE 16 David DeLorme

And David DeLorme has made a career of being helpful to folks who are lost or need some direction. DeLorme’s Atlases are sold worldwide and he has, personally, undermined the old Maine myth that..

“ You can’t get they-ah from he-ah”! In fact you can – and he’ll show you the way!

SLIDE 17 Thomas Moser

Over the year’s, Maine’s people have become known for their fine craftsmanship – like the sleek line of Thomas Moser Furniture...

SLIDE 18 Tim Hodgdon

Or the stunning craftsmanship of our yachts!

The workmanship of companies like Hodgdon Yachts is absolutely breath-taking and is becoming known worldwide for quality and innovation.

SLIDE 19 Amy Bouchard – Wicked Whoopie

And for the millions who watch Oprah Winfrey, they may know of Maine for Amy Bouchard’s Wicked Whoopies – and may conceive of Mainers as being fun-loving and spirited.

SLIDE 20 Stonewall Kitchen

Others may know of our wholesome side from Stonewall Kitchens...

SLIDE 21 Raye’s Mustard

Still others who enjoy the many flavors of Kevin and Karen Raye’s mustards, may think of us as grounded.

SLIDE 22 Wyeth’s

The influence of having Maine roots can be seen everywhere. In the fine arts, the Wyeth family has put Maine on the map.

SLIDE 23 Henry W. Longfellow

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow has long been lauded in literary circles.

SLIDE 24 Ed Harris

And Maine has been home to many movie and TV stars.

SLIDE 25 Patrick Dempsey

For those who know that Grey’s Anatomy star Patrick Dempsey is from Lewiston, Maine – they may rightly have assumed that all Mainers are drop-dead gorgeous!

SLIDE 26 Habib Dagher

Being more serious for a moment, there is a good amount of research going on right now in Maine, being performed by folks whose names may well only be known in the research community, but whose work could truly change the world.

Take, for example, the work of the researchers in the University of Maine's Advanced Engineered Wood Composites Center, led by Habib Dagher and his amazing team of researchers.

You may never know the names of the folks in that lab, but you might be tremendously thankful if your son or daughter:

- is saved from being hit by shrapnel while off-duty in their army tent because of the composite tent wall inserts they developed.
- Or if a relative is serving as a Navy Seal, and no longer has to suffer dental and spinal injuries because composites that absorb shock are used in the boats.
- Or if the tamper-proof composite shipping containers developed in Orono prevent a bomb or hazardous materials from being delivered to our shores.
- Or if they are able to develop the blades and shafts for off-shore wind turbines to be put in the Gulf of Maine, supplying the entire State with electricity.

SLIDE 27 Hemant Pendse

And you may not ever know of the name Hemant Pendse and the great research that he and his people are doing at the University to develop biofuels from Maine's vast forest resource.

Not only could these fuels provide Maine with an indigenous source of energy, it could add value to the paper-making process, ultimately strengthening this industry and enabling us to compete more effectively in world markets.

SLIDE 28 David Serreze

And the name of Dave Serreze may never become a household name – but if your child suffers from Juvenile diabetes, you could be eternally thankful for the research that he has pioneered in this area while at the Jackson Laboratory.

SLIDE 29 Sue Ackerman

The same may be true of JAX's Sue Ackerman who discovered the sticky modifier gene which appears to cause the mis-folding of a protein in the brain.

Her work might go unnoticed in our everyday lives and conversations – but if you've ever had a family member struggle with Alzheimer's disease – you may grow to appreciate her distinguished work.

SLIDE 30 Simon John

And the Lab's Simon John was able to interrupt the intergenerational transfer of glaucoma in mice and is now working with peers at Columbia to see if the same can be done in humans.

Absolutely amazing Maine people who are touching and improving the quality of life for all mankind.

SLIDE 31 Samantha Smith

And speaking of touching the hearts of mankind, who would have thought that a 10 year old girl from Manchester, Maine would capture the heart of a world leader? Soviet President Yuri Andropov was touched by Samantha's letter asking him if he was going to wage a nuclear attack on us.

SLIDE 32 Hanley Denning

And Hanley Denning touched our hearts with her selfless work in Guatemala founding Safe Passage to provide housing and education to children who were living in the garbage-filled slums of Guatemala.

How have we, as Mainers, empowered our children to do great things – things far beyond their years – and to poignantly touch the lives of others?

Well, it could have something to do with the fact that we honor and love our children.

The theme of today's conference is Investing in our most precious assets, and there are a number of folks who advocate for children on a daily basis.

There are many folks in this room today who are true visionaries and whose life work centers on protecting and educating our youngest people.

SLIDE 33 Elinor Goldberg

Perhaps the most well-known of our child welfare crusaders is Ellie Goldberg – whose work with the Maine Children’s Alliance, the annual publication of the Kids Count book, and numerous other initiatives has bettered the lives of Maine’s children and has earned her national recognition.

Her energetic advocacy and dynamic leadership led to her being awarded the Florette Angel Memorial Award in Washington DC.

A great tribute to a great lady!

SLIDE 34 Tim Wilson – Seeds of Peace

And visionary Tim Wilson’s dream of planting the seeds of peace in war-ravaged middle-east countries by bringing teenagers from enemy countries together at a summer camp in Maine – just celebrated it’s 15th year.

He has taken on the impossible and is, in no small way, working miracles with the world’s children – on the shores of a small lake in western Maine!

SLIDE 35 Karen Heck

And Karen Heck has devoted her career to helping girls and women change American culture. By forming Hardy Girls, Karen is working to make the world a better, more supportive place for girls.

In 2006, she received the AAUW’s Achievement Citation Award, the highest award for extraordinary community involvement in women’s issues.

SLIDE 36 Harold Alfond

Harold Alfond has invested mightily in the health of our children by providing athletic facilities across the state to help children develop strong minds and bodies.

In addition, his foundation recently launched an initiative to grant monies to every baby born in Maine – giving them a start at saving for college. An amazingly visionary idea that could ultimately change the course of history for Maine and propel our children forward.

SLIDE 37 Angus King

And Angus King’s visionary Laptop Initiative put Maine on the technological map by providing every Maine 7th and 8th grader with a computer – making our children technologically literate and positioning them to better compete in the global workforce.

SLIDE 38 Don Perkins

The Gulf of Maine Research Institute, with the generous funding from companies like Poland Spring and Hannaford, brings 5th and 6th graders from across the state to the educational center to learn about the vast marine resource of the Gulf of Maine. This experience exposes our kids to the opportunities that exist for them and increases excitement for science.

SLIDE 39 Challenger

And in Bangor, our children’s imaginations about space are captivated at the Challenger Learning Center!

SLIDE 40 George Mitchell – Mitchell Institute

Some organizations in Maine are making it possible for Maine students to go on to college.

The Mitchell Institute provides scholarships to students in every single Maine high school and works with these students to help them successfully transition into and graduate from college.

SLIDE 41 Rob Brown – Opportunity Maine

And Opportunity Maine Executive Director Rob Brown has been recognized nationally for his efforts to raise awareness among young people that Maine has the most ambitious financial aid program in the country, and to assist educators, guidance counselors and staff in promoting and implementing it.

SLIDE 42 Good Will - Hinckley

And in Maine, we honor all of our children – and seek to provide opportunities for those less fortunate or struggling with special challenges.

Good Will Hinkley provides a home to youth facing complex academic, social, behavioral and emotional challenges.

SLIDE 43 Kenneth Olson – Kid’s Peace

And Ken Olson and his staff at Kids Peace provide supports to help children overcome crisis, to value themselves, and to find a vision for their future.

This is only the tip of the iceberg – as countless Maine people have dedicated themselves to helping all of Maine’s children.

Truly amazing people doing truly amazing work. Today – we celebrate you and thank you!

SLIDE 44 MDF Celebrating 30 Years

And as we wrap up this portion of the program – we celebrate 30 years of service to Maine’s people and Maine’s economy.

I have grown to appreciate that 3 decades is no small feat – requiring tremendous reinvention and innovation to remain abreast of and engaged in the most relevant and pressing issues of the day.

SLIDE 45 James Longley

In preparing my background paper for the Brookings Institution a couple of years ago, I was interested to learn that it was Governor James Longley who had created the Maine Development Foundation in 1978.

An Independent Governor and thinker, Longley, along with the Legislature, saw the wisdom of having an entity outside of government who could bring together the private, non-profit and education sectors and partner with government in long-term economic development.

Since its inception three decades ago, MDF has stayed true to its nonpartisan convener role, bringing the resources of the private and non-profit sector to bear on Maine’s greatest economic challenges and opportunities.

So who are the people responsible for the success and longevity of this great organization? Let’s take a look...

SLIDE 46 MDF – Original Staff 78-83

MDF's first 5 years were guided by the Foundation's President – Nate Bowditch. Nate was a brilliant leader with a true global perspective and worked to connect Maine with the economic opportunities that lay beyond the borders.

Under Nate's leadership, a million dollars was raised in private capital and the Maine Capital Corporation was chartered.

The Maine World Trade Association was also created and was housed at MDF for some time, before spinning off to a stand alone entity that ultimately became the Maine International Trade Center.

MDF ran a number of more traditional economic development programs that were ably staffed by such economic development professionals as Dick Kelso, Gore Flynn, Stan Moody and Steve Weems.

SLIDE 47 1984-2004 – The Era of Henry

For the next 21 years, Henry Bourgeois was at the helm. Henry is a true visionary, with a passion for education and a core value of bringing stakeholders to the table.

Through that Era, MDF grew and prospered, launching a number of initiatives that truly propelled Maine's economic development thinking.

In addition to creating a number of core programs, MDF created:

- the Maine Science and Technology Board (which later became a stand alone Foundation),
- raised over \$1 million for raising aspirations of our school kids,

- ran a series of Blaine House conferences on Small Business
- Created the Maine Coalition for Excellence in Education

The Foundation's dynamo staff included:

- Lucien Gosselin,
- Meredith Jones
- Laura Hudson,
- Laurie Windsor,
- Leann Greeley Bond,
- Kellie Guarino
- Craig Freshley
- Darcy Rollins Saas

Now I've only been here for 4 years, but I've got to tell you – running a small non-profit is the hardest thing I've ever done! For 4 years I have been struggling to figure out how Henry did it with such apparent ease.

Then it dawned on me, Henry has always surrounded himself with the most forward looking, competent people.

SLIDE 48 Board of Directors – 1983-84

The MDF Board has long been filled with a who's who of corporate and non-profit leaders.

Check out this wild and crazy bunch back in 1983-1984!

Over the years, Board Chairs and members included:

- Alton Ciancette
- Skip Thurlow
- Hugh Farrington
- Wes Bonney
- Ed Dinan

- John Fitzsimmons
- Kevin Gildart
- Chuck Hewett
- Bob Woodbury
- John Bragg

SLIDE 49 Staff Out Standing in their fields

The staff he hired were always outstanding in their fields.

And the true secret of his success?

SLIDE 50 Henry Superman

He had a phone booth!

I am still searching for this particular item!

I think when he decided to retire – he had Ed Dinan and company remove all the pay phones!

SLIDE 51 Institute on the Maine Economy

One of MDF's first signature programs was the Institute on the Maine Economy – developed to train Legislators about Maine's economy.

The program was launched by a dynamic team of LL Bean President Leon Gorman and then Speaker of the House Dan Gwadosky.

SLIDE 52 Institute – Meredith Jones

Early success of the Institute was due, in large part, to the energetic staffing by the irrepressible Meredith Jones – Queen of the Legislative bus tours!

A little known fact, in a quarter of a century of bus tours, Meredith is the ONLY MDF staffer to abandon a Legislator who was on the tour – leaving them somewhere in the wilds of Northern Maine!

SLIDE 53 Policy Leaders Academy

The Institute has remained a core program of the Foundation – but has morphed into Policy Leaders Academy.

MDF believes deeply that taking new Legislators

- on an intensive economic bus tour of Maine,
- introducing them to business people around the state
- and letting them see, first hand, how their public investments in transportation, education and other public systems drive economic development

grounds and enriches the policy making process.

In January 2007, we took 75 legislators on a grueling 1,300 mile economic tour of Maine.

We are currently working with our partners, The Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center, the Muskie School of Public Service, and the Community College System to plan this year's tours.

SLIDE 54 Leadership Maine – Kelly Guarino

In the early 1990s, the second major leadership program was born.

Following the State budget crisis that rocked Augusta in 1991, all MDF General Fund support was cut – causing the Board to really dig deep to figure out how to sustain the organization.

Leadership Maine was created and has grown to be a true force.

Former Governor Ken Curtis served as Dean of the program and Kellie Guarino was its first Program Director with consulting help from Charlie Colgan, Pam Plumb and the staff of Hurricane Island Outward Bound Program.

SLIDE 55 Leadership Maine – Cheryl Miller

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.

We now have well over 600 graduates and they are already doing absolutely amazing things for Maine.

For the past 8 years, Senior Program Director - Cheryl Miller – has been the heart and soul of this program – continuing to innovate to better meet the needs of Maine leaders.

SLIDE 56 Maine Economic Growth Council - Original

Another program born out of the state's period of adversity was the Maine Economic Growth Council. The state's fiscal crisis made clear to the Legislature that they needed a source of consistent, reliable, unbiased economic information on which they could rely to guide them in their policy making.

The Growth Council was created in statute with a clear mandate to set a vision for Maine's economic future, a broad outline of how to get there, and a set of benchmarks to measure progress.

BIW's Kevin Gildart and Senator Chellie Pingree co-led a very diverse group of council members and quickly made this Annual Report THE most widely used and trusted of all economic reports.

SLIDE 57 MEGC – 14th MOG Report

In 2008, the 14th 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.

The Growth Council is currently very ably staffed by Program Director Ed Cervone, who has done a great job of bringing the most pressing economic issues before the council for their consideration.

The Council is co-chaired by Senator Lynn Bromley and retired Madison Paper Industries President Leroy Barry. Tim Hussey, President of Hussey Seating, served as interim chair this past winter.

SLIDE 58 MOG – Table of Contents

The most recent report includes 24 indicators across three broad categories – Economy, Community and Environment – all three of which impact our ability to move Maine towards our vision of a high quality of life for all Maine people.

SLIDE 59 Adopt a Benchmark

Under the leadership of Senator Lynn Bromley, the Growth Council received some funding that allowed us to re-launch the Adopt-a-Benchmark Program.

Over the past year, 27 companies and organizations, which is twice the number of participants as when this began, 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.

These 27 entities are taking a lead in focusing on critical elements of our future prosperity – and I would like to both commend them and thank them.

SLIDE 60 2008 Gold Star Award Winners

Today, I'd like to honor the 12 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:

- Blue Hill Peninsula Chamber of Commerce
- Community Concepts, Inc.
- Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems
- Finance Authority of Maine
- Greater Waterville Patch
- Maine Community Foundation
- Maine Technology Institute
- National Semiconductor
- Portland Water District
- 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 61 Maine Downtown Center

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 14 to 1 return on every dollar.

SLIDE 62 Maine Downtown Center – Leadership/Visionaries

The Center's success has been due in large part to such downtown visionaries as Bill King, Mary Kate Reny, Roxanne Eflin and Jayne Palmer, and a number of other dedicated Advisory Council members – particularly Council Chair Jon Edgerton.

And Commissioner John Richardson has emerged as the Champion for revitalization of our historic downtowns. His commitment and our partnership with DECD have breathed new life into this program and have enabled us to bring our Program Director, Kristen Cady, to full time.

SLIDE 63 Realize Maine – Yellow and the Steering Committee

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 of the Bangor Savings Bank Foundation and the hard work of an extremely dedicated Steering Committee, led initially by Yellow Light Breen and more recently by Sally DelGreco, we were able to launch a new web-based tool aimed directly at this age cohort to provide job opportunities, living options, and a ready-made network of young professionals.

Ed Cervone stepped up to lead this past spring, working closely with Amanda Roggio to establish relationships with the growing numbers of regional Realize affiliates, to run a grant program to benefit the regions, and to create social networks for all to connect with.

Today, I am happy to announce the appointment of this year's Statewide Realize Maine Steering Committee. Some of them are with us this morning – others will be joining us for the Realize Maine networking reception directly following today's event in the Kennebec Room. All are welcome – even older folks like me!

Can those who are with us please stand and be recognized.

This year's Steering Committee includes:

Michael Bennett
Corey Bisson
Scott Blake
Noel Bonam
Michael Carey
Sally DelGreco
Andre Duchette
Hillary Flynn Eaton
Shannon Haines
Stacey Haskell
Thomas Kittredge
Emily Mitchell
Mariah Nelson
Lorinda Payton
Amanda Rector
Catherine Reilly
Gloria White

SLIDE 64 Realize Maine Regional Groups

For those who think that all of our young people are leaving Maine – think again! A recent analysis of demographic trends prepared by State Planning Office Realizers – Amanda Rector and Kate Reilly, shows that the out-migration of the 20-40 cohort has been, at least temporarily, reversed.

And regional Realize groups have formed all around the state – from Presque Isle to Portland and from the Oxford Hills to the mid-coast, with 11 active groups welcoming and engaging young people in the economies and communities of their areas.

SLIDE 65 The Maine Aspirations Foundation

Throughout MDF’s history – promoting education has been at our very core. In the 80s, the Maine Aspirations Foundation was created.

SLIDE 66 Compact for Higher Education

In the 90s, the Compact for Higher Education was created – to promote post secondary education through a variety of strategies.

The Compact has been ably led by Joe Boulus and now Joe Foley – two powerfully effective and passionate leaders committed to this cause.

SLIDE 67 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, has recently launched the Maine Employers' Initiative.

Last year, the Maine Community Foundation, under the bold leadership of Hank Schmelzer and the hard work and strategy of Meredith Jones, secured over a half million dollars in grant funding from the Ford Foundation and the Lumina Foundation to launch this work,

- an effort to identify best practices in employer-supported college-going,
- and to support businesses statewide as they encourage their employees to pursue post-secondary degrees.

Today – I would like to take a moment to publicly thank Hank Schmelzer, President of the Maine Community Foundation for all of the work he has done for Maine people to further the opportunities they have for attaining a college education.

Hank – please stand and accept our gratitude!

SLIDE 68 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

SLIDE 69 Just Imagine – MDF People

Just Imagine if a small group of Maine Development Foundation Employees, with the visionary leadership of their board and the engaged support of their advisory councils and volunteers, can empower Maine's leaders and Guide Public Policy by:

- bringing people together from across this great state, from all sectors and all perspectives,
- arming them with relevant, reliable, unbiased economic information and
- engaging, encouraging and supporting them to catalyze growth and development in Maine

SLIDE 70 Just Imagine – Kennebec River

Just Imagine if that same organization who has worked tirelessly over 3 decades, to earn the trust of business, non-profit and government leaders, could continue to strengthen communities by:

- Moving to an historic downtown
- Catalyzing investment in the Capital Riverfront district
- Working with downtowns across this state to revitalize these tremendous assets and bring economic vitality back to Main Street

SLIDE 71 Just Imagine – You've Inspired Me

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.

One of my favorite bumper sticker messages is this:

“Be the Person your Dog believes you are”

Across the US – people believe that Mainers are:

- honest
- hard-working
- grounded
- independent
- innovative
- adventurous
- industrious and
- hopeful

Let’s commit to be the people that the world thinks we are!

And just imagine all that Maine can be!