



CHAMBER NEWS



Chamber Celebrates 25th Anniversary 1984—2009



Executive Director
Russ Page

Yes, it's true. The Chamber is looking for a new Executive Director. You'll see the ads in the Observer and the Gazette this week. I have fulfilled my promised year-or-two commitment to Ralph Gabarro and the Board of Directors and now it is time for me and my wife to officially retire. That means not having to get up and go to work every morning and it also allows me to do some occasional business and non-profit consulting which I have passed up due to time restraints. It also means we'll finally have the time to do some traveling around this beautiful country to no one's timetable but our own. As the Chamber celebrates its 25th year, think about how you or someone you know might help to move this dynamic organization forward, as a regular member, board member or even as the new executive director. The challenges are undeniable, but the rewards are worth it.

The Piscataquis Chamber of Commerce celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2009. Throughout the year we will look at the Chamber's milestones, its accomplishments and the people who served this organization and this region so well over the last 25 years.

According to the archives, the Southern Piscataquis Chamber of Commerce was chartered with the state of Maine in June of 1984, the same month that the pieces of the current Chamber building arrived from **Northeast Log Homes in Kenduskeag**. Total cost of the donated materials? \$11,000.

The organization that put the building together was the same group that recently completed upgrades nearly 25 years later. The **Charles-ton Correctional Facility** supplied the labor to erect the building in 1984 and to replace the steps, deck and handicap ramp, new metal roof, pressure wash the building, caulk the logs and stain the exterior in 2008. Jim Robinson said that he brought coffee and donuts to the crew every morning that they put the log home together. I didn't buy any coffee and donuts because I'm too cheap and those guys ate like horses.

Chamber charter members back in 1984 included **Jim Robinson**, **Rev. F. Cleon Ross of St Augustine's Episcopal Church** was president, **Dale Thistle**, owner of **Thistle's Restaurant** was vice president, **Michael Walker** owner of **Dover True Value Hardware** was secretary, treasurer was **William Hogan** and the very first executive director was **Richard Sawyer**.

"Bill Hogan was the first person to come to me back in 1984 and said that we needed a chamber of commerce," remembers **Jim Robinson**

Other charter board members were **Gene Gammon** the owner of **Rowell's Garage**, **Dentist Harold 'Hap' Gerrish**, **WDME Owner Fred Hirsch**, **Gene 'Red' Mountain** owner of **Mountain's Market**, **J.J. Newberry** Manager **Wilma Andrews**, attorney **Arthur Hathaway**, **Bangor Savings Bank's Betty Harvey**, **Jerry Dunham** of the **Blethen House**, **Gordon True** of **True Farms** and insurance rep **David Bowley**.

In June of 1984 the Chamber had signed a health insurance agreement which gave coverage to members if they so desired. **Dale Thistle** was heading up a membership drive and had meetings scheduled in Guilford and Milo and the new Chamber building was expected to be up in a month. The new offices were funded by *"various towns, the county and a note taken out by the directors in the name of the corporation."*

It was noted that bookkeeping and accounting *"will be done on a computer agreement with Frank Myers."* The operational budget for 1984 was \$12,700.

A lot of things have changed since 1984, but a lot remains the same. The Chamber is still made up of dedicated, forward-thinking members of our communities who believe that healthy business & industry mean a healthy county and more prosperous state.



Photo courtesy of the Observer's Josh Salm

Well over 100 guests attended the **Business After Hours & grand opening ceremonies** January 16 at **Foxcroft Veterinary Services**. Kudos to the FVS staff for providing an excellent mini buffet. **Doctor Ron Miles** noted the firm's appreciation to all of its customers without whom the new building would not have been possible. The next **Business After Hours** will be hosted by the **Town of Dover-Foxcroft Thursday, February 12** from 5—7 pm at the new Town Office.

French Honored with Myric Community Service Award

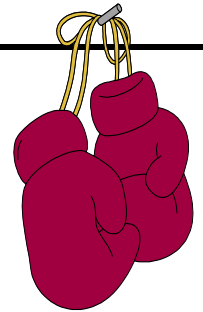


Piscataquis Chamber of Commerce Vice President, Sherry French of WDME Radio, was recently honored as the recipient of the 6th annual Warren ‘Pete’ Myrick Community Service Award. Tom Lizotte (Mayo Regional Hospital) made the presentation at the annual meeting of the PCEDC. The award is presented to a citizen, business or organization that exemplifies Pete’s concern for and commitment to education, economic development and/or civic leadership in the region.

Sherry said that she shared the award with her husband, Jim, (French Construction) who gave her moral as well as financial assistance for her many projects. She went on to say the he was mostly unaware of the latter.

(Left to Right—Tom Lizotte, nominator Keri Foster of the Piscataquis Observer, French and new PCEDC President & Greenville town manager John Simko.

How To Beat A Recession



These are things you should be doing in your business recession or no recession. If you aren’t doing these already and you think that more than 2 are foolish and will not work, put a Going Out of Business sign in your front window...because you are.

1. **Don’t cut advertising.** Let your competition dump his advertising. When times are good it pays to advertise. When times are tough you’ve got to advertise.
2. **Network, network, network.** Let people see your face. Get involved in your community. You can’t do business living in a vacuum.
3. **Re-evaluate** your product lines and your suppliers. Get rid of the old and bring in fresh, new items that have appeal to today’s consumers.
4. **Clean, brighten & freshen** up your store. Old, worn and dingy doesn’t sell. Never did.
5. **Add a new service.** Offer something nobody else is offering.
6. **Shut Up & Listen.** Really listen to customers. They’ll tell you what you’re doing right and what you’re doing wrong. Then fix it.
7. **Use technology and your head.** Look for ways to save time and money. Be more efficient.
8. **Stop doing things** that aren’t working (profitable) and start doing things that are.
9. **Smile** and say “Thank you for choosing to do business with us.”
10. **Thank your employees,** empower them and listen to their ideas. You’re not the only sharp knife in the tray, you know. If your employees aren’t worth listening to, they’re not worth keeping.



“Big Business never pays a nickel in taxes, according to Ralph Nader who represents a big consumer organization that never pays a nickel in taxes,” - Dave Barry

Chamber Board Recognizes Donna Page

Chamber VP Sherry French (Left of WDME Radio & French Construction) and Chamber Treasurer Gail Stutzman (Right of Stutzman Business Services) present Donna Page (center) with special recognition for her hundreds of hours of volunteer work for the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber board recognized Donna in December. She has worked on the Saturday Night in Dover-Foxcroft concert series since its inception in 2005 and has worked at every major Chamber event for the past two years. She has also put in hundreds of hours working at the Chamber offices handling everything from reception work to mailing and invoicing. Donna also made the beautiful queen size quilt that will be the grand prize for the Chamber Showcase raffle in April. Sherry and Gail both noted Donna’s time and dedication to the Chamber.



“The recent expansions on the Chamber’s web page allow visitors an attractive overview of the Piscataquis Region, not only from a business standpoint, but also for families looking to relocate. We feel the Chamber’s visibility provides us with an excellent source of marketing. Visitors to the area are able to become familiar with our business, the services that we offer and our location.” - Jane Hibbard-Merrill, Hibbard Nursing Home & Maine Street West



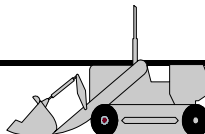
Workers' Comp Rates To Drop?



The Maine Chamber tells us that the Maine Bureau of Insurance has approved a recommendation from the **National Council on Compensation Insurance** that the state's workers' compensation rates for 2009 be lowered by 7.6 percent. Last year rates fell 2.2 percent. The story noted that the lost time frequency has dropped 58.2 percent between 1993 and 2005 and the NCCI estimates that trend to continue. The new decrease is great news for most, if not all of Maine's businesses.

Chummy's "Doing Just Fine"

Chummy Jackson stops by now and then to solve the world's problems and to complain when nobody takes his advice. He was recently miffed about rumors that he'd had a heart attack & his company was on the rocks. **"I didn't have a heart attack and the company is stronger than ever! The young fella is better and more of a perfectionist than I ever was. He's helping to run things now. I'm just slowing down a little, but I go to work every day and still love it."** Chummy had the same problem my wife did...an irregular heart beat. My wife had a catheter ablation & Chummy had a grease job and an oil change. Both are doing just fine & so is **G.A. Jackson & Son**, general contracting. Give Chummy a call. He and his company do excellent work all the time. However, his political advice is only good about half the time.



Stop My Payment!



Can a consumer ever refuse to pay for a purchase they made on a credit card? Yes, if they are convinced that you treated them unfairly. But, before they can refuse to pay the credit card bill **the Maine Attorney General's office** says that the following requirements must be met:

- The cost of the sale must exceed \$50.00
- The consumer must have made a good faith effort to resolve the dispute with you
- And, the place of business where the transaction took place must be in Maine or within 100 miles of the consumer's home.

For more information go to maine.gov/ag

Fancy Restaurants & Town Dumps



In my travels around the country I heard many stories about excellent customer service and what I learned is that outstanding customer service is achieved by doing a lot of little things right. I was in Chicago having lunch with a marketing executive from La-Z-Boy.

The waitress (named Susan) came over and before pouring coffee or dropping off menus, **asked if either of us was left handed.** Pat said that he was and the waitress proceeded to rearrange his entire place setting. Then she asked if either of us wanted coffee or a drink.

Pat was flabbergasted. For years he had always had to move his own silverware and cups and glasses to more convenient positions. No waitress had ever asked him which hand he used, much less reset the table for his convenience. We were both suitably impressed and left nice tips.

Outstanding service experiences can also be found closer to home. **One of the best examples of outstanding customer service locally was given by the late Johnny Brooks.** Johnny worked at the Dover-Foxcroft town dump. I hate trash & garbage and never liked going to the dump... until I started hauling it to the Dover-Foxcroft facility. Johnny was always smiling and happy to see you. He helped unload the trash, asked about the family and then he did the totally unexpected. He thanked you for coming! Can you image. **He thanked you for coming to the dump!** Outstanding! Johnny Brooks loved what he did and he did it better than anyone else. Period.

Outstanding customer service is not doing the big things right, it's doing the little things right. Little things that your competition doesn't do at all. It's greeting your customer with a smile, knowing your customer, helping your customer, and sincerely thanking your customer. When you find a Susan or a Johnny Brooks reward them well. They are few and far between.



"The man who stops advertising to save money is just like the man who stops the clock to save time."

Author Unknown

Did Piscataquis Spend \$13 Million at Christmas?

Surveys indicate that Americans spent on average \$795 per capita on Christmas. With the population in Piscataquis County hovering around 17,300 people, easy math tells us that in 2008 we spent \$13,600,000.00 on or over the holidays.

That sounds like a lot for the second poorest county in Maine doesn't it? So, let's cut that by 60% and say we all spent only \$318 on Christmas or Hanukkah or Kwanza. That amounts to \$5,501,400.00! Over Five Million Dollars!

If all that money were spent here in Piscataquis County, what a boost it would be to the region's economy, to our local businesses, communities, schools, churches, clubs, organizations and people!

They say that charity begins at home. Well, folks, so does economic development.



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CHAMBER NEWS!

www.piscataquischamber.com—*"The World's Portal to Piscataquis County"*

PISCATAQUIS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Showcase '09

"Bringing Piscataquis County Businesses & Consumers Together"

Friday Morning 7:30
Special Issues & Eggs
Breakfast!

Sponsored by
WDME Radio 103.1 and
The Piscataquis Observer!

Saturday Visit the
Showcase & then
Watch the Dover-
Foxcroft Kiwanis
Canoe Races Along the
River!

April 24—25 SEDOMOCHA Dover-Foxcroft
Friday 4—9 PM Saturday 10—2

Larger Business Marketplace ★ Bigger Food Court
Outdoor Displays ★ Larger Booths ★ No Admission
Charge ★ All New 'Touch-A-Truck Display'
Prizes & Giveaways ★ Free Iris Scans & More!
Confirm your space today!

Contact the Piscataquis Chamber of Commerce 564-7533
or email exdir@piscataquischamber.com

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☺ **Joan & Buddy Baird** have 1360 sq. ft. of commercially zoned, stand-alone **office space for rent** on outer Summer Street in D-F. Newly redone inside. Call 564-8526

☺ The SBA recently announced the **top lenders in Maine** for 2008. Chamber member **Bangor Savings Bank** was the #1 lender to women business owners and **Key Bank** was the #1 volume lender under the 7(a) program.

☺ **Mark Robinson & Webber Ace Hardware** are making hay while the economy stinks. Improvements include new stairs, basement floor & more.

☺ **It's a fact!** Nearly 10% of Piscataquis County is water? And because of Augusta, nearly 90% of Kennebec County is hot air?

☺ **John Holden** has joined **Eaton Peabody** as an economic development consultant. At one time he was with the EMDC in Bangor.

☺ **Did you know** that in 1982 **Jim Robinson of A.E. Robinson Oil Company** and **Bruce Tibbetts of Bob's Hardware** (Farm, Home & Garden now) put on the first 'Floor Show' at the old A.E. headquarters across from the Chamber? Jim cleaned out the garage and off they went. In 1984 they turned things over to the new Chamber of Commerce, included other retailers, moved the event to SEDOMOCHA and the rest is history. Call it **Floor Show, Expo or Showcase** We celebrate **25 years in 2009.**