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STRATEGIC SUPPLY

VINCI Construction USA's new asphalt terminal

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MAINE TRAILS

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Maine Better Transportation Association

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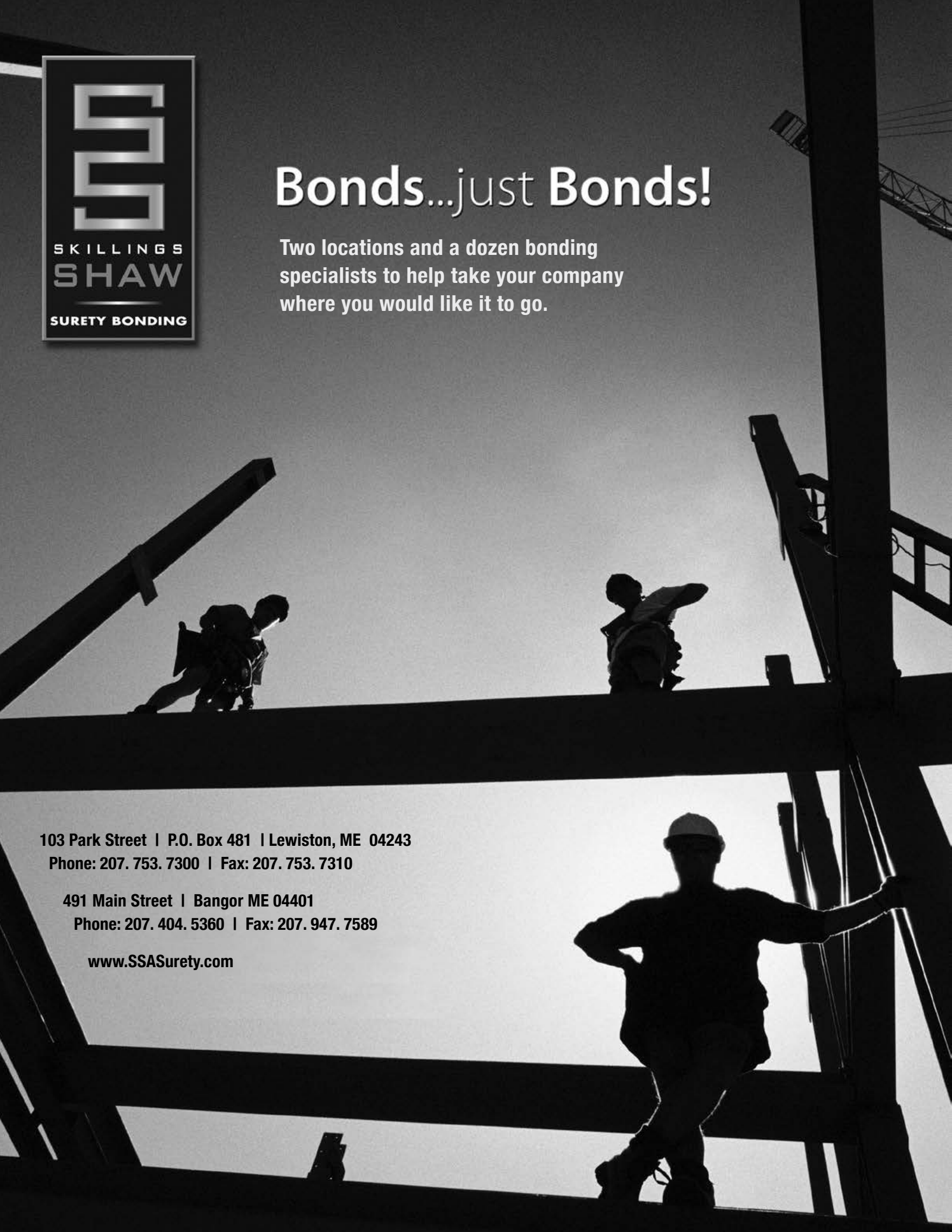
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by Eric Ritchie, MBTA President

Battling perceptions

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How do we get young people interested in the skilled trades? That is a question Maine businesses have been asking for quite a while now.

RECENTLY, STANLEY Black & Decker conducted a survey of high school students, parents, and workers in the trade professions to better understand what is causing the skilled trade labor shortage. In mid-2022, they released the first edition of the Makers Index, which takes a comprehensive look at the barriers that construction, manufacturing, and other businesses face in identifying, recruiting, and training a new generation of employees.

The Makers Index aims to help us understand how these jobs are seen across generations, the deterrents to entering the trades, the biggest misconceptions about our business, and how we can combat those misconceptions.

The index is an eye opener for anyone who has ever scratched their head and wondered just what it would take to encourage more young people to choose a career in transportation and construction. Here is what the Makers Index found, boiled down to a few key points.

First, there is no foreseeable shortage of careers in our field. Currently, there are a projected 650,000 construction jobs open in the United States.

Second, many high schoolers see the trades as a good career choice – just not the choice for them. Only sixteen percent would consider a skilled trade career for themselves – and boys are more likely to choose a career in the trades than girls, but not by much. Working in an industry where there is such a great need for skilled workers, this is information we cannot afford to overlook.

Third, we need to be more upfront about the earning potential of jobs in construction and transportation. The Makers Index found

“We need to get out and talk with young people more. According to the Stanley Black & Decker survey, only 42 percent of young people have ever had a conversation about skilled trade careers with someone currently working in these fields. . . Meanwhile, 94 percent of parents think such jobs are good career options.”

that young people vastly underestimate the potential earnings in the skilled trades. While one in five young people think starting pay in the trades is less than \$20,000, the reality is less than ten percent earn that amount or less. At the same time 93 percent of skilled trades workers report good earning potential or progression. This is just regarding base pay, let alone the retirement and other financial benefits offered by many.

Fourth, we need to get out and talk with young people more. According to the survey, only 42 percent of young people have ever had a conversation about skilled trade careers



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with someone currently working in these fields. Thirty-seven percent have never had a conversation with anyone about skilled trade careers. Meanwhile, 94 percent of parents think such jobs are good career options.

Fifth, we need to talk about what makes our jobs great and worth investing a lifetime in. Construction is a big industry that offers a lot of variety and opportunity. We need to have these discussions, because in addition to wanting financial stability – not too much to ask – 77 percent of young people say it is especially important to have work that interests them. Our industry serves society, and we have meaningful work for anyone who is interested, regardless of the trade.

Sixth, we need to counter old stereotypes about our business. Many young people have outdated perceptions of what a career in skilled trades entails. In fact, one in four thinks that someone who works in a skilled trade does not work with cutting-edge technology. In reality, the Makers Index found 89 percent of

tradespeople do.

As you and I know, skilled laborers and trades people have a deep, proud history in the U.S., serving as the engine that has built our country's infrastructure and economy, dating back to the very founding of this country. In fact, even George Washington completed an apprenticeship to become a land surveyor. No doubt, it helped make him a better president.

We need to figure out how to express to young people that great feeling you get when you are part of a team building a modern bridge or constructing a roadway, or designing trails, building rail tracks, or much more.

Meanwhile, we are working to turn things around. MBTA has teamed up with MaineDOT and AGC Maine on a two-year pilot of the Workforce Development Collaborative to help reach out to people – young and older – and open the door to meaningful discussions and experiences about careers in transportation and construction. Every MBTA member should look into what this effort can do to help

you with your workforce needs.

Our businesses are also a critical part of this collaboration as we look to identify, recruit, and train a new generation of employees. The lessons from the Makers Index are going to be key. We need to keep these talking points at the top of our minds as we reach out to potential new employees and interact with schools and other institutions in the community. We need to tell the story of our industry – no one else can do it better!

In closing, I'd like to say thanks to everyone who has attended recent MBTA events: the Infrastructure Golf Classic, Transportation on Tap, the MBTA Aroostook County Meeting, or the Fall Convention.

Getting together with people who lead, talking about the issues, and having fun while we are doing it, is another wonderful thing about this organization. We work hard, yes. But we also know how to have a good time.... and that also helps to make the transportation industry a worthwhile career! ■

MBTA CALENDAR

Wednesday, October 18

TRANSPORTATION ON TAP
Flight Deck Brewing, Brunswick

Thursday, December 7

MAINE TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE
Augusta Civic Center

Thursday, December 14

HOLIDAY-SCHOLARSHIP MEETING
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For the latest information about MBTA events, go to the Events tab at MBTAonline.org.

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Tough beans

THE IDEA for a new, tougher kind of concrete grew out of a simple question: How to minimize coffee waste in the workplace? The question was posed by engineers at RMIT



University in Melbourne, Australia, looking for ways to mitigate greenhouse gases created by food waste. Australia generates an estimated 75,000 tons of coffee waste every year.

“There was a lot of ground coffee and coffee pods being discarded,” study co-lead Dr. Shannon Kilmartin-Lynch, a vice-chancellor’s Indigenous postdoctoral research fellow at RMIT, told *The Guardian* newspaper. “[We wanted] to see if we could transform those spent coffee grounds into a more valuable sort of material.”

RMIT engineers converted the coffee grounds into biochar by way of pyrolysis: they heat the coffee waste to about 350 degrees centigrade in an oxygen-free environment – a temperature that is lower than typical and

therefore energy saving, according to the researchers. By using the biochar to replace 15 percent of the sand typically used in the manufacture of concrete, it increased the concrete’s strength by almost 30

percent.

“Structurally, the coffee biochar itself is finer than a sand,” Kilmartin-Lynch told *The Guardian*. “It’s also a porous material, so it allows the cement to bind within the porous structure of the biochar itself.”

The discovery has the potential to reduce the amount of coffee waste in landfills, greenhouse gases created by that coffee waste, and the amount of natural sand needed to produce 72 million tons of concrete used in Australia’s construction industry annually. ■

FMI: The results of RMIT research team’s findings are published in the September 2023 *Journal of Cleaner Production* (bit.ly/47SNJVp).

THE MINNESOTA Department of Transportation’s Office of Research & Innovation recently published research on managed lanes on urban highways and their role in transportation equity.

MnDOT’s research arm looked at the demographic make-up of E-ZPass commuters on the state’s tolled highways and compared it with commuters in the larger “travel shed.” In Minnesota, express lanes are available to carpoolers and transit users for free during high-traffic times, while vehicle owners driving alone pay a fee. Investigators analyzed demographics in main corridors of I-394, I-35W and I-35E. Numerous data sources identified demographic characteristics for

E-Z equity

travel shed users and E-ZPass lane users (transponder owners, carpoolers and transit riders). Those characteristics included population, income, poverty level, race, education, disability, head of household, age and travel mode.

The study found that E-ZPass users – about 80 percent of whom are either carpoolers or transit riders – were slightly more diverse than the general travel shed population. The study also found that a lower percentage of people with disabilities use the E-ZPass lanes, and that there is little income difference between

E-ZPass lane users and travel shed users, even though more E-ZPass account holders have higher incomes.

In its blog post detailing the findings, MnDOT noted: “Multimodal managed lanes will continue to be a significant part of highway planning in urban areas. . . MnDOT will use study results in ongoing considerations of a low-income discount program for E-ZPass lanes and public transportation incentive programs. The agency may also consider developing a program to distribute the benefits of the E-ZPass program more equitably by using excess toll revenue in underrepresented communities adjacent to managed lane corridors for transportation improvements . . .” ■



STRATEGIC SUPPLY

Copiam Asphalt Solutions, a new asphalt terminal in Maine, is a strategic investment for the company's northeast region

By Betty Adams

FOURTEEN MONTHS after a new terminal for Northeast Paving sent out its first load of asphalt, the eight-acre site off Odlin Road still looks brand new. Three large base asphalt tanks – capable of holding 2.35 million gallons (10,000 liquid tons) each – stand along one side of the terminal; another side is marked by a rail siding where pumps stand ready to off-load more asphalt from the next arriving rail cars which come from refineries in the northeast and Midwest United States and Canada. There are blend tanks as well, some holding 40 tons and others holding 250 liquid tons in the polymer-modified asphalt (PMA) process area.

And a tanker truck drives under a gantry of pumps and valves, ready to be filled with asphalt for delivery to one of Northeast's paving plants.

In the control room in the main office building, Jerry Harris has a clear view of the operations he is running, both from large plate glass windows and on a large computer monitor at his elbow, where the myriad pumps in use glow green and those off-line radiate red. The various scale weights show up as well.

The ground-breaking for the \$16.5 million terminal, doing business as Copiam Asphalt Solutions, took place in October 2020. The property already had been owned by Northeast / Eurovia Atlantic Coast and had been used for material storage, including sand piles and scrap.

Other divisions based along Odlin Road include Northeast Paving and Dirigo Materials – the nearby quarry.

BREATH-taking

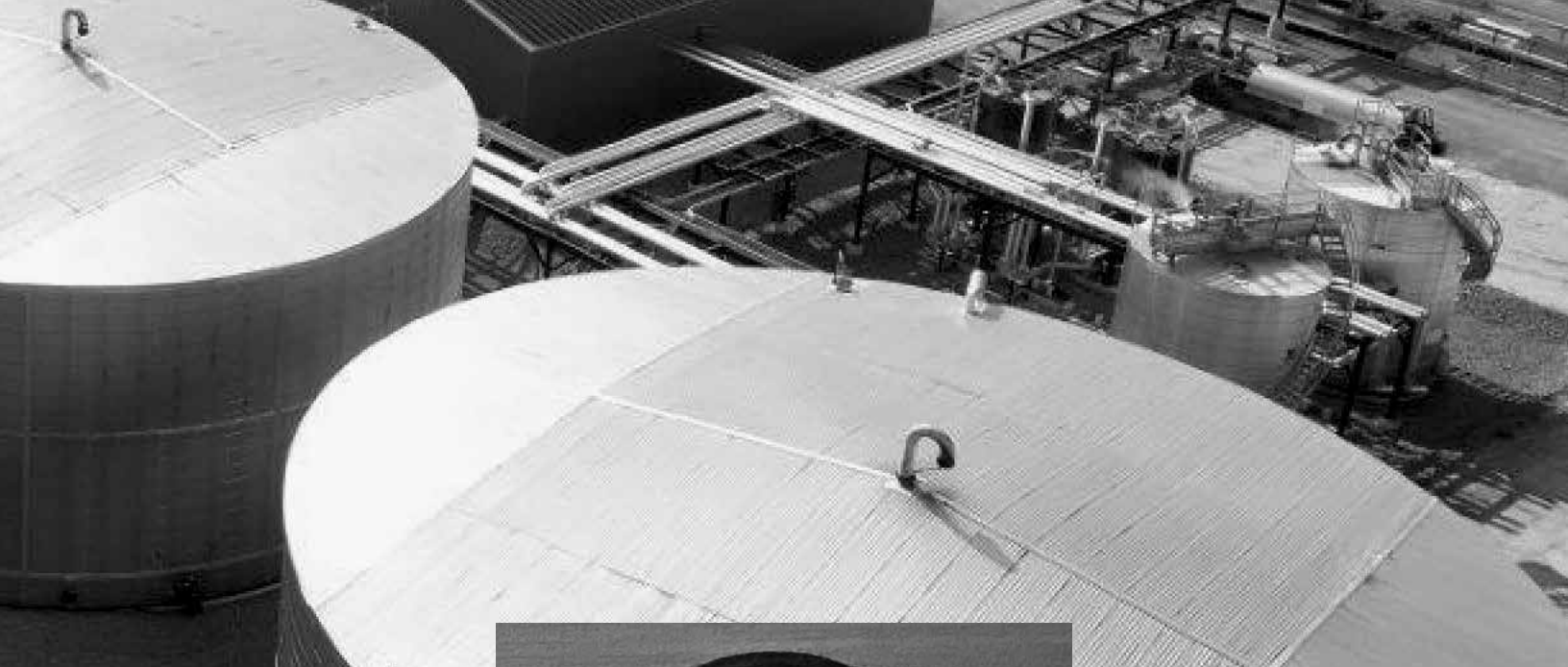
For Eurovia and its parent company VINCI, the new plant represents a major investment. For many longtime employees, the plant symbolizes much more.

“Every visit to the terminal takes my breath away,” said Rod Lane, senior vice president and secretary for Eurovia Atlantic Coast. “The passion to protect the livelihoods of our current employees and generations to come was the driving factor for this project. We owe a great debt to those who came before us and established a culture of work ethic, integrity, and pride. This first-class facility is a way of honoring them and providing a vital product for the state of Maine and the infrastructure needs, well into the future. Thank you to everyone involved in making this happen.”

Casey Tuttle, division manager-liquid asphalt for Eurovia Atlantic Coast, now part of VINCI Construction USA, said, “What’s cool about this specific area is that we have our state’s largest hot mix plant, our one and only asphalt terminal and then our largest operating quarry. It is the largest operational quarry we have in the country – not just Eurovia Atlantic Coast, but VINCI Construction USA. It’s all right here within one mile.”

“This is kind of the hub,” he added. “This is the largest capital expansion we have had.”

Along with the terminal and other Northeast Paving sites in Hermon,



An aerial view of the tanks at the new Copiam terminal.

NORTHEAST PAVING

Eurovia Atlantic Coast has a number of other operations in Maine, including those in Bangor, Charlotte, Hancock, Lewiston, Presque Isle, and Washington.

“Northeast Paving is a full-service paving and construction company operating throughout the northeastern United States,” according to its website, which also notes, “Our operations here in the United States benefit from the global network of 330 agencies and 770 production sites managed by our parent company, VINCI Construction USA.

Tuttle said the decision was made to erect such a large terminal in Hermon to meet the demands of the Bangor area and beyond. He also pointed to open space where more large asphalt tanks could be located, saying, “This terminal is built for growth. We can meet all the needs plus some. And we did build in room for expansion.”

LOCAL WELCOME

The town of Hermon welcomed the project as well. “The industrial zone is the perfect location,” said Scott Perkins, Hermon’s economic development director. “The use fit the location well, and it’s a safe spot to have this kind of activity.” The site, close to I-95, is within a 2,252-acre area of the town designated for industrial uses.

Perkins said Northeast Paving presented the project to the Hermon Town Council, which gave an opportunity for the town to learn about it.

“They’re a very good company to work with and very thorough,” Perkins said,



“This terminal is built for growth. We can meet all the needs plus some. And we did build in room for expansion.”

- Casey Tuttle

Division Manager - Liquid Asphalt,
Eurovia Atlantic Coast

adding, “There are not many places in central and eastern Maine that can accommodate that type of use so easily.”

Tuttle said Northeast Paving had considered some locations that could offer water access. However, he said, “When we worked with the town of Hermon in this area specifically, they were very excited to welcome this expansion project and made it very easy.” The town offered a TIF (a tax-increment financing plan), as well.

The project also meant extending the Canadian Pacific Railway rail spur some 1,800 linear feet to the terminal plant. MaineDOT funded 50 percent of that cost through the Industrial Rail Access Program (IRAP) in 2020. “It was really easy to work with them, and it worked out awesome,” Tuttle said.

A separate rail line, owned by CSX Corporation, goes into the nearby quarry. The terminal brings in asphalt by rail cars, each of which can each hold 90 tons of asphalt.

‘STICKY BLACK RESIDUE’

Asphalt has humble beginnings as a byproduct of oil production. An article by Terence S. Arnold on the Federal Highway Administration’s website says, “Asphalt is the sticky black residue that is left over from the processing of crude oil. It has been used in paving for more than 100 years . . . Asphalt is remarkably efficient, making up only 4 to 5 percent by weight of the pavement mixture. The asphalt, which serves as the pavement’s binder, is also the most expensive part



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of the cost of the material for paving roads. The weight of an asphalt pavement varies depending upon the aggregate type, the asphalt, and the air void content.”

Tuttle said, “We’re buying the finished grade asphalt from the refineries. It has to be heated to be pumpable and moveable, so everything here is heated to around 300 degrees Fahrenheit.”

It is loaded as a liquid, but – depending on temperature and time of year – could become a solid. To off-load it, the plant uses a hot oil steam generator.

“We have three big hot oil heaters that heat the oil to 500 degrees or so and that circulates through all of our main areas,” Tuttle said. “It circulates through the tanks. It circulates through the steam generator, so when the rail cars come in, we hook them up to steam inside of the rail car’s coils. That pressurized steam goes in and heats the car,” he said, adding, “We try to get the product to 280 degrees before we pump it.” Heavily insulated pipes carry the product up and over to the large base asphalt tanks.

Then there’s PMA (polymer-modified asphalt), a product specially prepared at the terminal for use on bigger corridors that carry heavier loads, such as the Maine Turnpike, the interstates, airport runways and taxiways, as well as portions of other



“From a legislative perspective, what we look for is anything for our constituents to enhance the ability of the transportation system – for MaineDOT to effectively do its job and enhance the infrastructure in the state.”

- Maine Representative James E. Thorne

An H.O. Bouchard truck takes on a load of asphalt at the Copiam asphalt terminal.

busy roads.

Tuttle said the addition of the polymer pellets gives those roads the additional flexibility they need and stops them from rutting and cracking.

“We add a polymerized pellet to the asphalt,” Tuttle said. “Once it solidifies, it’s kind of stretchy.”

KEEPING IT IN STATE

The facility has its own laboratory as well and is applying for certification so it can do all the testing and certifying of the PMA in-house. Currently that certification is performed by out-of-state labs.

The terminal also captures vapor and liquid from the manufacturing process and reuses it after filtering it. That process is designed to meet standards of the federal Environmental Protection Agency, Tuttle said.

Seven year-round employees work at the terminal, spending the winter months filling the asphalt base tanks, and selling asphalt the rest of the year. “We sell it to our own plants,” Tuttle said. “We are here to support the paving crews. At this point we don’t sell it externally unless it is a specialty grade of asphalt that can’t be made in the state. We

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A crew of seven staffs the terminal year round. (Left to right) Justin Lewis, Josh Dube, Jerry Harris, Jeff Reese, Audrey Allen, Joe "Abe" Mionis, and Francis "Tito" Rodriguez.

have the only PMA facility in the state."

The price of asphalt is somewhat tied to crude oil and is fairly seasonal, Tuttle noted.

Large loops of piping – 10-foot up, 10-foot over and 10-foot down – allow the asphalt to expand. Pipes bearing large labels connect the various buildings and valves are color-coded for instant identification.

And the pipes themselves are insulated to the standards of the European-based parent corporation – which Tuttle said is double the required insulation in the U.S.

STRATEGIC VOLUME

Volumes in the largest storage tanks are measured by three separate methods: a board gauge that looks like an oversized ruler attached to the side of the tank, a laser gauge, and a manual plunge bob.

"We have as much storage here as Searsport would," Tuttle said. "This is a large terminal for the demands of this area."

The expansion project has proven to be successful. "We're doing it because we're such a large operation and we're securing our supply," Tuttle said. "This is a very strategic supply position for us. As long as asphalt is readily available, we know that our plants are always going to have the material. We don't have to rely



"Every visit to the terminal takes my breath away. The passion to protect the livelihoods of our employees and generations to come was the driving factor for this project."

- Rod Lane, Sr., Vice President and Secretary Eurovia Atlantic Coast

on somebody else."

In fact, Northeast Paving is the paving subcontractor for Sargent, which is building the new, six-mile I-395-Route 9 Connector through Brewer, Eddington, and Holden, under a contract with the state DOT.

State Representative James E. Thorne (R-Carmel), whose district includes Hermon said, "From a legislative perspective, what we look for is anything for our constituents to enhance the ability of the transportation system – for MaineDOT to effectively do its job and enhance the infrastructure in the state. That is key to everything, including manufacturing and touring. We are small in population but large with regard to infrastructure: roads and bridges."

Thorne said he is particularly pleased that Northeast Paving chose to expand in Hermon: "Having that accessibility in the local area bodes well for future projects that MaineDOT will have for its road systems." ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Betty Adams is a freelance writer and journalism instructor. She lives in Augusta and can be reached at adamsbetty00@gmail.com.

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How will Maine EV-olve?

State hears pros and cons on contentious clean car and truck mandate

THIS SUMMER, the Sierra Club of Maine, Natural Resources Council of Maine and Conservation Law Foundation presented a petition signed by 150 Mainers to the state’s Board of Environmental Protection (BEP), calling for the state to adopt California’s clean car and truck standards. The BEP had taken up the truck standards at the end of 2021, but the groups were able to force the issue again by collecting 150 signatures of registered Maine voters.

So again this year, the Maine BEP will determine how extensive those vehicle controls should be.

Maine BEP held a hearing on August 17 and opened the debate to the public, encouraging oral and written testimony. Maine Better Transportation Association teamed up with Maine Motor Transport Association, Maine Automobile Dealers Association, AGC Maine, Maine Energy Marketers, and Maine Aggregate Association to get the word out on the challenges the state would face by mandating California rules on Maine trucks and equipment.

The hearing lasted for nine hours, and for the truck standards, many in the transportation, construction, and manufacturing industries testified against the rule, citing that Maine’s electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, and the EV technology, is not yet advanced enough to service industries in a rural state where charging facilities are far flung and the electric supply might not be able to meet demand. That online comment period closed on August 28.

CALIFORNIA RULES

California was the first state in the country to adopt clean vehicle standards, a policy that grew out of



“There is clearly a place for medium and large zero-emission trucks, and we believe they will have a meaningful role in decarbonizing the transportation industry. . . We also believe there will be unintended consequences if Maine moves forward with the California rule when we are not ready as a state, and these consequences are completely foreseeable and avoidable.”

Maria Fuentes and Brian Parke, writing in the *Bangor Daily News*

early efforts during the administration of Governor Ronald Reagan to reduce air pollution in the state. In the early 2010s, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) passed the strictest rules in the nation in an effort to curb greenhouse gas emissions and force the auto industry to speed development of clean vehicle technologies. In 2022, CARB strengthened those rules to aggressively electrify the state’s fleet of vehicles. By 2035, no new gasoline-powered vehicles – cars and trucks – will be sold in the state.

The proposal under consideration by Maine BEP would adopt a version of those California rules and would require auto manufacturers to increase the number of EV and hybrid vehicles for sale in Maine to 43 percent of all vehicles by 2027 and to 82 percent by 2047.

MAINER CONCERNS

At the hearing in August, testimony mirrored concerns that were raised as the board was considering its new regulations. Does Maine have time to develop the EV charging infrastructure to support the switch? Will the state have access to enough electricity supply? How will Maine businesses be able to afford converting their fleets to electric vehicles? What about small businesses – mechanics and service stations – how will they be able to afford converting to the new EV technology? What about low-income Mainers? Will they be able to afford the new electric vehicles, which often carry a heftier price tag than gasoline-powered vehicles? Where will companies who work in the woods go to charge electric equipment?

Advocates in support of the California standards argued that



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Glenn Adams of Sargent and Brian Parke of Maine Motor Transport Association spoke about why the proposed rules would not be well-suited to commercial and industrial vehicles.

Maine needs to enact changes that will reduce emissions in transportation, which produces nearly half of the state’s greenhouse gases. They also said the state will not be able to reach its goals of reducing emissions under current regulations.

GOVERNOR’S OPPOSITION

Even though her administration has been a strong supporter of addressing climate change, Governor Janet Mills has voiced her reservations about adopting such an aggressive approach and the effect it would have on Maine businesses and residents. Under her administration, the state released *Maine Won’t Wait* in 2020, a set of strategies to reduce greenhouse gases 45 percent by 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. The strategies outline a more “organic” approach to electrification and focuses efforts on encouraging the expansion of the EV and hybrid vehicle market for passenger cars and light-duty trucks. That segment of the transportation market is responsible for 60 percent of transportation’s greenhouse gas emissions.

Maine Better Transportation (MBTA) and other transportation and trade organizations also have opposed adopting the new, stricter standards at this time. The *Bangor Daily News* published an editorial by MBTA Executive Director Maria Fuentes and Maine Motor Transport Association CEO Brian Parke on August 10 that outlines the industry’s concerns. “We agree with Governor Janet Mills; Maine should not ‘blindly’ follow California and let “decisions by any other state determine

Maine’s course of action,” wrote Fuentes and Parke, quoting a statement from Governor Mills in 2022. The editorial continued: “There is clearly a place for medium and large zero-emission trucks, and we believe they will have a meaningful role in decarbonizing the transportation industry. . . We also believe there will be unintended consequences if Maine moves forward with the California rule when we are not ready as a state, and these consequences are completely foreseeable and avoidable.”

CLIMATE IMPACTS

There is strong awareness of the growing impacts of climate change on Maine, a state with a large coastline and expansive river system, and the state will undoubtedly continue to push forward on its goals to address greenhouse gas emissions. Warming of the region’s water and air already is having a marked effect on the state’s transportation systems, with stronger weather systems straining state roads, bridges and culverts.

While the state provides economic incentives for residents to purchase EV and hybrid vehicles, currently EVs make up only approximately six percent of new car sales in the state. Maine has close to 11,000 vehicles registered in the state, meeting just a fraction of the 2030 goal of having 219,000 registered EV and hybrid vehicles called for in its climate action plan.

To date, several states have adopted the advanced clean vehicle rules, including: Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Vermont, and Washinton state. ■

SPEAKING OUT

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Please vote on November 7

Pine Tree Power is Question 3 on November ballot

WE ARE approaching Voting Day, November 7, when Maine voters cast ballots on Pine Tree Power, Question 3 on the Maine ballot.

If adopted, Question 3 would establish a new state agency called “Pine Tree Power” governed by a board of mostly elected politicians, and that board would be mandated by law to take over CMP and Versant Power – most likely by eminent domain – and in turn hire a private, for-profit company to operate the electric grid. The cost is expected to run into the billions, and by some estimates, north of \$13 billion. For workers, there are limited protections, and the risk of a revolving door of future employers.

MBTA HAS JOINED THE COALITION

Maine Better Transportation Association has joined the Maine Affordable Energy Coalition, a coalition opposing Question 3 comprised of more than 12,000 individuals from 350 towns, and 130 businesses



and organizations ranging from the Maine State Chamber of Commerce to the Maine AFL-CIO.

Question 3 represents the single most costly and risky initiative ever put before Maine voters, according to the coalition. It is also unprecedented. No state has ever tried to seize its largest electric utilities, and the way Pine Tree Power would be set up has been tried only twice in this country – Long Island Power Authority in New York, and the Puerto Rico Power Authority. Both have had significant problems that have

been well-reported. The coalition strongly believes that, if Question 3 passes, consumers will pay more, taxes will go up, and the quality of electric service in Maine will go down.

The coalition is working to educate voters about the financial and political damage of Pine Tree Power, and the coalition needs help getting the word out. The best place to start is a conversation with family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. Let them know it will cost more than \$13 billion to buy out CMP and Versant. Ask them if they really feel safe putting politicians in charge of their electricity. Urge them to vote NO on Question 3.

Want to do more? Put up a yard sign. Send a letter to your local newspaper. Sign up now to Get Out The Vote.

Maine cannot risk letting Pine Tree Power take over our electric grid . . . and our future. Help us defeat Question 3 on November 7. ■

FMI: To learn more, visit maineaffordableenergy.org.

New group examining transportation in Aroostook County

THE MAINE Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) is convening an advisory stakeholder group to assist the department in identifying and developing strategies to address highway mobility and transportation needs in northern Maine. This group will review past feasibility studies and recommend highway improvements that will improve safety, mobility, and economic opportunity in Aroostook County.

“Aroostook County is a special place and a key element of our statewide transportation system in Maine,” said MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note. “The members of this stakeholder group will examine northern Maine’s transportation needs and work toward practical solutions aimed at improving connections, supporting economic development, and improving quality of life. We look forward to engaging with our partners in Aroostook County and spending some extra time in one of the most beautiful parts of our state this fall.”

In June, the Maine State Legislature passed, and Governor Janet Mills signed into law, LD 607: *Resolve to Direct the Department of*

Transportation to Examine Improving Highway Connections from Interstate 95 to the St. John Valley. In accordance with that resolve, this stakeholder group will consist of 11 members and include representatives from local municipal offices, regional and statewide planning organizations, and local industry groups, including Maine Better Transportation Association.

This stakeholder group will have three in-person public meetings in Aroostook County in the coming months. The first meeting was held on September 18 in Madawaska. Additional meetings are scheduled for October 12 in Fort Kent and November 14 in Caribou. Exact locations of the second and third meetings are still being finalized. Each stakeholder meeting is scheduled from 3 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The last hour of each meeting is reserved for public comments.

A virtual meeting will be held on December 12 to review this group’s work. By the end of the year, MaineDOT will submit a final report that includes the findings and recommendations of the stakeholder group to the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. ■



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Aroostook County Meeting

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Plans for renewable power in The County



Left: Matthew Conradi and Jasmine Strout. Middle: Drew Blier, Phil Sirois, and Bruce Bosse. Right: Anne O'Brien, Erik Wiberg, and Mike O'Brien (right).

MORE THAN 60 MBTA members and guests gathered at the Northeastland Hotel on August 10 to learn about the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Program, an innovative proposal to build a 170-turbine wind farm in Webbertown Township in northern Maine.

Before the panel discussion got underway, MBTA President Eric Ritchie welcomed everyone and introduced several special guests in the audience: Trisha House from U.S. Senator Susan Collins' office; Maine Representative Roger Albert (R-Madawaska); Representative Austin Theriault (R-Fort Kent); and Maine Representative Joseph Underwood (R-Presque Isle). He also thanked the meeting sponsors: Innovator sponsors Cross Insurance, Northeast Paving, Sargent, and VHB; and Pathfinder sponsors Beauregard Equipment, The Rowley Agency, and Soderberg Construction.

The project, which has been in the planning stages since 2011, was put out to competitive bid in late 2021 by the Maine Public Utilities Commission. Two companies won the bid process and their representatives – Chad Allen of Longroad Energy and Doug Mulvey of LS Power – were the featured panelists at the meeting. Paul Towle of the Aroostook Partnership, a public-private organization that works to attract and support business in The County, served as moderator for the discussion.

Chad Allen introduced Longroad Energy's track record in New England. The company has financed and constructed 13 wind and solar projects in the northeast, including the Mars Hill and Oakfield

wind farms in Maine. Longroad also has developed wind and solar projects in 11 other states, and Allen offered details about the wind farm component of the project, which Longroad Energy is calling "King Pine Wind," a 1,000 MW (170 turbines) project that will be located on 4,500 acres.

Allen noted that the project is estimated to cost \$2 billion and will bring considerable ratepayer, economic, and environmental benefits to the region. He noted that the local community can expect to benefit from low-cost electric energy generated by the wind farm. Additionally, the company plans to spend \$425 million in the state on development, engineering, construction, and operations and is designing a significant community benefit package of at least \$4,000 per turbine.

Environmentally, the project will generate three billion kWh/year of



John Beauregard, Nancy Spaulding, Bracy Hood and Michelle Iburguen.



Left: David Norman and Paul Towle, who moderated the program. Middle: Chad Allen, one of the evening's speakers, and Doug Morrison. Right: Tony Grande, Eric Ritchie and Irvin Smith.



Left: Herb Sargent and Erik Wiberg. Middle: Adam Jandreau and Doug Mulvey, who spoke about plans for a new electric transmission line from The County. Right: Tim Folster and Tim Ring.

clean electricity, enough to supply nearly a half a million households with electricity in the northeast.

Allen then outlined the steps before the project can begin construction: negotiate power contracts with Maine and Massachusetts; complete studies on connecting the project to the New England electric grid; complete environmental studies, permit engineering and obtain permitting from the state, local and federal authorities; and finally, to select the turbine equipment, complete detailed engineering and design for the project, and secure financing.

He estimated that construction would begin in 2028 with testing of the delivery system extending through three phases ending in 2032. Allen’s fact-filled presentation also included these key facts: 1) when finished, the energy generated at King Pine will equal all of the wind energy currently generated in Maine; 2) the project will call for building or improving approximately 150 miles of roads; 3) more than 60,000 cubic yards of concrete will be needed to construct the project; 4) three project substations and an operations and maintenance facility will be constructed; and 5) Longroad Energy will consider transportation of turbines and construction material over various routes – marine, rail, and road – to minimize the impact on communities in the region.

Doug Mulvey discussed how his company, LS Power, intends to manage the transmission and sale of the power generated at King Pine, a project the company is calling the “Aroostook Renewable Gateway.” For LS Power, the project is all about creating the infrastructure that will enable them to transmit the power and sell it to markets in Maine and beyond. LS Power was founded in 1990 and, since that time, has gained experience in all aspects of the development of power generation and transmission. Mulvey said that, since 2013, LS Power has permitted or constructed more than \$3 billion in high voltage transmission projects, and has raised more than \$50 billion in capital to finance and support energy projects.


Mulvey noted that the route of the Aroostook Gateway transmission line has not yet been determined, but the process to identify the best path is underway. Once constructed, he said it will include between 140 and 160 miles of new transmission line and will distribute 1200 MW of electrical power. He spoke of the work under way to determine the transmission line route, including extensive stakeholder meetings and other opportunities for input, and initiating the permitting process.

Getting to “go” on construction of the transmission line will be a complex undertaking, according to Mulvey. The transmission line would stretch from a new substation located in Aroostook County to Cumberland County and will require permitting from three federal agencies and nine state agencies. The line will need to comply with ordinances in all of the communities it passes through, as well.



Mulvey emphasized the benefits of the project for New England and Maine: low cost, fixed-price renewable energy contracted for the next two decades to be injected into the ISO-NE system; billions of dollars


invested in Maine’s energy infrastructure; Maine rate-payer savings of approximately \$880 million; hundreds of new construction jobs; and \$125 million in new property and sales tax revenues for local towns.

In another major gain for the project, the Maine Public Utilities Commission and the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources



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have already signed purchase agreements for power that will be generated and delivered from this project.

Mulvey outlined a trajectory for the permitting, land acquisition, design and construction of the transmission line, with a plan to start construction by mid-2026.

The meeting concluded with the traditional 50-50 Raffle drawing. Former MBTA President Tony Grande of VHB was the lucky winner of \$156, which he generously donated to the MBTA Scholarship Fund. Thank you, Tony! ■

FMI: To learn more about upcoming MBTA events and get involved with the organization, visit www.MBTAonline.org, and Maine Better Transportation Association on Facebook and Instagram.



Jan Murchison, Nate Strout, and Erik Wiberg.



Ben Gagnon, Will Dacey, Tim Deschesne, and Bradley Doody.



Jason Griffiths, Bradley Doody, Carl Soderberg, and Tim Deschesne.



Left: David Norman and Adam Jandreau. Right: Brent Williams, Tim LePage, Tasha Gardner, and Cody Jean.

2023 MBTA AROOSTOOK COUNTY MEETING

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Fore-gone conclusions

Annual tournament raises more than \$30,000 for Infrastructure Development Fund

CERTAIN THINGS are givens at the annual MBTA Infrastructure Golf Classic: the event will sell out early; the course parking lot will be filled with pickup trucks; golfers generally take advantage of as many Mulligans as the rules allow; the sponsors and golfers will be generous in their support; the competition will be fierce, but good-natured; and a good time will be had by all.

In that regard, the 27th MBTA Golf Classic held true to form.

Additionally, golfers and volunteers were in a particularly good mood for this year's classic, held on July 13 at the Waterville Country Club, after waking up to sunny weather following a rain-soaked spring and early summer.

"We couldn't have asked for a better day," said Joe B. Rollins of Northeast Paving Company, who has chaired the popular event for the past several years. Rollins' sunny outlook was bolstered by the knowledge that the 2023 tournament raised more than \$30,000 for the MBTA Infrastructure Development Fund.

The tournament was again hosted at the Waterville Country Club, which dates back to the

early 20th century and is known for its views of the Belgrade Lakes region and challenging holes. Play kicked off with the 9 a.m. shotgun start and golfers grabbed lunch at the clubhouse as they played through. At the end of play, everyone gathered at the clubhouse for the reception and awards ceremony emceed by Rollins.

The final scores showed just how competitive the day's play had been. The team from Gendron & Gendron (Josh White, John Gendron, Matt Greenleaf, and Scott Cote) took Low Gross honors with a score of 57, and the Shaw Brothers team (Bob Brady, Rick Proctor, Tom Biegel and Mike O'Brien) earned Second Gross title with a score of 63.

The margin separating the winners in the Low Net category was even tighter with the Kleinfelder team (Matt Steele, Kyle Plossay, Tyler Camick, and Ian Gervais) taking first place Low Net with a score of 52, and the Core & Main team (Ryan Barnicle, David Bogart, Mike Bogart and Aaron Gallagher) coming in a close second with a 54 net score.

The Top Mixed team, Sargent (Eric Ritchie, Pat Dubai, Joshua Shaw, and Shelly Langerak) finished with a 66.

There were several prizes to recognize individual achievements on the course, as well. Joe Rollins took first in the Putting Contest with Donald Roeske (Ranger Construction) taking second. Ken Knauer (Prock Marine) and Scott Warchol (Maine Turnpike Authority, retired) tied for third place.

Dale Mitchell of HNTB won Straightest Drive-Men, and Danyl Sanborn of Ranger Construction took Straightest Drive-Women honors. Keith Carpenter of Ranger Construction landed Closest-to-the-Pin with a measure of 10'11". And winnings from the Casino Hole were split three ways among Jason Chadwick (E.J. Prescott), Joe Perryman (St. Laurent & Son), and Chris Black (Dragon Products).

"This is such a great circuit breaker event," said Rollins. "It's the height of the construction season, and this gives members a great chance to take a break, raise money for a good cause, enjoy a round of golf, and catch up with colleagues in the business. We are so lucky to have a great group of sponsors and golfers who make this tournament possible."

Rollins thanked the sponsors, golfers, the Golf Committee, MBTA staffers, and a small



Left: Low Gross winners Scott Cote, Matt Greenleaf, John Gendron, and Josh White. Right: Low Net team Ian Gervais, Kyle Plossay, Tyler Camick and Matt Steele.



Left: Peter Coleman, Ken Sienko, Anthony Salafia, and Doug Bryant. Right: Second Net team Mike Bogart, Ryan Barnicle, Dave Bogart, and Aaron Gallagher.

army of volunteers who helped make the event a success.

“Golf and getting together with you all is fun, but the underlying purpose of this event is vitally important to our state,” said Rollins. “The Infrastructure Fund supports the core mission of Maine Better Transportation, and we are so lucky to have such generous members who support this tournament,” said Rollins.

The awards reception wrapped up with the drawing for the 50-50 Raffle. Jake Kilbreth of ARC Enterprises was the lucky winner. He took home \$1,045, while an equal amount went to the MBTA Scholarship Fund. ■



Top Mixed Team: Pat Dubay, Shelly Langerak, Joshua Shaw, and Eric Ritchie.



Left: Don Norris and Larry Grondin discuss a shot while Doug Fortier looks on. Right: Nathan Jones, Parker Brown, Greg Shaw and Roland Lavallee.



Left: Thank you, volunteers! Greg Dore, Pam Rogers, Casey VanDenBossche, Shannon Walton and Kevin Tomberlin. Right: Second Gross team Mike O'Brien, Tom Biegel, Rick Proctor, and Bob Brady.



Left: Joe Caret, Dick Cousens, Rhonda Cousens and Tim Folster. Right: Tournament Chair and Putting Contest winner Joe B. Rollins, Jason Pina, Chris Kane, and Wayne Berry.

27TH MBTA GOLF CLASSIC

2023 GOLF WINNERS

LOW GROSS – GENDRON & GENDRON (57)
Josh White, John Gendron, Matt Greenleaf, Scott Cote

2ND GROSS – SHAW BROTHERS (63)
Bob Brady, Rick Proctor, Tom Biegel, Mike O'Brien

LOW NET – KLEINFELDER
Matt Steele, Kyle Plossay, Tyler Camick, Ian Gervais

2ND NET– CORE & MAIN (54)
Ryan Barnicle, David Bogart, Mike Bogart, Aaron Gallagher

TOP MIXED – SARGENT (66)
Eric Ritchie, Pat Dubay, Joshua Shaw, Shelly Langerak

CLOSEST TO THE PIN (10' 11")
Keith Carpenter, Ranger Construction

STRAIGHTEST DRIVE – MEN
Dale Mitchell, HNTB

STRAIGHTEST DRIVE – WOMEN
Danyl Sanborn, Ranger Construction

PUTTING CONTEST
1st Joe B. Rollins, Dirigo Materials
2nd Donald Roeske, Sr., Ranger Construction
3rd (tie) Ken Knauer, Prock Marine; Scott Warchol

CASINO HOLE
Chris Black (Dragon Products), Jason Chadwick (E.J. Prescott), Joe Perryman (St. Laurent & Son)

50-50 RAFFLE (\$1,045)
Jake Kilbreth

2023 VOLUNTEERS

Greg Dore, Old Mill Pub and Heritage House
Pam Rogers, Cross Insurance
Kevin Tomberlin, Micronics
Casey VanDenBossche, MaineDOT
Shannon Walton



Left: Tim Cote, Ray Hanf, Peter Merfeld and Dale Mitchell (Straightest Drive-Men winner). Right: The Ranger teams – Danyl Sanborn won Straightest Drive-Women; Keith Carpenter won Closest-to-the-Pin; and Donald Roeske placed second in the Putting Contest.

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Transportation on Tap No. 3 Pie times in Hallowell

MAINE BETTER Transportation Association's Young Professionals got creative for the third Transportation on Tap (T2) gathering in Hallowell in August. More than 25 MBTA members showed up for a brew and a pie at Burano's, known for its wood-fired pizza.

The restaurant is named for an Italian island near Venice, and MBTA's YPs sampled the Burano's inventive pies while enjoying local brews and great conversation with fellow transportation professionals.

The gathering was the third T2 in the annual summer series. MBTA Board Member Patrick Brady, who is also chair of the Young Professionals group, was pleased with the turnout, which included members from all sectors of the organization's membership.

"We all have so much to talk about as we make our way through the construction season, and these gatherings are such a great way to get to know your fellow MBTA members," said Brady. "There's no agenda, and the atmosphere is always welcoming and relaxed."

The next T2 will be in Brunswick on October 18. See you there! ■

FMI: To learn more about Transportation on Tap, visit the Event page at www.MBTAonline.org or watch MBTA's Instagram (@mainebettertransportation) or Facebook page (www.facebook.com/MaineBetterTransportation).





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Building community

Since 2007, Acorn Engineering has been working with Maine communities to develop essential infrastructure. But the firm's entrepreneurial roots go further back.

By Kathryn Buxton

This May, Acorn Engineering staff gathered on a sunny late spring day at Goodfire Brewing Company in Freeport to mark the company's 16th year in business. There was good beer, cornhole and lots of clients, friends and family. The "Sweet Sixteen" event punctuated what has been a busy time for the Portland-based engineering company founded by William Savage in 2007.

The firm, which began as a one-person operation, now employs more than two dozen professionals at its office just off I-295 in Portland and at a newly launched satellite office in Kingfield. Savage and his staff provide a wide range of services to commercial developers, municipalities and state agencies: civil and environmental engineering; watershed restoration; construction administration; and stormwater inspections. Savage and his team have worked on several high-profile urban infill projects in Biddeford-Saco, Portland, and Lewiston that are helping to address the state's housing shortage.

"Thirty-five hundred and fifty units," said Nancy Sullivan, Acorn's office manager and resident statistician referring to the number of housing units the firm has had a hand in launching, whether it's providing site design, stormwater management, or helping usher the critical projects through the permitting process.

The number brings a big smile to Savage's face.

"We really like the challenge of urban redevelopment," he said of Acorn's staff. He said that is likely because the work is both complex and fulfilling, bringing together a variety of engineering disciplines and site- and client-specific factors – environmental, stormwater, utilities, open space, and transportation.

IN THE DNA

For Savage, engineering and entrepreneurialism are part of his DNA. Both of his parents were self-employed. His mom ran a local at-home daycare, and his dad founded the original Acorn Engineering in the basement of the family's home in Brunswick during the late 1980s. Savage is one of five siblings, and he recalls his dad putting the kids to work "mapping out



Acorn Engineering's Will Savage at the topping ceremony for 52 Hanover Street, a mixed-use project in Portland's Bayside neighborhood.



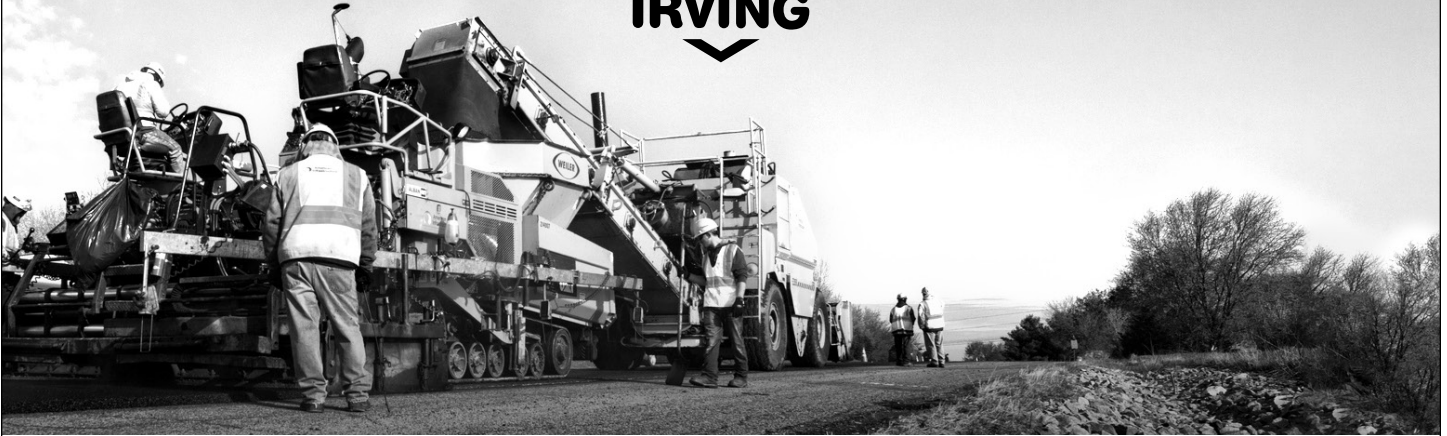
ACORN ENGINEERING PHOTOS

Will Savage and Lynnsey Savage getting ready for snow plow season in 2009.

stormwater sub-catchments, soil groups, land-use changes, flow paths and entering the pre- and post-development data into HydroCAD."

The early introduction to engineering has had a lasting effect: today three of the Savage brood are professional engineers; the fourth is a computer scientist and the fifth is a neuroscientist.

For Will Savage, those early days managing data and drawing up plans with his dad led to a bachelor of science in engineering from Union College



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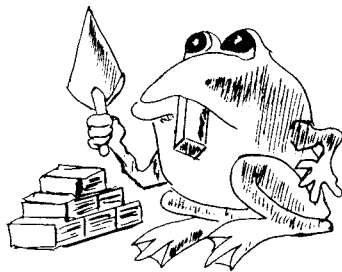
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ACORN ENGINEERING PHOTOS

in Schenectady, New York, with a semester abroad at Czech Technical University in Prague. After graduation, he worked as a field office engineer for HNTB on the Maine Turnpike northern widening project, then spent four years working for Gorrill Palmer on a team designing and permitting residential and commercial projects.

He recalls looking out on the horizon in 2007 and seeing a slowing economy that meant layoffs would soon be inevitable across the engineering profession. So he left and decided to open his own firm under the Acorn Engineering name in Portland (his parents had since founded another business, Upcountry Inspections). Savage had recently married and was starting a family, and the next five years did prove challenging as Maine and the nation dipped into the “Great Recession.”

“I was always the entrepreneur. Everyone in the family expected that I would be the one to go out on my own,” said Savage, who, from an early age, worked to earn spending money mowing lawns and delivering the daily and Sunday papers.

BUILDING A NAME

That first year he recalled making just \$5,000 – an amount that just happened to equal the loan his father had given him to get the business off the ground and which he repaid.

No stranger to hard work, Savage did what he needed to do to help make ends meet for his young family during the early days of the business. His wife, Lynnsey Savage, was working as a teacher in the local school system at the time. He started a plowing business – Casco Bay Plowing – and advertised that he actually got out of the truck to shovel and blow snow when needed. That was an extra effort that many of his older clients appreciated. In the warm weather months he added landscaping services.

All the while he was building Acorn’s engineering portfolio by taking on projects and working late nights and over the weekend, and even volunteering his services to get the company’s name known. The strategy worked. As the state emerged out of the recession, Acorn’s roster of clients and projects grew and by 2012, he was ready to dive in and hire his first employee.

“If I had only known in 2007 what I knew in 2012 about how long it would take,” joked Savage, recalling those long and challenging early years. Since then, “our growth has been organic,” added Savage.

A GOOD FEELING

As Acorn’s projects have grown more diverse and larger, the firm has added talented professionals who share Savage’s passion for community building.

“I had a good gut feeling about [Acorn], and obviously I made the right

The company celebrated its “Sweet Sixteen” earlier this year. Top row, left to right: Christopher Hawkins, Aubrey Strause, Zach Jones, Mike Triglione, David Horne, Pat Roma, and Jarrod Googins. Bottom row, left to right: Sam Lebel, Pete Heil, Nancy O’Sullivan, Danielle McGowan, and Will Savage.



Will’s parent’s Hugh and Caroline Savage. Hugh founded the original Acorn Engineering in the 1980s.

call,” said Acorn Project Manager Sam Lebel, who joined the firm in 2016. “The work is exciting, and it’s been great to feel like you are contributing to the communities we work in. It’s fulfilling and fun. We work hard, but we also play hard.”

These days, things are humming at Acorn Engineering’s headquarters just off I-295 in Portland. Nearly every desk is occupied, and the office is full of the muffled sounds of keyboards and phones. The firm has sixteen full-time engineers and nine inspectors on staff, and projects underway that stretch from York to Aroostook counties. Hugh Savage, Will’s dad, rejoined the company in 2012 when the company needed an extra hand to help out on oversight for a marine construction project on Little Diamond Island. Hugh now works one day a week at Acorn, performing internal quality assurance-quality control on permit level and construction level plans developed at the firm.

BRANCHING OUT

Acorn is adding a satellite office in Kingfield, which will be convenient as the firm expands its reach to western Maine. Staff has been active on

projects across the state this summer: from rail line inspections in Aroostook County and stormwater design at Maine Turnpike Exit 45 to the Princess Point Stream Restoration for the town of Yarmouth, and third-party construction inspection for the town of Kennebunkport and for the Sugarloaf Mountain expansion project.

The firm is active in the community and the industry. Acorn is a member of Maine Better Transportation, ASCE Maine, American Council of Engineering Companies, Maine Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association, Maine Rail Group, the Portland Society of Architects, GrowSmart Maine and Maine Water Environment Association. Savage volunteers on the Long Creek Restoration Project in South Portland and has volunteered at the Maine Stormwater Conference.

Acorn's work has won awards, as well: Contractor of the Year from the Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District; ACEC of Maine's Honor Award for Engineering Excellence for work on the redevelopment plan for the former Portland Public Works Building at 82 Hanover Street; and the firm shared a Maine Preservation Honor Award for its work on the Riverdam Mill Complex to remove the former mill's raceways and strengthen its old masonry walls in Biddeford.

URBAN SPACES

The firm's roster of current projects is impressive, and Acorn Engineering has earned praise for its work on innovative projects; many of them have been in the forefront of the push to build much-needed new housing. One of those, the Pearl Street Waterfront Renaissance zone in Biddeford, is a project that is dramatically reshaping and revitalizing the area surrounding the city's riverfront textile mills that were built in the 1800s. The project will add 200 new housing units in the city. Acorn Engineering's Peter Heil was one of the presenters last fall when MBTA members toured the Biddeford project as part of the annual PDH Tour.

Acorn has done civil and site design on several major projects that are currently underway across the state, and is particularly active in Portland where the firm has several urban infill projects underway including 201 Federal Street in Portland, where Redfern Development is building what will be the highest building in Maine (if you don't count church steeples in Lewiston and Biddeford). Another high-profile



ACORN ENGINEERING PHOTOS

John Shute and Will inspecting a rail line in Aroostook County.



Groundbreaking for the Pearl Street mixed-use redevelopment project in Biddeford earlier this year.

Acorn has worked to help convert old mill buildings and former industrial sites in Biddeford into residential and commercial space. One of those projects, Riverdam, won an award from Maine Preservation.



project is redevelopment of the old Mercy Hospital site on the west end of the city, where Acorn is partnering on the site design with Aceto Landscape Architects on a mixed-use project for NewHeight Redfern. This project features “woonerf” – or “living street” parking – a Dutch concept that promotes different kinds of mobility within urban neighborhoods, including cars, pedestrians, wheelchairs and bicycles.

Earlier this year, Acorn staff was on hand for the groundbreaking at the Pearl Street mixed-use redevelopment project for Sewall-Treadwell Franklin in Biddeford. The project complements Acorn’s earlier work on Riverdam and includes construction of 200 new residential units on Pearl Street for the Fathom Companies, and 175 units on Upper Falls Way for Port Property.

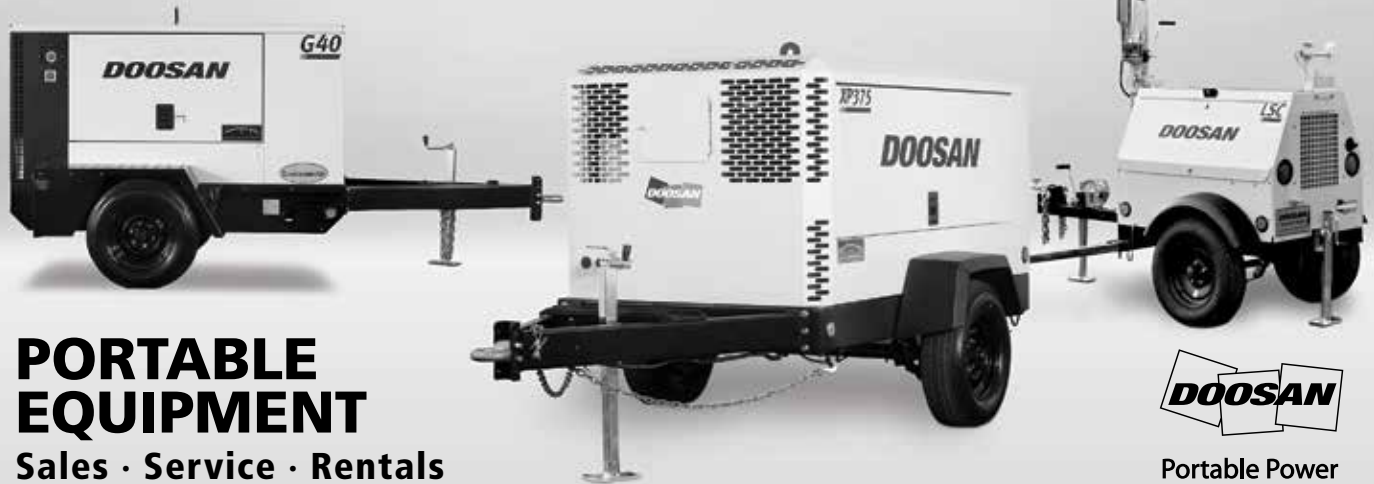
Another project in Portland, at 200 Valley Street, offers a window onto the overriding philosophy that guides Acorn. While developing the site design for the affordable housing project, Acorn’s engineers showed that Avesta Housing could add another floor – and additional units to the project – to maximize the number of housing units.

“That’s what we aim to do,” said Savage. “To bring extra value to our clients by studying the code and knowing the ins and outs. That helps when you are trying to fit as much density on a piece of land as possible.” ■

FMI: To learn more, visit acorn-engineering.com.



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Building Maine and New England For Over 25 Years

Wilber joins Sewall

JAMES W. Sewall Company has hired Christen Wilber as its new vice president of geospatial services. Wilber will oversee all aspects of the geospatial division, including geospatial asset management, geospatial forestry, and geospatial services that enhance and expand Sewall's civil engineering offerings.

Most recently, Wilber was a consultant with Attar Engineering's survey group, managing crews and reviewing plans and proposals. Immediately prior, he served as president of SGC Engineering, the U.S. based engineering, survey and GIS division of Lloyd's Register in London. While there, he worked with Lloyd's Register Foundation to identify and develop technologies to make pipelines



Christen Wilber

and energy projects safer.

Previously, he was vice president of pipeline services at Lloyd's Register in Houston, Texas, and London and director of pipeline services for SGC Engineering in Portland. Chris gained significant natural gas pipeline experience at the El Paso Corporation in Houston, Texas, where he worked with task forces that assessed damages from hurricanes Rita and Katrina. Additionally, his degree in forest technology from the University of New Hampshire served him well as the right-of-way and GIS manager of Portland Natural Gas Transmission System.

Wilber was a co-founder of a land surveying firm in 1987, and later managed a regional survey and title office in Portsmouth, New

Hampshire. Currently, he is professionally licensed as a land surveyor in both Maine and New Hampshire and is also an FAA Part 107 drone pilot.

Sewall President Charles Nadeau said: "Chris brings a curious, thoughtful, inventive approach to his work in geospatial (GS) engineering. I am thrilled to add his talents to our already outstanding GS team."

Wilber works out of the firm's office in Portland and travels regularly to Sewall's headquarters in Bangor.

Founded in 1880, Sewall is a multi-disciplinary consulting firm providing services to government, energy and utilities, and the natural resources industry. It is owned by Treadwell Franklin Infrastructure Capital, an integrated infrastructure business focused on municipal, institutional and energy infrastructure and services in New England and the northeast United States. ■

FMI: To learn more, visit sewall.com and tficapital.com.

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Bryant to lead VHB in Maine

TIM BRYANT has been named VHB's managing director for Maine. A principal of the firm, Bryant has been with the company for more than 30 years.

Bryant will be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of VHB's South Portland, Augusta, and Westbrook offices, as well as developing and implementing strategies to drive growth and success.

VHB's Maine offices work with MaineDOT, the National Park Service, the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, the Maine Turnpike Authority, Versant Power, and Sugarloaf Mountain Resort.

"Tim has successfully led teams to achieve remarkable results in Maine and was also one of the founding members of the South Portland office when it opened in 2012," said Tom Jackmin, senior vice president and New England regional manager. "He is known for his exceptional communication skills, strategic thinking, his focus on people, and the ability to foster a positive work culture."



Tim Bryant

Bryant has more than three decades of experience in design and management of transportation engineering projects for state and federal transportation agencies, municipalities, the National Park Service, and railroads. His experience includes bridge rehabilitation and replacement, bridge inspection, freight and passenger railroad improvements, highway improvements, construction inspection, and construction management on a variety of projects throughout Maine and New England.

Tim is a graduate of Wentworth Institute of Technology where he earned an associate of science degree in architectural engineering technology, and a bachelor of engineering degree in civil engineering. He is a licensed professional engineer in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, and a member of Maine Better Transportation Association, American Society of Civil Engineers, Women's Transportation Seminar International, and the American Institute of Steel Construction. ■

FMI: To learn more, visit www.vhb.com.

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PURUS

R. J. Grondin & Sons announces leadership changes

ROBERT J. “Bob” Grondin, III, will retire from R. J. Grondin & Sons at the end of the year, the company announced in August.

Bob, the eldest of co-founder Robert J. Grondin, Jr.’s children, started with the company in 1975 as a laborer, worked his way up to general superintendent and currently serves as the president.

Laurence R. “Larry” Grondin will assume the role of president. Larry, the youngest son of co-founder Phillip Grondin, started working summers at the company and joined full-time in 1999 after graduating from St. Michael’s College in Colchester, Vermont.



Robert J. Grondin, III



Laurence R. Grondin



Sean M. O’Leary

Larry has spent most of his career managing the company’s aggregate division. He currently serves as vice president.

As part of the transition, Sean M. O’Leary has been promoted to vice president of operations. Sean worked summers at R.J. Grondin before attending Assumption University in Worcester, Massachusetts. After graduation, he moved

to Washington, D.C, and spent the next six years with Miller & Long as part of their estimating and project management team. He rejoined R.J. Grondin 11 years ago as an estimator/project manager.

Following Bob’s retirement, Sean will also become a shareholder, joining

Larry as an owner of the company.

Founded in 1959 and headquartered in Gorham, R. J. Grondin & Sons is a heavy civil contractor providing a wide range of services throughout Southern and Central Maine. ■

FMI: To learn more, visit rjgrondin.com.

Abboud advanced

USI INSURANCE Services has announced the promotion of Chris Abboud to Practice Leader of USI’s South Portland, Maine office. In his new role, Abboud is responsible for the execution and growth strategies for northern New England, with a focus on the Maine market.

At USI, Abboud works closely with USI’s regional transportation and construction risk advisors and account managers to help USI’s clients understand the complexities and components of their insurance program and identify areas to mitigate claims and insurance costs through modification review and alternative risk financing analysis. Chris brings national underwriting experience through his tenure on the American Association of State Compensation Insurance Funds



Chris Abboud

(AASCIF) Underwriting Committee from 2016 to 2018, which he chaired in 2018.

Since joining USI in 2020, Abboud has specialized in transportation and construction verticals which deliver custom risk management programs to transportation/logistics and infrastructure construction clients. Prior to USI, he served as a senior underwriter at Maine Employers’ Mutual Insurance Company (MEMIC) and as an account executive for The Rowley Agency.

Abboud graduated from the University of Southern Maine’s Risk Management Program and received the Certificate of Excellence in Business Strategy in 2011. Abboud has been an active board member of the MBTA for over four years and currently chairs MBTA’s membership committee. ■

FMI: To learn more about USI, visit www.usi.com.

To contact Chris, visit chris.abboud@usi.com.

Green International wins Client Savvy award

MBT A BOARD member Jasmine Strout, a senior engagement and marketing specialist at Green International Affiliates, Inc. at the company's Tewksbury, Massachusetts office, recently accepted Client Savvy's Employee Engagement Award on the company's behalf at the 2023 CXps Conference 2023. This is the fourth year that Green International has won the award.



Jasmine Strout (left) accepts the award from Client Savvy CEO Ryan Suydam.

In its entry for the 2023 awards, the company detailed its recent efforts and experiences in undertaking the transition from a traditional hierarchical management structure to a flatter management structure. The new structure enables every employee, regardless of their position, to leverage their strengths and pursue their interests.

The leaner management structure allows more employee autonomy. Adopting a “paradigm shift” approach, all members of the Green International team are encouraged to engage in work that holds personal meaning for them. As of April 2023, professionals at the Engineer IV level now have the opportunity to choose

their career path as a technical manager, business manager, or client manager. This not only benefits individual employees but also contributes to the overall growth of the company.

Client Savvy consults with companies and helps them evaluate how they are performing in relation to their clients' expectations – and how to advance innovative approaches and ideas as they pursue professional excellence. The annual awards

are presented to leaders in client service in the engineering, construction, architecture, accounting, legal, and other fields. ■

FMI: Green International provides engineering services for transportation infrastructure, water resources, landscape architecture, and more. To learn more, visit greenintl.com.

18 MBTA members named to ‘Best Places’ list

THE MAINE State Council of the Society for Human Resource Management recently announced the winners in the 18th annual “Best Places to Work in Maine” program. This year, 18 MBTA members were among the more than 100 companies that met the criteria of a “Best Place to Work in Maine.”

MBTA members named to the list are, in alphabetical order: Auburn Concrete/Aggregates; Bangor Savings Bank; Bernstein Shur; Central Maine Power; Cianbro; Darling's; Eaton Peabody; Gorham Sand & Gravel; Gor-rill Palmer Consulting Engineers; Haley Ward Inc.; Hammond Lumber Co.; Lebel & Harri-man Retirement Advisors; Machias Savings Bank; MMG Insurance Co.; Moulison Heavy Electrical; S. W. Collins Co.; Sebago Technics;

and Skowhegan Savings Bank.

The official rankings for 2023 in categories are based on company size (Small Employer, 15 – 49 U.S. employees; Medium Employer, 50 – 249 U.S. employees; and Large Employer, 250 or more U.S. employees) and will be announced at an awards ceremony, October 11 at the Augusta Civic Center.

The employer recognition program was launched in Maine in 2006 by the Maine State Council of the Society for Human Resource Management. The program recognizes companies that have established and consistently fostered outstanding workplace environments. The organization that manages the program, Best Companies Group, gathers information from all registered organizations including employee benefits and workplace policies. The

program also surveys employees to measure their job and workplace satisfaction.

Participating companies receive an Employee Feedback Report to help them identify strengths and find opportunities to continue building a better workplace. The report summarizes employee engagement and satisfaction data and includes employees' written comments. The report is used by many organizations to make significant improvements in their workplace culture.

The program is part of a long-term initiative to encourage growth and excellence in companies throughout the state. ■

FMI: To learn more, visit bestplacesworkinme.com.

Construction Academy completes first season

THE LAST of four groups of students graduated from this year's 2023 Summer Construction Immersion Program, part of the Maine Construction Academy, at Bath Regional Technical School at the end of August. The program was held in Biddeford, Brewer, Westbrook, and Bath.

AGC Maine, along with a local Career and Technical Education Program, community workforce service providers, and contractors all partnered to provide students valuable exposure to different career pathways within construction.

"We were absolutely honored to be one of the first to offer the program," said Kevin Napolillo, ELO Coordinator and Immersion Program Instructor at Brewer High School. "This program has had a profound impact on not just the students' career paths, but their lives as a whole."

The program, funded by a grant through the Maine Department of Labor, is geared toward growing pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities in Maine. AGC Maine, along with several partners, worked together to bring the program to life in

the summer of 2023. The student participants earned a \$200 per week stipend while participating in the program and graduated with several industry recognized credentials including OSHA 10, Construction First Aid and CPR, Rigger and Signal Person Training. Some of the students also received their NCCER Core Badge.

Once training was complete, the students received hands-on experience for several weeks through either construction activities on an active jobsite, or hands-on training at their class location. The students learned how to assemble and disassemble concrete forms, wire an electrical outlet, run piping, operate heavy equipment, shoot grades, and much more. The program concluded with resume preparation, a class on money management, and guaranteed interviews with participating contractors. A total of over 100 students applied, with just over 50 ultimately joining and completing the program. Several of the students have received job offers due to their participation in the program. ■

FMI: To learn more, visit maineconstructionacademy.godaddysites.com.



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Maine, Start to Finish

MMG hires Clukey, appoints Smith

MMG INSURANCE Company in Presque Isle recently hired Julia Clukey as vice president of people and engagement/HR and appointed Zachary Smith, chief operating officer of Smith's Farm, to its board of directors.

JULIA CLUKEY

Before joining MMG, Clukey held leadership positions at General Electric, WEX, Wayfair, the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee, and VF Corporation. A native of Augusta, Clukey earned her bachelor of science degree in electrical engineering from DeVry University and an MBA from Johns Hopkins University. Clukey competed on the World Cup luge team from 2003 to 2015 and on the 2010 U.S. Olympic team.

She was inducted into the Maine Sports Hall of Fame in 2014 and the Maine Women's Hall of Fame in 2018. Julia also is passionate about community and youth development. She founded and ran Julia Clukey's Camp for Girls from 2011 to 2017.

"We are fortunate to have Julia joining our highly experienced management team and leading our workforce strategies," said Matthew McHatten, MMG CEO and president, noting that her "expertise in leadership, recruiting, talent development, and human resource strategy have played an important part in the success of several organizations and will



Julia Clukey

be a valuable addition to the MMG team and Aroostook County community."

ZACHARY SMITH

MMG's new director Smith has held several roles in his family's company, including daily operations, as well as oversight of quality and sustainability. As the largest supplier of broccoli east of the Mississippi, Smith's Farm has many logistical needs that he tends to, including crop rotation and management, labor management and post-harvest strategy.

Smith's Farm began in 1859 in Mars Hill and today is a fifth- and sixth-generation farm. "We enthusiastically welcome the valuable business



Zachary Smith

acumen and dynamism that Zach will introduce to our board," said Sam Collins, MMG's board chair.

Smith holds a bachelor's degree in resource and agribusiness and a minor in sustainable agriculture from the University of Maine.

Founded in 1897, MMG Insurance Co. is a regional property and casualty insurance company with operations in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Pennsylvania and Virginia and is in partnership with more than 220 independent agencies across more than 580 locations. ■

FMI: To learn more about MMG, visit www.mmgin.com.

3 MBTA members nominated for Family Business Awards

GORHAM SAND & Gravel, NRF Distributors, and the Cote Corporation were recently named finalists for the 2023 Maine Family Business Awards. Winners will be announced at a gala event on October 18.

Each year since 2000, the Institute for Family-Owned Business (IFOB), a Portland-based nonprofit trade group, has recognized large and small Maine-based family businesses that exemplify business success, positive business and family linkages, contributions to the community and industry, family participation, work environment, communication and

innovation. An independent judging panel selects the winners.

All family-owned businesses headquartered in Maine are eligible for consideration.

For purposes of the awards, a family business is one in which an owner either shares ownership or works in the business with at least one other family member (contemporaneously or over time) and has a commitment to continuing the enterprise.

FMI: To learn more, visit fambusiness.org/awards.

Ryder joins Sargent

SARGENT CORPORATION has hired Claire Ryder as the company's new human resources manager.

Ryder graduated from the University of Maine in 2014, and began her career in the social services field, ultimately leading to a position in recruiting and human resources. She went on to join the Northern Light Health human resources department where she provided support for the organization's physicians.

"I am delighted Claire made the decision to join our team. Her skills and experience will be a great addition to Sargent," Vice President of Human Resources Amanda Martin said.

Ryder said she looks forward to working with a well-established team and



Claire Ryder

continuing to provide support, learn, and grow at Sargent. "I have enjoyed the culture and people," said Ryder. "I have yet to meet someone who works at Sargent who does not like their job. Everyone genuinely cares for one another, which is great to see," Ryder said.

Sargent Corporation is a team of over 450 employee-owners, building infrastructure including renewable energy projects, highways, commercial site work, landfill cells, highways, and underground work in the northeast and mid-Atlantic regions. Sargent has a rich, near-century-long history and continues to focus on preparing the next generation leading into its second century. ■

FMI: To learn more visit sargent.us.

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Charles E. Bragdon, Jr.

‘A good, kind man’

CHARLES E. Bragdon, Jr., passed away peacefully in his sleep on July 18 after a period of declining health.

Charlie, as he was known to friends, family and many in the construction and transportation industries, was born in Lewiston on December 23, 1937, to Charles E. Bragdon, Sr., and Myra G. McGaffey. He grew up in New Gloucester, Maine, and attended area schools. He graduated from Gray-New Gloucester High School in June of 1956. The following June he married Pauline Burns (“Polly”). Polly and Charlie were married for more than 60 years, and together they had three children, Stephen, David, and Patricia.

They moved to Kennebunk in 1964 where they raised their family and the children attended area schools. In September of 1973, the family suffered the painful loss of Patricia following a tragic pedestrian accident.

In 1984 Charlie and Polly moved to Sebago Lake where they renovated a cottage turning it into a beautiful waterfront home. Charlie spent 30 years working to create the most beautiful lawns and flower gardens on this large lakefront property. They spent many enjoyable years boating and entertaining. In 2000 upon their joint retirements, Polly and Charlie began to spend winters in Marco Island, Florida, and summers in Maine. Upon the sale of both homes in 2014, they moved to beautiful Riverbend Woods in Wells, Maine where they resided until both of their passings.

Charlie retired as a plant and quarry manager for Pike Industries after having worked in road construction for over 36 years. He was a member of Maine Better Transportation and served on the MBTA Board of Directors and on several committees, rising through the offices to become president of the organization from 1988 to 1989.

During his time on the board and as president, the organization faced several tough election battles over transportation funding for roads, bridges, rail and marine infrastructure, and Charlie was instrumental in soliciting fellow MBTA members’ support for the measures and raising awareness in the community. Mark Barnes of Shaw Brothers Construction recalled meeting Bragdon when he first joined MBTA.

“I was a young man when I first met Charlie. I had just joined the board at MBTA, and for whatever reason Charlie took me under his wing and showed me the importance of the MBTA and how it affected our industry,” said Barnes. “Each and every time I met with Charlie, whether it was working on the Membership Committee or some other MBTA business, I gained more and more respect for him. He taught me how to approach others and treat them with respect.”

“Charlie had a very special way about him,” said Barnes, who followed in Bragdon’s footsteps and was elected MBTA president in 1990. “He was a true mentor to me, and I will miss him but think about him often. It’s very seldom we have a chance to meet and work with someone as special



Charles Bragdon, Jr., when he was elected MBTA president in 1988.

as Charlie Bragdon. He was a kind, good man.”

MBTA Executive Director Maria Fuentes said that, although Charlie had served his term as president prior to her job at the association, she quickly learned how valuable and engaged he was as a member. A seasoned sales professional, he was fearless about asking companies to join the association and recruited many dozens of corporate members over several years. Fuentes said: “He would come into the office with blue membership cards and checks and tell me about the five new corporate members he had recruited. And at that time, he wasn’t even serving on the membership committee.”

Charlie’s passion for construction, transportation and the MBTA was inspirational. “I would look back at the history of our membership campaigns in recent years, and it was not unusual for Charlie to have recruited 15 or more corporate members in one year,” said Fuentes.

She recalled that Charlie would go on sales calls and would not leave without pitching the association to non-members. If he saw someone at an event or another function, he would ask them to join the MBTA. He was also very engaged in funding initiatives and helped organize many Caribbean trips for members.

Charlie was a dedicated outdoorsman who loved the water and boating. He was an avid fisherman, both commercial and recreational including open water and ice fishing. He enjoyed hunting for both large and small game. In his younger years, he was a trapper to provide income for the family.

He also liked watching professional sports and was a Red Sox and New England Patriots fan. He enjoyed coin collecting, photography, and visits to the casino. Charlie also enjoyed snowmobiling, golfing, and bird watching. He loved horse racing and previously owned several harness race horses. Over the years he and Polly travelled extensively and enjoyed several cruises together.

Charles is predeceased by his parents, his grandparents Ruth and Lester McGaffey and Eleanor and Wallace Bragdon, Sr., his beloved wife Polly, his sister Ruth Bowie, his brother William (“Bill”) Bragdon, son Stephen and daughter Patricia.

He is survived by his son David C. Bragdon and wife Gayle Witham; granddaughters Amy P. Bragdon and Stephanie M. Bartlett; Stephanie’s husband Joshua Bartlett and their daughter Bristol; grandson Eric Bragdon and wife Mia and their two daughters; daughters-in-law Carole M. LaBranche Bragdon, Sandra Harpell, and Amber L. Bragdon; sister-in-law Aline Bragdon; and great uncles Wallace Bragdon and Charles Fortier.

In lieu of flowers the family requests that contributions be made to the American Cancer Society (donate.cancer.org) in the memory of Charles and Pauline Bragdon. ■

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Work zone ahead: Improvements on I-295 north of Portland

EVERY YEAR, millions of leaf peepers and beachgoers do the same thing that thousands of Mainers do on a daily basis: they rely on the I-295 corridor to get them to their destinations. While traffic volumes on this stretch of interstate surge on holiday weekends and during rush hours, on average, about 70,000 vehicles use I-295 in Portland on any given day. Further north up the interstate, those volumes are lower, but there are still almost 30,000 vehicles traveling between Falmouth and Gardiner daily. Simply put, this is one of the most heavily used and, therefore, most important stretches of highway in our state.

Lately, you can't go very far on I-295 north of Portland without encountering a work zone. That's because, at the Maine Department of Transportation, we are working with our partners to invest millions of dollars to ensure that this interstate corridor remains safe and reliable. Each of these projects is coordinated to minimize impacts to the traveling public and strengthen Maine's transportation system.

THIS YEAR, MaineDOT has been working with our contracting partners at Pike Industries to perform paving work on the northbound side of I-295 in Portland. There are mill-and-fill operations happening from the Maine Turnpike to the Falmouth town line. Safety upgrades are focused on replacing guardrails and medians on the northern part of this stretch. All this work represents a \$15.2-million investment in the northbound side of the interstate this year. Last year, similar work was completed on the southbound side. That work was done by our partners at Northeast Paving for a total construction cost of \$9.9 million.

NEXT YEAR, MaineDOT is planning paving work on both sides of I-295 between Gardiner and the Androscoggin River in Topsham. In 2025, we will turn our attention to the lanes that stretch from the Androscoggin River to the Portland-Falmouth line. Pavement rehabilitation and drainage work will focus on the passing lanes on both sides of the interstate between Freeport and Brunswick. Like almost all I-295 highway projects, this work will happen primarily at night to minimize traffic impacts.

Of course, there are plenty of bridges along the interstate north of Portland. Three are currently under construction and scheduled to be finished by the end of 2025:

IN FALMOUTH, MaineDOT is working with Wyman & Simpson, Inc. to replace the bridges that carry Bucknam Road and Johnson Road over I-295. The existing bridges were built in 1960; they date back to the creation of the interstate. Construction on the new Bucknam Road Bridge started in September 2022 and is expected to continue into 2024. Work on the new Johnson Road Bridge will be the second phase of this nearly \$20-million project.

IN YARMOUTH, we are working with CPM Constructors to replace two bridges that carry I-295 over Route 1 near Exit 17. Drivers have been able to watch the new southbound bridge take shape just west of the existing southbound lanes. Traffic began using this new alignment bridge earlier this summer. Northbound traffic is now using the old southbound side while we build a new northbound bridge on the current alignment.

“Lately, you can’t go very far on I-295 north of Portland without encountering a work zone. That’s because, at the Maine Department of Transportation, we are working with our partners to invest millions of dollars to ensure that this interstate corridor remains safe and reliable.”

This project also involves another important connection: extending the Beth Condon Memorial Pathway to the Yarmouth Visitor Center. This is a nearly \$28-million project that is benefiting from grant funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Competitive Highway Bridge Program.

CONTINUING NORTH, MaineDOT is working with McNamee Construction Corporation to replace the bridges that cross I-295 at Exits 20 and 22 in Freeport. The bridge at Exit 20 carries Desert Road; the bridge at Exit 22 carries Mallet Drive (Routes 125 and 136). The original bridges were built in 1957. The construction contract on this project is almost \$26 million; some of the costs are being covered by discretionary federal grant funding from the USDOT's Competitive Highway Bridge Program. Each new bridge will feature a 12-foot-wide multi-use path that will tie into paths the town is planning to construct in the future. Traffic signals will be installed at the ends of the northbound and southbound interstate exit ramps.

We will continue to plan projects to improve travel on the vital I-295 corridor. The team at MaineDOT works hard to balance needs with available resources while constantly working to minimize the impacts felt by the traveling public. These construction projects and others will help ensure that one of the most important highway corridors in our state remains safe and reliable.

Finally, please slow down and increase your awareness as you approach work zones. Our most valuable asset is our people. Our family members work in these work zones, and we want to ensure everyone returns home at the end of the day. Please help us make our work zones safer by slowing down and paying attention when traveling through them. ■



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An illustration of the *Penobscot*, one of several generations of steamships that served ports and travelers with stops along Maine's coast and rivers between 1823 and the early 1900s.

Full steam ahead

THE FIRST regular steamship service to operate in Maine waters was the *Patent*, piloted by Captain Seward Potter, considered to be the “pioneer of steamboating” in Maine. The *Patent* ran regular service between Boston and Portland beginning in the summer of 1823. The next year, the *Maine* arrived in Belfast in grand style, firing a “small cannon” on May 22, 1824, according to *The History of the Boston & Bangor Steamship Co.*, published in 1882.

The owners of the *Patent* and the *Maine* formed the Kennebec Steam Navigation Company and soon the *Patent* was running between Boston and Bath, and the *Maine* was connecting the ports of Belfast and Eastport. They connected with other ships that ran the navigable waters of the Kennebec and St. John rivers. The fare to Boston was \$5 and the trip averaged 17 hours, considered good time when compared to the overland journey.

In 1833, the Boston and Bangor Steamship Company was

formed. The company commissioned the *Bangor* to be built by Brown & Bell, a New York shipyard. She was the fastest steamship operating in Maine during her day, and weighed 400 tons fully loaded. She was painted “wholly white” and carried 120 passengers, who each paid \$6 for passage including meals and berth, plus cargo between Boston and Bangor.

The *Bangor* led a colorful life. After she retired from service in Maine around 1841, she steamed to the Mediterranean, where she transported pilgrims from Alexandria to Mecca. Eventually, the *Bangor* was sold to the Sultan of Turkey, painted black, and became part of the Turkish naval fleet.

The Boston & Bangor Steamship Company merged with the Portland Steam Packet Company in 1901 to become the Eastern Steamship Lines, a company formed by Wall Street financier and speculator Charles W. Morse, who was born in Bath and educated at Bowdoin College. ■



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