

Sunrise County Economic Council

**Annual Report of Activities
Fiscal Year 2007**

“A Time of Opportunity”



*Initiating and facilitating the creation of
prosperity and jobs in Washington County*



Dear Fellow Citizens of Washington County,

Sunrise County Economic Council has just completed another year of dedicated service to our communities and wrapped up a successful Capital Campaign to help fund our work for 2007-08. The Campaign more than doubled our contributor base as well as doubling total contributions and pledges. Thirty-six new contributor firms and individuals have joined our donor ranks, giving strong evidence that SCEC programming and staff dedication is making a major impact on the business, economic and personal leadership in our county.

Despite major job losses and continued low personal income stats for our County, we are looking forward to *"A Time of Opportunity"* in our immediate future. Major economic opportunities in energy production, transportation, sustainable tourism, international regionalization and business expansion are on the horizon. SCEC stands ready with a dedicated staff, business support tools, Pine Tree Zone designations, labor force training programs and a strong regional post secondary educational thrust to make that *"Time of Opportunity"* a reality for our area. We appreciate your continued support of our programming and capital needs, as well as your volunteer service to the boards and agencies with which we partner.

Sincerely,



Edwin S. Plissey
Chairman
SCEC Board of Directors

"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty."

Sir Winston Churchill

A letter from the Executive Director

I am pleased to present the Board with our 2007 Annual Report, *"A Time of Opportunity."* SCEC remains a pivotal player in building Washington County's economy by developing businesses, assisting communities, investing in people, and ensuring excellence.

Over the past year, the SCEC team has been active in many initiatives, both new and existing. Economic development balance is the key to our region's economic success and prosperity. This mix must include business opportunities of all sizes and from all sectors.

SCEC has assisted local businesses through the auspices of the Sunrise Business Support Center, creating innovative, one-stop solutions to help business owners succeed. Through a contract with the Maine Office of Tourism, SCEC is assisting in developing sustainable nature-based tourism opportunities Down East.

In partnership with the Washington County Council of Governments, SCEC has helped small communities navigate the often confusing Community Development Block Grant process. SCEC is also involved in a number of projects which will facilitate cross-border initiatives.

The Washington County Leadership Institute began its second decade of equipping local folks with the skills and network to be successful leaders and to advocate for Washington County at all levels. Washington County's greatest natural resource is its young people. With this in mind, SCEC has begun designing a youth leadership training program. SCEC also provides leadership on a number of boards and committees locally and state-wide.

Collaborative capacity building improves the economical environment for all. This allows for website development and administrative assistance to municipalities and non-profit partners, and also allows SCEC to remain flexible in responding to immediate needs in Washington County.

Addressing each of these core areas, SCEC continues to fulfill its mission of initiating and facilitating the creation of jobs and prosperity in Washington County. Moreover, I firmly believe that we are experiencing a time of opportunity that will continue to move us in a positive direction - making Washington County a better place to live and work.



Harold W. Clossey

Developing Businesses

- ☆ to encourage prosperity
- ☆ to increase incomes
- ☆ to create and retain quality jobs

Sunrise County Business Support Center

A cluster of business services, including the Women's Business Center at CEI, Maine SBA and SBDC, and the Down East Business Alliance, providing technical assistance, lending, and web based resources and data.

Sunrise Loan Fund

A source of flexible gap financing for business start-up and expansion when traditional financing sources are not enough.



Resource Packaging, Referrals and Advocacy

Ongoing efforts to work with existing and new businesses to identify a variety of appropriate financing sources and incentive programs, make referrals to public and private business services that will best meet their needs, and serve a problem solving role when needed.

Nature Based Tourism Initiative

Working with the Vacationland Resources Committee of the Down East RC&D to develop sustainable nature based tourism strategies in Washington and Hancock Counties through itineraries and infrastructure improvements.

Success Story: The Sunrise Loan Fund allowed SCEC to provide \$90,000 in gap financing to three business ventures, resulting in the creation of 8 new jobs and over \$137,000 in leveraged investment.

Assisting Communities

- ☆ to help local leadership address local issues
- ☆ to convene citizens to work toward common goals
- ☆ to encourage regional cooperation

Municipal Technical Assistance Program

In cooperation with the Washington County Council of Governments, this initiative provides direct services to communities, including website development, project management, grant writing, grassroots economic development planning and implementation, and problem solving.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Technical Assistance

Certified CDBG administrators who work with municipalities to facilitate the use of state/federal funds for business and community development.



Transboundary Collaborations

Activities to strengthen business relationships and opportunities on both sides of the border with projects such as the St. Croix-Passamaquoddy Changing Borders conference and as a partner in the AccessAtlantica Northeast Trade Corridor coalition.

Washington County: One Community

One community of citizens devoted to positive communication across our county demonstrating, celebrating, promoting success.

Success Story: SCEC provided contracted technical assistance to local towns, and Washington County Government, as well as the Delta Development Corporation and the Washington County Development Authority, and helped towns to attract \$980,000 for business and public infrastructure development. Thirteen full-time jobs have been created, with more than 51% filled by people of low-to-moderate income.

Investing in People

- ☆ to build leadership
- ☆ to encourage educational success
- ☆ to enhance opportunities

Washington County Leadership Institute

An annual program for the county's formal and informal leaders to strengthen skills, increase awareness of the region's economic challenges and opportunities, and build a supportive network. More than 180 people have participated since 1997.

The Gracie Fund

A tuition-reimbursement program to encourage natives of Washington County to return to or remain in their communities following completion of their post-secondary education. School loan repayment awards of up to \$5,000 are given, usually, to three individuals each year and may be renewed for up to three years. For 2007, however, the Gracie Fund committee was able to select four recipients!

Youth Leadership Institute

Now in the formative stage, this will be a leadership program for high school students who are not yet leaders which will improve self confidence and communication skills, build aspirations, encourage volunteerism and community connectedness, and promote healthy lifestyles.

Success Story: The Gracie Fund has enabled one recipient (who expected to come home for just a year after graduation) to stay home and repay her student loans. Thanks to the Washington County Leadership Institute, she has discovered opportunities to continue in the field of work she loves and to make a difference in Washington County.



Ensuring Excellence

- ☆ to forge partnerships
- ☆ to empower organizations to become more effective & sustainable
- ☆ to remain responsive and flexible to emerging issues

Fiscal Agency Support

Administrative services to the Washington County Council of Governments and the Down East Institute that provides cost-effective support to and collaboration among Washington County agencies – ensuring more resources are available for direct services rather than overhead.



The Opportunity Fund

An annual fund that helps SCEC respond to immediate needs and opportunities within the region and the organization, such as research, public education, project coordination, technology and facilities.

Municipal, County and Non-profit Website Development

Websites developed and maintained for Washington County Government, Washington County Council of Governments, and the Downeast Institute, as well as the towns of Charlotte, Pembroke and Perry who have teamed up for municipal website development.

Success Story: A pool of flexible, available funds allowed SCEC to help Cutler Commercial Properties to facilitate the sale of the former Cutler Navy Base, putting the property back on the tax rolls. Currently, six businesses are active in the Cutler Commercial Park - Cutler Residential Properties, Engineering Technologies Inc, Look's Gourmet Foods, Artful Wares, Cutler Craftsmen and A-2-Z Variety store.

**Sunrise County Economic Council
Board of Directors, 2007**

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