

**Sunrise County Economic Council
Board of Directors, FY 2014**



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Sunrise County Economic Council

**Annual Report of Activities
Fiscal Year 2014**



The Machias Marketplace

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

53 Prescott Drive, Suite 3
Machias, ME 04654
www.sunrisecounty.org
Phone: 207-255-0983 Fax: 207-255-4987

To the Friends of SCEC

The past year has been one of transition for SCEC. Last December, our Executive Director, Harold Clossey, accepted the position of President and CEO of the Maine Development Foundation. Over his eight years at SCEC, Harold's fine work greatly expanded SCEC's programs and capabilities. We look forward to the work that he will accomplish statewide and greatly appreciate what he has already done to raise Washington County's profile. Jennifer Peters, SCEC's Assistant Director, managed our operations during the transition and provided invaluable support and insight to our search committee. On behalf of the Board, I want to express deep gratitude to Jen for all that she did and does to assist SCEC to run smoothly and to keep our programs on track.

Our search was a success, with the Board welcoming Charles Rudelitch as SCEC's third Executive Director in May. Charles grew up in Washington County and knows our region well. With his training in the law and economics coupled with his professional experience, he has the knowledge and skills to help SCEC continue to grow and better meet our mission of creating jobs and prosperity in Washington County. Charles has hit the ground running, demonstrating the leadership necessary to move SCEC forward.

For much of SCEC's 21 year history, I have served as a volunteer with the organization. We started with little more than an idea and deep commitment to making Washington County a more prosperous, better place. Our first Executive Director (and only employee at the time), Dianne Tilton, made that idea a reality and along with Jen and Will Tuell, SCEC's Communications Manager, created the foundation that all of SCEC's work has been built on.

I am very proud of the organization that our staff, Board, and many partners have built. On behalf of the Board, I want to extend a thank you to all of the banks, businesses, community leaders, interested individuals, and foundations that have supported us over the years. We are very excited about the work we are doing and hope that you will continue to work with us to make Washington County a better, more prosperous place to live and work.

Sincerely,



Shirley Erickson
Chairman
SCEC Board of Directors

Axiom Technologies to Steer Adult Education into the Future

On July 1, Axiom Technologies opened the doors to the Axiom Education and Training Center (AETC) which will be coordinating with Machias area school systems, community partners such as SCEC, and the business community to deliver and build upon adult and community education opportunities.

"It's a logical next step," AETC President and SCEC Assistant Director Jennifer Peters said.

"Axiom and SCEC have been working with businesses, communities, and individuals to promote computer literacy through a John T. Gorman Foundation grant. We've also been actively working with the Maine Community Foundation to expand educational opportunities in Washington County, and have developed strong relationships with folks who want to revamp and expand continuing education in the area."

While it's Machias-based, the AETC plans on reaching out to other communities across the county and will offer both traditional adult education courses and "in-demand" courses that employers and job seekers are looking for in the ever-changing workplace.

"We really believe that adult education is important to Washington County," says Jane Blackwood, Director of AETC. "We're going to support it and promote it to see that we have the best programs for the population here and that it's accessible to everyone across the whole county."



Many of the same courses that were taught in the past will continue, along with HiSET (formerly GED). Classes will provide opportunities for professional growth, personal enrichment, computer skills improvement and preparation for professional careers in a supportive environment. Classes, workshops, seminars, and one-on-one tutoring will all be possible at the center in Machias and at

other locations across the county based on student needs.

To find out more, check out the AETC on Facebook at www.facebook.com/AxiomEducationTrainingCenter

New Poultry Processing Plant Launched with SCEC Assistance



Carly DelSignore and Aaron Bell own and operate Tide Mill Organic Farm in Edmunds, Maine. They are the 8th generation of Bells to farm the Tide Mill land. Their organic farming operation includes milk, vegetables, eggs, beef, pork, and poultry. After years of seeing demand for their organic chicken steadily increase, Aaron and

Carly began talking with SCEC about a project that would allow them to raise more meat birds, increase their capacity to process poultry on their farm, and expand their market for fresh, organic poultry.

Shortly thereafter Tide Mill Farm received a grant from the Unorganized Territories TIF Program (administered by SCEC) to conduct a market feasibility study for the expansion of their poultry operation. Based on this study Tide Mill determined that they could reasonably expand their organic poultry processing operation from, what was at the time approximately 10,000 birds per year, to at least 20,000 birds per year, and that the market would support it.

In 2013 Tide Mill and SCEC attended a quarterly meeting of the Slow Money Maine network to present their plans for expansion, and outline the funding that would be needed to support them. The presentation was very successful, and we were subsequently able to secure approximately \$200,000 in grant funds for the project in the following months. This funding - which came in the form of several grants from Maine Community Foundation, Sewall Foundation, and a number of private anonymous donors - was granted to SCEC's Sunrise Food Infrastructure Initiative, which in turn awarded it to Tide Mill based on a competitive application and conditions approved by the SCEC board of directors. During this time Tide Mill also applied for, and received further support from the SCEC administered Unorganized Territories TIF Program - a \$200,000 loan, and a \$15,000 grant - for project implementation.

Construction began in the summer of 2014. In July Tide Mill broke ground on the construction of a new USDA Certifiable Poultry Processing building, and adjacent Hoop House - for raising birds throughout the winter. Together these two structures will allow the farm to double their poultry processing production to at least 20,000 birds in the first two years, and eventually well beyond that.

These two buildings represent a significant investment into the infrastructure of commercial agriculture in Washington County. The goal of the facilities is to be able to process USDA certified organic poultry products that can be sold not only anywhere in Maine, but also across the state border to any grocery store in the country. This project has an immediate job-creation impact of 4 full-time equivalent, and 3 part-time jobs, with the potential for significant growth beyond these numbers as it scales over the next several years.

A Year in Transition

This is an exciting time at SCEC. In the past year, we have seen remarkable growth in the local foods sector and the local capacity to deliver workforce training. With County Government as our partner, we have helped over a dozen businesses in the unorganized territory to start up or expand. We gave out more scholarships to working age adults to improve their job related skills and helped develop our community's leaders through the Washington County Leadership Institute.



More broadly, we celebrated ground breaking for the new tissue machines at St. Croix Tissue in Baileyville and the Washington County Community College's innovative program to train local people to take these new jobs. We welcomed the recent news about the expansion at the Down East Institute for Applied Marine Research and Education and the long term commitment that the University of Maine at Machias has made to understand the resources that make commercial fishing possible.

While we celebrate our accomplishments and those of our neighbors and partners, we recognize that much more work needs to be done. We will continue to work to improve our economy, seeking out partners and resources wherever we can. I am happy to be part of SCEC and of this larger effort to make Washington County a place where anyone who works hard can provide for their family and get ahead. It is the most important work that I can think of doing, and I am thankful to be part of it.

I want to express my gratitude to my fellow staff at SCEC and the Board of Directors for their support and help during this year of transition. I also want to thank the many concerned individuals, businesses, banks, and foundations that support SCEC and make our work possible.

Sincerely,

Charles J. Rudelitch
Executive Director

SCEC Program Areas

- ☆ Business Development
- ☆ Community Development
- ☆ Individual Development

Focus on Businesses Development

Developing businesses includes retention, expansion, and attraction—each has its own unique set of needs. SCEC meets these needs by offering a multitude of resources and information—all FREE and located here in Washington County through our own programs and our partners. Using our knowledge of Washington County and understanding of the economic climate, we help business owners and entrepreneurs navigate to success.

Success Stories:

☆ *In partnership with County Government, SCEC provided support to over a dozen businesses through the Unorganized Territories Tax Increment Financing (UT TIF) District in 2014, providing almost \$150,000 in grants and over \$330,000 in loans. The UT TIF district allows the County to use property tax revenues from the wind farms near Danforth to fund economic development throughout the unorganized territories. In this past year, UT TIF funds helped leverage another \$340,000 in private investment, allowing businesses to expand and create new jobs in some of the most rural areas of Washington County.*

☆ *SCEC has taken a leadership role in building and promoting local food businesses in Washington County. Through our Sunrise Food Infrastructure Initiative and with support from individual and foundation donors, we launched microloan and grant programs that have invested over \$250,000 in local farms during 2014. In September, SCEC was awarded a grant from the USDA Local Food Promotion Program to examine the local food system and identify the investments needed to help the Machias Marketplace (on cover) and other local food businesses expand.*

Focus on Community Development

No man, nor organization, is an island. SCEC works to empower organizations that are playing critical roles in the development and advancement of Washington County, help local leadership address local issues, convene citizens to work toward common goals, and encourage regional cooperation. SCEC uses a grassroots approach to economic and community development. By seeking common ground, working across political, municipal and economic boundaries, SCEC and our partners are moving Washington County forward!

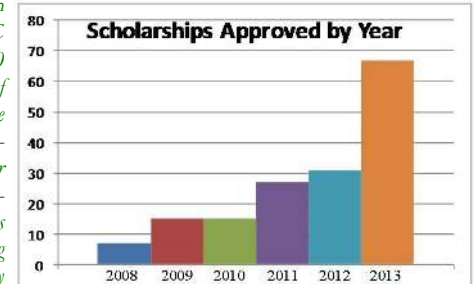
Success Story: The Maine Community Foundation created the Washington County Education Initiative to assist Washington County in building an educated workforce. SCEC has been a partner since its inception. This group helped connect the dots between Axiom Technologies and Adult Education. SCEC is helping to strengthen Adult Education by working with the Town of Machias on a \$100,000 Community Development Block Grant for Workforce Development. This grant will ensure that Adult Ed services can be accessed by residents within and beyond the Machias Bay Area.

Focus on Individual Development

Above all, Washington County is only as good as its people. Strong, capable, and informed people build better communities. SCEC works to build leadership at all levels—from youth to adult—by encouraging and supporting educational success. SCEC offers several leadership and scholarship opportunities with programs ranging from our flagship Washington County Leadership Institute to the Sunrise Scholarship Fund. We are secure in our belief that training tomorrow's leaders today will result in more vibrant and informed communities.

Success Stories:

☆ *Thanks to the Eaton Foundation and The Boston Foundation, SCEC provides scholarships of up to \$500 for Washington County residents, of low-to-moderate income, who will be attending a training and/or certification program that will increase their opportunities for immediate employment or job advancement. This fiscal year, 33 scholarships, totaling \$14,359, were approved by SCEC's Board of Directors.*



☆ *The Washington County Leadership Institute, which provides Washington County residents with the skills, insight, and professional network to become more effective leaders, completed its 18th year. There is now a total of 276 members in its network! Special thanks to our sponsors including: The Boston Foundation, the Eaton Foundation, Machias*

Savings Bank, Northern Maine Development Commission, RHR Smith & Company, SCEC, the University of Maine at Machias, and the Washington County Council of Governments.

Thanks to Our Donors

Sunrise County Economic Council is an independent, nongovernmental organization that has worked to promote economic growth since 1993. Donations to the Annual Campaign enable SCEC to work with businesses, communities, and individuals with consistency and focus and to leverage foundation and government funds. Your support makes local control a reality. SCEC Board and staff would like to thank all of our donors and sponsors and to let others know that without your support some of the **Success Stories** on these two pages would still be just a dream!