



Sunrise County Economic Council

Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2015



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

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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

Sunrise County Economic Council Board of Directors, FY 2014



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Project Manager

A Message from the Director

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,

Business

Developing businesses includes retaining, and expanding existing businesses as well as attracting new businesses to Washington County. SCEC supports businesses' unique needs with free resources and information as well as access to grants and loans.

We help business owners and entrepreneurs navigate to success!



Through Downeast Commercial Fisheries Funds, Sunrise Agricultural Micro-loans FAME (Finance Authority of Maine) Loans, IRP (Intermediary Relending Program) Loans, and Sunrise Loan Fund Loans, **SCEC loaned over \$110,000 to Washington County businesses**

In partnership with County Government, SCEC provided loans and grants through the Unorganized Territories Tax Increment Financing (UT TIF) District program.



The Dennysville Snowmobile Club was able to purchase a groomer to support winter tourism

Through SCEC, the UT TIF provided **\$120,000 in grants and \$200,000 in loans this year**

In this past year, UT TIF funds helped leverage another **\$412,005 in private investment** in some of the most rural areas of Washington County.

Development



In partnership with the Community Caring Collaborative (CCC) and as a member of Poverty Busters, SCEC is working to bring more services and supports to families and other vulnerable populations in Washington County, Maine.

SCEC is coordinating efforts to revitalize the Machias Valley Airport..



SCEC has been a founding member of the **Downeast Sustainability Initiative**. With regional partners, the DSI is completing the **initial planning work to restore commercial river herring fisheries on the Orange and main stem of the East Machias Rivers.**



Community

SCEC works to empower organizations that are playing critical roles in the development and advancement of Washington County. We help local leadership address 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!

Through a contract with the Washington County Council of Governments, SCEC helps Washington County communities and businesses with economic development projects under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.



This year, SCEC conducted a census of Eastport to help it become eligible for CDBG monies.

SCEC supported the Washington County Development Authority in taking on the redevelopment planning of the former Cutler Naval Base.



Development

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 provided \$5,000 in micro loans and awarded more than \$125,000 in grants during 2015.



Christmas geese at 10th Village Farm bound for its new USDA funded rabbit and poultry processing facility

SCEC has also completed a Local Food Promotion Program Planning Grant which examined the local food system and identified the investments needed to help local food businesses expand.



Tide Mill chickens in their new hoop house created with UT TIF and Slow Money Maine Grants and loans



Rich Bard with his cattle — a SAM loan will help him feed them this winter

Individual

Strong, capable, and informed people build better communities. SCEC works to build leadership at all levels by encouraging and supporting educational success.



Blueberry contract harvester's training

Business training, leadership development, student loan reimbursement 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.

The Gracie Fund, a student loan repayment program which encourages students who call Washington County "home," to put down roots **repaid \$30,000 of student loans this year.** Fund recipients have earned a degrees and are now building a professional and personal life in Washington County.



2014 Gracie Fund Student Loan reimbursement recipients

Development

SCEC provides Sunrise 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, was Sunrise Scholarships' biggest year ever!



Tara Skeate earned credentials which will allow her to start a community elder care business from her home.



"Your support allows me to continue on the path towards completing my educational & employment goals. ... I am so very grateful for your help..."

Sixty-nine scholarships were approved by the Board of Directors and over \$23,000 was distributed.

The Washington County Leadership Institute, which provides Washington County residents with the skills, insight, and professional network to become more effective leaders, completed its 19th year.

WCLI now is a network of nearly 300 members!



The WCLI Tau Class