

May 9, 2019

Taxation committee defeats one local option sales tax bill and carries over another

Chamber opposed all five bills

On Tuesday, May 7, the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation voted 7-6 “ought-not-to-pass” on **LD 609**, *An Act to Provide Municipalities Additional Sales Tax Revenue from Lodging Sales*, sponsored by Rep. Maureen Terry (D-Gorham). The bill would have increased the lodging tax by 1% and incremental revenues generated, minus administrative costs for Maine Revenue Services, would have been returned to the generating municipality.

In addition, the committee unanimously voted to carry-over till next legislative session **LD 1254**, *An Act to Authorize a Local Option Sales Tax on Meals and Lodging and Provide Funding to Treat Opioid Use Disorder*, sponsored by Rep. Michael Sylvester (D-Portland). The bill would have allowed a municipality to impose a year-round or seasonal local option sales tax, if approved by referendum, of no more than 1% on prepared food and short-term lodging. A total of 85% of revenue generated would have been distributed back to the municipality and 15% would have been distributed to all other municipalities that have to use that money for preventing and treating opioid use. In a last-ditch effort to make the bill more politically palatable, Rep. Sylvester came in with an amendment that changed the distribution

formula to 75% back to the generating municipality and 25% to all other municipalities. The committee decided to still carryover the bill and not deal with this issue this session.

The committee unanimously defeated the other three bills: **LD 65**, *An Act to Allow Municipalities to Impose a Seasonal or Year-Round Local Option Sales Tax*, sponsored by Rep. Pinny Beebe-Center (D-Rockland), which would have allowed a municipality to impose a local option sales tax if approved by referendum on a seasonal or year-round basis with no limit on the rate that could be imposed; **LD 156**, *An Act to Allow Regional Service Center Municipalities to Assess an Additional One Percent Tax for Infrastructure Costs*, sponsored by Sen. David Miramant (D-Knox), which would have allowed municipalities to impose a local option sales tax of no more than 1% if approved by referendum for the purpose of funding infrastructure costs and **LD 1110**, *An Act to Establish a Local Option for Sales Tax*, sponsored Rep. Lori Gramlich (D-Old Orchard), which would have allowed a municipality to impose a local option sales tax, if approved by referendum, on items that were subject to the sales tax, such as retail transactions, prepared

Apprenticeships serve as alternative pathways our future workforce

The Maine State Chamber testified in support of Sen. Lisa Keim’s (R-Oxford) internship program bill this week. **LD 1521**, *An Act To Expand Skill Development Opportunities for Maine Youth*, directs the Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Labor, to develop an internship program for students who are 23 years of age or younger. The internship program developed by the department would authorize participants to receive compensation options, in combination with a variable hourly wage that is equal to or greater than the federal minimum wage, that may include academic credits, credentials of value and stackable credentials. The bill directs the Department of Education to submit a report outlining the internship program developed, together with any necessary implementing legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs by December 4, 2019.

In addition, to facilitate participation in the Maine Apprenticeship Program established under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 26, section 3202, this bill directs the Department of Labor to calculate the amount of funding and the number of positions it would require in order to establish an apprenticeship coordinator

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Vol. 53, No. 15 Impact

(207) 623-4568

Impact (ISSN 1055-3029) is published weekly January through June and monthly July through December by the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, 125 Community Dr., Suite 101, Augusta, Maine 04330-8010. Periodicals postage paid at Augusta, Maine, and additional mailing offices. Maine State Chamber member companies are assessed \$75.00 yearly for each newsletter subscription (subscribers or out-of-dues assesment). **POSTMASTER:** Please send any address changes to **Impact**, 125 Community Dr., Suite 101, Augusta, Maine 04330-8010.

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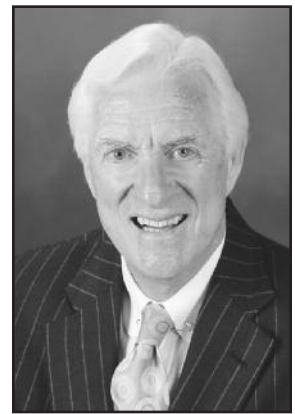
President: Dana F. Connors

Information in this newsletter is intended to provide guidance, not legal advice. Since exact language and definitions of key terms are critical to understanding the requirements of legislation, rules or laws, we encourage you to read each carefully. Articles and information contained in this newsletter may be reprinted with attribution given to: Maine State Chamber of Commerce. Please address comments to Melanie Baillargeon, director of communications. Information about the Maine State Chamber of Commerce may also be viewed on the Internet at: www.mainechamber.org. Our email address is news@mainechamber.org.

About the Maine State Chamber of Commerce:

Since 1889, the Maine State Chamber has been fighting to lower your cost of doing business. Through our Grassroots Action Network and OneVoice program, we work with a network of approximately 5,000 companies statewide who see the value in such a service and provide the financial support that keeps our access, advocacy, and assistance efforts going strong. As Maine's Chamber, we make sure that the business environment of the state continues to thrive. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce advocates on behalf of their interests before the legislature and regulatory agencies and through conferences, seminars, and affiliated programs.

A message from the president...



“We are at a critical junction in the legislative process...”

by Dana Connors

By the time you read this, our Leadership Summit Follow-up will be a day or so away (May 14). I cannot stress enough the importance of these events. As we prepare for this event and head into what is likely the final six weeks of session, we will get a status report from legislative leaders and Governor Mills regarding the session's remaining major policy issues, as well as their thoughts on what lies ahead, perhaps even into next session. We look forward to hearing from Governor Mills and legislative leadership on Wednesday, May 14.

As statutory adjournment (June 19) nears, there are many important issues remaining. A significant number of these bills are cause for great concern from the business community, especially our small family-owned businesses. Some issues have been dealt with, with reason and balance – however, what's left on the table carry significant consequences and costs. We are at a critical junction in the legislative process as bills move from committee to floor votes in both bodies. Please consider contacting your locally-elected legislator to share your company's perspective.

The Maine State Chamber is proud of the daily work our team of seasoned, full-time advocates does on behalf of Maine businesses, large and small at the Statehouse and beyond. We also know that no one tells your story better than you do. So, whether you want to testify on a bill or have us do it for you, please reach out and let your voice be heard. Now is the time, and together, we are the Voice of Maine Business. □

2019 Measures of Growth Report Finds Maine Continues to Lead the Nation in Environment and Safety, but Persistently Struggles with Other Business, Community and Workforce Indicators

MEASURES OF GROWTH

Performance Measures and Benchmarks to Achieve a Vibrant and Sustainable Economy for Maine

2019

On April 24, 2019, the Maine Economic Growth Council today released its 25th annual Measures of Growth report (<https://www.mdf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/MOG-FullReport2019-FNL.pdf>), a snapshot of where the state's economy sits relative to our long-term goals, to other states, and the U.S. as a whole. It finds that overall, Maine continues to perform exceptionally well in terms of environment and safety, and persistently struggles in other business, community and workforce areas. This year's report also issues an urgent call to action for the State of Maine to develop a long-term economic plan to grow the state's economy and make a high quality of life possible for all Mainers.

"The Measures of Growth annual report has long provided valuable information about what we are doing right, where we need to improve, and the trends of progress or decline over time," said Steve Von Vogt, chair of the Maine Economic Growth Council. "However, in order to truly make meaningful, sustainable progress Maine must develop, commit to and implement a long-term strategy for growing the economy and establishing our state as a vibrant, desirable place to do business and raise a family."

In total, the report tracks 27 indicators that represent Maine's assets and areas of persistent challenge. Maine made measur-

able progress on seven indicators, but lost ground versus the benchmark on seven others. More specifically, the 2019 report assigns **four Gold Stars** signifying exceptional performance in the following areas:

- ♦ **Safety:** Maine's crime rate is 40% below the national average;
- ♦ **Air Quality:** The number and severity of unhealthy or even moderate air quality days continues to decline and in 2018 were the lowest on record;
- ♦ **Water Quality:** The water quality of Maine rivers and streams remains far above the U.S. average; and,
- ♦ **Sustainable Forest Lands:** The growth to harvest ratio increased between 2016 and 2017.

It assigns **six Red Flags** highlighting the following areas in need of particular attention:

- ♦ **Research and Development Expenditures:** Total spending on R & D declined \$25 million between 2015 and 2016, and Maine ranks 45th of the 50 states
- ♦ **Fourth Grade Reading and Eighth Grade Math Scores:** In 2017, 36% of 4th graders were proficient in reading, trailing the New England average by 7 points
- ♦ **Working Age Population:** Maine's

proportion of working age population continues to decline, and is below the national average

- ♦ **Cost of Health Care:** Maine's health care spending remains at 17.8 percent of all personal expenditures since 2015, which is above the U.S. average and a full percentage point above the New England average
- ♦ **Transportation Infrastructure:** In 2017, 33% of Maine's most-traveled highways were graded "D" or "F."

"The Maine Economic Growth Council's vision of a high quality of life for all Maine people is the foundation of our work at MDF," said Yellow Light Breen, president and CEO of Maine Development Foundation. "Improving Maine's economy requires both brutal honesty and unquenchable optimism. We look forward to the opportunity to work with the new Administration and other policymakers, along with business and community leaders, over the next decade to develop, implement and maintain a comprehensive, long-term plan that delivers on this vision."

The Maine Economic Growth Council takes a nonpartisan, data-driven approach to presenting an unbiased picture of Maine's economy and well-being. Measures of Growth is designed to be a resource for policy and decision makers at all levels, helping them to focus their efforts and understand the connections between the major issues affecting the state. Since 1993, the Council has served as an unbiased analyst and advisor of Maine's economic health and status and is administered by the Maine Development Foundation (MDF). Council members are jointly appointed by the Governor, Senate President, and Speaker of the House, and represent a broad and diverse cross-section of Maine's key constituencies.

For more information, please contact Kathleen Shannon Nichols, director of engagement and communications at MDF, by calling (207) 400-1828 or by emailing kshannon@mdf.org. □

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Local Option Sales Tax...

(Continued from Page 1...)

foods, liquor, hotel rentals, and certain rentals of automobiles.

The committee had originally tabled LDs 609 and 1254 in effort to seek an opinion from the Attorney General as to whether permitting a local option sales tax is in fact constitutional. The Maine Constitution, under Article IX, Section 9, states: "the Legislature shall never, in any manner, suspend or surrender the power of taxation."

The constitutional issue was originally raised by Maine Revenue Services (MRS). Although Maine Revenue Services testified neither for nor against the local option tax bills, MRS outlined major concerns with the proposals. MRS concerns included the increased complexity for MRS, retailers and consumers due to the degree of municipal discretion in structuring the local option sales tax; the timing and cost of implementation; issues with the tracking and transfer of revenues; and, constitutional issues. MRS also stated concerns regarding the timing and cost of the implementation of a local options sales tax and that it could take up to two years to update accounting, noticing, and billing systems, tax returns, and tax guidance documents. Retailers would incur the cost of having to update of accounting and point of sales systems. The committee received the opinion that concluded that enacting a local option sales tax was constitutional.

The Maine State Chamber has long-opposed local option sales taxes for a variety of reasons, including the following reasons cited from the testimony on these bills:

- ♦ **Enacting a local option sales tax increases the total tax burden in the state:** This bill would have added another layer of sales tax to items purchased in municipalities that enact it. Local option taxes are nothing more than another way to raise revenue for municipalities and would do nothing to reduce taxes at the local level. After all, any time a municipi-

pality needs a new fire truck, a new school, or any new budget item, it could simply impose the tax. Municipalities need to focus on spending efficiencies, not just continually raising taxes on Maine businesses and Maine people.

- ♦ **Local option sales taxes hurt small brick and mortar businesses:** Many folks buy local to support small brick-and-mortar businesses in their municipalities. Local businesses located in one locale compete with local businesses in another. Businesses located in towns that enact a local option sales tax will be at a competitive disadvantage with businesses in municipalities that do not enact a local option sales tax. This will pit one community against another. *Local brick-and-mortar retail businesses will never be able to compete in that high-taxed environment.* The tax will hit their bottom line, and they may not be able to pass the expense on to the consumer. Ultimately, they will lose sales to neighboring towns that don't have local option sales tax.
- ♦ **Local option sales taxes impact local economic development efforts:** Municipalities around the state work hard to try to attract businesses to their locales; many hire economic development directors to do just that. This will do nothing to attract businesses, but instead, would discourage businesses from locating in towns that have additional taxes. This bill will make towns that impose sales taxes less attractive. Once local option taxes are in place, they would be virtually impossible to remove because that municipality would become dependent on the revenue.

If you have any questions, please contact Linda Caprara by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 106 or by emailing lcaprara@mainechamber.org. □

Increase to the Maine State Grant program encourages more Mainers to attend and complete college, ultimately strengthening our state's economy

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce has been a supporter of the Maine State Grant program and its benefits to Maine students. The State of Maine Grant program provides need-based grants to Maine undergraduate students that are enrolled at least half-time in an undergraduate program at an eligible institution. The program is administered by the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME).

This week, the Maine State Chamber testified in support of two bills that would increase the funding to the Maine State Grant program. Both bills were heard in front of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business.

LD 461, *An Act To Improve the Affordability of Higher Education*, sponsored by House Chair, Rep. Matthea Daughtry (D-Brunswick), would provide additional funding to the Maine State Grant Program in the 2020-2021 biennium. It requires FAME to expand the Maine State Grant Program to enable more low-income residents of the State to attend an institution of higher education within the State of Maine. It also requires the FAME and the Department of Health and Human Services to jointly examine ways to maximize the delivery of federally-funded support services to post-secondary students, including but not limited to, the federal supplemental nutrition assistance program.

LD 509, *An Act To Increase the Minimum Grant Amount under the Maine State Grant Program*, sponsored by Rep. Teresa Pierce (D-Falmouth), establishes the minimum grant amount under the Maine State Grant Program not be less than \$2,500 if sufficient funds are appropriated for this purpose, subject to the current grant amount modifications under the program.

The Maine State Chamber and its business members believe strongly that education is the most important investment that can be made to ensure success-

ful participation in the new, knowledge-based economy. Post-secondary education and training is critical for creating a strong economy and to ensure success in the workforce. Education is the best means for individuals to create a better future for themselves or their families. An educated workforce benefits all of us by making the economy more productive and making Maine a place that families want to live and for businesses to thrive, expand and be successful.

By now, most of us have all have heard about the predicament that lies before us in terms of college affordability and student debt. Investing in our higher education institutions is the best way to address student debt. Many Maine college students experience an "affordability gap" in their ability to pay for the complete costs associated with college. Some of this is associated with the result of a sustained trend of underfunding of our public higher education institutions and grant programs. Too many in our state choose not to pursue higher education or fail to complete their programs due to an inability to afford the price or financial pressures once enrolled, creating a worst situation for themselves by being burdened by college debt but with no credential to show for it.

Increasing the State of Maine Grant will help Maine's economy work and ensure that Mainers' education and career choices aren't dictated by their financial situation allowing them the opportunity to succeed, regardless of income. The Maine State Chamber urged the committee to support an increase to the Maine State Grant program, to encourage more Mainers to attend and complete college, and ultimately strengthening our state's economy. For more information about education and workforce policy issues, please contact Megan Sanborn by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 108, or by emailing msanborn@mainechamber.org. □

Public Hearings

Public hearings are open to everyone. This public hearing schedule is subject to change. Questions may be directed to the Secretary of the Senate's Office at (207) 287-1540. For the most current schedule, please visit <http://legislature.maine.gov/committee/#Committees> or contact the committee clerk.

Monday, May 13, 2019

Education and Cultural Affairs
1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 208
LD 1607, An Act To Create the Department of Early Care and Learning (Sen. Millett of Cumberland)
LD 1641, An Act To Strengthen the School Transportation Workforce (Sen. Herbig of Waldo)

Wednesday, May 15, 2019

Education and Cultural Affairs
1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 208
LD 610, An Act To Provide Funding for Maine Public (Rep. Jorgensen of Portland) □

Legislative Week Ahead

Check it out at
www.mainechamber.org/legweekahead.php

A snapshot of the biggest legislative issues of the week, the Legislative Week Ahead, provides a weekly video forecast of the biggest issues facing lawmakers in Augusta during the upcoming week. The Maine State Chamber's Advocacy team breaks down the issues and what each means to your business. New episodes are posted each Tuesday during the legislative session.

View the Legislative Week Ahead by visiting www.mainechamber.org/legweekahead.php, or see past Legislative Week Ahead videos by visiting www.mainechamber.org/legweekaheadarchive.php. □

Apprenticeships...

(Continued from Page 1...)

at each career and technical education center in the State and report this information to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs by December 4, 2019.

With education attainment levels rising, and trade skills and technology constantly evolving in the modern economy, there is an increasing need for well-trained and well-educated employees. Therefore, the Maine State Chamber believes that education or training beyond a high school diploma is needed.

Maine is faced with a workforce shortage across all sectors and regions. By 2025, Maine will need approximately 158,000 more workers than exist here today. For a state facing an enormous workforce shortage, we need to establish alternative pathways for our future workforce that ultimately lead to an increase of workers into the workforce earning a pay check and helping our local businesses thrive.

The Maine State Chamber applauds the Department of Labor for the work they are doing with the Maine Apprenticeship Program. We are lucky to live in a state with such a forward-thinking approach to apprenticeships and a corresponding desire to expand the available pool of employees. The Maine State Chamber believes that this bill will provide an additional step in the right direction to get more people into the skilled professions, thereby increasing the overall size of the Maine work force.

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce is committed to all endeavors that will help provide additional employment opportunities for Maine people as well as skilled employees for our members, and to that end, we welcome any chance to participate in any creative solution to the Maine workforce shortage. For more information about education and workforce policy issues, please contact Megan Sanborn by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 108, or by emailing msanborn@mainechamber.org. □

30,000 more H-2B visas for FY 2019 to become available

A final rule will be published in the Federal Register on May 8, 2019, launching the process leading to issuance of 30,000 additional seasonal non-agricultural H-2B visas for positions set to begin by September 30, 2019. The rule clarifies that the 30,000 additional FY 2019 H-2B visas will be available “for those American businesses that attest to a level of need such that, if they do not receive all of the workers under the cap increase, they are likely to suffer irreparable harm, in other words, suffer a permanent and severe financial loss. In addition, employers may only request these supplemental visas for specified H-2B returning workers who were issued H-2B visas or were otherwise granted H-2B status in FY 2016, 2017, or 2018.”


If past is prologue, demand will far exceed supply, triggering a lottery. Last year, within five days after the Federal Register notice appeared, USCIS received petitions for more than 29,000 H-2B visas and conducted a lottery to randomly select the petitions to process for the 15,000 additional H-2B visas. While 30,000 additional H-2B visas for the remainder of FY2019 is an improvement over the 15,000 additional visas provided in the past few fiscal years, Congress needs to make a permanent fix to the H-2B visa cap so that Maine’s seasonal employers can have predictability when trying to meet their seasonal employment needs.

For more information, please contact Beth Stickney, Esq., at the Maine Business Immigration Coalition, by calling (207) 899-4940 or by emailing bstickney@mainebic.org. □

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An investment in workforce development, LD 1596 will help some at-risk immigrant youth

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following testimony was delivered by Megan Sanborn on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce in support of LD 1596, An Act to Enhance the Long-term Stability of Certain At-Risk Youth, at a public hearing held on Wednesday, May 8, 2019, before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. We have reprinted it here for your review.*

On Wednesday, May 8, the Maine State Chamber testified before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary in support of **LD 1596**, *An Act to Enhance the Long-Term Stability of Certain At-Risk Youth*, sponsored by Committee House Chair, Rep. Donna Bailey (D-Saco). This bill provides that the District Court has jurisdiction to consider petitions filed by at-risk noncitizens who are 18 years of age or older and under 21 years of age and the Probate Court has jurisdiction for at-risk noncitizens who are under 18 years of age. The courts are required to expeditiously issue findings of fact, rulings of law, and dependency or custody determinations on these petitions.

It's been a topic of conversation among legislators, employers, and residents that Maine is facing a growing demographic challenge, as our workforce ages and our birth rates decline. This problem has been years in the making but is growing in urgency each year.

In 2013, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, together with the Maine Development Foundation (MDF), issued *Making Maine Work: Growing Maine's Workforce*. This report identified two key strategies to address Maine's workforce challenges. The first, increasing Maine's existing population's participation in the workforce, has been complicated by the otherwise good news that the state's unemployment rate has remained below 4% for more than three years. The second was to attract people to come to Maine, whether from other states or from other countries.

That report was followed in 2016 by *Making Maine Work: New Mainers and Diversity*, which pointed out that since 2013, Maine's labor supply challenges had "become more dramatic, and the need to act more urgent." The 2016

report focused on immigrants as essential to both increasing the quantity and the quality of Maine's current and future workforce. Quoting Maine's state economist, "(e)ven if we kept all of our young people here, we simply do not have enough of them in the state now to replace the retiring baby boomers. We must attract more workers to the state."

In 2018, the Maine State Chamber, MDF, and Educate Maine issued the most recent version of this report, *Making Maine Work: Critical Investments for the Maine Economy*. The first goal identified in that report was to grow Maine's workforce, including by attracting immigrants to Maine.

Fortunately for Maine, immigrants are coming here, including young immigrants. To Maine's credit, the state has gained a reputation among immigrants of being safe and generally welcoming. Unaccompanied youth, or youth who have fled violence and arrived here with one parent, are entering our schools and learning English quickly and adapting to our culture. These are people who, if they stay in the U.S. permanently, will be working and contributing to State for decades. They are absolutely part of the solution to Maine's demographic and workforce challenges.

Maine is putting tremendous effort into convincing young people to stay here; or if they leave the state for college, to return; or if they have never lived here, to choose to make Maine their home. The youth whom LD 1596 would benefit have already chosen Maine to be their home. But to stay here, they need to get their residency.

As Maine's law currently stands, these youth who suffered abuse, neglect or abandonment in their home countries

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Coalition seeks to establish a more computer science curriculum in Maine schools

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce has been working with a coalition since Fall 2018 to support expanding computer science in Maine Schools. The Computer Science for Maine (CS4Maine) coalition has been working diligently this legislative session to demonstrate support for providing computer science education for Maine K-12 students. The public hearing for the bill that came out of this coalition was scheduled for a public hearing on Friday, May 10 in the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee - **LD 1382**, *An Act To Establish Computer Science Courses and Content in Kindergarten to Grade 12 Schools*, sponsored by Rep. Teresa Pierce (D-Falmouth).

The Maine State Chamber testified in support of LD 1382 to help the CS4Maine Coalition accomplish their goal that computer science courses are offered to all Maine K-12 students. The Maine State Chamber supports policies and regulations that spur the investment in and help grow our economy. One of the biggest issues facing our state today is our current workforce challenge. It is widely known that to be competitive in the global workplace of the future, that by 2025, Maine will need approximately 158,000 more workers with post-secondary degrees or credentials than exist here today. Right now, employers in health care, construction, finance, manufacturing, and other sectors report difficulty in finding workers with the right skills. Many of these professions are science- and technology-related, and

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At-Risk Youth...

(Continued from Page 7...)

can't get the state court orders here in Maine that they need to apply for permanent residency, just because they've turned 18, even though they would qualify under federal law as long as they are under 21. Without a change in Maine's law to conform it to federal law, these youth may have to leave Maine to go to a state where they can get into court. And once they leave, they might not come back. This is not only disruptive for them but is bad for Maine's economy.

We see LD 1596 as an investment in workforce development. Maine needs every young person we can get to stay here and work. LD 1596 will help some at-risk immigrant youth do just that. For more information about education and workforce policy issues, please contact Megan Sanborn by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 108, or by emailing msanborn@mainechamber.org. □

Computer Science...

(Continued from Page 7...)

employers are finding that there are not enough workers with the skills needed to perform these jobs.

It is essential that all students have access to a high-quality science and technology education that provides them with the skills and knowledge they need to be well-informed citizens, to be prepared for college and careers, and to understand and appreciate the scientific enterprise. Maine is one of only 10 states that does not count computer science courses toward high school graduation requirements, and one of five states that does not follow any of the nine recommendations from Code.org, which is a national non-profit dedicated to expanding access to computer science in schools and increasing participation by women and underrepresented minorities.

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stewardship, a countless number of personal and societal issues require citizens to make informed decisions based on their understanding of science and technology. Today's modern workforce depends on individuals with scientific and technological skills. According to the U.S. Department of Education, we are not preparing all students to achieve high levels of science performance. We are failing to graduate enough students with the skills needed to fill the growing number of jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Maine has more than 1,000 open computing jobs, with an average annual salary of over \$79,000.

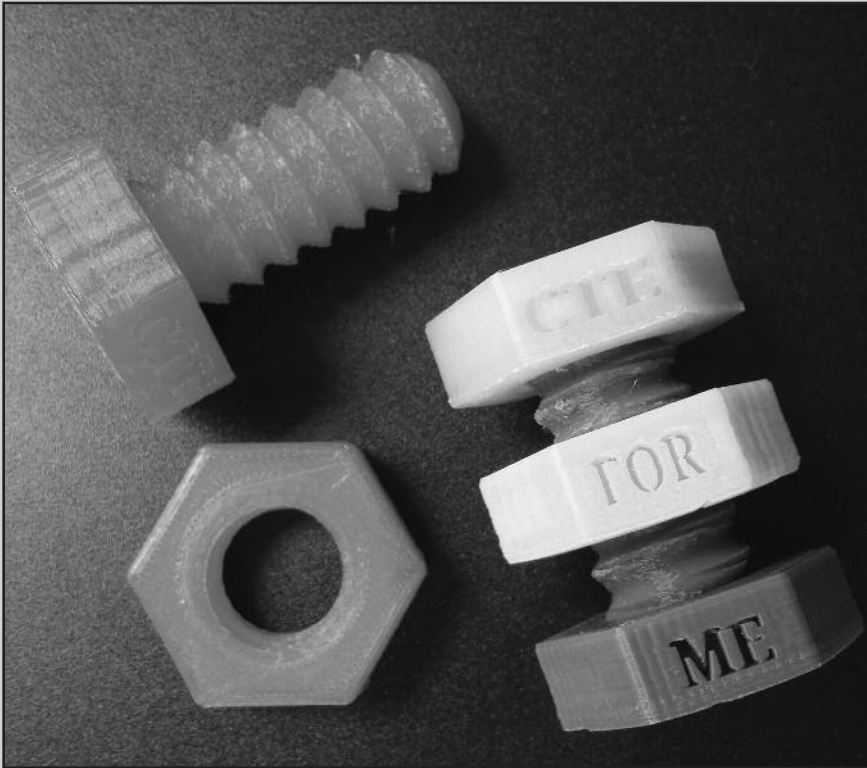
The facts about computer science in Maine schools:

- ♦ Fewer than 30% of Maine's K-12 schools offer computer science education. Nationally, 90% of parents want their children to take computer science courses, but only 35% of high schools offer them.

- ♦ Only 246 Maine students took the AP Computer Science exam in 2017; and only 20% of the test takers were female.
- ♦ Maine has over 1,000 open computing jobs, with an average annual salary of over \$79,000.
- ♦ Maine is one of ten states that does not count computer science courses toward high school graduation requirements, and one of five states that does not follow any of the nine recommendations from Code.org, which is a national nonprofit dedicated to expanding access to computer science in schools and increasing participation by women and underrepresented minorities.

For more information about education and workforce policy issues, please contact Megan Sanborn by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 108, or by emailing msanborn@mainechamber.org. □

3D printing technology fosters innovation and creativity as students work to solve real world challenges



On Tuesday, April 30, bolts made on a 3D printer by career and technical students were delivered to each member of the legislature. While the screw is one of the oldest machines known to man, these bolts and nuts are very special – they are a left- and right-hand threaded! Created by students at Tri County Technical Center in Dexter using a 3D printer, the specifications and tolerances for the left- and right-handed threads to work have to be exact. Students program the printer using G-code which stands for “geometric code.” Its main function is to instruct a machine head how to move geometrically in three dimensions. Using 3D printing technology, students are able to solve real world problems, create, and innovate in ways never see before. This is just one example of how Maine’s career and technical education centers are preparing students for the ever-changing workforce. These 3D printed bolts and nuts were sponsored by the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, Andrew Marden of Marden’s, and Rob Pierson of Grover Gundrilling.

As a real-world example of 3D printing applications, the construction company ICON has produced a 3D house in under 24 hours for less than \$10,000. When armed with this kind of technology, Maine students will be equipped to solve the problems of tomorrow. There aren’t a ton of ways to build a house, other than the traditional way houses have always been built – by putting up four walls then adding a roof. This ages-old technique had to be modernized at some point, though, and as with everything else in our lives these days, technology is delivering that modernization. In this case, instead of being built the old-fashioned way, houses can now be printed. □

Maine teens head to international STEM competition

Four young scientists will share their inventions and findings at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) next week. Tyler Delargy from Bangor High School developed a device to expand the sensory horizons of the Blind Visually Impaired by creating and interpreting a live infrared depth map through a vibrotactile array. Artem Laptiev and Antonia Zakorchemna from Fryeburg Academy developed functional prototypes of low-cost Braille displays for e-readers, using different alternative technologies, including magnetic coils, pneumatic systems and stepper motors. Amara Ifeji from Bangor High School tested the effectiveness of mycorrhizae in the remediation of heavy metals, copper and nickel, from stormwater.

The city of Phoenix, Arizona, will host 1,700 high school students from 81 countries for this event during the week of May 12–17, 2019. Each year Maine State Science Fair (MSSF) sends its top three projects to this competition. These four students were chosen from a pool of 250 science and engineering projects exhibited by students from across Maine. The MSSF is sponsored by Maine Mathematics & Science Alliance and The Jackson Laboratory.

The students will present their projects to judges on Tuesday and Wednesday; and on Thursday, the exhibit hall will be open to the public. The special awards and scholarships will be given at a ceremony on Thursday night, and the category and overall winners will be announced on Friday morning.

This week, the students will be available to interview at their respective schools. Contact teacher Cary James at Bangor High School by calling (207) 992-5500 or James Wauer at Fryeburg Academy by calling (207) 935-2001 to set up a time to interview students. Next week, photos, b-roll, and updates on the competition will be available. For more information, please contact Rebecca Clark Uchenna, STEM education specialist at the Maine Mathematics & Science Alliance, by calling (207) 691-2505 or by emailing rclarkuchenna@mmsa.org. □

Inadequate access to affordable, quality child care has economic implications

The lack of quality, affordable early childhood care and education in the area has been an ongoing concern for businesses and organizations whose employees need it. **LD 1584, *An Act to Attract, Build and Retain an Early Childhood Education Workforce Through Increased Training, Education and Career Pathways***, sponsored by Assistant House Majority Leader Ryan Fecteau (D-Biddeford) begins the conversation about how to address Maine's child care challenges.

LD 1584 had a public hearing this week in front of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business. This bill requires the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, the Commissioner of Education, and the Commissioner of Labor jointly to develop and implement an early childhood educator's workforce support program to recruit and retain early childhood educators work-

ing with children up to 5 years of age. Components of the program include:

- ♦ Expansion of educational programs at career and technical education centers and financial support of those programs;
- ♦ Comprehensive scholarships for persons taking classes toward the attainment of an early childhood education credential or an associate or bachelor's degree that allow the persons to graduate without student debt as long as the persons agree to work for a year with an approved employer;
- ♦ An increased number of apprenticeships; and,
- ♦ Salary supplements awarded to individuals who provide child care or who are early childhood educators. The amount of the supplement is based on the level of education and

experience of the individual and other factors.

Earlier this year, ReadyNation released a national report that sheds light on our nation's child care crisis. The report shows that inadequate access to affordable, quality child care for infants and toddlers is costing our economy billions of dollars each year. Business leaders recognize that this lost productivity is hindering economic growth and harming both employers and employees.

The child care predicament is felt by parents as well as businesses. Nearly one-third of parents report having difficulty finding child care. This leads to reduced productivity for working parents, and over 10% of parents report being demoted, transferred, or fired due to child care problems. Businesses feel these impacts as well, through decreased output and

Continued on Page 11...

“Those who want to make changes [to workers’ compensation] miss the point that they can not achieve their goals without throwing the compromise off balance.”

—Maine Sunday Telegram, September 13, 1992

Let's all work to maintain that delicate balance.



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Two bills would limit public school options for Maine children

LD 307, *An Act To Limit the Number of Charter Schools in Maine*, and **LD 513**, *An Act To Limit the Number of Students and Prevent the Addition of Grade Levels at Virtual Public Charter Schools*, both sponsored by Rep. Michael Brennan (D-Portland) have been reported out of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and will head to the full Legislature to vote on. These bills would limit public school options for Maine children. LD 307 and LD 513 seek to “cap,” prematurely and permanently, seven years of volunteer efforts by education professionals to create additional public education options for the Maine children who need them.

Maine’s public charter schools enroll 2,400 children who have chosen to attend, and more than 660 children are on waiting lists hoping to attend. Each child has personal reasons for leaving their assigned district school. They are fortunate that free public education options exist. Reasons for transfers include wanting a different curriculum, not fitting in, being bullied, being bored, having health challenges, needing a flexible schedule, having mental health challenges, and having suffered trauma. Students can always return to a district public school and the per pupil funds would follow to that public program.

LD 307 reneges on the promise of the enabling law that there would be a 10-year “transition” period for learning and adjustment. It would abolish the program before considering the Education Commissioner’s required eight-year Evaluation Report and the additional independent studies the Department of Education plans to undertake. LD 307 would prevent local districts from contracting for charter schools within their own jurisdictions, hamstringing superintendents’ efforts to meet the needs of more children.

LD 513 would put a freeze on Maine’s virtual schools, which already have a “cap” on enrollment and the grades offered due to cautious decisions by the Charter School Commission. Public chartered schools offer an efficient

model for innovating in public education, by allowing specialized programs to emerge in response to needs of families and the economy.

There are examples of charter and district programs around the country that have pioneered successful programs in the areas below that Maine can study and adapt. These areas include information technology, programming, and data analysis; construction, carpenters, and electricians; engineers; nurses and medical assistants; hospitality; and, manufacturing.

As with Maine’s forest, fishing, and farming sectors, Maine’s public education system will have to adapt to changing world conditions. Maine should continue to explore new approaches to optimizing the effectiveness of our public education system. We need to find new ways to maximize each student’s potential and achievement, and to help communities adapt to demographic and economic changes that threaten sustainability of their local schools. Public charter schools are responding to these challenges and working with districts to develop new pathways.

New Hampshire has led the way with its program of specialized charter schools, and it served as a pilot project for Maine. With an initial cap of 20, it qualified for millions of federal dollars in grants. After an evaluation in year eight, the cap was not renewed. Now, there are 28 unique and successful chartered programs, and five have faded away due to lack of demand by parents and/or financial problems. The well-managed program in New Hampshire shows that allowing a slow growth in the number of chartered programs in Maine will benefit children and the sky will not fall.

The Maine State Chamber continues to support charter schools in Maine and hopes that the Legislature will do so as well. For more information about education and workforce policy issues, please contact Megan Sanborn by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 108, or by emailing msanborn@mainechamber.org. □

Quality Child Care... (Continued from Page 10...)

extra costs to manage workforce disruptions. The ReadyNation report states that the cumulative impact on the national economy is \$57 billion - a significant sum that could contribute to stronger economic growth if the underlying issues of the child care crisis are resolved.

While we do not have a similar report specifically on the status of Maine’s child care system, we do know that 73 percent of all children under age 6 have all parents in the workforce. And the Maine State Chamber of Commerce hears from local chamber members – specifically those on the coast and in Central Maine – that the lack of child care is impeding area businesses’ ability to hire and keep employees. Earlier in the year the Central Maine newspapers published a series of articles on the lack of quality, affordable early childhood care and education in the area and how it has grown to be an ongoing concern for businesses and organizations whose employees need it.

Kim Lindlof, executive director of the MidMaine Chamber of Commerce, is quoted in one of the articles, saying: “The Mid-Maine Chamber is very aware of the lack of child care and supportive of initiatives that try to address it, because it’s an impediment to getting able-bodied people back into the workforce. Even for the 9-to-5 or 7-to-3 employees, there’s not enough child care in the region to fill the child care we need.”

It is important that we improve child care access and affordability, and that child care needs to be high-quality. We only achieve the educational outcomes we seek for Maine’s youngest learners when their programs are high-quality. That means the early educators need the sort of trainings and professional development outlined in this bill. We thank Rep. Fecteau for putting this forward to begin the conversation to support a more productive workforce and economy, both now and in the future.

For more information about education and workforce policy issues, please contact Megan Sanborn by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 108, or by emailing msanborn@mainechamber.org. □

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2019 Maine County Teachers of the Year announced



Teachers from 15* of Maine's counties were honored today in Maine's State Capitol at an annual event in the Hall of Flags announcing the 2019 Maine County Teachers of the Year. The group is the county finalists for Maine Teacher of the Year, an honor awarded each year to one teacher in Maine.

Commissioner of Education Pender Makin notes, "The MTOY program offers all of us the opportunity to celebrate the phenomenal work that is being accomplished every day in Maine's public schools. Each of the County Teachers of the Year exemplifies a deep commitment to Maine's students and a belief in the power of education to create positive and lasting change. They bring their compassion, creativity, and innovation to the art and science of teaching, amplifying the dreams and futures of their students. In highlighting the accomplishments of these 15 educators, we are also honoring all of Maine's teachers, and the outstanding talents and dedication they bring to their classrooms and communities."

The educators were each nominated by a member of their community for their exemplary service in education, and dedication to their students. They were selected by a distinguished panel of teachers, principals and business community members from a pool of hundreds of other nominated teachers in their communities.

The 2019 County Teachers of the Year are:

- ♦ **Androscoggin County:** Shawn Rice, Edward Little High School, Auburn
- ♦ **Aroostook County:** Kim Barnes, Caribou Middle School
- ♦ **Cumberland County:** Heather Whitaker, Gorham Middle School
- ♦ **Franklin County:** Robert Taylor, Spruce Mountain Middle / High School, Jay
- ♦ **Hancock County:** Nell Herrmann, Blue Hill Consolidated School
- ♦ **Kennebec County:** Emily Bowen, Hall-Dale Middle/High School, Farmingdale
- ♦ **Knox County:** Thomas Gray, Camden Hills Regional High School
- ♦ **Oxford County:** Linda Andrews, Buckfield Junior/Senior High School, Hartford -Sumner Elementary
- ♦ **Penobscot County:** Tracy Deschaine, Orono Middle School
- ♦ **Piscataquis County:** Bobbi Tardif, SeDoMoCha School, Dover-Foxcroft
- ♦ **Sagadahoc County:** Charles Bingham, Morse High School, Bath
- ♦ **Somerset County:** Katherine Bertini, Madison Junior High School
- ♦ **Waldo County:** Ashley Reynolds, Captain Albert Stevens School, Belfast
- ♦ **Washington County:** Jeanna Carver, Jonesport Elementary School

- ♦ **York County:** Ethel Atkinson, Bonny Eagle Middle School, Buxton

As ambassadors for teachers, students, and quality education in Maine, these teachers will continue to participate in the intensive State Teacher of the Year selection process, including the submission of a video showcasing their classroom instructional practices.

The field will be narrowed to eight semi-finalists who will begin working on their professional portfolio, a component of the National Teacher of the Year process. After the portfolio review and presentations to a select panel, the field is narrowed to three finalists. In October, the 2020 Maine Teacher of the Year will be selected after a school site visit and final interview.

The Maine Teacher of the Year is a program of the Maine Department of Education. It is with gratitude from the Maine DOE that the program is administered by Educate Maine, a business-led organization working to ensure Maine's students and workers are the best educated and highly skilled in the world.

For more information, please visit www.maine.gov/doe/toy/ or contact Kelli Deveaux, DOE's director of communications, by calling (207) 624-6747 or by emailing kelli.deveaux@maine.gov. □

**Lincoln County did not have a nominee who both met the criteria and completed the application process.*

Digest of New Legislation

Maine Chamber staff have studied each of these recently printed bills to assess potential impact on business trends. If you have concerns regarding any bill, please communicate those concerns to a member of our governmental services staff at (207) 623-4568.

A total of 332 business-related bills have been tracked to date since the session began on January 2, 2019!

HEALTH CARE

LD 1694, An Act To Amend the Mental Health Insurance Coverage Laws. (Se. Gratwick, D-Penobscot) *Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services.* This bill requires insurers, health maintenance organizations and nonprofit hospital or medical service organizations to submit mental health and substance use disorder parity compliance reports to the Superintendent of Insurance. It specifies how the superintendent of Insurance may enforce parity requirements and provides parity reporting requirements for the superintendent. The bill also prohibits certain types of medical management protocols from being used in conjunction with prescription medications used to treat substance use disorder.

LABOR

LD 1639, An Act To Require Comprehensive Responsible Contracting Practices for Public Construction Projects. (President Jackson, D-Aroostook) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* Part A, for the purpose of ensuring that the work on public construction contracts is performed by responsible, qualified contractors that maintain the capacity, expertise, personnel and other qualifications and resources necessary to successfully perform public contracts in a timely, reliable and cost-effective manner, establishes responsible contractor requirements for publicly funded construction projects that receive state funds. The Part outlines a responsible contractor certification process to be administered by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of General Services.

Part A also clarifies that, for the purpose of the law requiring fair minimum rate of wages and benefits on public works contracts,

“public works” includes any construction projects funded all or in part with state funds. Part A also amends the method of determining the prevailing wage and benefits rate paid in the construction industry to require the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Standards to ascertain the applicable wage and benefits rates established in collective bargaining agreements in private construction and includes in benefits wages paid to apprentices in apprenticeship programs registered with the department.

Part B requires the Executive Director of the Workers’ Compensation Board or the executive director’s designee to immediately issue a stop-work order to an employer who fails to procure workers’ compensation insurance coverage. It requires the executive director or the executive director’s designee to issue a stop-work order to an employer if the executive director or the executive director’s designee finds after a hearing that the employ-

Continued on Page 15...



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Governor Mills convenes first meeting of Children's Cabinet

Cabinet outlines immediate action, including the establishment of a new Chief Pediatrician for Maine, to support children's health and safety



On Thursday, May 2, Governor Janet Mills convened the first meeting of the Children's Cabinet under her Administration, bringing together leaders from across state government to begin improving the lives of Maine's children.

"There is no higher priority than our children," said Governor Mills. "My Administration is committed protecting and supporting them from their early years through their transition to adulthood by providing high-quality care, education, and support for their families. By reconstituting the Children's Cabinet today, we are renewing this commitment to them and to our future."

"Ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of Maine's children is paramount," said DHHS Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew, the Chair of the Cabinet. "The Children's Cabinet is pursuing this key goal of the Administration with ambition and expertise."

The Cabinet is collaborating on two central goals:

- ♦ Creating an aligned early care and early education system in Maine that supports children before they reach school age. This includes expanding home visiting, improving childcare and early childhood programs, bolstering coordination across agencies and geographies, maximizing state and federal funds, and targeting the children and families who need quality programs the most.
- ♦ Improving care and prevention for at-

risk youth, especially those who are in the child welfare system, or who are homeless, or who are at risk of entering the juvenile justice system. The objective is to provide services to youth and their families close to home.

Commissioner Lambrew announced immediate actions toward these goals, including establishment of a new Chief Pediatrician for Maine who will ensure kids get the full range of health and human services; streamlining of the home visiting program through the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention; and expanding training for child care providers to help them better identify and help protect children at risk of abuse.

Governor Mills announced in her Inaugural Address that she would reconstitute the Children's Cabinet, which was created in 1996 by then-Governor Angus King as a forum for government agencies to collaborate on policies to support Maine children. The Children's Cabinet is comprised of the Commissioners of the Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, Labor, Public Safety, and Corrections. Maine's Chief Justice, Leigh Saufley, who plans to participate regularly by invitation, was also in attendance, along with representatives from participating agencies.

The Children's Cabinet will meet approximately every six weeks. □

New Legislation... (Continued from Page 14...)

er knowingly misrepresented employees as independent contractors or provided false, incomplete or misleading information to an insurance company on the numbers of employees the employer has for the purpose of paying a lower payment.

Part C encourages the State to use project labor agreements for large-scale state-funded construction projects of \$10,000,000 or more. A project labor agreement is a prehire collective bargaining agreement with one or more labor unions that establishes the terms and conditions of employment for a specific construction project.

Part D requires an employer with a public works contract with the State of \$50,000 or more to provide to all employees who will be on the construction work site a safety training program that uses a curriculum approved by the United States Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration and that is at least 10 hours in duration. Flagger, security workers and certain other employees not considered to be on the work site are exempt from this requirement. A contractor that violates this safety training program requirement may be assessed a fine of up to \$2,500 and an additional fine of \$100 per employee for each day of noncompliance.

Part E provides that for public works construction contracts that involve funding from the Federal Government the prevailing wage requirements in state law apply unless the prevailing wage requirements that would otherwise apply under the federal Davis-Bacon Act would result in higher total wages under the contract. An exception is provided for funds received under the United States Housing Act of 1937 if the application of a state prevailing wage is expressly preempted by federal law.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
LD 1685, An Act To Facilitate Entry of Immigrants into the Workforce. (Rep. Cloutier, D-Lewiston) *Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Commerce.* This bill establishes and provides funding for the Foreign Credentialing and Skills Recognition Revolving Loan Program to be administered by the Finance Authority of Maine. Under the program, the authority may provide interest-free loans to foreign-educated or foreign-trained, experienced immigrants who need assistance while awaiting federal employment authorization to pay the costs of certain actions and activities that will improve their work-readiness once they receive their work permits. □

Maine's community colleges expanding workforce development programs to meet industry need

Responding to workforce gaps in key Maine industries across the state, Maine's community colleges are taking the lead in expanding their workforce development programs. The Maine Community College System (MCCS) has long been the leader in workforce training, with programs in more than 130 occupational fields. Three-quarters of those programs are the only ones of their kind available in the state.

But the need for qualified workers is growing, particularly in an aging state with demographic challenges. A shortage of workers in a broad swath of occupations - truck drivers, health care professionals, hospitality workers, welders among them - has led to the urgent call for more, and faster, workforce training.

At MCCS, workforce development programs responding to that demand are underway and expanding.

New state funding in 2017 earmarked for workforce development has enabled the colleges to build or expand 10 degree and certificate programs in the trades and technologies. At the same time, MCCS has created regional training centers in manufacturing, CDL, IT, and nursing. More than two-thirds of the students entering MCCS last fall were enrolled in career and occupational training.

The system has also been responsive to the shifting economy, changing over 75 of their program offerings in recent years to meet critical workforce needs. A few highlights include programs for the construction, manufacturing, transportation, and marine industries.

At Southern Maine Community College (SMCC), the new Construction Institute provides flexible, short-term training in specific construction skills that are in high demand across the industry. Students can get to work quickly and then combine their new skill sets to build toward a certificate or Associate's degree. SMCC also launched new welding and manufacturing training at its Brunswick campus, preparing students to apply for positions at BIW, which anticipates needing 1,000 new tradespeople

this year alone.

A shortage of commercial truck drivers led to a new regional CDL training center at Eastern Maine Community College, expanding existing programs. This winter, 35 students earned their Class A commercial driver's license through programs at Eastern Maine Community College and Northern Maine Community College, and new classes are being offered this spring and summer. At the same time, Kennebec Valley Community College has partnered with Maranacook Adult Education to provide Class B driver's license training to 25 individuals.

One of the newest workforce development programs is a Yamaha Outboard Motor Repair Training course, launched at SMCC this spring, that was created after industry leaders said they'd had difficulty finding qualified marine mechanics for years.

"SMCC is committed to workforce training that meets the needs of businesses and students, while contributing to Maine's statewide economic development," said SMCC President Joe Cassidy. "Maine's workforce needs are pressing, and we are answering the call."

Steve Arnold, owner of Yarmouth Boat Yard, Moose Landing Marina and Freedom Boat Club of Maine, worked with other business leaders, the Maine Marine Trade Association and SMMC, to create the program. "We're very proud of how this hands-on training has evolved and thrilled to lend a hand in giving back to the marine industry," Arnold said.

Looking ahead, new programs and educational pathways are in the works, thanks to a new \$3.6 million grant from the Harold Alfond Foundation to The Foundation for Maine's Community Colleges (FMCC).

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USM's Muskie School of Public Service launches free workplace violence prevention training



WORKPLACE VIOLENCE:
*Protecting Small
Business Retail Workers*

The University of Southern Maine, in collaboration with Maine Small Business Development Centers, has launched a free online program to train small business retail workers in preventing and responding to violence. Three versions of the training will be available at www.mainesbdctraining.org. The first version, which is targeted towards employers and managers, is available now. An employee-specific version will be available in May 2019 and a trainer version will be available this summer.

The Cutler Institute, a part of USM's Muskie School of Public Service, was awarded a \$116,000 OSHA grant to help create the online training. The funding is part of the Susan Harwood Training Grant Program totaling \$9.3 to 74 non-profit organizations across the country. The grants provide educational and training programs to help employees and employers recognize serious workplace hazards, implement injury prevention measures, and understand their rights and responsibilities.

"The funding provided through this Susan Harwood grant supports the development of a sustainable online training program for Maine's small business retail workforce," said Judy Tupper, the director of the Population Health and Health Policy Program at the Muskie School. "We are

pleased to apply our e-Learning skills to the very important topic of workplace violence and offer these training products to our community partners at no cost."

OSHA recognizes that workplace violence is a major safety and health issue for the retail trade. Workplace violence is the second leading cause of workplace fatalities in the U.S. overall and the leading cause of deaths for women. In 2016, cashiers and retail sales supervisors had the highest homicide rates of any occupation, occurring most commonly during a robbery (Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017).

Employers are encouraged to train workers in safety procedures and establish workplace violence prevention programs. OSHA states that workplace violence "can occur at or outside the workplace and can range from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and homicide, one of the leading causes of job-related deaths." Adopting practical measures can significantly reduce this serious threat to worker safety.

All three versions of the training will include information on the types of violent threats in retail workplaces, including robbery, shoplifting, unwelcome walk-ins, and threats from customers or employees. Employers and employees will learn how to respond to violence or

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Community Colleges... *(Continued from Page 16...)*

The grant is being used to expand and strengthen short-term training in health care, information technology, construction, manufacturing and the trades. The grant is also being used to develop industry recognized badges, awarded in recognition of the specific skills gained through short-term courses that meet the workforce needs of key Maine industries.

"Our community colleges are key to addressing Maine's workforce challenges," said Greg Powell, chairman of the Harold Alford Foundation, in announcing its latest grant to FMCC. "They are leading the way, opening the door to opportunity for more Maine people through innovative education and training that meet both the immediate and long-term needs of students and the state." □

Submitted by Noel K. Gallagher of the Maine Community College System.

Violence Prevention... *(Continued from Page 17...)*

the threat of violence by reading body language and using de-escalation techniques. Employers will learn how to establish a workplace violence prevention program. The trainer version will be designed for team-based learning, including activities to identify workplace risk factors and improve safety.

The University of Southern Maine developed the training to meet the needs of the busy retail workplace. Employers may want to recommend this training to their staff as part of a workplace violence prevention plan. Employees are also welcome to enroll without their employer's involvement. The online program is free and accessible from any computer or mobile device. Participants may login when convenient and complete the training at their own pace. After successful completion, the staff member is awarded a downloadable certificate.

For more information about the training, please contact Judy Tupper, Population Health and Health Policy Program Director at the Muskie School of Public Service, by calling (207) 228-8407 or by emailing judy.tupper@maine.edu. □

About the Cutler Institute at the University of Southern Maine: *Through innovative and collaborative public service, the Cutler Institute advances and supports the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.*

About the Susan Harwood Training Grant Program: *Susan Harwood Training Grants provide training and education for workers and employers on workplace safety and health hazards, responsibilities and rights. Target audiences include underserved, low-literacy, and high-hazard industry workers and employers.*

University of Southern Maine: *Situated in Maine's economic and cultural center, the University of Southern Maine (USM) is a public university with 8,000 undergraduate and graduate students taking courses online and at campuses in Portland, Gorham and Lewiston-Auburn. Known for its academic excellence, student focus and engagement with the community, USM provides students with hands-on experience that complements classroom learning and leads to employment opportunities in one of the nation's most desirable places to live.*

Maine Employers: Connect now for fall hiring events at Maine's universities

The University of Maine System is participating in the Maine HR Convention this week at the Samoset and encouraging employers from across Maine to connect with campus career centers now for Fall 2019 events. Employers also have ongoing opportunities to post available positions and take advantage of employer support services.

Every year Maine's public universities serve 32,000 students and confer 5,500 degrees and credentials making the University of Maine System the state's largest and most important workforce development resource.

The campus career centers work with 1,900 Maine employers annually to help build a stronger connection between career-focused university students and Maine workforce opportunities. This work includes hosting career fairs and networking events, facilitating more than 1,500 internships and experiential learning opportunities, posting jobs, and helping students prepare for the hiring process and the expectations of employers.

The University of Maine System shared a career center directory as part of

its engagement with the Maine HR Convention and urged employers to connect with campus staff to learn more about how Maine's public universities can help meet their workforce needs.

Maine's faces an acute workforce shortage and skills gap. In December the University of Maine System Board of Trustees adopted a Declaration of Strategic Priorities that expedites and guides higher education reform over the next five years. It commits the System to the establishment of an employer-engaged, efficient and cost-effective public education continuum that extends from early childhood to retirement.

"Solving our workforce challenges has to include both connecting our current students to Maine employment opportunities and reaching Mainers traditionally underserved by higher education," said James Erwin, Chair of the UMS Board of Trustees. "To that end the university's first strategic priority is workforce engagement and employer partnership. Together we will lift Maine-career aspirations, provide adult learners with access

Continued on Page 19...



From left to right, Andrew Osheroff, Manager of Operations at the USM Career and Employment Hub, and Champ the Husky encourage employers at the Maine HR Convention to work with campus career centers to help connect Maine's 32,000 public university students to Maine workforce opportunities.

E2Tech Council names Marty Grohman as new executive director



The Environmental and Energy Technology Council of Maine (E2Tech) has hired entrepreneur and former State Representative Marty Grohman of Biddeford as its new Executive Director.

E2Tech is known for its nonpartisan forums on current environmental and energy issues, bringing together a variety of voices on issues critical to the future of Maine, and is the preeminent organization of its type in the region.

Grohman said, "I'm pleased and hon-

ored to join E2Tech in a leadership role. I've been a longtime member and supporter. The organization plays a critical role in Maine's economy and continues to grow strongly. Because of my mix of formal training as a Chemical Engineer and experience running a Maine composites and recycling company; as Director of Sustainability for a multinational manufacturer; and then as a State Representative, I have long seen the connection between smart energy and environmental policy and the future of Maine."

E2Tech Board Chair Tom Eschner of TRC Companies said: "I am looking forward to seeing Marty, with his industry and public policy skills and experience, build on the excellent work of prior Executive Director Melissa Winne, who has been steering the organization through an important time of transition over the past year. With Marty's leadership and E2Tech's strong Board of Directors, the organization will be well-positioned to take on issues of environment and energy in Maine today and into the future."

Upcoming E2Tech forums include "Understanding PFAS – What is it? And what is being done about it?" scheduled for Thursday, May 30 in Portland; an aquaculture forum in June; and, a networking reception in July. Visit e2tech.org for more details. □

Fall Hiring Events at Maine's Universities...

(Continued from Page 18...)

to job-relevant credentials where they live and work, and commit the state's public education resources to the lifelong success of all of our citizens."

As part of the HR Convention the University is also providing employers with information about how campuses can help upskill incumbent employees with certifications and micro-credential programs. Professionals from the University of Southern Maine Office of Professional Development Programs are staffing the University of Maine System

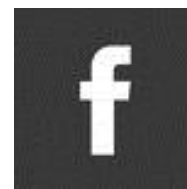
booth to network with participants and answer their questions.

Employers can also visit the System Booth to learn about innovations like the University of Maine at Presque Isle's YourPace program. This \$2,000-per-semester accredited online program was designed to meet the needs of adult learners with some college but no degree. It allows them to get college credit for their past learning and work experience while taking advantage of a flat-tuition rate that is less than half the cost of standard, full-time tuition. □

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Is your Maine company one of the best places to work?

Registration now open; deadline is May 24th



For the fourteenth year, Maine employers with superior work environments and the most engaged employees will be recognized as the “Best Places to Work in Maine.” The program, sponsored by the Maine State Council of the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM), recognizes companies that have established and consistently fostered outstanding conditions in which their employees can thrive.

“Maine businesses that prioritize the success of their employees not only have a competitive advantage in our ever-changing economy – they are critical to encouraging young people to return to live and work in Maine,” said Governor Janet Mills. “I look forward to celebrating the 2019 ‘Best Places to Work in Maine’ awardees and honoring employee-driven workplaces across our state.”

The program is managed by Best Companies Group and is endorsed by the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Economic and Community Development, Maine HR Convention, and *Mainebiz*. *JobsinME.com* is the premier sponsor of the 2019 “Best Places to Work in Maine” program.

Any Maine company with at least 15 employees may be eligible and is encouraged to participate. Interested companies can apply online at www.bestplacetoworkme.com. **The deadline to apply is Friday, May 24, 2019.**

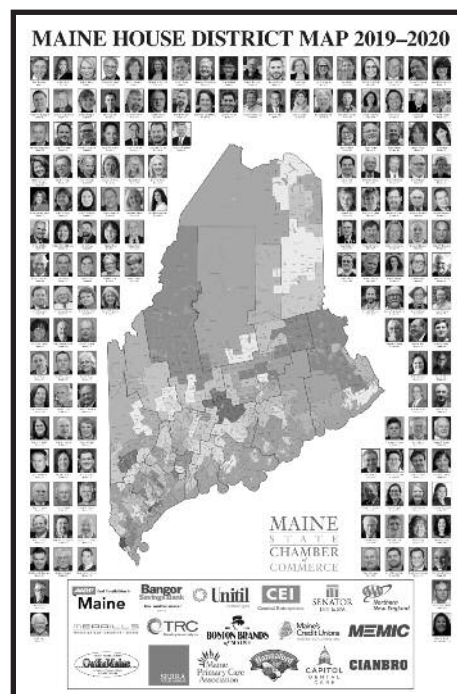
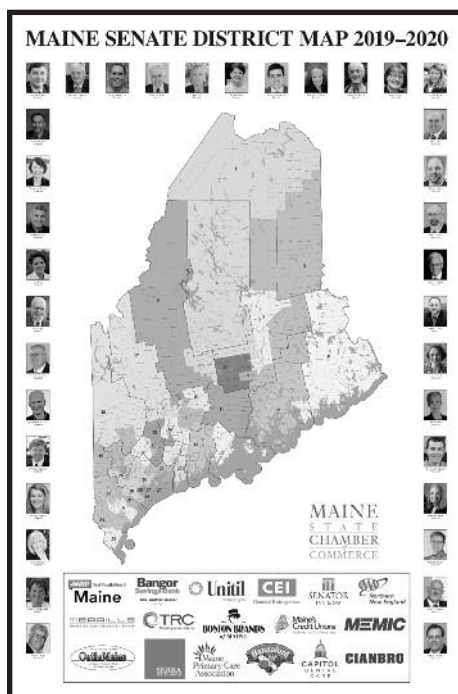
In June and July, Best Companies Group will use scientifically validated surveys to gather information from all Maine companies that have registered online. Information collected from the assessment will include details on a company’s employee benefits and workplace policies as well as employee responses to a comprehensive engagement and satisfaction survey. This information is used to deter-

Continued on Page 21...

LEGISLATIVE POSTERS NOW AVAILABLE

MAINE STATE CHAMBER of COMMERCE

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce has produced the two-year legislative posters again this year. Each of the two legislative posters contains color photos of all Senate and House members of the 129th Legislature, as well as a map of the state’s legislative districts.



The free posters are available for pick up at the Maine State Chamber’s office in Augusta, while supplies last.

The Maine State Chamber would like to thank the sponsors of our 2019-2020 legislative posters:

AAA-Northern New England; AARP Maine; Bangor Savings Bank; Boston Brands of Maine; Capitol Dental Care; CIANBRO; Coastal Enterprises, Inc.; Hannaford Supermarkets; Maine Credit Union League; Maine Primary Care Association; MEMIC; Merrill's Investigations & Security; OutInMaine LLC; The Senator Inn & Spa; Serra Public Affairs; TRC Companies; and, Unitil Corp.

MAINE
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Regional Business Breakfasts

After the legislature adjourns, our staff routinely travels throughout the state during the spring and summer months to discuss legislative activity and the critical role individual business owners can play in the passage or defeat of legislation. The Maine State Chamber gathers business leaders on a regional level through its **Regional Business Breakfast Meetings**. Local business leaders provide valuable insight that is instrumental to this open dialogue about business issues that affect your business, your community, and your state.

To register for any of these **FREE** events, please contact Angie Arno by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 104, or by emailing aarno@mainechamber.org. To sponsor one of these events in your area, please contact Melody Rousseau by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 102, or by emailing melodyr@mainechamber.org.

Each Regional Business Breakfast runs from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Tuesday, June 4

Southern Maine Regional Breakfast Meeting

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, 2 Gannett Drive, South Portland

Wednesday, June 26

Maine Highlands Regional Breakfast Meeting

Hilton Garden Inn, 250 Haskell Road, Bangor

In collaboration with Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce

Thursday, June 27

Northern Maine Regional Breakfast Meeting

University of Maine at Presque Isle, St. John & Aroostook Rooms

June-July 2019

Kennebec Valley Regional Breakfast Meeting

To be determined

In collaboration with Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce

Best Places to Work... *(Continued from Page 20...)*

mine the "Best Places to Work in Maine."

"Great workplaces are essential to a healthy economy," said Barry Martin, state director of the SHRM Maine State Council. "The 'Best Places to Work' program honors businesses that exemplify what it means to be an employer of choice and gives companies tools that will help them continue to foster great work environments."

The Best Companies Group's Employee Feedback Report is presented to each participating company, even those that do not make the list of "Best Places to Work." The report includes a summary of the company's employee engagement and satisfaction data, the Maine benchmark report, and a transcript of written employee comments. Many employers use this report as a starting point for improving their workplace cultures.

Employers pay a fee that covers the cost to conduct the comprehensive surveys and create the Employee Feedback Report.

Last year's "Best Places to Work in Maine" first place winners included, for the fifth consecutive year, Belfast-based Edward Jones in the large company category. Patriot Subaru, located in Saco, took the top honor in the medium company category for the fifth straight year. First place in the small company category went to Maine Information Network, of Augusta for the second year in a row.

Companies selected as a "Best Place to Work in Maine" will be announced at a gala event at the Augusta Civic Center on Wed., October 2, 2019. A complete list of top companies will be featured in a statewide publication produced by *Mainebiz*.

Additional sponsors include MEMIC, KMA Human Resource Consulting, Clark Insurance, Live and Work in Maine, Pro Search Inc., and Human Resources Association of Southern Maine. Sponsorship opportunities are still available. If your company is interested in being involved or for more information, please contact Jodie Griffith at Northern Light Mercy (jgriffith@northernlight.org; 207-822-2541) or Kate Wilber at Tyler Technologies (Kate.Wilber@tylertech.com; 800-772-2260, ext. 4284). To reach the Best Companies Group, please contact Jackie Miller by calling 1-877-455-2159, ext. 3271, or emailing jmiller@bestcompaniesgroup.com. □

Special Member Profile:

Maine Credit Union League's recipe for success combines member and community service, centers on "people helping people" philosophy

Credit unions operate to promote the well-being of their members and the communities in which they live. Founded in 1938, the Maine Credit Union League is a nonprofit, professional trade association that supports and protects Maine's 55 credit unions while promoting their strength, growth, and unity and raising awareness about our credit unions' secure and affordable financial services. The League is directed by a democratically elected Board of Directors whose function is to ensure the League's initiatives help Maine's credit unions succeed and improve the financial lives of more than 702,000 credit union members statewide.

Our ability to cooperate and collaborate as a unified League enables us to provide the unsurpassed member service our industry is known for, as well as ensure our communities and our state are well cared for. Working collaboratively also helps Maine's credit unions promote the *People Helping People* philosophy that serves as a cornerstone of the credit union industry.

We raise millions of dollars to combat hunger in our state through the Maine Credit Unions' *Campaign for Ending Hunger* and provide financial education to children, teens, and adults – including Maine's immigrant and refugee population. The League and Maine's credit unions are not just in a community, we consider ourselves an integral part of the community.



Maine Credit Union League

Our commitment to promoting positive change sets us apart and demonstrates the value of belonging to a credit union.

Our pledge to provide exceptional service extends to protecting some of our most vulnerable members from financial abuse. Several years ago, the League was a founding member of a group that launched a new initiative, called SeniorSafe, to help Maine's elderly protect their finances. This program continues today and has become a model for the nation.

The success of our credit union network depends heavily on the League's advocacy initiatives. We are politically active at both the state and federal level, promoting policies that advance and grow credit unions and actively advocating against anti-credit union initiatives. By closely monitoring and studying state and

federal regulations, the League also ensures our credit unions have access to the most comprehensive compliance resources and training in the industry. Having a seat at the table in Augusta and Washington, D.C., is important and helps us ensure credit unions succeed in today's competitive market.

To further support its member credit unions' growth with competitive products and services, the League founded its subsidiary Synergent in 1971. As a service provider owned by credit unions, and serving only credit unions, Synergent provides comprehensive solutions, including technology, marketing, and payments, to its credit union partners across the country.

The Maine Credit Union League and Synergent together have been recognized as one of the Best Places to Work in Maine. In 2018, we shared this honor with 11 credit unions. Our 12 organizations represent 16% of the total number of award recipients, making credit unions the most highly represented industry sector.

We understand the issues that matter to Maine's credit union members, and we will continue working hard to meet their needs now, and in the future, to ensure credit unions remain strongly positioned for years to come. Whether it's providing educational or networking opportunities, technology solutions, or advocacy, the League makes Maine's credit unions more efficient and better connected. The ongoing success of our movement will undoubtedly contribute to the economic health and vitality of our state – moving Maine forward and making it one of the best states in the nation to live and work. □



*Content is provided by the member. To take advantage of this unique opportunity, please contact Melody Rousseau by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 102, or by emailing melodyr@mainechamber.org.



WORKPLACE WELLNESS

HEALTHY EMPLOYEES MAKE CENTS!

Sun Safety: Protecting Yourself from Harmful UV Radiation

- 1 **Stay indoors** or look for shade in the middle of the day when UV radiation is strongest, usually between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- 2 **Seek shade** under an umbrella, tree, or other shelter to seek relief from the sun.
- 3 **Plan outdoor activities** for the early morning or late afternoon, when UV radiation is typically one third of what it is at midday.
- 4 **Cover up** with long-sleeved shirts, long pants, wide-brimmed hats, and sunglasses to offer the best protection against UV radiation.
- 5 **If you can't cover up completely**, be sure to use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 on all exposed skin.

Slip! Slop! Slap! Wrap!

To help you remember some of the basic sun safety tips, the American Cancer Society has adopted this simple message, created in Australia: Slip! Slop! Slap! Wrap!

SLIP on a shirt. Clothing is one the most effective protections against UV radiation. Keep the following tips in mind:

- ♦ Long-sleeved shirts and long pants offer the best protection.
- ♦ A tight weave, such as the cotton knit of a t-shirt, offers more protection than a loose weave. For a rough idea of a fabric's ability to block UV rays, hold it up to the light. Fabrics that allow more light to come through will probably let more UV radiation through as well.
- ♦ Dark colors are more absorbent and less reflective than light colors and so offer better protection.
- ♦ Dry clothing is more protective than wet. A wet t-shirt offers protection equivalent to about an SPF of only 4.

SLOP on sunscreen. Sunscreens absorb, reflect, or scatter most but not all UV rays before they can penetrate the skin. Look for sunscreens with the following features:

- ♦ Broad-spectrum protection. Broad-spectrum sunscreens protect against both UVA and UVB radiation. Look out for sunscreens containing zinc oxide, titanium dioxide, Mexoryl, and avobenzone in particular.
- ♦ A sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. SPF measures how long a product protects the skin from UVB rays before it starts to burn, compared with how long it takes to burn without protection. If you start to burn in 10 minutes without protection, using an SPF 15 sunscreen theoretically will prevent you from burning 15 times longer, or about 2.5 hours. An SPF of 15 blocks 93% of UVB rays. SPF's of 30 and higher block 97% of UVB rays and are suggested for people who are sun-sensitive, have skin cancer, or are at a high risk for developing skin cancer.
- ♦ Make sure you put on an adequate amount of sunscreen and reapply every 2 to 3 hours and more regularly if you are swimming. The number one cause of people sunburning even when they have sunscreen on is a failure to reapply it after several hours.
- ♦ A "waterproof" feature, if you will be sweating or swimming.
- ♦ A valid expiration date. Sunscreen without an expiration date has a shelf life of no more than three years. Some sunscreen ingredients can degrade and lose their effectiveness over time, particularly when exposed to extreme temperatures.

SLAP on a hat. For the most protection, wear a hat with a brim wide enough to shade your face, ears, and the back of your neck. Look for hats made of tightly woven fabrics, such as canvas. Avoid loose weaves, particularly straw hats with holes that allow sunlight through. If you prefer to wear a baseball cap, make sure to protect your ears and the back of your neck. Wear clothing that covers those areas, use sunscreen with at least SPF 30, or stay in the shade.

WRAP on sunglasses. Sunglasses protect your eyes, your eyelids, and the delicate skin around your eyes from UV rays. They also reduce the risk of cataracts.

- ♦ The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) requires that sunglasses block a minimum of 50% of UVA and 70% of UVB rays. Glasses labeled "meets ANSI requirements" or "UV absorption up to 400 nm"

Continued on Page 24...

Workplace Wellness... (Continued from Page 23...)

provide 99% to 100% protection from UVA and UVB rays. Glasses labeled “cosmetic” block 70%. Avoid buying sunglasses that carry no label.

- ◆ Darker sunglasses or polarized lenses don’t necessarily offer more UV protection. UV protection is provided by a chemical that makes up part of the invisible coating on the lenses, regardless of how dark they are.
- ◆ Wraparound sunglasses prevent UV rays from entering your eyes from the sides. Don’t buy “toy sunglasses” for your children. Look for the same UV protection in children’s sunglasses as you would in adult glasses.

What about Vitamin D?

It’s true that vitamin D is important for health; that some people may be deficient. However, because of the risks associated with UV radiation, the National Institute of Health recommends that you focus on getting vitamin D from food or supplements rather than the sun. Learn more about vitamin D as an essential vitamin from the NIH by visiting <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminD-HealthProfessional/>.

When employees feel good, they tend to perform better. That’s why most Chamber BlueOptions’ plans come with employee discounts on health products and services, as well as an online come with employee discounts on health products and services, as well as an online health and fitness program. Just contact your Anthem-appointed insurance producer for more information or visit the Chamber’s BlueOptions web page (www.mainechamber.org/blueoptions.php) to find a producer. For more information on the Chamber BlueOptions health plan, please contact Mark Ellis by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 107, or by emailing mellis@mainechamber.org. □

Source:

<https://www.aimatmelanoma.org/prevention/protecting-your-skin-2/>

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Health Care Forum

***Wednesday, May 22 | 9:00 a.m. to Noon
Bangor Savings Bank, Senator Way, Augusta***



Health care and health insurance was the single biggest public policy issue that impacted - and motivated - voters this past November at the polls. Newly-elected officials from both sides of the aisle - in Maine and in Washington - have pledged to do something “meaningful” to address cost and access to health care. On May 22, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce is hosting its annual informative and timely presentation on the status of health care here and beyond, and what you as a business in Maine need to know as we head into 2019, and what specifically is being considered here in Maine this session. We will be joined by Katie Mahoney, vice president of health policy and a national speaker from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, as well as other state-based experts on health insurance and health care delivery.

To register for this event, please visit mainechamber.org or contact Angie Arno by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 104, or by emailing aarno@mainechamber.org.

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