

2007

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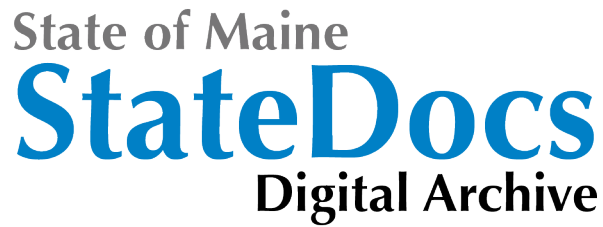
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2007 Archive of **Governor Baldacci's Press Releases**

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Governor Baldacci, State Leaders Remember Gerald Ford

January 2, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci was joined by members of House and Senate Leadership and many others to remember President Gerald Ford today during a ceremony at the Blaine House. The Governor also presented a proclamation naming January 2, 2007 as Gerald Ford Remembrance Day.

“One week ago we lost a United States President,” said Governor Baldacci. “We lost a man who was proud to serve his country – both in public office and in World War II.”

Governor Baldacci led the ceremony, where Maine leadership spoke of President Ford’s unique situation, never having been elected to serve as Vice President or President. Governor Baldacci recalled President Ford assuming the Presidency during extraordinary circumstances and unprecedented times.

“We remember how he tried to heal a country through Watergate and Vietnam,” said the Governor. “We remember how he renewed hope and faith in our country.”

Governor Baldacci was joined at the ceremony by Speaker of the House Glenn Cummings, Senate Minority Leader Carol Weston and Assistant House Minority Leader Bob Crosthwaite. Representatives from the Maine Funeral Honors Program presented the colors, members of the Maine National Guard were present, and Julia Allen of Cony High School sang “Amazing Grace” and “God Bless America.” The ceremony ended with a prayer by Chaplain Valmore Vigue and the playing of “Taps” by Captain Scott Ludwig.

Governor Baldacci Unveils Budget

January 5, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released his budget for Fiscal Years 2008-2009. The Governor's budget proposal addresses the issue of property tax relief and actively works to downsize administration on the state and local level.

With this budget, the state will have fulfilled the promise of state spending on local education to 55%. Governor Baldacci is insisting that the savings available from increased funding be directly passed on to taxpayers for immediate property tax relief. In addition, the Governor proposes to reduce the number of superintendents in Maine from 152 to 26. The Governor said no schools will close, and in fact, the new Local Schools, Regional Support Initiative will enhance local oversight. With the savings from consolidating 290 central office administrations, Governor Baldacci plans to put the dollars into the classrooms, benefiting teachers and students.

Governor Baldacci demands guaranteed tax relief to Maine permanent resident taxpayers, and will veto legislation that does not meet this requirement. His tax relief plan also consists of freezing property valuations on homes of permanent Maine residents for tax purposes. Additionally, he has proposed merging two state departments, eliminating several high level administrative staff positions.

In order to meet our responsibilities to fully fund education, representing about \$800 million new dollars over a four year period; and because of the need to protect healthcare benefits for Maine people, Governor Baldacci is recommending a \$1 increase in the tobacco tax. The cigarette tax also addresses a serious public health problem that costs Maine people \$554 million each year in direct health care costs. "But it's about more than dollars and cents," said the Governor, "It's about saving lives. Over 29,000 children alive today will die prematurely from smoking."

Details of the biennial budget, including a budget balancing education tool, can be found on the Governor's new website at <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/budget/index.html> .

Governor Baldacci Supports Girl Scout Cookie Sale

January 9, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci welcomed members of Junior Girl Scout Troop 535 from Glenburn and Brownie Troop 118 from Scarborough to his office Tuesday morning for the annual Girl Scout Cookie Sale Kick-Off. A total of 18 Girl Scouts packed into the Governor's Office with volunteers and staff members from each troop to offer the Governor a chance to purchase his first boxes of Girl Scout Cookies for this year's sale.

"The Girl Scout Cookie Sale is a great way for the young ladies in Girl Scouts to learn how to set goals, work together, and raise money for their organization to continue providing opportunities for years to come," said Governor Baldacci. "It's also a chance for Mainers to indulge a little, enjoying what has become a delicious tradition."

Governor Baldacci purchased twenty dollars worth of cookies from the troops. Troop 535 is a part of the Abnaki Council; while Troop 118 is a part of the Kennebec Council. Each box of Girl Scout Cookies costs \$3.50 and this year's sale runs from now through April 1.

Governor Baldacci Receives Straight-A Report Card from American Lung Association

January 9, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has received a straight-A report card for tobacco control on behalf of the State of Maine from the American Lung Association. The report card is issued on a yearly basis and Maine has received Straight A's for the second consecutive year.

"Last year, we were honored for being the only state to receive all A's for tobacco control," said Governor Baldacci. "This year, we are proud to hear that we have received the honor yet again. We hope that other states throughout the country will follow our lead and our coordinated efforts to fight tobacco use."

The American Lung Association State of Tobacco Control 2006 Report graded all 50 states in four categories: smoke-free air, tobacco taxes, prevention funding and restrictions on youth access to tobacco products. Dr. Lee Ann Baggott, a pulmonologist from Augusta and an American Lung Association national board member, presented Governor Baldacci, along with the Attorney General and members of House and Senate Leadership with the straight-A report card.

The State of Maine was praised for reducing teenage smoking by 60% since 1997. In addition, Governor Baldacci was praised for proposing to raise the tobacco tax by another dollar, making Maine's cigarette tax \$3.00 per pack.

"The proposal to raise the cigarette tax will keep an estimated 10,000 young people from becoming smokers, saving a third of them from dying prematurely from lung cancer or another tobacco-related disease," said the Governor. "It will also save about \$238 million dollars in health costs."

Governor Baldacci said that one of his top priorities as Governor was to make Maine become the healthiest state in the nation. He acknowledges that there is still work to be done, but Maine is headed in the right direction.

"Tobacco use still costs too many lives and too much money," said Governor Baldacci. "Every year, 2400 Maine people die prematurely from tobacco-related disease, and every year over \$600 million dollars is spent on health costs related to tobacco use. We need to do everything we can to keep our kids from getting hooked on these deadly products."

Governor Baldacci Presents Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year Award

January 10, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has presented the Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year Award for 2007 to Josiah and Kathleen Pierce of Baldwin. The Governor made the presentation during the Agricultural Trade Show Wednesday afternoon at the Augusta Civic Center.

“Maine’s tree farmers manage their woodlands for wood, water, wildlife and recreation,” said Governor Baldacci. “Their contribution to our heritage and our economy cannot be overstated.”

The Pierces own nearly 2000 acres in Baldwin, which they use for recreation, ownership of a small logging operation, and providing wood chips for the Sappi Mill in Westbrook. Josiah Pierce is a past-president of the Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine (SWOAM) and a long-time member. He has also served on the Governor’s task forces on Forest Certification and Public Use of Private Land.

Governor Baldacci recognized the Josiah and Kathleen Pierce, as well as all of Maine’s tree farmers for the work they do.

“Tree farmers are more than woodlot owners,” said the Governor. “By adhering to Tree Farm standards, they care for the environment in many ways – practicing responsible forestry, providing a healthy habitat for wildlife, helping keep Maine’s air and water clean, and many have had their forest lands green-certified. For those things and many more, I applaud Maine’s tree farmers and small woodland owners.”

The Pierce Tree Farm will be featured during the Outstanding Tree Farm Field Day in Baldwin on August 18. The field day will be open to the public.

Governor Baldacci Signs Executive Order to Enhance Trade Opportunities

January 11, 2007

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci has signed an Executive Order which will establish a committee to develop a plan to create additional international trade opportunities in Maine. The Governor signed the Executive Order Thursday morning and announced it at the Governor's International Community Breakfast in Portland.

"There are many different efforts taking place in this state," said Governor Baldacci. "We should work on coordinating our interests and take advantage of building economic development opportunities throughout the state."

The Governor spoke to about 125 people at the breakfast, talking about the highlights of Maine's involvement with international trade.

"Foreign Direct Investment has ranked Maine number one for quality of life," said the Governor. "We're the 8th fastest growing state in terms of exports. We must continue to compete in the global economy and sell the strong points of our state around the world."

Governor Baldacci thanked the World Affairs Council – the host of this morning's breakfast – for their assistance in the state's trade mission to France in 2005, calling it their most successful trade mission.

"The trade mission to France is still paying off for businesses in Maine," said Governor Baldacci.

The text of the Governor's Executive Order is attached below.

AN ORDER CREATING THE MAINE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PLANNING COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, the arts and cultural resources in Maine provide a unique opportunity for the state to grow its innovative economy by increasing trade, not only in traditional goods and services, but in creative ideas and innovations; and

WHEREAS, reaching across cultural divides will enhance our understanding and appreciation for differing customs and traditions and will contribute to the expansion of knowledge and interest in Maine, its history and culture; and

WHEREAS, education and cultural interchanges and people-to-people involvements with sister-cities, sister-states and other foreign communities and organizations will broaden and strengthen the relationships between Maine citizens and those of other cultures and facilitate joint projects and programs; and

WHEREAS, expanded foreign language and culture education programs from pre-school through continuing education will enlarge the capacity of Maine citizens to contribute to international

understanding, reduced international tension and conflict, healthy international trade and broader appreciation and understanding of cultural diversity in our own communities; and

WHEREAS, cultural and educational interaction opportunities can be greatly expanded through use of direct visits, cost-effective communications through the internet and the exchange of materials in various media; and

WHEREAS, an effective Maine program of international relations, education and cultural interaction and trade will depend on creative partnerships between State government, local communities, educational institutions, cultural organizations, businesses and trade organizations, building on existing experience with sister-city and sister-state organizations, voluntary efforts and the Maine International Trade Center; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby order the creation of the Maine International Relations Planning Committee ("Committee").

Purpose

The Committee is created to develop a plan for a public-private partnership to foster and implement additional opportunities for Maine citizens, institutions and organizations, and businesses to engage in international education, cultural, people-to-people and economic interchanges, coupled with expanded international education programs in Maine.

Membership

The Committee shall consist seven members, who are appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of the Governor, one of whom shall be appointed to serve as chair.

A representative from other state agencies or other organizations not represented on the Committee can be called on to provide limited information or to participate fully in the Committee when, in the Committee's discretion, that person has responsibilities or expertise in a particular area that would be helpful to the work of the Committee. The Committee may establish sub-committees as necessary to work on specific tasks. The Committee shall consult with representatives of various international relations constituencies and shall convene at least one conference of interested parties from a broad range of organizations involved in international relations that can advise the Committee on Maine's international, cultural, educational and economic relations interests and potential programs.

Duties

The committee is charged with developing recommendations and a work plan for enhancing and coordinating Maine's public-private partnerships in cultural, educational and economic relations interests and potential programs. A report containing the Committee's recommendations and proposed work plan shall be submitted to the Governor, the Legislature and the participating organizations no later than December 31, 2007.

Procedures

The Committee shall meet at times and places called by the chair. The Committee may accept staffing, financial and other administrative or program support from outside sources as it deems appropriate to its duties. The members of the Committee shall serve without compensation.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is January 11, 2007

Governor Announces Changes in His Press Office

January 11, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci announced today that Crystal Canney, who has served as his Director of Communications since December 2005, has announced she will be leaving the Governor's Office. Canney will be pursuing another opportunity in State Government. Filling this crucial position in the Governor's Office will be David Farmer, a former editorial page editor and current reporter for the Lewiston Sun Journal, covering the State House and other political and government issues. He has worked for the publication since 2003.

"I am deeply appreciative of Crystal's contributions to my communications and outreach," said Governor Baldacci. "She has been a vital member of my Administration, and instrumental in my ability to reach out to Maine people and transmit my vision, goals and policies. She will be greatly missed, but I am pleased that she will continue to contribute to the running of the State in her new capacity."

Canney will be joining the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, where she will be an Associate Commissioner.

Farmer comes to the Governor's Office with eighteen years of media experience. His vast reporting and editorial experience derives from work at local, regional, and national newspapers and magazines. Farmer earned his B.A. in Arts and Journalism from Emory & Henry College in Virginia, and his M.A. in American Government from The American University in Washington, D.C.

"I look forward to David joining my staff in this leadership position," said Governor Baldacci. "David has a deep understanding of the issues facing Maine and has demonstrated high quality work. His experience, integrity, and knowledge of Maine issues and people will serve my Administration well as we enter this Legislative session."

The transition in the Governor's Press Office will take place over the new few weeks.

Governor Baldacci Says Maine National Guard Not Immediately Impacted by Troop Surge

January 11, 2007

AUGUSTA — Governor John E. Baldacci has announced that the Maine National Guard is not immediately impacted by President Bush's plan to deploy over 21,000 additional troops to Iraq. The Governor was joined by Adjutant General John W. Libby during a press conference Thursday afternoon in Augusta.

"There is no immediate impact on Maine National Guard troops," said General Libby. "This is based on the President's statements last night; the Secretary of Defense's comments this morning and this afternoon's conference call with General Blum."

Governor Baldacci said that continued support for the troops is especially important at this time.

Governor Baldacci Presented with Fire Safety Book from Maine Author and Illustrator

January 12, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has been presented with a book on fire safety written for children ages 3-5 Friday morning. The Governor received the book from the author and illustrator – both from Maine – during a ceremony in his office.

The book, titled “Children are No Match for Fire,” was written by Carol Dean and illustrated by Sandy Dunn. The book is being distributed around the country and will be provided to all Maine schools that have pre-K and kindergarten classes.

“I know that this is an issue near and dear to Carol’s heart,” said Governor Baldacci. “She’s a successful children’s author and the wife of Maine’s very own State Fire Marshal, John Dean.” The Governor was joined at the presentation by John and Carol Dean, John’s mother Doris Cyr, Sandy Dunn and “Smokey” – a black lab who demonstrates how to “stop, drop & roll.” Smokey has also visited area schools to help educate students about fire safety.

Governor Baldacci Celebrates Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

January 15, 2007

ORONO – Governor John E. Baldacci celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Monday morning in Orono, at the 11th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast. The breakfast is put on by the Greater Bangor Area NAACP Chapter and the University of Maine Human Rights Coalition.

“Maine has never been bashful about tackling any discriminations or injustices,” said Governor Baldacci. “When it happens in our state – whether it was with the white supremacists who wanted to come into our state or with the recent incident in Hancock County - Mainers come together, stand strong and remember what Martin Luther King Jr. taught us about living peacefully amongst one another.”

Governor Baldacci joined President Robert Kennedy of the University of Maine; Senator Susan Collins; NAACP Greater Bangor Chapter President Emeritus, James Varner; and other dignitaries at the breakfast, held at Stodder Commons on the University of Maine Campus.

The keynote address was delivered by Reverend Professor Forrest M. Pritchett. Professor Pritchett is the Program Director for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership Program at Seton Hall University.

Governor Comments on Merger of Verizon Local Telephone Operations with FairPoint

January 16, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John Baldacci today commented on the proposed merger between Verizon's local exchange and other business assets and FairPoint Communications, saying he hopes the new venture will have a positive impact on Maine consumers and Verizon employees. The merger impacts local telephone services in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

"I am confident that the Maine Public Utilities Commission, in its capacity to review such telecommunications mergers, will ensure that Maine employees and consumers are protected," said Governor John Baldacci. "I look forward to the vigorous scrutiny of the PUC as the prescribed process moves ahead."

Upon receipt of the filing from Verizon, the Public Utilities Commission will begin a thorough review of the proposed merger in accordance with Maine law. The Commission is charged with ensuring that the merger does not harm Maine consumers.

Governor Baldacci and PUC Announce Winners for Energy Savings Contest

January 17, 2007

AUGUSTA — Governor John E. Baldacci awarded six students with iPod Shuffles today for winning the 4th Annual Energy Savings Tip contest. The contest was open to 4th, 5th and 6th graders around the state and asked students to submit the best energy tips in two categories for saving energy in your home and for your school. Prizes were awarded to winners of both categories in each grade level.

“Maine is a leader once again on energy,” said Governor Baldacci. “My Administration has been encouraging and assisting the appropriate development of the vast renewable energy sources we are fortunate to have in Maine, including: wind, water, wood, tidal, solar and biomass energy. We have come a long way on the road to energy independence, and I will continue to move us in that direction.”

Governor Baldacci continued, “I am pleased to see that these six young men and women have taken a leadership role in trying to address energy issues.”

The winners of the contest were:

4th Grade School Tip: Brian Allen, Hall Dale Elementary School, Hallowell “Use sensor lights in schools to save money.”

4th Grade Home Tip: Jane Carr, Sea Road School, Kennebunk “Switch to energy saving light bulbs that last longer and save money.”

5th Grade School Tip: James Rose, T.C. Hamlin Elementary School, Randolph “Keep the computer off if no one is using it.”

5th Grade Home Tip: Jordan Drouin, Bay Ridge Elementary School, Cutler “Insulate the hot water tank so the heat won’t get out and have to use more electricity to reheat it.”

6th Grade School Tip: Makayla Moors, Central Middle School, Corinth “Instead of running lights, just open the shades and get natural light.”

6th Grade Home Tip: Gino Helm, Kingfield Elementary School, Kingfield “Buying a refrigerator? Make sure the label says ENERGY STAR.”

The 4th Annual Energy Savings Tip contest was sponsored by Governor Baldacci’s Office of Energy Independence and the Maine Public Utilities Commission’s Efficiency Maine program.

Governor Baldacci Says LD 1 Shows Need for Improvement at School Administrative Level

January 17, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci announced today that in the two years since LD 1 was enacted the state has kept its promise of putting more money into education. At the same time, he said the state is finding a disturbing trend revealing most school administrative units have not met spending benchmarks, in effect failing to pass on the full savings available to towns and communities.

The law LD 1 is the result of a voters mandate requiring the state to contribute 55% of local education costs and at the same time bring state and local property taxes to the national average.

Today's report shows that for the second year in a row, the growth rate of property taxes was lower than before the law went into effect.

"A majority of municipal and county governments stayed within their LD 1 limits during the last year," said Governor Baldacci. "And the State did even better, keeping within its limits even while increasing aid to local schools. We have kept our word."

Governor Baldacci said that while this is good news, not everyone has done their part to stay within the spending limits.

"81% of School Administrative Units exceeded the spending benchmarks established by EPS," said the Governor. "This is unacceptable. This failure to live within our means must be corrected. We must have accountability at all levels of government, and school administrative districts, like everybody else, must learn to live within their means."

The Governor pointed to the inability of schools to stay within their benchmarks as another reason why he is insisting that the savings available from increased education funding by the state be directly passed on to taxpayers for immediate property tax relief.

"Maine people have not gotten the relief they deserve," said the Governor. "It's unacceptable and changes need to be made. That's why I have proposed reform of school administration, improving education of our children and giving relief to Maine resident property tax owners. I will veto any bill which does not contain mandatory provisions to pass savings on directly to the people."

"Maine people deserve better. They will get it."

For more information about the LD 1 report, please visit: <http://www.maine.gov/spo/economics/ld1/index.php>

Governor Baldacci Presents Gold Star Honorable Service Medals to Families of Fallen Maine Soldiers

January 18, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Major General Bill Libby in the Hall of Flags Thursday morning to present Gold Star Honorable Service Medals to families who have lost soldiers post-September 11, 2001. The Governor and General Libby also presented Silver Star medals to families of fallen Purple Heart recipients.

“The Gold Star Medal honors these servicemen and women who gave their lives to our nation and we present this medal to the families of these heroes to recognize their dedication, duty, and ultimate sacrifice while service our state and nation in support of combat operations,” said Governor Baldacci. “The people of Maine will never forget what our families, neighbors and friends have given so that we can continue to enjoy a life of liberty.”

Total, 14 soldiers were honored with the Gold Stars, with 8 of them also receiving the Silver Star Medals. Families of the fallen soldiers that were at the Hall of Flags received the medals in honor of their family member's service.

Presentation of Medals to Family will be made in order of date of death since September 11, 2001.

Gold Star

** Gold Star and Silver Star

** CDR Robert A. Schlegel US Navy September 11, 2001 Gray CDR Schlegel's mother Patricia received the Gold and Silver Star Medals on behalf of the family. Recipients are Robert's wife Dawn, mother Patricia, and father Elvin.

Msgt Evander E. Andrews Air Force October 10, 2001 Solon Msgt Andrews's mother, Mary received the Gold Star Medal on behalf of the family.

*LCDR Robert E. Clukey III Navy November 3, 2002 Orono LCDR Clukey's parents will receive the Gold Star medal at a later date.

MAJ Jay T. Aubin Marine Corps March 21, 2003 Waterville MAJ Aubin's mother, Nancy Chamberlain will receive the Gold and Silver Star medals.

SPC Daniel J. Cunningham Army April 4, 2003 Lewiston SPC Cunningham's mother Nancy received the Gold Star Medal on behalf of the family. Recipients are Daniel's wife Heather and mother Nancy.

** SGT Nicholes D. Golding Army February 13, 2004 Addison SGT Golding's father Darwin Golding will receive Gold and Silver Star Medals on behalf of the family. Recipients are Nicholes' wife Heidi, mother Cynthia, and father Darwin.

** SGT Lawrence A. Roukey Army Reserve April 26, 2004 Westbrook SGT Roukey's sister Dottie received the Gold and Silver Star Medals

** SPC Beau R. Beaulieu Army May 24, 2004 Lisbon SPC Beaulieu's wife Christina lives in Texas and will receive her medals at a later date

** SSG Lynn R. Poulin Sr. Army National Guard December 21, 2004 Freedom SSG Poulin's mother Theresa received the Gold and Silver Star Medals on behalf of the family. Recipients are Lynn's mother Theresa and father Betrand.

1SG Michael D. Jones Army National Guard March 3, 2005 Unity 1SG Jones's mother Margaret received the Gold Star Medal.

** SFC Shawn C. Dostie Army December 30, 2005 Lewiston SFC Dostie's mother Delaine Fugere received the Gold and Silver Star medals on behalf of the family. Recipients are Shawn's wife Stephanie and mother Delaine.

** SSG David M. Veverka Army National Guard May 6, 2006 UMO/Jamestown, PA SSG Veverka's family lives out of state and will receive the Gold and Silver Star Medals at a later date

*CPT Patrick D. Damon Army National Guard June 15, 2006 Falmouth CPT Damon's mother Barbara and father Ellsworth received the Gold Star medal.

** SSG Kristofer R. Ciraso Army December 7, 2006 Bangor SSG Ciraso's family lives out of state and will receive their Gold and Silver Star medals at a later date

Governor Details His Property Tax Freeze Resolution

January 19, 2007

AUGUSTA- Governor Baldacci today detailed his proposal to provide tax relief to Maine permanent resident taxpayers. The Resolution, L.D. 276, which has a tri-partisan support in the Legislature, freezes the valuation of Maine primary residences by amending the Maine Constitution.]

"The time has come to enact a property tax relief policy that is by Maine people for Maine people," said Governor Baldacci, echoing his Inauguration promise. "Freezing valuations will provide permanent relief for permanent residents."

The constitutional amendment is modeled after the existing provision in the Maine Constitution - known as the Tree Growth Law - that gives a valuation break to woodlands, farmlands, wildlife management lands, open space, and working waterfront land.

"If we can freeze valuations in these cases, certainly we can do the same to protect primary Maine residents from escalating land prices," said the Governor. "There's a difference, however, in my proposal: The Tree Growth Law is voluntary. For primary Maine residents, I want to require valuation freezes across the board. This is about guaranteed relief."

Governor Baldacci's proposal puts in the Constitution the principle that valuations of primary resident lands are treated differently. It provides for a 5-year look-back recapture of forgone taxes when the property is transferred.

Once the resolution is ratified by the people of Maine, the proposal tasks the Legislature with creating implementing legislation.

"I know of the opposition to this proposal. But I'm certain we need to do more for Maine residents," said the Governor. "We've helped businesses by repealing the business equipment tax. We can export more of our property tax burden to second-home owners who aren't residents. I appreciate all the work that's gone into this in previous Legislatures, but I'm asking them to tackle it again."

The Governor's resolution is part of his vision to provide property tax relief to Maine residents. With the Governor's proposed biennial budget, the State will have fulfilled the promise of state spending on local education to 55%. His proposed budget restructures school districts, providing tax savings to all who pay property taxes in Maine. Governor Baldacci is insisting that the savings available from increased funding be directly passed on to taxpayers for immediate property tax relief.

As Chairs of the Taxation Committee, L.D. 276 is sponsored by Senator Joseph Perry; Representative John Piotti is the lead cosponsor. Additional cosponsors include Senator John Courtney; Representative Patsy Crockett; Representative Leila Percy; and Representative Dick Woodbury.

Governor Baldacci Swears In John Richardson as Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development

January 19, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has sworn in the new commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development, John Richardson, of Brunswick. Richardson will lead the department charged with developing economic sectors, promoting new businesses, growing existing businesses, and creating economic opportunity for Maine citizens. The department works closely with the Governor, the Legislature, and the private sector to accomplish this mission.

“I am extremely pleased to have John Richardson sworn-in as the Commissioner of this department,” said Governor Baldacci. “His leadership skills and vast knowledge of the business community will serve the people of this state well.”

The swearing-in took place in the Governor’s Office, with members of Richardson’s family present and his mother joined by speaker phone.

Richardson will begin his new job on Monday, January 22.

Governor Baldacci Honors First School to Receive SHAPE Award

January 22, 2007

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci awarded United Technologies Center in Bangor with the Safety and Health Award for Public Employers (SHAPE) Monday afternoon in Bangor. UTC is the first public-sector organization to be certified under the program.

“It came as no surprise to me when I heard that UTC was the first school in the state to receive the important recognition of the SHAPE award,” said Governor Baldacci. “UTC has always been on the cutting edge, providing top quality vocational and technical skills and preparing students for good careers in our economy.”

Governor Baldacci praised the school for providing additional opportunities for Maine’s student population. He said that providing opportunities is what his administration reaches to do every day.

“That is why we are putting more money into higher education and research and development,” said the Governor, “and that is why we have given a raise to starting teachers – to attract the best and brightest teachers to our schools...and to retain them in our state.”

The SafetyWorks! Safety and Health Award for Public Employers (SHAPE) program offers incentives to public sector employers that take a proactive approach to workplace safety. To qualify, employers must demonstrate exemplary achievements in workplace safety and health by receiving a comprehensive safety and health consultation visit, correcting all workplace safety and health hazards, adopting and implementing effective safety and health management systems, and agreeing to request further consultative visits if major changes in working conditions or processes occur that may introduce new hazards.

Governor Baldacci was joined at the presentation by Commissioner Laura Fortman of the Maine Department of Labor. Students enrolled at UTC spent time telling the Governor and Commissioner Fortman where they attend high school and what they do at UTC. Following the presentation, the Governor and Commissioner Fortman toured the facility.

Governor Baldacci Meets with Bangor High School Newspaper's Editorial Board

January 22, 2007

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci met with the editorial board of the Bangor Ram Page Monday afternoon – the student run newspaper of his alma mater, Bangor High School.

“I think that Bangor High School is a wonderful school and I have lots of great memories here,” said Governor Baldacci. “It’s important to me that I meet with the editorial board here and answer any questions they may have.”

The students – Executive Editor Tara Hackett, Co-Editors Dan Stearns and Morgan Herrell, and Managing Editor Lydia McOscar - talked with the Governor for about an hour.

The four students asked the Governor a number of questions based on the Local Schools, Regional Support (LSRS) initiative, which would reduce the number of School Administrative Units to from 152 down to 26. The students also asked about the Governor’s plan to have a 17-to-1 student-to-teacher ratio, the SAT vs. MEA debate and the laptop program for students in grades 7-12.

Governor Baldacci – a Bangor High School graduate in 1973 - was also asked about his memories from his days at Bangor High. The Governor spoke fondly with the students about playing football and golf, and his days on the Debate Team.

Governor Nominates Robert McAleer to Head Maine Emergency Management Agency

January 25, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today announced that he is nominating Robert P. McAleer as Director of the Maine Emergency Management Agency MEMA). Upon confirmation, McAleer will lead the department charged with providing the leadership, coordination and support in the four phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. MEMA is a bureau of the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management.

“I am pleased to nominate someone of Robert McAleer’s caliber to serve in this important leadership role,” said Governor Baldacci. “Robert’s extensive military career coupled with his recent experience in homeland security and emergency preparedness will make him a wonderful leader of this department. He has a proven record managing a wide range of challenges, and his unique set of skills will greatly benefit the safety and welfare of the state.”

McAleer, a resident of Harpswell, served nearly thirty years with the military. In his career as a Marine, he served in a variety of capacities including commander. His experience ranges from developing and executing logistical support for operations to planning and managing operational and readiness requirements and objectives.

As Battalion Commander of the 2nd Marine Regiment, he planned and executed the emergency evacuation of 280 civilians from the American Embassy in Somalia, an operation that earned him the Bronze Star Medal.

From 1993 to 1996, McAleer served as Executive Secretary for the Department of Defense, where he managed administrative functions among other duties. He was awarded the Defense Distinguished Service Medal for his leadership at the Department.

McAleer finished his career with the Marines as Assistant Chief of Staff with the First Marine Division. There, McAleer managed training plans for 20,000 people, developed operational plans and coordinated support to global operations.

Following his distinguished military career, McAleer entered the private sector. He has for the past five years served in numerous part-time positions, a number of which enabled him to use his incident management and response preparedness experience and knowledge of Homeland Security related issues. He has since 2004 served as adjunct staff member for the National Emergency Response and Rescue Training Center at Texas A&M University. McAleer has conducted emergency response training exercises in Lincoln County and Brunswick. He has assisted Brunswick with the development of a town-wide safety program.

McAleer is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame.

Legislation passed into law last year authorized the director of MEMA to have direct access to the Governor in the case of an emergency. The law also transferred oversight of MEMA to the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. After approval by the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, Robert McAleer must be confirmed by the Senate.

Governor Nominates Richard Davies to Head Public Advocate's Office

January 25, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today announced that he is nominating Richard Davies to serve as Maine's Public Advocate. Upon confirmation, Davies will lead the Cabinet-level office charged with representing the interest of ratepayers within the jurisdiction of the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

"Dick Davies has served Maine for more than thirty years with great distinction," said Governor Baldacci. "He has provided an outstanding level of service and dedication to the state in the past four years as a top level staffer in my office."

In taking this new position, Davies leaves the Governor's Office where he served for four years as senior policy advisor.

"Dick has been my chief liaison on policy and agency matters regarding public utilities and energy," said the Governor. "In particular, I have relied on his extensive knowledge and experience in the areas of energy and utility issues impacting Maine citizens. His unique expertise will be invaluable in this new position."

Before joining the Governor's staff, Davies served as President of Public Policy Associates, Inc., where his clients ranged from a natural gas utility to an association of Community Action Program agencies.

Davies's prior State government experience includes his work as a Senior Officer for the Maine State Housing Authority and as an advisor and legislative liaison for Governor Joseph Brennan.

Davies served in the Maine House of Representatives for eight years, from 1974 to 1982. During his tenure, he chaired the Committee on Energy and the Committee of Public Utilities. Davies negotiated the compromise that created the Office of Public Advocate in 1981, and was active in reforming utility laws during his tenure in the Legislature.

Davies earned both his B.A. and his M.A. at the University of Maine, Orono.

After approval by the Utilities and Energy Committee, he must be confirmed by the Senate. The Public Advocate's role extends to, among other actions, arguing for the lowest feasible level of rates; identifying emerging problems affecting service quality for utility customers; and pursuing in federal agency proceedings and courts each of these objectives in order to protect the interests of Maine ratepayers. The Public Advocate works extensively with organizations, individual consumers and their representatives to achieve these objectives.

Davies is taking the position being vacated by Stephen Ward. Ward has served as the Public Advocate for twenty years. While Ward had planned to retire from State government, he has instead agreed to join the Maine Department of Environmental Protection on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

(RGGI) team. Ward will be assisting in the implementation of RGGI through the program design, legislative and rulemaking process.

“Steve has been an exceptional advocate for the citizens of Maine,” said Governor Baldacci. “I am pleased that he will continue to serve the state at the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, as we move RGGI forward on an ambitious track. Steve’s vast experience with the electrical industry and utility issues will be invaluable as he takes on this new role.”

In addition to Ward, the Department of Environmental Protection announced the hiring of Suzanne Watson as Director of Innovation and Technical Assistance. The office oversees the Pollution Prevention (P2), STEP UP, Small Business Assistance, Governor’s Carbon Challenge and related efforts. Watson will contribute to the State’s carbon-reduction and global warming projects. She brings an extensive background in innovative energy technology programs to this role, having served as the Town of Topsham’s Economic and Community Development Director, senior policy advisor for NESCAUM (Northeastern States for Coordinated Air Management), executive director of the Maine Environment & Energy Center, and the Maine Science and Technology Center.

“Together, these dedicated public servants will expand my Administration’s efforts to promote a consumer and citizen-focused approach to the most pressing energy, utility and environmental facing Maine today. I am pleased to have them on my team,” said Governor Baldacci.

Governor Baldacci Thanks Three Businesses for Re-Upping STEP-UP Agreement

January 26, 2006

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci was joined by Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner, David Littell Friday as three businesses re-upped their STEP-UP agreements. STEP-UP, or “Smart Tracks for Exceptional Performers and Upward Performers” also honored seven businesses for meeting their STEP-UP goals and four businesses for notable achievements in the STEP-UP program. The program aims to encourage sustainable practices.

“You have exhibited a commitment to go beyond compliance goals related to energy, water and other natural resources use,” said Governor Baldacci. “I commend you for your leadership and success in meeting the goals of pollutant reduction and elimination of hazardous materials, toxic releases and greenhouse gases.”

Degussa/CYRO, Moss Inc. and National Semiconductor re-upped their agreements today.

The seven businesses honored for meeting their STEP-UP goals were Moss Inc., National Semiconductor, Bath Iron Works, Lyman-Morse Boat Building Company, NorDx, Pratt & Whitney, and ZF Lemforder Corporation.

The businesses honored for notable achievements in the STEP-UP program are Fairchild Semiconductor, Interface Fabrics, Poland Spring, and Wright-Ryan Construction.

Each business commits to various goals in their STEP-UP agreements that include reducing hazardous waste, fuel and energy consumption.

Governor Receives Blue Ribbon Commission on Dirigo Health Reform

January 29, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci met today with members of his Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Reform and accepted their final report.

The Commission included recommendations addressing how to strengthen and improve DirigoChoice; identified new funding sources to continue to support the program; laid out market reforms to make coverage more affordable for all Mainers; and encouraged shared responsibility for health care costs among employers and individuals.

“I am pleased that this prestigious group of Maine citizens with very diverse backgrounds and experiences was able to reach agreement to ensure that Maine’s hardworking families have access to high quality, affordable health care,” the Governor said. He praised the Commission and its Chair, Sandra Featherman, and noted the foundation that has been built over the past four years with Dirigo.

“We must build on this success,” said Governor Baldacci. “DirigoChoice currently covers more than 13,000 people and 2,300 businesses with comprehensive care and good preventive health benefits. While the national rate of uninsured increased, Maine’s has remained stable, and Maine continues to have one of the lowest rates of uninsured in the nation. Since DirigoChoice began, the small group market has become more competitive.”

Key recommendations included:

- Allowing the DirigoChoice program to self-insure;
- Identified new sources of revenue for the General Fund, including taxes on specific behaviors and products that have negative influence on health; and
- Continued to support the recapturing of bad debt and charity care savings to fund a portion of the Dirigo Health program.

The Commission called for further study to implement market reforms to make coverage more affordable, particularly in the individual market, and endorsed the concept of an employer mandate along with a mandate for individuals over 400% federal poverty level to secure health coverage and recommended that the Governor explore how such mandates might work. The group further recommended an independent study of the cost drivers of health care and made a series of recommendations to increase access to health coverage and reduce its costs.

The Governor said that “it’s time to cover all Mainers, and to do so in a responsible way. When I began the work of health reform in 2003, Maine was very much alone. No other states, or the Federal Government, were talking about health reform. We’ve learned a lot in the past four years and we can

learn much from other state initiatives. Dirigo Health is a work in progress and your recommendations will take us in a new and important direction.

“My team has already begun to analyze your recommendations,” said the Governor. “It’s time for action. I’m not going to argue about who to leave behind. My interest is in expanding coverage to all Mainers and I’m eager to develop and debate my plan to do this.”

The Governor stated his hope to provide more specifics after more complete review of the report and to have a plan to implement it, including specific legislative proposals, ready in a few weeks. The Blue Ribbon Commission represents business, consumers, insurers, labor, health professionals, government and academia. Their final report is available online at <http://www.dirigohealth.maine.gov/>

Governor Baldacci Applauds Backyard Farms for Business in Maine

January 29, 2007

MADISON – Governor John E. Baldacci visited Backyard Farms' new, high-tech, state-of-the-art, 24-acre greenhouse in Madison Monday morning to celebrate the first truckload of tomatoes being shipped to Hannaford Supermarkets. Governor Baldacci credits Pine Tree Zone incentives, low utility costs and cooperation from the town of Madison for helping to bring Backyard Farms to Maine.

"This time of year in the restaurant business, we would get the worst tomatoes and we would have to pay through the roof for them," said Governor Baldacci. "To have a greenhouse like the one here in Madison and a plan like the people from Backyard Farms - working with Hannaford - we are able to get these delicious tomatoes that are made in Maine out to people all over the Northeast."

Governor Baldacci thanked Backyard Farms for expanding their business in Madison. The site in Madison was designated as a Pine Tree Development Zone, making the facility eligible for the tax incentive program, and a \$400,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) was awarded to the town of Madison for public infrastructure support of economic development in preparation of Backyard Farms' opening.

Backyard Farms' CEO Paul Sellev introduced the Governor at the reception, thanking him for his willingness to pull together state resources; his role in bringing together the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Department of Agriculture to work with Backyard Farms; and his overall commitment to helping the company bring their business to Maine.

Governor Baldacci also thanked the workers, as well as the partnership with Hannaford saying that partnerships are needed for a large-scale project like the greenhouse in Madison.

Governor Baldacci Outlines Priorities to Economic Development Council

January 30, 2007

LUCERNE – Governor John E. Baldacci emphasized his priorities of property tax relief, growing Mainer's incomes, and reduction of excess administration while speaking to the Economic Development Council Tuesday evening. The Governor spoke to the group during a reception at their annual meeting in Lucerne.

"Simply put, we need to change the status quo in Augusta to make sure we are reaching our full potential," said Governor Baldacci. "We need to make the right choices, because by making the right choices for this state we can seize the opportunity to make this century Maine's century."

The Governor went into detail about his plan to consolidate school administrative units from 290 down to 26. Governor Baldacci explained benefits of the Local Schools, Regional Support (LSRS) Initiative, such as increased teacher salaries and expanded professional development opportunities for teachers; expansion of the laptop initiative; proposed scholarships for students to attend higher education; and \$241 million in savings that translates into property tax relief over three years.

"In Maine, we spend \$2,000 more per pupil than the national average and pay our teachers \$7,000 less than the national average," said Governor Baldacci. "My initiative will keep local schools open, boost classroom resources and enhance local oversight. My plan benefits the right people – the children."

Governor Baldacci highlighted other plans in his budget, including downsizing state government, appropriating more money for higher education and R&D, and proposing a property tax freeze for year-round permanent Maine residents.

"As I said during my Inauguration, in this new economy Maine stands head and shoulders above any state in the nation," said Governor Baldacci. "Our good people and strong communities, along with our natural beauty and small town character, have become scarce resources in a crowded world. Maine has competitive assets in the new 21st century economy. If we make the right choices, this century will be Maine's century. Our time has come."

The Governor's budget proposes to appropriate \$14.4 million to the University of Maine System; \$11.7 million to the Maine Community College System; and the Maine Maritime Academy by \$2.1 million. Additionally, his budget commits to raising investments in research and development by \$5 million; and in our growth clusters by \$8 million. These investments will help to fuel private companies growing private sector jobs in Maine.

Governor Baldacci joins PrepMe in Announcing Free Online SAT Prep Course for all Maine High School Juniors

February 1, 2007

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Angela Faherty, deputy commissioner of the Department of Education, as well as representatives from the online test preparation company PrepMe.com on Thursday to announce the offering of a free online SAT preparation course to every high school junior in Maine.

For the next three years, PrepMe.com plans to let every junior in Maine use its program without cost to students, schools or the state. The cost of the Gold Program is usually \$300 and through this donation, over \$4.5 million worth of test preparation per year will be made available.

“We are very grateful for this donation because it expands access to test preparation to all of our students, regardless of geography and financial situation,” said Governor Baldacci.

Built by recent graduates of Stanford and the University of Chicago, PrepMe’s SAT program creates a personalized study plan based on a thorough diagnostic of each student’s strengths and weaknesses.

The program is comprised of instructive lessons and quizzes based on the essential elements of the SAT, lessons just like those taught by great teachers, not test-taking tricks. By making the program available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to every student in the state, PrepMe and the State of Maine are doing everything they can to level the playing field for all Maine students.

“This is all about opportunities – opportunities for our students to succeed in school and throughout life,” said the Governor. “PrepMe is providing opportunities for students all over the state by allowing them equal access to a program that could potentially have a direct impact on their SATs – and that is a benefit to all of us.”

Following the presentation, three Portland High School students who were allowed to test the program in advance of Thursday morning’s announcement, demonstrated PrepMe for their fellow students and members of the media. The students, junior Anthony Toppi; sophomore Christina Moore; and junior Kudija Tahlil all gave the program high marks, saying it will be a great tool to use in preparation for the SATs.

More information is available at <http://www.prepme.com/>

Report Shows Support for School District Consolidation

February 1, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci said that a newly released GrowSmart study shows support for his initiative to reduce central administration of school districts across the state.

The study released today reflects the demand that exists across Maine for tax relief and for reduced administration. The poll of 500 registered voters found that 51 percent favored a reduction in the number of school superintendents in order to provide local property tax relief. Only 15 percent did not support such a reduction.

Named “Local Schools, Regional Support”, the Governor’s proposal would reduce administrative spending, freeing up funds for tax relief and for direct benefit of students and teachers.

“This poll shows that Maine people want change. I am pleased that citizens are engaged in this important debate because our schools need to be about excellence in education, not excess in administration,” said Governor Baldacci. “We are proud of the work that our administrators are doing, but it is time for a change in the way our administrative units operate. Bold action is required to ensure that resources are being spent in the right place: to support students and teachers in the classroom.”

In reporting the results, Alan Caron, president of GrowSmart Maine, said “We certainly need to have a robust conversation about how we’re going to become more efficient, but Maine people are clearly in support of action that will move us forward. The status quo is not an option.”

Governor Baldacci and Maine Education Commission Susan Gendron have been traveling across the state to discuss with the public the details of the Local Schools, Regional Support Initiative. A series of forums have been conducted in Lewiston, North Berwick, Portland, and Bangor. An all day legislative hearing on the proposal will be held February 5 at the Civic Center in Augusta.

The biennial budget proposed by the Governor meets the commitment that the people of Maine voted for - fulfilling the promise of state spending on K-12 education to 55 percent. That represents about 800 million new dollars over a four year phase-in.

To achieve property tax relief and ensure resources are spent in the right place, Governor Baldacci’s plan reduces the number of school administrative units from 290 to 26. The Governor’s initiative will:

- o Keep local schools open;
- o Boost classroom resources and improve student outcomes;
- o Enhance local oversight, with more involvement from parents through local advisory boards.

The benefits of Local Schools, Regional Support Initiative include:

- o Funding for a full-time principal for every school;

- o Increased teacher salaries and expanded professional development opportunities for teachers;
- o Major expansion of the laptop initiative so that all students from grades 7-12 will have access to laptops so they can better connect to the global economy;
- o Proposed scholarships averaging \$2,000 per student to attend UMaine System, Community Colleges, or Maine Maritime Academy;
- o Provide \$241 million in savings that translate into property tax relief over three years.

“This plan will achieve the excellence in education we have been striving for in Maine,” remarked the Governor. “It will strengthen local involvement in K-12 education and will open the doors to higher education wider than ever before, so students are ready to learn and graduate ready to succeed here in Maine.”

The study also showed broad support for streamlining government at all levels. Governor Baldacci has proposed in his biennial budget to reduce administration and streamline State government. Since taking office, the Governor has eliminated 600 state positions and saved 11 million dollars in the last budget cycle. This budget proposes administrative savings at the Department of Health and Human Services and proposes the consolidations of two state departments: Economic and Community Development and Professional and Financial Regulation to form one Department of Commerce with a focus on business activity.

Governor Baldacci Honors First Responders

February 5, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci honored a group of 100 first responders Monday for completing a course in maritime security. The program is a 15 hour, two-day, level one maritime security domain awareness course. The pilot program, conducted by Maine Maritime Academy in Castine, awards 1.5 Continuing Educational Units to each certified participant.

“In your everyday walks of life you are already serving on the front lines,” said Governor Baldacci. “You are fire department and police personnel, game wardens, maritime pilots, harbor masters, county emergency officials, and others. Maine is deeply grateful for your efforts and for showing through your participation and completion of the certification in this coursework your commitment to improve our maritime security.”

About 20 of the 100 course participants were present at the ceremony in the Hall of Flags at the State House in Augusta. Governor Baldacci presented each of the participants who were certified in the program with a uniform patch.

“With our 3,500 miles of coastline, it’s vital that we have well-trained professionals to guard our safety and security,” said the Governor. “Maine is safer and our officials better prepared because of this partnership between the state, Maine Maritime Academy, and you, our first responders.”

The program is funded through the Maine Emergency Management Agency and is expected to become a model for other states across the country.

Governor Applauds Choice of Richard Pattenauade to Lead University of Maine System

February 5, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci applauded the selection of Dr. Richard L. Pattenauade as next chancellor of the University of Maine System. Upon hearing of the unanimous decision by the University of Maine System Board of Trustees, the Governor said that this decision strengthens the strong partnership that has been established between the State and the University System. Pattenauade has served as the president of the University of Southern Maine for nearly 16 years.

The Governor thanked Terrence MacTaggart for leading the University System for the past eight months. MacTaggart will stay on in his present position until Pattenauade takes the helm as chancellor of the System on July 1, 2007.

“I want to extend my deep appreciation for the outstanding dedication and leadership of Terrence MacTaggart, who has so ably and expertly led the System through this transition period,” said Governor Baldacci.

MacTaggart served as Chancellor from 1996-2001, and last July took on the job for up to a year to enable the System’s Board of Trustees to find a permanent chancellor.

Governor Baldacci noted the continuity that will come from the installation of Pattenauade as Chancellor of the University of Maine System. “Rich has exhibited throughout his extraordinary tenure at the University of Southern Maine great dedication to the mission of the University System,” said the Governor. “I have worked with Rich for many years and have found him to be committed to the students of the University and to enhancing the role of the University in the greater community. He has been a tremendous asset to the System for many years and I look forward to working with him in this new capacity.”

Earlier this year, the Governor emphasized his continued support for the University of Maine System in his biennial budget. Governor Baldacci has proposed a \$14.4 million increase in funding for the University of Maine System. Additionally, the Governor’s supplemental budget reported out of committee last week included \$3 million for telecommunications infrastructure improvements.

In announcing these funding increases during his Inaugural Address, the Governor said, “The University of Maine system enrolls 34,000 students. Most of these students build their careers in Maine. By focusing on quality education, and pursuing R&D to create private sector jobs, the University has an important impact on Maine’s future.”

Maine Receives \$600,000 to Improve Health Care Quality for Chronic Illnesses

February 6, 2007

Gov. John Baldacci Lauds Grant, Hails Collaborative Effort of Health Care Leaders

AUGUSTA - Maine has received a \$600,000 grant to improve the quality of health care for people with chronic illnesses. The grant was awarded by Aligning Forces for Quality, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).

The grant proposal was developed by Quality Counts in partnership with other key stakeholders in Maine's health care community, including the Dirigo Health Agency's Maine Quality Forum and the Maine Health Management Coalition.

"This significant grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation will help provide our citizens with the knowledge they need to make better health care choices," said Governor Baldacci. "The collaboration of key community partners such as Quality Counts, Dirigo Health, and the Health Management Coalition, will help people with chronic illnesses improve the quality of their lives and reduce health care costs."

Baldacci noted that 40% of premium costs are due to the costs of chronic illnesses like those the grant will address: asthma, diabetes, depression and heart disease.

The grant is designed to help communities do three things that advance the quality of chronic care provided in doctors' offices, clinics and other outpatient settings: (1) help health care providers improve their own ability to deliver quality care; (2) help providers measure and publicly report their performance; and (3) help patients and consumers understand their role in demanding high-quality care.

"We are excited to join a program that seeks to align the efforts of Maine leaders, consumers, doctors, nurses, employers and insurers in a collaborative effort to improve the care we provide for chronically-ill patients," said Quality Counts representative Dr. Lisa Letourneau. "No one person, group or profession can improve care for chronic illness without the support of others."

Quality Counts will help direct the \$600,000 grant to use over three years for planning, coordination and infrastructure development. Dirigo Health's Maine Quality Forum is the grantee.

"This program will help engage the people of Maine to create a coordinated system of care that best meets their needs," said Chris McCarthy of the Dirigo Health Agency's Maine Quality Forum.

The project joins 13 other grantees in the three-year, \$14-million Aligning Forces for Quality program. The selection process entailed guidance of national experts and intensive site visits that confirmed Maine has taken significant initial steps toward the program's goals and has the capacity for further improvement.

Doug Libby of the Maine Health Management Coalition stated, "Maine has already made great strides in collecting and reporting quality data, and in efforts to engage consumers in using quality data in decision making. We're looking forward to working with all organizations involved in improving quality to align these efforts."

RWJF conceived of Aligning Forces for Quality as an effort to help communities use multiple market forces to drive and sustain quality. The goal is to help regions such as Maine retool their health care markets so that they can function as markets should.

For Quality Counts to improve the quality of care in Maine, there needs to be participation on many fronts: 1) civic, business and health care leadership that is committed to quality care; 2) doctors, nurses and other providers who are committed to improving and who have the resources and capability to improve; 3) purchasers who are willing to reward high quality care; and 4) patients and consumers who receive accurate understandable information about the performance of providers and are motivated to act on that information when making health care decisions.

The other grant recipients are:

- Alliance for Health – Grand Rapids, Mich.
- Health Alliance of Humboldt-Del Norte – Eureka, Calif.
- Greater Detroit Area Health Council – Detroit, Mich.
- Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati – Cincinnati, Ohio
- Healthy Memphis Common Table – Memphis, Tenn.
- Healthy York County Coalition – York, Pa.
- Kansas City Quality Improvement Consortium – Kansas City, Mo.
- MetroHealth System – Cleveland, Ohio
- Minnesota Measurement – Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn.
- Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation – Portland, Ore.
- P2 Collaborative of Western New York – Buffalo, N.Y.
- Puget Sound Health Alliance – Seattle, Wash.
- Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality – Madison, Wis.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 30 years

the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.

Governor Names Anne Jordan Commissioner of Public Safety

February 7, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today announced that he is nominating Anne H. Jordan of South Portland as Commissioner of the Maine Department of Public Safety.

“I have known Anne for a number of years and have been particularly impressed with her leadership as Chair of the Governor’s Advisory Board on Executive Clemency,” said Governor Baldacci. “Additionally, the experience Anne gained during her 22 years of advocacy, prosecutorial and private practice gives her a broad understanding of all aspects of the workings of the public safety system and its dedicated workers and officials. Anne’s strong legal background and accomplishments makes her an outstanding candidate for this important position.”

As chair of the Pardon Board since 2000, Anne has adeptly managed a challenging caseload. Jordan was first appointed to the Pardon Board in 1991.

Jordan is currently a partner at the firm of Norman Hanson and DeTroy, where she has specialized in trial law in the areas of insurance fraud, domestic relations, mediation and dispute resolution, and animal welfare.

Jordan has six years experience as a prosecutor with the York County District Attorney’s Office, having served as Deputy District Attorney and Assistant District Attorney.

Additionally, Jordan is a current member of the Maine Harness Racing Commission and the Animal Welfare Advisory Council. As the chair of the Working Group on Animal Welfare, Jordan drafted Maine’s first-in-the-nation legislation to permit pets to be included in Protection from Abuse Orders.

A graduate of Kennebunk High School, Jordan received her B.A. in political science from the University of Southern Maine. She earned her J.D. from the University of Maine School of Law.

The Department of Public Safety serves the people of Maine by protecting their lives, rights and properties. This is accomplished through criminal justice, law enforcement, fire safety and emergency response services. The department has eight bureaus: Capital Security; Criminal Justice Academy; Drug Enforcement Agency; Highway Safety; Emergency Medical Services; Liquor Enforcement; Fire Marshal’s Office; and the Maine State Police.

Upon approval by the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, Jordan must be confirmed by the Senate.

Governor Baldacci Tackles Global Warming

February 7, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci opened the Forum on Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI): Decisions for Maine Wednesday morning by discussing Maine's efforts to address climate change.

"The Maine Department of Environmental Protection developed Maine's Climate Action Plan, one of the first in the nation," said Governor Baldacci. "The cap-and-trade program that came from the Action Plan is one of the most effective greenhouse gas reduction strategies both in terms of carbon reductions and cost-effectiveness."

Governor Baldacci said that 10 states are now committed to participating in RGGI. The Governor has asked DEP Commissioner David Littell to ensure the environmental and economic benefits of the RGGI initiative are maximized in Maine.

"RGGI will reduce CO2 emissions from electrical generators by 10% from current levels by 2019," said the Governor. "If we take growth between now and 2019 into account, this represents a 35% reduction over business as usual. It will reduce CO2 emissions by the most cost-effective means."

Governor Baldacci delivered his remarks at the beginning of the forum, hosted by the USM Muskie School and the UM Margaret Chase Smith Center. The Department of Environmental Protection presented draft legislation and a panel discussion after Governor Baldacci's remarks.

Governor Baldacci Discusses Education Reform with Portland Chamber

February 7, 2007

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci continued presenting his plan for downsizing School Administrative Districts across the state this morning, talking with members of the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce. The Governor spoke to about 500 people during the Chamber's "Eggs and Issues" breakfast at the Holiday Inn by the Bay.

"In this plan, the most important thing that's taking place is a child's education," said Governor Baldacci. "That is what is most important to all of us – our children."

The Governor outlined details of his plan, including boosting classroom resources for students and teachers, \$241 million in savings over three years that will translate into property tax relief, and building up the rigor for high school students by requiring four years of math and science.

"We should do this differently not just to save money, but to achieve excellence in education," said the Governor. "That is the foundation."

Governor Baldacci also addressed some of the fears that exist. First, he said that local schools will not consolidate as a result of his plan. In fact, the Governor said, provisions exist in the plan to protect local schools from closing. Governor Baldacci noted concerns that some people have expressed about representation on regional school boards and the number of students in each district. The Governor said changes to certain parts of his plan are being considered.

"If we were to start from scratch and assemble a School Administrative District plan with 290 districts and 152 Superintendents, you would all laugh at us," said Governor Baldacci. "The status quo in the way we run schools is not acceptable. We need to change."

Governor Baldacci continues touring the state to answer questions about his Local Schools, Regional Support (LSRS) initiative. The Governor will be addressing the Maine State Chamber Leadership Summit in Bethel Thursday and will have a day-long listening tour in Presque Isle and the St. John Valley on February 12.

Governor Accepts Report from Working Group on Allagash Wilderness Waterway

February 8, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today accepted the report of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway Working Group. The group, which the Governor established by Executive Order in June 2006, was charged with providing guidance and advice to the Governor respecting the long-term governance, management, and oversight structure for this vital resource.

The Governor thanked the members of the Working Group for fulfilling their mission. “Your findings will form the basis of actions taken by my Administration to strengthen the Waterway’s capacity to preserve and enhance the natural environment of the Allagash, support a variety of wilderness recreation experiences, and respect and protect the cultural heritage of the area.”

The Working Group submitted seven recommendations to the Governor, all aimed at making it possible for the Waterway to fulfill its promise as a wilderness recreational resource and a vital part of Maine’s heritage. The proposals would elevate the status of the Waterway in the Department of Conservation, strengthen its management capacity, provide a mechanism for obtaining financial support from sources outside state government, build a strong advisory program and community input process, and bring new focus to the Waterway and its environmental and historic values through a strategic planning program.

In the report, titled “Choosing Common Ground and Moving Ahead,” the group said “the success of [the] recommendations... will depend in large part on the achievement of a common sense of purpose and direction [for the Waterway] by the several constituencies that have a strong interest in the Allagash.”

The Working Group reviewed a variety of documents and studies related to the Waterway, conducted hearings, engaged in a field trip on part of the river and consulted with users, neighbors of the Waterway and public officials and other experts in developing its findings and recommendations.

The specific recommendations are as follows:

- Correct the 1995 downgrading of the Waterway to the status of an ordinary park by making it a separate region in the Bureau of Parks and Lands;
- Initiate, for the first time, a strategic planning process for the Waterway;
- Create the position of superintendent to provide leadership in the Waterway in carrying out strategic planning, strengthening working relationships among the different Waterway constituencies, and obtaining funding from a variety of sources to support enhancements of the Waterway;
- Establish an independent advisory council, with its own chair, to represent the public interest in the Waterway and provide counsel to the superintendent and the Bureau Director;

- Supplement the policy advisory role of the Council with technical committees that can provide assistance to the Superintendent and staff on a number of resource management and other technical issues;
- Create an endowment fund that would support capital acquisitions and improvements, historic, cultural and educational programs and facilities; and
- Initiate an annual report by the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation to the Legislature.

Governor Baldacci said that he will review the recommendations in detail. He said he is committed to the recommendation to create in statute of an Allagash Waterway Advisory Council and will submit legislation to implement this recommendation.

"I deem this recommendation to be the center point of your report and around which the other recommendations are built," said the Governor. "Finally, I want to commend you for your concluding observation, that the Working Group urges a new beginning of careful listening, respectful communication and energetic collaboration among all persons and groups with a stake in the future of the Allagash Waterway. It is ours to steward and enjoy, and we owe it to this river to find a way to bring stability, peace and prestige to its management."

For more information and a link to the full report,

visit http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/mainersworkingfor_maine.html

Governor Promises Assistance to Laid-Off Workers at Moosehead Manufacturing

February 8, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci learned today that Moosehead Manufacturing, a furniture maker in Monson, will be closing.

“This is difficult news for the employees at Moosehead and for Maine. The state will do everything possible to help those workers affected,” Governor John Baldacci said Thursday. “Our Rapid Response team from the Department of Labor is already putting into place an action plan to help them, and we will make sure that every available state and federal resource is put to work on their behalf.”

The state also will send a team from the Department of Economic and Community Development to the community and is working with Maine’s congressional delegation to ensure the displaced workers receive assistance.

Approximately 90 workers are expected to be laid off as early as next week. Another 36 will be released following liquidation of the company’s inventory.

Moosehead has faced stiff competition from foreign imports, particularly from China. Despite efforts by the company to move into a new market with more upscale products, cheap imports undercut its operations.

“This is an example of a traditional Maine industry taking a beating at the hands of unfair trade,” said Jack Cashman, the governor’s economic advisor. “Moosehead Manufacturing has a long history in Maine. This will be tough for the community.”

The Maine Department of Labor’s CareerCenter Response team has scheduled an informational session for the workers impacted by the closure. The Rapid Response Session will be held at the College Center in Dover-Foxcroft on Monday, February 12 at 1:00 pm. Workers will receive information about how to file for unemployment benefits, health care resources, and state and community resources for laid-off workers.

Moosehead Manufacturing workers who are unable to attend the Rapid Response Session are encouraged to contact the Dover-Foxcroft CareerCenter to learn more about resources available to them during their transition. The Dover-Foxcroft CareerCenter is located at the Pine Crest Business Park in Dover-Foxcroft and can be reached at (207) 564-8358 or TTY: (888) 697-2898.

Moosehead Manufacturing laid-off several workers in 2006. At that time, the Maine Department of Labor was able to get the company certified under the Federal Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA). TAA provides retraining benefits, extended unemployment, a health care tax credit, and relocation allowances to workers who lost their jobs due to foreign trade. Workers will be able to learn more about these benefits at the Rapid Response session Monday.

Maine and New Brunswick Sign Agreements to Partner in Electricity, Education

February 9, 2007

BANGOR – Governor John Baldacci today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Shawn Graham, the Premier of the Province of New Brunswick, at a ceremony at Eastern Maine Community College. The MOU lays out a timeline to explore and set forth actions enhancing cross-border cooperation on electrical interconnections.

"Both Premier Graham and I have the privilege of living in communities rich and natural resources, like wind and tidal energy, that can generate emission-free electricity," said Governor Baldacci. "We also both produce an electricity surplus and want to ensure that we pay competitive prices for electricity."

Governor Baldacci said that Maine consumers are shouldering the burden of transmission and capacity costs for other states in New England. This prompted the Governor to join the Legislature in requesting that the Maine Public Utilities (PUC) study alternatives to benefit Maine.

"Maine's current arrangement with the ISO-New England presents a number of inequities, and I have a responsibility to think beyond New England and look to our neighbors in the North," said the Governor.

The PUC study found that there are no legal, economic or technical barriers to pursuing an electricity partnership with New Brunswick as an alternative.

"This partnership to develop and pursue an expanded clean energy market could help curb global warming by reducing carbon pollution and grow our respective economies," said Governor Baldacci.

"This MOU is the beginning of a relationship that holds a lot of promise for Maine and New Brunswick. Together, we can expand the clean energy market, reduce carbon pollution all while creating new jobs and increasing the production of a clean environmentally-responsible product we can export to both countries."

Governor Baldacci and Premier Graham also witnessed an MOU signing between Dr. John Fitzsimmons, President of the Maine Community College System, and Michel Theriault, Assistant Deputy Minister and CEO of the New Brunswick Community College. The agreement outlines how these valued institutions will share knowledge, experience, and resources, enhancing efforts to meet the needs of our students and communities.

"I am encouraged by the opportunities to learn from each other as we expand our community college system to meet the needs of a growing and diverse population," Governor Baldacci said.

Maine's Community College System is experiencing tremendous growth and success. Enrollment has soared by 47%. Maine's community colleges are building new skills for a new economy, and a brighter economic future for the entire state.

"In an era driven by technology and innovation and a knowledge-based economy, it's important that we build these relationships with other regional systems," said the Governor.

"These new agreements demonstrate the spirit of partnership and co-operation between the State of Maine and the Province of New Brunswick," Premier Graham said. "Improving efficiencies of our electric systems should benefit consumers and the environment, for both New Brunswickers and Mainers. We are also excited about creating more opportunities for students and faculty through the collaborative work of the Community Colleges."

The text of the MOU on Electrical Interconnections follows.

Memorandum of Understanding Between The Province of New Brunswick And The State of Maine To Enhance The Mutual Benefits Of the Maine/New Brunswick Electrical Interconnections

WHEREAS, The State of Maine ("Maine") shares electrical interconnections with the Province of New Brunswick ("New Brunswick");

Maine also shares electrical interconnections with other New England states;

New Brunswick also shares electrical interconnections with the Maritime Provinces and Quebec;

New Brunswick and Maine each have located within their respective borders adequate and at most times abundant generation capacity;

New Brunswick and Maine export significant quantities of generation to southern New England for the benefit of all consumers;

New Brunswick and Maine each have abundant natural resources from which renewable energy, such as wind and tidal energy, can be harvested to generate electrical energy;

Maine and New Brunswick have each adopted policies to promote the development of renewable resources;

The northeastern United States needs new supplies of electrical energy, including renewables;

Maine and New Brunswick wish to expand opportunities for the mutual development and export of new electric generation capacity resources;

Maine and New Brunswick wish to increase the opportunities to transmit energy between the State and Province and to their neighbors in Canada and the United States;

Maine and New Brunswick wish to improve the efficiency of their respective electric systems and the interconnections between them to benefit consumers and the environment; and New Brunswick and Maine acknowledge the significance of climate change and recognize the importance of emphasizing the development and deployment of low emission electricity generation in the future.

NOW THEREFORE,

I, Shawn Graham, Premier of the Province of New Brunswick, and I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby enter into this "Memorandum of Understanding Between the Province of New Brunswick and The State of Maine To Enhance The Mutual Benefits Of the Maine/New Brunswick Electrical Interconnections" and do hereby agree as hereinafter set forth.

Maine and New Brunswick agree to explore expansions of generation capacity, including renewables, and transmission opportunities by agreeing to jointly undertake the following tasks:

Study the feasibility of expanding generation capacity and transmission infrastructure to increase electrical flows across borders;

Identify processes and systems to provide transparency and efficiency in Maine and New Brunswick markets;

Study the feasibility of developing common market rules that could be applied in Maine and New Brunswick;

Explore the potential benefits and technical and legal impediments to the common provisioning of control area services (including balancing, dispatch and reserve sharing);

Explore the tariff and governance structures required for a regional transmission organization for Maine and New Brunswick; and

Examine the opportunities for compatible greenhouse gas emissions reduction regimes in the electricity sector.

Maine and New Brunswick agree to dedicate sufficient resources from their respective state and provincial agencies for the completion of the tasks described herein. Maine and New Brunswick agree to appoint one person from each government to serve as each state's or province's, as applicable, point of contact (the "Joint Representatives").

The tasks are to be completed in two phases. Phase 1 work will overview the tasks, will assess priorities and possibilities, and will identify common principles (the "Principles") to guide additional work and any future implementation. The Joint Representatives shall deliver to their respective governments a report on the Phase 1 activities no later than June 1, 2007.

Upon completion of Phase 1, and agreement on the Principles, Maine and New Brunswick agree to proceed to Phase 2. It will be guided by the Principles and will complete detailed assessments of all tasks. The Joint Representatives shall present a final Phase 2 report to their respective governments no later than January 1, 2008.

Upon completion of the tasks identified above, Maine and New Brunswick agree to consider entering into a further agreement to implement mutually beneficial actions. Upon mutual consent, this further agreement may include other states or provinces.

Signed and delivered this 9th day of February, 2007.

_____ Premier Graham Official Signature Block

_____ Governor Baldacci Official Signature Block

Governor Baldacci on the Passing of Paul “P.D.” Merrill

February 13, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci extends his deepest sympathy to the family of Paul “P.D.” Merrill upon hearing of his passing Sunday.

"This is a terrible loss," Governor John Baldacci said Monday. "He has been a leader in Maine, particularly on transportation issues and ports, and was a real advocate for the state. I just saw him this past Wednesday at Eggs and Issues in Portland, and he talked about wanting to do more for the people of Maine."

Merrill was the owner and Chairman of Merrill Marine Terminal Services in Portland for more than two decades. Although Merrill Marine Terminal Services Inc. was acquired by Sprague Energy Corp. in 2004, Merrill himself stayed active in the business community.

Merrill was a former chair of the Maine Chamber. He was a founding member of the board of Maine Economic Research Institute (MERI), and a Trustee to the University of New England.

"Paul meant so much to the maritime industry and to the business community in Maine," said the Governor. "His loss is deeply felt."

Governor Baldacci Stresses Importance of Tourism Industry

February 13, 2007

ROCKPORT – Governor John E. Baldacci joined tourism officials and industry leaders Tuesday afternoon at the Samoset Resort for the Governor's Conference on Tourism.

"Maine's tourism industry continues to be a star, not just in economic impact, but the way it enriches the lives of both Mainers and those who have the opportunity to travel here," said Governor Baldacci. "Tourism enhances our lifestyle by generating jobs, sales and tax revenue. It keeps arts and cultural sites and festivals alive and contributes to conservation of our natural resources."

Governor Baldacci told the audience that Maine's tourism industry continues to be a "perennial powerhouse" both in direct and ripple impacts.

"Visitors to Maine generate roughly \$13 billion in sales of goods and services," said the Governor. "The trickle down effect of that provides over 100,000 jobs for Mainers."

Governor Baldacci applauded the work that has already been done to benefit tourism in the state. The Governor highlighted marketing efforts, specifically noting articles about Maine, press trips and Maine's tourism Web site, www.visitmaine.com.

"In 2006, there were 1.3 million unique visitors to the Web site," said Governor Baldacci. "This is roughly the population of the entire State of Maine."

The Governor expressed excitement about Maine's new tourism director, Patricia Eltman, saying that she is bringing a great amount of passion to the job. He said that while there is much to celebrate, there is still plenty of work to be done.

"There are many trends in the marketplace and challenges that we need to face to compete in a global marketplace," said Governor Baldacci. "These challenges include Internet security, marketing strategies in a technology driven world and staying current with travel trends."

In addition to the Governor's noontime address, workshops were conducted on topics including web design tips, usage of research in marketing, international marketing and internet security.

Governor Signs Supplemental Appropriations Legislation

February 13, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today signed into law the Fiscal Year 2007 supplemental appropriations bill, which includes critical funding through June 30, 2007.

The Governor thanked Legislative leaders and members of the Appropriations Committee. “I’m pleased with the bipartisan way in which this spending bill was achieved,” said the Governor.

The legislative package introduced by the Governor passed unanimously in the Appropriations Committee and then later in the Senate. The bill received a near-unanimous vote of support in the House.

The Governor addressed the priorities covered under the supplemental bill.

“With this supplemental budget, we have made significant progress in ensuring appropriate payment to Maine’s hospitals in a timely fashion,” said the Governor.

The bill provides for a direct appropriation of \$20 million for hospital settlements and makes an additional downpayment of \$30 million to raise prospective payments to hospitals beginning July 1st of this year. The bill also provides for the capture of an additional \$52 million in any surplus revenues to continue this commitment to Maine hospitals.

The supplemental budget also provides funding to meet the State’s share of funding for disaster relief due to flooding over the past two years and provides funding to assist in moving the Canton downtown out of the flood zone.

Additionally, the spending bill makes critical investments to public and private research facilities, including the University of Maine.

“With this bill \$3 million will support telecommunications infrastructure improvements, which will enhance opportunities for our research institutions and students,” said Governor Baldacci.

The legislation, as passed with 2/3 vote in both houses, took effect immediately upon the Governor’s signing.

Governor Guarantees Heating Oil Deliveries

February 13, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today issued a procedural proclamation to ensure heating oil deliveries are made to Maine residents during this prolonged period of freezing temperatures. The text of the Proclamation follows.

WHEREAS, the northeastern United States, including Maine, is expecting a major winter storm, as well as experiencing arctic cold temperatures and dangerous wind chills; and

WHEREAS, this cold weather is expected to continue for several days; and

WHEREAS, heating fuel in Maine is in great demand because of the cold and because supplies have lagged behind demand; and

WHEREAS, federal rules determine the number of hours the drivers of heating fuel delivery and transport vehicles may operate; and

WHEREAS, many drivers in the state will shortly be approaching their federal limit on hours of operation, and may have to cease delivery and transport; and

WHEREAS, these conditions threaten public health and safety and endanger public property if heating fuel cannot be transported or delivered; and

WHEREAS, the declaration of a State of Emergency will facilitate the granting of a waiver from the Federal Department of Transportation to allow heating fuel delivery and transport drivers to operate additional hours,

NOW THEREFORE, I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of Maine, find that these conditions constitute a civil emergency under 37-B M.R.S.A. section 742, and for the purpose of facilitating a waiver to Federal Department of Transportation Rules do hereby declare that a State of Emergency exists as of February 13, 2007.

State Offices Close Today at 12:30 pm

February 14, 2007

AUGUSTA – Due to weather conditions, all State Offices will be closing today, February 14, 2007, as of 12:30 p.m.

State Offices to Open Late Thursday

February 14, 2007

AUGUSTA – Maine state government will delay opening until 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 15. Weather conditions will be re-evaluated Thursday morning to determine if further delays in some parts of the state are necessary.

Governor Baldacci Coordinates Response to Short-Term Propane Shortage

February 15, 2007

AUGUSTA – Reacting to a short-term shortage of propane in Maine, Governor John Baldacci has been working with the industry, Governor John Lynch of New Hampshire, the Coast Guard and representatives from the Canadian and U.S. government to insure the state has adequate supplies of the fuel.

Poor weather in New England Wednesday slowed the arrival of a tanker ship into New Hampshire and a Canadian rail strike has left supplies of propane limited throughout Maine.

That ship, carrying about 16 million gallons of propane, arrived in port today and is expected to begin overloading its cargo this afternoon.

“We haven’t had any reports of people running out of propane,” Governor Baldacci said Thursday from the state’s Emergency Operations Center. “But suppliers around the state are prioritizing their deliveries, making sure that people who heat with propane and buildings like hospitals and nursing homes have an adequate supply.”

Propane is the primary heating fuel for about 26,000 Maine households, or about 5.5 percent of the population.

During the day Wednesday and early today, Governor Baldacci worked with the White House, the Canadian government, the Maine Oil Dealers Association, the Coast Guard, New Hampshire Governor John Lynch and several propane companies to assess the situation and determine if alternative supplies of the fuel could be found and brought to Maine.

“We have all been working to locate additional supplies of propane and make sure that we can quickly move them into Maine,” Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Baldacci also issued an emergency order Tuesday that extends the service hours of fuel delivery drivers, allowing them to work longer and make more deliveries and has worked with the federal government for a similar waiver that will allow Maine drivers to more quickly bring in propane supplies from other states.

Maine’s propane supplies have been self-rationing their inventory but have continued to provide limited deliveries to homes and businesses in Maine.

The Maine Oil Dealers Association estimates that at least 50 percent, and perhaps as much as 70 percent, of the state’s propane supply is brought into the state by rail. Workers for Canadian National Railway went on strike Saturday, curtailing the flow of propane by rail into Maine.

In calls to the Canadian government, Governor Baldacci has talked about the strike's effects on Maine's energy market.

"Maine has a good relationship with our neighbors to the north," Governor Baldacci said. "But I wanted to impress upon them the importance of a quick resolution to this rail strike."

"At this point, there isn't a crisis," Governor Baldacci said. "And we are working closely with the industry and our neighbors to the north and south to make sure we don't have one."

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Governor responds to Canadian LNG letter

February 15, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci released the following statement Thursday afternoon concerning a letter submitted to the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission by Michael Wilson, Canada's ambassador to the United States.

In his letter, Wilson said that Canada will not permit LNG tankers to pass through Canadian waters to potential terminal locations in Maine.

"This really isn't much of a surprise," Governor Baldacci said Thursday. "The Canadian government hasn't made a secret of their opposition to the proposed LNG terminals in Maine."

"I have talked at length with New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham about LNG," Baldacci said. "We have an important and growing relationship with the provinces. This is one place where we disagree, but there are many other things that we agree upon."

"At the same time, we have communities that have decided to proceed," Governor Baldacci said. "We have our own process, which has begun. Ultimately, that will determine what happens with the terminals."

Nominations Deadline for 2007 Governor's Service Awards Extended

February 16, 2007

AUGUSTA - Today the Office of the Governor and the Maine Commission for Community Service announced that the nomination deadline for the 2007 Governor's Service Awards will be extended through February 28, 2007. Honorees, including Maine's Volunteer of the Year, will be announced by the Governor at a special ceremony at the State Capitol in April.

The Governor will pay special recognition to individuals and organizations who have contributed their time and effort to serving their communities. In addition to Maine's Volunteer of the Year, Governor Baldacci will announce the Youth Volunteer of the Year, the Excellence in Volunteer Administration Award, the National Service Volunteer Award, Outstanding Volunteer in a Public Sector Volunteer Program, Small Business Volunteerism Award, Corporate Volunteerism Award and Maine's Non-Profit Certificate for Outstanding Contributions. The awards will also pay tribute to Maine's Honor Roll, recognizing individuals who have volunteered 500 or more hours of documented service to their communities during the course of twelve months.

"Maine has a long withstanding tradition of public service," Governor Baldacci said. "The Governor's Service Awards not only presents an opportunity to honor that tradition, but encourages more of Maine citizens to get involved in their communities. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our state, a vital part of our economy, and one of the qualities that make Maine such a great place to live."

Maine ranks as the second highest New England state for volunteerism, just behind Vermont, according to "Volunteering in America: State Trends and Rankings", a groundbreaking study recently released by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNS). The study places Maine as #16 nationally for volunteerism. The average volunteerism rate for 2003 to 2005 in Maine was 33.2% which was higher than the 3-year rate for the Northeast overall (26.4%) and the national average (28.8%).

Official nomination forms and rules can be found online at <http://www.volunteermaine.org/> or by contacting the Maine Commission for Community Service at 287-8931 or service.commission@maine.gov

Governor continues efforts to ease propane shortage

February 16, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci continued his efforts Friday to ease Maine's propane shortage.

Governor Baldacci sent a letter to President Bush Friday afternoon urging the White House to contact Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and request his office assist in resolving a labor dispute that has crippled railroad shipments of propane into Maine.

The governor is also working with the state's Congressional delegation to place pressure on the Canadian ambassador to the United States and the Canadian government to intervene in the strike at Canadian National Railway.

"We are working with our Congressional delegation to do whatever we can to help end the rail strike in Canada," Governor Baldacci said Friday. "It's critical for Maine's propane supply for those trains to start moving."

In addition, Governor Baldacci has been working closely with propane dealers in Maine to help them locate additional supplies and to provide them with the support necessary to speed up delivery. His efforts have helped secure additional shipments into the state.

In cooperation with the Maine Oil Dealers Association and representatives from several large fuel companies in the state, Governor Baldacci was assured that Maine would get additional propane from three ships scheduled to arrive in Portsmouth, N.H., and Providence, R.I. The first ship is scheduled to arrive in Providence on Feb. 22. Two others will arrive in Portsmouth in March. Even with those assurances, Maine's propane supply remains fragile.

"We have been coordinating with the efforts of the industry, which has come together in a remarkable spirit of cooperation," Governor Baldacci said from the Maine Emergency Management Agency where he spent part of Friday working on the propane shortage.

About 26,000 homes in Maine rely upon propane for heat. The fuel is also used by numerous businesses.

Maine receives at least 50 percent, and perhaps as much as 70 percent, of its propane by rail from Canada. A Canadian National Railway strike, which began Saturday, has severely limited supplies in Maine, with the problem potentially spreading throughout the Northeast.

Governor Baldacci has also been in contact with the federal governments in Canada and Washington to reduce delays at border crossings between the two countries. On Tuesday, Governor Baldacci issued a State of Emergency that extended the hours of service for fuel truck drivers in the state. Maine drivers also received a federal waiver to allow them to work longer hours to bring propane back into the state.

"This is a serious problem. We've heard from a lot of concerned people and a number of concerned businesses," Governor Baldacci said Friday. "We are doing everything within our power to find additional supplies, to break down barriers to its delivery and to help end the rail strike in Canada."

"We will continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure everything possible is being done," Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Baldacci Visits Togus for “National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans” Week

February 16, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci visited Togus VA Medical Center Friday afternoon to spend time with veterans and thank them for their service to our country. Governor Baldacci visited about 10 veterans at the facility and talked with the patients about a variety of things including his proposed school administrative unit consolidation plan, his family's restaurant, and mutual friends between the patients and himself.

“It's always nice to be able to visit patients at Togus and thank them for their service and wish them a speedy recovery,” said Governor Baldacci. “Our veterans have done a lot for this country and we cannot thank them enough for their service.”

Governor Baldacci was joined at Togus by Major John W. Libby, Adjutant General of the Maine National Guard and Commissioner of the Maine Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management.

Propane supplies remain tight; conservation recommended

February 19, 2007

AUGUSTA – While new deliveries of propane are coming into Maine by both rail and truck, the situation remains serious and supplies of the fuel are still tight.

Propane distributors in the state are limiting their deliveries to residential and commercial customers.

About 20 rail cars of propane were expected to enter the state as of Monday, but those deliveries are not enough to meet full demand, according to the propane industry.

Governor John Baldacci met Monday morning with members of the state's Emergency Response Team at the headquarters for the Maine Emergency Management Agency. During the meeting, representatives from major state agencies participated in a conference call with the Maine Oil Dealers Association, other industry leaders, county emergency management directors and FEMA Region 1 to discuss the current propane supply and the outlook for the rest of the week.

According to the propane industry, the new supplies of the fuel that began arriving Saturday represent only a fraction of the amount needed under normal conditions. Propane distributors are continuing to prioritize delivery, concentrating first on homes that rely upon propane for heating and on high priority buildings, such as hospitals and nursing homes. Many customers are receiving only partial deliveries.

"We're calling on individuals and businesses to do what they can to conserve propane. In addition, I've instructed state agencies that use propane to put conservation measures in place," Governor John Baldacci said Monday. "Even with everything that's being done, we are still facing a serious situation."

Maine receives at least 50 percent, and perhaps as much as 70 percent, of its propane by rail from Canada, according to industry sources. A Canadian National Railway strike, which began Feb. 10, has limited supplies in Maine by slowing the movement of rail tanker cars.

Once the strike in Canada is resolved, the propane industry estimates that it will take at least two or three weeks for supplies to reach normal levels.

An estimated 26,000 homes in the state heat with propane as do numerous businesses. Propane is also used in the restaurant industry and by many manufacturers and builders.

Governor Baldacci has been working with the White House and the state's Congressional delegation to expedite propane transportation across the border and reduce barriers to propane deliveries into Maine from other states.

On Friday, Governor Baldacci sent a letter to President Bush seeking assistance and asking that pressure be placed on the Canadian government to intervene in a rail strike that, along with bad weather, has crippled the supply of propane in Maine.

Last week, Governor Baldacci declared a State of Emergency that reduced restrictions on hours of service for fuel truck drivers and has worked with other states and federal authorities to ease restrictions in other states for Maine drivers.

The governor, Maine Emergency Management Agency and the Maine Oil Dealers Association, which has been coordinating the industry response, will continue to monitor the situation daily.

"We are fully engaged on this problem, and we will continue to work with the propane industry to make sure our people are safe," Governor Baldacci said.

Conservation:

- If you cook with a propane stove, cooking on the stove top takes less fuel than the oven. Remember that alternate means of cooking such as charcoal or gas grills should NEVER be used inside the home.
- If you use propane for heat, put on an extra sweater and turn your thermostat down a few degrees, but not to the extent that you endanger your health. Close off rooms you are not using and close drapes on all windows at night
- Take shorter showers.
- Commercial and industrial users may also wish to take conservation measures over the next few weeks.
- Visit www.maineenergyinfo.com for more conservation ideas.

Safety:

- If you are cutting back on propane use, you may be using an alternate source of heating such as a wood stove or portable heater. Make sure all stoves and heaters are installed correctly, vented correctly, and that you have carbon monoxide monitors installed in your home. There have been tragedies in both Maine and New Hampshire this winter from carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Make sure all wood stoves are installed correctly, flammable materials are moved well away, and chimneys are clean. For kerosene heaters, follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully, and use only the recommended fuel. For electric space heaters, check the heater carefully for frayed or broken cords; do not use extension cords. Keep children away from all stoves and space heaters. Check heaters frequently, and turn them off when you are going to bed or leaving the house.
- For more information on alternate heat source safety, please visit www.maineprepares.com.

Governor Directs Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff

February 20, 2007

AUGUSTA – In remembrance and honor of Staff Sergeant Eric Ross, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half staff from sunrise to sunset tomorrow, Wednesday, February 21, 2007. Staff Sergeant Ross, a Maine native, died in Baqubah, Iraq on February 9. His funeral will be held Wednesday at 11:00 am at Orono High School.

Executive order creates task force to consider public land management

February 21, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci signed an executive order Tuesday creating the Governor's Task Force Regarding the Management of Public Lands and Publicly-Held Easements.

The purpose of the task force is to develop recommendations to increase the information available about the management of public lands and to ensure management decisions continue to be made in a fair manner that considers the interests of diverse recreational users.

"In the last four years, more than 750,000 acres of land have been conserved in Maine through public and private partnerships," Governor Baldacci said. "Given all of the changes taking place in landownership and around land-use issues, now is an important time to bring people together to make sure protected land is managed appropriately."

The task force will focus on four areas:

- Create a baseline inventory of existing management and recreational uses and types of access on public lands in Maine while considering the context of private, municipal and federal lands;
- Review and document the statutes, rules and guidelines that direct decisions regarding the management of and recreational uses on public lands in Maine;
- Collect information regarding: the trends in recreational use in Maine; the adequacy of supply in relation to demand; and the gain or loss of access by recreational use on private land that may have a relation to recreational use on public land; and
- Identify strategies and resources necessary to reduce conflicts regarding recreational use on and access to public lands and to adequately plan for existing and future needs for the broad array of recreational activities in Maine.

Governor Baldacci has been working with Senate President Beth Edmonds, who had been developing legislation to create a task force, and the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine on the executive order.

"I want to thank the Governor for agreeing to assemble this task force," President Edmonds said. "It is encouraging to see that all major stakeholders will have a seat at the table for this work. The mission of this group is challenging, and it is crucial that all interested organizations have a voice in the process."

The people of Maine own more than 1 million acres of state parks, public reserved and non-reserved land and wildlife areas. Those lands are managed for multiple-use by the Department of Conservation and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

"We are grateful to Senator Beth Edmonds for sponsoring SAM's legislation that would have created this task force, and to Governor Baldacci for jump-starting the process with his executive order," said George

Smith, the executive director of the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine. "This fact-based process will help Mainers understand their recreational opportunities on public lands and conservation easements lands, and begin to sort out the issues that have divided us in recent years. It may also lead to new strategies that will benefit recreational users in the future."

The text of the executive order follows:

AN ORDER CREATING THE TASK FORCE REGARDING THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS AND PUBLICLY-HELD EASEMENTS IN MAINE

WHEREAS, the State of Maine, through the Department of Conservation and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, owns and manages over one million acres of state parks, public reserved and non-reserved land, and wildlife management areas; and owns, manages and funds boat ramps, snowmobile, ATV, hiking, equestrian, biking, interpretive and cross-country ski trails and easements on private lands; and other state agencies own and manage small amounts of land and easements that provide public recreational benefits; and

WHEREAS, 97% of all Department of Conservation-managed lands is open to hunting, fishing and trapping and 99% of all Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife-managed lands is open to hunting, fishing and trapping; and

WHEREAS, there are nearly 500 miles of multi-use trails and shared-use roads on Bureau of Parks and Lands holdings open to snowmobiles and ATV users; more than 13,400 miles of snowmobile trails, 4,414 miles of ATV trails, and 294 miles of state park and public reserved lands hiking trails throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, there are 279 campsites on public reserved lands that have motorized access (boat/vehicle) and 42 campsites that have non-motorized access; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Conservation owns or manages 336 boat launch sites and the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife owns or manages 117 boat launch sites; and

WHEREAS, the State manages a total 82,299 acres as ecological reserves on Department of Conservation managed lands which comprise 14.23% of the reserved/non-reserved fee acres in Bureau of Parks and Lands ownership; and

WHEREAS, the State manages approximately 4,700 acres as ecological reserves on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife lands; and

WHEREAS, in the last 4 years more than 750,000 acres of land in Maine has been conserved and made permanently available for public access and recreation through public and private partnerships; and

WHEREAS, in July, 2003 the Maine Department of Conservation published the "Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2003-2008" that documents the supply of and demand for

outdoor recreation facilities and how the need for these facilities might be met (12 MRSA 1817) and which the Department of Conservation has been endeavoring to implement; and

WHEREAS, the level and diversity of recreation demand is increasing rapidly, reflecting its growing role as an important contributor to the future economic well-being of Maine citizens; and

WHEREAS, the nature of and changes in the patterns of land ownership and management throughout the state in the last decade have resulted in uncertainty regarding recreational use on private land and have placed added pressure to meet recreation needs on public lands; and

WHEREAS, the State natural resource agencies are in the process of collaborating on GIS mapping that will result in more precise information regarding management of and recreational use on public lands; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to create a factual accounting of the types of recreational opportunities and accesses that are available in specific locations of public lands; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to examine the management of public lands in the broader context of recreational opportunities on private, municipal and federal lands; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for better land management information regarding public lands and improved planning processes to make decisions about management allocations of public lands;

WHEREAS, conflicts and competition between recreational users of public lands – especially focused on motorized versus non-motorized uses and access – must be resolved;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the Governor's Task Force Regarding the Management of Public Lands and Publicly-Held Easements in Maine (hereinafter "Task Force").

Purpose

The purpose of the Task Force is to develop recommendations to improve the accuracy and availability of information regarding management of public lands in Maine and to ensure that decisions regarding management of public lands are made in a fair manner that meets the full array of recreational interests in Maine now and into the future. In conducting its work, the Task Force should:

create a baseline inventory of the existing management and recreational uses and types of access on public lands in Maine and in the context of private, municipal and federal lands;

review and document the statutes, rules and guidelines that direct decisions regarding the management of and recreational uses on public lands in Maine;

collect information regarding the trends in recreational use in Maine, the adequacy of supply in relation to demand; and the gain or loss of access by recreational use on private land that may have a relation to recreational use on public land; and

identify strategies and resources necessary to reduce conflicts regarding recreational use on and access to public lands and to adequately plan for existing and future needs for the broad array of recreational activities in Maine.

In conducting its work, the Task Force shall utilize information from private citizens, economic development and regional planning entities, land conservation organizations, recreational user groups, businesses, landowners, Indian tribal governments, government agencies and Maine's federal delegation.

The Task Force shall take public comment and shall conduct at least two listening sessions to receive this input.

Membership

The Governor shall appoint sixteen members to the Task Force, who will serve at the pleasure of the Governor. Nine members shall represent recreational interests; four members shall represent landowners of different size and from different parts of the state who provide for public recreation on their lands; one member shall be the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation, or his designee; one member shall be the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, or his designee; one member shall be the Director of the Lands for Maine's Future Program. Members shall serve without compensation.

The President of the Senate may appoint two members of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House may appoint three members of the House of Representatives. Members shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority.

The Governor shall appoint the chair of the task force from among the members.

Staff

The Departments of Conservation and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the State Planning Office and the Land for Maine's Future Program shall provide all necessary staff, from existing resources.

Report

The Task Force shall submit its recommendations to the Governor no later than December 1, 2007, after which the Task Force will dissolve.

Meetings

The Task Force shall meet as often as necessary to complete the assigned duties. All meetings shall be open to the public and held in locations determined by the Task Force.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is February 20, 2007.

John E. Baldacci, Governor

Governor Announces \$9.3 Million Federal Housing Grant

February 22, 2007

AUGUSTA – The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded Maine more than \$9.3 million in new funds to provide housing opportunities for people who are homeless, Governor John E. Baldacci announced today.

It is the largest HUD Continuum of Care grant Maine has received and is more than \$400,000 larger than last year's grant.

"This grant makes a real difference in our communities in the shelter, housing, and supportive services that we can provide people who are homeless," Governor Baldacci said. "The funding will enable us to move forward in our goal to end homelessness in the state and help us address some of the critical housing issues that people who are homeless face."

The HUD grant of \$9,345,275 combines funding for three different Continuum of Care regions in Maine – Portland, Greater Bangor region, and the rest of the state, represented by MaineHousing. The grant money helps fund emergency shelters, provides rental assistance (including in some cases support services for people with mental health illness), and funding for the computer information system that the three regions share.

"Most of the grant finances long-term housing opportunities for people and families who are homeless," said MaineHousing Director Dale McCormick. "Long-term housing, which includes needed support services in some instances, is critically important to establish people who are homeless in stable housing and further our long term goal of eliminating homelessness."

MaineHousing's share of the grant amounts to about \$5.4 million, including \$770,000 in funds for Maine's network of emergency shelters. Portland will receive \$2.6 million, plus \$95,000 for emergency shelters. The Bangor region Continuum of Care will receive about \$1.2 million.

Nancy Fritz, Director of Homeless Initiatives for MaineHousing, said that \$1.5 million of MaineHousing's grant is for new supportive housing or housing plus care, while more than \$2.9 million is renewal of rental assistance for current households.

McCormick and Fritz noted that the federal Continuum of Care grant helps leverage several million dollars more in other funding to help people who are homeless, including MaineHousing funds to develop additional rental and supportive housing.

The Continuum of Care funding is a national competitive application process that MaineHousing coordinates for Maine's application. The process for next year's funding begins this month, and Maine's application will be submitted in June.

Governor Baldacci Proclaims Entrepreneurship Week in Maine

February 23, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has proclaimed February 24 – March 3, 2007 as Entrepreneurship Week in Maine. The Governor performed a ceremonial signing of the proclamation in his office Friday morning, joined by entrepreneurs from around the state.

“In a knowledge-based economy, the importance of young entrepreneurs is even greater,” said Governor Baldacci. “All across the state, wonderful programs are growing to encourage entrepreneurship and to teach entrepreneurial skills.”

Governor Baldacci highlighted USM’s School of Business, Women Work and Community, Maine Small Business Development Centers, R&D at the University of Maine, Maine Center for Enterprise Development and the USM Business Plan Competition as successful entrepreneurial programs that exist in Maine. A representative from each program was present at the ceremonial signing including Rebecca Stockridge, a USM Business Plan Competition finalist from last year who has just hired her first full-time employee.

“Rebecca and her partner Anya’s concept was to create a web and graphic design company that helps doctors communicate with patients,” said the Governor. “Not only did they come up with a successful idea, but they came up with an idea that helps people in a significant way.”

The text of Governor Baldacci’s proclamation for Entrepreneurship Week follows:

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Labor, most of the new jobs created throughout the United States in the past decade have come from the creative efforts of entrepreneurs, which have been expanding and advancing technology and fueling the recent growth in the economy; and

WHEREAS, entrepreneurs have been the source of economic innovation throughout the history of our Nation, and society has been improved because of the new ways of getting things done that have been brought about by people who market their ideas; and

WHEREAS, entrepreneurs are engaged citizens who work to improve their local communities, providing better opportunities for businesses to operate and a better overall environment for the human resources they need to advance their innovative ideas; and

WHEREAS, more than 70 percent of young people envision starting a business or doing something entrepreneurial as adults, and entrepreneurial awareness will assist them in the future regardless of whether they run their own business or work in a business owned by others; and

WHEREAS, the high interest of young people in becoming entrepreneurs and the critical role entrepreneurs have played in advancing the national economy make it vital to encourage young people from all academic backgrounds and all walks of life to explore their entrepreneurial potential and see if they have it in them to ‘make a job’; and

WHEREAS, through a national initiative to observe Entrepreneurship Week USA, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, New York Times, Inc. magazine and hundreds of partner organizations promote awareness of the contributions of entrepreneurs as innovators, positive forces in the economy, and important resources for improving communities as places to live and work,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim the week of February 24 – March 3, 2007 as

ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

In testimony whereof, I have caused the Great Seal of the State to be hereunto affixed GIVEN under my hand at Augusta this twelfth day of January Two Thousand and Seven.

John E. Baldacci Governor

Matthew Dunlap Secretary of State

Governor Baldacci Congratulates Two University of Maine Programs for Awards in Excellence

February 23, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined officials from the New England Board of Higher Education today to honor two University of Maine Programs for education excellence. The Frederick Hutchinson Center and the Onward Program both received 2007 New England Higher Education Excellence Awards from NEBHE.

“It is an honor for me to be here today to help recognize two programs affiliated with my alma mater for the New England Higher Education Excellence Awards,” said Governor Baldacci. “Both of these programs are providing additional opportunities for success to the people of Maine – and they are doing it well.”

The Frederick Hutchinson Center, located in Belfast, was selected to receive the regional Robert J. McKenna Award for Program Excellence named after the former Rhode Island state senator, Newport mayor and NEBHE chair.

The center provides midcoast residents with opportunities to pursue a college degree, professional development and lifelong learning. The Onward Program was selected to receive NEBHE's State Merit Award for Maine. The Onward Program has provided support to prepare students for success in college and beyond for 36 years. Students accepted into the Onward Program attend The University of Maine and receive academic skill development and placement into developmental courses in a variety of subjects. The program reaches out to students who come from low-income families, are the first in their families to attend college or face other college readiness challenges that are different from those of traditional students. Upon completion of the Onward Program, students may transfer to the major of their choice within the University of Maine.

“We know that higher education results in higher paying jobs, more job stability and a more stable economy,” said the Governor. “Providing further opportunities to reach higher education is what these two programs have done so well to earn these awards as well as our respect, thanks and appreciation.”

The 2007 New England Higher Education Excellence Awards ceremony will take place on Friday, March 9, at Boston's Fairmont Copley Plaza. For more details about NEBHE's New England Higher Education Excellence Awards, visit <http://www.nebhe.org/excellence2007>.

Governor Baldacci Helps Cut Ribbon on Children's Discovery Museum

February 23, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci officially re-opened the Children's Discovery Museum in Augusta Friday afternoon by cutting the ribbon on the facility. The museum had been closed for 13 months, since director Julie O' Brien resigned in January 2006.

"The purpose of this museum is to encourage creativity," said Governor Baldacci. "Creativity begins at a young age, and with Discovery Museums and Children's Museums, we use a child's curiosity and imagination for learning."

Governor Baldacci told the crowd that while encouraging creativity, it's important to build up the rigor in schools as well.

"I am proposing to require four years of math and science in high schools," the Governor said. "It's not just about learning those subjects, but it's about the way those subjects make students think – more creatively and in-depth."

The Governor praised the partnerships that have formed between local businesses and the museum to complete the renovation and establish new exhibits.

"Whether it's teaching healthy eating in the museum's restaurant or grocery store; or teaching the importance of money in the museum's bank – the children using these exhibits will get a hands-on lesson about things that will be important to them for the rest of their lives," said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor was joined by Augusta Mayor Roger Katz and Discovery Museum Board President, Craig Garofalo. The museum re-opened its doors Tuesday, before the official grand re-opening celebration Friday afternoon.

The museum is open 10 am – 4 pm, Tuesday – Thursday; 10 am – 5 pm, Friday and Saturday; and 11 am – 5 pm Sunday. Admission is \$5 per child and \$4 per adult.

Governor Baldacci Nominates Wayne Newell to the Board of Trustees for the University of Maine System

February 26, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John Baldacci today nominated Wayne Newell of Princeton to the Board of Trustees for the University of Maine System. Upon confirmation, Newell would be the first Native American to serve on the Board.

"Wayne brings a unique perspective, level of skills and experience to the Board," Governor Baldacci said. "He will use his talents to promote the University of Maine System and continue its ability to meet the needs of Maine students and the work force in this global economy. The University System is one of the most crucial links to the economic development of Maine now and in generations to come."

Mr. Newell currently serves as the Director of Bilingual Education. In this position, Newell administers the Native Language and Cultural Program for Indian Township School for grades K-12. He has previously worked as Tribal Planner with the Indian Township Tribal Government and had developed a tribal health delivery system for the tribe. He has held a wide number of appointments which led to a broad range of programs for Native Americans, including the area of education.

Newell received his Masters of Education at Harvard University.

As a newly appointed member of the Board of Trustees, Newell will join the other members to assume responsibility for the overall operation, maintenance, and supervision of the University of Maine System. The Board is the entity that approves the establishment and elimination of academic programs, confers tenure on faculty members, and sets tuition rates and operating budgets.

In addition to this new appointment, Governor Baldacci also announced the reappointment of William D. Johnson to the Board. Johnson, of Saco, has served on the Board for five years. A retiree of Mobil Oil, Johnson remains active in his community. Johnson, a University of Maine graduate, is a former city councilor and mayor of Saco.

Governor Receives Report from Council on Jobs, Innovation and the Economy

February 27, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John Baldacci met today with members of Council on Jobs, Innovation and the Economy and accepted their interim report on cluster development.

The Commission included recommendations to fund cluster development at \$10 million a year, to be open to all sectors with a competitive process for the funding. They further commended the Governor for the \$8 Million proposed in the biennial budget as a significant first step in achieving this goal and urged that it receive the support of the Legislature.

The Governor thanked the Council for their hard work to develop this interim report. He noted that he had recently returned from the National Governors' Association winter meeting, where a predominant message was the importance of innovation and cluster development.

"This is an area that is receiving national focus," said Governor Baldacci. "And Maine is in the forefront. In this global economy, it's vital that Maine place itself in a strong competitive position."

The Governor said that Maine has already been focusing attention on some promising clusters. "The State was successful in obtaining a \$15 million Wired Grant - an example of how the traditional Maine boat building business coupled with innovation can provide growth and opportunity," said the Governor.

The Governor established the Council on Jobs, Innovation and the Economy late last year to develop an action plan for moving the state forward on the innovation-focused and cluster development activities that will define the state's investment strategies. A second charge of the group is to develop specific recommendations for a research and development bond. That report will be forthcoming in the near future.

"Cluster development is a growth strategy for the future of Maine," said the Governor. "It's about using our competitive assets and building on our strengths. Investment in our boat building, food industry, natural resources and biofuels, and other clusters - will enable us to build sustainable economic development and jobs for many years to come. But to do this we have to be focused. We have a proven spirit of entrepreneurialism, but we have to get a critical mass. In developing clusters we will grow Maine's economy, create good jobs with benefits, and create opportunity for Maine people."

The Governor's Biennial budget appropriates \$3 million in the first year and \$5 million in the second year to cluster development.

"It's just so important that we put the politics aside and do what's best for Maine's future," Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Baldacci Praises Maine School of Science and Mathematics

February 27, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci praised the Maine School of Science and Mathematics (MSSM) Tuesday evening, saying the state is lucky to have such an institution. The Governor made the comments during a social gathering and informational session for the school at the Senator Inn, in Augusta.

“The importance of math and science to our high school students is vital,” said Governor Baldacci. “I returned from the National Governor’s Association Meeting in Washington, D.C., Monday, where this was a major topic. Governors from all across America focused on the importance of teaching science and math in creating a competitive, global economy. With MSSM in Limestone, Maine and Aroostook County are leading the nation.”

Governor Baldacci has proposed an education reform plan that would require four years of math and science in public high schools, as opposed to the two years that are required now. He says that the importance of math and science is not just the teaching of the subjects themselves, but also teaching students how to think creatively and solve problems.

“By pushing yourself and building up the rigor in the classroom,” the Governor told students in the room, “you are preparing yourself to be a leader and a success story once you graduate from high school and college.”

MSSM is one of 11 public, residential schools of math and science in the country. MSSM has students from all over Maine, the country and from as far away as Germany.

“Maine clearly benefits from this school and we are proud of its many accomplishments,” said the Governor. “I am here tonight to thank you and to encourage you to continue doing what you are doing – learning, teaching, encouraging, spreading the good news, and, even better, succeeding.”

Governor Baldacci Encourages Substance Abuse Awareness and Recovery

February 28, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has proclaimed February 28, 2007, as Fighting Substance Abuse: Increasing Awareness and Recovery Day in the State of Maine. The Governor presented the proclamation to the Maine Association of Substance Abuse Providers during a ceremony in the Hall of Flags.

“I don’t need to emphasize how vital your work is to the health and well-being of the people of this state and this country,” said Governor Baldacci. “The advocacy that you provide for substance abuse support services, addiction prevention, education, treatment and recovery is important, and at times crucial, to the success of our efforts to combat the effects of drugs and alcohol in our communities.”

The Governor said the purpose of the proclamation is to increase awareness of the issue and to help put more people on a track to recovery.

“Those who have entered into programs for treatment and recovery are brave souls,” said the Governor. “It gives them a new chance at life and success.”

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, substance abuse is a major public health problem that affects nearly ten percent of Maine’s citizens including all ages, races and ethnic backgrounds and in all communities, and which has a huge medical, social and economic cost; and

WHEREAS, the Maine Association of Substance Abuse Programs is recognizing February 28, 2007, as Fighting Substance Abuse: Increasing Awareness and Advancing Recovery Day; and

WHEREAS, acknowledging February 28 offers advocates of substance abuse prevention, treatment and recovery the opportunity to educate the public and policymakers about the effectiveness of treatment and recovery; and

WHEREAS, on this day we recognize and applaud the many individuals with drug and alcohol dependence who have entered into treatment and begun their journeys of recovery restoring many lives, families and communities,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim February 28, 2007 as

FIGHTING SUBSTANCE ABUSE: INCREASING AWARENESS AND ADVANCING RECOVERY DAY

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

Governor Baldacci Names Judicial Nominee

February 28, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John Baldacci today nominated Justice Andrew M. Mead to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court.

"Justice Mead is a respected, bright, and hard working individual with an impressive resume and an outstanding reputation," said Governor Baldacci. "I have no doubt that his experience, knowledge and enthusiasm will continue to serve him and the people of Maine well on the Supreme Court."

Judge Mead, of Bangor, became the first judge to preside over the Penobscot Tribal Court where he served as Chief Judge. He held that position from 1979 to 1990.

Mead was appointed by Governor John McKernan to the Maine District Court in 1990. Two years later he was appointed to the Maine Superior Court. After being reappointed for a second term in 1999 by Governor Angus King, Justice Mead served as Chief Justice (1999-2001) and Regional Presiding Justice (2004-2006). Governor Baldacci reappointed Mead to the Superior Court last spring.

Mead served as a partner at Mitchell & Stearns from 1981-1990 and practiced at Paine, Lynch & Weatherbee from 1976-1981. He served as president of the Maine State Bar Association in 1990, and chaired the Medical Malpractice Screening Committee from 1987-1990.

Mead has been active in the Bangor community. He has sat on the Board of Directors of the Bangor Symphony Orchestra and the Bangor Youth Ballet. He has been an assistant coach for Bangor Youth Hockey and has volunteered at the YMCA Camp Jordan Youth Leaders School.

Mead, 55, received his undergraduate degree from the University of Maine and his J.D. from New York Law School.

Judicial nominees must be confirmed by the Judiciary Committee and the full Senate before being appointed.

Governor Receives Report Measures of Growth Report

February 28, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John Baldacci today received the 2007 "Measures of Growth" report from the Maine Economic Growth Council. The 13th annual report provides state policy makers with planning information that helps them to chart a course toward increased job opportunities and improved quality of life for the people of Maine.

The Governor acknowledged that the measures were mixed this year. A number of indicators in the report show Maine is doing well in meeting the economic health and welfare needs of our citizens:

- o The cost of doing business is going down;
- o International exports are growing;
- o Economic disparities such as poverty are being reduced;
- o We're conserving more land and increasing sustainability of our valuable natural resources;
- o We are reducing chronic disease; and
- o Maine remains one of the best states in relation to the rate of health insurance.

"My Administration has established and is pursuing additional initiatives which will lead to strong economic growth for all Maine citizens," said Governor Baldacci. "While I'm pleased with the progress in these areas, there are a number of indicators that the report identifies as troublesome."

"We know our economy is not yet where we want it to be. My Administration is actively addressing these issues in an aggressive way," Governor Baldacci said.

"That's why my plan for real property tax relief and growing incomes for all Maine people is so important. We must reduce government spending – including consolidating school administrative units, modernizing MaineCare, and merging State departments. And we need to make the right investments for Maine's future. These include investments in cluster development, R&D, higher education and workforce development."

"With these steps, we will have the tools, resources and flexibility to meet the challenges we face, and to grow our economy not just now, but for generations to come. Maine people deserve our best efforts to bring job security and an improved quality of life to our state."

For more information about the Measures of Growth and the Maine Economic Growth Council, you can visit <http://mdf.org/megc>

New Electric Transmission Line Being Considered; Would Directly Connect Northern Maine to the Rest of the State

February 28, 2007

AUGUSTA – Maine Public Service (MPS) and Central Maine Power (CMP) have agreed to study the feasibility of a new power transmission line that would directly connect the Aroostook County power grid to the rest of the state, Governor John Baldacci announced today.

Currently, the Aroostook grid is connected to the rest of Maine and New England only indirectly through transmission lines in Canada.

“The new transmission line has the potential to accomplish a number of important goals,” Governor Baldacci said. “It will connect Aroostook to the rest of the State, making it possible for a more competitive electricity market there and hopefully restraining prices. Both the Aroostook grid and the grid that serves the rest of the state would be strengthened.”

In addition, the line also would reinforce a memorandum of understanding signed Feb. 9 between Maine and New Brunswick for greater cooperation on energy issues, Governor Baldacci said.

“We are serious about our commitment to work more closely with Canada and take advantage of the opportunities that exist for clean energy supplies and renewable resources,” Governor Baldacci said.

CMP and MPS signed a memorandum of understanding formalizing the feasibility study on Tuesday. The agreement sets up a four- to six-month study period to evaluate the proposed transmission line.

The isolation of the northern Maine power grid is a barrier to competition. In December 2006, the Maine Public Utilities Commission's standard offer solicitation attracted only one bidder.

Maine Public Service Company is the electric transmission and distribution utility serving 35,000 customers in northern Maine. Central Maine Power Company, a subsidiary Energy East Corp., delivers electricity to 600,000 customers in central and southern Maine.

Governor Baldacci Announces New Business in Fort Kent

March 3, 2007

FORT KENT – Governor John Baldacci joined the COO of Synergy Solutions to announce the creation of 80 new full-time jobs at the former MBNA building in Fort Kent. Corey Conklin joined the Governor for the announcement, following the start of the Can Am 250 Crowd Sled Dog Race Saturday morning.

“Thanks to Mr. Conklin and Synergy Solutions, we will see 80 people in the St. John Valley working full time by the end of the year,” said Governor Baldacci. “This is strong economic development for Aroostook County, and we are happy to welcome Synergy Solutions to Maine.”

Synergy Solutions is already accepting applications for the 80 full-time jobs and 20 part-time jobs at the Fort Kent facility. Synergy Solutions is a supplier of outsourced tele-services solutions headquartered in Phoenix, Ariz. The company has seven call centers throughout the United States, the closest to Maine being in Johnson City, N.Y.

“Maine workers are proven time and time again to be the gold standard,” said Governor Baldacci. “Synergy Solutions is walking into a situation where it will have 100 employees ready to work hard and perform beyond expectations.”

Synergy Solutions offers the program expertise and technical resources of a large outsourcer while maintaining the customized, hands-on management style typically found only in small companies.

The company has been received several forms of recognition, including the Silver Leadership Award from the American Teleservices Association; the MVP Gold Quality Award from Customer Interactions Solutions Magazine; and was mentioned in the Top 100 “Who’s Who” from Business to Business Magazine.

The company plans to start hiring employees for the Fort Kent facility immediately.

Governor Baldacci Meets with Fusion: Bangor

March 5, 2007

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci met with the Fusion: Bangor Steering Committee tonight to discuss their recent involvement in community events and issues. The group met with the Governor at Thistle's Restaurant in Bangor.

"I am proud to see so many young people meeting, networking and discussing issues," said Governor Baldacci. "Bangor and the State of Maine have a lot to offer, as do all of you. We are lucky to have such intelligent, motivated people in this state."

Fusion: Bangor used the opportunity to meet with the Governor to tell him about their "We've Got Issues" campaign. In the campaign, each month the group will pick an issue to highlight through print, radio and television ads. Each issue will have a designated spokesperson from the group who will present their case to an audience throughout the region.

"This is a great program that can call attention to issues that face our young people on a daily basis," said the Governor. "With groups like Fusion throughout the state, I am positive that Maine is on the right track with tomorrow's leaders working today."

The Fusion: Bangor Steering Committee spoke with Governor Baldacci about a variety of issues, ranging from education reform to health care. Fusion: Bangor's mission is to forge a young professional's network of those who are interested in making a positive impact on the growth and development of the Bangor region.

Governor Baldacci Encourages Leadership

March 5, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined 12 appointed leaders from various departments within state government Monday afternoon at a Maine Leadership Institute Seminar. Governor Baldacci talked on a variety of topics to the group, highlighting basic advice that he has followed during his time in public service.

“I have always thought you should be yourself, be honest with people and work hard,” said Governor Baldacci. “Those qualities instill integrity and credibility in what you do.”

Governor Baldacci told the group about when he first decided to run for the U.S. Congress because of encouragement from his father, and about his recent proposals to reform education and increase the cigarette tax by a dollar.

“You will never be able to achieve the results you want unless you put it all on the line,” Governor Baldacci said. “You need to be able to take risks and lead by example.”

The Maine Leadership Institute is a three-day seminar which prepares managers in state government to become leaders. It is the beginning of a comprehensive approach, under the umbrella of the Maine Management Service that will ensure managers in state government have the skills they need to excel in today's fast-paced, results-oriented world.

Doctors, State Officials & Youth Prepared to Answer the Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking

March 6, 2007

AUGUSTA - Today, Acting Surgeon General Kenneth Moritsugu issued a Call to Action To Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking. The report identifies underage drinking as a "major societal problem with enormous health and safety consequences" that "will demand the Nation's attention and committed efforts to solve."

Shortly after the release of the report, Maine pediatricians, state officials and young people came together to say they were prepared to answer the Surgeon General's Call to Action.

Maine's Public Health Director, Dr. Dora Anne Mills, praised Dr. Moritsugu for his leadership in addressing this critically important child health issue. She said, "Youth drinking is a major pediatric health crisis in this nation and in this state that is not getting better. New research has demonstrated the long-term and sometimes irreversible effects of alcohol on developing brains. This new research demands an urgent response – we must get youth and parents to understand the significant and serious health risks associated with youth drinking."

Dr. Donald Burgess, President of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, echoed this sentiment and analogized this new research to research done in the 1970s related to the effect of alcohol on developing fetuses. "Physicians have known since the early 70's that alcohol has a significant, irreversible and sometimes devastating effect on the brain of the developing fetus. Many efforts and programs since that time have provided education to pregnant women around the disastrous effects of alcohol use during pregnancy. Pediatricians now know that pre-adolescent and adolescent brains continue to develop into young adulthood and the effect of alcohol use during this crucial neurological stage of life is no less significant than the effect on a developing fetus. That is why it is imperative that we, as pediatricians, must educate our patients and parents about the dangers of early alcohol use during well child exams as part of our regular anticipatory guidance."

The Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics pledged to work with the Maine Office of Substance Abuse (OSA) to develop and implement quick, simple interventions that can be used by pediatricians, school health coordinators and other health care professionals with parents and youth. This is one of the Surgeon General's recommendations for health care professionals.

Kim Johnson, OSA Director said that these types of interventions can go a long way in changing the way we all think about underage drinking. "In Maine, we've been particularly successful at using environmental strategies to reduce other types of youth substance use, and the National Academy of Sciences has already provided us with a roadmap for applying these strategies to underage drinking. We know these strategies work because Maine has achieved one of the lowest youth smoking rates in the country. We can do this for drinking too – it'll just take all of us working together."

Maine's First Lady Karen Baldacci is a member of the Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free. Since the National Academies of Science issued the Institute of Medicine's Report on underage drinking entitled Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility, the Leadership has been working to implement the recommendations contained in the report. Mrs. Baldacci explained how the Surgeon General's Call to Action will help this effort. She said, "We already know what we need to do to prevent underage drinking. The Surgeon General's Call to Action now tells us why it is so critical that increase our efforts to implement these recommendations."

Kristin Ireland of the Youth Empowerment and Policy Group (YEP) said she was encouraged by the Surgeon General's report. "The Surgeon General's Call to Action will help motivate youth and their parents to do more to change the social norms around underage drinking." YEP last year created a first in the nation Maine Alcohol Retailer's Local Marketing Code of Conduct. This Code has been implemented in many Maine retail establishments.

Ally Beaucage and Tim Stretton of the Lewiston Youth Advisory Council are part of a local initiative in Lewiston to have high school students speak to 8th graders about entering high school and the peer pressure they will face around drinking. Their message is simple, it's important to stay true to yourself and to your dreams. Their slogan, "UBooze, ULooze" is made more powerful because the message is coming from older peers. Ally explained, "We know that younger kids look up to us. They can't wait to go to high school, and many think they need to give in to peer pressure to drink in order to fit in. We hope it means a lot to them to hear from older kids that you don't have to drink to fit in and to have a good time. We hope by doing this work some kids will think twice about drinking." Tim said, "We're doing our part and now that the Surgeon General has asked people to do more, we hope other kids around the state will start to speak out against drinking with their peers as well. We think this will start to make a big difference."

The Surgeon General highlights new research that explains why youth react to alcohol differently from adults and explains why successful interventions must occur early, continuously and in the context of human development. The Call to Action offers six goals for reducing and preventing underage drinking and outlines how parents, schools, prosecutors, health care professionals, government and community officials, and youth can achieve the goals.

Attorney General Steve Rowe could not attend the Maine press conference because he was attending the Surgeon General's private briefing on the Call to Action. However, he expressed his strong commitment to work with state officials to implement the recommendations of the Call to Action. He said, "The Surgeon General's Call to Action must motivate us all to action. Our efforts must be more focused, more intense and we must use all of the tools at our disposal. But, we cannot do it alone – we need everyone, every parent, every doctor, every educator, every community member to get involved and stay involved until we put a halt to this pediatric health crisis."

For more information, visit:

<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/underagedrinking/calltoaction.pdf>

Governor Baldacci Presents Awards Honoring the Arts

March 7, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and First Lady Karen Baldacci presented four awards today to Mainers associated with the arts. The awards were presented in the Hall of Flags at the State House as a part of Arts Education Advocacy Day, as proclaimed by Governor Baldacci.

“The economic engines that create opportunity are our people,” said Governor Baldacci. “These are our youth, our creative workers and our creative entrepreneurs, and we must provide them with the resources and support to be able to succeed.”

Governor Baldacci and the First Lady presented the following awards during the ceremony:

The Outstanding Advocate for Arts Education Award was presented to Jennifer Ryan, Education Director at L/A Arts in Lewiston.

The Bill Bonyun Award was presented to Gretchen Berg, dance educator from Portland. The award is named after Bill Bonyun, a folklorist, storyteller, singer, writer and educator for more than 50 years from Westport Island, Maine.

Honorable Mention Awards were given to Richard Lee, papermaker and arts educator from Richmond; and Steve Orlofsky, music educator from George Stevens Academy in Blue Hill.

Four other outstanding award nominees were also honored at the ceremony: Sandra Cyrus, Dance Educator from Orono; Charles Hamm, Fine Arts Teacher from Belfast Area High School; Eugenia O’ Brien, Director of the Portland Ballet; and Rob Westerberg, Music Director of York High School.

Governor Baldacci to Begin Weekly Radio Address

March 8, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci will deliver this weekend the first of what will become a weekly radio address. The Governor's Weekly Radio Address is scheduled to begin airing on select stations Saturday, March 10, with more stations added the following weekend.

"We live in an era where a transparent executive office is expected," said Governor Baldacci. "It's an honor to speak to directly to listeners around the state, to update them about what's happening in Augusta and provide them with information about the issues of the day."

The weekly five-minute address will be available in most Maine media markets and online.

"I am hopeful that future Governors will take advantage of this opportunity to further engage the people of Maine," Governor Baldacci said.

This will be the first time a Maine Governor has delivered a weekly radio address. Other Chief Executives currently provide scheduled radio addresses, including the Governors in California, Texas, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Hawaii.

The topic for the first address will be education reform. Governor Baldacci will encourage Mainers concerned about quality public schools and government spending to make their voices heard.

Stations interested in broadcasting the address can contact the Governor's Communications Office.

Scheduled airtimes are as follows:

Portland area:

WGAN - AM 560 (Portland) – 8:08 a.m., Saturday

WLOB – AM 1310, 96.3 FM (Portland/Rumford) – 8:08 a.m., Saturday

Augusta/Waterville area; Midcoast:

WTVL/WJZN – AM 1490/AM 1400 (Waterville, Augusta) – 8 a.m., Saturday

WCME – 96.7 FM (Boothbay Harbor/Augusta) – 9:28 a.m., Saturday

WCTB – 93.5 FM The River (Fairfield/Augusta) – 7 a.m., Sunday

WSKW – AM 1160 (Skowhegan/Augusta) – 7 a.m., Sunday

WIGY/WFAU/WRKD – 97.5 FM/AM 1280/AM 1450 (Madison, Gardiner, Rockland) – 7:25 a.m., Sunday

WABK – 104.3 FM (Augusta) – 7:27 a.m., Sunday

WKCG – 101.3 FM (Augusta) – 8:27 a.m., Sunday

WTOS – 105.1 FM (Skowhegan/Augusta) – 7:27 a.m., Sunday

WMCM – 103.3 FM (Rockland) – 7:27 a.m., Sunday

WQSS – 102.5 FM (Camden) – 7:27 a.m., Sunday

Bangor/Ellsworth area:

WQCB – 106.5 FM (Bangor) – 7 a.m., Sunday

WEZQ – 92.9 FM (Bangor) – 8 a.m., Saturday

WWMJ – 95.7 FM (Ellsworth/Bangor) – 6 a.m., Sunday

WWNZ – AM 1400 (Bangor) – 8 a.m. and 9 a.m., Saturday

WNZS – AM 1340 (Bangor) – 8 a.m. and 9 a.m., Saturday

WVOM – 103.9 FM (Howland/Bangor) – 12:30 p.m., Saturday

WABI – AM 910 (Bangor) – 12:30 p.m., Saturday

WBFB – 104.7 FM (Bangor) – 12:30 p.m., Saturday

WGUY – 102.1 FM (Pittsfield/Bangor) – 12:30 p.m., Saturday

WKSQ – 94.5 FM (Ellsworth/Bangor) – 12:30 p.m., Saturday

WDEA – AM 1370 (Ellsworth) – 11:06 a.m., Sunday

WLKE – 99.1 FM (Ellsworth) – 12:30 p.m., Saturday

Presque Isle/Caribou/Aroostook County:

WCXU – 97.7 FM (Caribou) – 11:30 a.m., Sunday

WCXX – 102.3 FM (Madawaska) – 11:30 a.m., Sunday

WCXV – 98.1 FM (Van Buren) – 11:30 a.m., Sunday

W276AY – 103.1 FM (Fort Kent) – 11:30 a.m., Sunday

WEGP – AM 1390 (Presque Isle) - TBA

Online:

Maine Public Radio – Online – Details coming soon at www.mainepublicradio.org

2007 Archive of Governor Baldacci's Press Releases

Governor Baldacci's Website – Online – Details coming soon
at <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/index.shtml>

Governor Baldacci Swears In Anne Jordan as Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety

March 8, 2007

AUGUSTA – The new Commissioner of the Maine Department of Public Safety, Anne H. Jordan, of South Portland was sworn in Thursday by Governor John E. Baldacci. Jordan will lead the department charged with serving the people of Maine by protecting their lives, rights and properties through criminal justice, law enforcement, fire safety and emergency response services.

“Anne Jordan’s level of experience and integrity make her a perfect fit for the role as Commissioner of Public Safety,” Governor Baldacci said. “She’s going to do a terrific job and I’m very pleased to have her as commissioner.”

Jordan will oversee the Maine Department of Public Safety’s nine bureaus: Capitol Security, Criminal Justice Academy, Drug Enforcement, Gambling Control Board, Highway Safety, Emergency Medical Services, Liquor Licensing and Compliance, Fire Marshall’s Office and Maine State Police.

The swearing-in took place in the Governor’s Office, with members of Jordan’s family present.

Jordan, who is the first woman to serve as Commissioner of Public Safety, will begin her new job on Friday, March 9.

Governor's Statement on Education Committee's Report on Education Reform

March 8, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today commented on the status of his education reform proposal after the Education Committee presented its plan to the Appropriations Committee. The Appropriations Committee has now begun its review of the far-reaching reform proposal.

"Members of the Education Committee have been wrestling with difficult issues while considering my plan to reform K-12 education," said Governor Baldacci. "I appreciate the hard work and long hours they have put in."

While waiting on the details of the recommendations from the committee, the Governor expressed concern about the committee's plan. "I am concerned that they have not gone far enough and that they have pushed the most difficult decisions down the road," said the Governor. "The status quo is unacceptable. We have to change."

As the Appropriations Committee begins its consideration of the difficult choices left to be made, the Governor said that he will continue to demand real reform that guarantees tax relief to Maine citizens.

"I understand the political pressure being placed on members of the Legislature, but I am firm in my commitment," said the Governor. "I will not support an education plan that does not reduce excess administration. I will not support an education plan that does not achieve significant savings in this budget and sustains those savings in the future. And I will not support a plan that does not deliver tax relief."

The Governor reiterated the essential problem confronting the existing education system in Maine: while student populations have declined, the amount of administration has increased.

"We've got an administrative structure that's out of whack," said the Governor. "If we don't tackle this problem now, it will continue to drag down student performance. I don't want Maine kids to fall behind. We have to modernize and change, and we have to emphasize innovation."

Governor Baldacci Celebrates Augusta Philanthropist Elsie Viles

March 12, 2007

ROCKPORT – Governor John E. Baldacci joined First Lady Karen Baldacci at a ceremony honoring Elsie Viles of Augusta. Viles was named the 2007 Philanthropist of the Year by the New England Association of Health Care Philanthropy.

“Elsie is a person who doesn’t do what she wants to do for the recognition,” said Governor Baldacci. “She does it to try to make a difference in the community and state in which she lives.”

Viles has given to various projects in the Augusta area including the new Cony High School, Friends of the Blaine House, the Maine Criminal Justice System, the Kennebec Valley YMCA, Camp KV, and the institution which nominated her for the award, Maine General Health.

“My wife and Elsie have become very close,” the Governor said. “When you put the two of them on the same side of a project, you can be assured that it will be a success.”

Governor Baldacci proclaimed Elsie Viles as First Lady of Augusta and of the State of Maine for the day and presented her with the First Lady’s pin.

Governor Baldacci Outlines Education Plan to Androscoggin Chamber

March 12, 2007

LEWISTON – Governor John E. Baldacci presented his “Local Schools, Regional Support” plan to the Androscoggin Chamber of Commerce Monday afternoon, asking business leaders to make their voices heard in support of the plan.

“I have presented a reasonable plan that will make real progress in reducing the amount of money state and local government spends on K-12 administration,” Governor Baldacci said. “I need your help, showing your legislators that there is solid support for administrative consolidation from the business community.”

Governor Baldacci outlined his plan for the chamber, saying that it will save \$241 million over three years and provide tax relief to the people of Maine. The Governor said that he is open to changes that will provide relief and savings, but that he will not settle for the status quo.

“No one would design a system like the one we have today. We have too much administration and too many districts,” the Governor said. “The flawed structure is cheating our students and teachers out of the resources they need.”

The Education Committee passed their version of the education reform to the Appropriations Committee last week.

“I appreciate the hard work and long hours the members of the Education Committee have put in,” Governor Baldacci said, “but I am concerned that they have not gone far enough and that they have pushed the most difficult decisions down the road.”

Governor Baldacci continues to promote his plan throughout the state. The Governor used the first of his weekly radio addresses to discuss education reform and he spoke of the plan Monday morning on a scheduled radio appearance in Bangor. The Governor says that he hopes people in favor of the plan will begin to speak out publicly, rather than being a part of the “silent majority” who support the reform from the sidelines.

Governor Saddened by Death of Don Furth

March 13, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci was saddened to learn of the death of Don Furth, longtime member of the Hancock County Democratic Committee. Furth passed away Sunday morning of a heart attack. He was with his wife of 56 years, Sue Furth, at the time of his death.

“I was just with Don Saturday evening in Lucerne at the Ruth Moss Award presentation,” said Governor Baldacci. “Both Don and Sue were very dedicated volunteers who were involved in many different ways throughout the community where they lived.”

Governor Baldacci phoned the Furth family Tuesday morning to express his condolences.

“Don was a terrific individual and will be sorely missed,” the Governor said. “He ran a tight ship and got the job done, and at the same time he was well liked by everyone.”

Don and Sue Furth were involved with the Hancock County Democratic Committee for more than 20 years. Don Furth was involved with other community endeavors, including WERU, the Maine Civil Liberties Union, and Blue Hill Memorial Hospital. The Furths were longtime Surry residents, until recently when they moved to Lubec to live with their son, Alan and his family. Don is survived by his wife Sue, three children, Alan, Paul and Jane Furth, and several beloved grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Don Furth was 82 years old.

Governor Baldacci Joins British Lawmakers to Discuss Greenhouse Gas Emissions

March 13, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined four members of the British Parliament Tuesday afternoon to discuss greenhouse gas control. The State of Maine is currently working on implementing the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) with nine partner states in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

“We look forward to replicating the British experience in Maine through implementing Maine’s Climate Action Plan,” Governor Baldacci said. “In fact, we can use the British experience to our benefit in designing RGGI.”

Governor Baldacci met with British Vice Consul Joseph Pickerill, Lord Corbett of Castle Vale, Lord Harrison of Chester, the Right Honorable Greg Knight, Member of Parliament, and the Honorable Greg Mulholland, Member of Parliament. Governor Baldacci said that British government has identified four ways to reduce emissions in Britain.

“They have improved energy efficiency, restructured the energy supply sector in the 1990s by switching from coal to natural gas, used more low-carbon fuels and renewable energy, and they have developed low-energy fuels,” the Governor said. “With all of their efforts, UK greenhouse gas emissions fell by more than 13 percent in the 1990s while the economy and employment both grew.”

“We wanted to visit Maine because under the leadership of Governor Baldacci, it was the first state in the U.S. to pass a law to set a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions,” said Right Honorable Greg Knight, MP. “Our only regret is that our visit to Maine is too short.”

Ten states are committed to RGGI, with the goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, establishing a national program model for a cap and trade program, promoting the lowest cost reductions of CO₂ emissions and to create incentives for cleaner forms of energy and new technologies. Ultimately, RGGI’s goal is to reduce CO₂ emissions by 10 percent by 2019.

In addition to being a leader on RGGI, Governor Baldacci has positioned Maine as a leader in addressing climate change. Maine now buys 100 percent of its electricity from renewable sources; tax credits have been established for the production of biofuels in Maine; an 8 cent per gallon state excise tax reduction is provided for diesel motor fuel containing at least 2 percent biodiesel; rebates are provided for purchasing and installing solar electric, hot air and hot water systems; and Maine has set a goal of 10 percent new renewable power by 2017.

Lord Lyndon Harrison has been a member of the House of Lords since 1999, taking the title of Lord Harrison of Chester. Prior to 1999, Lord Harrison spent 10 years as a Member of the European Parliament.

Lord Robin Corbett was appointed to House of Lords in June of 2001. Lord Corbett of Castle Vale was the Chairman of House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee from 1999-2001 and was elected MP for Birmingham Erdington, representing the area from 1983-2001.

The Right Honorable Greg Knight, MP, entered Parliament in 1983, and was most recently made the Chairman of the House of Commons Procedure Committee in November of 2005.

The Honorable Greg Mulholland, MP, entered Parliament after the 2005 General Election and was appointed to the position of Junior International Development Spokesperson upon entering parliament.

Governor Baldacci Swears In Richard Davies as Public Advocate

March 13, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has sworn in Richard Davies as Public Advocate for the State of Maine. Davies' nomination was confirmed by a unanimous vote of the State Senate earlier today, 32-0 with three members absent.

“Dick Davies has served the state for a long period of time, he has given tremendous amounts of his life and his family’s life as a sacrifice,” said Governor Baldacci, “and for him to be in this position is good for the state and good for the future.”

In taking this new position, Davies leaves the Governor’s Office where he served for four years as senior policy advisor, where he advised the Governor on utility and energy issues. Before joining the Governor’s staff, Davies served as President of Public Policy Associates Inc., where his clients ranged from a natural gas utility to an association of Community Action Program agencies.

Davies served in the Maine House of Representatives for eight years, from 1974 to 1982. During his tenure, he chaired the Committee on Energy and the Committee of Public Utilities. Davies negotiated the compromise that created the Office of Public Advocate in 1981, and was active in reforming utility laws during his tenure in the Legislature.

Davies earned both his B.A. and his M.A. at the University of Maine, Orono.

Governor Creates Council on Maine's Quality of Place

March 13, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci Tuesday signed an executive order creating the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place.

The Council will examine the way land-use decisions are made and will recommend a plan for protecting, investing in and enhancing Maine's distinctive quality of place.

"The Council is part of our overall strategy to take advantage of Maine's assets and to build upon them for the future," Governor Baldacci said Tuesday. "Last year, the Brookings Institution told us that we needed to protect those parts of Maine that make us special, seek efficiencies in government at all levels, and invest in innovation, education and job growth."

"We have created a detailed plan to reduce state spending on K-12 administration while also improving the education our children receive, and we have proposed consolidations and modernizations within state government that will save taxpayers more than \$100 million," Governor Baldacci said. "The Council on Maine's Quality of Place is another step in our aggressive agenda to move Maine forward."

The Council will be headed by Chairman Dick Barringer, professor of public policy and community development at the Muskie School.

"For 35 years, Maine has been at the center of my professional life," Barringer said. "I welcome this opportunity to help safeguard the qualities that make our state unique."

The Council on Maine's Quality of Place will collaborate with the Governor's Council on Jobs, Innovation and the Economy, stakeholders and state agencies.

"The Council is made up of forward-looking individuals with a respect for the environment and the traditional uses of Maine lands," Governor Baldacci said. "I look forward to working with them to keep the state a great place to live, work and raise a family."

Members of the Council include: Eleanor Kinney, Natural Resources Council of Maine; Bruce Hazard, Mountain Counties Heritage Network; Evan Richert, Orono town planner; Kevin Mattson, Harper's Development Co. and FAME board; Hilary Basset, Greater Portland Landmarks; John Rohman, Creative Economy Council; Tracy Michaud Stutzman, Maine Highlands Guild and REALIZE! Maine; former state Rep. John Marsh; former state Sen. Barbara Trafton; Ken Young, Kennebec Valley Council of Governments; Mary Kate Reny, Reny's Department Stores; and Jay Espy, Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Additional appointments to the Council are pending.

Text of the executive order below:

29 FY 06/07 March 13, 2007

AN ORDER ESTABLISHING THE GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON MAINE'S QUALITY OF PLACE

WHEREAS, a recent Brookings Institution study of Maine carries the title “Charting Maine’s Future: An Action Plan for Promoting Sustainable Prosperity and Quality Places”; and

WHEREAS, the study states that “land development patterns are...consuming rural land, increasing government costs, and degrading the state’s small towns and environments—its true ‘brand’”; and

WHEREAS, in order to promote sustainable development the State’s competitive strategy must focus on what makes Maine different and distinctive in the increasingly global marketplace; and will only do so by building on demonstrated strengths, by investing in them, and by creating opportunity through widely understood and supported investments in quality – in quality clusters and quality places; and

WHEREAS, in order to ensure sustainable development the State must protect and invest in the assets and amenities that comprise Maine’s quality places—our diverse communities, our natural resources, our scenic landscapes, the built-environment, the arts and culture, and the infrastructures that support them; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the Governor’s Council on Maine’s Quality Places (hereinafter, "the Council").

Purpose and Duties

The purpose and duties of the Council shall be to:

Examine the State’s public programs, decision-making processes, investment practices, private market incentives, institutional capacities, and research efforts to assess their readiness to maintain Maine’s distinctiveness as a desirable place to live, to work, to raise a family, and to build a useful and productive life

Develop a recommended action plan or plans for protecting, investing in, and enhancing Maine’s distinctive quality of place, including creative ways and means to finance such plans;

Propose structures, institutions, processes, programs, activities, and investments that will ensure the long-term protection and enhancement of Maine’s quality places; and

Propose coordination with and among the actions of existing and recommended public, private, and nonprofit “quality of place” efforts in Maine.

To fulfill these duties, the Council shall collaborate and coordinate with the Governor’s Council on Jobs, Innovation and the Economy; the Commissioners of Conservation, Marine Resources, Agriculture, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Environmental Protection, Economic and Community Development, and Administrative and Financial Services; the Director of the State Planning Office; the State Historic Preservation Commission; the Maine Arts Commission; the Governor’s Office; the Maine Legislature; Maine’s university and community college systems, and other interested stakeholders.

Membership and Support

In order that it may remain small, practical, and focused on developing action-oriented recommendations, the Council shall comprise at least seven (7) and not more than seventeen (17) members who shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

The Council will comprise active members of the natural resources, downtown revitalization, historic preservation, smart growth, arts and culture, and rural protection and development communities who have a perspective on and strong interest in the sustainable growth of the State. It will include bipartisan and diverse members with relevant knowledge and experience in all parts of Maine. The members of the Council shall serve without compensation.

The Governor shall appoint an Executive Director of the Council, who will schedule, set the agenda for, chair, and preside at Council meetings. Staff support to the Council will be provided by the State Planning Office, the Governor's Office, and other state agencies as needed. The Director of the State Planning Office or designee shall serve as an ex officio Council member.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is March 13, 2007, through April 16, 2008.

Governor Baldacci Conducts Ceremonial Signing of Visual Arts PhD Bill

March 14, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Speaker of the House Glenn Cummings, (D-Portland) today for a ceremonial signing of LD 462, An Act Authorizing the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts To Confer the Degree of Doctor of Visual Arts. Dr. George Smith, President of the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts, was also in the Governor's Office for the ceremony.

"The passing and signing of this legislation shows the State of Maine's further commitment to the arts, the creative economy and innovating approaches to education," Governor Baldacci said. ""This program will open new worlds to students who embark on a course of study that integrates firsthand exposure to the classics with cutting edge Web-based learning."

The PhD program is a three-year curriculum that is slated to begin in May of this year. The school is based in Portland and features a hybrid residency/distance learning program, which will take students to Tuscany, Italy, as well as New York City. Fifteen students are admitted each year to begin the three year curriculum. Further details and contact information for the school can be found on their Web site at www.idsva.org.

Governor Baldacci Congratulates Camden Business on Federal Contract

March 14, 2007

ROCKPORT – Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated Penobscot Bay Media Wednesday evening for being one of 45 prime companies in the United States to receive the Veterans Technology Services Government-wide Acquisition Contract (VETS GWAC). Qualifying companies are eligible to compete for a share of contracts worth \$5 billion over 10 years. Penobscot Bay Media is the only company in New England to receive the opportunity.

“The significance of the contract for this growing company in Camden, Maine, is that it will continue to grow, thrive and prosper,” Governor Baldacci said. “Penobscot Bay Media added 16 jobs in 2006, totaling more than 30 employees for this small business. They hope to add at least that many more in 2007, thanks in part to Government-wide Acquisition Contract.”

The new jobs would be Information Technology positions, a field in which Penobscot Bay Media specializes. The company’s president, Ann Yahner, is a disabled veteran entrepreneur who says that the company has been around since 1999 and will benefit greatly from the contract.

“This is a huge opportunity for a company like ours to grow in size and professionalism,” said Yahner.

When a government contract is presented, Penobscot Bay Media will have the opportunity to bid on the contract with the 44 other prime companies chosen for VETS GWAC. Yahner says the contract is very highly sought after, with some 400 businesses competing around the country.

More details about Penobscot Bay Media can be found on their Web site at www.penbaymedia.com.

Governor Baldacci Mourns Death of Barbara McKernan

March 14, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci was saddened to learn Wednesday of the death of Barbara Guild McKernan, the mother of former Governor John McKernan Jr.

“Barbara was an unstoppable force, who had a tremendously positive influence on the development of Bangor,” Governor Baldacci said. “She was involved in so many important public matters all while remaining deeply committed to her family. She was an amazing woman.”

Governor Baldacci called the McKernan family Wednesday to express his condolences.

“I wanted Jock to know that everyone is thinking of him and his family,” Governor Baldacci said. “Barbara’s passion and civic dedication will be greatly missed.”

John McKernan Jr. is married to U.S. Sen. Olympia Snowe.

Flags in Bangor will be ordered flown at half staff on the day of the funeral.

Juliana Frappier of Scarborough Awarded \$1,000 NextGen Scholarship

March 15, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci presented Juliana Frappier of Scarborough with the second annual \$1,000 NextGen Scholarship this morning at the Finance Authority of Maine. The scholarship, which began in 2006, is awarded each year as part of the \$50 First Step grant available to each child born or adopted in Maine. The grant and scholarship are awarded to help open the child's first college savings account. Every Maine family who has a child this year will be mailed a packet that explains how to get the free \$50 into a NextGen College Investment Plan account for their newborn.

"Juliana was one of 124 babies who received a \$50 First Step Grant in 2006, making her eligible for the drawing to win this \$1,000 scholarship," Governor Baldacci said. "We will give every baby born a one-time \$50 grant before their first birthday to get their NextGen account started for their educational future." Governor Baldacci was joined by John Witherspoon, CEO of FAME; State Treasurer David Lemoine; members of the FAME Board of Directors and several legislators. Juliana's parents, Bill and Kathy Frappier, and her brother, Nicholas, were also at the presentation.

"Having a new baby is like seeing the world for the first time," said the Governor. "The world stretches out before them and everything is possible. The goal behind this program is to give families a little boost, a head start toward saving for college. With all the demands out there for a family's resources, saving can seem like an impossible hurdle. But it shouldn't. A few dollars today and a steady approach can make a real difference when those tuition bills come due."

The Finance Authority of Maine is an independent state agency that provides targeted financial tools and information that help Maine citizens pursue business and educational opportunities. FAME administers the NextGen program, the State Treasurer oversees investments and monitors performance and Merrill Lynch serves as Program Manager, providing investment, administrative, record keeping and marketing services for the program.

To find out more about NextGen and the First Step Grant, contact FAME at 1-800-228-3734 or visit www.FAMemaine.com.

Governor Baldacci Swears In New MEMA Director

March 15, 2007

AUGUSTA – Robert McAleer was sworn in today by Governor John Baldacci as the Director of the Maine Emergency Management Agency.

McAleer, a combat-decorated former Marine with extensive experience in logistics and emergency management, was unanimously confirmed by the State Senate earlier this week.

“I know with Bob McAleer at MEMA, Maine will be in good hands during any emergency,” Governor Baldacci said. “He has proven himself throughout his career. I’m glad to put him to work for the people of this state.”

“We’ve got a terrific group of first responders and county emergency management offices. The MEMA team prevents a lot of bad things from happening,” Governor Baldacci said. “I’m proud to have Bob as the new MEMA director.”

McAleer expects to begin work immediately.

Governor Baldacci also thanked Acting Director Charles Jacobs for his leadership during the transition at MEMA. Jacobs had been in the position since last year.

Council on Jobs, Innovation and the Economy Recommends 3-year, \$150 Million Investment in Research and Development

March 15, 2007

AUGUSTA – The Governor's Council on Jobs, Innovation and the Economy released its final report today, recommending that the state invest \$150 million over the next three years to promote research and development, and job creation.

Governor John Baldacci received the report from Council Chair Karen Gordon Mills.

The report provides the Governor with a timely recommendation for an essential part of his investment package, which will be unveiled at 1 p.m. March 19 during a press conference at the State House.

"This recommendation makes clear that Maine has a tremendous opportunity if we invest wisely," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine's economy is transitioning. We must make sure that the state's economy becomes innovation driven. That means helping companies to work smarter, faster and better."

While the Council has recommended a \$150 million bond for research and development, Governor Baldacci said that he is still weighing the demands of several competing priorities and has not made a final decision on the package he will present next week.

"We've gone two years without a bond package. We've got issues that we must address," Governor Baldacci said.

"As part of our study, we examined the state's capacity to bond," said Chair Karen Mills. "Some projections indicate the state could afford \$500 million of new bonds. Now is the time to be aggressive and to provide resources to develop and expand private sector jobs that can sustain themselves."

Governor Baldacci said investing in innovation includes more than helping companies to grow.

"This type of investment is about improving the quality of life for our citizens and about making sure that they have access to good jobs with good pay and good benefits," Governor Baldacci said.

The Council recommends a three-year bond package totaling \$150 million, with \$50 million available each year. The funding would be made available as part of a competitive process and could be used for capital and infrastructure that supports economic growth.

The recommendations also earmark how the money should be divided among sectors each year:

\$15 million per year would be directed toward The University of Maine System to support R&D infrastructure. \$7 million would be available for biomedical proposals. \$5 million would be available for marine related proposals. \$23 million would be available for other technology sectors.

“We believe that the prospects for economic growth and job creation in the state of Maine are positive,” the Council wrote in its report. “Investment in research and development will give Maine companies access to world class technology. These investments will allow some of the vibrant clusters of Maine companies to compete and succeed in the global economy. If we make these investments in a focused and disciplined way they will lead to the growth of well paying jobs in successful and enduring Maine companies.”

Karen Mills is available by phone today at 917-992-8088.

Governor Baldacci Proclaims Sunshine Week in Maine

March 16, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has issued a proclamation naming March 11 – 17, 2007, as Sunshine Week in the State of Maine. Sunshine Week is about what the government is doing, and why.

“It is important that we operate in a way that is transparent and open to the public,” Governor Baldacci said. “It keeps the public involved and assured that their government is working as it should – for the people.”

Sunshine Week began as Sunshine Sunday in Florida five years ago as a result of attempts by some members of the Florida Legislature to create new exemptions to the state's public records law. Sunshine Week was first implemented in 2005. This is the third consecutive year that Governor Baldacci has issued a proclamation recognizing Sunshine Week.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, the hallmarks of a great democracy include government transparency and accountability; and

WHEREAS, public oversight is the ultimate safeguard of that democracy; and

WHEREAS, the free flow of information from the government to the people instills trust and confidence in our democracy and ensures that our government is accessible, accountable and open; and

WHEREAS, we must strive to further educate and empower the public on their right to access government documents, information and meetings;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim March 11 – 17, 2007 as

Sunshine Week: Your Right to Know

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to join in this observance.

Governor Baldacci Celebrates Launching of New Sabre Yacht

March 16, 2007

PORTLAND, Maine – Governor John E. Baldacci joined representatives from Sabre Yachts today to launch a new luxury motoryacht, the Sabre 52 Salon Express, and celebrate the boat builder's ongoing expansion into the global boat building market.

The boat was unveiled at a private showing at DiMillo's Old Port Marina and coincided with the Maine Boatbuilders Show at the Portland Company Marine complex.

"Maine's boat builder's are setting new standards in quality and pushing boat building standards on an international level," said Governor Baldacci. "Sabre is meeting industry demands and staying competitive in the global economy."

The Sabre 52 Salon Express sets a new level in size and sophistication for the South Casco-based company and features many exceptional design features such as a large sun roof over the main salon and hull portlights, which provide an abundance of natural light to the yacht's exquisitely crafted cherry interior.

In recent sea trials, extraordinarily low sound levels of 72 decibels were recorded at cruise speeds, which will provide a very quiet ride for owners.

Sabre, a member of Maine Built Boats, designed the new motoryacht to meet dealer and customer demands. Sabre considers the boat as a new company standard in boat building that will take the business to the next level in the global market.

"Maine's boat builders have the skills and the fortitude to keep Maine's 400-year-old traditional industry at the forefront of the international market," said John Richardson, commissioner of the state Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). "We will continue to support Maine's marine-based industries and the more than 2,500 quality jobs they provide for our work force."

To view the new Sabre 52 Salon Express, visit www.sabreyachts.com.

Governor Baldacci Presents Award to 6-Year-Old Volunteer Organizer

March 16, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci met with Madeline Timberlake Friday afternoon to honor the 6-year-old girl for her efforts surrounding the “Think Blue” campaign.

“Volunteering is a quality instilled in us at a very young age – as proven here today by Madeline,” Governor Baldacci said. “She took matters upon herself and rallied others to help her with a cause that she is very passionate about, and a cause that is important to all of us.”

Madeline’s work began last September when she rallied volunteers to stencil paint covers on 120 storm drains in Livermore Falls. The point of the covers is to inform residents that what goes down the drain can pollute their lakes, rivers and streams. Madeline and her volunteers painted and posted signs in her town that explained the project and had the slogan, “Clean Water Starts with You.”

Madeline learned about the program through the television advertisement campaign featuring rubber ducks being washed down a storm drain. The ad was produced by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. DEP Commissioner David Littell was also at the award ceremony, held in the Hall of Flags in the State House, to present Madeline with one of the original rubber duckies used in the television commercial as well as a Commissioner’s Award honoring her work.

Governor proposes three-year, \$397 million investment strategy

March 19, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci released today details of his plan to invest more than \$397 million over three years in innovation, job creation, education the environment and transportation.

“We all know that Maine is on the edge of a great transformation. The old ways are no longer sufficient for a 21st Century, global economy. We must all work smarter, faster and better,” Governor Baldacci said.

“Our proposal is about creating jobs and opportunities,” Governor Baldacci said.

The bond proposal includes:

- \$131 million for transportation;
- \$131 million for research and development, and business growth;
- \$97.4 million for conservation, the environment and quality places; and
- \$33 million for the University of Maine System, community colleges and Maine Maritime Academy.

“We will invest in our innovation economy, in clean air and clean water, in education, in roads and bridges, and in private-sector job creation,” Governor Baldacci said. “We must do it and we must do it now.”

Bonds require a two-thirds vote in the Legislature and then approval by voters. No bond proposals have been sent to voters in two years.

“My plan is aggressive, but it is also affordable,” Governor Baldacci said. “It takes careful measure of what we can do, and what we need to do.”

“For the past two years, politics has stood in the way of progress,” Governor Baldacci said. “Moving Maine forward shouldn’t be about Democratic ideas or Republican ideas. Partisanship has no place in this debate.”

Ultimately, Governor Baldacci said, it should be up to voters to decide the state’s investment strategy.

“What we decide here in Augusta must be sent to the voters for ratification,” Governor Baldacci said. “I trust that they have the wisdom to make the right decisions. For two years, they have been denied their say. That’s long enough.”

The Governor’s plan calls for investments of roughly \$144 million in fiscal year 2008, \$136 million in FY 09 and \$120 million in FY10.

“Earlier this month, I met with representatives of three major credit rating agencies from New York,” Governor Baldacci said. “Unanimously, they agreed that Maine has the ability to use bonds to invest more into our infrastructure and into helping our economy grow.”

On average, the state pays down \$70 million of debt each year. Maine ranks 33rd among states in debt per capita and 34th in debt as a percentage of personal income. With the Governor's proposal, Maine's debt service will remain below 5 percent of revenues, a generally accepted debt threshold.

During the past four years, sound financial practices have laid the foundation for this proposal.

"We have closed a \$1.2 billion structural gap, eliminated short-term borrowing and rebuilt our reserve accounts to the tune of \$150 million. That hard work has put us on a firmer financial footing, and has given us the opportunity to invest today," Governor Baldacci said.

"We have an opportunity – today – to do great things and to lay the foundation for a better tomorrow," Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Appoints New Director of Office of Energy Independence and Security

March 18, 2007

AUGUSTA -- Governor Baldacci today announced that John Kerry, former CEO of Catholic Charities Maine, has been appointed as the Director of the Office of Energy Independence and Security.

Kerry has extensive experience in the public and private sector, and an impressive background in the energy and environmental fields. "We have a lot of challenging issues on energy that must be addressed. From implementing the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to expanding renewable energy resources and working toward energy independence, Maine needs John's experience and dedication right now," Governor Baldacci said. "His ideas and background are an excellent fit for this position during a demanding time."

Kerry served two terms in the state Senate, where he chaired the Utilities Committee. He also served one term in the state House of Representatives. From 1983 to 1986, he was the Executive Director of the Maine Office of Energy Resources in the Brennan Administration. In addition to his work in government, Kerry has been a successful businessman, including ownership stakes in a real estate company, two restaurants and an energy services company.

Kerry said that he would work to focus the state's energy policy on three critical areas.

"Energy policy, environmental issues and economic development are integrally connected," Kerry said. "Our energy policies have to be geared toward addressing all three at the same time."

Kerry said he would seek ways to expand the state's production of renewable energy, increase conservation and provide energy stability and cost savings to both large and small businesses.

"In the last 10 or 15 years, the world's energy market has changed radically," Kerry said. "It could very well do it again in the next 10 years. Maine can be ready for that transition and be on its leading edge."

Kerry has a master's degree in Public Administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and a master's degree in planning from Boston College. He lives in Saco.

Kerry replaces former Director Beth Nagusky, who left the position in December. The position does not require confirmation by the state Senate.

Kerry is available for media interviews today. Interviews can be scheduled by contacting the Governor's Communications Office.

Governor Baldacci Welcomes VingTech to Maine

March 20, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci, representatives of the state Department of Economic and Community Development and the city of Biddeford today welcomed a new European high-tech manufacturing company to Maine and thanked company officials for choosing Biddeford as the site of its new U.S. facility.

VingTech, a subsidiary company of Norwegian-based Simrad Optronics ASA that manufactures sophisticated electro-optics and other systems for the defense and law enforcement industries, chose to locate in Biddeford over three other New England sites, a move that will create up to 40 new, quality jobs in the first two years of production. Biddeford is VingTech's first manufacturing presence in the United States.

"Maine is competing for and attracting companies from all over the world with its quality of life, dedicated work force and Pine Tree Zone incentives," said Governor Baldacci. "I welcome VingTech to Maine and I look forward to the positive presence the high-tech manufacturing company will have on the community and the state."

Governor Baldacci added that VingTech's decision to establish itself in Maine was aided by a collaborative, supportive effort by the state, the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and Biddeford city officials.

VingTech's Biddeford facility is located at 15 Morin St. Chief Executive Officer of Simrad Optronics Jon Asbjorn Bo said the existing building will be retro-fitted to VingTech's production requirements and represent a more than \$3 million investment in the state and the community. Construction will begin in April with production beginning in September 2007. VingTech has applied for Pine Tree Zone certification.

Asbjorn Bo said the decision to establish a VingTech manufacturing facility in Maine was an easy one after visiting the state and meeting with the Governor, the DECD and Biddeford's municipal officials.

"We are happy to expand our business into Maine and to be able to utilize the state's skilled and dedicated work force," said Asbjorn Bo. "We conducted an extensive search throughout New England and Maine offered all of the right reasons to come here with local and state and federal support, Pine Tree Zone benefits, the work ethic of the residents and the quality of life. It was a perfect fit."

Governor Baldacci noted that VingTech will be making a \$3 million investment in its facility in Biddeford, while Maine is looking to invest in its future and its people as well.

"Yesterday, I released my proposed bond package, with a \$397 million investment strategy, focused on our innovation economy, clean air and clean water, education, roads and bridges, and in private-sector job creation," Governor Baldacci said. "My three year bond package invests money today to spur

economic growth in our state and bring us to a prosperous future by creating good-paying, private-sector jobs.”

The Governor’s bond package proposed \$131 million in bonds for transportation; \$131 million in the innovation economy for job growth and business development; \$97 million in quality places; and \$33 million in the universities and community colleges.

“I am pleased that the Pine Tree Zone program, now in its third year and helping 109 businesses create more than 4,100 jobs, was a major factor in VingTech’s decision,” said Governor Baldacci.

VingTech is the U.S. subsidiary of Simrad Optronics, based in Norway. For more information about VingTech, visit www.simrad-optronics.com.

Governor's Weekly Radio Address now Available in Washington County and Online

March 22, 2007

AUGUSTA – The Governor's Weekly Radio Address will now be available on two additional stations in Washington County and will be available worldwide, online. WQDY - 92.7 FM in Calais and WALZ - 95.3 FM in Machias will both air the Governor's Weekly Radio Address at 9 a.m. Saturday. Additionally, AM 1390 - WEGP in Presque Isle has committed to broadcasting the address at 11:30 a.m. Saturday.

"I am happy to be able to reach out to a larger audience and to update them about what's happening in our state," said Governor Baldacci. "We have already discussed education reform and investments in the future of Maine. I look forward to discussing more issues in further detail down the road."

In addition to increased access in Washington County, the Governor's Weekly Radio Address is also now available online, linked through Maine Public Radio's Web site, www.mpbnet.net, and on Governor Baldacci's Web site at <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/news/speeches/radio.shtml>.

Stations interested in broadcasting the address can contact the Governor's Communications Office.

Updated scheduled airtimes are as follows:

Portland area: WGAN - AM 560 (Portland) – 8:08 a.m., Saturday WLOB – AM 1310, 96.3 FM (Portland/Rumford) – 8:08 a.m., Saturday

Augusta/Waterville area; Midcoast: WTVL/WJZN – AM 1490/AM 1400 (Waterville, Augusta) – 8 a.m., Saturday WCME – 96.7 FM (Boothbay Harbor/Augusta) – 9:28 a.m., Saturday WCTB – 93.5 FM The River (Fairfield/Augusta) – 7 a.m., Sunday WSKW – AM 1160 (Skowhegan/Augusta) – 7 a.m., Sunday WIGY/WFAU/WRKD – 97.5 FM/AM 1280/AM 1450 (Madison, Gardiner, Rockland) – 7:25 a.m., Sunday WABK – 104.3 FM (Augusta) – 7:27 a.m., Sunday WKCG – 101.3 FM (Augusta) – 8:27 a.m., Sunday WTOS – 105.1 FM (Skowhegan/Augusta) – 7:27 a.m., Sunday WMCM – 103.3 FM (Rockland) – 7:27 a.m., Sunday WQSS – 102.5 FM (Camden) – 7:27 a.m., Sunday

Bangor/Ellsworth area: WQCB – 106.5 FM (Bangor) – 7 a.m., Sunday WEZQ – 92.9 FM (Bangor) – 8 a.m., Saturday WWMJ – 95.7 FM (Ellsworth/Bangor) – 6 a.m., Sunday WWNZ – AM 1400 (Bangor) – 8 a.m. and 9 a.m., Saturday WNZS – AM 1340 (Bangor) – 8 a.m. and 9 a.m., Saturday WVOM – 103.9 FM (Howland/Bangor) – 12:30 p.m., Saturday WABI – AM 910 (Bangor) – 12:30 p.m., Saturday WBFB – 104.7 FM (Bangor) – 12:30 p.m., Saturday WGUY – 102.1 FM (Pittsfield/Bangor) – 12:30 p.m., Saturday WKSQ – 94.5 FM (Ellsworth/Bangor) – 12:30 p.m., Saturday WDEA – AM 1370 (Ellsworth) – 11:06 a.m., Sunday WLKE – 99.1 FM (Ellsworth) – 12:30 p.m., Saturday

Washington County: WQDY/WALZ – 92.7 FM/95.3 FM (Calais, Machias) – 9 a.m., Saturday

Presque Isle/Caribou/Aroostook County: WCXU – 97.7 FM (Caribou) – 11:30 a.m., Sunday WCXX – 102.3 FM (Madawaska) – 11:30 a.m., Sunday WCXV – 98.1 FM (Van Buren) – 11:30 a.m., Sunday W276AY – 103.1 FM (Fort Kent) – 11:30 a.m., Sunday WEGP – AM 1390 (Presque Isle) – 11:30 a.m., Saturday

Online: Maine Public Radio – Online – www.mpbnet.net Governor Baldacci's Website – Online – <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/news/speeches/radio.shtml>

Governor Baldacci Swears In Andrew Mead as Maine Supreme Judicial Court Justice

March 22, 2007

AUGUSTA – Justice Andrew M. Mead was sworn in as a member of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court by Governor John E. Baldacci Thursday. Justice Mead's nomination was confirmed by a unanimous vote of the State Senate last week, 33-0 with two members absent.

"Justice Mead has earned respect and admiration from his peers during his years on the Maine District Court and Maine Superior Court," Governor Baldacci said. "I am sure that he will continue serving the state with dignity, compassion, integrity and honor as a Supreme Court Justice."

Justice Mead, of Bangor, became the first judge to preside over the Penobscot Tribal Court, where he served as Chief Judge. He held that position from 1979 to 1990.

Mead was appointed by Governor John McKernan to the Maine District Court in 1990. Two years later he was appointed to the Maine Superior Court. After being reappointed in 1999 by Governor Angus King, Justice Mead served as Chief Justice (1999-2001) and Regional Presiding Justice (2004-2006). Governor Baldacci reappointed Mead to the Superior Court last spring.

Mead served as a partner at Mitchell & Stearns from 1981-1990 and practiced at Paine, Lynch & Weatherbee from 1976-1981. He served as president of the Maine State Bar Association in 1990, and chaired the Medical Malpractice Screening Committee from 1987-1990.

Mead, 55, received his undergraduate degree from the University of Maine and his J.D. from New York Law School.

Governor Baldacci Cuts Ribbon on Wood Pellet Plant

March 23, 2007

CORINTH – Governor John E. Baldacci celebrated the grand opening today of a business that will create 30 new jobs in Corinth. Corinth Wood Pellets, located on 103 acres of land in a Pine Tree Zone, held a grand opening and ribbon cutting this afternoon with Governor Baldacci and Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner John Richardson on hand to help celebrate.

“This project represents a more than \$4 million investment in the community and will create more than 30 good paying jobs with benefits for Maine residents,” Governor Baldacci said. “Corinth Wood Pellets is here today in part due to the assistance of the DECD and its Pine Tree Zone program, which has been vital in helping Maine businesses expand, as well as convincing companies from out of state to locate in Maine.”

The plant will produce over 140,000 tons of wood pellets, making it the biggest single manufacturing plant in the United States with plans in the works to double production levels. In addition to the 30 jobs the plant will directly create, indirectly, over 100 more are expected to be created including in retail stores, truck drivers and in the logging industry.

“Maine is at a crossroads, and we need to continue to move our economy forward,” said the Governor. “My new \$397 million bond proposal will strengthen our economy by dedicating funds to improve our roads and bridges, and invest in higher education and R&D over the next three years. This bond package will help bring about economic growth in Maine, and lead to the creation of more good-paying jobs, like those here at Corinth Wood Pellets.”

Corinth Wood Pellets expects to be operational within a month.

Governor Baldacci Visits Business Benefiting From Seed Grants

March 23, 2007

ORONO – Governor John E. Baldacci visited a business this afternoon that has been directly affected by a seed grant from the Maine Technology Institute. Shaw & Tenney, a maker of oars and paddles for 149 years in Orono, has received both a seed grant from MTI and matching funds from the North Star Alliance, which was created from the \$15 million WIRED grant received by the state in 2006.

“This is a truly remarkable small business,” Governor Baldacci said. “It has 149 years of history and a brand that is well-respected for its craftsmanship, quality, and pride. I am proud to see the positive results of the seed grants and matching funds.”

In addition to paddles and oars, the company also makes wooden flagpoles and ship masts. As a result of the grant, Shaw & Tenney plans to add one or two more employees to their existing seven-person workforce.

Governor Baldacci Proclaims Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month

March 26, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has proclaimed the month of April 2007 as “Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month” throughout the State of Maine. The Governor issued the proclamation during a rally at the State House, which served as the culmination of the State Trooper Blue Ribbon Relay.

“As everyone here knows, child abuse is a public health problem, and must be treated as one,” Governor Baldacci said. “As with other serious public health issues, we know that we can gain ground if we are able to increase the focus on prevention.”

A half dozen State Troopers arrived at the Hall of Flags delivering to Governor Baldacci the final piece of the “Prevent Child Abuse Blue Ribbon Puzzle.” Governor Baldacci put the final piece in place before speaking at the rally.

The Fourth Annual “Blue Ribbon Relay” is designed to highlight awareness of child abuse and neglect prevention activities in Maine. Troopers from all regions collected puzzle pieces to carry to the State House and put together to form a blue ribbon.

In addition to Governor Baldacci, other speakers at the rally included Department of Health and Human Services Commissioner Brenda Harvey; Public Safety Commissioner Anne Jordan, and Betsy Norcross-Plourde of the Maine Association of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Councils. More than 20 advocates of child abuse and neglect prevention awareness were also on hand to lend their support.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, child abuse is a community problem and finding solutions depends on the environment of people throughout the community; and

WHEREAS, the effects of child abuse are felt by whole communities, and need to be addressed by the entire community; and

WHEREAS, effective child abuse prevention programs succeed because of partnerships created among social service agencies, schools, religious organizations, businesses and law enforcement agencies; and

WHEREAS, youth-serving prevention programs offer positive alternatives for young people and encourage youth to develop strong ties to their community; and

WHEREAS, all citizens should become more aware of child abuse and its prevention, and become involved in supporting parents to raise their children in a safe, nurturing environment,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim April, 2007 as

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this month by dedicating ourselves to the task of improving the quality of life for all children.

Governor Baldacci Endorses Health Reform Legislation

March 26, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced his support for two separate health initiatives to increase access and affordability of health care.

The legislation, LD 841 "An Act To Extend Health Insurance Coverage for Dependent Children up to 25 Years of Age" and LD 431 "An Act To Enable the Dirigo Health Program To Be Self-administered," are sponsored by Rep. Chris Barstow and Rep. Jill Conover respectively.

"This legislation reflects the spirit and mission of Dirigo health reform," Governor Baldacci said. "I welcome these bold and cost-saving initiatives from representatives Barstow and Conover."

Rep. Conover's bill, LD 431, allows Dirigo Health to self-insure, providing greater flexibility and potential for savings. The legislation also assures that the Dirigo Health Agency comply with mandates and consumer protections similar to those in the insurance industry.

"This legislation enables the Dirigo Board of Directors more choices in determining how best to serve their clients," said Trish Riley of the Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance. "By allowing the Dirigo Health product to self-insure we create greater opportunity for Dirigo Health Reform to expand access and lower the cost of health coverage for its members."

Rep. Barstow's bill, LD 841, requires health insurers to provide coverage to dependent children up to 25 years of age. The legislation provides access to an underserved population and increases the number of healthy individuals in the insurance pool.

"Young adults just starting out in their professional life often can not afford to buy health insurance, and wrongly assume that it is just another expense they can do without," Governor Baldacci said. "By requiring insurers to provide coverage under a parents plan, we're able to extend coverage at a lower cost than they would pay on their own."

Baldacci went on to say, "These important initiatives are key recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Dirigo Health, and will have a significant effect on the accessibility of health insurance for the citizens of Maine."

The Blue Ribbon Commission was convened to provide recommendations on the future of health care accessibility and affordability in the state Maine.

Dirigo Health Reform was enacted in 2003 as a multi-faceted approach to address health care cost, quality, and access in Maine.

Governor Baldacci Mourns Death of Soldier Killed in Iraq

March 27, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci received official confirmation today that Sgt. Jason William Swiger, a graduate of South Portland High School, was killed in action during his third tour of duty in Iraq.

Sgt. Swiger, a member of the 82nd Airborne Division was killed Sunday, March 25, in a suicide bomb attack.

Governor Baldacci called Sgt. Swiger's mother Monday afternoon after he learned of the death from members of the South Portland community. The news of Sgt. Swiger's death was widely known Monday, but official confirmation was not made available until today.

"Mrs. Swiger is very proud of her son and his service in defense of our country," Governor Baldacci said. "This is a terrible loss. Sgt. Swiger put duty to others above his own safety, and we all owe him a great debt. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the entire Swiger family."

Flags will be ordered flown at half staff on the day of Sgt. Swiger's funeral.

No further information is available at this time.

Governor Nominates New Chief of Maine State Police

March 28, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today presented to the Legislature the nomination of Lt. Patrick Fleming as the new Chief of the Maine State Police.

Fleming has spent more than 20 years with the Maine State Police and is currently the lieutenant in charge of special investigations, which includes Liquor Licensing, Gaming and Weapons, Gambling Control, and the Executive Protection Unit.

“Lt. Fleming has the highest level of personal and professional integrity and has always conducted himself with fairness and compassion, which are core principles of the State Police,” Governor Baldacci said. “I am proud to nominate him for a promotion to colonel and as the new Chief of the State Police.”

Lt. Fleming was promoted to his current rank in 2004. From 2000 to 2004, he was the sergeant in charge of the Executive Protection Unit, which provides security for the Governor and other dignitaries. Lt. Fleming was first assigned to the EPU in 1993.

He joined the State Police in 1984 and served as a Trooper in North Anson, Farmington and Fairfield.

He has a bachelor's degree in management and an associate's degree in criminal justice from the University of Maine.

He lives in Fairfield.

The nomination must be reviewed by the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee and confirmed by the State Senate. By statute, the chief of the state police is nominated by the Commissioner of Public Safety with the advice and consent of the Governor.

Governor Baldacci Meets with Biotechnology Reps

March 28, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci met today with representatives from biotechnology associations and companies from Maine and around the country. The group expressed support for the Governor's bond package, which includes \$131 million for the innovation economy and research and development, which will help to stimulate the biotechnology field in Maine.

"Research and development dollars provides a foundation for job growth and for people to relocate or stay in this state," Governor Baldacci said. "It provides opportunities – not only for employment, but for technological breakthroughs and new businesses."

Meeting with the Governor were H. William Harris, M.D., Ph.D., Co-Founder, President, and Chief Scientific Officer of MariCal Inc. of Portland, and president of the Biotechnology Association of Maine; Patrick Kelly, Vice President for State Government Relations and Alliance Development for the Biotechnology Industry Organization in Washington, D.C.; David Groggin, Director of State Governmental Affairs at Amgen in Thousand Oaks, CA; and James T. Brett, President and Chief Executive Officer of the New England Council.

"We know that investing in research and development pays dividends for the state," Governor Baldacci said. "By investing in innovation, we will help private-sector companies create sustainable, good-paying jobs with good benefits. That's an investment in the future and an investment in the people of Maine."

Governor Baldacci's \$397 million bond proposal, which includes investments in higher education, natural resources and transportation in addition to innovation and R&D, is currently being considered by the Legislature.

Governor Baldacci Attends Celebration for Cesar Chavez

March 29, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor Baldacci joined John Connors of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement and others this afternoon to honor the late Cesar Chavez.

“His values, words and actions continue to serve as a guide to effective participation in public life,” Governor Baldacci said.

Chavez was a Mexican-American farm worker, labor leader and activist who founded what eventually became the United Farm Workers. Chavez died in 1993. He would have turned 80 years old Saturday.

“What better way to celebrate an individual so integral to the labor movement than to offer up a plan that will bring good jobs with good benefits to the state,” Baldacci said. “I recently proposed a \$397 million bond package that includes \$131 million for Maine’s innovation economy, for job growth and business development. I urge you all to support it and support the expansion of Maine’s workforce.”

The 4th annual celebration drew representatives from the Department of Labor, the Maine AFL-CIO and the Maine League of United Latin American Citizens Council 3100.

“Chavez’s commitment to community activism and volunteerism, fairness and non-violent protest was a model that should guide us today as it did in the decades when he championed the cause of the worker,” said Governor Baldacci. “As more and more groups remember Cesar E. Chavez, they honor him by their actions and by giving back to others.”

Governor Signs Order to Implement Bay Management Recommendations

March 29, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci signed an executive order Wednesday that will implement the recommendations of the Bay Management Study.

The two-year study, which was conducted by the Land and Water Resources Council, was presented to the Legislature's Committee on Marine Resources in January. Its intent was to examine management practices in regards to coastal and nearshore areas and develop recommendations to protect the valued qualities of Maine's coast.

"Maine's economic and ecological health depends on the ocean," Governor Baldacci said. "It's imperative that we consider long-term sustainability and undertake regional approaches to marine and coastal management."

The executive order creates a policy subcommittee of the Land and Water Resources Council that will oversee the implementation of the study's recommendations and improve interagency coordination and communication on marine policy.

"As a result of the study, we have a good idea of what needs to be done. This executive order will make sure those things happen," Governor Baldacci said.

The subcommittee will be responsible for setting yearly priorities and goals, determining necessary funding for priority activities and recommending changes in state laws and regulations.

The text of the executive order follows:

30 FY 06/07 March 28, 2007

AN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BAY MANAGEMENT STUDY

WHEREAS, Maine is privileged to possess more than 5,000 miles of coastline and over two million acres of public submerged lands and nearshore coastal waters, which together form one of the most productive and rich ecosystems in the world; and

WHEREAS, Maine's nearshore waters and the lands beneath them have historically sustained a variety of uses, including providing food, transportation, commerce, recreation, artistic inspiration, and spiritual sustenance; and

WHEREAS, the uses which our society makes of Maine's nearshore coastal resources are changing, diversifying, and intensifying; and

WHEREAS, Maine's nearshore coastal waters are an important component of the State's natural resource based economy; and

WHEREAS, growing coastal populations, increased commercial and recreational use of state waters, and the introduction of new potential uses, require improved methods and systems for coastal management, in order to optimize the public benefits of this broad expanse of the public domain; and

WHEREAS, the long-term sustainability of the coastal marine environment and the uses that depend upon it, rely upon the maintenance and enhancement of the integrity of its ecological systems; and

WHEREAS, regional nearshore management is the most promising first step in moving towards integrated, inclusive and ecosystem-based coastal governance in Maine, yet there is currently no forum to advance comprehensive marine and coastal management efforts on a regional scale; and

WHEREAS, the "Bay Management Study" conducted by the Land and Water Resources Council (PL 2003 c. 660 Part B) generated important recommendations which should be implemented to achieve the well-coordinated, efficient management of Maine's nearshore coastal resources and ensure their continued sustainable productivity into the future;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby order and direct as follows:

I. Establishment of a coastal and nearshore policy subcommittee of the Land and Water Resources Council

A coastal and nearshore policy subcommittee ("subcommittee") of the Land and Water Resources Council ("LWRC") is established to provide oversight of the implementation efforts of the Bay Management Study, and to improve interagency coordination and communication on marine policy. The subcommittee shall be responsible for oversight of all sections of this executive order. The subcommittee shall consist of commissioner-designated senior representatives of those state agencies with ocean and coastal management responsibilities, including the State Planning Office ("SPO"), Department of Marine Resources ("DMR"), Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP"), Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife ("DIFW") and Department of Conservation ("DOC"), and others as appropriate. Representatives from the SPO and DMR will chair this group and will coordinate its work as appropriate with that of interagency science and information efforts undertaken pursuant to recommendations in the Bay Management Study Data and Information report. The subcommittee will meet periodically as it deems appropriate and report to the LWRC at its quarterly meetings. During its first year and annually thereafter, the subcommittee will:

- Identify priorities for each fiscal year;
- Identify joint goals, measurable objectives, and projects within and across agencies to address these priorities;
- Assess the capabilities of agencies to carry out their ocean and coastal responsibilities;
- Determine necessary funding for priority actions; and
- Recommend any necessary legislative action or regulatory changes to implement priority actions and strategies.

The subcommittee shall report during the First Regular Session of the 124th and 125th Legislatures, to the joint standing committee having jurisdiction over marine resource matters, on the progress of the implementation efforts of the Bay Management Study.

II. Development of an interagency strategic plan

SPO will coordinate an effort among state agencies, including DEP, DMR, DIFW, and DOC to create an interagency strategic plan, identifying and facilitating coordinated actions to address agencies' nearshore coastal management goals. Initially, agencies shall undertake this as a pilot effort, selecting individual issues around which agencies can coordinate to implement the related policies of Maine's Coastal Management Policies Act. The first plan will be created by December 2008. Subsequent issue-specific plans should build on the first plan, such that in combination, they result in a more robust, multi-issue nearshore interagency strategic plan. This plan should be consistent with the bay management principles contained within the bay management report and should advance an ecosystem based approach to coastal management.

In 2010, to the extent deemed appropriate in light of the above efforts, SPO shall initiate and coordinate a broader, multi-sector interagency coastal strategic planning effort among DEP, DMR, DIFW, DOC and other pertinent natural resources agencies. This effort shall be integrated with state agency planning and budgeting efforts as required by the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), the Clean Water Act and other pertinent federal and state funding sources. This coastal strategic plan, covering the period 2012 – 2017 should form the basis for the 5-year strategic plan required by Section 309 of the CZMA.

III. Development of regional priorities

SPO and DMR will work with other state agencies that have coastal responsibilities to identify regional priorities for their work, and consider the extent to which they can assist with regional projects to improve coastal and nearshore resources. This work will be completed by August 2007.

IV. Annual Nearshore Management Meeting

SPO shall host an annual nearshore management meeting to advance integrated, ecosystem based coastal management. SPO should invite participation by regional grantees, interested stakeholders and others as appropriate, to assess progress and further develop in-state knowledge of the application of ecosystem-based management to nearshore systems.

V. Implementation Costs

The costs for implementing the duties included in this Executive Order shall be absorbed by the participating agencies.

Effective Date:

This Executive Order is effective on March 28, 2007.

John E. Baldacci, Governor

Governor Nominates Justices Mills and Gorman for Reappointment to the Maine Superior Court

March 29, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci nominated both Justice Nancy Mills and Justice Ellen Gorman today for reappointment to the Maine Superior Court.

Justice Mills of Cornville, has served on the Superior Court since 1993 and served as Chief Justice between 2001 and 2004. She has also been a District Court Judge and an Assistant District Attorney in Kennebec and Somerset counties.

Justice Gorman of Auburn, has served on the Court since 2000. Prior to that time, she was a Judge in Maine District Court for 11 years. She also worked for the Maine Workers Compensation Commission and has been a member of the Judicial Education Committee.

The nominations must be reviewed by the Judiciary Committee and confirmed by the State Senate.

Governor Baldacci Transfers Kennebec Arsenal Property to Developer

March 30, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci officially transferred the Kennebec Arsenal to Tom Niemann of Niemann Associates who plans to preserve and develop the property.

“I want to recognize this company for the work they have done,” Governor Baldacci said. “There are exciting things happening here in Augusta, and there is more on the way in Waterville and Brewer.”

The Governor and Niemann signed the closing documents transferring the property. Governor Baldacci also presented Niemann with the commemorative key to the Arsenal. The two were joined by state and city officials, including Augusta Mayor Roger Katz and state Sen. Elizabeth Mitchell, D-Kennebec.

“I would be remiss if I did not mention that this would not have gotten done without the leadership of our Governor,” Sen. Mitchell said. “For those who came with me knocking on his door, we always knew that we had a seat at the table.”

The Kennebec Arsenal will be a major public and economic benefit, serving as a multi-use facility on the banks of the Kennebec River. Public access to the wharf, trails and waterfront area of the site will be preserved; historic preservation covenants will ensure that the National Historic Landmark will keep its character for future generations; proceeds of the sale will help support the programs of Maine Housing; and the site will be redeveloped and put to active use for the people of Maine.

“City and state leaders, both in my Administration and in the Legislature – along with the private sector - have all worked together to forge a partnership that has helped make this project happen,” Governor Baldacci said. “The historic Kennebec Arsenal already is one of those places that helps make Maine a special place. Today begins a new chapter in the Arsenal’s storied place in Maine.”

Governor Mourns Soldier's Death in Afghanistan

April 3, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci learned today of the death of a soldier with Maine ties.

Spc. Christopher M. Wilson, 24, was killed in action March 29 while serving in Afghanistan. He was a member of the 10th Mountain Division.

Spc. Wilson has a young daughter in Maine, but the rest of his family is in Massachusetts.

"We will offer every support possible to Spc. Wilson's family," Governor Baldacci said Monday. "There is a young girl who has lost a father, and it's heartbreaking. She is in my thoughts and prayers."

Flags will be ordered flown at half-staff on the day of Spc. Wilson's funeral.

No further information is available at this time.

Governor Applauds Deal on Bond Package

April 3, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci applauded the work of the Legislature Monday night to reach agreement on a significant bond package.

“After much work and long nights, a bipartisan agreement has been reached that is a victory for this state,” Governor Baldacci said.

“I am particularly impressed that the Legislature recognized the importance of investing in innovation through bonds that will support research and development,” Governor Baldacci said. “The \$55 million proposed is an important installment in our efforts to create sustainable, private-sector jobs with good pay and good benefits.”

The investment package, which was unanimously approved Monday night by the Appropriations Committee, will send to voters \$295 million in bonds to support roads and bridges, research and development, the environment, natural resources and education.

Parts of the package will be divided to appear on three ballots, beginning in June of this year. Part two and three will appear on the ballots in November and in June 2008. The June portion will ask voters to approve a \$131.3 million package, with \$134 million in November and \$29.7 million in June 2008.

“I think about where the Legislature was when this discussion started,” Governor Baldacci said. “There was a great distance between Democrats and Republicans. Now there is a common understanding that we must invest not only in asphalt and gravel, but also in the underpinnings of the economy of tomorrow.”

“We’ve come a long way, but I still believe the health of our economy depends on a long-term commitment to innovation and economic development,” Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Honors Inaugural Dorothea Dix Award Winner

April 3, 2007

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci honored today the winner of the inaugural Dorothea Dix Award, Melissa Gattine of Spring Harbor Psychiatric Hospital in Westbrook. The award, which will be presented biennially, was created by the Legislature in 2005 by the statute designating the name change of what is now the Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Hospital.

“Melissa has over 15 years experience working with people with mental illness,” Governor Baldacci said. “It was while she was at the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Maine when she was tasked with establishing specialized teams of law enforcement officers – known as Crisis Intervention Teams – all across the state. These teams are teaching our law enforcement and corrections officers how to avoid, where possible, the arrest and incarceration of the mentally ill.”

Gattine established CIT programs in 16 Maine Police Departments over the course of five years. She was then asked to become the first person in the nation to design a CIT program for a correctional setting. Over the past three years, Gattine’s work has helped put CIT officers in six Maine jails.

“CIT officers give mental health consumers a sense of dignity, generating a new respect and outlook on both law enforcement and the mental health care system,” Governor Baldacci said. “This is an important service – and one that might not exist to this extent without the hard work of Melissa Gattine.”

The award and the hospital are named after Dorothea Dix, who was born in Hampden in 1805. She worked tirelessly advocating for better living conditions for the mentally ill in jails. Her work took to her to every state east of the Mississippi and eventually to 13 countries in Europe over nearly two decades.

Governor Baldacci Unveils Plan to Expand Health Coverage

April 4, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci released his plans today to continue Maine along the path toward universal health care.

The Governor's plan will build upon Dirigo Health Reform, Maine's groundbreaking program to provide affordable, comprehensive insurance to the state's uninsured and underinsured population.

"I am proud of what Dirigo has accomplished. We have helped small businesses provide insurance to their employees, we've given individuals a place to turn when the insurance market failed them, and we've saved lives," Governor Baldacci said. "We've helped to contain costs and we've focused on preventative care, which saves money and improves quality of life. But now is the time to take the next step."

"What we're fighting for here is to make sure that quality, affordable health care is available to every family in Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "Health care security is about real people, with real lives and real families. They work hard and play by the rules, yet too many of them are left out of the system. We will make sure quality health care is available for everyone."

Under the Governor's plan:

- New cost containments will be placed on MaineCare, the state's version of Medicaid.
- Improvements will be made in the delivery of MaineCare services to improve patient health and case management.
- Dirigo will be able to self-insure and will grow moderately.
- Dirigo will be made more affordable for small businesses and will refocus on the uninsured and underinsured.
- New rate regulations will be placed on the insurance industry.
- Market reforms, including a reinsurance plan, will be instituted to increase competition and provide consumers with more choices.
- Transparency will be increased in the rate-setting process.
- Insurers will be required to provide discounts for nonsmokers and worksite wellness programs.
- Once steps have begun to increase competition and make insurance more affordable, a play-or-pay system will be implemented. It will provide incentives for employers to provide insurance and will require individuals to have coverage.

"Health care reform is about more than just making sure everyone has insurance," Governor Baldacci said. "It's about encouraging people to be healthier and improving their quality of life. That's better for people, better for the state and better for the economy."

Governor Baldacci Signs Emergency Declaration and Advises Caution

April 5, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has signed an Emergency Declaration allowing power crews from other states to come in to Maine and to help restore power. The Emergency Declaration was signed around noontime today to expedite power restoration for the 250,000 – 275,000 individuals in the state currently without power.

Governor Baldacci has participated in several conference calls regarding the power outages and has been briefed by Central Maine Power and the Maine Emergency Management Agency.

The Governor encourages people to use caution, report any outages, not to touch any downed power lines, and to look out for one another.

“If you see things that could be dangerous, don’t hesitate to call; watch out for each other; and let us or the power company know what has taken place,” the Governor said. “If there are people who are vulnerable or who could be at risk, please let them know that there are warming stations and shelter availability.”

Governor Baldacci said that local emergency management agencies have been working with the Red Cross to open shelters and warming stations in necessary areas.

The Emergency Declaration will stay in effect until it is rescinded by the Governor. The text of the Emergency Declaration follows:

WHEREAS, the State of Maine is experiencing a severe winter storm that has left thousands of Maine homes and businesses out of power; and

WHEREAS, work crews will have to work many hours to restore power; and

WHEREAS, power restoration crews will be requested from other states and potentially from Canadian provinces to assist in power restoration; and

WHEREAS, federal rules determine the number of hours the driver of an electrical line repair vehicle may operate; and

WHEREAS, drivers of such vehicles must cease operations when they reach the federal limit on hours of operation, and therefore would have to cease power restoration; and

WHEREAS, these conditions threaten public health and safety and endanger public property if power cannot be restored to Maine homes and businesses; and

WHEREAS, the declaration of a State of Emergency will facilitate the granting of a waiver from the Federal Department of Transportation, pursuant to 40 CFR part 390.23 to allow these drivers to operate additional hours and otherwise operate effectively in this situation,

NOW THEREFORE, I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of Maine, find that these conditions constitute a civil emergency under 37-B M.R.S.A. section 742, and for the purpose of facilitating a waiver to Federal Department of Transportation Rules do hereby declare that a State of Emergency exists as of April 5, 2007.

John Elias Baldacci Governor Date: April 5, 2007 12:00 pm

Governor Baldacci Calls for More Public Comment, Environmental Study of Low-Level Military Training Flights Over 3 Counties

April 5, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci sent a letter today to Maine's congressional delegation concerning a plan by the Massachusetts Air National Guard to conduct low-level training flights over Western Maine.

"I have serious concerns about the proposed change and about the process," Governor Baldacci said. "I do not believe that enough time has been allowed for public comment, and I'm concerned that the environmental impact has not been fully considered."

The Massachusetts Air National Guard has proposed changing altitude restrictions on flights over parts of Franklin, Oxford and Somerset counties. Currently, military aircraft cannot conduct exercises below 2,800 feet in some areas and 6,300 feet in others. The change would lower the floor to 500 feet.

The stated purpose of the change is to allow pilots to practice low-level and low-speed air intercept missions.

In his letter to Sens. Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins and U.S. Reps. Tom Allen and Mike Michaud, Governor Baldacci asked for assistance in gaining intervenor status and for Maine's Department of Transportation to be the lead agency for the state.

Citing opposition to a similar proposal in the mid-1990s and concern over the potential effects on the three-county area, Governor Baldacci also asked that a more thorough process be used for determining the environmental impact of the low-level flights.

Governor Baldacci Honors Lifetime Achievements of Mainers

April 6, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci opened the 5th Remember ME project at the State House Friday morning by recalling personal stories from his own family. The project honored 37 individuals who live, or have lived, in nursing homes and residential care facilities around the state.

“My grandmother used to make a dish, it was a Middle Eastern dish called Leban - today it’s known more as yogurt,” recalled Governor Baldacci. “In order to make it, she always needed to have the batch she had made from before to be able to make the new stuff. In a lot of cases, we don’t spend enough time with our roots, our cultures and traditions to be able to pass them along to the next generation.”

About 250 people crowded the Hall of Flags for the ceremony, which honored a prestigious group, including war heroes, writers, journalists, nurses, teachers, mentors and leaders.

“A lot of you are World War II veterans,” said the Governor. “A lot of you have been successful in your lives in developing your businesses, your families and the next generation. Your work has created an opportunity for this state to continue to grow and prosper and have more opportunities in the future.”

The event was sponsored by the Maine Health Care Association.

Governor Baldacci Congratulates Scarborough's Academic Decathlon Team

April 9, 2007

SCARBOROUGH – Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated Scarborough High School's Academic Decathlon Team Monday for winning the state competition and wished them well in the national competition.

"The Academic Decathlon encourages students to actively learn and educate themselves in many areas – math, economics, arts, social sciences and speech, among other subjects," Governor Baldacci said. "It helps to build a broad range of knowledge. More importantly, it lets students have fun while learning both in and out of school."

The Scarborough High School Academic Decathlon Team will be competing in the nationals in Hawaii later this month. The Scarborough team has enjoyed a considerable amount of success in the event, including producing the overall top scoring scholarship winner in the entire country in his division at the national competition in 2006.

"These programs produce success stories – like the stories here at Scarborough High School," said the Governor. "This school has won 18 of the last 21 state championships, which is truly a remarkable achievement."

The popularity of the Decathlon is growing statewide with 18 teams competing in the state championship this year. Governor Baldacci told the students that more time should be spent honoring academic achievement and teachers.

"We are always there to honor the sports teams when they win, and that's important," said Governor Baldacci. "But we should be there more often to honor achievement in academics. Scarborough's Academic Decathlon Team certainly deserves to be honored here today."

Governor Baldacci Says Maine Continues to Lead in Health Care

April 10, 2007

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated the Portland Identification and Early Referral (PIER) Program today on receiving a \$12.4 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, citing it as another example that Maine leads the way in health care.

“By systematically engaging the community to identify early symptoms of psychotic illness, and by involving families of at-risk youth, they can help stem the progression of these symptoms,” Governor Baldacci said. “While the PIER program’s reach only extends to Cumberland County now, Maine values innovative, research-based programs that can help reduce the cost of mental health care in the long-term. We are invested in the success of these programs, not only in Cumberland County, but across the state.”

The grant will be used to continue the work at PIER, as well as to train up to four other sites throughout the country to replicate the work being done by PIER.

Governor Signs \$295 Million Bond Package

April 10, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci was joined today by members of the House and Senate as he signed a \$295 million bond package that will go to voters this June and November and in June 2008.

“As we transition our economy to the future, we need to provide more opportunities in our state,” the Governor said. “And we need to be able to preserve and protect our natural resources and make sure that our air is clean and our water is safe.”

Praising the Legislature for its collaboration and bipartisanship, he said “The members of leadership, with the Appropriations Committee and the committees in the Legislature have worked in an overwhelmingly bipartisan fashion to address issues that are important to the state’s future.” The bill required a two-thirds vote in the House and Senate in order to pass.

The package includes funding for a number of programs, including Land for Maine's Future, the New Century Community Program, the School Revolving Renovation Fund, the Municipal Investment Trust Fund and the establishment of a Riverside Community Development Program.

This June's vote will include a proposed \$113 million for roads, bridges, transit facilities and recreational trails as well as another \$18 million for grants supporting the construction of wastewater treatment facilities and improvement of Maine's public water systems.

This fall, \$43 million in funding for school renovations and cultural initiatives will be on the ballot. Also in November will be a \$50 million bond for research and development and another \$5 million in loan and grant funds for economic development. A \$35 million bond issue to be matched by at least \$21 million in private and public contributions would go toward conservation efforts with \$3 million of that going to the improvement of Maine's quality places, including among other things working waterfront initiatives, agricultural water-source grants and improvements to state parks and historic sites.

The June 2008 referendum includes a bond issue of nearly \$30 million for natural resource and environmental quality investments and additional funding for the State's transit infrastructure.

“It’s a great effort and you should all be proud,” the Governor said in closing. “Most importantly, the citizens will have a chance to vote on this in June and November, and we should recognize that our future is much more solid and secure because of your efforts.”

Before the signing ceremony began, Governor Baldacci led the group in a short tribute to Rep. Abigail Holman, who was killed in a skiing accident on Saturday.

Governor Baldacci Proclaims Disability Awareness Month in Maine

April 11, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has proclaimed the month of April as Disability Awareness Month throughout the state of Maine. The Governor issued the proclamation during a press conference in the Hall of Flags at the State House with the Maine Disability Advocacy Coalition.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, one in five residents of Maine over the age of 5 years has some type of disability; and

WHEREAS, disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to live independently, and participate in the economic, political, social, cultural and educational mainstream of our communities and State; and

WHEREAS, individuals with disabilities are our neighbors, friends and colleagues, and contribute significantly to the overall quality of life in Maine; and

WHEREAS, all persons regardless of any disability have the right to live their lives with dignity and respect as full participants in society; and

WHEREAS, public awareness and education can help us to recognize the factors that limit access and inclusion for persons with disabilities, and promote the removal of those barriers; and

WHEREAS, we must increase our efforts to assure that persons with disabilities have the same opportunities to explore and develop their abilities, pursue meaningful and productive lives, and contribute to their families, community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, achieving these goals for persons with disabilities will benefit all citizens of our state,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim April, 2007 as

DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

Governor Baldacci Conducts Ceremonial Signing of Andover College Bill

April 11, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined representatives from Andover College and State Representatives from Lewiston and Portland today for a ceremonial signing of LD 271, An Act to Permit Andover College to Issue Degrees Under New Ownership.

“Since its beginning as the Andover Institute of Business 40 years ago, Andover College has expanded to include campuses in Lewiston and Portland, and offers courses in business, education, health care, legal studies and travel and tourism for its students,” Governor Baldacci said. “Andover College offers certificates and degrees in fields that are specifically targeting the job markets in Lewiston, Portland and this entire state and can lead to better paying jobs for its students.”

The bill was sponsored by Rep. Elaine Makas (D-Lewiston). Andover College was purchased by Kaplan Higher Education Corporation in 2005. At that time, Andover College was given authority to issue degrees under its new ownership for one year, until full permission was granted by the Legislature. The Governor signed the emergency legislation, which will take effect immediately, so that Andover College may continue to issue degrees.

Governor Baldacci Applauds Bipartisan Efforts on Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

April 11, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the details today of his bill to implement the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

“The two most important things that we have a responsibility to do in government are to prepare our children for a bright future and to preserve and protect our natural resources for future generations,” Governor Baldacci said.

“Global warming is real. There is overwhelming scientific agreement that we, all of us, are changing the environment that sustains us,” Governor Baldacci said. “The stakes are incredibly high. If we allow climate change to continue, the world faces terrible consequences that will put at risk Maine’s economy and our quality of life.”

The Governor’s bill, called the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative Act of 2007, has broad, bipartisan support in the Legislature and among environmental and business groups.

The bill is sponsored in the Legislature by state Rep. Ted Koffman and state Sen. Philip Bartlett.

“Nationally, the politics of global warming have stood in the way of progress and environmental groups are pitted against industry and the business community,” said the Governor. “In Maine, it’s different. Working with Rep. Koffman, Sen. Bartlett, leaders in the House and Senate and the state’s environmental and business groups, we have been able to craft a plan that will produce real progress.”

RGGI is a coalition of 10 Northeastern states that have agreed to set limits on the emission of greenhouse gases. The coalition’s goals are to: • Reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions; • Encourage the lowest cost reductions of CO2 emissions; and • Establish a national model for a cap-and-trade program for carbon dioxide emissions.

Governor Baldacci’s plan also proposes to: • Provide funding for energy efficiency investments for businesses and residences across Maine; and • Ensure that electricity consumers are protected.

The Governor’s RGGI bill would: • Give the Department of Environmental Protection and the Public Utilities Commission the authority to create rules for Maine’s participation in RGGI; • Use a public auction for selling Maine’s carbon emission credits; • Dedicate the funds from the sale of carbon allowances to energy efficiency and price mitigation; • Recognize the high efficiency of some energy producers; • Create strict standards to protect the market and prevent manipulation; and • Build on the success of the Efficiency Maine program at the Public Utilities Commission in carrying out energy efficiency programs statewide.

RGGI will use a flexible, market-based, cap-and-trade system. This system controls the right to emit by setting an emissions cap, but allows companies to trade carbon credits to meet their emission

requirements. The total number of emission credits adds up to the total emissions cap for the region. This system allows flexibility for companies to reduce emissions in the most cost-effective manner and to sell their allowances so carbon reductions are made in most efficient manner across the 10-state region.

Governor Baldacci stressed the link between Maine's climate and economy, saying if one changes, so will the other.

"We know climate change is real. Stop in any place where hunters and fishermen gather and they'll tell you. The ice is late to come and early to leave. There's no snow to track deer in the fall," Governor Baldacci said. "Ask loggers. The ground isn't frozen enough for them to work for much of the winter. If things don't change, our coastal communities will be threatened by rising sea levels and our fishing industries endangered."

"We all have a part to play. Working together, as we did in crafting the RGGI legislation, we can make a difference for our state, for our children and for the future."

Business Answers Receives Its 50,000th Inquiry

April 11, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci fielded the 50,000th business inquiry for the Business Answers program today as Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) Commissioner John Richardson and representatives from DECD celebrated the program's milestone.

Governor Baldacci was on hand to return a phone call from Melonie Ross who called to inquire about required state business licenses for restaurants as she prepares to open her own eatery in Avon.

"Starting and operating a business presents many questions for business owners, but there is help available to them through DECD," said Governor Baldacci. "Business Answers streamlines the question and answer process and it is just one of the ways we are keeping Maine business-friendly.

Business Answers is managed through the DECD and provides information about doing business in Maine to current and potential business owners. Since the Web site, www.maine.gov/businessanswers, was established in July 2003, Business Answers has received 50,000 phone calls, e-mails and Web inquiries for an average of more than 50 a day during the business week. The toll-free number, (800) 872.3838, was launched in 1986 and information can also be accessed through business.answers@maine.gov.

"We are happy that Maine residents are utilizing this program and we are happy to provide support to the state's small businesses," said Commissioner Richardson. "We are here for Maine's business community and we want to streamline the business process so it is a positive experience for everyone."

Along with licensing info, the program also offers business start-up kits, customized information packets on self-employment, hiring employees and required labor posters and quality referrals to DECD and other sources of financial and technical assistance.

Governor Baldacci Says Paper Industry is Key to Rural Economy

April 12, 2007

ORONO – Governor John E. Baldacci spoke today to representatives from Maine's paper industry, calling it the backbone of the state's rural economy.

"This industry and what you represent in this state is enormous," Governor Baldacci said. "The paper industry has seen difficult times over the last five years, but the forest products industry as a whole is still the largest industry in our manufacturing sector."

The Governor spoke to about 50 people during the Paper Days Open House at the University of Maine in Orono. He highlighted some efforts made by the state to make Maine more business friendly, including eliminating the Business Equipment Tax and instituting the Pine Tree Zone program, which assists new businesses and expanding businesses throughout the state.

"We give up on taxation because we want good jobs with good pay and we know that is also what the people want," said the Governor. "Lincoln Paper and Tissue used a Pine Tree Zone to reopen their facility, and now they have a \$21 million payroll. The ripple impact on that amount of money and how it affects the communities is astronomical."

Governor Baldacci said that more should be done to help industry in Maine, including improving Maine's tax policy through reducing administration at all levels, reducing energy costs, improving the quality of Maine's timber supply, identify vulnerabilities, and examining ways to support work force infrastructure.

"These are good jobs and good companies," said the Governor. "I want you to know that you have a partner in the Governor's Office with the Governor's team."

Governor Baldacci Joins Hampden Students in Honoring Veterans

April 13, 2007

HAMPDEN – Governor John E. Baldacci joined about 150 8th-grade students at Reeds Brook Middle School today to honor hundreds of veterans. The event was part of the school's Patriots' Day celebration.

"There should be more events like this one, honoring veterans in schools, all around the country," Governor Baldacci said. "To honor a veteran is to honor the people who put your freedoms and rights ahead of their own lives and families."

Governor Baldacci told the students and veterans gathered for the event that Mainers are proud of their troops and veterans and continue to show their support throughout the state.

"When we have a fallen soldier, the entire community comes out to support the family and friends," said the Governor. "When we have a troop sendoff or a return ceremony, hundreds of people show up to wish them well or welcome them home. Every Veterans Day, thousands of people line the streets to say thanks to our veterans at parades all over the state."

In addition to Governor Baldacci, the students and veterans were treated to singing by the Reeds Brook Middle School Chorus, dancing by the Top Hat Dance Studio, a letter from President George H.W. Bush, a USO show and live feed from Baghdad that allowed deployed troops to talk to the students and veterans.

"The sooner you learn the stories of veterans and the importance of the service they have given," said the Governor, "the sooner you will realize that you should support them any way you can."

Maine Tax Deadline Extended Until April 19

April 17, 2007

MAINE REVENUE SERVICES, P.O. Box 1067, AUGUSTA, MAINE, 04332-1067

For Information, Call MRS: (207) 624-7854

AUGUSTA, Maine: Jerome Gerard, Acting Executive Director of Maine Revenue Services, announced today that victims of the major storm affecting several northeastern states on Monday, April 16, will have two additional days to file their Maine tax returns and submit tax payments. This relief is limited to any tax return and/or payment with a due date that falls on April 17, 2007.

The new deadline will be midnight, April 19.

To qualify for relief, taxpayers directly impacted by the storm should write "APRIL 16 STORM" across the top of their return. Taxpayers who e-file their returns can use their software's "disaster" feature, if available. Taxpayers who use Maine's free I-file application may do so without specific reference to the storm. Taxpayers covered by this relief who are charged penalties and interest for filing returns or paying taxes late during the relief period should contact MRS for waiver of the penalties and interest.

The Internal Revenue Service is also extending the tax deadline until midnight on April 19.

Taxpayers with questions about federal tax relief associated with the April 16 storm should contact the IRS at 800-829-1040 or go to the IRS web site at www.irs.gov for posted information.

Taxpayers with questions about their Maine taxes are encouraged to contact MRS at 207-626-8475 for Income Tax or 207-624-9693 for Sales Tax, or visit the MRS web site at www.maine.gov/revenue.

Governor Baldacci Advises Caution Following Spring Storm

April 17, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci urged Maine citizens to put safety first following the intense spring storm that has affected much of the state over the past couple of days. The Governor said the storm is the most destructive natural disaster seen by the state since the ice storm of 1998.

“I’m asking our citizens to put safety first for themselves and their families. Don’t take any unnecessary risks,” Governor Baldacci said. “I’m also asking for patience. It will take time to assess, plan and recover. In the meantime, no one will be left out in the cold, wet weather. We have established shelters with food and water in areas hardest hit by the storm. If you are in need, you will be taken care of.”

Governor Baldacci advised people to call 911 for emergencies, 211 for a list of shelters and to report any damage to their homes or businesses to their town.

Power restoration efforts are underway in many communities, Governor Baldacci said, but it could still take a couple of days for service to be restored in some areas.

“I’ve been in touch with federal officials and FEMA Region 1 for assistance, and they have been very helpful providing support and being able to move extra line crews to repair electric lines and restore service to our citizens,” said the Governor. “We are also working with FEMA to get financial help to individuals and businesses as quickly as possible.”

The Governor said that the worst of the storm has passed, but high winds and rain is expected to continue through tomorrow. He said the State of Emergency, which went into effect late Sunday night, will continue for at least a few more days.

Governor Saddened by Virginia Shootings; Orders Flags Lowered Until Sunday

April 17, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci issued the following statement today in response to the shooting at Virginia Tech on Monday.

“I know I speak for all Mainers when I say our prayers are with the Virginia Tech community,” Governor Baldacci said. “We are all saddened by this terrible, violent loss of life, and our condolences go out to the families who are suffering.”

Governor Baldacci talked Tuesday with the Maine Department of Education and the State’s Community College and University Systems about the shootings.

“Both the University System and the Community College system have extensive emergency plans,” Governor Baldacci said. “The University of Maine had a full drill – from the president on down – in February.”

At the Governor’s direction, the University System will review its policies and procedures. A major review of the Community Colleges’ emergency planning began last year.

All public K-12 schools in Maine are required to have an emergency plan. The Department of Education is increasing training for schools on emergency preparedness, which includes hazard analysis and coordination with local law enforcement.

In addition, Governor Baldacci ordered that flags around the state be lowered to half staff until sunset April 22, 2007, for the victims of the Virginia Tech shootings.

On Monday, President Bush ordered flags lowered until April 22 on federal buildings, military posts and embassies.

Governor Baldacci Declares a Day of Mourning at Request of Virginia Governor

April 19, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci, as a show of solidarity with the Commonwealth of Virginia, has declared Friday, April 20, 2007, a Day of Mourning for the victims of the Virginia Tech shootings.

“We will stand with our friends from Virginia and with the Virginia Tech community,” Governor Baldacci said. “This tragedy is national in scope, and on some level touches us all. The survivors of this shooting and the families of the victims will remain in our thoughts and prayers.”

Governor Baldacci is asking that bells around the state ring at noon on Friday in honor of the Virginia Tech victims.

Virginia Governor Timothy Kaine declared Friday a statewide Day of Mourning in Virginia and sent a letter to other governors asking them to join the effort.

“As this tragedy impacts not just Virginia, I encourage you to consider standing with Virginia,” Governor Kaine wrote in an April 18 letter to other governors.

“It is clear that difficult days lie ahead as we all embrace the grieving process that is sure to come. Again, I thank you for your thoughts and prayers and ask that you keep Virginia Tech in your hearts and minds as we all work together to overcome this horrific tragedy,” Governor Kaine continued.

Maine Tax Filing Date Further Extended for April 16 Storm Victims

April 19, 2007

AUGUSTA: Jerome Gerard, Acting Executive Director of Maine Revenue Services (MRS), announced today that victims of the major storm affecting several Northeastern states on Monday, April 16, will have until April 26, 2007, to file their Maine tax returns and submit tax payments. This relief is limited to any tax return and/or payment with a due date that falls on April 17, 2007, and is the same extension period as has been granted by the Internal Revenue Service.

MRS previously extended the filing date by two days, to April 19. In light of the ongoing consequences of the storm, however, the date is being further extended to allow affected taxpayers additional time to file their returns.

To qualify for relief, taxpayers directly impacted by the storm should write "APRIL 16 STORM" across the top of their return. Taxpayers who e-file their returns can use their software's "disaster" feature, if available. Taxpayers who use Maine's free I-file application may do so without specific reference to the storm. Taxpayers covered by this relief who are charged penalties and interest for filing returns or paying taxes late during the relief period should contact MRS to apply for waiver of penalties and interest.

Taxpayers with questions about federal tax relief associated with the April 16 storm should contact the IRS at 800-829-1040 or go to the IRS web site at www.irs.gov for posted information. Taxpayers with questions about their Maine taxes are encouraged to contact MRS at 207-626-8475 for Income Tax or 207-626-8483 for Sales Tax, or visit the MRS web site at www.maine.gov/revenue.

Governor Requests Disaster Declaration for Patriots' Day Storm

April 18, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today requested a disaster declaration from the federal government as teams from the Federal Emergency Management Agency began assessing damage in the state.

Governor Baldacci also received an update about storm damage and recovery efforts at the Maine Emergency Management Agency.

“The effects of this storm will be felt long after the rain has stopped falling and the wind has stopped blowing,” Governor Baldacci said. “We’re now doing everything we can to speed the recovery process, to repair roads and bridges, and get people back home and back to work.”

Earlier in the day, Governor Baldacci and MEMA Director Rob McAleer conducted a flyover with the United States Coast Guard of Coastal and Southern Maine to see the damage caused by the Patriots’ Day Storm.

“This storm has left a scar on large areas of the state,” Governor Baldacci said. “It will take a little while to get back where we were before the storm, but we will get there. I’m asking people to be safe, to not take any unnecessary risks and to be patient.”

Early estimates put damage to public property and infrastructure from the storm at more than \$11 million with only four counties partially reporting. The estimate does not include damage to homes or businesses and is certain to grow as more information is collected.

Eight assessment teams from FEMA are on the ground today and are working in coordination with MEMA and local officials. Individuals and businesses should report damage to their towns.

The Governor is scheduled to fly over the areas again on Thursday with local and state emergency management personnel and to tour impacted areas in Lincoln and York counties by car.

Charles Summers, regional administrator for the U.S. Small Business Administration, also will accompany Governor Baldacci on the tour.

Governor Saddened by Death of Michael Sockalexis

April 23, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci issued the following statement today after learning of the death of Michael J. Sockalexis.

“I was deeply saddened to learn about Mike’s death. He and I worked together when he was the Tribal Representative to the Maine Legislature,” Governor Baldacci said. “He was very wise and a great asset to the state. He was able to bring people together and was someone who others wanted to work with. We need more people like him in public service. He will be missed.”

Governor's Council on Quality of Place Holds First Meeting

April 19, 2007

AUGUSTA – The Governor's Council on Quality of Place held its first meeting Thursday in the Cabinet Room at the State House.

"Maine is attracting more and more businesses and people to our state every day," Governor John Baldacci said. "People are coming here because of the qualities that make Maine precious and unique. This council is part of our overall strategy to take advantage of this state's assets and build upon them for the future."

A letter from the Governor was read to the Council at the beginning of the meeting. The Governor was unable to attend.

The Council will examine the way land-use decisions are made and will recommend a plan for protecting, investing in and enhancing Maine's distinctive quality of place. Last year, the Brookings Institution recommended that Maine protect its open spaces and natural resources as an important element in growing the state's economy.

Alan Caron of GrowSmart Maine and Mark Muro of the Brookings Institution were two of the morning's featured speakers.

The Council is headed by Chairman Dick Barringer, professor of public policy and community development at the Muskie School. The Council on Maine's Quality of Place will collaborate with the Governor's Council on Jobs, Innovation and the Economy, stakeholders and state agencies.

Members of the Council include: Eleanor Kinney, Natural Resources Council of Maine; Bruce Hazard, Mountain Counties Heritage Network; Evan Richert, Orono town planner; Kevin Mattson, Harper's Development Co. and FAME board; Hilary Basset, Greater Portland Landmarks; John Rohman, Creative Economy Council; Tracy Michaud Stutzman, Maine Highlands Guild and REALIZE! Maine; former state Rep. John Marsh; former state Sen. Barbara Trafton; Ken Young, Kennebec Valley Council of Governments; Mary Kate Reny, Reny's Department Stores; and Jay Espy, Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Additional appointments to the Council are pending.

Recovery Loans Available for Storm Damage

April 20, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today announced that the Maine State Housing Authority will be offering low-interest loans for families whose homes were damaged or destroyed by the Patriots' Day Storm.

"This program was created to give families a fast response, to make money for repairs available as soon as possible," Governor Baldacci said. "It's difficult to comprehend the damage some areas of the state have suffered unless you see it up close. We were hit hard and a lot of people need help. This will give them a place to turn."

The Maine Housing Disaster Recovery Loan program was started last year after a damaging spring storm struck York County.

The loans will be available to residents in any county that is declared a disaster area by the federal government. Once the declaration has been made, the loans will be available.

Governor Baldacci discussed the program after meeting Friday with Federal Emergency Management Agency Director R. David Paulison in Portland.

The Governor and Paulison discussed disaster response and recovery before being briefed about storm damage in Portland and traveling to areas in York County that were hit by the storm.

Loans are available for both home repair and replacement. Home repair loans of up to \$15,000 are available at 3 percent interest for families who qualify. Home replacement loans of up to \$303,000 are available at 5.3 percent interest.

There are income restrictions on the loans. In York County, for example, household income cannot exceed \$75,000; in Cumberland County, the threshold is \$78,000.

Loans from the program are made through participating local banks. Kennebunk Savings Bank is partnering with the Maine State Housing Authority for York County residents. MSHA is working to bring additional partner banks into the program for other counties.

For more information about the loan program, people can contact their local banks or call the Maine State Housing Authority at 626-4600 or toll free at 1-800-452-4603.

Governor Baldacci Announces Winners of 2007 Governor's Service Awards

April 23, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci handed out nine awards today for volunteer efforts at the 2007 Governor's Service Awards.

"My grandfather used to tell me, 'Life is like a glass. Whatever you put into it is going to be whatever you get out of it,'" said Governor Baldacci. "In front of me, I can see that these glasses are more than overflowing because of what they do on a regular basis."

The awards were presented as follows: Volunteer of the Year: Jane Card of Cape Porpoise National Service Volunteer Award: Alice White of Baileyville Outstanding Public Sector Volunteer: Deborah Davenport of Naples Corporate Volunteerism Award: Jackson Laboratory of Bar Harbor Excellence in Volunteer Administration: Linda Danielson of Brunswick

In addition to the five award winners, the Governor also awarded four Exemplary Service Awards to nominees who did not receive an award in the category in which they were nominated, but whose service deserved to be highlighted. Those recipients include: Cheryl Rust of Wiscasset, Dr. R. Stephen Drane of Auburn, Rolf Staples of Bangor and Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield.

"In terms of the gold standard of workers in Maine, and what you do to reflect what takes place in the state, we're all very fortunate," said the Governor. "The ripples that you send out greatly enhance the reputation of Maine."

This is the 19th year of the Governor's Service Awards. They were created in an effort to celebrate and recognize the exemplary work of Maine's volunteer community.

At a separate afternoon ceremony at the Maine State Museum, more than 350 recipients of the Roll of Honor were recognized by the Governor for contributing 500 or more hours of documented service to their communities during the course of 12 months.

State of Emergency Lifted; Much Work Remains for State

April 23, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today lifted the State of Emergency for Maine that was put into place for the Patriots' Day Storm that battered much of Maine.

"I signed the emergency declaration so that we could react immediately to the effects of this massive storm and to help power companies restore electrical service as quickly as possible," Governor Baldacci said. "We are out of immediate danger, and there's no need for the State of Emergency to continue."

"Our work, however, is not complete," Governor Baldacci continued. "Many communities still face a difficult recovery. I will continue to work with the Maine Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, and towns and counties to get help to people who need it."

The last storm-related power outages were repaired Saturday, and there are no members of the Maine Army National Guard remaining on active duty responding to the storm.

Governor Baldacci made the decision to end the State of Emergency after meeting today with Gen. John Libby, commissioner of the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, MEMA Director Rob McAleer and other members of senior staff.

Water test kits are available from county emergency management agencies.

Personal property damage should be reported to towns. The reports will help determine the level of federal aid available to the state.

Governor Baldacci Swears In Cuddy and Mills to Superior Court

April 24, 2007

AUGUSTA – Bangor Attorney Kevin M. Cuddy was sworn in as a member of the Maine Superior Court by Governor John E. Baldacci today.

“We are very honored,” Governor Baldacci said to Cuddy. “You had a wonderful confirmation hearing and you have a tremendous reputation of service. We are honored to have you serving the citizens in this new capacity.”

Cuddy is a former assistant U.S. Attorney in Washington, D.C., and Maine. He has also worked for the Federal Communications Commission. He’s been in private practice since 1973 and has argued cases at every level of the judicial system, including the Maine Supreme Judicial Court and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Cuddy has served as the president of the Maine Trial Lawyers Association, the Maine Bar Foundation and the Maine Chapter of American Board of Trial Advocates.

He was appointed to the Select Committee on Workers’ Compensation by Governors Longley and Brennan, and to the Select Committee on Judicial Nominations by Governors King and Baldacci.

Cuddy is married and lives in Holden. He has three adult sons.

Justice Nancy Mills was sworn in today for re-appointment as a member of the Maine Superior Court.

Justice Mills of Cornville has served on the Superior Court since 1993 and served as Chief Justice between 2001 and 2004. She has also been a District Court Judge and an Assistant District Attorney in Kennebec and Somerset counties.

“We’re lucky to have the quality of Superior Court Justices, like Justice Mills, in this state,” said the Governor, “and I am happy that Justice Cuddy will enhance that quality for years to come.”

Governor's Statement on the Death of Former Rep. Thomas Kilcoyne

April 24, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci released the following statement today after learning of the death of former state Rep. Thomas Kilcoyne of Gardiner.

“For the second time this week, we’ve heard sad news about a former member of the Legislature,” Governor Baldacci said. “Tommy was a very kind man and an effective lawmaker. He worked hard to try to get things done. My condolences go out to his family.”

Former Tribal Representative Michael J. Sockalexis passed away on Sunday.

Remains of Vietnam-Era Downed Airman Coming Home

April 25, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today learned that the remains of Air Force Lt. Col. Paul E. Getchell of Portland have been found in Laos and will be returned to the United States.

Lt. Col. Getchell was killed in action during a bombing mission on Jan. 12, 1969. His remains were discovered as part of an investigation led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command. The search began in 1995, but recovery was not complete until 2005.

Lt. Col. Getchell was identified along with Col. Norman D. Eaton of Weatherford, Okla.

“The news that Lt. Col. Getchell has been found brings a mixture of sadness and relief,” Governor Baldacci said. “He’s been gone for such a long time, and his recovery surely reopens the grief for all those who knew and loved him. At the same time, I hope there’s some sense of relief that he is finally coming home – an opportunity for closure, for mourning and for public tribute in honor of a man who died in the service of his country.”

Governor Baldacci spoke Wednesday with Teresa Getchell, Lt. Col. Getchell’s widow.

“This is just an incredibly painful ordeal,” Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Baldacci ordered that flags be flown at half-staff on the day of Lt. Col. Getchell’s funeral. Details of the arrangements are not available.

Six Maine Counties Qualify for Federal Disaster Aid

April 25, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci received word today that President Bush has signed a major disaster declaration for six Maine counties as a result of the Patriots' Day Storm that struck the state last week.

The six counties are Androscoggin, Cumberland, Kennebec, Knox, Oxford and York. Other counties can be added to the declaration as damage is verified.

"This is an encouraging first step from the federal government," Governor Baldacci said. "The declaration makes it possible for work to begin on repairing and rebuilding the roads, bridges and public infrastructure that was destroyed in the storm."

As it stands, the declaration covers only damage to public property. A separate determination must be made as to whether residents and businesses in the state qualify for individual federal assistance.

"It's crucial that people report damage to their homes and businesses," Governor Baldacci said. "We need to gather as much information as possible about the extent of the storm's impact."

Residents of York County should call 324-1578 to report storm damage. Cumberland County residents should call 1-877-372-7363. In other locations, damage should be reported to town or city offices.

"Ultimately, we expect a larger area to qualify for federal assistance," Governor Baldacci said. "Today's announcement will allow us to move quickly toward recovery."

Governor Baldacci requested the disaster declaration in a letter sent April 18 to the President.

Governor Baldacci Visits Businesses Damaged by Storm

April 26, 2007

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci visited New Meadows Lobster Thursday morning, a business that suffered more than \$300,000 in damage as a result of the storm that hit Maine less than two weeks ago. New Meadows Lobster has bounced back quickly and will be ready to open for business tomorrow.

“As I have traveled across the state and talked with people who have lost their homes and have seen their communities torn apart by raging water and high winds, I have been struck by the resilience of the Maine people,” Governor Baldacci said. “They are tough, and they don’t let little things like record tides and 80 mile per hour wind gusts keep them down. I am convinced – absolutely – that Maine will be open and ready when tourists start making their way to the state during the height of the summer season.”

Governor Baldacci said that President Bush yesterday approved a portion of the disaster declaration request issued by the state last week. Six counties have qualified for federal aid to repair public property damage so far. More counties could still qualify. The Governor said that personal property could qualify as well, but residents and business owners need to report any damage they have incurred from the storm.

“While the reports don’t guarantee that anyone will receive direct assistance, they do help us make the case that the individuals and businesses need federal help,” said the Governor. “And they are the first step to putting direct federal aid into the hands of people who need it most.”

To make reports of damage, residents of York County should call 324-1578, residents of Cumberland County should call 1-877-372-7363, and residents in other areas should report their damage to their town offices.

The state is also offering assistance in the form of low-cost loans. The Finance Authority of Maine has created two programs that will provide loans to businesses hit by the storm and Maine Housing has programs to help people make repairs to their homes or to replace them entirely if they have been damaged beyond repair.

“I can’t stress how important it is for people to report their damage,” Governor Baldacci said. “It won’t just help them, but it could make the difference for their entire community.”

Earlier in the day, Governor Baldacci visited DiMillo’s in Portland. The DiMillo family estimates their marina to have \$100,000 - \$150,000 in damage from the storm.

Governor Vetoes Racino Bill; House Sustains Veto

April 26, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today vetoed L.D. 805, a bill that would have allowed the expansion of slot machine gambling into Washington County.

“My opposition to the expansion of gambling in Maine is well documented and unwavering,” Governor Baldacci said in his veto statement. “As presented, this bill would authorize doubling the total number of slot machines statewide, and would bring gaming into a part of the State that currently has none.”

Supporters of a slot machine and harness race track facility in Washington County gathered enough signatures to place a question on November’s ballot seeking voter approval for the project. The Governor’s veto ensures that voters will have the final say on the expansion of gambling.

“What is most troubling about this bill, however, is that it would expand gambling without the approval of Maine’s citizens,” Governor Baldacci said. “Major expansions of gaming have justifiably been brought before the people of Maine through the citizen initiative process.”

“Gaming proposals like L.D. 805, and the one approved by the voters in November 2003, so alter the fabric of the State that all of its citizens, not just the elected members of the Legislative and Executive branches, deserve an opportunity to be heard.”

The veto was sustained by the House of Representatives, with 92 members voting to sustain and 38 voting to override.

Governor Baldacci Shows Support for Youth Anti-Tobacco Summit

April 27, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci took part in an anti-tobacco summit aimed at high school students Friday morning. The Governor spoke during the breakfast portion of the two-day summit.

“Last year, Maine was honored by the American Lung Association for being the first state to receive all A’s for tobacco control – a feat that no other state had accomplished,” Governor Baldacci said. “We received this honor for a number of reasons, including the fact that in 10 years youth smoking in Maine had dropped over 60%.”

Governor Baldacci said that events like the one put on by the Maine Youth Action Network and the Partnership for a Tobacco Free Maine educate people about the dangers of smoking and added to the American Lung Association’s decision to give Maine straight A’s.

“The extraordinary individuals here today, who get involved, make their voices heard and develop the messages that resonate with their peers, are the ones who make the biggest difference,” said the Governor. “Keep up the good work.”

Governor Baldacci Presents Awards for Diversity

April 27, 2007

SOUTH PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci presented four awards today for Excellence in Diversity Leadership. The Governor made the presentations during the Strengthening Maine's Competitiveness Through Diversity Luncheon.

"A leader is someone who guides or directs; taking others down a path toward the future while instilling confidence in those who are following. A courageous leader guides, directs and instills confidence, but does so while taking others down a path that is often less traveled," Governor Baldacci said. "The award winners with us this afternoon all reflect the qualities necessary to be known as a courageous leader."

The award winners are Bowdoin College President Barry Mills for Leadership in Education; Bob Peixotto, a member of the Office of the President for L.L. Bean, for Leadership in Business; and Southern Maine Community College President James Ortiz and Joel Rogers, Manager of Seaside Rehabilitation and Health Care, jointly accepting the award for Leadership in Workforce Development.

"Economic development grows stronger when diversity is introduced in an area because it encourages new ideas and a new way of thinking," said the Governor. "Frankly, we need diversity to progress, evolve and grow as a state."

Governor Baldacci announced the formation of a task force to look into creating a Diversity Employment and Business Resource Center. The task force will be lead by the Department of Labor, the NAACP and the University of Maine System. The idea for the center is to be connected to a college or university and be a clearinghouse for people of color looking for jobs or business opportunities in Maine.

"The fact that such a task force is being created is a significant step forward and hopefully one of many steps forward," said the Governor.

Tonight, Governor Baldacci will participate in the 5th Annual Celebration of Excellence in Education sponsored by the Portland Branch of the NAACP. The event recognizes and celebrates the educational accomplishments of students of color graduating from area colleges.

Governor Swears In New Chief of Maine State Police

April 30, 2007

AUGUSTA – Patrick Fleming was sworn in today as the new Chief of the Maine State Police. Governor Baldacci conducted the ceremony in the Fallen Heroes Conference Room at State Police Headquarters in Augusta.

Col. Fleming has spent more than 20 years with the Maine State Police and most recently was the lieutenant in charge of special investigations, which includes Liquor Licensing, Gaming and Weapons, Gambling Control, and the Executive Protection Unit. As part of the appointment, Fleming was promoted from lieutenant to colonel.

“This is an important day because this is an important organization,” Governor Baldacci said. “I feel very strongly about the core principals and values of the Maine State Police, and I offer congratulations to you and your family.”

“This is a good man in an important position,” said the Governor. “We’ve done the state good today.”

Col. Fleming was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in 2004. From 2000 to 2004, he was the sergeant in charge of the Executive Protection Unit, which provides security for the Governor and other dignitaries. Lt. Fleming was first assigned to the EPU in 1993.

He joined the State Police in 1984 and served as a Trooper in North Anson, Farmington and Fairfield.

He has a bachelor’s degree in management and an associate’s degree in criminal justice from the University of Maine.

He lives in Fairfield.

Col. Fleming was joined at the ceremony by his wife, Norleen, their two sons, Daniel and Isiah, several other friends and family and members of the Maine State Police.

Governor Baldacci Swears In Gorman to Superior Court

April 30, 2007

AUGUSTA – Justice Ellen Gorman was sworn in for reappointment to the Maine Superior Court by Governor John E. Baldacci today.

“Judge Gorman has earned this reappointment,” Governor Baldacci said. “Our court system maintains a high level of dignity, honor and integrity. We know that she will continue to add to that reputation on the bench.”

Justice Gorman of Auburn has served on the Court since 2000. Prior to that time, she was a Judge in Maine District Court for 11 years. She also worked for the Maine Workers Compensation Commission and has been a member of the Judicial Education Committee.

Six Additional Maine Counties Qualify for Federal Disaster Aid

April 30, 2007

AUGUSTA – Six more Maine counties have qualified for federal aid related to the Patriots' Day Storm.

Governor John Baldacci received word today that President Bush has added Franklin, Hancock, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Somerset and Waldo counties to the list of declared major disaster areas.

Androscoggin, Cumberland, Kennebec, Knox, Oxford and York counties were declared disaster areas on April 25.

"Maine is still working to recover from the storm," Governor Baldacci said. "And we are still working with the federal government to assess the damage and help as many people as possible receive the assistance they need."

As it stands, the declaration covers only damage to public property. A separate determination must be made as to whether residents and businesses in the state qualify for individual federal assistance.

"It's crucial that people report damage to their homes and businesses," Governor Baldacci said. "We need to gather as much information as possible about the extent of the storm's impact."

Governor Baldacci requested the disaster declaration in a letter sent April 18 to the President. Washington County was included in the original request along with the 12 counties that have been declared. A declaration there is still pending.

Governor Baldacci Awards Service Learning Projects

May 1, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci awarded students from four schools with Service-Learning Exceptional Project Awards Tuesday morning. The schools participated in the projects through KIDS Consortium, a Lewiston-based, nationally recognized leader in the service-learning movement.

“Fast forward and you are going to be Governor of the State of Maine, you’re going to be Congressmen of Maine, you’re going to be Senators of Maine, you’re going to be leaders in your communities and you’re going to be leaders in your professions. You are our leaders,” the Governor told the students. “To have an educational system which recognizes that you need to be part of your communities and the communities need to be part of what you’re doing is great because you are so important and vital to your communities and your schools.”

Governor Baldacci congratulated the students and schools receiving awards, but reminded others that they should still be proud of the work they have done to improve their communities.

“Talented, energetic students put their skills to work on behalf of their community. They help solve problems and to bring communities closer together,” Governor Baldacci said. “Long after the students have moved on, the projects they developed continue to make a difference. That is the legacy of service learning.”

The list of award winners follows:

Eddington School – Sun Safety Awareness

Forest Hills Middle School (Jackman) – World War II Prisoner of War Camp Preservation and Honor

Lyman Moore Middle School (Portland) – Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness

Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Governor Baxter School for the Deaf and the Portland Museum of Art (Falmouth) - John Brewster Jr. Project

Additional information on the Service-Learning projects from each school is available upon request.

First Lady Launches Healthy Schools, Healthy Kids TV Series

May 1, 2007

Augusta, May 1, 2007—"Healthy Schools, Healthy Kids," a new TV series hosted by Maine First Lady Karen Baldacci will highlight school programs that are improving the health of Maine's children and adolescents.

The programs will be aired on Time Warner/Channel 9 cable stations across Maine beginning at 11 a.m., Friday, May 4, and at 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. Sunday, May 6.

The First Lady traveled to award-winning school systems to talk with people working to improve student health and to hear from students about the importance of good health in their lives.

She also has interviewed state-level policymakers and local school administrators, who will share stories about the partnerships that are key to successful school health programs.

The first two shows will provide an overview of school health in Maine, including the Healthy Maine Partnerships. The remaining programs will showcase school systems that demonstrate excellence in one or more of four components of school health: school health services, school site health promotion/wellness programs, health education, school nutrition services and physical education/physical activity.

Each of the seven half-hour shows in the series will be broadcast three times a week during May and June. Please visit the Time Warner/Channel 9 program guide or the school health Web site at www.maineeshp.com for more details on program times and topics.

Governor Baldacci Conducts Ceremonial Signing of Bill Clarifying Snowshoe Hare Trapping

May 1, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci was joined by Rep. James Campbell (R-Newfield) and Rep. Walter Wheeler (D-Kittery) today for a ceremonial signing of LD 503, An Act Regarding the Authority of the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to Issue Licenses to Beagle Clubs to Trap Snowshoe Hares.

“With this legislation, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Commissioner is allowed to issue permits to beagle clubs, allowing them to trap live snowshoe hares, which will stock areas that are used to run beagles,” Governor Baldacci said.

The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has been issuing the permits already, but with the legislation, the Commissioner will have the clear statutory authority to do so.

“This bill offers clarity in what was a gray area of permission, and I thank Rep. Campbell for that definition and clarity,” said the Governor.

The bill was passed as emergency legislation, allowing the Act to take effect when it was originally signed, April 12, 2007.

Governor Baldacci Meets with President of Montenegro

May 2, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today met with President Filip Vujanovic of Montenegro.

The Maine National Guard has been linked to the Montenegrin military as part of the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program. The program helps emerging democracies build bilateral military relationships with the United States.

"It is a great honor to be here today with President Filip Vujanovic and the delegation from Montenegro," Governor Baldacci said. "Together, we have begun to build the foundation for a strong partnership."

The relationship with Montenegro began in December when Maine Adjutant General John Libby traveled with a National Guard delegation to Montenegro.

"On the basis of this partnership, we will have an opportunity to develop an ongoing relationship, including an economic relationship," President Vujanovic said Wednesday. "Through contacts and exchanges of experience between our two sides, we will pave the way to promoting ties."

"We believe this is just the beginning," Governor Baldacci said. "There are opportunities for cultural and educational exchange programs, for expanded trade and economic ties, and for increased understanding between our people."

As part of the State Partnership Program, the Maine National Guard will advise Montenegro's military on its transition to an all-volunteer, professional force, and could offer training for officers and noncommissioned officers. Other areas of cooperation could include language training, coastal defense, emergency management and search and rescue training.

"In 1993 when the Soviet Union fell apart and new democracies started to emerge, the partnership program was given birth to," Gen. Libby said.

Montenegro became an independent country June 3, 2006, when it separated from Serbia. Until 1918, Montenegro was an independent nation. It became part of the former Yugoslavia in 1945, and remained part of Yugoslavia until 1992 when the country dissolved. Montenegro remained loosely federated with Serbia until declaring independence.

Governor Baldacci Welcomes Actress/Author Victoria Rowell to Augusta to Promote Foster Care

May 4, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci welcomed actress and author Victoria Rowell to the Blaine House Friday to promote Foster Care Month in the State of Maine. Rowell spent her childhood in Maine's foster care system.

"Foster parenting can be challenging, but the rewards are great, as any foster parent knows," Governor Baldacci said. "The impact a foster family can have on a child is life-altering. Children are looking for love, acceptance and to be included in a family. And that is what foster parents give in abundance, not to mention time, patience, guidance and support."

The Governor and Rowell were joined by First Lady Karen Baldacci and Department of Health and Human Services Commissioner Brenda Harvey, as well as representatives from Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Victoria Rowell starred in "The Young in the Restless" on CBS television for more than a decade and co-starred in "Diagnosis Murder" for eight seasons. She also appeared alongside Samuel L. Jackson in "The Home of the Brave" in 2006. She is in Maine promoting her memoir, "The Women Who Raised Me," which is a tribute to the foster parents she had as well as Maine's foster care system.

"Victoria Rowell has put her thoughts, experiences and emotions on paper for all of us to read," said the Governor. "She is bringing exposure and recognition to foster families in a way that not many people can do – and we should thank her for devoting her energy to this subject."

Governor Baldacci presented the proclamation naming May as Foster Care Month in the State of Maine during the ceremony. The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, the family, serving as the primary source of love, identity, self esteem and support, is the very foundation of our communities and our State; and

WHEREAS, in Maine there are 2000 children and youth in foster care being provided with a safe, secure and stable home along with the compassion and nurture of a foster family; and

WHEREAS, foster families, who open their homes and hearts to offer help to children whose families are in crisis, play a vital role both in helping children and families to heal and reconnect and in launching children into successful adulthood; and

WHEREAS, dedicated foster families frequently adopt foster children, resulting in a greater need for more foster families; and

WHEREAS, there are numerous individuals and public and private organizations who work to increase public awareness of the needs of children in and leaving the foster care "system" and who work to

create an awareness that the enduring and valuable contribution foster parents and the foster care system provide is only as good as those who choose to be a part of it,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim May, 2007 as

FOSTER CARE MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize the efforts of these very special families.

Bill to Protect Health of Guard Members Introduced

May 4, 2007

AUGUSTA – Standing with an impressive group of veterans, activists and lawmakers, Governor John Baldacci unveiled today ground-breaking legislation that will help safeguard the health of members of the Maine National Guard.

“It was a tragedy almost a year ago that started us down the path toward today. But it is not tragedy or sadness that keeps us going and keeps us working,” Governor Baldacci said. “Instead, it is hope that we can – all of us – come together and find the answers to make things better.”

The bill, which is sponsored by more than 150 members of the House and Senate, will create the Commission to Protect the Lives and Health of Members of the Maine National Guard.

“When this country sends its men and women into harm’s way, we have a moral obligation to make sure we take care of them, not only when they are in combat, but also when they come home,” Governor Baldacci said. “We can tolerate nothing less.”

Barbara Damon-Day, who’s son Capt. Patrick Damon died while serving with the National Guard in Afghanistan, has lead the effort to create the Commission.

“A model of higher and safer standards for preventative medical practices and health screenings for Maine National Guard Members will be created, with Maine, once again, leading the way nationally,” Damon-Day said.

The Commission, working with the Maine Department of Defense and Veterans' Services and the Maine Center for Disease Control, will review all preventative health care treatment practices and protocols, vaccinations and other medications administered to members of the Maine National Guard, and propose recommendations to the U.S. Military regarding safer healthcare practices and medications.

The Commission will assist veterans' families who have members who have died or been wounded while serving in the military. The Commission also will address the issue of accurate and timely information sharing in regard to the death or wounding of servicemen and -women.

“Here in Maine, we take care of our people. And that’s what this bill is all about,” Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Protests Increase in Northern Maine Electricity Rates

May 4, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor Baldacci today sent a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission protesting a proposed rule change that could increase electricity rates in Northern Maine by almost 8 percent.

“I hope this action gets the attention of the federal government and lets FERC know that we will fight arbitrary rate increases placed upon Maine people and businesses,” Governor Baldacci said. “The people of Aroostook County are already hurting from a 45 percent increase in electricity rates. Enough is enough.”

Also today, the Maine Public Utility Commission filed a protest of the rule change, calling on FERC to stop the rate increase.

On April 13, the Northern Maine Independent System Administrator (NMISA) filed a proposed rule change with FERC that would result in a 7.6 percent rate increase for electricity prices of Maine Public Service Co. customers. Over the 26 month term of the standard offer, the increase could exceed \$3.5 million. In the rule change request, NMISA claims that the changes will not impact rates but offers no explanation to support this claim.

In November 2006, the PUC rejected all standard offer bids for Northern Maine. Citing that only one retail bidder participated, the PUC found the bids inadequate.

In December 2006, the PUC accepted a standard offer bid for Northern Maine. The rejection of the original standard offer bid forced the supplier to resubmit an offer at a lower price than had originally been submitted, yet a price still higher than the expired standard offer price. In fact, standard offer rates increased 45 percent effective Jan. 1, with a smaller rate increase effective July 1. The current standard offer rate for residential use is 7.89 cents/kWh and will increase to 8.25 cents/kWh in July.

“I’m not going to get into the technicalities of a federal rule,” said state Rep. Jeremy Fischer of Presque Isle, who attended a press conference with the Governor about the rule change. “But I know this, we can’t afford another rate increase of nearly 8 percent that won’t improve customer service or benefit the people who are already having a tough time paying their electric bill.”

Governor Baldacci echoed that point.

“I am committed to pursuing viable alternatives like a greater partnership with our neighbors to the North, and I will also fight attempts to increase electricity rates without merit,” Governor Baldacci said. “Maine can’t afford it.”

Governor Baldacci Helps to Test Emergency Message Over Radio Airwaves

May 7, 2007

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci delivered a test message over a network of 16 radio stations Monday morning, informing Bangor area listeners about the importance of the group called the United Radio Broadcasters of Eastern Maine.

“These stations have put aside their competitive spirit and have put you first to ensure safety in the event of a catastrophe,” Governor Baldacci said in the message. “Should we experience a major emergency, they will bring you coordinated news updates as quickly as possible.”

Nine commercial radio stations in the Bangor area and the seven statewide public radio stations of the Maine Public Broadcasting Network have teamed up to inform listeners as soon as possible in the case of an emergency.

“The credit goes to the companies who are working together to put listeners first,” said the Governor. “Cumulus Radio, Clear Channel Radio and the Maine Public Broadcasting Network have put the interests of Mainers ahead of their own competitive interests and should be commended for doing so.”

The project of the United Radio Broadcasters of Eastern Maine has been in the works since June 2006 and supports the existing Emergency Alert System, which has warned radio listeners and TV viewers of potential danger for decades. The United Radio Broadcasters of Eastern Maine will go beyond the Emergency Alert System, giving listeners a more localized outlet for information, news and updates.

“Your local radio stations are ready to provide you with necessary information when you need it most,” the Governor said in the message.

Governor Baldacci Visits Space Day in Brunswick

May 7, 2007

BRUNSWICK – Governor John E. Baldacci joined astronaut Chris Cassidy in Brunswick Monday morning, telling 3rd and 4th graders about the marvels of astronomy and outer space.

“We need to have more of our students involved in math, science and engineering,” Governor Baldacci said to the students. “When you have someone on the radio saying, ‘Houston we have a problem,’ you had better make sure there is someone on the other end that knows what they are doing.”

Governor Baldacci spoke to the classes after watching a group of students perform a musical routine about the solar system. The Governor also had the opportunity to introduce Maine astronaut Chris Cassidy. Cassidy lived in Woolwich and York, Maine, and graduated from the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland before becoming an astronaut in 2004. Cassidy told the students about getting his acceptance phone call from NASA, training for life in space and his hope to get to the moon someday soon.

Earlier in the month, Governor Baldacci invited a group of students from Brunswick to his office to present a proclamation naming May 7, 2007, as Space Day in the State of Maine.

Governor Baldacci Attends Grand Re-Opening of York Beach Business

May 7, 2007

YORK BEACH – Governor John E. Baldacci visited the grand re-opening of Bill and Bob's store Monday afternoon. The Governor hasn't visited the business since May 16, 2006, when he toured the building following last year's Mother's Day storm with the owner of the business, Peggy Fennelly.

"Sometimes we have natural disasters and we have to deal with them – it's just a part of life. It really says a lot about someone in how they deal with events like a disaster," Governor Baldacci said. "You can either sit around and complain about it, or you can get back on the horse and start riding again. Peggy, York Beach, and just about everyone in Maine will always get right back up on that horse."

Governor Baldacci visited York Beach in May 2006 after the storm, which left roads, businesses and homes throughout the area flooded and damaged. Upon meeting Peggy Fennelly and touring the damage at her business, he told her that she would bounce back and her Bill & Bob's would re-open.

"I walked into the store with her, and witnessed what most would call devastation," recalled Governor Baldacci. "After Peggy's initial shock wore off, I gave her a hug and she let her inspiring attitude shine through. She immediately started making plans to put up new drywall, replace damaged or ruined merchandise, and was thinking of when she could re-open."

Governor Baldacci said that the resilience of Peggy Fennelly set the standard for the ability of people and businesses of York Beach to bounce back.

"Looking at this area and this store, it's hard to believe what it looked like a little less than a year ago," said the Governor, "but when I was standing here during the storm, I knew it would get back to looking as it does today."

Governor Mourns Death of Maine Firefighter

May 7, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci issued the following statement regarding the death of a Springfield volunteer firefighter:

“I am deeply saddened by this terrible accident,” Governor Baldacci said Monday after learning of the death. “Peter Beebe-Lawson gave his life in the line of duty. He was answering a call for help when the fire truck he was driving overturned. Firefighters risk their lives everyday protecting the rest of us. They deserve our deepest gratitude and respect.”

No further information is available from the Governor's Office.

Governor Creates Wind Power Task Force

May 8, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today signed an executive order that creates the Governor's Task Force on Wind Power Development in Maine.

"Maine must be aggressive in pursuing alternative sources of energy," Governor Baldacci said. "We know that climate change is real. We know that people are contributing to the problem. And we know that wind power is a good source of clean, renewable energy."

The Task Force will review the regulations that affect the development of wind power projects in the state and recommend any changes that would assure that Maine has a balanced, efficient and appropriate regulatory framework for evaluating proposed developments.

The Task Force will also monitor advances in wind power technology, identify benefits and incentives that might be available to communities considering wind power projects, help developers find the most appropriate locations for their projects and propose goals for wind power in Maine for 2010 and 2020.

"We want to make sure that we're rolling out the red carpet for progress, particularly on wind power. But we also want to make sure we're doing it in a way that's sensitive to the neighbors of any project," Governor Baldacci said.

The Governor will appoint 16 members to the Task Force. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House may appoint two members each.

The text of the executive order follows:

An Order Establishing the Governor's Task Force on Wind Power Development in Maine

WHEREAS, Maine energy policy seeks to promote the development and use of renewable energy sources to help reduce Maine's dependence on imported fossil fuels, provide economic development, and promote security; and

WHEREAS, scientists have concluded that increases in greenhouse gas levels, including but not limited to carbon dioxide, are resulting in worldwide climate change; and

WHEREAS, wind power does not generate greenhouse gases and is broadly viewed as having fewer environmental impacts than other forms of electrical power generation; and

WHEREAS, wind power is the fastest growing utility-scale source of renewable energy in the world; and

WHEREAS, Maine has the highest wind potential of any New England state and ranks 19th in terms of wind potential in the United States as a whole; and

WHEREAS, wind power development can provide short term and long term economic and employment benefits for Maine citizens; and

WHEREAS, the State's wind resources occur in various areas of the State that may have important ecological, natural resource, remote resource, and other values that are important to Maine people that can lead to conflict regarding the siting of wind power facilities; and

WHEREAS, Maine could become a leader in New England in the development of wind power if a comprehensive approach is pursued that involves guidelines that direct wind power toward appropriate locations; well-designed and efficient regulations; the protection of areas where wind power is not appropriate; and collaboration among state agencies, wind power developers, interested parties, and the public.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the Governor's Task Force on Wind Power Development in Maine.

PURPOSE AND DUTIES

The purpose and duties of the Task Force shall be to:

Examine the regulatory process and review criteria by which wind power projects currently are evaluated in Maine, identify barriers to wind power development and compare Maine's policies with approaches used in other jurisdictions;

Identify and recommend any changes deemed beneficial for assuring that Maine has a balanced, efficient and appropriate regulatory framework for evaluating wind power projects. Changes might include, but are not limited to, updating statutory and regulatory review criteria, technology-specific wind power siting guidelines, opportunities for streamlined permitting for certain categories of wind power projects and the use of negotiated settlement tools for resolving conflicts;

Propose policy changes that would help facilitate the development of wind power in Maine and establish a lead agency for tracking wind power generated in Maine, monitoring technological advances in wind power generation and providing educational materials regarding wind power;

Examine and make appropriate recommendations regarding Federal, State and local programs and financing options available to assist in the development of wind power projects;

Identify a range of options, benefits and incentives that might be available to communities that are affected by wind power projects; Create guidelines and related information that would assist wind power developers in identifying areas in the State of Maine that are more appropriate for wind power development, and avoiding areas that are not appropriate for wind power development, due to legal, natural resource or public value constraints; and

Propose goals for installed wind power in Maine for 2010 and 2020, provide an estimate of the economic and emission-reduction benefits of achieving such goals and suggest strategies to attain those goals.

To fulfill these duties, the Task Force shall collaborate and coordinate with the Land Use Regulation Commission, the Department of Marine Resources, the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Department of Agriculture, the Public Utilities Commission, the Office of the Governor, members of the Maine Legislature and other interested members of the public. The establishment of this Task Force is not intended to delay or interfere with wind power projects that are already in the permitting process.

MEMBERSHIP

The Governor shall appoint 16 members to the Task Force. One member shall be the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation, or his designee; one member shall be the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection, or his designee; one member shall be the Director for the Office of Energy Independence and Security; one member shall be the Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, or his designee; and one member shall be the Director of the State Planning Office or her designee.

The remaining appointments shall include diverse members with relevant knowledge and experience in wind power development, land use and conservation policies and regulation, renewable energy policies, electricity and transmission policies and infrastructure, natural resource and remote recreation values, and environmental impacts from electrical power generation.

The President of the Senate may appoint two members of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House may appoint two members of the House of Representatives. Members shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority.

The Governor shall appoint the chair of the task force from among the members. The chair will schedule, set the agenda for, and preside at Task Force meetings.

STAFF

Staff support to the Task Force will be provided by the Land Use Regulation Commission, the State Planning Office, Department of Environmental Protection, and other state agencies as needed. The members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation.

REPORT

The Task Force shall submit its recommendations to the Governor no later than January 15, 2008, after which the Task Force will dissolve.

EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date of this Executive Order is May 8, 2007.

Governor Proclaims Nurses Week in Maine

May 8, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci has proclaimed May 6 – 12, 2007, as Nurses Week in the State of Maine. The Governor presented the proclamation during a ceremony at the Blaine House Tuesday afternoon. The ceremony was sponsored by the Coalition of Maine Nursing Organizations.

“The dedication you exhibit every day on behalf of Maine citizens is greatly appreciated, and it is fitting that we take this opportunity to recognize your efforts,” Governor Baldacci said. “You are the professionals on the front lines of our rapidly changing health care delivery system.”

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, the nearly 2.9 million registered nurses in the United States, 20,236 of which are Registered Professional Nurses in the State of Maine, comprise our nation's largest health care profession; and

WHEREAS, the depth and breadth of the registered nursing profession meets the different and emerging health care needs of the Maine population in a wide range of settings; and

WHEREAS, Maine's nursing organizations are the voices for the registered nurses of Maine and are working to chart a new course for a healthy state that relies on increasing delivery of primary care and preventative health care; and

WHEREAS, a renewed emphasis on primary and preventive health care will require the better utilization of all of our nation's nursing resources; and

WHEREAS, professional nursing has been demonstrated to be an indispensable component in the safety and quality of care of hospitalized patients; and

WHEREAS, the demand for registered nursing services will be greater than ever because of the aging of the state population, the continuing expansion of life-sustaining technology, and the explosive growth of home health care services; and

WHEREAS, that more qualified registered nurses will be needed in the future to meet the increasingly complex needs of health care consumers in our communities; and

WHEREAS, the cost-effective, safe and quality health care services provided by registered nurses will be an ever more important component of the Maine health care delivery system in the future; and

WHEREAS, along with the American Nurses Association, the Maine State Nurse's Association has declared the week of May 6-12 as NATIONAL NURSES WEEK with the theme "Nursing: A Profession and a Passion" in celebration of the ways in which registered nurses strive to provide safe and high quality patient care and map out the way to improve our health care system,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim May 6 - 12, 2007 as

NATIONAL NURSES WEEK

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to celebrate registered nurses' accomplishments and efforts to improve our health care system, and to show our appreciation for Maine's registered nurses not just during this week, but at every opportunity throughout the year.

Residents of Cumberland and York Counties Qualify for Direct Storm Aid

May 9, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci learned today the residents of York and Cumberland counties who were affected by the Patriots' Day Storm can qualify for direct federal assistance.

"For families and businesses in York and Cumberland counties that were hurt by the Patriots' Day Storm, this is great news," Governor Baldacci said. "It means that people can get federal help for damage that isn't covered by their insurance. This will make a real difference as they work to recover from the storm."

Twelve counties in Maine have qualified for federal assistance to make repairs to public property, such as roads and bridges. To date, only York and Cumberland counties have qualified for individual assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The federal assistance may be used for temporary housing, repairs and for disaster-related expenses not covered by insurance or other assistance programs.

FEMA assistance does not typically cover the entire cost to repair storm damage. For people with insurance, the aid may help pay for basic needs not covered by insurance.

FEMA's assistance for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, an applicant must complete an SBA loan application to be eligible for assistance that covers real estate, business losses, personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

Individuals can begin the application process by calling 1-800-621-3362; 1-800-462-7585 (TTY). Individuals can also register at www.fema.gov.

"It's important for people to apply for assistance even if they have insurance claims pending," Governor Baldacci said. "The only way to know for sure if they qualify for assistance is to apply."

Governor Baldacci Applauds JM Huber for Voluntary Protection Program Certification

May 9, 2007

EASTON – Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated JM Huber's Easton facility for becoming the 23rd Maine business to be certified under OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program. Huber is also the first facility in Easton to achieve the certification. The Governor attended a ceremony honoring the business and its workers Wednesday morning.

"Huber has made safety a staple of its operations from day one," Governor Baldacci said. "That is in sync with my duties as Governor – whether it's a winter storm blowing into the state, a spring storm causing damaging winds and flooding, or Maine troops being sent off to war – the safety, health and well-being of Maine citizens is job one for the Governor of the State of Maine."

Governor Baldacci also took the opportunity to report that Huber will be making a \$39 million capital investment to modernize its Easton facility.

"Huber's operations are a great success story, employing 130 hard working Aroostook County Mainers with a payroll of nearly \$9 million," Governor Baldacci said. "The investment they are announcing here today will preserve those jobs well into the future and align this facility for future growth."

The Governor praised Huber for its partnership with Aroostook County and the State of Maine for more than 50 years and for giving back to its communities through donations of time, effort and money to nonprofits, scholarships and conservation efforts.

"Congratulations on the OSHA VPP certification as well as the multi-million capital investment in this facility," Governor Baldacci said. "It is a clear sign that you believe in your employees, you believe in Aroostook County and you believe in Maine."

Governor Baldacci Attends Unveiling of Standpipe

May 9, 2007

BANGOR – It is a structure that has been visible from most of Bangor for more than a century.

The lights around the top, when illuminated at night, create a “crown,” which lead to Bangor being nicknamed the “Queen City.”

Now there’s a model of it, built to scale, at Bangor International Airport.

Governor John E. Baldacci visited the unveiling of the Standpipe model at BIA Wednesday afternoon.

“The Thomas Hill Standpipe is one of the landmarks in Bangor that defines the city, just by its sheer, towering, skillfully crafted appearance,” Governor Baldacci said. “The detail of this model is intricate, from the 220,000 shingles on top down to the door that would let visitors in at the bottom, and all of the fiber-optic designed lights in between.”

The Governor congratulated the three brothers who built the model, Warren Young, C. William Tuck and Richard Tuck. The brothers completed the model in 2006 after six years and many thousands of hours of work.

Governor Baldacci said that seeing art like the standpipe model on display in Bangor emphasizes to him how important the creative economy is to Maine.

“The creative economy is about using skills – art, creativity, woodworking – and defining communities, such as the downtowns that contain libraries, art galleries, museums and architecture that make our cities and towns unique,” said the Governor. “This piece of art and the structure it was modeled after are both unique, and as of today they work together to welcome visitors to Bangor and give definition and uniqueness to Maine’s Queen City.”

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Governor Mourns Soldier's Death in Iraq

May 10, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci has learned of the death of a soldier with Maine ties.

Spc. Kyle A. Little died Tuesday while serving with the U.S. Army in Iraq.

“We have lost another brave young man,” Governor Baldacci said. “Spc. Little’s death is a terrible reminder of the horrors of war. He died while serving his country and deserves the honor and respect of a grateful State and country. His family is in all of our hearts and prayers.”

Governor Baldacci has spoken to the soldier’s father, Mike Little, who lives in North Berwick, to express his condolences.

Flags will be ordered flown at half-staff on the day of Spc. Little’s funeral.

Governor Baldacci Declares Motorcycle Safety and Awareness Month

May 10, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci welcomed the United Bikers of Maine to the Blaine House Thursday morning. The bikers joined the Governor for a tea reception and accepted a proclamation naming May as Motorcycle Safety and Awareness Month in Maine.

“It’s not only important for you to ride safe, but also for other motorists to be aware of your presence on the road and for them to drive safely with you in mind as well,” Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Baldacci, owner of a Harley Davidson, spoke with many of the bikers during the reception about issues important to their group. Also speaking at the reception were Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap; Chief of the Maine State Police Col. Patrick Fleming; Commissioner David Cole from the Department of Transportation; and President of the United Bikers of Maine, Fulton Butler.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, more motorcyclists are again on Maine’s roads this year and the general public should realize the season for motorcycles is beginning; and

WHEREAS, the season has begun and we should be mindful to look out for these vehicles and look twice to save lives; and

WHEREAS, the safe operation of a motorcycle requires the use of special skills developed through a combination of training and expertise, the use of good judgment, plus a thorough knowledge of traffic laws and licensing requirements; and

WHEREAS, motorcycles represent 2.8 percent of all registered vehicles and unfortunately account for 6.8 percent of all motor vehicles fatalities,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim May, 2007 as

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY AND AWARENESS MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance and share the road.

Governor Baldacci Proclaims Nursing Home Week

May 14, 2007

BANGOR – Governor John Baldacci visited Stillwater Healthcare Monday morning to personally deliver the message that May 13 – 19, 2007, is Nursing Home Week in the State of Maine.

“During Nursing Home Week we honor your time, your sacrifices, your wisdom and your contributions,” Governor Baldacci told residents of Stillwater Healthcare. “You should know, however, that it’s not just about honoring you today, but everyday. Your experience and your wisdom have taught us and will continue to guide us while we grow, as individuals, and as a state.”

While at Stillwater Healthcare, Governor Baldacci also honored a Newburgh woman who is a resident at the facility. Elsie Brough received a Certificate of Lifetime Achievement from the Governor. Brough was originally honored at the “Remember ME” celebration at the Hall of Flags in Augusta. Because of her age, 92, and health conditions, Brough was unable to attend the ceremony.

“Elsie, I met you for the first time today, but I can tell that you are a wonderful person,” Governor Baldacci said. “You were in the front lobby shaking so many hands and talking with so many people I thought you were running for office.”

Elsie Brough and her husband, Rev. A. Alan Brough, founded the Hospital Chaplaincy Service more than 60 years ago. The organization helps to “bring comfort, cheer, and a non-denominational Christian message to nursing and boarding home residents in Maine.” It has engaged more than 3,000 volunteers and has served nearly 200 homes in its history. Brough is also known for her poetry and her distinction of being the oldest legal resident of Newburgh.

The “Remember ME” ceremony was held April 6 in Augusta, honoring 37 individuals who live, or have lived, in nursing homes and residential care facilities around the state.

Standard and Poor's Upgrades State Bond Rating

May 14, 2007

AUGUSTA – Standard and Poor's, one of three major credit rating agencies, has upgraded Maine's rating.

"Standard and Poor's has recognized the progress we are making in Maine and the incredible work that has been done to put the State on solid financial footing," Governor Baldacci said today. "The upgrade also reinforces the importance of passing the budget I submitted to the Legislature, which includes further reforms to improve the State's finances."

Governor Baldacci's budget proposal, which was submitted to the Legislature on Jan. 5, includes major restructuring of the administration of K-12 education, reforms in MaineCare and continues to streamline State government.

Four years ago when Governor Baldacci was elected to his first term, the State faced a \$1.2 billion gap between revenue and projected expenses. Based on the Governor's proposal, that structural gap has been reduced to \$136 million.

"Back then, I said if we worked together, we could put Maine on firmer financial footing without raising income or sales taxes," Governor Baldacci said. "Big change doesn't happen overnight, but it can happen. It has happened."

Standard and Poor's complete report is expected today.

On Friday, Moody's announced that it would leave Maine's rating at Aa3.

In describing the State's strengths, Moody's said that Maine had managed spending levels "while absorbing substantial K-12 education costs mandated by citizens' initiative."

Moody's also cited the State's commitment to growing reserves. Moody's also said the State's debt ratio, both on a per capita and personal income basis, remains below the 50-state median.

Fitch, in an announcement today, also maintained the State's AA rating.

Maine's rating reflects the state's low debt burden and very rapid debt amortization, the report said.

Governor Baldacci Creates Tourism Sub-Cabinet

May 14, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci was joined by about 20 tourism industry professionals Monday afternoon as he announced the creation of a tourism sub-cabinet. Membership will consist of representatives from departments that are connected to the tourism industry in Maine.

“The tourism industry affects so many pieces of the public and private sector,” Governor Baldacci said. “It’s Maine’s largest industry and largest economic engine, and we need to look at it that way.”

The Tourism Cabinet will consist of representatives from Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, the Department of Conservation, the Department of Transportation, the State Planning Office, the Department of Agriculture, Marine Resources, the Maine State Museum and Archives, the Maine Turnpike Authority, the Maine Arts Commission and the Department of Economic and Community Development.

“We will begin working as a coordinated team to help move the industry forward,” said the Governor. “We have some of the best natural resources in the world right in front of us. Maine is an affordable, beautiful destination with first-class accommodations and entertainment choices. The more coordinated our efforts can be with those in the industry the more it will pay off for the state as a whole.”

Governor Baldacci said the tourism industry creates an 11-1 return on dollars invested and it has potential to grow. The first meeting of the sub-cabinet will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday, May 16, in Augusta.

Governor Baldacci made the announcement while proclaiming May 12-20, 2007, as Tourism Week in Maine. The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, for hundreds of years the State of Maine has been a four-season destination for tourists, travelers and adventure seekers; and

WHEREAS, these visitors have enjoyed recreation, experienced the State’s cultural, historical, artistic and musical offerings, returned year after year to their favorite inn, restaurant or shop, and found solitude in the State’s many beautiful natural areas; and

WHEREAS, travelers have been drawn year-round to Maine for these pursuits, which happen along the coastline, in our forests and mountains, and in vibrant cities and picturesque villages that make Maine a world-class tourist destination; and

WHEREAS, Maine’s small business owners and their staffs, and highway, railway, airport and seaport professionals have welcomed travelers with a level of hospitality that is world-renowned; and

WHEREAS, the positive impact of Maine’s tourism industry affects communities large and small, contributing \$13 billion in direct and indirect revenues to the gross state product and employing more than 176,000 people and growing; and

WHEREAS, this makes tourism Maine's largest industry, a leader in the economic health of the State, and a model for other tourism industries around the nation and the world,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim May 12-20, 2007 as

MAINE TOURISM WEEK throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize those who participate in and contribute to our largest industry, and I encourage them to welcome guests to our great state as we strengthen Maine's most significant economic engine – tourism.

Governor's Statement on Bangor Racino

May 14, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci released the following statement today after the Legislature's Appropriations Committee removed proposals to change the tax structure for the racino in Bangor from budget talks.

"I want to thank the leadership in the House and Senate and members of the Bangor delegation for their hard work on this issue," Governor Baldacci said. "Everyone's goal all along has been to get people back to work. That's going to happen tomorrow. I'm pleased that an agreement has been reached, and I remain optimistic about future talks between Penn National, the Legislature and my office."

Governor Baldacci Congratulates Two Internationally Recognized Maine Lobster Companies

May 15, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci invited representatives from Shucks Maine Lobster in Richmond and Claw Island Foods in South Portland to his Cabinet Room Tuesday morning so he could recognize them for being nominated for Prix d'Elite Awards last month in Belgium. The awards are part of the International Seafood Exposition and are widely considered the "Academy Award" of the seafood industry.

Only four of the products nominated for the Prix d'Elite were from the United States; of those three are from Maine. Shucks Maine Lobster won two awards, one for "Best Service Product" and another for "Best Convenience Product."

"The Prix d'Elite nominations are proof that the Maine lobster industry is meeting the demands of the market, particularly in Europe where consumers eat more seafood products than they do in any other region," Governor Baldacci said. "60 percent of Maine lobster is processed in Canada and then sold as a product of Canada. Rather than exporting raw product, businesses like Shucks and Claw Island are doing processing right here in Maine, and keeping jobs here too."

"While we're pleased that Shucks won such top honors," Governor Baldacci said, "we also want to recognize Claw Island and its owner Jeff Holden for being recognized as a top contender."

Joining the Governor and Jeff Holden for the presentation were Kristen Millar, former executive director of the Maine Lobster Promotion Council; and John Hathaway, owner of Shucks Maine Lobster.

"These awards and nominations are quite a compliment to our industry – these products represent how the Maine lobster industry has listened to consumers who want to enjoy succulent lobster without the mess normally associated with its preparation," Millar said. "Eating Maine lobster is always special, but new innovations are making it possible to get this healthy option in restaurant menus and on the dinner table more often and with greater ease."

Hathaway and Holden both thanked Governor Baldacci and Kristen Millar for their support and enthusiasm toward the lobster industry.

Governor Orders Flags to be Flown to Half-Staff on May 18

May 16, 2007

AUGUSTA – In remembrance and honor of Spc. Kyle A. Little, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Friday, May 18, 2007.

Spc. Little, who served as a member of the 3rd Infantry Division of the United States Army, was killed in action May 8 while serving in Iraq.

His funeral services are scheduled for Friday. No further information is available.

Executive Order Begins Planning for Veterans' Homes Expansion

May 16, 2007

SEARSPORT – Governor John E. Baldacci signed an executive order today creating the Maine Veterans' Home "Veterans Campus" Planning Committee.

The Committee is charged with proposing legislation that would allow for the creation of a Veterans Campus adjacent to the current Maine Veterans' Homes in Bangor.

"We have a responsibility to protect the people who protect us," Governor Baldacci said. "The Planning Committee is an important step in the process of expanding the Maine Veterans' Homes and the services it can provide. We know there is great need, and we're going to do something about it."

The plans for expanding the current facility include the addition of an outpatient clinic, veterans' hospice and housing.

The Committee is required to submit its proposal to the Governor no later than Nov. 30, 2007.

The Committee includes 11 members appointed by the Governor. Appointments have not been announced.

Governor Baldacci Celebrates Sears Island Planning Initiative

May 16, 2007

SEARSPORT – Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated the people involved with the Sears Island Planning Initiative and Agreement regarding future uses of Sears Island Wednesday afternoon.

The agreement was completed last month and provides policy makers, state and regional businesspeople and local citizens clear guidance about how Sears Island will and will not be used in the future.

“Today I offer you my heartfelt congratulations for your hard and successful work to find a middle ground in the matter of future uses of Sears Island,” Governor Baldacci said. “In doing so, you have placed the paramount interests of a vital economy and a quality environment for Maine as your goal, and you have found a positive path forward of which we can all feel proud.”

The agreement has seven components: It outlines appropriate uses for Sears Island as “compatibly managed marine transportation, recreation, education and conservation.” It identifies inappropriate uses for Sears Island. It encourages “build-out” of Mack Point to accommodate future marine transportation needs prior to development on Sears Island; encourages Maine DOT to actively market for cargo/container port on Mack Point and/or Sears Island. It reserves 341 acres on Sears Island for potential port development, and establishes outdoor recreation, education and conservation opportunities on Sears Island by creation of a buffer easement. It recognizes that by preserving the potential for enhanced marine transportation and by defining permissible uses for education, recreation and conservation, the Agreement is likely to provide the Town of Searsport tax revenues which will benefit its citizenry. It establishes a Joint use Planning Committee of 15 individuals with balanced representation to jointly plan for a potential port and for outdoor recreation, education and conservation on Sears Island. It indicates that the signatories to the Agreement will publicly support the Agreement and that in good faith to pursue its goals.

“A year ago, when I asked for this group to be formed, I said ‘Please take advantage of your power as a stakeholder group to analyze and discuss the issues in a way that is respectful of one another, and which leads to comprehensive, well-reasoned and sound recommendations. If you do your part, I pledge to do mine,’” Governor Baldacci said.

“You have done your part, and now that the Town of Searsport and the Transportation Committee have received this Agreement and its framework for action, I direct my Commissioner of Transportation David Cole to work with the Town of Searsport to form a Joint Use Planning Committee within 15 days to effectuate this agreement over the next year.”

The Governor thanked the members of his Administration who played key roles in the Agreement, as well as four individuals who represented different concerns and interests in the process. Dianne Smith, representing the Town of Searsport; Bob Grindrod, President and CEO of Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway; Scott Dickerson, Director of Coastal Mountains Land Trust; and Jonathan Reitman, Facilitator of

the Sears Island Planning Initiative, were all present at the celebration and spoke positively about the new agreement.

Washington County Qualifies for Federal Disaster Aid

May 16, 2007

AUGUSTA – Washington County has qualified for federal aid related to the Patriots' Day Storm.

Governor John Baldacci received word today that President Bush has added Washington County to the list of declared major disaster areas.

Androscoggin, Cumberland, Kennebec, Knox, Oxford, York, Franklin, Hancock, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Somerset and Waldo counties were declared disaster areas in April.

As it stands, the declaration in Washington County covers only damage to public property. A separate determination must be made as to whether residents and businesses in the state qualify for individual federal assistance.

Only York and Cumberland counties have qualified for individual assistance. Homeowners, renters and business owners in Cumberland and York counties are now eligible to apply for financial assistance to recover from losses and should call 1-800-621-FEMA to apply.

Governor Baldacci requested the disaster declaration in a letter sent April 18 to the President. Washington County was included in the original request along with the 12 counties that have been declared.

Governor Baldacci Proclaims Lewiston MAINEiacs Day

May 17, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has proclaimed Saturday, May 19, 2007, as Lewiston MAINEiacs Day throughout the State of Maine. The Governor issued the proclamation honoring the team for winning the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League's Presidents Cup last week and to wish them luck in the upcoming Memorial Cup Tournament in Vancouver, British Columbia.

"It's always a great honor and privilege to have a championship team hail from Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "Maine is known for quality hockey and the Lewiston MAINEiacs will be showcasing their talent for all of Canada to see this weekend. I wish them luck and hope to see the Memorial Cup in L-A in a couple of weeks."

The MAINEiacs finished the regular season in first place in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League with 50 wins on the season. They swept three of the four playoff series they played, compiling a post-season record of 16-1. The MAINEiacs beat the Val-d'Or Foreurs by a score of 2-1 on May 9 in the fourth game of the President's Cup finals to win the league championship. The MAINEiacs now advance to the Memorial Cup Tournament in Vancouver, British Columbia. Their first game is at 4 p.m., Saturday, May 19, against the Medicine Hat Tigers of Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada. The tournament is a Round Robin style tournament, which will wrap up with a championship game on Sunday, May 27.

"Winning the President's Cup is an accomplishment that will not only be celebrated in the short-term, but etched into the hockey history of Maine for all-time," stated Matt McKnight, President and Governor of the Lewiston MAINEiacs Hockey Club. "The Lewiston MAINEiacs are now firmly planted within the hockey echelon around the world and that is something that all MAINEiacs fans should take great pride in. This remarkable season is to be celebrated by not only the players, coaches and management, but to every member of MAINEiacs Nation as we grow our loyal legion of supporters in defense of our championship next season."

The text of Governor Baldacci's proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, the Lewiston MAINEiacs play in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League; and

WHEREAS, Lewiston is the only city outside of Canada to host a team in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League; and

WHEREAS, the Lewiston MAINEiacs finished the 2006-2007 regular season in first place with 104 points and a record of 50-14-2-4; and

WHEREAS, in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League playoffs, the Lewiston MAINEiacs swept three of the four series they played, losing only one out of 17 games to the Halifax Mooseheads; and

WHEREAS, the Lewiston MAINEiacs captured their first Presidents Cup on Wednesday, May 9 with a thrilling 2-1 win over the Val-d'Or Foreurs; and

WHEREAS, the MAINEiacs will be representing the State of Maine and the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League with pride and respect on Saturday, May 19 in Vancouver as they compete for the Memorial Cup,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim May 19, 2007 as

LEWISTON MAINEIACS DAY

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance and cheer on our hometown Quebec Major Junior Hockey League team as they compete on a national stage.

Governor Baldacci Delivers Keynote Address at Law Enforcement Officers Memorial

May 17, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor Baldacci honored the work of Law Enforcement Officers Thursday morning during a ceremony in Augusta to pay tribute to Maine's fallen officers.

"As a society, we need and depend on a well-trained police force to not only protect our lives and property, but also our rights as citizens of this great state and of this great nation," Governor Baldacci said. "Many of those whose names appear on this monument died protecting us from immediate harm. Some were pursuing dangerous felons. Others were trying to keep innocent people out of harm's way."

About 200 people were at the annual service, including family members of David Rancourt, whose name will be added to the memorial this year. Rancourt died in late 2006 while diving for evidence in the Androscoggin River. He was a 10-year veteran of the Androscoggin Sheriff's Department.

"The dedication of the officers we honor today, their devotion to duty and public service, their recognition that justice thrives when all people enjoy the protection of our laws, fairly and evenly enforced, helped to make Maine a better, safer place," the Governor said. "The sacrifice these officers made should remind us that the protection of our freedoms comes at a high cost."

The service was held on the State Street side of the State House grounds in Augusta. In addition to the Governor's remarks, it featured the reading of every name etched on to the Memorial, state and local dignitaries and the playing of "Taps."

Governor Welcomes South Korean Ambassador

May 17, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci met with Lee Tae-sik, ambassador of the Republic of Korea (ROK) to the United States, today to promote the state's relationship with South Korea and highlight the upcoming gubernatorial trade mission to South Korea and Japan.

"South Korea has proved to be wonderful trade and business partner to Maine, and we plan to explore additional marketing opportunities in the country's expanding economy," said Governor Baldacci.

"Ambassador Lee's visit here today strengthens the bond between Maine and South Korea, and I look forward to visiting his native country in October."

Governor Baldacci, along with state Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner John Richardson, Director of Tourism Pat Eltman and Maine International Trade Center (MITC) President Janine Bisaillon-Cary, welcomed Ambassador Lee to the state and discussed trade and tourism opportunities.

MITC is coordinating a gubernatorial trade mission to South Korea and Japan from Oct. 27-Nov. 3 to offer Maine businesses the opportunity to establish contacts in Asia and expand trade to both country's growing economies.

"We are building off the momentum of a record export year to increase trade between Maine and Asia, and the trade mission allow Maine businesses and entrepreneurs to capitalize on meetings and knowledge obtained through the mission," said Commissioner Richardson. "Maine is being proactive in marketing its businesses outside the United States and providing growth outlets for our business community."

MITC will provide one-on-one business appointments, in-country market research, visit preparation, market briefings and networking events as part of the trade mission.

Bisaillon-Cary said the trade mission's timing works well with the recent reports of increased trade between Maine and Asia. Japan is the world's second largest industrialized economy and the third largest trading partner for the United States. Maine's exports to South Korea totaled \$111 million in 2006, a 29 percent increase from 2005; exports to Japan totaled \$129 million in 2006, a 47 percent increase.

"MITC is working to provide Maine businesses with economic opportunities overseas, specifically in the emerging markets of South Korea, Japan and China," said Bisaillon-Cary. "Our goal is to help Maine businesses compete on a global level while positively impacting the economy on the local level."

Visit www.mitc.com for more information on Maine International Trade Center, or for more information on attending the trade mission.

Governor Signs Law Creating Allagash Advisory Council

May 21, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed into law “An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway Working Group.”

The law creates an independent advisory council to represent the public interest in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, elevates the status of the waterway within the Department of Conservation and establishes an endowment fund to support capital improvements.

“I believe this is a new beginning for the Allagash,” Governor Baldacci said. “This law will help to preserve and enhance this great state treasure and open a new era of communication, cooperation and collaboration among all the people who hold it dear.”

The law, L.D. 1419, was passed as an emergency and will take effect immediately.

The legislation is based on the recommendations of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway Working Group, which presented its report to Governor Baldacci in February.

Governor Baldacci Announces Partnership Between Bowdoin and UMaine

May 22, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci announced an engineering educational partnership Tuesday morning between Bowdoin College and the University of Maine. The Governor made the announcement with Bowdoin President Barry Mills and University of Maine President Robert Kennedy in the Governor's Office.

"Maine's economy needs highly trained and well-prepared thinkers, people who can push the limits in today's technology- and innovation-based industries," said Governor Baldacci. "I look forward to tracking the progress of this cooperative, and know that it will serve the needs of some of Maine's best and brightest students."

In the program, students will begin their course work at Bowdoin. For three years, they will participate in the liberal arts program at the college. Those who are successful can transfer to the University of Maine for two years of intense engineering education. Upon completion of the five-year program, students graduate with a bachelor's degree from Bowdoin and an engineering degree from Maine.

"We at Bowdoin are very proud of this new alliance, and I want to thank the University of Maine for really helping to make this happen," said Bowdoin College President Barry Mills. "We really do have a strong commitment to the state of Maine and look forward to providing an opportunity for students from Maine who should be at Bowdoin to come to Bowdoin to study in our liberal arts tradition, which we believe in passionately, and then to have the opportunity to go to the University of Maine and to be in an engineering program that is world class and then hopefully to stay in this state."

"This is very exciting for the University of Maine," UMaine President Robert Kennedy said. "Some of the most outstanding students in the nation attend Bowdoin College. For those with an interest in engineering and the technical aspects, for them to have the opportunity to come to the University of Maine's engineering college, interact with our faculty, really brings two of the best things in the state together."

The program is expected to begin enrolling students from Bowdoin into the UMaine engineering program as soon as fall 2008.

Maine Receives Artwork as Gift

May 22, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has accepted a gift from a well-known artist who is a longtime resident of Maine. Robert Indiana of Vinalhaven has donated his painting, titled “First State,” which currently hangs outside of the Governor’s Office, to the State of Maine.

“It has been tradition to feature art throughout the halls of the State House, and I am happy to make “First State” a permanent fixture in our capitol,” Governor Baldacci said. “It is a beautiful painting about Maine, by a Maine artist, given to us because of the artist’s genuine affection for and gratitude toward this state.”

The painting is oil-on-canvas, with dimensions of approximately 6’ x 6’. “First State” will be on display to the public either in, or adjacent to, the Governor’s Chambers in the State House, according to terms of the agreement. The artwork will be owned by the State of Maine in the custody of the Maine Arts Commission.

“Our creative economy, highlighting our artists, musicians, actors, actresses and craftsmen and women, holds so much importance to this state,” the Governor said. “Being able to display such a wonderful work of art in the State House, a building that sees thousands of tourists, families and school children every year, will enhance the attraction toward creativity for the young people of this state. This is a wonderful gift, and I thank Mr. Indiana for his generosity and love for Maine.”

Indiana is known as a pop artist, whose work usually contains words or numbers. He is probably best known for his piece titled LOVE, which features the letters in block form, L-O on top and V-E on bottom. In the work, the “O” is tilted at a 45 degree angle. The work has been featured on postage stamps, Christmas Cards and sculptures are on display in various museums and parks around the world.

Governor Baldacci Honors EMS Providers

May 22, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci honored Emergency Medical Service providers and individuals Tuesday afternoon. Twelve EMS providers were honored for making the communities they serve HeartSafe Communities. Nine individuals were honored after being nominated by their peers for the contributions they have made in their professions.

“Although it’s impossible to predict when and where sudden cardiac arrest will occur, or who its victims might be, there’s a better chance for survival because of the efforts of these individuals, communities, organizations and agencies,” said Governor Baldacci. “Those living in a designated Maine HeartSafe Community should be proud to live in a place that is committed to the highest quality pre-transport care.”

HeartSafe Communities is a recognition program based on the “Chain of Survival.” Its purpose is to recognize work being done by Emergency Medical Services programs throughout Maine and to provide further opportunities to enhance community partnerships, resources and services to improve cardiovascular health, and decrease deaths due to cardiovascular-related events. To become a HeartSafe Community, certain criteria must be met that helps to improve cardiovascular health while decreasing death and disability associated with cardiovascular events. Criteria includes offering CPR within the community, equipping one emergency response vehicle with an Automated External Defibrillator, and offering cardiovascular education and/or awareness within the community.

“Each of the providers and their communities that are being honored today have taken steps to ensure that they have a system in place to address the chain of survival – from community education, to EMS personnel training, to program evaluation,” the Governor said.

Below is the list of those honored at the ceremony:

Emergency Medical Service providers receiving awards:

Caribou Fire and Ambulance

Crown Ambulance Service

United Ambulance Service, Inc.

Auburn Fire/Rescue Department

North Berwick Rescue Squad, Inc.

Winthrop Ambulance

Lisbon Emergency, Inc.

Glenburn & Hudson Ambulance

Mayo Regional Hospital EMS

Sanford Fire Department

NorthStar EMS

Buckfield Rescue Department

Individuals receiving awards:

Danel Bahr, EMT-P Orrington

Cindy Rossi, EMT-I, EMD Marshfield

Mark Baker, EMT-P Caribou

Lois Libby, EMT-I Machias

Eric Strout, EMT Glenburn

Christopher Burnham, EMT-P Naples

Marjorie Dyer, EMT Yarmouth

James Brann, EMT Whitefield

Jean Cashman, LCSW Woodland

Governor Urges Congress to Investigate Rising Gas Prices

May 23, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor Baldacci has joined Connecticut Governor M. Jodi Rell and 20 Governors from across the country to urge a bipartisan Congressional investigation of escalating gas prices.

Maine's statewide average for gasoline prices was at \$3.09/gallon on May 21, compared to \$2.86/gallon a year ago. In areas around Presque Isle and Caribou, it was as high as \$3.24/gallon. The U.S. Energy Information Administration expects national averages to decrease slightly over the next few weeks but to remain around \$3.00/gallon for most of the summer. It also warns that prices could rise again in August if demand for gasoline increases during that time, as it frequently does.

"High gasoline prices trickle through our entire economy," Governor Baldacci said. "A lot of hard working people in Maine don't have the luxury of deciding not to drive. They rely on their cars to get to work and for their businesses. They deserve an answer about why gas prices have increased so much while large oil companies are reporting record profits."

Governor Baldacci signed onto a letter written by Governor Rell that was sent to U.S. House and Senate leadership dated May 21, 2007, and stating that "families and businesses across the country are straining under these uncontrollable prices." The letter stressed that "This is not a simple 'supply and demand' issue because gasoline is not a simple commodity. It is a basic necessity."

In addition to signing the letter to Congress, Governor Baldacci has directed the Maine Office of Energy Independence and Security to communicate his concerns to the Attorney General in order to avoid any potential price gauging or anti-competitive practices. The Governor's Office will also maintain regular communication with Maine's Congressional Delegation in order to monitor state and national gasoline inventories.

Maine's Energy Information Web site has tips about how Maine drivers can enhance their fuel economy at: www.maineenergyinfo.com/docs/tips.pdf.

Governor Baldacci Attends Cornerstone Unveiling at Bath Iron Works

May 23, 2007

BATH – Governor John E. Baldacci praised workers at Bath Iron Works Wednesday morning as the cornerstone was unveiled for the new Ultra Hall at the facility. The Governor said that the multi-million dollar investment will strengthen the shipyard's ability to compete for new work into the future.

"Six years ago we stood here and dedicated the Land Level Transfer Facility, an excellent example of government, at all levels, and business working together for a better future," said Governor Baldacci. "Since that time, the men and women of Bath Iron Works have achieved extensive productivity improvements in their shipbuilding processes by coming together and taking advantage of what that facility has to offer."

The Ultra Hall will cover 1.5 acres of property, or 66,788 sq. ft. The building will be 282 feet wide and 236 feet deep, containing four cranes and four mega doors. The Ultra Hall will allow BIW to construct larger ship sections than now possible. Currently, BIW builds and outfits what are called Mega Units, which are created by joining smaller units together inside a building. The Ultra Hall facility will feature the capacity to build ship units of up to 5,000 tons each. The new facility will continue to decrease the number of hours required to construct a destroyer, while maintaining the quality of work that BIW is known for.

"This facility will help safeguard Maine workers by allowing a greater amount of work to be accomplished within a controlled, more easily accessible and safer environment," said the Governor. "Not only will it strengthen BIW's ability to compete for new work, it will help to ensure that ships will continue to be constructed along the banks of the Kennebec far into the future."

The BIW Ultra Hall is expected to be ready for use in February 2008.

Governor Baldacci Presents Awards to Seven Young Authors

May 23, 2007

HALLOWELL – Governor John E. Baldacci presented seven high school juniors with awards for their entries in the third annual Governor's Young Writer of the Year Awards. The entries consisted of poems, essays and short stories. The seven students were semi-finalists, with three students being named the winners of the 2007 Governor's Young Writer of the Year Awards.

"I have read your work and I have been very impressed with it," Governor Baldacci said. "This writing award is something that we established on John (Fitzsimmons', President of Maine Community College System) urging and his recommendation. It was something that we wanted to call more attention to – writing, to be able to express yourself. It's something that we've gotten away from, and I think it's something that we need to remember."

The 2007 Governor's Young Writer of the Year Awards generated 231 entries from all of Maine's 16 counties, representing 85 high schools and 121 different cities and towns. The entries were judged by Maine writers Richard Russo, Wesley McNair and Linda Greenlaw.

Six of the seven semi-finalists were at the ceremony (one had a prior commitment and sent her sister to be present in her place). All semi-finalists received a \$100 check and a plaque. The three winners also received a framed certificate and a check for \$2,500.

"In reviewing the entries, I noticed that Freeport High School has a student for the third year in a row who has made it to the semi-finals," Governor Baldacci said. "Your repeat visit here this year is a tribute to the wonderful teachers here today and to the administrations that support you."

The semi-finalists are listed below. The three winners are marked with a "*" in front of their names:

Julia Bald – Brunswick High School

Aimee St. James – Brunswick High School

Alex Forsythe – Richmond High School

Max HoddWells – Maranacook High School

George Murray – South Portland High School

Siobhan Smith – Freeport High School

Anna Whiston – Kennebunk High School

About 65 people were on hand for the ceremony at Maple Hill Farms in Hallowell, including sponsors, semi-finalists and their families, teachers, administration and judges. All three judges and the sponsors have agreed to participate in next year's competition as well.

Governor Baldacci's Statement on the Hiring of Cindy Blodgett as UMaine Coach

May 23, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci made the following statement following the announcement that Cindy Blodgett has been named as the new head coach of the University of Maine women's basketball team.

"For more than a decade, Cindy Blodgett has been a name that Mainers associate with the game of basketball. Whether she was leading the Lawrence High School Bulldogs to four straight state championship titles or the Maine Black Bears to four straight NCAA appearances, she was a player that basketball fans loved to watch because of her talent, skill, and love of the game," Governor Baldacci said.

"When you think of women's basketball in Maine, you always think of our hometown All-American, Cindy Blodgett. Since leaving UMaine, her career has allowed her to learn even more about the sport, grow as both a player and a coach, and maintain her enthusiasm for the game she loves. I cannot think of a better choice to lead the University of Maine Lady Black Bears right now than Cindy Blodgett. I am pleased to welcome her back home and look forward to an exciting season at the Alfond Arena."

Four More Counties to Receive Storm Assistance for Individuals

May 24, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci learned today that residents of Knox, Lincoln, Oxford and Sagadahoc counties who were affected by the Patriots' Day Storm can qualify for direct federal assistance.

The four counties join York and Cumberland, which became eligible for individual assistance on May 9.

"This is good news for the people who were hurt by the Patriots' Day storm," Governor Baldacci said.

"Recovery from a major storm like the one Maine endured takes time. Additional federal assistance will help families and businesses move forward with their lives."

Thirteen Maine counties have qualified for federal assistance to make repairs to public property, such as roads and bridges.

Six counties have qualified for individual assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The federal assistance may be used for temporary housing, repairs and for disaster-related expenses not covered by insurance or other assistance programs.

FEMA assistance does not typically cover the entire cost to repair storm damage. For people with insurance, the aid may help pay for basic needs not covered by insurance.

FEMA's assistance for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, an applicant must complete an SBA loan application to be eligible for assistance that covers real estate, business losses, personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

Individuals can begin the application process by calling 1-800-621-3362; 1-800-462-7585 (TTY). Individuals can also register at www.fema.gov.

Statement on the Death of Former State Rep. Verdi Tripp

May 24, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci issued the following statement after learning of the death of former State Rep. Verdi Tripp, who died Wednesday, May 23.

“Maine has lost a true public servant. He worked for the people of this state in the Legislature, as a selectman, as a business leader and as a newspaperman,” Governor Baldacci said. “I had spoken with Verdi just this week. He put up a brave fight against cancer, and I’m sorry that he’s gone. His family is in our prayers.”

Governor Baldacci Visits Bottom Line Exchange Program

May 25, 2007

SCARBOROUGH – Governor John E. Baldacci visited the Bottom Line Exchange Program Friday, a week long event run by the Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation.

This is the first phase of a voluntary program in which lobstermen can exchange floating lines for sinking lines. The program is important because large whales can become entangled in float rope in the Gulf of Maine, which can be prevented by using sinking lines.

“The fact that the lobstermen involved in this program are participating voluntarily is a testament to the sense of responsibility Mainers have for their surroundings,” Governor Baldacci said. “They are doing it because it’s the right thing to do, and I have a great amount of respect for that commitment.”

Governor Baldacci continued his praise of the efforts of the lobstermen by pointing out the ripple of economic impact whales can create.

“It helps to foster a tourist industry that relies on whale watching as one of its centerpieces,” Governor Baldacci said. “It helps to keep clean one of Maine’s most precious natural resources – our shoreline and ocean; and it sets an example for others across the state making their living from Maine’s outdoors.”

The Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation contracted with Conigliaro Industries to collect, transport and recycle up to 500,000 pounds of used float rope during Phase One of the Bottom Line Project. There will be at least one additional rope exchange offered to lobstermen, which should be announced later in the year.

For more information on the Bottom Line Project, visit www.gomlf.org or contact Laura Ludwig at the Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation, 207-985-8088.

First Lady Kicks Off Effort For Maine Youth In Foster Care

May 25, 2007

AUGUSTA –On Tuesday, May 29, First Lady Karen M. Baldacci, who serves as Chair of the Maine Children's Cabinet, will host a tea from 4:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. at the Blaine House welcoming members of the Maine Youth Transition Collaborative, Maine youth with personal experience in the foster care system, as well as special invited guests to celebrate an exciting new program supporting youth in care, as they transition out of the foster system.

"The work of the Collaborative is consistent with one of the three major priorities of the Maine Children's Cabinet -- youth in transition -- and is a project in which I have taken a special interest," says Mrs. Baldacci.

The Maine Youth Transition Collaborative is being piloted in the Bangor area and is off to a successful start with two projects that link multiple providers in the network to respond to two of foster youth advisors' highest priorities:

- *Assisting 16-18 year olds with the driving time with adults to get their licenses

- *Matching former foster care youth in their first year of school at UMO or Thomas College with mentors who are juniors or seniors in college

The Maine Youth Transition Collaborative is a partnership between Common Good Ventures, Four Square Foundation, Good Will-Hinckley, Jobs for Maine's Graduates, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Bangor Savings Bank, the Unity Foundation and the Muskie School of Public Service.

The key goals of the Maine Youth Transition Collaborative are to:

- *Continue and expand Opportunity Passport™, a program funded by the Jim Casey Foundation to assist foster youth in saving money for major purchases;

- *Expand youth leadership opportunities for youth in foster care and tribal youth;

- *Broaden and develop Friends of Youth Networks around Maine to engage the community in supporting youth as they transition out of foster care.

Joel Russ, spokesperson for the Collaborative says, "There are endless benefits to the concept of Friends of Youth Networks. We're creating a formal structure of existing service providers and community resources without creating new programs. There are many successful, effective programs in Maine working to serve this population. We are simply providing a vehicle for all of those organizations to be more readily accessible to the people who need them."

According to one participating youth, "It's easy to give up when you are trying to deal with all kinds of different agencies individually and none of them are communicating with each other. Having access to

many resources through one person will help a lot of people like me who might be intimidated by having to jump through too many hoops.”

Foster Youth will be on-hand for comment and photos.

Governor Baldacci Honors Fallen Vietnam Veterans

May 25, 2007

OLD ORCHARD BEACH – Governor John E. Baldacci welcomed The Moving Wall, a traveling, half-size replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., to Old Orchard Beach Friday afternoon.

The Wall will be on display, free of charge, around the clock through Memorial Day at Veteran's Memorial Park.

"Having spent eight years in Washington as a member of Congress, I have visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and it is truly a moving experience," Governor Baldacci said. "As you approach and view this wall, remember that every name has a story behind it. Every name has a family behind it. Every name on this wall is the name of a person who left their life behind to serve the land that we call home."

The Moving Wall arrived in Old Orchard Beach on Wednesday, with a motorcycle escort. The ceremony Friday featured the singing of the National Anthem, a military flyover, and numerous state and local dignitaries offering their thoughts and comments on Memorial Day Weekend.

"Too often during my time as Governor, I have placed calls to the families of young men who have died in uniform," Governor Baldacci said. "There is terrible grief and sadness in those phone calls, but there is also pride and dignity in the voices of folks who have every reason to be upset. Instead, they want to talk about their son, their husband, their father. They want me to know that they loved their country and that they were proud to wear its uniform."

During the ceremony, Governor Baldacci announced that flags would be flying at half-staff on Monday, Memorial Day, until noon to honor America's fallen servicemen and women. At noon, flags will be raised to the top of the staff until sunset, in honor of the country's war heroes.

The Moving Wall's next stop is in Lincoln on June 1–4.

Maine Tax Relief for April 16 Storm Victims Expanded

May 30, 2007

AUGUSTA, Maine -- Jerome Gerard, Acting Executive Director of Maine Revenue Services (MRS), announced today that Maine tax relief previously provided to taxpayers located in York and Cumberland counties has been extended to taxpayers located in Knox, Lincoln, Oxford and Sagadahoc counties.

Taxpayers whose tax records are located in these six counties will have until June 25, 2007, to file Maine tax returns originally due any time from April 17, 2007, through June 25, 2007. These counties have been declared disaster areas by President Bush due to the storm on April 16, 2007. This relief applies to all taxes administered by Maine Revenue Services, including Sales and Use Taxes, Individual and Corporate Income Taxes, and the Financial Institution Franchise Tax and mirrors the extension period granted by the Internal Revenue Service for affected taxpayers. This extension of time to file Maine returns for taxpayers located in Knox, Lincoln, Oxford and Sagadahoc counties follows a previous extension for filing returns through June 25, 2007, for taxpayers located in York and Cumberland counties.

Although the new extended relief does not generally apply to tax payments paid after April 26, 2007, taxpayers may request a waiver of interest and penalty charges if the required payment was paid late due to the effects of the storm.

To qualify for relief, taxpayers directly impacted by the storm should write "APRIL 16 STORM" across the top of their return. Taxpayers who e-file their returns can use their software's "disaster" feature, if available. Taxpayers who use Maine's free I-file application may do so without specific reference to the storm.

Taxpayers with questions about federal tax relief associated with the April 16 storm should contact the IRS at 800-829-1040 or go to the IRS web site at www.irs.gov for posted information. Taxpayers with questions about their Maine taxes are encouraged to contact MRS at 207-626-8475 for Income Tax or 207-624-9693 for Sales Tax, or visit the MRS web site at www.maine.gov/revenue.

If the IRS grants further relief to other Maine areas affected by severe storms and flooding, Maine Revenue Services intends to grant similar relief to affected Maine taxpayers.

Governor Baldacci Presents Awards for Physical Activity

May 30, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci presented nine awards today for efforts surrounding physical fitness and activity programs. The 2007 Contest for Communities recognized schools, businesses and nonprofits in eight counties for their contribution to increasing physical activity among Maine's children and adults.

"Good health affects everything we do," said Governor Baldacci. "Kids who are healthy perform better in school and are better prepared for successful careers; workers who are healthy are more productive; and we all are able to more fully enjoy time with family and friends when we are healthy."

The Governor presented awards in various categories to Hartland Consolidated School; "Fit for Kids Program" from Boothbay Region YMCA, St. Andrews Hospital and Healthcare Center and Miles Medical Group Pediatrics; "3rd Annual Latino Soccer Tournament," Minority Health Program, City of Portland; Fit for Life, Somerset Sports and Fitness, Skowhegan; MDI Hospital Wellness Programs – "Spring & Fall Walking Series," Bar Harbor; Seacoast Management Company, Topsham; Tom's of Maine, Kennebunk; Maine Health Works on Wellness, Portland; and the University of Maine and the Campus Recreation Department, Orono.

Governor Baldacci, who jogs nearly every morning, said that practicing a healthy lifestyle at work is just as important as doing so at home.

"The Maine Department of Education has a model wellness program that is showing results," the Governor said. "Their activities bring the employees closer together, make them healthier, relieve stress, keep insurance and worker comp costs down, improve their productivity, and, most importantly, make them feel better mentally and physically."

Governor Baldacci praised the award winners for doing their part to help achieve the goal of making the state the healthiest in the nation.

"Whether you're adding physical activity time during the school day, scheduling a walking series in one of our state's natural gems, or providing access to a safe, effective and fun workout routine for your community, you're all contributing to the greater goal of making this a healthier state," Governor Baldacci said. "If each and every one of us spreads the word and enthusiasm about the responsibility for our own health, we will have taken an important step toward making our entire state healthier."

Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Funeral Protection Bill

May 30, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci was surrounded by members of the Patriot Guard, bipartisan supporters from the House and Senate, and family members of Maine soldiers who were killed in the line of duty Wednesday afternoon as he ceremonially signed LD 246, An Act to Protect the Solemnity and Dignity of a Funeral or Memorial Service in Maine. The bill passed with all but two votes in the House and unanimously in the Senate earlier this month.

“This bill from Sen. David Hastings strikes the right balance of protecting free speech, while at the same time ensuring friends and families have an opportunity to grieve without being harassed by vile and disrespectful displays,” Governor Baldacci said.

The Governor spoke of the pain he hears when he places phone calls to families of fallen soldiers from Maine.

“As clear as their pain is over the phone, it is even more apparent in person at the memorial services. These services and funerals are sacred. The services are the final opportunity to say goodbye to the person loved so dearly by family and friends,” the Governor said. “These services are not the proper time to voice opinions about politics, protests or any topic of a controversial nature.”

Sharon Bouchard, grandmother of Sgt. Corey Dan who was killed in Iraq in March 2006, spoke on behalf of Dan’s family. She thanked the members of the Legislature and the Governor for removing the politics from the discussion and making the bill a reality.

The bill includes all funerals and memorial services, not just those for members of the military. The legislation was signed as an emergency measure, meaning it will go into effect immediately.

Governor Baldacci Calls for Repeal of Government Pension Offset

May 31, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci joined Congressman Tom Allen, Congressman Michael Michaud, legislators and supporters to call for the repeal of the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision Thursday afternoon at the Hall of Flags. Representatives from Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins were also at the press conference, showing bipartisan support from Maine's Congressional Delegation for the repeal.

The Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision were originally developed to keep the very wealthy from unnecessarily dipping into Social Security. Over time, nearly 400,000 people including teachers, firefighters, social workers and police officers are losing Social Security benefits they should be entitled to receive.

"We all support the effort to repeal these very erroneous rules and, frankly, they're siphoning money off from Mainers," said Governor Baldacci. "You work your whole life and at retirement age they all of a sudden tell you because of these rule changes we're going to take two-thirds of your retirement and we're going to leave it in a treasury in Washington."

Earlier Thursday, a joint resolution was presented in the Maine House and Senate by Rep. Seth Berry (D-Bowdoinham) calling on Congress to end the Offset and Windfall provisions. The bill in Washington has more than 300 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives and 30 in the Senate.

"Maine is one of fourteen states where back in the 70s and early 80s this designation was made," the Governor said. "It's denied the state those resources in terms of our economy. Can you think of what several billion dollars a year would be doing to Maine's economy? How many restaurants, how many hotels, how many businesses, what would be happening in our community. Why should it be because you live in Maine that you should be disaffected?"

Governor Baldacci thanked the leadership of the Congressional delegation and the state Legislature for putting the issue front and center for the people of Maine.

Governor Baldacci's Statement on the Budget Approved by the Appropriations Committee

May 31, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement today about the budget approved by the Legislature's Appropriations Committee.

"The Appropriations Committee has developed a budget plan that holds close to the original priorities I laid out in January," Governor Baldacci said. "It reduces unnecessary K-12 administration, it cuts the cost of administration in state government while seeking greater efficiencies at all levels of government, and it invests in innovation and higher education, areas that will help our economy grow."

"There has been a lot of skepticism about the changes proposed for the administration of K-12 education, but the bipartisan plan strikes a reasonable balance," Governor Baldacci said. "Communities have an opportunity for real property tax relief, and the power to control their own destiny. They can have business as usual and higher taxes, or they can join in consolidation and keep local property taxes lower."

"And this budget achieves our commitment to fund 55 percent of K-12 education."

"Deliberations for this budget were challenging," Governor Baldacci said. "But the end product is something both parties should be proud of. Democratic and Republican leaders deserve enormous credit. They came to the table in good faith and negotiated a sound budget that will lead Maine forward."

"None of us got everything we wanted. But the budget, which was approved unanimously by the Appropriations Committee, moves Maine in the right direction. I strongly support it," Governor Baldacci said.

Governor and First Lady Plant Seedling from the Elm Tree Memorial of the Oklahoma City Bombing

June 1, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John Baldacci joined his wife today on the Blaine House lawn to plant an American elm seedling. First Lady Kim Henry of Oklahoma gave the seedling to Maine's First Lady earlier this year when Mrs. Baldacci attended a conference for First Spouses in Henry's home state.

The tree from which the seedling came, stands in Oklahoma City at the site of the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building. Now dubbed "the Survivor Tree", the 90-year-old elm withstood the attack and is now seen as a symbol of strength and resilience. The planting of other "Survivor Tree" seedlings in communities in Oklahoma and across the country has been seen as a testament to the continued strength of the next generation and its ability to grow and thrive.

"The planting of this tree in Maine, while acknowledging the courage and tenacity shown by the survivors of the Oklahoma City attack, also shows that we as Mainers not only share in their grief, but that we also share in their strength and in the strength of our nation," Governor Baldacci said. "It is my hope that during its lifetime it will bear witness to a State and a Country unscathed by further attacks, and strengthened by the will of its people."

Governor Baldacci Praises Collaboration Between Cianbro and Brewer

June 2, 2007

BREWER – Governor John E. Baldacci praised the collaboration between Cianbro and the City of Brewer Saturday morning. The project which will create more than 500 quality jobs at the former site of Eastern Fine Paper.

“I hope that through this exercise, people realize that Maine built means quality and integrity. It’s the Maine brand that is excellence,” said Governor Baldacci. “We can do business from here around the world because that’s what you’re doing and that’s what the opportunities are in front of us.”

Cianbro plans to turn the former mill into a modular construction facility for the fabrication and assembly of modules weighing more than a half ton each. The modules would be used for industrial process plants in North America. The Governor praised the efforts of Cianbro, Niemann Capital LLC, which was previously selected for the redevelopment of the site, and the City of Brewer for all working together to bring manufacturing jobs back to location.

“It’s the leadership of Pete Vigue, it’s the combination of a great city staff in Brewer, working together with the region and the state,” said the Governor. “Everybody worked together, moving heaven and earth to make these things happen.”

Eastern Fine Paper’s Brewer facility has been closed since January 2004. Cianbro expects to have at least 500 workers at the facility within nine months. Those interested in the new positions should visit the company’s Web site, www.cianbro.com, or call the toll free job hot line at 866-CIANBRO.

Governor Baldacci Announces More Jobs at Old Town Mill Site

June 4, 2007

OLD TOWN – Governor John E. Baldacci joined officials from Red Shield Environmental, LLC, Monday morning to announce plans to restart the pulp mill operation at the facility. The plans allow for additional workers at the Old Town site, bringing the total work force to approximately 175 employees.

“With the re-starting of the pulp mill, you can count more than 180 good paying jobs with health insurance and pension plans at this Old Town plant, but this is still just the beginning,” Governor Baldacci said. “Today’s announcement marks the start of a long-term relationship with the University of Maine. We are not only restarting the pulp mill, but today we are announcing a partnership where this facility will be using new patented technology from the University of Maine’s Chemical Engineering Department.”

In addition to making pulp, the technology will allow the Old Town facility to become the first plant of its kind to manufacture biofuels from cellulose. Prior to the pulping process, hemi-cellulose will be extracted from the wood fiber to create the biofuels.

“When we started four years ago, it was Great Northern Paper Company (that announced they were closing) the first day in office,” Governor Baldacci recalled. “When you look at the closures at Great Northern in Millinocket, East Millinocket, Lincoln, Old Town and Brewer, it was bigger than a base closing and what we have experienced at Loring. That’s almost 3000 jobs. That’s over \$100 million of payroll that has been negatively impacted.”

Governor Baldacci praised the work force in the areas where mills closed, saying that their reputation is to credit for getting some of the facilities back on their feet, and others on that path. The Governor also praised efforts by the University of Maine to create the partnership with Old Town.

“A key element of all of the redevelopment of this site and the future viability and sustainability of this site is with the University of Maine and the research that they are doing,” Governor Baldacci said.

The Governor said that transforming the Old Town site to a modern technology transfer center will further increase the viability and sustainability of the jobs at the facility. Ed Paslawski, of Red Shield Environmental, LLC, said that he expects to make a \$100 million capital investment in the facility over the next twelve months.

Governor Baldacci Congratulates 2007 Clean Water Week Poster Contest Winners

June 5, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated three students from Central Middle School in Corinth Thursday morning for being selected as the winners of the 2007 Clean Water Week Poster Contest. The 2007 theme was “What Clean Water Means to Me.”

The contest generated dozens of entries from schools throughout the state of Maine. Governor Baldacci congratulated the students and the administration for having all three finalists come from Central Middle School for the second year in a row.

“I am proud that you have put so much work into your posters and you are being recognized for your work,” Governor Baldacci said. “Clean water is important to everyone, everywhere in the state of Maine.”

First place went to Taylor Clark of Hudson; second place went to Brianna Speed of Corinth; and third place went to Victoria Pendleton of Hudson. All three finalists are in the 7th grade.

Governor Baldacci was presented with a framed copy of the first place poster by Taylor Clark for the Governor’s Office. Governor Baldacci also autographed each finalist’s entry for them to take home.

Governor Baldacci Signs Troop Support License Plate Bill

June 5, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci signed LD 964, An Act to Establish a Special License Plate to Honor Maine Residents Serving our Country, Tuesday afternoon. Bill sponsor Rep. Donald Pilon (D-Saco) was in the Governor's Office for the signing, as well as co-sponsors and supporters of the legislation.

"About nine months ago, I joined Rep. Pilon at WLOB in Portland with Ray Richardson and Ted Talbot and many others for a telethon to raise money for a Yellow Ribbon License Plate," Governor Baldacci said. "The plate would support families of Mainers in the National Guard and Reserves currently serving overseas. The response from the telethon was terrific and extremely supportive."

The "We Support Our Troops" license plate will be available starting Nov. 1. Ten dollars from each plate sold will go into a trust fund to assist Maine families who are financially struggling to make ends meet while their family members are serving overseas.

"I would like to thank Rep. Pilon for his legislation as well as his tireless efforts to ensure this project would become a reality," the Governor said.

Governor Baldacci Keeps 68-year Promise

June 5, 2007

AUGUSTA -- Governor John Baldacci today presented a lifetime fishing license to Donn Fendler, hero of "Lost on a Mountain in Maine."

"Donn Fendler's story of survival has been an inspiration to Maine children for more than five decades," said Governor Baldacci. "It is my pleasure to present him with this lifetime license, which he was promised many years ago."

A 12-year-old boy in 1939, Donn Fendler became separated from his hiking party on the slopes of Mt. Katahdin. He didn't see another human being for 12 days. Fendler wandered the slopes of Maine's tallest mountain until he discovered a stream, which he followed to safety. The search for Fendler was front-page news throughout the country. When he was rescued, Governor Louis Barrows invited him to the State Capitol, where he promised Donn a lifetime fishing license. But Donn never got the license.

"Last summer, Donn recounted his adventure to me when we met in Augusta," said Conservation Commissioner Patrick K. McGowan. "He mentioned that Governor Barrows had promised him the license, but he'd never received it. I mentioned that to Governor Baldacci, and today we are redeeming Governor Barrows' promise."

Fendler spent his career serving his country in the military. He retired from the United States Army as a Lieutenant Colonel. His book is still used in elementary schools throughout the state. Each summer, Donn returns to Maine from his winter home in Tennessee and often visits classrooms to talk about his adventure.

Governor Baldacci Releases Statement on House Budget Vote

June 6, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement regarding a vote in support of the state budget by the Maine House of Representatives.

“I’m encouraged by the developments during the day Tuesday and the cooperation between the leaders of both parties,” Governor Baldacci said. “This budget represents a significant step forward for Maine and will help give our people a better opportunity for prosperity.”

“The agreement, which passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, holds true to the core principles I have advocated throughout the budget process,” Governor Baldacci said. “We are reducing unnecessary administration in K-12 education and putting the emphasis in the classroom where it belongs. We are streamlining state government, especially in the area of human services, and we’re investing in higher education and innovation.”

“Last night’s actions are a huge step forward in the process,” Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Baldacci Presents Proclamation for Native American Veterans

June 6, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci honored Charles Norman Shay of Indian Island today as he proclaimed June 6, 2007, as Native American Veterans History Day in the State of Maine.

“Sixty-three years ago today, Charles Norman Shay was a 19-year-old combat medic in the 16th Regiment of the First Infantry Division,” Governor Baldacci said. “His unit was one of the first to land on Omaha Beach as part of the D-Day invasion. The division sustained about 1,000 casualties that day. Charles Norman Shay survived landing on Omaha Beach and did so while helping others survive as well.”

Shay earned a Silver Star for his heroism on D-Day. Shay was captured by Nazis in 1945, survived the German POW camps and eventually returned home to Maine. Shay returned to action serving in the Korean War as a combat medic. In the Korean War, he was promoted to Master Sergeant and awarded the Bronze Star.

“It is clear than Mr. Shay is deserving of recognition, as are the other Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet and Micmac veterans of this country’s wars,” the Governor said.

“I would like to pay special tribute to all Veterans who have paid the ultimate price in their service to this country,” Charles Norman Shay said at the press conference. “I would like to pay tribute to those who have been wounded, some very seriously. I would like to pay tribute to those who have been fortunate enough to return unharmed.”

The Governor presented the proclamation for June 6, 2007, to honor all Native American Veterans and to honor Mr. Shay for his service during World War II, the Korean War and the Cold War. In World War II, there were more than 150 Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet and Micmac men and women living in Maine who enlisted in the military during World War II. Total, there were approximately 30,000 Native Americans enlisted throughout the country.

“Native Americans – like many other Americans – have contributed greatly in service to their country over many decades. Unfortunately, the part they have played in protecting their country has been neglected,” Governor Baldacci said. “We are here today to issue public recognition that is long overdue.”

Charles Norman Shay, originally from Indian Island, returned home five years ago.

FERC Rejects Change to Aroostook Electric Rates

June 6, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci learned Tuesday that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has rejected a proposed rule change that would have increased utility rates in Northern Maine.

Governor Baldacci sent a letter to FERC in May asking that the proposed rule be rejected.

“Aroostook County has already been hit with a 45 percent increase in electricity rates. If this change had been allowed to happen, the county would have been hit again,” Governor Baldacci said. “I’m relieved that FERC has taken the appropriate action, and my administration will continue to fight any unreasonable rate increase.”

Governor Baldacci was joined in protesting the rule by Kurt Adams, chairman of the Public Utilities Commission, state Sen. John Martin (D-Aroostook) and state Rep. Jeremy Fischer (D-Presque Isle). The four participated in a conference call on May 4 denouncing the proposed rule change, and the PUC filed a formal protest on the same day.

“If this idea had been allowed to go forward, Aroostook would have seen another rate increase of nearly 8 percent,” Rep. Fischer said. “That’s more than we can afford.”

On April 13, the Northern Maine Independent System Administrator (NMISA) filed a proposed rule change with FERC that would result in a 7.6 percent rate increase for electricity prices of Maine Public Service Co. customers. Over the 26 month term of the standard offer, the increase could exceed \$3.5 million. In the rule change request, NMISA claims that the changes will not impact rates but offers no explanation to support this claim.

In November 2006, the PUC rejected all standard offer bids for Northern Maine. Citing that only one retail bidder participated, the PUC found the bids inadequate and declared a market failure. In December 2006, the PUC accepted a standard offer bid for Northern Maine. The rejection of the original standard offer bid forced the supplier to resubmit an offer at a lower price than had originally been submitted, yet a price still higher than the expired standard offer price. In fact, standard offer rates increased 45 percent effective Jan. 1, with a smaller rate increase effective July 1. The current standard offer rate for residential use is 7.89 cents/kWh and will increase to 8.25 cents/kWh in July.

Governor Celebrates Biotech Company Investment

June 7, 2007

PORTLAND – Governor John Baldacci today congratulated officials and employees of ImmuCell Corporation at the unveiling of a \$1.5 million investment in equipment and facility renovation. Touring the facility, the Governor praised the biotechnology company's expansion.

"I am pleased that ImmuCell is committed to enhancing their competitiveness in the global marketplace," said Governor Baldacci. "This expansion mirrors what we are doing on the State level, making strategic investments to grow our economy."

The investments by ImmuCell are designed to enable the company, which develops and manufactures products that improve dairy and beef industry productivity and health, to comply with current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP). Meeting these standards facilitates the company's ability to break in to foreign markets.

"I am confident that ImmuCell will be yet another shining example of what can be accomplished in Maine with a high quality workforce and product and smart investments for future growth," Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Welcomes AirTran Service to Maine

June 7, 2007

PORTLAND - Governor John Baldacci today welcomed the inaugural flight of AirTran Airways to the Portland International Jetport. AirTran, a low-fare airline, begins direct connections from Portland to Baltimore/Washington Airport and to Orlando, Florida, on Saturday, June 9.

"This is a great day for the Portland International Jetport and for all of Maine," said the Governor. "We celebrate new opportunities for tourism and business expansion that this service brings to the state. AirTran's arrival sends a message across the country and the world that Maine is a great place to do business."

The Governor said that the new service to the Jetport is one of many new transportation options for those traveling to and from Maine. Last year The CAT began ferry service from Portland to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and JetBlue began air service from Portland to New York City.

"Today is about new opportunities," said Governor Baldacci. "Maine is poised for exciting growth, and thanks to AirTran we will become a bigger travel destination."

AirTran's first flight into Portland arrived from Baltimore/Washington Airport with Jim Walsh, Director of the Baltimore Airport, on board. Governor Baldacci and Mr. Walsh exchanged crustacean themed gifts to commemorate the new connection between Portland and Baltimore, Maine certified lobsters and Maryland blue crabs.

Governor Signs State Budget

June 7, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci signed the State's biennial budget today following its overwhelming, bipartisan passage in both the House and Senate last night. Legislative leadership and members of the Appropriations Committee, as well as a number of other legislators and supporters, joined him in the Governor's Cabinet Room for the signing ceremony. The budget, which takes effect immediately, holds strongly to the principles the Governor outlined in his inaugural address, and he commended the Legislature for its success in meeting those goals.

"Eighty percent of State spending is in health and education," said Governor Baldacci. "This budget gets spending under control. Together, we recognized the need to cut administration in order to create opportunities and put more money in the classroom where they belong. This budget provides the tools to grow our economy and add better paying jobs for our citizens."

The budget contains the first significant reform in the administrative structure of K-12 education in more than 50 years. "With this budget, we have kept the promise to increase state aid to local education to 55%," said the Governor.

Speaking about the final outcome the Governor said, "The plan achieves substantial savings. That means Mainers will be seeing real property tax relief."

The budget invests in innovation, research and development, and higher education, including increased funding for the University of Maine System, community colleges and Maine Maritime Academy, aimed at helping to hold tuition costs down and increase Mainers' access to college education. The Governor reiterated that, "these investments are absolutely critical if Maine is going to create sustainable, private sector jobs with good benefits and the highly skilled workers to fill those jobs."

"With the \$295 million investment package passed earlier in the year, we are laying the foundation for a brighter, more prosperous future," said the Governor.

The biennial budget took immediate effect with the Governor's signature.

Governor Signs Bill to Curb Predatory Lending

June 11, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today signed into law LD 1869, “An Act to Protect Maine Homeowners from Predatory Lending,” sponsored by Speaker Glenn Cummings. This far-reaching comprehensive legislation protects consumers from abusive mortgage lending practices.

Governor Baldacci said the law provides a model for national legislation. “There has been much national attention shedding light on the unfortunate trend of people losing their homes due to predatory lending,” said the Governor. “I applaud Speaker Cummings and the entire Legislature for recognizing this problem in Maine and for coming up with this important package of protections for homeowners.”

The legislation received wide support from consumer and professional organizations, and passed in the House and Senate with unanimous support. The Governor thanked the partners who advanced the bill.

“Your efforts to develop these protections will enable Maine families to stay in their homes,” Baldacci said. “I particularly want to thank Speaker Cummings as well as the chairs of the Committee on Insurance and Financial Services, Senator Nancy Sullivan and Representative John Brautigam, for their tireless efforts in moving this important legislation forward.”

Governor Baldacci Applauds The LifeFlight Foundation for National Recognition

June 11, 2007

LEWISTON – Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated The LifeFlight Foundation Monday afternoon for receiving the first Excellence in Community Service Award from the National Association of Air Medical Services.

“Despite the fact that this foundation is only four years old, we have seen the effects of the hard work of the people and parties involved, and here in Maine we know how important this Foundation is to the overall health and safety of our citizens,” Governor Baldacci said. “So, it really came as no shock that The LifeFlight Foundation has now been recognized nationally with this community service award.”

The LifeFlight Foundation was given the recognition for its work implementing a statewide system of hospital helipads, weather navigation systems, GPS instrument navigation systems and fuel systems; and for creating a safe aviation environment that supports LifeFlight of Maine’s medical helicopters. LifeFlight of Maine began operations in 1998, and The LifeFlight Foundation was created in 2003 with a mission to support and develop a state-of-the-art infrastructure to support the LifeFlight program. In addition to pointing out the hard work and dedication of the workers involved, Governor Baldacci praised the partnerships the Foundation has developed.

“This project is a public-private partnership at its best – working together can help improve our health system and our economy, while making each stronger for the people of Maine,” Governor Baldacci said. “The combination of public and private funding has supported the construction of, or improvement to, 22 hospital helipads.”

In addition to supporting LifeFlight’s air medical infrastructure, The LifeFlight Foundation has also put in place continuing medical education projects, including a mobile training lab and programs focusing on traumatic brain injury, cardiac care and pediatric trauma management.

“I would like commend The LifeFlight Foundation for their work and also for their understanding of the benefits of working together in a public-private partnership,” Governor Baldacci said. “I feel that these partnerships do a wonderful job in consolidating resources while at the same time benefiting many interested, deserving parties.”

Governor Encourages Mainers to Vote Today

June 12, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci this morning voted in his hometown of Bangor and encouraged other Mainers to vote today. Two bond issues are on the statewide ballot: one to provide for \$113 million for transportation projects and the other for \$18 million to improve wastewater and drinking water facilities.

“These important investments, if approved, would yield an additional \$310 million in matching funds,” Governor Baldacci said. “These bond questions, having been carefully considered and approved overwhelmingly by the State Legislature, are vital economic development tools for the state. They mean jobs for our people now and into the future, and will improve our communities from one end of the state to the other.”

The referenda questions being considered today build on the investments in the economy and jobs in the recently passed biennial budget. The budget, signed by the Governor less than a week ago, continues the Administration’s efforts to cut spending, provide property tax relief and grow Maine’s economy.

“Today Maine voters have the opportunity to support crucial infrastructure improvements and provide more opportunities for good paying jobs in Maine,” said the Governor Baldacci. “These are smart investments to secure Maine’s future.”

Earlier this spring, Standard & Poor’s upgraded Maine’s general obligation bond rating with a stable outlook. The associate director of Standard & Poor’s said that Maine’s improving economic outlook was a major contributing factor to the upgrade.

Maine citizens last considered bonding in November 2005.

Governor Baldacci Conducts Ceremonial Signing of Rail Service Bill

June 12, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci conducted a ceremonial signing today of LD 328, Resolve, To Require an Engineering Study to Determine the Cost of Extending Rail Service from Portland to Fryeburg.

“I’ve long been an advocate of extending our rail system for both passenger and freight in Maine,” Governor Baldacci said. “As a former member of the Transportation Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives – and certainly as Governor – I have been active in efforts to expand such service.”

The resolve calls for the Maine Department of Transportation to work with the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority to determine the cost of extending rail service from Portland to Fryeburg. Following the study, legislation may be proposed in 2007 for such an extension.

“Local companies currently shipping stone and gravel by truck in the Mountain Division Corridor could shift more than 25,000 truck trips a year onto freight rail,” Governor Baldacci said. “In addition to reducing wear and tear on our highways and bridges, freight railroads are three times more fuel efficient than trucks and would contribute to reduction of Green House Gas emissions.”

The bill was sponsored by Sen. Bill Diamond (D-Cumberland). The bill was officially signed on May 14 as an emergency measure, meaning it has already taken effect.

Statement on the Death of Charles F. Bragg 2nd

June 12, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci issued the following statement after learning of the death of Charles F. Bragg 2nd. Bragg dedicated more than 25 years of his time and talent to Healthcare Charities in Bangor.

“Charlie was a wonderful man to me and my family, not only in business dealings but also as neighbors,” Governor Baldacci said. “He contributed greatly to his community, state and family. He will be sorely missed.”

Governor's Statement on Tax Reform Proposal

June 12, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement tonight following a meeting with Democratic leadership from the House and Senate.

“I’ve gone through the details of the proposal with my staff and experts from Maine Revenue Services, and I’ve had two encouraging and productive meetings with legislative leaders,” Governor Baldacci said. “I still have concerns about the proposal, but I believe that we can all work together to build a plan that will provide real income tax relief while also gaining bipartisan support.”

Governor Baldacci Swears In Deane Jones to House of Representatives

June 13, 2007

AUGUSTA – Deane Jones of Mount Vernon was sworn in as a member of the 123rd House of Representatives today by Governor John E. Baldacci.

“Deane was a terrific candidate and has a terrific family,” Governor Baldacci said. “Welcome, congratulations, and we look forward to working with you.”

Deane Jones was elected to the House in District 83 yesterday. Rep. Jones’ district includes the towns of Manchester, Vienna, Mount Vernon, Fayette and Belgrade. Jones won the election over Republican candidate Penelope Morrell of Belgrade. The special election was held to fill the seat vacated by the death of Rep. Abigail Holman of Fayette in April.

The swearing-in took place in the Governor’s Office, with members of the legislature and Jones’ family present.

Rep. Jones begins serving in the House immediately.

Governor Signs Bill Banning Chemical in Household Products

June 14, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed into law LD 1658, “An Act to Protect Pregnant Women and Children from Toxic Chemicals Released into the Home.”

“In Maine, we are proud to be at the forefront in protecting our children's health,” said Governor Baldacci. “This legislation recognizes that the levels of the harmful chemical deca have increased rapidly over a short amount of time. We must address this issue for the health of our children and families.”

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection presented a report in January that concluded that safer alternatives to this flame retardant chemical exist. These options are not only feasible, said the report, but economically viable.

The bill prohibits the sale of mattresses and furniture made with deca beginning next year, and bans the sale of new televisions and other plastic-encased electronics made with deca starting 2010.

The bill was sponsored by Maine House Majority Leader Hannah Pingree (D-North Haven), and received broad support from health, environmental and professional organizations. The legislation passed with near unanimous support in the State Legislature.

“The time is now to begin the transition away from the environmental hazard that is deca and toward better alternatives that don’t sacrifice fire safety,” said Governor Baldacci.

Governor Baldacci Addresses American Legion Conventions

June 15, 2007

GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE CONTACT: David Farmer, 287-2531 (cell) 557-5968 Dan Cashman, 287-2531 (cell) 837-4821 June 15, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Governor Baldacci Addresses American Legion Conventions

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci addressed the 89th annual conventions of the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary today.

"I've attended many of these conventions and enjoy the time I spend with our veterans and their families," Governor Baldacci said. "You know all too well the meaning of sacrifice and service."

The Governor spoke to the groups at the Bangor Civic Center about the importance of their organizations, Father's Day, and legislation affecting veterans that he has been working on this legislative session.

"I included in my budget – which was just signed into law - \$341,000 for the veterans' cemetery for personnel and equipment," Governor Baldacci said. "We have not had enough attention paid to our cemeteries. Hopefully this funding will allow more attention and better care for those facilities."

The Governor told the groups that he also recently signed into law An Act to Establish a Special License Plate to Honor Maine Residents Serving our Country. The license plates will create a fund to support families of Mainers in the National Guard and Reserves currently serving overseas.

"Rep. Don Pilon and Ray Richardson did a radio telethon in Westbrook to raise money to start up the program," Governor Baldacci said. "They raised about \$30,000 and I provided an additional \$10,000 through my contingency account to ensure this project moved forward."

The American Legion Auxiliary broke into applause when the Governor mentioned signing a bill last month to Protect the Solemnity and Dignity of a Funeral or Memorial Service in Maine.

"We respect and honor free speech," Governor Baldacci said, "but funerals and memorial services are not the time or place to demonstrate your personal feelings for, or against, political issues."

Governor Baldacci also touched on the Executive Order creating a planning committee for the Maine Veteran's Home "Veterans Campus," and the passing and signing of his bill An Act to Protect the Lives and Health of Members of the Maine National Guard.

"This bill creates the Commission to Protect the Lives and Health of Members of the Maine National Guard, which will provide a model of higher and safer standards for preventative medical practices and health screenings for Maine National Guard Members," Governor Baldacci said. "I had gone to Walter

Reed and visited Building 18. It really was a sin to see the conditions of that building," Governor Baldacci continued, "They shouldn't have anybody go into conflict until they can guarantee our soldiers are taken care of when they come back."

Governor Baldacci also took a moment to remember Roger Landry, a former legislator from Sanford who was a longtime advocate for veterans.

"Roger was a co-chair of my veterans' health task force and he was someone who fought tirelessly for top-quality care for our veterans," the Governor said.

Governor Signs Bill to Protect Health of National Guard Members

June 18, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed into law LD 1889, “An Act To Protect the Lives and Health of Members of the Maine National Guard.” This law creates a commission that will review all the preventative health care measures that members of the National Guard receive.

“Our country has a moral obligation to make sure we take care of those we send into harm’s way - not only when they are in combat, but also when they come home,” said Governor Baldacci.

The commission will look at vaccines and medicines prescribed and the way the military conducts medical screenings. It will propose recommendations to the U.S. military with the intent of making the system stronger. The commission will also serve as an advocate for veterans and their families, helping them obtain information and making sure wounded servicemen receive the care that they need.

The legislation was born out of the advocacy of Barbara Damon-Day, the mother of Pat Damon. Damon died on June 15, 2006, in Afghanistan during his service with the Maine National Guard. Since his death, his mother and other family members have made it a priority to make safe health care practices available to current and future guard members. Damon had served as a staff member for the Maine House of Representatives and in the Baldacci Administration.

“The tragedy and sadness of our loss of Pat energized all of us to get this legislation through so that we can protect our National Guard members – our heroes,” said Governor Baldacci. “The loss of Pat is still vividly painful. We honor his memory with this law.”

“I want to recognize Pat’s mother, Barbara Damon-Day, who has spent countless hours working to improve the system meant to safeguard the men and women who serve in Maine’s National Guard,” said Governor Baldacci. “Through her absolute commitment and the hard work of Speaker Cummings and his office, and with 154 cosponsors, this law will better protect the health of the people who protect us.”

The Governor’s bill was sponsored by Speaker Glenn Cummings and received unanimous support in the State Legislature. In addition to Barbara Damon-Day, Pat Damon’s wife and two children were in attendance for the signing of the bill.

Governor Signs Regional Greenhouse Gas Legislation

June 18, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed into law LD 1851, “An Act To Establish the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative Act of 2007.” The bill establishes the road map for Maine’s implementation of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), a first of its kind collaboration of states to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

“Here in Maine we put people first,” said Governor Baldacci. “I’m proud that Maine is a leader in protecting the health and welfare of our citizens. Reducing global warming pollution protects our natural treasures for future generations. It protects our children’s future while placing Maine at the forefront of new economic opportunities.”

The Governor said that RGGI is one of many initiatives undertaken by his Administration to increase energy independence, reduce pollution and protect the environment. Maine took the lead in the country by measuring and tracking greenhouse gas emissions from State government energy consumption. Since 2002, the State has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 8%. Maine is the first state government in the nation to buy 100% of its electricity from renewable sources.

“Maine is leading by example, and RGGI is a crucial step,” said Governor Baldacci. “The bill I am signing today builds on my commitment to lower emissions and fund new investments in cleaner technologies and energy efficiency and conservation. These investments will improve the competitiveness of Maine’s businesses and lower electricity rates for consumers, individuals, and businesses. This is a brighter future, a healthier future, a future that will mean cleaner air, lower energy costs and greater economic opportunity.”

Maine entered into the RGGI agreement in 2005. Nine other states are participating in this first in the nation mandatory cap-and-trade system for carbon dioxide emissions.

The Governor thanked the stakeholders – including the 57 legislative sponsors - who participated in the development of his legislation. “This took the combined efforts of legislators, businesses, consumers, and generators to develop this bill and to achieve its near-unanimous passage in the State Legislature,” said Governor Baldacci.

Governor Baldacci Awards Five Students with State Police Memorial Scholarships

June 18, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated five students from around Maine for being awarded with State Police Memorial Scholarships. The Governor presented the students with their checks Monday afternoon in the Governor's Office.

"This is the 24th year of the scholarship program," Governor Baldacci said. "I have really appreciated my association with the Maine State Police. They couldn't be a finer organization of individuals and family members. I am very proud of what they do for us. It is with honor I am able to present these scholarships."

Receiving the scholarships were Lindsay Cejka of Brunswick, who will attend Smith College in Northampton, Mass.; Kelsie Winklmann of Fairfield, who will attend Daniel Webster College in Nashua, N.H.; Amy Marchessault of North Waterboro, who will attend the University of Maine in Orono; Jamie Pelletier of Eagle Lake, who will attend the University of Maine in Orono; and Lindsay Trafton of Unity, who will attend the University of Maine at Farmington. Amy Heino of Belgrade will also receive a scholarship, but was unable to attend the ceremony in the Governor's Office. Amy will attend the University of Rhode Island.

The scholarships were awarded to students of an active, retired or deceased State Trooper who are going into their first year of college.

Governor Baldacci Addresses Girls State

June 19, 2007

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci spoke to the more than 300 delegates of Girls State Tuesday night about the connection between government and Girls State, lessons to take away from Girls State and the consolidation of education administration. The Governor also spoke to the delegates about his experience at Boys State when he was in high school.

“I myself was in Boys State a few years ago,” Governor Baldacci said. “That experience, along with the influence of my family and my father, gave me an active interest in politics and government.”

Governor Baldacci told the delegates, who are gathered at Husson College for the week-long event, that the operation of Girls State is a great representation of the way local, county and state governments operate.

“I think that you can go about working together on the issues, even if you have disagreements,” the Governor said. “My father told me that life is like a glass, you get out of it whatever you put into it. What you are putting in here at Girls State is an invaluable experience that will last you a lifetime and you will learn to work together and work through your disagreements.”

The Governor answered questions from the students on everything from Maine’s economy to the 2008 presidential election, although many of the questions were about the consolidation of administration in Maine’s schools.

“The reason this plan is necessary is because teachers are being cut, less money is being put into the classroom, and property taxes are still going up,” Governor Baldacci said. “We need to be putting more money into the classroom for the students benefit, and less money into the administration of education.”

Governor Baldacci told the delegates that the end result of the plan was a compromise between legislators and the Governor, and he is happy with the outcome.

“It is hard work coming together to find a compromise that works for everyone,” the Governor said, “and you will likely experience that type of work here at Girls State.”

The Governor closed by praising the students for their community-minded participation at an early age and said that Girls State is a model example of a way for young people to get involved.

“If you want to be successful, you have to be yourself,” the Governor said. “Don’t try to impress the person next to you. You need to be honest with yourself and each other and work as hard as you can for the greater good. Girls State represents those values and I hope that you take them with you long after this week comes to a close.”

Governor Baldacci is scheduled to speak to Boys State Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. at the Thomas College Gymnasium in Waterville.

Governor Signs Bill to Reduce Unemployment Taxes for Business and Increase Work Force Training Opportunities

September 1, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 1884, "An Act to Create the Competitiveness Training Fund and Improve Maine Employment Security Programs." The Governor's bill meets his goals of improving Maine's competitiveness and increasing opportunities for Maine people, benefiting the state's entire economy.

The Governor said the bill provides significant benefits for Maine businesses. "This legislation reduces unemployment taxes for Maine businesses for the next two years: \$33.7 million in 2008; and \$35 million in 2009," said Governor Baldacci. "This is real, tangible savings for Maine businesses, and goes a long way to increasing Maine's competitiveness."

Businesses will see an average tax rate reduction per employee of \$74-\$77 each year respectively from what would have otherwise been collected. This is accomplished by reducing the benefit reserve cap of the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund from 21 months to 18 months starting Jan. 1, 2008.

The bill builds on past Administration efforts to create opportunity for businesses, including expanding Pine Tree Zones; investing through R&D, quality places and transportation bonds; funding for industry cluster development through the Maine Technology Institute; repealing BETR; and working with Maine's Chamber of Commerce on a budget that controls spending while making crucial investments to create sustainable, private sector jobs.

In addition to the tax relief components of the bill, LD 1884 recognizes that Maine must transition its work force to meet the demands of the 21st Century economy.

The bill establishes the Competitiveness Skills Scholarship. The scholarship allows CareerCenter customers earning below 200 percent of the poverty level to obtain a degree or certificate in a training program for high-wage jobs in industry clusters that need skilled workers.

"The Competitiveness Skills Scholarship helps Maine workers and business succeed in a changing economy and has been a top priority for the Governor and Maine Department of Labor," said Maine Labor Commissioner Laura Fortman. "It helps workers gain the skills they need to get jobs in high demand sectors, and helps business demand for trained employees."

The bill rewards work by removing the pension offset against unemployment benefits for persons who receive Social Security or similar pension plans. The Governor's bill also encourages older workers and those who can only work part time to remain in the workforce following a layoff, and maintains unemployment protections for workers who are only available and able to work part time.

A strong bipartisan effort and collaboration between Maine's business community and worker advocates led to unanimous support for LD 1884 in the Legislature. "I'm proud of this important

initiative for Maine's future, and of the strong bipartisan support behind it," said the Governor in thanking those who worked for passage of the bill.

Governor Mourns Maine Army National Guard Soldier's Death

June 15, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has learned of the death of a Maine Army National Guard soldier.

Sgt. Richard K. Parker, 26, was killed in action June 13 while serving in Iraq. He was a member of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 152nd Field Artillery Regiment from Waterville serving with the Security Force II element in Iraq.

Sgt. Parker's family has been notified. His home of record was Phillips.

"Sgt. Parker was well-loved and greatly respected by his unit and the Maine Army National Guard," Governor Baldacci said. "We're very lucky both as a state and as a country to have people of the quality of Sgt. Parker who are willing to serve and put themselves on the front lines."

"I was very, very sorry to learn of this death," Governor Baldacci continued. "May God bless Sgt. Parker and his family. On behalf of everybody in Maine, I want to send my condolences to the family. We will do everything we can to honor him and his service."

Governor Baldacci has placed condolence calls to the family.

Flags will be ordered flown at half-staff on the day of Sgt. Parker's funeral.

Governor Baldacci Applauds 60 Years of Boys State

June 20, 2007

WATERVILLE – Governor John E. Baldacci spoke to the more than 250 delegates of Boys State Wednesday night about his time as Governor of the State of Maine and his experience running for Governor of Boys State. 2007 marks the 60th Anniversary of the week-long program.

“I ran for Governor of Boys State many years ago,” Governor Baldacci said. “I was running against about 19 other candidates and I did not win. However, I did make several friendships that lasted for years. When I ran for Congress and for Governor, many of the friends I made at Boys State came back and helped me out on the campaigns. The friendships you make here are important and will be important to you for years to come.”

The Governor told the delegates that he intends to sign legislation for Opportunity Maine when it hits his desk. Opportunity Maine creates a new tax credit to help pay off student loans for people who live and work in Maine following graduation.

“We are giving you an opportunity to live and work in Maine and not have to be burdened by debt to do so,” the Governor said.

Governor Baldacci spoke to the delegates of Boys State, held this year at Thomas College in Waterville, for about 15 minutes and answered questions from the students for an additional half hour. The Governor answered questions on his plans after his term as Governor expires, gas prices and the 2006 gubernatorial election. As was the case Tuesday night at Girls State, the Governor also fielded questions about the consolidation of school administration.

“Education consolidation is not just about saving money, it’s about investing that money in scholarships and resources for the classroom,” the Governor said. “You grow the economy by making wise investments and that’s what we are looking to do by investing in your education.”

The Governor spoke to delegates of Girls State Tuesday evening at Husson College in Bangor. Boys State and Girls State are sponsored by the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary, respectively.

Governor Baldacci issued a proclamation celebrating the 60th Anniversary of Boys State. The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, the American Legion, Department of Maine, believes there is no better way to assure the survival of our democratic society and state than to train our young people in the ideals and objectives of American Government; and

WHEREAS, the American Legion Boys State program is among the most respected and selective educational programs of civics instruction for high school students; and

WHEREAS, through the weeklong program Dirigo Boys State, young Maine citizens learn how city, county and state governments function by actually doing the job themselves; and

WHEREAS, Dirigo Boys State focuses on participation and personal experience in a model state, complete with governing bodies and elected public officials, designed to mirror the structure and operation of the State of Maine; and

WHEREAS, Dirigo Boys State encourages participants to identify their common democratic beliefs, organize campaigns, seek elective office, write legislation, debate judicial arguments, utilize parliamentary procedure, and to become effective community leaders; and

WHEREAS, Dirigo Boys State exposes students to the rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities of an American citizen; and

WHEREAS, six decades after its introduction, Dirigo Boys State continues to demonstrate its excellence in teaching Maine students the importance of our American way of life,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim June 17-21, 2007 as

60TH ANNIVERSARY SESSION DIRIGO BOYS STATE WEEK

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

Governor Baldacci Applauds Debut of Cynergy

June 21, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci attended the kickoff Thursday evening for Realize!Maine's newest regional offshoot, Cynergy. Cynergy is a social and professional networking group targeted at young persons, ages 20 – 40.

"In this technological age, Maine offers a quality of life that is second to none," Governor Baldacci said. "People are living here, working here and succeeding here. It's great to see so many of you looking to do the same."

More than 200 young professionals turned out at the Kennebec Arsenal in Augusta for the launch party. Cynergy joins other Realize!Maine branches such as Fusion:Bangor and KV Connect in Waterville encouraging young professionals throughout Maine to become involved in the areas where they live and work.

"When I started in politics at the age of 23, people said, 'What do young people know about it?'" the Governor said. "Fast forward 30 years, and now we're running things and running the state. It's important for you to get involved and be active at your age."

Along with Governor Baldacci, Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner John Richardson and KV Chamber President Peter Thompson were among the distinguished guests.

Governor Baldacci Addresses Legislature at End of Session

June 21, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci addressed the Maine State Legislature as the session closed Thursday night. The Governor complimented legislators about the accomplishments made on behalf of all Maine people.

The Governor's remarks, as prepared, follow:

"We came into this session with a long list of goals, and I'm proud to say we have accomplished much. This has been one of the most productive legislative sessions in recent memory.

With overwhelming, bipartisan support, we created a two-year state budget that makes the most significant reforms in K-12 education in more than 50 years, imposes new spending discipline upon state government, and invests in innovation and higher education.

With overwhelming, bipartisan support, we developed a package of targeted investments that will make our roads and bridges safer, will protect the state's special places and will help to grow private-sector, sustainable jobs with good benefits.

With near unanimous support, we have taken major steps forward in protecting our environment and reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. We have protected our citizens from toxic chemicals hidden inside consumer goods.

Thanks to your efforts, Maine now has one of the toughest predatory lending laws in the country, and together we have delivered to business a work force training program and nearly \$70 million in real tax relief.

We've created a national model to protect the health of people serving in the National Guard.

And we've taken important steps in advancing our goal toward universal health insurance coverage and an improved health care system.

DirigoChoice will have the option to become self-insured, a move that will give us the flexibility to improve the program and restrain costs.

And we have made it possible for young adults to keep health insurance through their parents until they are 25 years old, a major expansion of coverage to an age group prone to go without.

Our success is the product of our ability to work together for the good of the people of Maine.

During the last days of this session, there has been difficult debate around health care and tax reform.

On both issues, we still have work to do.

The Taxation Committee this year undertook an enormous task, and its members have done it with great creativity and openness.

Working diligently for the entire session, the committee, and particularly its chairs Rep. John Piotti and Sen. Joe Perry, developed a reform plan that has moved the debate on taxes further than most people thought possible.

But this is a difficult and complicated issue with consequences for our entire economy and affecting every business and family in Maine. We have to make sure we get it right.

I am committed to working with Legislative leaders going forward to further advance tax reform and tax relief. My goal is to develop a plan, like our groundbreaking budget and bond package, that will gain broad support.

In consultation with the Legislature, experts and interests on all sides, we will examine the taxes Maine people and visitors pay; consider more ways to streamline government at all levels.

Our discussion must include both changing the tax code and reducing spending.

We must also make sure the spending caps that we have in place at the state, county and municipal level have the teeth to make them effective.

Before January, I will develop a Governor's bill to reduce the tax burden on Mainers, improve our tax laws and continue to restructure government and reduce administration at all levels and in all areas.

We will do more to take our case to the people, making sure that we bypass the special interests and engage the public interest.

I appreciate the work of the Taxation Committee. Its members have done a tremendous job. Their efforts and the efforts of the many lawmakers who supported their work will be the foundation for discussions moving forward.

Like taxes, our work on health care is not complete. Although we took big strides this session, health care reform still needs more attention.

My pledge is to work with the Legislature to achieve our goal of making Maine the healthiest state in the nation.

Our goals will be to increase the number of people who have health insurance and implement market reforms that will increase private-sector competition and help hold down insurance costs while expanding universal access.

If we continue to work together, I know we can do it.

I've often said that the Legislature is like a big family. We're going to have our disagreements in the State House, but I know that we will all join together to do what's best for Maine.

The friendships that are built here continue long after your service has ended. That's one of the great gifts of serving in the Legislature.

Before I close, I want to take a moment to remember someone who should be here with us tonight. This year our family lost one of its own. Rep. Abigail Holman died in a tragic accident in April. Abby was a force in Maine politics.

Be proud of what you've done. You've worked hard, and you've done great things for Maine and all of our futures.

God bless you all and God bless Maine."

Maine Revenue Services' Augusta Taxpayer Service Center Relocation

June 22, 2007

AUGUSTA - Jerome Gerard, Acting Executive Director of Maine Revenue Services, has announced that the Taxpayer Service Center now located at the Edmund S. Muskie Federal Building in Augusta will close June 29, 2007 and will reopen at Maine Revenue Services' central office building at 26 Edison Drive, Augusta on July 2, 2007.

Taxpayers will be able to receive assistance for all of the taxes and programs administered by Maine Revenue Services at the new location, Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM., state recognized holidays excepted. Taxpayers needing more information about the new location may call 626-8475.

Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Bills that Expand the Authority to Report Abuse

June 22, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci ceremonially signed two bills Friday morning that expand the ability to detect and report both human and animal abuse in the State of Maine. LD 583, “An Act to Permit Medical and Social Service Professionals to Report Animal Cruelty,” and LD 584, “An Act Concerning Animal Control Officers as Reporters of Abuse” were both ceremonially signed by the Governor in his office with Rep. Deb Simpson (D-Auburn), the sponsor of the bills, and supporters present.

“This legislation is being heralded nationally,” Governor Baldacci said. “Maine recognizes when animals are being abused, often time so are people and the reverse is also true. Extensive research shows that animal abuse and human violence are linked when it comes to domestic violence, criminal behavior, child abuse and abuse of vulnerable adults.”

The bills protect first responder professionals who come into contact with people who are abused and animals that are abused. Governor Baldacci signed both bills last month, and they will go into effect 90 days after the last day of the legislative session, Sept. 20.

Governor Mourns Loss of Soldier with Maine Ties

June 25, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today mourned the loss of an active duty Army soldier with Maine ties. Sgt. Joel A. House died as a result of an IED attack in Taji, Iraq, on June 23, 2007. The notification of the soldier's family has been completed.

Sgt. House was serving in Iraq with the 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Hood, Texas. His parents Paul and Deanna reside in Lee, Maine.

Governor Baldacci spoke to Sgt. House's parents over the weekend to express his condolences on behalf of the State of Maine.

"This is an incredible family," said Governor Baldacci. "They have given so much. Joel was one of five generations of soldiers in his family who served their country in the military. His parents expressed a deep pride in what their son accomplished in his short lifetime. It is a great tragedy that Maine has lost another beloved and talented son. We join as a state in expressing our deepest sympathies to Joel's family."

No funeral arrangements have been made public at this time, and no further information is currently available. The Governor will order flags to be lowered to half-staff on the day of the funeral.

Governor Baldacci's Statement on Proposed Acquisition of CMP

June 25, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement on the announcement of the proposed acquisition of Energy East Corporation, the parent company of Central Maine Power (CMP), by Iberdrola, a Spanish utility company.

"I have talked to CMP's president Sara Burns today and will meet with company officials later this week," said Governor Baldacci. "I am cautiously optimistic about the proposal at this time."

Governor Baldacci was on Prince Edward Island Monday meeting with other governors and Eastern Canadian premiers. On the agenda was further discussion with New Brunswick about increased cooperation, including the production and transmission of electricity between Maine and the Canadian province.

According to a joint release by Iberdrola and Energy East, Iberdrola is a global electricity business. The company operates in markets in Spain, the UK, the US, Mexico and Brazil. Globally the company has approximately 24 million electricity points of supply and almost 40,000 MW of generation capacity.

For more information:

<http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/070625/nym122.html?v=73>

Maine and New Brunswick Move Forward on Electricity Partnership

June 26, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham released a report on electricity cooperation at the 31st Conference of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers being held in Prince Edward Island. The report contains the findings of Phase I of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Province of New Brunswick and the State of Maine to Enhance the Mutual Benefits of the Maine/New Brunswick Electrical Interconnections (MOU).

“This is an important step in growing a partnership with our neighbors in New Brunswick to provide for efficient production and transmission of electricity and for doing so in a way that protects our environment,” said Governor Baldacci. “My administration has actively explored ways to become more energy independent and has entered into historic agreements to reduce our carbon footprint. My work with Premier Graham is crucial to expanding these efforts in a way that is mutually beneficial to the people of Maine and New Brunswick.”

Governor Baldacci and Premier Graham signed the MOU in Bangor, Maine, on Feb. 9, 2007. The MOU lays out a timeline to explore and set forth actions enhancing cross-border cooperation on electrical interconnections. The MOU called for two phases: an assessment of tasks and prioritization of objectives; and an implementation phase.

Phase I has been completed, with the resulting report concluding that there are significant economic and environmental benefits possible to Maine and New Brunswick through closer coordination. The priority for Phase II is to pursue efficient energy production and transmission in a manner that addresses climate change. The report calls for a review of electricity production as a regional issue, and to address structural and international barriers to establishing or expanding interconnections.

The Phase II report is due to be completed by the fall of 2007. That report will analyze the feasibility and challenges of specific collaborative approaches.

Premier Graham noted, “The energy sector is a critical part of our sustainability agenda, and the work of the MOU task force will assist us in identifying the opportunities and the challenges to increasing our electricity exports to Maine and the rest of New England, and I thank the joint representatives for the fine work and look forward to receiving the Phase II report in the fall.”

“This report confirms what Premier Graham and I thought when we began this process,” Governor Baldacci said. “Maine and New Brunswick have much to gain from closer cooperation. And while there will be challenges, none of them are insurmountable.”

The text of the Feb. 9 MOU on Electrical Interconnections follows.

Memorandum of Understanding Between The Province of New Brunswick And The State of Maine To Enhance The Mutual Benefits Of the Maine/New Brunswick Electrical Interconnections

WHEREAS, The State of Maine ("Maine") shares electrical interconnections with the Province of New Brunswick ("New Brunswick");

Maine also shares electrical interconnections with other New England states;

New Brunswick also shares electrical interconnections with the Maritime Provinces and Quebec;

New Brunswick and Maine each have located within their respective borders adequate and at most times abundant generation capacity;

New Brunswick and Maine export significant quantities of generation to southern New England for the benefit of all consumers;

New Brunswick and Maine each have abundant natural resources from which renewable energy, such as wind and tidal energy, can be harvested to generate electrical energy;

Maine and New Brunswick have each adopted policies to promote the development of renewable resources;

The northeastern United States needs new supplies of electrical energy, including renewables;

Maine and New Brunswick wish to expand opportunities for the mutual development and export of new electric generation capacity resources;

Maine and New Brunswick wish to increase the opportunities to transmit energy between the State and Province and to their neighbors in Canada and the United States;

Maine and New Brunswick wish to improve the efficiency of their respective electric systems and the interconnections between them to benefit consumers and the environment; and

New Brunswick and Maine acknowledge the significance of climate change and recognize the importance of emphasizing the development and deployment of low emission electricity generation in the future.

NOW THEREFORE,

I, Shawn Graham, Premier of the Province of New Brunswick, and I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby enter into this "Memorandum of Understanding Between the Province of New Brunswick and The State of Maine To Enhance The Mutual Benefits Of the Maine/New Brunswick Electrical Interconnections" and do hereby agree as hereinafter set forth.

Maine and New Brunswick agree to explore expansions of generation capacity, including renewables, and transmission opportunities by agreeing to jointly undertake the following tasks:

Study the feasibility of expanding generation capacity and transmission infrastructure to increase electrical flows across borders;

Identify processes and systems to provide transparency and efficiency in Maine and New Brunswick markets;

Study the feasibility of developing common market rules that could be applied in Maine and New Brunswick;

Explore the potential benefits and technical and legal impediments to the common provisioning of control area services (including balancing, dispatch and reserve sharing);

Explore the tariff and governance structures required for a regional transmission organization for Maine and New Brunswick; and

Examine the opportunities for compatible greenhouse gas emissions reduction regimes in the electricity sector.

Maine and New Brunswick agree to dedicate sufficient resources from their respective state and provincial agencies for the completion of the tasks described herein. Maine and New Brunswick agree to appoint one person from each government to serve as each state's or province's, as applicable, point of contact (the "Joint Representatives").

The tasks are to be completed in two phases. Phase 1 work will overview the tasks, will assess priorities and possibilities, and will identify common principles (the "Principles") to guide additional work and any future implementation. The Joint Representatives shall deliver to their respective governments a report on the Phase 1 activities no later than June 1, 2007.

Upon completion of Phase 1, and agreement on the Principles, Maine and New Brunswick agree to proceed to Phase 2. It will be guided by the Principles and will complete detailed assessments of all tasks. The Joint Representatives shall present a final Phase 2 report to their respective governments no later than January 1, 2008.

Upon completion of the tasks identified above, Maine and New Brunswick agree to consider entering into a further agreement to implement mutually beneficial actions. Upon mutual consent, this further agreement may include other states or provinces.

Signed and delivered this 9th day of February, 2007.

Premier Graham

Governor Baldacci

Governor Baldacci's statement on Fraser Paper Layoffs

June 26, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement after learning Tuesday of layoffs by Fraser Paper in Madawaska. The layoffs were announced early Tuesday evening.

“This is difficult news for Madawaska and all of Aroostook County,” Governor Baldacci said after receiving a call from the company Tuesday. “The Department of Labor and its Rapid Response Teams have been put on notice, and we will do everything we can to help the workers and the community recover.”

The governor's office has no further details about the layoffs at this time.

Governor Baldacci Congratulates Auburn Company on Expansion

June 27, 2007

AUBURN – Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated the work force at Tambrands for being a major influence on Proctor & Gamble's decision to expand its Auburn facility. Tambrands, acquired by Proctor & Gamble in 1997, is the only manufacturer of Tampax products in North America. Governor Baldacci attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the 47,000-square-foot expansion, which adds to the existing 500,000-square-foot facility.

"The investment being made by Proctor & Gamble ensures that 500 people will continue to have good paying jobs at this facility," Governor Baldacci said. "In fact, that investment will create 28 more good paying jobs here at Tambrands."

Tambrands has been located in Auburn for 39 years. The company currently contributes \$75 million annually to the Maine economy through payroll, taxes, and purchasing of goods and services. The expansion is a \$25.5 million investment and will be used to accommodate additional production lines and warehouse space for the company.

"This investment shows a commitment to ensuring that these jobs stay in Maine," the Governor said.

The Auburn facility was one of three being considered for an expansion by Proctor & Gamble. A sourcing study was done to determine which site could best meet performance criteria. Proctor & Gamble chose Auburn because of the work force, Maine's elimination of the business equipment tax, and the incentives contained in the Pine Tree Development Zones program.

"Proctor & Gamble is a multi-national company that could expand anywhere, but they have chosen Maine. It is a testament to Maine's work force and the quality of work that is being done at this plant," Governor Baldacci said. "It is also an example of what can happen when you continually strive to improve the business climate of the state. Congratulations to the team at Tambrands for making today a reality."

Members Named to Wind Power Task Force

June 28, 2007

AUGUSTA – The 16 members of the Governor's Task Force on Wind Power Development in Maine have been named.

"I expect great things from the members of this Task Force," Governor John E. Baldacci said. "They are extremely talented and experienced, and they have the abilities necessary to advance the development of wind power in Maine."

The Task Force, which was created by executive order in May, will review the regulations that affect the development of wind power projects in the state and recommend any changes that would assure that Maine has a balanced, efficient and appropriate regulatory framework for evaluating proposed projects.

The Task Force will also monitor advances in wind power technology, identify benefits and incentives that might be available to communities considering wind power projects, help developers find the most appropriate locations for their projects and propose goals for wind power in Maine for 2010 and 2020.

Nearly 50 individuals sought membership on the Task Force.

"There was tremendous interest in participating with the Task Force," said Alec Giffen, the director of the Maine Forest Service, who will serve as chairman of the Task Force. "We will make sure that everyone who is interested can actively participate in the workings of the group."

Giffen said that those not selected for membership on the Task Force will be notified of meetings, receive copies of the agenda and be asked to present to the Task Force as part of a panel or as an interested individual.

Panels comprised of wind power developers, landowners, residents living near wind projects and utility experts will advise the Task Force throughout its deliberations.

The other members are: State Sen. Phil Bartlett of Gorham; Juliet Browne of Verrill Dana; Pete Didisheim, Natural Resources Council of Maine; Judy Dorsey of Gardiner; State Rep. Stacey Fitts of Pittsfield; State Sen. Walter Gooley of Farmington; Jody Jones of the Maine Audubon Society; John Kerry, director of the Office of Energy Independence and Security; Kathleen Leyden, State Planning Office; David Littell, commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection; State Rep. W. Bruce MacDonald, Boothbay; Milton McBreairty, IBEW Local Union 567, Lewiston; Pat McGowan, commissioner of the Department of Conservation; Steve Timpano, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife; and David Wilby, Independent Energy Producers of Maine.

The date of the Task Force's first meeting has not been set.

The text of the executive order follows:

An Order Establishing the Governor's Task Force on Wind Power Development in Maine

WHEREAS, Maine energy policy seeks to promote the development and use of renewable energy sources to help reduce Maine's dependence on imported fossil fuels, provide economic development, and promote security; and

WHEREAS, scientists have concluded that increases in greenhouse gas levels, including but not limited to carbon dioxide, are resulting in worldwide climate change; and

WHEREAS, wind power does not generate greenhouses gases and is broadly viewed as having fewer environmental impacts than other forms of electrical power generation; and

WHEREAS, wind power is the fastest growing utility-scale source of renewable energy in the world; and

WHEREAS, Maine has the highest wind potential of any New England state and ranks 19th in terms of wind potential in the United States as a whole; and

WHEREAS, wind power development can provide short term and long term economic and employment benefits for Maine citizens; and

WHEREAS, the State's wind resources occur in various areas of the State that may have important ecological, natural resource, remote resource, and other values that are important to Maine people that can lead to conflict regarding the siting of wind power facilities; and

WHEREAS, Maine could become a leader in New England in the development of wind power if a comprehensive approach is pursued that involves guidelines that direct wind power toward appropriate locations; well-designed and efficient regulations; the protection of areas where wind power is not appropriate; and collaboration among state agencies, wind power developers, interested parties, and the public.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the Governor's Task Force on Wind Power Development in Maine.

Purpose and Duties

The purpose and duties of the Task Force shall be to:

Examine the regulatory process and review criteria by which wind power projects currently are evaluated in Maine, identify barriers to wind power development and compare Maine's policies with approaches used in other jurisdictions;

Identify and recommend any changes deemed beneficial for assuring that Maine has a balanced, efficient and appropriate regulatory framework for evaluating wind power projects. Changes might include, but are not limited to, updating statutory and regulatory review criteria, technology-specific wind power siting guidelines, opportunities for streamlined permitting for certain categories of wind power projects and the use of negotiated settlement tools for resolving conflicts;

Propose policy changes that would help facilitate the development of wind power in Maine and establish a lead agency for tracking wind power generated in Maine, monitoring technological advances in wind power generation and providing educational materials regarding wind power;

Examine and make appropriate recommendations regarding Federal, State and local programs and financing options available to assist in the development of wind power projects;

Identify a range of options, benefits and incentives that might be available to communities that are affected by wind power projects; Create guidelines and related information that would assist wind power developers in identifying areas in the State of Maine that are more appropriate for wind power development, and avoiding areas that are not appropriate for wind power development, due to legal, natural resource or public value constraints; and

Propose goals for installed wind power in Maine for 2010 and 2020, provide an estimate of the economic and emission-reduction benefits of achieving such goals and suggest strategies to attain those goals.

To fulfill these duties, the Task Force shall collaborate and coordinate with the Land Use Regulation Commission, the Department of Marine Resources, the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Department of Agriculture, the Public Utilities Commission, the Office of the Governor, members of the Maine Legislature and other interested members of the public.

The establishment of this Task Force is not intended to delay or interfere with wind power projects that are already in the permitting process.

Membership

The Governor shall appoint 16 members to the Task Force. One member shall be the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation, or his designee; one member shall be the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection, or his designee; one member shall be the Director for the Office of Energy Independence and Security; one member shall be the Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, or his designee; and one member shall be the Director of the State Planning Office or her designee.

The remaining appointments shall include diverse members with relevant knowledge and experience in wind power development, land use and conservation policies and regulation, renewable energy policies, electricity and transmission policies and infrastructure, natural resource and remote recreation values, and environmental impacts from electrical power generation.

The President of the Senate may appoint two members of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House may appoint two members of the House of Representatives. Members shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority.

The Governor shall appoint the chair of the task force from among the members. The chair will schedule, set the agenda for, and preside at Task Force meetings.

Staff

Staff support to the Task Force will be provided by the Land Use Regulation Commission, the State Planning Office, Department of Environmental Protection, and other state agencies as needed. The members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation.

Report

The Task Force shall submit its recommendations to the Governor no later than January 15, 2008, after which the Task Force will dissolve.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is May 8, 2007.

Governor Baldacci Greets United States Youth Soccer Tournament Players

June 28, 2007

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci greeted about 5,000 soccer players from up and down the East Coast Thursday afternoon in Portland as they prepared for the opening ceremonies of the US Youth Soccer Region 1 Championships. This is the first of two consecutive years the event, for players between the ages of 10 and 19, will be held in Maine.

“You are all about to embark on a week’s worth of heated competition,” Governor Baldacci said. “But make sure that you don’t lose sight of the friendships that can be made during this week, as well as the memories and the excitement of the tournament. On top of all that, you are in the most beautiful place in the world. I encourage you to take some time and enjoy what Maine has to offer with your families, friends and teammates.”

Governor Baldacci’s involvement in bringing the US Youth Soccer Region 1 Championship to Maine began in February, 2005, with a letter to the US Youth Soccer Association. The Governor told the association that Maine would embrace the tournament and use it as a showcase for Maine’s outdoor recreation heritage.

“I welcome all of you to our great state and sincerely wish you the best of luck,” the Governor said.

The preliminary round of play begins Friday at Bowdoin College, Falmouth High School and Falmouth Park. Semifinal matches will be played on Monday, July 2, with the US Youth Soccer Region I Finals being played on Tuesday, July 3. Champions will be crowned following the final games.

Governor Baldacci Joins First Lady for New England Garden Rehabilitation

June 28, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined First Lady Karen Baldacci Thursday evening for the ribbon cutting for the rehabilitation of the New England Garden on the grounds of the Blaine House.

The garden was designed in 1920 by Fredrick Law Olmsted, the architect who designed New York City's Central Park, and was built in 2006-2007 under the leadership of the First Lady.

"My family – as current residents of the Blaine House – feels a special bond with it and its history," Governor Baldacci said. "That's why this day is so special to us – the completion of a major project – part of a two decades-old effort to restore this house and land to its original splendor."

"Great pains have been taken to ensure that this garden adheres to the original plans while conforming to modern-day site conditions and construction codes," First Lady Karen Baldacci said. "I think you will all agree that the result is nothing short of spectacular, and I want to thank Pressley Associates for the fine work they did in the adaptation."

The New England Garden is a formal, square-shaped traditional garden with a centerpiece surrounded by footpaths and fencing. Each corner features a flower display that changes from season to season. The garden represents the third phase of a 20-year-long effort begun by Governor John McKernan in 1987 to repair and restore the Blaine House to its original appearance.

Governor Ceremonially Signs Coastal Water Protection Bills

June 29, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today conducted a ceremonial signing of LD 403, "An Act To Encourage Municipalities To Abate Coastal Pollution," and 1318, "Resolve, To Conduct an Independent Review of the Department of Marine Resources, Public Health Division." These emergency bills together will go a long way toward improving Maine's valuable shellfish industry.

"LD 403 provides an incentive for coastal municipalities to abate sources of pollution that may exist within their borders," said Governor Baldacci. "This bill is a product of extensive work between the Maine Department of Marine Resources, several towns and other stakeholders."

Using that process of collaborating with stakeholders, the department will establish regulations which will improve the ability of towns and their shellfish committees to take a clear role in improving the water quality in areas that have been downgraded.

The resolve, LD 1318, calls for an evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Public Health Division under the Department of Marine Resources.

The water quality experts at the Public Health Division evaluate about 12,000 water quality samples a year. These samples are taken from approximately 1,600 sites, 6 times a year at a minimum. The resolve directs the Department of Marine Resources to work with members of the shellfish harvesting industry to determine the need and feasibility of a shellfish advisory council.

The resulting recommendations will be submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources by Jan. 15, 2008.

"This will go a long way to ensure we have the best quality testing and procedures in place and continue to build a collaborative relationship between the state and shellfish harvesters," said Governor Baldacci.

Governor Orders Flags to be Flown to Half-Staff on July 3

June 29, 2007

AUGUSTA – In remembrance and honor of Sgt. Joel House, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Tuesday, July 3, 2007.

Sgt. House was serving as a member of the 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Hood, Texas. He died as a result of an IED attack in Taji, Iraq, on June 23, 2007.

His funeral services are scheduled for Tuesday at the Lee Academy Gym. The Governor will be speaking at his service.

Governor Baldacci Addresses Corporate Conservation Council of Maine

June 29, 2007

FREEMPORT – Governor John E. Baldacci addressed about 100 people Friday afternoon at the Corporate Conservation Council of Maine luncheon. The Governor spoke on a variety of topics ranging from the US Youth Soccer Region I Tournament in Portland to legislation known as Opportunity Maine. The majority of the Governor's talk, however, centered on conservation efforts and collaborations between business leaders and conservation leaders.

"You are all here because you recognize what a special place this is," Governor Baldacci said. "In this last legislative session, we tackled some issues people didn't want to tackle. We realize that we have to change the way things are being done so that we can continue to provide opportunities to our citizens while preserving and protecting our natural resources."

Governor Baldacci listed examples of how land conservation and economic development go hand-in-hand, specifically sighting the Katahdin Forest Easement.

"Just a year ago, the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands accepted this 190,000-acre easement from The Nature Conservancy," the Governor said. "This easement will keep those rich forest lands adjacent to Baxter State Park intact. It will also ensure that hikers and hunters will have access to them, giving a recreational boon to the state. But the easement also keeps those lands intact as working forests, so that the mills in Millinocket can continue to provide jobs and product."

Governor Baldacci praised legislative efforts to pass the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative as well, a program that will reduce emissions from electric utilities to 1990 levels by 2014.

"If we have President Bush talking about global warming in his State of the Union address, I think it's obvious that this is a widely recognized problem, and we need to act on it now," Governor Baldacci said.

The Corporate Conservation of Maine provides business expertise and financial support to The Nature Conservancy to protect ecologically significant lands, waters and natural communities in Maine. At the luncheon, Poland Spring Water/Nestle Waters and Lowe's Home Improvement were recognized for their significant contributions to Maine's conservation efforts.

Governor Signs Opportunity Maine Bill

July 2, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 1856, “An Act To Allow a Tax Credit for College Loan Repayments,” called the Opportunity Maine bill.

“Opportunity Maine is a prime example of the innovation and commitment that young people have to the state of Maine,” said Governor Baldacci. “Mainers love this state and want to stay here after graduation. That’s what this bill is all about. These are our future leaders, and we can’t afford to lose them.”

The Governor said the importance of education was instilled in him at an early age. “My parents raised eight of us, and they made clear the importance of education,” said Governor Baldacci. “With a quality education, you have a better chance of hanging out a shingle for your own business and finding success throughout your life. This legislation gives us the tools to offer more to our young people - a fresh start right here at home.”

The initiated bill recognizes that student loans are a significant burden to many graduates as they enter the work force, and that assistance in helping them pay off their student loans will help keep them in Maine to work and be productive citizens.

The bill creates a new tax credit for Maine graduates who choose to stay in Maine to work. The legislation also enables the employers of these graduates to pay off student loans.

“For four years, my administration has worked hard and maintained tight budget discipline,” said Governor Baldacci. “Now that’s paying off, and we can put more resources into tax relief and higher education. This is about our generation helping the next one. We’re telling our students: If you live, work and pay taxes in Maine, you’re not going to have this student debt hanging around your neck.”

The Governor also said this initiative helps Maine businesses, providing for them a well-educated work force.

“This is a wise investment in our children’s future and our state’s economic future, and I believe it will pay huge dividends,” said Governor Baldacci.

Governor Signs Special Budget and Expenditure Order

July 2, 2007

Governor Signs Special Budget and Expenditure Order

Continues Fiscal State Spending Restraints

AUGUSTA –Governor John E. Baldacci signed a Special Budget and Expenditure Order at the beginning of the State's Fiscal 2008-2009 cycle. The Governor has signed similar orders since 2003. This directive places a hiring freeze on vacant positions and limits overtime, travel and other expenses. The order allows for emergency exceptions.

"My Administration has been committed to restructuring government and reducing administration at all levels and in all areas," said Governor Baldacci. "This order is just one tool to keep in place critical measures to ensure Maine State Government operates efficiently and effectively."

A copy of the order follows:

SPECIAL BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE ORDER OF JULY 1, 2007

WHEREAS, the State of Maine and National economies continue to exhibit slow to moderate growth; and

WHEREAS, it is fiscally responsible to continue budgetary constraints that are currently in place;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby order, effective immediately, that each State agency and department must review its programs and implement the following procedures:

Financial orders that request the transfer of balances of appropriations and allocations between line categories and accounts, that request the use of savings for project or limited period positions or that request allotment in excess of allocation, except Government/Student Intern positions, will not be approved unless the State Budget Officer determines such uses are necessary to protect the health or safety of the public, to meet payroll obligations, to fund legislatively approved salary increases and adjustments or are necessary to meet unavoidable legal obligations.

A hiring freeze is immediately in effect for all positions that are vacant or that become vacant. Emergency exceptions to this provision may be approved by each department or agency head with advice and recommendations from the Bureau of the Budget and the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, or the Commissioner's designee. Department and agency heads should make every effort to streamline operations in order to avoid the filling of vacancies. The Division of Purchases will not approve personal services contracts that are contrary to this provision. Hiring decisions by department and agency heads will be limited by available Personal Services in General Fund accounts during FY 08.

Unscheduled overtime shall not be permitted except in emergency or other unavoidable circumstances and only with the prior approval of the department or agency head, or his or her designee.

All travel must be reduced to the absolute minimum necessary to maintain effective operations with the following exceptions:

Travel directly related to the care of residents, wards, foster children and other individuals under state care or protection.

Travel required in the execution of law enforcement investigations, interstate contracts directly related to the extradition of an individual, or the transfer of an individual to or from a correctional facility.

Travel directly involved in the securing of revenue, or that directly impacts revenue.

Travel required in emergencies or other extraordinary circumstances.

Alternatives to travel should be explored, especially the use of appropriate telecommunications technology.

All contracts, grants or purchases must be reviewed by each department and agency head and reduced to the absolute minimum necessary to maintain effective operations or to meet emergency situations. Each department or agency head will be responsible for making the determination that a contract, grant or purchase satisfies the emergency or cost effective operation standard in accordance with guidelines developed by the Division of Purchases. The Director of Purchases is authorized to return to a department or agency head any contracts, grants or purchases that are determined to be nonessential or that can be delayed or postponed. Federal Expenditures Fund accounts and Federal Block Grant Fund accounts are exempted, only if a General Fund match or other General Fund obligation is not required.

Nothing in this Executive Order may be interpreted to authorize departments and agencies to postpone the processing of invoices payable in fiscal year 2007-08. This Executive Order also is not intended to prevent state agencies and departments from addressing emergencies or imminent threats to health and safety, or from fulfilling legal obligations entered into prior to its effective date.

The Executive Order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect through June 30, 2008, unless modified or rescinded by Executive Order. This Order supersedes 05 FY 01/02, 02 FY 02/03, 07 FY 02/03, 01 FY 03/04, 19 FY04/05, 26 FY 04/05, 01 FY 06/07, and 17 FY 06/07.

John E. Baldacci, Governor

Governor Signs Pine Tree Zone Expansion Legislation

July 2, 2007

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 1926, “An Act To Expand the Pine Tree Development Zone Benefits to Small and Midsize Maine Manufacturers.” The legislation builds on the popular and successful Pine Tree Zone program (PTZ), an important economic development initiative the Governor created four years ago.

“I’m pleased to extend the significant benefits of the Pine Tree Zone program to more Maine businesses,” said Governor Baldacci. “This will spur more economic growth throughout Maine and create more jobs for our quality Maine work force.”

The Pine Tree Zone initiative is a critical part of Governor Baldacci’s economic plan to make Maine more competitive in the 21st Century. The program has already proven to be a great success for Maine businesses and the state’s work force. There are currently 122 companies certified, with nearly 4,500 full-time jobs created. Estimated investment projections by companies certified are more than \$334 million. These are private investments in facilities and worker training.

“The expansion applies to any existing manufacturer in Maine that is not already eligible for Pine Tree Zone benefits and that is committed to grow in Maine, regardless of where in the state they are located,” said Governor Baldacci. “We built a solid foundation for growth with the original Pine Tree Zone model in 2003. This bill enables us to go to the next level.”

The expansion enables a manufacturer to be eligible for Pine Tree Zone status with a minimum of four new positions and an investment minimum of \$225,000.

Maine Film Office Receives Two Marketing Awards from International Organization

July 2, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today officially presented two marketing awards to the Maine Film Office. The awards were announced earlier this year from the Association of Film Commissioners International. The Maine Film Office received the Second Place Award for Best Web Site and the Honorable Mention Award for Color Advertising.

"Maine won these awards in competition with larger state, provincial and even national film offices," said Governor Baldacci. "The awards are testaments to the significant focus and talent of the Maine Film Office and other Maine partners in marketing our state in the global economy."

Governor Baldacci's Administration has provided significant tools to the marketing of Maine as a destination for television, film and other media productions. Through the Creative Economy initiative and the Maine Attraction Film Incentive Plan, Maine has been aggressively pursuing opportunities for growth in attracting the film industry to the state.

The Maine Film Office worked with Maine-based media professionals to create the award-winning ad and web site. The web site was created by the film office and Xwave, an international business-solutions provider with offices in Augusta, elsewhere in New England, Washington, D.C. and Canada. The advertisement was created by the film office and Nancy Marshall Communications, a public relations and marketing firm based in Augusta.

"It was a thrill for us to win not one, but two awards," said Lea Girardin, director of the Maine Film Office. "Considering the fact that our budget for advertising is very small and we were competing against much larger film commissions and offices, we are extremely honored to be recognized."

The Maine Film Office is a two-person division of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. Its mission is to bring more film, television, video and other media production the state; help improve and expand Maine's indigenous media production industry; and help all media projects in Maine succeed.

"One of our most important tasks is to show decision-makers that Maine's media-production professionals are among the best in the world," said Girardin. "These awards help prove that point."

The Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) is the global professional and educational organization for film commissions and film offices. There are more than 300 film commissions and film offices worldwide that belong to AFCI, serving cities, counties, states, regions and nations. AFCI members assist with the production of feature films, television, commercials, catalog shoot in other media productions throughout the world.

For more information on the Maine Film Office, visit

<http://www.filminmaine.com/>

Governor Mourns Soldier's Death in Iraq

July 9, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has learned of the loss of an active duty Army soldier with Maine ties. Pfc. Jason E. Dore, 25, died Sunday, July 8, in Baghdad, Iraq, of wounds sustained from an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

The Governor has spoken to the soldier's family, who lives in Moscow, to express his condolences.

"I was deeply saddened to hear of the loss of this promising young man," said Governor Baldacci. "Pfc. Dore loved doing what he was doing, and always gave of himself. The family is really suffering from this tremendous loss. We will do everything we can to stand with them and support them during this very difficult time."

Pfc. Dore is the third soldier Maine has lost in Iraq in a month; the second in that timeframe from Western Maine, and the second Maine soldier from this Brigade. Sgt. Joel A. House, whose parents live in Lee, was killed June 23 in Iraq. He was also a member of the 1st Cavalry Division, 1st Brigade Combat Team.

Flags will be ordered flown at half-staff on the day of Pfc. Jason E. Dore's funeral.

Governor Orders Flags at Half-Staff for Former First Lady

July 13, 2007

AUGUSTA – In accordance with President Bush's proclamation and in respect for Lady Bird Johnson, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Sunday, July 15, 2007, the day of the former First Lady's interment.

The Governor noted that Lady Bird Johnson was "a true partner to President Johnson and an ardent champion of the environment in her own right."

Governor Celebrates Opening of Portland Freedom Trail

July 14, 2007

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today attended the unveiling of the Portland Freedom Trail, a set of 13 marked sites in the city that commemorate and tell the story of the history of the Underground Railroad and abolitionist movement in Maine.

“The Freedom Trail is about educating and engaging our community, and all those who visit the city,” said Governor Baldacci. “We should all be aware and inspired by our history of supporting freedom, tolerance and equality. The Portland Freedom Trail has inspired a sense of community pride and interest in the history of African Americans in Maine, and in our ongoing commitment to justice and human rights.”

The Governor is a co-chair of the Portland Freedom Trail. The trail is the result of the work of a diverse group of individuals and organizations, a truly community-driven enterprise. According to Maine Freedom Trails, Inc., there are approximately 75 possible Underground Railroad sites in Maine.

“We have come a long way as a state and as a nation, but we must never be satisfied until all our people have equal opportunities for success,” said Governor Baldacci. “We must be continually vigilant to guard against injustice and intolerance wherever we see it. Finally, we want to promote a society where we as individuals are accepted for the people we are, the quality of our character and the contributions that we can make.”

For more information about the trail, please visit <http://www.portlandfreedomtrail.org/>

Governor Speaks at STRIVE U Commencement

July 14, 2007

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today spoke at the graduation of STRIVE U, a program that promotes independence for young adults with developmental disabilities through post-secondary education and training. This is the second graduating class of STRIVE U, which partners with the University of Southern Maine for the education component. The Governor has been a supporter of STRIVE U since its development in 2003 and its kick-off in 2004.

“This one-of-a-kind program,” said Governor Baldacci. “STRIVE U is truly a national model.”

The Governor said that the program is critical to his overall vision of Maine’s future. “My goal for the future of Maine reflects an awareness of what it takes to grow healthy communities and families, as well as what is needed in our schools to ensure that youth are prepared to become happy and productive citizens,” said Governor Baldacci.

“That’s why I have worked so hard to build the capacity of our institutions of higher learning so that more Mainers can access post-secondary education. My Administration created the Community College System. We have moved forward consolidation of our public school administration so that more dollars go to where they are needed – to our kids’ education and to the classroom. We’ve worked hard to ensure there are opportunities for more young people and adults to access higher education, and that obtaining this critical education is more affordable.”

Seven young people were in this year’s STRIVE U graduating class.

Governor Addresses National Guard at Freedom Salute

July 15, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci welcomed home 82 members of the 240th Engineer Group of the Maine Army National Guard and two other soldiers returning from Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom at a Freedom Salute ceremony at the Cony High School this morning. The members of the 240th Engineer Group had served a year in Afghanistan.

“You have made Maine proud,” Governor Baldacci told the troops. “You return to a grateful State and nation, and a very happy group of friends and family. We are deeply appreciative of your efforts. You continue a great tradition in Maine of service.”

The 240th Engineer Group conducted engineer operations throughout eastern and south-central Afghanistan. They built or improved roads, bridges, medical clinics wells and schools, and cleared more than 2 million square meters of area on Bagram Air Field of unexploded mines and other explosive hazards.

The Governor commented on the accomplishments of the unit while overseas, and of the spirit with which they achieved their mission. “You reflect the values with which you are raised, and you cherish above all your family and friends, and this great land and all the ideals to which we hold firm,” said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor reminded the audience that Pat Damon, who served with the 240th Engineer Group, had passed away just over a year ago. He said, “In honor of Pat, we have a new law on the books in Maine to protect our National Guard members – our heroes. This law will review all the preventative health care measures that members of the National Guard receive. This is vital because our country has a moral obligation to make sure we take care of those we send into harm’s way - not only when you are in combat, but also when you come home.”

Governor Orders Flags to be Flown to Half-Staff

July 16, 2007

AUGUSTA – In remembrance and honor of Specialist Jason E. Dore, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset tomorrow, Tuesday, July 17, 2007.

SPC Dore was serving as a member of the 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Hood, Texas. He died as a result of an IED attack in Baghdad, Iraq, on July 8, 2007.

His funeral services are scheduled for Tuesday at the Quimby Elementary School in Bingham.

Maine Finishes FY 2007 with \$19.1 Million Surplus

July 16, 2007

AUGUSTA – Maine's General Fund finished the Fiscal Year 2007 with a surplus of \$19.1 million. The State's Highway Fund also finished with a surplus of almost \$1.7 million of which \$1.6 million will be made available to assist with highway and bridge projects.

Maine also finished the Fiscal Year with \$156.1 million in reserve funds.

"Maine is on firm financial footing," Governor John E. Baldacci said. "We have built our reserves from zero when I took office to more than \$156 million today, and we have finished the year with a modest surplus. As we move forward, we must continue to emphasize fiscal discipline and strive for efficiencies at all levels of government."

Of the \$19.1 million, \$344,791 will be used to restore the Emergency Contingent Account; \$1 million will go to boost the Loan Insurance Reserve of the Finance Authority of Maine; and \$17.8 million will go toward increasing prospective interim payments (PIP) to hospitals.

The increase in PIP was part an agreement signed between Governor Baldacci and Maine hospitals in October 2006.

"The surplus allows us to move forward with our commitment to Maine hospitals," Governor Baldacci said. "We reached an agreement, and my administration will honor that agreement."

The State committed to increasing the PIP starting in FY08 in order to bring payments more in line with actual costs. The Governor will submit a supplemental budget early in 2008 that will fully fund the FY08 commitment.

Attached is the text of the memo from the State Controller, which informed the Governor of the FY 2007 surplus.

interoffice memorandum

John Elias Baldacci, Governor

Rebecca Wyke, COMMISSIONER

State Of Maine Office of the State Controller

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Augusta, MAine 04333

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The State of Maine has closed the Fiscal Year with a very modest surplus, which we are making available for hospital payments as agreed upon. We concluded the fiscal year with revenues over budgeted estimates of approximately \$14.6 million and a General Fund cash balance at June 30th of \$17 million, a decrease of approximately \$68.8 million from the previous fiscal year. Although we did not finish the fiscal year with a robust cash balance in the General Fund, it is a noteworthy accomplishment that we did not require any outside cash flow borrowing through a TAN.

After all accounting adjustments, other considerations, and the disposition of surplus approved by the Legislature in Chapter 240, Public Laws 2007, the State will have \$17.6 million in Unappropriated Surplus that will carry forward on our financial statements to be used in Fiscal Year 2008 as the budgeted balance forward. The State had a total of about \$156.1 million in reserves between General Fund Operating Capital and Budget Stabilization at June 30th, an increase of approximately \$36 million over the previous fiscal year. As you may remember, Chapter 519, Public Laws 2005 required a \$29.0 million deposit to the Budget Stabilization on the first day of the 2007 fiscal year which increased our total reserves to approximately, \$149.1 million on July 1st. With the increase to the July 1, 2006 balance and interest earnings our reserves have increased substantially over the past years. As a result of our diminished General Fund cash balance, there may be a need toward the late winter and spring to rely on temporary cash flow borrowing through a TAN. As long as revenue stays on track, and we fully collect on our tax accruals, I do not foresee the need for a TAN until the commencement of tax season in late January. The borrowing would be for a short duration to assist us with cash flow during the income tax refund season.

At the end of FY 2007, after all accounting adjustments and budgetary commitments, the State ended up with a Net Unappropriated Surplus of \$36.7 million of which \$17.6 is the budgeted balance forward to be used in Fiscal Year 2008. After other adjustments, replenishment of the Contingent Account and the Loan Insurance Reserve Account amounting to \$344,791 and \$1,000,000 respectively, the remainder of \$17,790,584 is available to be transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services to honor the commitment you made to pay past due bills owed by the State to the hospitals.

Our additions to the Budget Stabilization Fund, coupled with the additional \$29.0 million deposit to the Budget Stabilization Fund on July 1st of Fiscal Year 2007 and the accrued interest significantly strengthen the State of Maine's financial position going forward. We must continue to be vigilant to ensure that we expend our resources for those services and purchases which are necessary and add value to state government's delivery of services to the citizens of Maine.

Finally, there are many adjusting entries pending our final review for the year end as we begin the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report; however, at this time, I believe that these adjustments will not be material.

Governor Ceremonially Signs Health Care Bills

July 17, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed 18 bills passed by the Legislature this session.

“These bills together go a long way to accomplishing our most important job – to protect the health and welfare of the people of Maine,” said Governor Baldacci.

The legislation addresses consumer protection issues such as making more information about prescription drugs and their costs available; expand coverage for cancer screenings, hearing aids for the young, and for insurance for those 25 and under; calls for reviews to expand access to dental care and to assistance to those with debilitating diseases such as eating disorders and mental health issues; and improves practices that promote HIV testing and limit the spread of the disease.

Four of the new laws advance the goals of Dirigo Health in making Maine the healthiest state in the nation. LD 431 enables DirigoChoice to be self-administered, thereby taking the profit motive out of providing the insurance product, and providing more control over marketing and benefit design of DirigoChoice.

Legislation to require insurers and allow employers to extend a child’s insurance coverage on a parent’s plan until the age of 25, regardless of whether or not the child is in school, also LD 841 followed closely a recommendation of the Dirigo Health Blue Ribbon Commission.

Another proposal recommended by the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Dirigo Health, embodied in LD 1849, calls for the investigation of health care cost drivers. The legislation specifically expands the membership and duties of the Advisory Council on Health Systems Development and charges the body with identifying specific potential reductions in total health care spending without shifting costs onto consumers.

LD 1812 expands the Public Health Work Group and charges it with submitting a plan to the Legislature to build and coordinate a public health infrastructure in the state. The plan must include how to promote the system through existing resources over the next five years.

“These 18 bills provide further evidence that Maine is the leader in health care reform and in efforts to expand access to quality affordable health care,” said Governor Baldacci. “I’m proud of the efforts of the Legislature to take on these issues successfully and I’m very pleased to sign these bills.”

The Governor was joined by Legislative leadership, relevant committee members, sponsors, cosponsors and consumer advocates and organizations. The bill list follows below. For more information on the 18 bills, which were celebrated today, go to <http://janus.state.me.us/legis/>

LD 4 - "An Act To Amend the Prescription Privacy Law," Sponsored by Rep. Faircloth

LD 101 - "An Act to Enhance Screening for Breast Cancer," Sponsored by Rep. Haskell

LD 144 - "An Act to Support Maine's Free Clinics," Sponsored by Sen. Sullivan

LD 243 - "An Act To Establish November as Lung Cancer Awareness Month," Sponsored by Sen. Mitchell

LD 429 - "An Act to Improve Access to HIV Testing in Health Care Settings" Sponsored by Rep. Miller

LD 431 - "An Act to Enable the Dirigo Health Program to be Self-Administered," Sponsored by Rep. Conover

LD 792 - "An At Concerning Postpartum Mental Health Education," Sponsored by Sen. Sullivan

LD 807 - "An Act To Prevent Overcharging for Prescription Drug Copayments," Sponsored by Rep. Treat

LD 839 - "An Act To Establish a Prescription Drug Academic Detailing Program," Sponsored by Rep. Treat

LD 841 - "An Act To Extend Health Insurance Coverage for Dependent Children up to 25 Years of Age," Sponsored by Rep. Barstow

LD 995 - "An Act To Reduce the Expense of Health Care Treatment and Protect the Health of Maine Citizens by Providing Early Screening, Detection and Prevention of Cancer," Sponsored by Sen. Marraché

LD 1044 - "An Act To Address Eating Disorders in Maine," Sponsored by Rep. Tuttle

LD 1129 - "An Act To Increase Access to Oral Health Care" Sponsored by Rep. Pendleton

LD 1440 - "An Act To Prohibit Inappropriate Software Advertising of Prescription Drugs," Sponsored by Rep. Treat

LD 1514 - "An Act to Require Health Insurance Coverage for Hearing Aides," Sponsored by Sen. Sullivan

LD 1786 - "An Act To Reduce the Spread of Infectious Disease through Shared Hypodermic Apparatuses," Sponsored by Rep. Miller

LD 1812 – "Resolve, Regarding the Role of Local Regions in Maine's Emerging Public Health Infrastructure"

LD 1849 - "An Act To Protect Consumers from Rising Health Care Costs," Sponsored by Sen. Bartlett

Governor Attends Opening of First Maine Electric Vehicle Dealership

July 18, 2007

FALMOUTH – Governor John E. Baldacci spoke this morning at the grand opening of Maine Electric Vehicle, the first such dealership in the state.

The Governor praised those involved in the business. “This work complements our State initiatives in sustainable energy practices, which save money, reduce harmful pollutants and our dependence on foreign energy sources, and help the Maine economy,” said Governor Baldacci.

Maine has been a leader in addressing climate change. Upon taking office, Governor Baldacci established the Office of Energy Independence to focus on this issue. A list of accomplishments include:

Maine is the first state government in the nation to buy 100% of its electricity from renewable sources;

Established tax credits for production of biofuels in Maine;

Provide an 8 cent per gallon state excise tax reduction for diesel motor fuel containing at least 2 percent biodiesel;

Offer rebates for purchasing and installing solar electric, hot air and hot water systems;

Set a goal of 10 percent new renewable power in Maine by 2017;

Developed a Climate Change Action Plan in 2003 and have this year created the State plan as part of RGGI to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions.

The Governor also said that 18 percent of Maine state government’s central fleet of passenger cars are equipped to run alternative fuels, including hybrids.

“Using alternative fuels is right for the environment. It is right for consumers. And, it is right for the economy,” said Governor Baldacci. “I’m encouraged by the new technology for cleaner fuels.

Development and production of electric vehicles hold great promise for expanding options for achieving energy independence and for protecting our environment now and into the future.”

“Today we truly witness that being involved in efforts to protect our environment can go hand in hand with good business sense. It’s a win-win for all involved, preserving our way of life and the economic future of our state.”

Governor Attends Assembly of Governors and Chiefs

July 19, 2007

VEAZIE – Governor John E. Baldacci today attended the annual Assembly of Governors and Chiefs, a meeting hosted by the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission (MITSC). The Governor, state officials and representatives of the Wabanaki Tribal Governments participated in discussions related to the effectiveness of the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act and a variety of other issues important to the State and the Tribes.

Following the invocation there was a smudging ceremony and opening remarks. The Governor was reminded of the smudging ceremony performed at his first inaugural. That ceremony had been the first performed during an inaugural.

“My goal is to continue to work collaboratively with you on the issues that are important to you and to the State of Maine,” Governor Baldacci told the Tribal representatives. “The relationship between the State and the Tribes is a vibrant one. The Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act remains a living breathing document.”

The Governor complimented the activism of MITSC and the working relationship established between MITSC Chairman Paul Bisulca, Executive Director John Dieffenbacher-Krall, the Governor’s Office and the Legislature.

“I appreciate what we’ve been able to accomplish so far by working together,” said Governor Baldacci.

This year the Governor led an effort to dedicate additional funds for the ongoing efforts of the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission. Additionally, he noted that the Tribal State Work Group was legislatively extended. Governor Baldacci created the Work Group by Executive Order in 2006 to help resolve differences in the interpretation and understanding of the Settlement Act.

There has also been positive movement in regards to postsecondary education and the Tribes’ desire to establish a college. Specifically, the Tribes and Colby, Bates and Bowdoin Colleges are working to provide more exposure of Native American youth to the colleges and to have more interaction between the college students and Tribal youth. The Governor has supported additional collaborative approaches.

Governor Baldacci concluded: “I recognize that as promising as these initiatives are, we have many more challenges to address that are important to our people. I am pleased to be here today to discuss the opportunities before us, and I look forward to continuing our working relationship.”

Governor to Attend National Governors Association Annual Meeting

July 20, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci will be attending the National Governors Association (NGA) annual meeting being held in Traverse City, Mich., this weekend. The 99th annual meeting will highlight critical issues being addressed in the states, with a special focus on innovation.

“Our nation’s governors face huge challenges in competing in the global economy and in the areas of education, health care, and climate change,” said Governor Baldacci. “This conference enables us to share best practices and strategies to promote the strengths of our respective economies and to realize opportunities for our people now and into the future.”

The Governor and other chief executives of the states will participate in discussions on innovation as a means of achieving competitive economic advantage, the reauthorization of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, global climate change, and postsecondary education, among others. Governor Baldacci is expected to attend all general meetings at the conference. He sits on the Economic Development and Commerce Committee, which will be focused on productivity and competitiveness. Executives from Motorola, Procter & Gamble, and Cimarron Capital Partners will be addressing issues on global competitiveness at the committee meeting.

“I’m looking forward to the opportunity to discuss with my colleagues and with experts in the business community strategies for building our capacity for business growth, innovation and work force development,” said Governor Baldacci. “My Administration has built a solid foundation in these areas.”

Maine has been leading the nation in many of the areas being discussed at the NGA annual meeting.

- o The biennial budget contained the most extensive overhaul of K-12 school administration in more than 50 years, putting money back into the classroom.
- o The biennial budget invests in innovation, research and development, and higher education.
- o The State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) program is a great success in Maine, reducing the number of uninsured children by more than half in less than 10 years. Maine has experienced one of the largest declines in the rate of children uninsured in the nation. Meanwhile, Dirigo Health, the first in the nation state attempt to provide universal health insurance, continues to move forward in addressing health care quality, access and cost.
- o The Governor’s plan for implementing the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) firmly establishes the Administration’s commitment to lower emissions and fund new investments in cleaner technologies and energy efficiency and conservation.

The business meetings of the NGA conference run Saturday through Monday.

Members Named to Allagash Wilderness Waterway Advisory Council

July 20, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the members of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway Advisory Council.

“The Allagash is a great state treasure,” Governor Baldacci said. “It is our duty to preserve and protect it for future generations. I am certain that the Advisory Council will open a new chapter of cooperation in our ongoing efforts to strengthen the Waterway.”

The Advisory Council was created in May, when Governor Baldacci signed L.D. 1419, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway Working Group.

The purpose of the Council is to aid in the long-term governance, management and oversight structure for the Waterway and bring stability, peace and prestige to its management.

The members are: Don Nicoll, public member; Anthony Hourihan, of Irving who will represent private landowners whose property abuts the river; Don Hudson, of the Chenwonki Foundation who will represent wilderness recreation interests; Dick Walthers, of Trout Unlimited who represents fisheries and wildlife conservation interests; Don Cyr of the Musee culturel du Mont-Carmel who will represent cultural and historic preservation interests; and Janet McMahon, an ecologist with experience in natural resources planning and management.

The seventh member of the Council, which will represent the National Park Service, has not been named.

Nicoll, Hourihan and Hudson were also members of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway Working Group.

Governor Ceremonially Signs Bicycle Safety Bill

July 24, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1808, “An Act To Improve Road Safety and Update Bicycling Laws.”

“In the midst of summer and the height of the tourist season, it’s a very opportune time to talk about ways to keep both our motorists and bicyclists safe,” said Governor Baldacci.

Among other provisions, the law requires motorists to give three feet of space to bicyclists when passing them. It makes clarifications regarding riding on the right side of the road, recognizing instances when it makes sense to use the middle of the roadway. The new law also waives liability for businesses with drive-up windows that serve cyclists.

“These protections will help keep our citizens and tourists – motorists and cyclists – safer and will encourage more people to get out on their bikes, get some great exercise and take in the beauty of the surroundings Maine has to offer,” said Governor Baldacci.

Supreme Judicial Court Justice Calkins Resigns

July 25, 2007

AUGUSTA – Maine Supreme Judicial Court Associate Justice Susan W. Calkins has informed Governor John E. Baldacci that she will resign effective Oct. 1.

“Justice Calkins is a person who has given her entire career to the law,” Governor Baldacci said. “She started with Pine Tree Legal and worked her way to the top. She has given a tremendous amount of service to the law, and she leaves very big shoes to fill.”

Justice Calkins informed the Governor of her decision in a letter dated July 19 that was received July 23.

Justice Calkins was appointed to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court by Governor Angus King in 1998. She was re-appointed to the Court by Governor Baldacci in 2005. Before joining Maine’s highest court, Justice Calkins spent 18 years in the state’s Judiciary. She was appointed to the District Court in 1980, and served as Chief Judge of the District Court from 1990 to 1995. In 1995, she was appointed to the Maine Superior Court, where she served until being appointed to the Supreme Judicial Court.

Before joining the bench, Justice Calkins worked for Pine Tree Legal Assistance for 10 years, serving as the directing attorney, executive director, director of training and litigation, and co-director of training and litigation and directing attorney.

She graduated from the University of Maine School of Law in 1970 and received her undergraduate degree from the University of Colorado.

The process to select Calkins’ successor has begun. Qualified candidates are interviewed by the Governor’s Judicial Selection Committee, and Gov. Baldacci will choose a nominee. Once the process is complete, the nomination is announced and sent to the Judiciary Committee for consideration later this year. The committee makes a recommendation to the full Senate, either recommending the nomination be accepted or denied. Only a two-thirds vote by the Senate can overturn the recommendation of the committee.

Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Domestic Violence Bill

July 25, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Senate President Beth Edmonds and other co-sponsors and supporters today for a ceremonial signing of LD 1627, An Act to Protect Families and Enhance Public Safety by Making Domestic Violence a Crime. The law makes domestic violence a Class D crime in Maine.

“We’ve come a long way in just a few short years, much to the credit of the partnership between the Legislature and my Administration, as well as a network of advocates,” Governor Baldacci said. “Yet, we have a long way to go. Too many women and children are being victimized, and each story is tragic and compelling.”

“In this bill, we have given prosecutors the tools to take this step forward in Maine and figure out how to make domestic violence itself understood,” President Edmonds said. “We have given those prosecutors a way to take care of it in a better way.”

LD 1627 creates the Class D crime of domestic violence, a charge that becomes a Class C crime if the person has prior convictions relating to domestic violence or has a protective order against them issued within the past three years. Governor Baldacci said that the law will help police keep better track of the violators and assist processing of weapons requests and restrictions. The Governor said that more should still be done to assist victims.

“We need to do more to help victims obtain access to comprehensive resources and assistance so they can safely get out of abusive situations,” the Governor said. “This includes financial, emotional and legal help.”

The bill was passed as Emergency Legislation and went into effect immediately after being signed by the Governor last month. The cost of new criminal penalties will be reviewed and reported on before the criminal provisions of the law take effect on Feb. 1, 2008.

Governor Baldacci also announced during the ceremony that the Maine Department of Public Safety was awarded \$800,000 Wednesday morning from the STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grants Program, a grant established by the Violence Against Women Act of 2005 to aid state and local governments and nonprofit organizations in the development of violence prevention programs that serve women. The Governor said the Department is currently soliciting proposals for projects to enhance the apprehension and prosecution of persons committing acts of domestic violence, and to improve services to victims of domestic violence.

Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Informed Growth Act

July 26, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci Thursday ceremonially signed LD 1810, An Act to Enact the Informed Growth Act. Bill sponsor Rep. Chris Barstow (D-Gorham) was in the Governor's Office for the signing, as well as co-sponsors and supporters of the legislation.

"This law guarantees that along with environmental, traffic and other impacts, the economic impact of a proposed retail development project of 75,000 square feet or greater is evaluated as part of the local permitting process," Governor Baldacci said. "Local policymakers will get input from recognized experts, as well as the public, as part of this process."

The law requires an applicant who is seeking a permit to build a retail development project larger than 75,000 square feet to pay for an independent comprehensive impact study, identifying the economic impacts of the development. The study must then be presented at a public hearing before the municipal reviewing authority. Following the hearing, the municipal reviewing authority must decide, based on all of the information presented, whether the development is likely to have an undue adverse impact on the local economy. The development cannot go forward unless local policymakers find that there is likely to be no undue adverse impact.

The law allows for municipalities to determine the projected impacts of a large scale project without having to pay for such a study. Municipalities that already have adopted economic and community impact review criteria that apply to large-scale retail development are exempted from the law.

"This will not stifle economic growth," the Governor said, "but will rather enhance the flow of information about a project among developers, municipal officials and the general public."

Governor Baldacci signed the legislation in June. It will take effect on Sept. 20, 2007.

Governor Signs Executive Order Creating the Maine Interoperable Communications Committee

July 26, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci has signed an Executive Order to enhance communication information used by the state and others involved in ensuring the safety of Maine citizens. The order establishes a committee to review and recommend an interoperable communications plan for public safety purposes.

"There is nothing more important than protecting our people," said Governor Baldacci. "The committee I am establishing will develop a plan for improving communications infrastructure that meets the needs of all levels of government and those in the private sector we partner with to protect the health and welfare of Mainers."

In the post-9/11 world, an increasing focus of state and national policy has been ensuring an effective interoperable communications system is in place to respond to emergencies of all kinds.

The committee established under Governor Baldacci's Executive Order includes many state agency department heads as well as representatives from public and private health and safety groups. A preliminary report is due by Oct. 1, 2007, and a final report is due no later than Dec. 31, 2007.

The text of the order follows.

03 FY 08/09

July 25, 2007

AN ORDER CREATING THE MAINE INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, one of the most important responsibilities and profound duties of the state of Maine is to provide for the safety and security of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the state must constantly be prepared to immediately respond to all disasters, whether natural or man made; and

WHEREAS, in the event of a disaster or emergency, government agencies and emergency responders at all levels must be able to communicate effectively to ensure the most efficient and immediate provision of emergency services; and

WHEREAS, communications between public safety agencies across the nation must be further developed and enhanced to assure an immediate and coordinated response to disasters and emergencies.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the Maine Interoperable Communications Committee (hereinafter "Committee").

Purpose

The Maine Interoperable Communications Committee is established for the purpose of developing a plan for statewide voice and data communications interoperability to help ensure the safety of all citizens in day-to-day operations, natural disasters, emergency response scenarios, and terrorist incidents.

Membership

The Committee shall consist of at least 14 members who are appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

The Committee shall include:

the Commissioner of the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, or his designee, who shall serve as the Chair

the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, or her designee

the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation, or his designee

the Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife, or his designee

the Commissioner of the Department of Marine Resources, or his designee

the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation, or his designee

the Commissioner of the Public Utilities Commission, or his designee

the Chief Information Officer within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, or his designee

a representative of municipal governments to be nominated by the Maine Municipal Association and appointed by the Governor

a representative of county governments to be nominated by the Maine County Commissioners Association and appointed by the Governor

a representative of local police departments to be nominated by the Maine Chiefs of Police Association and appointed by the Governor

a representative of sheriffs' departments to be nominated by the Maine Sheriffs Association and appointed by the Governor

a representative of local fire departments to be nominated by the Maine Fire Chiefs Association and appointed by the Governor

a representative of hospital emergency services to be nominated by the Maine Hospital Association and appointed by the Governor

The Committee may call on a representative from any government agency or other organization not otherwise represented on the Committee, to provide information or to participate fully in the Committee when, in the Committee's discretion, that person has responsibilities or expertise in a particular area that would be helpful to the work of the Committee.

The participation and involvement of all state political subdivisions and the development of partnerships among them is encouraged to further the establishment of a statewide interoperable communications system.

The Committee shall meet at times and places called by the Chair. Technical assistance will be provided to the Committee by the Director of the Consolidated Emergency Communications Bureau and the Director of State Radio Services. Additionally staffing will be provided as necessary by the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management. The members of the Committee shall serve without compensation.

Duties

Consistent with the purpose of this Executive Order, the Committee shall:

Review, evaluate and make recommendations relating to interoperable public safety communications of government at all levels in the state;

Facilitate coordination among the various agencies of state government relating to interoperable communications;

Develop a plan that shall include, but not be limited to, a strategy for the design, construction and deployment of an interoperable communications system for the entire state of Maine. The plan shall take into consideration:

- a. the inclusion of existing legacy radio systems into the new interoperable communications system;
- b. the continuity of those operations and services; and,
- c. a mechanism to provide for long term maintenance and operation of the new interoperable communications system that is in the best interest of the public safety agencies of the state and its political subdivisions.

The Committee shall provide a preliminary report to the Governor on the status of its work not later than October 1, 2007. The Committee's final plan for statewide voice and data communications interoperability shall be submitted to the Governor not later than December 31, 2007.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is July 25, 2007.

John E. Baldacci, Governor

Governor Ceremonially Signs Blasting Legislation

July 30, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed two bills strengthening blasting regulations around quarries, gravel pits and the Kennebec River. The bills were sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Elizabeth Mitchell.

“These bills combined will go a long way to preserving the natural beauty and quality of our resources in Kennebec County,” said Governor Baldacci.

LD 895, "An Act Concerning Blasting Near Residential Areas," protects the rights of residents and businesses near gravel and quarry excavation sites. The law strengthens the notification process before blasting can begin, and ensures that if blasting standards are exceeded, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection must provide written authority before blasting can continue. It also requires a study of blasting operations to see if there can be further certification and requirements that will protect the public interest.

“These and other measures contained in the law ensure that there is adequate public notification before, and follow up on blasting projects,” said Governor Baldacci.

The other law, LD 1508, "An Act to Protect the Scenic Value of the Kennebec River," extends the “outstanding river segment” designation on the Kennebec. The designation currently extends from Georgetown to the Father Curran Bridge in Augusta. This law extends the definition to where the Kennebec meets the Sebasticook in Winslow.

“This law calls for a review of the buffers along the Kennebec for the purpose of proposing new standards for excavations and quarries,” said Governor Baldacci. “I’m pleased that we will look at the impact of excavations on this important waterway. Again, these bills together go a long way to enhancing protections against disturbances from blasting, protecting the interests of our citizens and our natural lands and waters.”

LD 895 goes into effect on Sept. 20, 2007. LD 1508, an emergency measure, went into effect on June 20, the day it was originally signed by the Governor.

Statement by Gov. Baldacci on Domtar Announcement

July 31, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement today concerning Domtar Corporation's decision to permanently close its paper machine at the Woodland mill in Baileyville.

"I am disappointed by Domtar's decision," Governor Baldacci said. "But in our meetings with Domtar CEO Raymond Royer, it has been clear that this is a mill in transition and not a mill in decline. My administration will do everything possible to help the affected workers and the community to move forward during this challenging period."

"Domtar senior officials have assured me that the pulp operation at the mill will be maintained and could see new investment in the future."

"I have also talked to the company about the research that is taking place at the University of Maine and new technologies that can be employed at the mill. The technologies that are being developed can make it possible to produce ethanol during pulp production. The process holds great promise to make Maine pulp operations more profitable while also creating an alternative source of fuel."

"Coupled with Maine's forest certification program, which helps forest product companies successfully appeal to customers who demand environmentally sensitive business practices, the ethanol process can make our state's mills more competitive in the future."

"Sustainable forest management is the hook that gives Maine companies an advantage in the global marketplace, and we need to work to expand participation and increase the number of acres covered."

Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Bill to Protect Borrowers

July 31, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Rep. John Robinson of Raymond and other supporters today for a ceremonial signing of LD 1452, An Act to Protect a Borrower's Right to Use the Borrower's Chosen Accounting Service.

"The new law provides real choice for consumers and contains provisions that ensure the proper accreditation and adequate liability insurance of the financial professionals," Governor Baldacci said.

"This law therefore gives a true balance for consumers and financial professionals, ensuring protection for each."

The bill protects borrowers from interference with their choice of accounting services. With the law, it is illegal for supervised lenders and creditors to interfere with a purchaser's or borrower's choice of an accounting, tax or attest services provider.

The law goes into effect on Sept. 20, 2007.

Governor Baldacci Swears In Judge French

July 31, 2007

AUGUSTA – Judge Rae Ann French of Augusta was sworn in today by Governor John E. Baldacci to the Maine District Court. This is the third reappointment to the court for Judge French.

“Throughout her career, Rae Ann French has proven to be an outstanding judge, member of the Attorney General’s Office and citizen,” Governor Baldacci said. “Judge French is always prepared, attentive and respectful of all those who come before her. It is an honor to be able to swear her in today.”

Judge French is a graduate of Gardiner Area High School in Gardiner, the University of Maine in Orono, and the University of Maine School of Law. Judge French joined the Attorney General’s Office as an Assistant Attorney General after graduating from law school. After working in the Attorney General’s Office for 19 years, Judge French was appointed to the Maine District Court in 1991 by Governor John McKernan. She was reappointed to the Maine District Court in 1998 by Governor Angus King.

Each Judicial District in the state must have at least one judge presiding in it who maintains his/her residence there as well. In 2000, Governor King reappointed Judge French, designating her Resident Judge in the Seventh District. Governor Baldacci reappointed Judge French to the same position

Judge French was joined at the swearing in by her husband, two daughters and son-in-law.

Governor Baldacci Introduces Program to Connect Youth with Maine's Outdoors

July 31, 2007

CAPE ELIZABETH – Governor John E. Baldacci joined two Olympic gold medalists from Maine this afternoon to announce an initiative designed to encourage young people to re-connect with Maine's outdoors. Joan Benoit Samuelson and Seth Wescott helped the Governor introduce "Take It Outside," a program intended to motivate adults to show Maine's youth how much activity and fun can be had in the Maine outdoors.

"I just went up to Mount Katahdin with my son, Jack. It took us two days to make the trip," Governor Baldacci said. "I wanted to do it because it's important that we have that kind of memory, that lasting experience. But I wanted to tell the Maine people that it's a park that's within our own grasp. We don't have to leave the State of Maine. We don't have to fly off to Disney World, we have Disney World all around us here. We have it in enjoying the natural resources, which everybody from around the world recognizes here in our state."

Governor Baldacci announced a Blaine House Conference on Youth and the Natural World that will be held next spring. The goal is to cooperate with organizations that are already working to get kids outside and connected to nature. The Governor also directed state agencies to evaluate their programs, rules and policies with respect to the role they play in encouraging Maine people to experience and appreciate the natural world. A letter was delivered to members of the Governor's Cabinet outlining the evaluation Tuesday afternoon.

"Sometimes we need to lead our kids outdoors," the Governor said. "We need to get them away from the iPod and, video and text messaging, and just get them out to smell the beautiful air and enjoy the beautiful resources we have."

The Governor said that Maine's natural resources and outdoor opportunities continue to be recognized, most recently with Outdoor Magazine naming Portland as its Best Town on the East Coast.

Joan Benoit-Samuelson, a 1984 gold-medal Olympian and former babysitter for a young Seth Wescott, spoke fondly of her days running to and from work when she was employed at a restaurant in Cape Elizabeth. She also spoke of the success stories that have been made as a result of the Beach to Beacon race in Cape Elizabeth, a race Governor Baldacci will be participating in this Saturday.

"To me, one of the largest successes of the Beach to Beacon has been seeing people pulled off the sidelines as spectators and taking charge of their own health and wellness," Benoit-Samuelson said. "As the Governor mentioned, we have a huge problem with diabetes and obesity in this state, and people need to take charge of their own lives."

Seth Wescott, a 2006 gold-medal Olympian, said that he grew up without a television, until Joan Benoit-Samuelson competed for the gold medal in the 1984 Summer Olympics. After the competition, Wescott was encouraged to spend part of everyday outside.

Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Bill to Help More Students Finish High School

August 1, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed the Governor's bill LD 1860, "An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Task Force to Engage Maine's Youth Regarding Successful School Completion." The Governor had formed the task force in June 2006 to review the issue of students experiencing educational disruption.

"Our economy – present and future – depends on a well-educated and well-trained workforce," said Governor Baldacci. "We know that youth who experience disruptions in their education lose valuable instruction time, become disengaged from school, often fail to advance to the next grade level and eventually give up on attaining a high school diploma. This law helps those students stay connected and complete their high school education."

The law establishes a process to recognize students experiencing disruptions in academic work, while creating manageable procedures for school personnel and other officials that are involved with these students. Disruptions may include homelessness, unplanned hospitalization, foster care placement and youth development center placement, among others.

Joined by the Governor's Task Force to Engage Maine's Youth; the First Lady; Legislative sponsors; and other supporters of the new law, the Governor praised the effort that led to the successful passage of this important legislation. "I'm pleased that the task force and the Legislature have worked together to develop this thoughtful proposal."

The law goes into effect on Sept. 20, 2007.

Governor Congratulates U.S. Cellular on Expansion to Southern Maine

August 2, 2007

LYMAN – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials from U.S. Cellular at an announcement of the company's network expansion in southern Maine, including rural areas. The Governor praised the company for making key investments in Maine's technology infrastructure, a major goal of his Administration's Connect ME initiative.

"U.S. Cellular has been an important partner in my Connect ME initiative," said Governor Baldacci. "Advancements this company has made in wireless communication over the years have been important to Maine. Just as valuable is U.S. Cellular's commitment to bringing wireless service to our rural communities through the Universal Service Fund, which has benefited the health, public safety, and economic development of more than 25 rural Maine communities in the past two years alone."

The Governor said this type of investment is crucial to growing Maine's economy and good paying jobs, especially in rural areas. The global economy requires businesses to be able to access cell phone technology wherever they are in Maine. To encourage expansion of service, Governor Baldacci announced his Connect ME initiative in 2005. One of the goals of Connect ME is to establish a partnership with organizations, communities and people to promote reliable wireless service in every community in the state by 2008.

Governor Baldacci has also supported the federal Universal Service Fund (USF), which has been instrumental in expanding cell phone coverage to underserved areas. The Governor has worked closely with Maine's Congressional delegation to protect the Universal Service Fund program and ensure that Maine's rural communities could continue to benefit from the program. U.S. Cellular is one of two cell phone carriers that use USF to expand service in the state.

U.S. Cellular has had a presence in Maine since 1988. The company made significant technology upgrades in 2003, and launched its service in Portland in 2004. "U.S. Cellular has proven to be a valued corporate citizen in Maine and we applaud their commitment to the people of Maine," said Governor Baldacci.

Governor Outlines Safety Status of Maine Bridges

August 2, 2007

AUGUSTA – In light of the tragedy yesterday in Minneapolis, Governor John E. Baldacci today addressed the bridge safety situation in Maine.

"I want to reassure the people of Maine that bridges in the state are safe," said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor said that the Maine Department of Transportation (DOT) maintains its own federally approved and certified bridge inspection program. All bridges, including local structures, are inspected by the department every two years. On an as-needed basis, bridges are inspected every year.

The Governor said that while the current state bridge inspection program is working, we must remain proactive given the Minneapolis event. The Governor issued an Executive Order today directing the Maine Department of Transportation to review the inspection program.

"If there are weaknesses," the Governor said, "we will address them."

The Governor noted that the State has proactively addressed bridge work when deficiencies posing a safety risk are identified. Recently, the Graham Lake bridge in Ellsworth was shut down and a temporary structure put in place when an inspector noted potential public safety issues.

Investments in infrastructure are crucial to the safety of Maine people, said the Governor. The recently approved bonding for transportation will help the State address these issues.

The text of the Executive Order follows.

AN ORDER DIRECTING MAINEDOT TO REVIEW MAINE'S BRIDGE INSPECTION AND PROGRAMMING

WHEREAS, Maine citizens join the people of Minnesota and the nation in mourning those who lost their lives on August 1, 2007, when a deck truss bridge carrying Interstate 35 over the Mississippi River collapsed; and,

WHEREAS, the cause of the bridge collapse is obviously unknown at this time; and,

WHEREAS, bridges are an integral part of providing Maine people with a safe and efficient transportation system; and,

WHEREAS, the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) is responsible for nearly 3,000 bridges in Maine, including six deck truss bridges; and,

WHEREAS, the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) currently has a bridge inspection program that meets or exceeds federal standards, such that every public bridge is inspected at least every two years including, as needed, underwater inspection by MaineDOT's Dive Team and use of an underbridge crane to allow inspection of otherwise inaccessible parts of bridges; and,

WHEREAS, MaineDOT has an aggressive Bridge Maintenance program, and extensive bridge information systems used to develop Maine's capital and maintenance bridge investment programs; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Maine need to be assured that these programs are adequate to ensure their safety;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, hereby direct MaineDOT to:

Review Maine's bridge inspection program to assure it continues to meet or exceed all applicable federal standards;

Utilize the available information on the cause of the Minneapolis bridge collapse to reassess the safety of Maine's bridges and take appropriate action to mitigate any safety concerns;

Analyze MaineDOT's capital programming processes and levels for bridges and other critical transportation infrastructure, the failure of which would likely cause loss of life or other significant public safety impacts; and

Report back to the Governor on any significant findings as they become available, and within 90 days provide the Governor with a progress report on the review and analysis conducted pursuant to this Order including any findings and recommendations.

Effective Date

This Executive Order is effective immediately upon signing.

John E. Baldacci

Governor

New Jobs Announced in Washington County

August 3, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci met Friday with community, business and labor leaders in Washington County to discuss future economic development plans for the region.

During the meeting, Damar Dore announced that his company, ICS of Maine Inc., would hire 60 people by September for a new facility being built in Baileyville.

“This was a very positive meeting,” Governor Baldacci said. “The ICS announcement is good news for Baileyville and Washington County. My administration will continue to work to bring economic development to Washington County.”

Commissioner John Richardson, Department of Economic and Community Development, Commissioner David Cole, Department of Transportation, Deputy Commissioner Jane Gilbert, Department of Labor joined Governor Baldacci at the meeting, which was held at Washington County Community College.

The meeting was organized in response to an announcement earlier this week by Domtar that it would permanently close a paper machine at its mill in Baileyville and eliminate about 150 jobs. The mill will continue to make pulp at the facility.

“I will do everything I can to help the families that have been touched by this shutdown. They are not going through this difficult time alone,” Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Celebrates Rail Station Re-Dedication

August 6, 2007

BATH - Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials at a re-dedication ceremony of the historic Bath Railroad Station. The Governor praised the Maine Department of Transportation (DOT), the City of Bath and the Bath Transportation Committee for their efforts in bringing passenger rail service back to the mid-coast region.

"Expanding rail is important to Maine's future and to growing our economy" said Governor Baldacci.

"For this region and the state, we have much to look forward to regarding the promise of rail. We're in the midst of the excursion season, with trains running from Brunswick to Rockland five days a week, and the signs are positive for continued growth in interest in passenger rail in the mid-coast."

Economic promise tied to the Bath facility and the railroad includes plans to establish a multi-model center. The close proximity of the rail to Route 1 and the Kennebec River present a wonderful opportunity to move people and goods by car, bus and ship. Governor Baldacci said area businesses will also benefit from the increased ridership.

The Bath station was originally dedicated to Arthur Sewall 65 years ago. The new facility is already operational. The Maine Department of Transportation partnered with the city and others to achieve the funding to refurbish the facility. In all, the project required \$1.2 million. The State was able to assist in passing through about \$1 million in federal funds. The Department of Transportation also agreed to move the visitors center that had been located on Route 1 to the railroad station.

The Governor said that improving our transportation services is critical to Maine's future. The Maine Department of Transportation's FY 2008/2009 Biennial Work Plan includes more than \$500,000 to be invested in improvements in the state owned Rockland Branch rail line infrastructure, which serves the new Bath Station. Another \$500,000 is dedicated to station improvements, parking facilities and passenger amenities in Bath and Rockland to grow the passenger rail potential of the Rockland Branch in the future.

Statewide, DOT capital investments in rail include:

A new maintenance facility to support growth of the Downeaster service;

Preliminary engineering work and regulatory work on the future passenger rail corridors from Portland to Brunswick;

Connecting the Rockland Branch to the regional system; and

Connecting Portland to Auburn, facilitating future commuter service between the state's two largest metropolitan areas.

The Governor said that the transportation bond passed this year will result in greatly needed improvements system-wide. "I am pleased that earlier this year we passed the largest bonding package for transportation in Maine's history," said Governor Baldacci.

Governor Urges Continued Support for Federal Tax Credit Program

August 7, 2007

PORTLAND - Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Ron Phillips, president of Coastal Enterprises Inc. (CEI), and others at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute to voice strong support for investments in Maine through the federal New Markets Tax Credit Program (NMTC). Funds from the program have led to the development of seven important projects throughout the state.

"This program is an important public-private partnership, yielding nearly \$93 million for Maine projects," said Governor Baldacci. "The tax credit has served as an invaluable tool for financing the Gulf of Maine Research Institute's new laboratory, which is designed to support the fishing industry and long-term viability of our ocean resources for years to come."

The Governor said the NMTC program also supports critical, sustainable timberlands and affordable housing. "The tax credits spurred investments of more than \$400 million from private businesses in both rural and metropolitan areas of our state," said Governor Baldacci. "These investments preserve jobs and make a real difference in the lives of Maine people."

The New Markets Tax Credit was established by Congress in 2000 to stimulate investments in rural and low-income communities. Credits are distributed to regional community development organizations by the U.S. Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions. CEI administers the program in Maine. Kimberly Reed, Director of the U.S. Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions, attended today's event.

The Governor praised the work of CEI in making the promise of the federal NMTC program a reality in Maine. "Coastal Enterprises Inc. is the link between this valuable federal program and the remarkable projects that have brought new vitality to Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "CEI directs its investments where they will really make a difference."

The Governor urged Congress to reauthorize the valuable NMTC program and thanked the Maine Congressional Delegation for its support for continuing these investments.

The projects and tax NMTC capacity amounts follow. For more information on the impact of the New Markets Tax Credit in Maine, go to CEI's Web site at: <http://www.ceimaine.org/content/view/220/245/>

Katahdin Forest Management, Millinocket, \$32.5 million

Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Portland, \$4.1 million

Appalachian Mountain Club, \$17 million

GMO Renewable Resources, Maine and New Hampshire, \$27.8 million

Ingraham Community Services, Portland, \$4 million

2007 Archive of Governor Baldacci's Press Releases

Wagner Forest Management, \$5.2 million

22 Park Street, Lewiston, \$2.13 million

Governor Presents Silver Star Medals to Veterans

August 7, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today presented State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals to 17 veterans in a Hall of Flags ceremony. The medal was first awarded to Maine veterans a year ago today, and is presented to those who have been wounded while serving their country.

"You know all too well the meaning of sacrifice and of service," said Governor Baldacci.

Maine has proportionately more veterans than any other state. "This is not surprising," said Governor Baldacci, "because taking care of our community is what we as Mainers are all about. You are part of this tradition of service, and I am proud to be with you today."

The Governor has made it among his highest priorities as a public servant to ensure that our current and past soldiers and their families are provided for. This year Governor Baldacci worked with the Legislature to ensure veterans received benefits for which they are entitled, including:

Providing significant funds to the Veterans Financial Assistance Program and for the veteran's cemetery;

Helping to fund and signing into law a special license plate to honor Maine residents serving our country;

Beginning the process of establishing the Maine Veterans' Home "Veterans Campus", which will create a one-stop shop and to expand services in Bangor, and which is intended to serve as a model for similar projects around the state; and

Passage of the Governor's bill, "An Act To Protect the Lives and Health of Members of the Maine National Guard," model legislation that will help safeguard the health of members of the Maine National Guard.

The Governor thanked the veterans and their families for their deep and abiding sense of duty and love for their country. "I honor you and your commitment today with these medals," said Governor Baldacci.

Of the 17 veterans who received medals today, nine were wounded in Iraq, two from World War II, three from Korea and three from Vietnam.

Below is the list of veterans recognized today, and the town in which they reside.

Iraq

SPC Fredrick Allen Pittsfield

PVT Richard Bond Springvale

SGT Nathan Burke Canaan

SGT Christopher Cruciotti West Gardiner

LCpl Ryan Doyle Durham

SPC Christopher Fraser South China

SGT Matthew Pennington Winterport

SRA Nicholas Prunell Etna

SGT Paul Shelmerdine Warren

World War II

Robert Baker Windsor

Estol McClintock Wellington

Korea

Richard Chick Winthrop

Kenneth Cyphers Hallowell

Jack G. Stearns Vassalboro

Vietnam

Gary I. Laweryson Waldoboro

John Moore Brewer

Randy Worthley Winslow

In addition, two veterans injured in Iraq were not present at the State House event today:

LCpl Thomas Adametz Winslow

SGT George Greene Dexter

Governor Commends Maine Medical Center at Surgical Center Ribbon Cutting

August 8, 2007

SCARBOROUGH - Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Maine Medical Center (MMC) Board of Trustees, administration officials and staff for the grand opening of the hospital's new surgery center.

The Governor praised the hospital's partnership with the State in providing top quality health care and working to control health care costs. "This new facility shows that Maine Medical Center recognizes the importance of containing costs and balancing new services against need," said Governor Baldacci. "This project is just the latest example of Maine Medical Center's leadership and commitment to quality health care."

Health care has been a top priority of the Governor. Among his first actions as Governor in 2003, Governor Baldacci brought together those in the medical community and other stakeholders to build what is now Dirigo Health Reform, the landmark law that continues to improve access to quality affordable health care.

"I applaud the good work of Maine Medical Center in meeting Dirigo's voluntary targets," said Governor Baldacci. "I want to thank those from Maine Medical Center for being partners in the hard job of reform. The road has been rough and challenges remain ahead. I look forward to continuing the hard work with Maine Medical Center and other hospitals and providers across the State. We need to continue to address health care costs so that no Mainer is left out when it comes to obtaining the kind of high quality care Maine Medical Center and other providers across the state deliver every day."

Maine Medical Center is one of the largest employers in the state. The hospital helps contribute to the growth and economic stability of Maine communities. Maine Medical Center has been recognized for providing quality care to Maine children and families. U.S. News & World Report recently named Maine Medical Center one of the top 50 hospitals in the country for the specialties of orthopedics, heart care and cardiac surgery.

"I appreciate the work of Maine Medical Center," said Governor Baldacci. "You are valued partners in this community, and I look forward to continue to work with you to ensure all Maine people have the best health care available."

Federal Assistance for Oxford County Approved

August 8, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci received notification today that the President has approved federal assistance for damage done by a severe storm that struck Oxford County last month.

“I am pleased that our federal partners have come through with assistance for Oxford County,” said Governor Baldacci. “The storm brought heavy devastation to public infrastructure. The federal assistance will go a long way in making repairs and long-term improvements.”

The Governor declared a state of emergency in Oxford County following a severe storm that hit July 11 and 12. The storm destroyed the public water supply system in Bethel. Roadways and public structures in the area were also heavily impacted. The storm dropped from 6 to 8 inches of rain in approximately 45 minutes, overloading capacities, Governor Baldacci wrote in his letter to the President.

Governor Baldacci toured the area following the declaration, and on July 17 requested federal assistance from President Bush totaling more than \$500,000. The request was amended to \$1.8 million on July 25, taking into account the increased estimate in damage experienced to the public infrastructure in the area.

A final determination on the amount of assistance is pending. Federal aid is expected to support the rebuilding of water district infrastructure to current codes and standards, as well as repair to other public property in the county.

Local and state assessments determined that damage to private homes and businesses did not qualify for federal assistance.

“These valuable federal funds will supplement the amazing work already achieved to recover from this storm,” said Governor Baldacci. “It is heartening – but not surprising - to witness firsthand the way people in Oxford County and throughout Maine have helped their neighbors during this time of distress.”

Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill to Protect Coastal Waters

August 9, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1297, "Resolve, Regarding Measures To Ensure the Continued Health and Commercial Viability of Maine's Seacoast by Establishing Nutrient Standards for Coastal Waters," sponsored by Representative Herb Adams. The resolve calls for a process to reduce marine pollution, setting nutrient criteria for coastal waters by Jan. 31, 2008.

"I am pleased to sign this important resolve, which continues our efforts to protect our coastal waters for years to come," said Governor Baldacci. "This will benefit our coastal environment, our quality of place and our economy, which depends on our maritime industries and tourism."

The resolve specifically directs the Department of Environmental Protection to work with stakeholders, including wastewater treatment facilities and others, to set nutrient criteria for coastal waters. The initial focus is the Casco Bay, but the work there will be a model for the entire Maine coastline.

The goal is for input and information to be collected and a report to be generated from the department with suggestions for implementing legislation.

"I look forward to continuing to work with the Legislature and our partners to ensure that our coastal waters remain healthy for the future of Maine," said Governor Baldacci.

Governor Presents Forest Stewardship Awards

August 9, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today recognized two individuals who have made important contributions to the health of Maine's forests. On the occasion of the third Austin H. Wilkins Forest Stewardship Award, the Governor honored John Hagan of the Manomet Center for Conservation Science and Sherry Huber of the Maine TREE Foundation.

"From the beginning of my Administration, I have had the health of Maine's forests and forest products industries at the forefront in many departments of state government," said Governor Baldacci. "These individuals we honor today play a critical role in the partnership between the State and stakeholders to preserve our valuable forest resources. I thank John and Sherry for their efforts."

The Governor commended John Hagan specifically for his advocacy on behalf of Maine's old-growth forests and bringing more attention to climate change and carbon offsets. Hagan's leadership of Manomet has led to numerous initiatives bridging environmental and economic goals.

"John has successfully brought together landowners, environmentalists and the government to protect and preserve the forests in Maine," said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor also presented a special Wilkins Award to Sherry Huber, whose contributions to Maine's forestry health are legendary.

In the early 1970s, Sherry Huber helped transform the Maine Audubon Society into one of the state's leading environmental advocacy organizations. By the end of the 1990s, Huber was deeply involved with almost every environmental project and organization in the state. She earned DownEast Magazine's prestigious Environmental Award in 2002 for her advocacy for the North Woods.

"Sherry Huber still finds time for meetings and strategy sessions with a variety of environmental groups and conservation projects," said Governor Baldacci. "She was deeply involved in the Forest Society of Maine's West Branch Project, which protected 329,000 acres of North Woods forestland. We are indebted to her activism and advocacy."

Governor Baldacci reiterated his support for keeping Maine's forests healthy and for maintaining a vibrant forest products industry.

"We have acted to keep paper mills open in Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "My North Woods Legacy spells out a vision of a thriving forest products industry side-by-side with land conservation and outdoor recreation. The success of our Forest Certification Initiative has made Maine a leader in the growing market for 'green-certified' paper and forest products. I will continue to work with stakeholders and the Legislature to make sure we are doing all we can to ensure our forests thrive for many generations to come."

Governor Mourns Passing of State Rep. Earl Richardson

August 9, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci issued the following statement today after learning of the death of state Rep. Earl Richardson of Greenville.

“Earl was a dedicated public servant,” Governor Baldacci said. “As a former town manager of Greenville and as a four-term State Representative, Earl gave his all to enhance the health and welfare of the people of the State of Maine. Valiantly fighting cancer, Earl remained committed to representing his district this year. I join with his family, friends, colleagues and constituents in their great time of sadness.”

Rep. Richardson served District 27 in the Maine House of Representatives, which includes the towns of Abbot, Beaver Cove, Bowerbank, Brownville, Cambridge, Greenville, Guilford, Monson, Parkman, Sebec, Shirley, Willimantic and Plantation of Kingsbury, plus the unorganized territories of Blanchard Township, Northeast Piscataquis and Northwest Piscataquis.

In remembrance and honor of Rep. Richardson, Governor Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from Friday, August 10, to sunset on the day of his funeral. The date of Rep. Richardson’s funeral has not been announced at this time.

Governor Announces Special Election to Fill District 93 Seat

August 10, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci late Thursday night signed a proclamation calling for a special election to replace Representative Randy Hotham, who announced late last month his resignation from the Maine House of Representatives. Hotham represents District 93 in the House, which includes the towns of Canton, Carthage, Dixfield, Mexico and Peru.

The proclamation, addressed to members of the Democratic, Green Independent and Republican Committees of the District 93 towns, announces the vacancy and orders a special election. The Governor directs the political committees to meet in order to nominate their candidates for the vacant seat. The Certificate of Nomination of the candidates must be filed with the Office of the Secretary of State on or before 5 p.m., on Friday, Aug. 31, 2007. The special election will be held on Nov. 6, 2007.

On Thursday, the Secretary of State announced the order of appearance for five questions on the statewide Nov. 6, 2007, ballot.

Governor Recognizes a Quality Maine Business

August 10, 2007

Simply Divine Brownies Semi-Finalist in Forbes.com Contest

AUGUSTA – Simply Divine Brownies of Brunswick, Maine has been selected as one of 20 semi-finalists in the inaugural Forbes.com “Boost Your Business” Contest. The 20 contestants were chosen from nearly 1000 entries and only five finalists will be entered to win \$100,000 in prize money to “boost” their business. Final panel-judge opinions and online reader’s votes will be combined to determine the Grand Prize winner and four runner-up First Prize winners.

Trina and Meggen Beaulier, the mother-daughter owners of Simply Divine Brownies, would use the award money to manufacture innovative frozen, ready-to-bake brownies trays, open new wholesale venues and grow their business. They make the first hand cut and hand decorated shaped brownies in the country.

Governor John E. Baldacci said, “Maine entrepreneurs like the Beauliers invigorate the local economy with their passion and creativity. I encourage all Mainers to support this high quality Maine business by voting on Forbes.com.”

Simply Divine Brownies, a member of the Maine Made Products Marketing Program, have been featured on the “Today Show,” selected as a Snack of the Day on the Rachel Ray Show and included in the Academy Award gift bags.

For voting information regarding the “Boost Your Business” contestants, visit www.forbes.com/boostyourbiz.

For more information on Simply Divine Brownies visit www.simplydivinebrownies.com.

Inspections Completed on Maine's Deck Truss Bridges

August 10, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci inspected the Augusta Memorial Bridge today with engineers from the Maine Department of Transportation.

The Augusta Memorial Bridge is one of six “deck truss” bridges in Maine, which are of the same structural type as the bridge that collapsed in Minneapolis last week. One of these six bridges runs between Maine and New Hampshire, carrying the Route 1 Bypass.

All six bridges have now been re-inspected.

“These bridges are safe,” Governor Baldacci said after speaking with John Buxton, MaineDOT’s lead bridge maintenance engineer, and Scott Harris, the State’s lead bridge inspector. “I wanted to see firsthand what it is the engineers look for and better understand the job that they do. They’ve done a great job reacting to a terrible tragedy and making sure our bridges are safe.”

A rehabilitation project was completed on the Augusta Memorial Bridge last year, and Buxton said that it is in good condition. He also said that there were no unexpected findings during the inspections conducted on the other bridges in Maine. MaineDOT plans to replace the Back River Bridge in Arrowsic in 2008, and will continue to monitor the condition of these and all of Maine’s bridges as part of the department’s ongoing bridge inspection program.

“Things were as good as we would expect,” Buxton said. “I want to stress that all of these bridges are safe.”

“We’re lucky that we have the expertise of such well-qualified engineers,” Governor Baldacci said. “I recognize how difficult this job is, and I wanted to go out with them.”

On Aug. 2, Governor Baldacci signed an executive order directing MaineDOT to review its bridge inspection program to assure it continues to meet or exceed all applicable federal standards.

“We’ve looked at the bridges to make sure their safe,” Governor Baldacci said. “Now we’re going to inspect the inspection program and make sure it’s as effective as possible.”

MaineDOT is to report back findings from the review as soon as they become available and no later than 90 days from the date of the executive order.

Flags at Half-Staff Until Tuesday, August 14

August 13, 2007

NOTE: This release further clarifies the timeframe that U.S. and state flags should be flown at half-staff.

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci on Thursday, Aug. 9, issued a statement on the death of state Rep. Earl Richardson of Greenville. Rep. Richardson served District 27.

In remembrance and honor of Rep. Richardson, Governor Baldacci directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff until sundown the day of his funeral, which is set for tomorrow, Tuesday, Aug. 14.

Governor Will Nominate Gorman to Supreme Judicial Court

August 13, 2007

Waterville Attorney Murphy Will Be Nominated to Superior Court

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci will nominate Superior Court Justice Ellen Gorman to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. He will also nominate Michaela Murphy to the Superior Court.

“Justice Gorman has distinguished herself while serving on the Superior Court,” Governor Baldacci said. “She has the intellect, temperament and skills necessary to handle complex cases and to assure that everyone that appears in her court is treated fairly. She will make an exceptional justice on Maine’s highest court.”

Justice Gorman was appointed to the Superior Court by Governor Angus King in 2000. She was reappointed by Governor Baldacci earlier this year. She was appointed to the District Court in 1989 by Governor John McKernan.

Justice Gorman is a graduate of Trinity College in Washington, D.C., and Cornell Law School in Ithaca, N.Y.

She lives in Auburn.

If confirmed by the State Senate, Justice Gorman will fill the seat vacated by the retirement of Supreme Judicial Court Justice Susan Calkins, who announced her Oct. 1 resignation in July.

Murphy is a partner in Jabar, Batten, Ringer and Murphy, a Waterville law firm. She is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Maine School of Law. Murphy’s legal career has included working as a public defender in Montana and as an assistant district attorney in Augusta.

“Michaela Murphy has had an impressive career handling both civil and criminal cases in Maine,” Governor Baldacci said. “She’s an experienced trial lawyer who has worked as a defense attorney and prosecutor. She will be a strong addition to the Superior Court.”

Murphy lives in Rome.

Both nominations will be considered by the State Senate during a confirmation session, which will likely be held in September according to the Senate President’s Office.

Governor Highlights the Importance of SCHIP

August 13, 2007

PORTLAND - Governor John E. Baldacci today reinforced his strong support for re-authorization of the federal State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). At a press conference at Maine Medical Center, the Governor praised the tireless work of Maine's Congressional Delegation, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and state Legislature to ensure that all Mainer's get health care coverage.

"There is nothing more important than protecting the health and welfare of the people of Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "Since becoming law 10 years ago, SCHIP has made a difference in millions of children's lives across the country, and has been an important tool in Maine to expand health coverage. With programs like Dirigo and SCHIP, Maine has made great strides toward increasing access to health care for everyone. We are proud that the number of uninsured children in our state is below the national average. But we can do better on our goal making Maine the healthiest state in the nation."

The Governor was joined at the event by representatives from the State Legislature, the Maine Children's Alliance, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Maine Medical Center.

Since taking office in 2003, the Governor has made access to quality health care for all Mainers a priority. He worked with legislators and stakeholders to pass Dirigo Health Reform, which expands access to affordable, high-quality health care.

More than 14,500 Maine children have health care because of SCHIP. The Governor said that without adequate funding for this valuable federal program, we are in danger of going backward in coverage. He believes this is necessary to maintain the current levels of enrollment.

The Governor urged Congress to reach a consensus on this important issue before SCHIP expires on Sept. 30.

"The current SCHIP legislation, much like the Dirigo legislation here in Maine, was the product of a very significant bipartisan agreement," said Governor Baldacci. "As we have learned here in Maine, the noble goal of providing access to health care for those who need it most is an extremely difficult challenge, even with bipartisan support. I urge the President to recognize the effort that has gone into reaching this consensus, and sign the legislation when it reaches his desk.

"There is still a lot of hard work that needs to be done on pending SCHIP legislation. The citizens in Maine and around the country deserve quality health care. I hope that once this legislation is approved that all the children of Maine continue to receive the health care services they need."

Governor Nominates Two to Dirigo Health Board of Directors

August 14, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the nominations of Mary McAleney and Mary Anne Turowski to the Board of Directors of Dirigo Health.

"I am pleased to have two candidates of such high caliber to serve on this important board," said Governor Baldacci. "Mary and Mary Anne are highly respected across the state, and will use their considerable expertise to move forward our important effort to bring affordable, quality health care to every man, woman and child in Maine."

Mary McAleney recently retired from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), where she had served as District Director. Prior to her work at the SBA, McAleney was the Chief of Staff to Senator George J. Mitchell. She served with the Senator during the Clinton health care debate, the last time comprehensive health care reform was addressed on a national level.

McAleney resides in South Portland.

Mary Anne Turowski, of Newburgh, currently serves as the legislative and political director for the Maine State Employees Association. She has worked for the organization since 1993. Turowski worked for 14 years for the State of Maine at the Department of Human Services. She served as a member of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Dirigo Health.

The Governor said the nominees bring to the table a broad perspective on health care issues. "These nominees understand the needs and concerns of individuals and businesses alike in Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "They will contribute greatly to the management and direction of Dirigo Health as it evolves and improves affordable access to health care for all Mainers."

Out of a bipartisan collaborative process, Dirigo Health was passed by the Legislature and was signed into law in 2003. Dirigo Health was the first comprehensive health reform proposal addressing universal access. Dirigo Health contains costs, ensures high quality health care, and increases access for Maine's working people and families through DirigoChoice health coverage.

The nominations must be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Insurance and Financial Services and confirmed by the Senate.

Federal-State Task Force Created to Help Former Domtar Workers and Washington County

August 15, 2007

AUGUSTA – Working cooperatively, Governor John Elias Baldacci, Sen. Olympia Snowe, Sen. Susan Collins, Rep. Mike Michaud and Rep. Tom Allen have formed a joint task force to address the issues faced by the displaced workers from the Domtar mill in Baileyville and to promote economic development in Washington County.

“The impact of Domtar’s decision to close its paper machine will ripple around Washington County,” Governor Baldacci said. “We need to work collaboratively and use every available resource to help the displaced workers and the community recover. In Maine, we have a history of working together to solve big problems. That’s what needs to happen here.”

The task force will coordinate state and federal efforts to assist Domtar’s former employees and to protect the long-term health of the mill’s pulp production in Baileyville. Additionally, the task force will work with the private sector and regional economic development organizations to capitalize on economic opportunities and to help address the challenges that exist in creating and supporting new and sustained job growth in the area.

“Last night during a substantive conversation with the governor, we discussed the absolute necessity of a two-pronged approach in first assisting these highly skilled and productive employees who have sadly lost their jobs and, second, to ensure a strong, robust and viable pulp operation going forward into the future,” said Senator Snowe. “In the spirit of working hand-in-glove on this approach, this task force will include all available state and federal resources as well as those in the private sector while bringing together the best minds at one table to work line-by-line through the comprehensive list of issues critical to the displaced workers and the ongoing pulp operation.”

In July, Domtar announced that it would permanently close its paper machine in Baileyville and eliminate about 150 jobs. The plant’s pulp operation will continue to employ more than 300 workers.

"Just this week, I visited the mill in Baileyville to speak directly with Domtar employees who will lose their jobs through no fault of their own," said Senator Collins. "This is devastating news, and they are understandably frustrated and concerned with the impact that this closure will have on them, their families, and their community. It is my hope that this task force will be able to complement the efforts already underway by the Washington County transition team and help provide answers and solutions to the many questions and concerns facing these dedicated workers."

Maine’s Department of Labor and Department of Economic and Community Development have sent rapid response teams to Baileyville and Washington County to help displaced workers with job placement and retraining. In addition, the Department of Labor has been working with Maine’s Congressional Delegation to receive Trade Adjustment Assistance.

“Mainers have rallied for each other during difficult times in the past and will do so now,” Representative Michaud said. “I have recently met with the workers to discuss the implications of this closing. These workers are dedicated, talented and hard-working Mainers who have given their all. In the days and weeks ahead, my office will work to provide whatever assistance is necessary to help these workers to get back to work.”

Washington County faces difficult challenges in its recovery. Creating new economic opportunity and safeguarding existing industries while also providing them with the opportunity to grow requires a unified effort.

“The Domtar job losses are only the latest in a series of sad economic news for the people of Washington County,” Representative Allen said. “This joint task force affords an opportunity for Maine to mount a vigorous, united response that focuses all of our resources and energy on behalf of the workers and their communities. As we learned in the case of the military base closure commission's recommendations, working together we can have a tremendous impact.”

Governor Celebrates the Expansion of Amtrak Service

August 17, 2007

PORTLAND - Governor John E. Baldacci joined officials today at the Amtrak station for a ceremony celebrating the expansion of the Downeaster passenger rail service. Starting today, Amtrak will offer five daily trips from Portland to Boston.

"The Downeaster is a great success story, and I'm pleased that the State, through the Maine Department of Transportation, contributed \$5 million in funding to the rail infrastructure improvements necessary to launch the round trip," said Governor Baldacci. "Ridership is up. Revenue is up. Today there are even more options for Mainers, business people and tourists alike to travel safely, conveniently, and affordably in the region."

The Governor said expanding transportation is vital to building Maine's economic future. Area businesses benefit from the increased ridership. The Downeaster is responsible for bringing in to Portland at least \$16 million a year in tourism.

Rail also benefits the environment by taking cars off the road and reducing congestion. The Downeaster already has carried more than 1.6 million passengers since the start of service, removing 800,000 passenger cars from Maine highways. Adding the fifth round trip is projected to eliminate another 30,000 cars from Maine roads.

"I am pleased that the citizens of Maine recognize that transportation is critical," said Governor Baldacci. "This year we passed the largest bonding package for transportation in Maine's history."

Maine Department of Transportation capital investments in rail include:

A new maintenance facility to support growth of the Downeaster service;

Preliminary engineering work and regulatory work on the future passenger rail corridors from Portland to Brunswick;

Connecting the Rockland Branch to the regional system; and

Connecting Portland to Auburn, facilitating future commuter service between the state's two largest metropolitan areas.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Approved for Domtar Paper Workers

August 17, 2007

AUGUSTA – The U.S. Department of Labor has approved Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Domtar employees who lost their jobs in July, Governor John E. Baldacci learned Friday.

The approval makes displaced workers eligible for retraining, re-employment services, income support, relocation services and job search allowances.

"I am pleased that the federal government has approved this assistance," said Governor Baldacci. "This will help provide laid-off workers the tools to speed their recovery and get them back to work. These are hard-working people who want to be working as soon as possible. This aid will help them do that. I want to thank Sen. Snowe, Sen. Collins, Rep. Michaud and Rep. Allen for joining me in supporting these families."

Permanent closure of the Domtar paper machine in Baileyville eliminated about 150 jobs.

Earlier this week, the Governor and the Maine Congressional Delegation announced the formation of a joint task force to address the issues faced by the displaced workers from the Domtar mill in Baileyville and to promote economic development in Washington County.

The task force will coordinate state and federal efforts to assist Domtar's former employees and to protect the long-term health of the mill's pulp production in Baileyville. Additionally, the task force will work with the private sector and regional economic development organizations to capitalize on economic opportunities and to help address the challenges that exist in creating and supporting new and sustained job growth in the area.

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Governor Announces Special Election to Fill District 27 Seat

August 20, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed a proclamation calling for a special election to replace Representative Earl E. Richardson, who passed away earlier this month. Richardson represented District 27 in the House, which includes the towns of Abbot, Beaver Cove, Bowerbank, Brownville, Cambridge, Greenville, Guilford, Monson, Parkman, Sebec, Shirley, Willimantic and Plantation of Kingsbury, plus the unorganized territories of Blanchard Township, Northeast Piscataquis and Northwest Piscataquis.

The proclamation, addressed to members of the Democratic, Green Independent and Republican Committees of the District 27 towns, announces the vacancy and orders a special election. The Governor directs the political committees to meet in order to nominate their candidates for the vacant seat. The Certificate of Nomination of the candidates must be filed with the Office of the Secretary of State on or before 5 p.m., on Friday, Aug. 31, 2007. The special election will be held on Nov. 6, 2007.

Governor Encourages Mainers to Improve Home Energy Efficiency

August 21, 2007

CAPE ELIZABETH – Governor John E. Baldacci today kicked off the “How Does Your Home Perform?” campaign as part of the Maine Home Performance with EnergyStar® program. Maine Home Performance, a home retrofit program sponsored by the Governor’s Office of Energy Independence and Security, is creating a sustainable market throughout the State of Maine for diagnosis and treatment of homes to make them healthy, comfortable, and cost and energy efficient.

Governor Baldacci said that while his Administration is working to reduce energy costs and make the state more energy independent, he is also encouraging Maine people to use energy efficiency as a way to cut their utility bills.

Earlier today, the Governor joined a coalition opposed to a new federally imposed charge on the electricity bills of Maine people and businesses. The federal fee adds an additional 6% charge to residential customers and 10% to industrial customers. The Maine Public Utilities Commission and Maine Public Advocate are appealing this case to federal court. Governor Baldacci joined the coalition of business people, school officials, regulators and lawmakers who are opposed to this charge, stating that Maine’s competitiveness is severely hampered by the fee. He said that this additional cost makes home energy conservation efforts even more important.

“Home energy improvements in Maine homes can reduce energy use by up to 50 percent and can improve indoor air quality and the home’s comfort and durability,” said Governor Baldacci. “Saving energy provides all our residents with a way to deal with high energy prices, to reduce our dependence on imported oil, and to avert global warming.”

Contractors participating in the program make long-term, sustainable and profitable changes to their business model. Homeowners participating in the program receive a comprehensive assessment of their home, implementation services, third-party quality assurance and access to affordable loans. A “Certificate of Energy Savings-Improvements” documents each participating homeowner’s energy, dollar and carbon savings.

The Governor and Maine Home Performance officials were at the home of Sarah MacColl, a personal trainer living in Cape Elizabeth, to see firsthand the kinds of improvements that will save Sarah money and make her home more comfortable.

Governor Baldacci said that while Maine has little control over what is behind rising energy prices, his Administration has been working to reduce energy costs and make the state more energy independent. The Governor has been working with New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham to partner with the province on electrical interconnections. Governor Baldacci has also been pursuing alternative energy sources such as wind, solar and biofuels.

The Governor said Maine Home Performance contractors are available today to help Maine homeowners. They can offer special low-interest financing through MaineHousing and other secured and unsecured loan options. Participating homeowners can count on third-party quality assurance and the integrity of the work performed on their homes through Maine Home Performance contractors. The Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security empowers the citizens of Maine by providing them with resources to make smart energy choices.

Look for the "How Does Your Home Perform" message in print, television, radio and online early this fall. For more information on the Maine Home Performance program, contact Heather Rae, Maine Home Performance Project Manager, at 207-449-1102 or hrae@MaineHomePerformance.org or visit the Maine Home Performance website at www.MaineHomePerformance.org.

Governor Baldacci Discusses Progress at HoltraChem Facility Clean Up

August 22, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner David Littell and members of the Maine People's Alliance Wednesday afternoon to discuss progress being made with respect to cleaning the site of the former HoltraChem chlor-alkali facility in Orrington. The Governor and Commissioner announced that the first four phases are nearly complete and a fifth phase has been approved. All phases are in a series of steps designed to clean up the site to protect the environment and public health.

"In the last year, I am pleased to report that much progress has been made, including the removal of the cell building itself," Governor Baldacci said. "The site is starting to appear very different as the work has focused on the dismantling of structures in preparation for long term remedial activities."

The first four phases approved by the DEP involved the dismantling of the internal portions of the mercury cell building, the removal of equipment contaminated with mercury, the cleaning of residual material in tanks and draining of rectifiers and transformers, and the removal of seven buildings, which were contaminated to the point that the demolition debris was considered a hazardous waste for mercury. The fourth phase is nearly complete. Phase 5 includes the removal of seven additional buildings and 20 additional tanks. Phase 5 was approved earlier this month by DEP and is expected to take 6 ½ months to complete.

"We are moving deliberately and prudently to protect the Penobscot River and the health of the people of Maine," Commissioner Littell said. "We have made significant progress at the HoltraChem site, removing highly contaminated buildings, tanks and other material, and, as the Governor said, we should be proud of that effort."

"While state officials have known about the significant mercury pollution at HoltraChem and in the Penobscot River for more than 30 years," said Jesse Graham, Executive Director of the Maine People's Alliance, "it wasn't until the Baldacci Administration that the Maine People's Alliance and the residents of Orrington have seen significant cleanup move forward."

The appearance of the Orrington site has changed considerably with the removal of several buildings. Phase 5 will continue changing the look of the site, with seven structures scheduled for removal, including the Old Well Pump Station, the Nitromethane Building and three River Well Pump Houses.

"Groups like the Maine People's Alliance, as well as individual Maine citizens, play an important role in concert with our Department of Environmental Protection to assure the protection of Maine's environment," Governor Baldacci said. "My Administration remains committed to ensuring that the public is informed and involved as we clean up this toxic site."

Governor Announces Nominations

August 22, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci announced the following nominations.

Finance Authority of Maine

Terry MacTaggart of Hampden

Brent Cross of Bangor

Susan Snowden of Scarborough

Patrick Murphy of Portland

Commission on Government Ethics and Election Practices

Francis C. Marsano of Belfast

Edward M. Youngblood of Bangor

Maine Human Rights Commission

Joseph A. Perry of Searsport

Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority

Marty Wilk of Brunswick

Dana Totman of Brunswick

Jennifer Stowell of Rumford

Stephanie Slocum of Harpswell

Art Mayo of Bath

John Moncure of Harpswell

Charles Spies of Topsham

Shep Lee of Cape Elizabeth

Maine State Housing Authority

Barbara Trafton of Auburn

Timothy O'Neil of South Portland

Elizabeth Mahoney of Cumberland

Board of Trustees, Maine Maritime Academy

Robert Walker of Marco Island, Florida

Ward Graffam of Portland

Richard Grosh of Brooklin

Anne Marie Samway of Hampton Falls, New Hampshire and Northport

Mary Lou Cormier of Castine

The nominations must be reviewed by the respective committees of oversight of the above boards and commissions and confirmed by the Senate. Senate President Beth Edmonds announced today that a confirmation session for the appointments will be 10:00 a.m. on September 20, 2007.

Governor Orders Flags to be Flown to Half-Staff

August 22, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff Friday, Aug. 24, and Saturday, Aug. 25, 2007. Details follow.

In remembrance and honor of Army Corps 2nd Lt. William Alfred Bujold, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Friday, Aug. 24, 2007.

Lt. Bujold was a World War II aviator who died 64 years ago during a bombing mission on an island off Papua New Guinea. His remains were identified in November 2006.

His funeral services are scheduled for Friday, Aug. 24 in Rumford.

In remembrance and honor of U.S. Navy Lt. Jerry Smith, of Greenville, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Saturday, Aug. 25, 2007.

Lt. Smith served as a naval aviator. He died on Aug. 15 while on duty on a training mission off the coast of North Carolina.

His funeral services are scheduled for Saturday, August 25, in Greenville.

Governor Accepts Baxter Park Wilderness Trust

August 23, 2007

Fund will Help Preserve Baxter State Park for Future Generations

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today formally accepted a generous gift of funding that will help to preserve the quality and character of Baxter State Park for generations to come. The donor, Frank Trautmann, requested that the gift be placed in a new trust, The Baxter Park Wilderness Fund.

Governor Baldacci recognized Frank Trautmann and his wife, Margery, who passed away in September, for their devotion to the vision of Governor Baxter and the preservation of Baxter State Park.

"This gift has been more than 20 years in the making," said Governor Baldacci. "Frank began volunteering at Baxter State Park that long ago. He helped with trail building and maintenance. Today his gift to the people of Maine will ensure that the unique beauty and adventure of the park will be accessible to all, now and into the future."

Under the terms of the Trust, which is expected to receive roughly \$2.7 million initially and ultimately as much as \$10 million, three individuals appointed by the Governor will be charged with managing the Trust's funds to maximize their growth for the benefit of the Park. "I am pleased to announce today that Jim Garland, Skip Pease and Buzz Caverly will be appointed to serve in this important capacity, and I look forward to working with each of them," said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor said he gained a renewed appreciation for Baxter State Park when he climbed up Mount Katahdin last month with his son, Jack.

"It was a truly remarkable experience, and one which I will treasure forever," said Governor Baldacci. "As a father I wanted to share that experience with my son. As Governor, I want to ensure that this state and national treasure remains unspoiled and accessible for all – for generations to come. I fully appreciate the vision of Percival Baxter for this land – and I share it. Governor Baxter gave us a wonderful gift."

Governor Baldacci also recognized Buzz Caverly, longtime director of Baxter State Park, now retired, who had worked with Frank Trautmann to establish the trust. Additionally, State Treasurer David Lemoine and Attorney General Steve Rowe worked with the Governor's office to establish the Trust document that will fulfill Trautmann's vision and benefit the Park.

This marks the second significant impact on the Park and its future in less than a year. In December 2006, Maine celebrated the completion of the Katahdin Lake Project. This achievement was decades in the making and took the combined efforts of more than 1,000 individuals, foundations and corporations to complete.

"May this gift inspire others to help preserve the rugged beauty that can be found in Maine's north woods," Governor Baldacci said, "and may we continue to honor Governor Baxter's vision, and regard

today's achievement as another important milestone on our journey to keep the Park among our most treasured Maine places."

Governor Baldacci Nominates Members of the Board of Trustees for the University of Maine System

August 24, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today nominated four members to the Board of Trustees for the University of Maine System: Lyndel "Joe" Wishcamper of Freeport; Norman Fournier of Wallagrag; Tamera Grieshaber of Auburn; and Krisandra Horn of Sweden.

"These capable individuals bring an exceptional level of experience, dedication and skill to the Board," Governor Baldacci commented. "They hail from diverse backgrounds, and have distinguished themselves in their respective fields. These appointees will use their talents to promote the University of Maine System and will further enhance the critical links between the University and economic development throughout the state."

Mr. Wishcamper is being reappointed to the Board of Trustees. He is manager and president of The Wishcamper Group, LLC. He has an extensive civic and community service background, including service on the Maine Public Broadcasting Network Board of Trustees, Maine Medical Center Board of Trustees, The Nature Conservancy Board of Trustees and former Brunswick Redevelopment Authority member. His professional experience and affiliations include serving as the director of Marical, Inc. and the National Leased Housing Association. Additionally, Wishcamper is a director of Central Maine Power. Wishcamper is a graduate of Yale University and Harvard Law School.

Mr. Fournier currently serves as executive director of Fish River Rural Health in Eagle Lake. Prior to this position, Fournier served for eleven years as an associate administrator with Northern Maine Medical Center and for fourteen years as executive director of the Aroostook County Action Program. His professional and community experience includes membership on the University of Maine at Fort Kent Board of Visitors, trustee of Northern Maine General, executive committee member of the Northern Maine Development Commission, and member of the Maine Job Council. Fournier currently serves as an Aroostook County Commissioner. Mr. Fournier received a B.S. in Education at the University of Maine at Fort Kent.

Ms. Grieshaber is self-employed, owning Creative Cycles, a digital media productions company. She also serves as the volunteer curator of L/A Arts Gallery 5, a new community art gallery. Prior to this experience, Grieshaber held various education-related positions, including serving as community relations coordinator for the Auburn School Department, communications manager for the Maine Coalition for Excellence in Education and director of the Lewiston/Auburn Aspirations Compact. Ms. Grieshaber, a Master of Arts, Public Policy and Management graduate from the University of Southern Maine, has held various community and civic positions. She sits on the College for ME, Androscoggin Steering Committee and the Auburn Comprehensive Plan Review Committee. She has previously served on the Board of Directors of the United Way and Head Start, as well as the Lewiston-Auburn Education Coalition.

Ms. Horn is nominated to serve as student trustee of the Board. She currently attends the University of Maine Farmington, with a double major in Elementary Education and Special Education. Horn serves on the University of Maine Farmington Student Senate. Prior to attending college, Ms. Horn was a mentor in the Big Buddy Program in Fryeburg and volunteered at the Bridgton Nursing Home.

The Board of Trustees assumes responsibility for the overall operation, maintenance, and supervision of the University of Maine System. The Board is the entity that approves the establishment and elimination of academic programs, confers tenure on faculty members, and sets tuition rates and operating budgets.

The Governor's nominations must be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and confirmed by the Senate.

Governor Baldacci Proclaims Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day

August 24, 2007

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci has proclaimed Friday, August 24, 2007 as Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day throughout the State of Maine. The Governor presented the proclamation during a ceremony Friday afternoon at the Cole Land Transportation Museum in Bangor.

“We cannot recognize and honor our veterans enough,” Governor Baldacci said. “Each day, we must thank these patriots in our hearts and minds and must remember their sacrifice.”

The Governor spoke as part of the ceremony that included a performance by the Luxembourg Youth Chorus, presentations of walking sticks to veterans and signings of the book “Quiet Courage” by Don Colson. The book features 89 stories from veterans, including 15 stories from Vietnam Veterans specifically.

More than 1000 walking sticks have been distributed to Vietnam Veterans by the museum. Proceeds from sales of “Quiet Courage” at the ceremony will be used in part for the purchase of additional walking sticks for veterans.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, 48,000 men and women from the State of Maine served the Nation’s call in Vietnam while an additional 16,000 Mainer’s were serving world wide during the Vietnam War Era; and

WHEREAS, the State of Maine has 343 names etched on that black granite wall in the Nation’s capitol and 13 of our young men are still missing in Southeast Asia; and

WHEREAS, as a State, we acknowledged our deep respect and admiration of our men and women Vietnam veterans by setting aside August 24, 2007 as Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day; and

WHEREAS, on this day, we recall these sacrifices and say to those who served, those who gave their lives, those who were disabled, and those who are still missing in Southeast Asia; thank you for service, we have not forgotten you, we will not forget you,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim August 24, 2007 as

VIETNAM VETERANS RECOGNITION DAY

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

Governor and Secretary of State Announce Special Election to Fill District 72 Seat

August 28, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap today signed a proclamation calling for a special election to replace Representative William R. Walcott, who has resigned from the Maine House of Representatives. Walcott represents the residents of Lewiston residing in House District 72.

The proclamation, addressed to members of the Democratic, Green Independent and Republican Committees of District 72, announces the vacancy and orders a special election. The Governor directs the political committees to meet in order to nominate their candidates for the vacant seat. The Certificate of Nomination of the candidates must be filed with the Office of the Secretary of State on or before 5 p.m., on Wednesday, Sept. 12, 2007. The special election will be held on Nov. 6, 2007.

Maine Among Leaders in Providing Health Coverage

August 29, 2007

State Continues to Address National Economic Challenges

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today said he was pleased that Maine ties with four other states as having the lowest rate of uninsured in the country. The data was released yesterday by the U.S. Census Bureau for 2005-2006. Despite an increase in the rate of uninsured nationally and in the Northeast, Maine's rate of uninsured held steady, with only 9.5% of Mainers uninsured, compared to 15.8% nationally.

"I am pleased that we have positive results to show for our efforts to ensure that more Maine people have access to health insurance," said Governor Baldacci. "Maine continues to lead, while the national trend shows a continuing worsening situation for hard working American families in covering this basic need. More work must be done and I am committed to achieving universal insurance for Maine people."

The Governor has made health care reform a central theme of his administration.

"Through Dirigo Health Reform, we are addressing underlying costs in the health care system while working to improve the quality of care and providing more insurance options in the health care marketplace," said Governor Baldacci. "We have expanded coverage through Medicaid and through innovative expansions. As of July 2007 more than 27,000 people have been covered by DirigoChoice and Dirigo's MaineCare parent expansion. This year I signed into law a bill to require insurers and allow employers to extend a child's insurance coverage on a parent's plan until the age of 25, regardless of whether or not the child is in school. I am proud of our record, and will use whatever methods I can to increase coverage."

Accompanying the news of the rate of uninsured was information on income and poverty. Income figures showed no statistically significant changes from the previous year.

In all, 38 million Americans live in poverty, or 13.3% of the population. In Maine, 12.9% of the population lives in poverty. Maine's poverty rate was 24th among the 50 states.

"There is more work left to do," said Governor Baldacci. "Access to stable, well-paying jobs remains my priority for all Mainers. Continuing investments in higher education, work force development, and healthcare is essential to meeting this goal."

For more information about the Census report, go to

http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/income_wealth/010583.html

Governor Outlines Plans for Single State Corrections System

August 30, 2007

Overcrowding, Demands for Better Care and Inefficiencies Require Action

AUGUSTA – Citing chronic overcrowding problems, double digit growth in costs and a lack of necessary services, Governor John E. Baldacci today released an outline of his plans to consolidate state prisons and county jails.

“We have been on the edge of a crisis for some time,” Governor Baldacci said. “The current system is inefficient and unsustainable. People are getting hurt, they aren’t receiving the care they need, and the burden for this outdated system is falling directly onto the back of property taxpayers. The system has to change.”

Governor Baldacci’s plan would consolidate 15 county jail systems and the state corrections system into a single, statewide system that would be managed by the Department of Corrections.

Over the last three years, the cost for counties to operate jails has increased by about 12 percent per year. During the same time, the cost to operate the state prison system has increased by about 6 percent per year.

“Our current situation is intolerable,” Governor Baldacci said. “We must act. The state prison system and a number of counties with older facilities don’t have enough room to house inmates while other counties have beds left empty.”

By creating a single, combined corrections system, costs can be reduced by \$10 million in the first year. By 2015, annual savings will grow to almost \$38 million. In addition, the new system would eliminate the need to build new jail and prison facilities in the near future. Without consolidation, four counties and the state are considering new construction for next year.

It cost property taxpayers \$66 million in 2006 and an estimated \$71.2 million in 2007 to support county jail operations. If nothing is done, that will balloon to \$148 million by 2013 and \$184 million by 2015, just for the county jails.

As part of the plan, four county jails would be closed: Oxford, Franklin, Piscataquis and Waldo. The plan would also allow for the creation of at least one specialty program – and perhaps two – that would treat prisoners with mental health issues. Currently, there is limited ability to treat psychiatric patients within either the prison or jail systems. The combined system will also benefit from reduced administrative overhead, improved purchasing power and increased flexibility.

“While constraining costs and relieving the pressure on property taxpayers is a high priority, our plan will also lead to better outcomes for prisoners,” Governor Baldacci said. “We can’t continue to have prisoners sleeping on floors, and mental illness and substance abuse going untreated. They are in our

custody and we are legally responsible for their welfare. We can't wait for a crisis that puts the lives of guards and prisoners in jeopardy."

Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island and Vermont have statewide corrections systems.

"This isn't new ground. Other places have been very successful with similar initiatives, and Maine can be too," Governor Baldacci said. "This eliminates unnecessary administration and improves outcomes for prisoners. That saves taxpayers' money and ultimately makes our communities safer and more secure."

The plan would freeze the current county assessment for jails, and the state would agree to take over responsibility for all future growth in costs, which would protect property taxpayers from double-digit increases in jail spending and the debt that would have been required to build new county jails.

Draft legislation for the plan has not been completed. The plan could be considered during a special session of the Legislature this fall or when the Legislature reconvenes in January.

"I am committed to putting this plan forward," Governor Baldacci said. "We know we have a problem, and we know what the solution is. Now, we must muster the political will to take action."

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Highlights

Creating a Single, Statewide Corrections System

- Maine's state prison system is overcrowded.
- 10 county jails are overcrowded while 5 are at or under capacity.
- By combining the county jails and the state prison system, more than 300 excess beds become available. The prisoner capacity of the combined system is projected to meet the needs of counties and the state for at least five years.
- The plan creates one, and perhaps two, specialty programs to treat mentally ill patients and improves rehabilitative services and the treatment of substance abuse.
- In the three years from 2004 to 2006, the cost to run county jails grew by an average of 12 percent annually. (2004, \$53.4 million; 2005, \$60.5 million; 2006, \$66.1 million)
- In the three years from 2004 to 2006, the cost to run the state prison system grew by an average of 6 percent annually. (2004, \$65.3 million; 2005, \$70.9 million; 2006, \$75.5 million)
- In the first year, a combined system will save taxpayers at least \$10 million.
- By the fifth year, the savings from the combined system grows to \$31 million, and by 2015 it grows to \$38 million.

- The plan freezes county assessments to pay for jails at their current levels, protecting property taxpayers from future growth in costs.
- Four jails – Oxford, Franklin, Piscataquis and Waldo – are closed under the plan.
- The combined system will capitalize on reduced administrative overhead, increased purchasing power, unified contract negotiations for services, and staffing flexibility and training consistency.

Governor Announces Nominations to Courts

August 30, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the following nominations: Judge John Nivison of Winslow as an Associate Justice of the Superior Court; Superior Court Associate Justice Kirk Studstrup of Augusta to Active Retired status on the Superior Court; Judge Patricia Worth of Belfast for reappointment as an Associate Judge of the District Court; and Richard Mulhern of Falmouth as an Associate Judge of the District Court.

“I am pleased to nominate these distinguished individuals,” Governor Baldacci said. “They each bring an impressive background in the practice of law and a high level of integrity to the bench.”

Judge Nivison has served on the Maine District Court since 1999, and has been Chief Judge since 2005. Prior to serving on the bench, he was employed at Pierce Atwood in Augusta. He received his undergraduate degree from Colby College and his J.D. from the University of Maine School of Law.

Justice Studstrup has served on the Maine Superior Court for nine years. He served on the Maine District Court for 12 years. Prior to his judicial service, Studstrup served as a commissioner on the Maine Workers’ Compensation Commission. He received his Bachelor’s degree from Duke University and his J.D. from George Washington University.

Judge Worth has served on the District Court for seven years. Prior to her judicial service, Worth was an associate with Woodward Law Offices in Belfast. She also served as an assistant district attorney in Rockland and Belfast. Worth received her undergraduate degree at Boston University and her J.D. from the University of Maine School of Law.

Mr. Mulhern is currently a partner at Sulloway & Hollis in Portland. He currently serves on the Zoning Board of Appeals. Prior to that, he served on the Falmouth Town Council. Mulhern received a B.A. in Journalism from the University of Maine and a J.D. from the University of Maine School of Law.

Nominations will be considered by the State Senate on Sept. 20, according to the Senate President’s Office.

Governor Mourns Passing of State Rep. Deane Jones

September 4, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci issued the following statement today after learning of the death of state Rep. Deane Jones of Mount Vernon. Jones represented House District 83. He won a special election in June to fill the seat after the death of Abigail Holman in April.

“Deane was a public servant in the great Maine tradition,” said Governor Baldacci. “For decades he served his town, a leader who didn’t seek special attention, but was ready always to do the work of the people. When I swore him in this past June, he expressed his excitement at having the opportunity to bring this local experience to the State House of Representatives.”

The Governor called Deane’s wife, Pat, yesterday to offer his condolences to her and the rest of the family. “This is such a person tragedy, and also a public one because the people of Maine will not have the opportunity to get to know Deane better as a member of the Legislature.”

Rep. Jones’ district includes the towns of Manchester, Vienna, Mount Vernon, Fayette and Belgrade.

Governor Baldacci will direct that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff in remembrance and honor of Rep. Jones. No details about the funeral are yet available.

Governor, N.B. Premier Meet on Energy Issues

September 4, 2007

Governor Baldacci Continues Efforts to Enhance Relationship with New Brunswick and to Lower Energy Costs in Maine

FREDERICTON, New Brunswick – Governor John E. Baldacci met today with New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham to discuss energy issues.

During a two-hour meeting in Fredericton, Governor Baldacci and Premier Graham continued the work that began in February with the signing of a memorandum of understanding to enhance cooperation between Maine and the Canadian province.

“This was a positive meeting that will help to move our relationship with New Brunswick forward,” Governor Baldacci said. “The process that began earlier this year is working. Our energy costs in Maine are too high, and I believe increased cooperation with New Brunswick holds the potential to bring them down.”

The MOU lays out a timeline to explore and set forth actions enhancing cross-border cooperation on electrical interconnections. The MOU called for two phases: an assessment of tasks and prioritization of objectives; and an implementation phase.

Phase I has been completed, with the resulting report concluding that there are significant economic and environmental benefits possible to Maine and New Brunswick through closer coordination. The priority for Phase II is to pursue efficient energy production and transmission in a manner that addresses climate change. The report calls for a review of electricity production as a regional issue, and to address structural and international barriers to establishing or expanding interconnections.

The Phase II report is due to be completed by the fall of 2007. That report will analyze the feasibility and challenges of specific collaborative approaches.

In addition, Governor Baldacci invited Premier Graham to Maine next year to climb Mount Katahdin, Maine's highest peak. The Governor agreed to visit Mount Carleton with the Premier.

Governor Nominates Members to the State Board of Education

September 4, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today nominated six members to the Board of Education: James A. Banks Sr. of Portland; Mabel J. Desmond of Mapleton; Philip A. Dionne of Brunswick; Constance Goldman of Cape Elizabeth; Michael C. Parkin of Lewiston; and Marilyn Temple Tardy of Palmyra. Dionne is being reappointed; the other five nominees constitute new appointments.

"These individuals will use their leadership and experience to provide thoughtful policy advice during a critical time of change in our state education system," Governor Baldacci said. "Combined, these members bring a great level of expertise, including teaching, administration and oversight of local education systems. This array of experience, combined with lifelong commitment to the children of this state, will help guide these nominees as my plan for school administration consolidation is implemented. There are unique opportunities in Maine to transition our education system into one that will fully meet the workforce and economic needs of Maine into the future."

Banks is a former small business owner, now retired. He served 17 years on the Portland School Board, three years of which as chair. Banks is a past member and president of the Maine School Board Association and received a number of honors and awards based on his dedication to education and civic and professional work. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Southern Maine.

Desmond is retired. She served as an educator in MSAD 1 for 21 years, including teaching in elementary and high schools. She also served as a University of Maine Presque Isle adjunct faculty member in education. Desmond served four terms in the Maine State House of Representatives, from 1994 to 2002, where she focused on education issues. She received a B.S. degree from the University of Maine Presque Isle and a M.Ed. at the University of Maine.

Dionne has served on the Maine State Board of Education since 1992. He has been self-employed since 1972. Dionne currently serves on the Maine Jobs Council and the Board of Directors of Jobs for Maine Graduates. He is a past member of the Maine Council on Vocational Education and the Brunswick School Board. Dionne received an Associate Degree in Architectural Engineering Technology from Wentworth Institute.

Goldman served as the District 121 State Representative from 2004 to 2006. Prior to that experience, Goldman served as Assistant Professor at Saint Joseph's College of Maine. She has since retired. Goldman served as Superintendent of the Cape Elizabeth School Department and the Gorham School Department. She also has experience as a junior high school administrator and as a teacher in middle and high schools. Goldman has been a member of the Essential Programs and Services Committee and the Steering Committee for Implementation of the Learning Results. She was also chair of the Work Group on Early Literacy. Goldman earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from Saint Joseph's College, a Master of Science in Secondary Administration from the University of Southern Maine and an Ed.D. from Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Parkin has been employed at Cross Insurance in Lewiston for 31 years, where he now serves as account executive vice president and benefits manager. Prior to that experience, he served four years in the United States Navy and two years in the Navy Reserves. Parkin is a former member of the Lewiston School Committee. He is active in church and professional activities. Parkin received his undergraduate degree from College of the Holy Cross.

Tardy is self-employed. She previously taught in the MSAD 38 and MSAD 23 school systems, and served 17 years on both the MSAD 48 School Board and the MSAD 48 Music Boosters. On the school board, she chaired various committees including budget, negotiations and building committees. Tardy earned a B.S. in Education from the University of Maine.

The Maine State Board of Education is authorized to act in an advisory capacity to the Commissioner of Education in matters concerning State Laws relating to education. Among additional charges, the Board is delegated specific powers to make recommendations to the Legislature for the efficient conduct of the public schools; to approve the formation of School Administrative Districts; to establish requirements for approval and accreditation of elementary and secondary schools; to grant permission for administrative units to enter into agreements for cooperative educational purposes; to approve standards for school construction; and to approve school construction projects for State aid.

The Governor's nominations must be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and confirmed by the Senate.

Governor Baldacci Applauds Western Maine Trail Project

September 6, 2007

CARRABASSETT VALLEY – Governor John E. Baldacci attended the ground breaking today of the first hut of the Maine Huts and Trails project in Western Maine. The hut is the first of 12 that are expected to be built along what will be a 180-mile recreation corridor stretching from Bethel to Moosehead Lake. Governor Baldacci praised the idea both for its tourism appeal as well as promoting a healthy lifestyle.

“A study came out in the past couple of weeks about obesity in America,” said Governor Baldacci.

“While Maine ranked as the 33rd least obese state in the nation, we still have work to do in establishing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Increased access to, and opportunities in, Maine’s great outdoors will encourage us to take advantage of healthy outdoor activities.”

Joining Governor Baldacci at the ground breaking near Poplar Stream Falls were the Chairman of Maine Huts and Trails Bob Peixotto, Executive Director Dave Herring, Penobscot Indian Nation Chief Kirk Francis, and many supporters of the project. One supporter, 2006 Olympic Gold Medalist Seth Wescott, joined Governor Baldacci in July at the announcement of the Governor’s “Take It Outside” initiative.

“With ‘Take It Outside,’ I have directed state agencies to evaluate their programs, rules and policies with respect to the role they play in encouraging Maine people, especially young people, to experience and appreciate the natural world,” said the Governor. “Maine Huts and Trails fits in perfectly with the ‘Take It Outside’ initiative, and is a new destination for both Mainers and tourists alike.”

The Governor said that early summer tourism numbers for the state look strong, but a four-season outdoor recreation project like Maine Huts and Trails will help boost tourism year-round.

“Maine has already protected and conserved some of the most spectacular pieces of land in the country with Baxter State Park, Mount Katahdin and the Allagash Wilderness Waterway,” Governor Baldacci said. “Now we are witnessing doors opening to another awe-inspiring part of Maine for future generations to experience and enjoy.”

The hut will consist of a main cabin with a kitchen, bathroom facilities and lodging for up to four staff members. Three separate cabins at the site will be able to house as many as 40 guests. The hut could open as early as February.

Governor Baldacci Helps Open Mini-Fenway

September 9, 2007

OAKLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Harold Alfond, Cal Ripken Jr., Congressman Tom Allen and scores of supporters this afternoon to help open The Harold Alfond Fenway Park. The park is a 2/3-size replica of Boston's Fenway Park and will be used primarily by the Cal Ripken League and 13 and under clubs in Central Maine.

"Kids and adults alike have dreamed for almost 100 years of playing left field in Fenway Park, trying to imagine how we would play a line drive off the Green Monster," Governor Baldacci said, "and now, thanks to Mr. Alfond, Mr. Ripken, and the rest of the team who have worked on this project, kids in Central Maine have the chance to live out that fantasy."

Governor Baldacci told the crowd that children will be more encouraged to enjoy outdoor activities when they have a baseball park in the area with as much to offer as The Harold Alfond Fenway Park.

"Whether it's hiking, biking, skiing, sledding or playing baseball – getting our children outside is an important part of growing up to be healthy individuals," the Governor said. "Maine is a great state in which to live, work and play outdoors."

The Governor said that while many sports are on children's radars as they grow up, baseball remains a constant.

"I would dare say that just about everyone here has a positive memory of baseball when they were growing up," Governor Baldacci said. "Whether it was something as simple as playing catch with mom or dad, or something as monumental as hitting a game winning homerun in a Little League game, baseball is something that just about everyone experiences in their lives." Governor Baldacci continued, "In my family, I remember my dad piling my five brothers and myself into the car to visit Fenway Park in the summertime and watch the Red Sox play. It didn't matter – win or lose – it was the experience of witnessing the game first hand with my family."

The park, located at Camp Tracy in Oakland, features many of the features of Boston's Fenway Park, including a 20-foot-tall left field fence and a scoreboard similar to the one on the Green Monster. While at the opening, in honor of their tremendous contributions, Governor Baldacci proclaimed September 9, 2007, as Harold Alfond and Cal Ripken Jr. Day in the State of Maine.

Governor Baldacci Rides Motorcycle in Toys for Tots Run

September 9, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined the United Bikers of Maine Toys for Tots Run. This is the 26th year the Toy Run has taken place.

“This event, which draws about 20,000 motorcyclists each year, is considered the largest one-day charity event in the state,” said Governor Baldacci. “And it proves again that there are no bounds to the generosity of Maine people, of their commitment to their community, and of their great spirit.”

Governor Baldacci participated in the parade-like Toy Run from the Augusta Civic Center to the Windsor Fairgrounds. The toys were dropped off at the Windsor Fairgrounds and will be used for distribution to Maine children around the holidays.

Governor Announces Maine Fallen Heroes Web Page

September 10, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced a new Web page on the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services site that honors service members who have given their lives while serving their state and nation since September 11, 2001. There are currently 33 service members listed on the Web site.

"This week, Maine Week of Heroes, has been set aside in Maine to remember all those who have and currently do serve their communities," said Governor Baldacci. "We must never forget those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. This Web page will serve as a reminder not only of what we have lost since September 11, 2001, but of the great caliber of our heroes. They so enriched our State and we will never forget their courage and commitment."

The Governor said that Maine has proportionately more veterans than any other state. "This tradition of service is an important part of what defines us as Mainers. Whether it is on the battlefield or in response to a domestic emergency, our first responders are there to protect and defend our communities. I wish during this Maine Week of Heroes to send forth my profound gratitude on behalf of the people of Maine to all those who serve in our communities and abroad."

The Governor has made it among his highest priorities as a public servant to ensure that our current and past soldiers and their families are provided for. This year Governor Baldacci worked with the Legislature to ensure veterans received benefits for which they are entitled, including:

- Providing significant funds to the Veterans Financial Assistance Program and for the veteran's cemetery;
- Helping to fund and signing into law a special license plate to honor Maine residents serving our country;
- Beginning the process of establishing the Maine Veterans' Home "Veterans Campus," which will create a one-stop shop and to expand services in Bangor, and which is intended to serve as a model for similar projects around the state; and
- Passage of the Governor's bill, "An Act To Protect the Lives and Health of Members of the Maine National Guard," model legislation that will help safeguard the health of members of the Maine National Guard.

The Maine Fallen Heroes Web page can be found at:

<http://www.maine.gov/dvem/bvs/MaineFallenHeroes.htm>

Governor Baldacci Urges Saving Early for College

September 10, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today issued a proclamation naming September, 2007, as College Savings Month in the State of Maine. The Governor presented the proclamation to John Witherspoon, CEO of the Finance Authority of Maine, and Maine State Treasurer David Lemoine during a ceremony in the State House.

“As you know, September is back to school and it is also time for college savings,” Governor Baldacci said. “We want our citizens to have the best opportunity and a firm foundation to help with their college education. Being able to save for college tuition now can be a big help later in life.”

Both FAME and the State Treasurer help to oversee the NextGen College Investing Plan, Maine’s Section 529 college savings plan. NextGen was created by the Maine Legislature in 1999 as a qualified tuition program and is now the 5th largest college savings plan in the nation. It is a tax-advantaged investing program administered by FAME, designed to help families prepare for higher education expenses.

“It has never been more important to save for college,” said FAME CEO John Witherspoon. “When Maine people think about saving for college, they should think about NextGen, Maine’s own 529 plan. We’re proud of the success of NextGen and appreciate the Governor’s strong support of the plan over the years.”

“The critical linkage between the attainment of a higher education and the well-being of Maine citizens and the State’s economy is clear,” said State Treasurer David Lemoine. “Replacing debt with savings in a college savings plan like NextGen is a wise investment.”

Governor Baldacci took time at the ceremony to highlight another important piece of Legislation designed to help pay for college, Opportunity Maine.

“As you know, the Legislature passed Opportunity Maine which is going to be able to have college students in the future deduct from income taxes the college loan if they are living and working in Maine,” the Governor said. “There are wonderful incentives around higher education in our state.”

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, to successfully compete in the global economy of the twenty-first century, Maine citizens must recognize the challenges ahead and accept the responsibility of providing their children with the education and skills that will enable them to succeed, as individuals and as a State; and

WHEREAS, since 1992, the annual amount of federal student loan debt has risen from \$15 billion to \$52.5 billion, leaving college graduates with the ever-increasing burden of paying for their college education long after they have completed their education; and

WHEREAS, it is in the State's interest to promote access to postsecondary education for our children;
and

WHEREAS, encouraging parents to save for their children's education promotes that public purpose; and

WHEREAS, the State of Maine has created the NextGen College Investing Plan®, a college savings plan operating as a Section 529 Qualified Tuition Plan that provides a Matching Grant Program, Fee Rebates and Tax-advantaged Savings,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim
September, 2007 as

COLLEGE SAVINGS MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize the benefit of attaining a higher education and urge the citizens of Maine to save for their children's education.

Governor Baldacci Commemorates 9-11

September 11, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci paused today to reflect upon the attacks of September 11, 2001, and to encourage preparedness for all Mainers.

Governor Baldacci addressed the Operation Homefront-Maine Chapter at the Hall of Flags this morning following the group's Freedom Walk. The walk began at the Augusta Armory and ended at the State House. The Governor, who was serving as a United States Congressman in 2001, recalled some of his memories of the attacks.

"I remember being told to leave our offices because the city was under attack," Governor Baldacci said. "I remember being ushered outdoors by the Longworth Office Building and looking out across the Potomac and seeing that the Pentagon had been attacked and was on fire and smoke was billowing out. It was the first time I had ever felt the uneasiness and the instability at that time, and I can only think that it was how our country must have felt when we were attacked at Pearl Harbor."

The Freedom Walk in Augusta was one of more than 130 walks taking place today throughout the country. The Freedom Walk started on September 11, 2005, when more than 15,000 people walked from the Pentagon to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to pay tribute to those who died, to renew their commitment to freedom and the values of this country, and to honor veterans past and present. Walkers in Augusta wore blue t-shirts with the Freedom Walk logo on the front.

Governor Baldacci also attended the American Red Cross Annual Day of Remembrance Blood Drive. The blood drive is a joint effort between the American Red Cross and the Boston Red Sox, with drives throughout New England including Fenway Park in Boston. Maine's blood drive was held at the Augusta Armory and was sponsored by Red Cross chapters throughout Maine, Eagle Scout Troop # 672 and the Maine Emergency Management Agency. In the spirit of the Red Sox connection, Governor Baldacci donated a Red Sox jacket to the American Red Cross to be given to a donor at the Augusta location.

"This jacket was given to the Governor of the State of Maine by Red Sox Nation," Governor Baldacci said. "Today, I want to make sure it is given to a special donor helping the Red Cross in Maine."

Governor Baldacci also presented a proclamation naming September 2007 as Preparedness Month in the State of Maine. The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, throughout Maine's history, disasters have caused millions of dollars of damage, and have taken lives in the State of Maine; and

WHEREAS, storms in March, April and July brought high winds, storm surge, flooding, widespread prolonged power outages and damages to roads, utilities, homes, businesses and farms in Maine; and

WHEREAS, April's storm tragically took lives in Maine; and

WHEREAS, the destruction in the wake of hurricanes, floods and tornadoes in our sister States reminds us that emergency preparedness in the home, in businesses and in communities saves lives and protects property; and

WHEREAS, the understanding of all possible threats, and the development of appropriate plans and mitigation measures is vital to the disaster resiliency of our state, its people, its communities and its economy; and

WHEREAS, US Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and many nationwide partners have proclaimed the month of September, 2007 as National Preparedness Month to raise public awareness about the importance of preparing for all types of disaster and to encourage Americans to take action to prepare for disasters and emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools; and

WHEREAS, the Maine Emergency Management Agency will be sharing educational messages and conducting programs and training on emergency preparedness throughout the month of September; and

WHEREAS, throughout the month, American Red Cross chapters in Maine will plan special outreach and activities to help their communities get "Red Cross Ready" for disasters and other emergencies by taking three simple steps: 1) Get a Kit, 2) Make a Plan, 3) Be informed,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim September, 2007 as

PREPAREDNESS MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all residents, businesses, government agencies, and civic organizations in the state to learn about the potential for disasters in Maine, learn how to stay safe, and make sure their emergency plans are in place.

Governor and Secretary of State Announce Special Election to Fill District 99 Seat

September 12, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap late yesterday signed a proclamation calling for a special election to replace Representative Philip A. Cressey Jr., who has resigned from the Maine House of Representatives. Cressey represents House District 99, which includes the towns of Baldwin, Cornish, Denmark, Limington and Sebago.

The proclamation, addressed to members of the Democratic, Green Independent and Republican Committees of District 99, announces the vacancy and orders a special election. The Governor directs the political committees to meet in order to nominate their candidates for the vacant seat. The Certificate of Nomination of the candidates must be filed with the Office of the Secretary of State on or before 5 p.m., on Tuesday, Sept. 25, 2007. The special election will be held on Nov. 6, 2007.

Governor Announces Inaugural Meeting of the Commission to Protect the Lives and Health of Members of the Maine National Guard

September 12, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the membership and the first meeting of the Commission to Protect the Lives and Health of Members of the Maine National Guard. The commission was established under a Governor's bill signed into law this summer. Members are charged with reviewing all the preventative health care measures that members of the National Guard receive.

"The commission will play a major role in analyzing and recommending improvements to the health care received by the men and women who serve in Maine's National Guard," said Governor Baldacci. "The important work of these commissioners will lead to better protection for those people who protect us. We have a moral obligation to make sure we take care of those we send into harm's way."

The nine-member commission includes:

Bill Libby, Adjutant General, ex officio;

Dora Mills, Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control, ex officio;

Peter Ogden, Director of Bureau of Maine Veterans' Service, ex officio;

Meryl Nass of Southwest Harbor, physician, appointed by the Senate President;

Brent Peters of Waldoboro, pharmacist, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

Gary Lawyerson of Waldoboro, retired Maine veteran, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

Barbara Damon-Day of Newcastle, who is Pat Damon's mother and the driving force behind the law, appointed by the Governor;

Melinda Pooler of Pittsfield, disabled Maine military person, appointed by the Senate President;

Dr. Elizabeth Wheeler of Portland, psychologist. Dr. Wheeler works at Community Counseling of Maine. She worked with the Maine National Guard to research the issues faced by returning Maine National Guard soldiers from Iraq, and continues to work with the Guard on their re-integration plans. She was appointed by the Governor.

Barbara Damon-Day serves as the Chair of the commission.

The first meeting of the commission is Tuesday, Sept. 18 at 9 a.m. The meeting will take place in Room 427 of the Maine State House.

The commission is charged with looking at vaccines and medicines prescribed and the way the military conducts medical screenings. It will propose recommendations to the U.S. military with the intent of making the system stronger. The commission will also serve as an advocate for veterans and their families, helping them obtain information and making sure wounded servicemen receive the care that they need. Annual reports will be submitted to the Legislature.

Legislation creating the commission followed the death of Pat Damon, who died on June 15, 2006, in Afghanistan during his service with the Maine National Guard. Since his death, his mother and other family members have made it a priority to make safe health care practices available to current and future guard members. Damon had served as a staff member for the Maine House of Representatives and in the Baldacci Administration.

The Governor's bill was sponsored by Speaker Glenn Cummings and received unanimous support in the State Legislature.

Governor Baldacci Honors State Managers of the Year

September 13, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci honored 22 state managers Thursday morning during a reception at the Blaine House. Each employee was named as a “Manager of the Year” within their respective departments.

“This is an important recognition,” Governor Baldacci said. “We have managers here today who are being recognized within their departments, and their Commissioners are here to show the significance of this recognition.”

Many “Manager of the Year” recipients brought a family member with them to the ceremony. Each recipient was honored individually by the Governor and given a plaque for their service.

“I know there is a lot of change that is taking place. We know what needs to be done to reorganize things and prepare the people of the State of Maine for the future,” the Governor said. “The managers being honored today are among the best in state government. You will help lead the state through the transition to a more efficient system. I am proud of your dedication and service.”

Governor Baldacci and Commissioner Gendron Update Reorganization Process

September 13, 2007

WESTBROOK – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Education Commissioner Susan A. Gendron today to announce that letters of response have been issued to all 290 school administrative units in response to their Notices of Intent which were filed in accordance with the state's reorganization.

"At the end of August, school districts were required to file notices of their plans to reduce administration and to partner with neighboring districts," Governor Baldacci said. "We are confident from those notices that we will reduce the number of school administrative units to fewer than 80, as required by law."

Commissioner Gendron estimated that there would be about 75 school administrative units when administrative reorganization is complete.

Governor Baldacci highlighted the efforts of the Westbrook School Department, which filed notice to partner with Windham and Raymond, even though the relationship was not required.

"These three districts recognized that they had much more to gain from working together than going their own way," the Governor said. "We're seeing this kind of leadership and vision around the state. School boards, municipal officials, business leaders and parents are working together to make Maine's new education law successful."

The Governor also responded to questions about efforts to repeal the school reorganization law, saying "I will vigorously oppose any effort to repeal this law or to lessen the penalties for districts that don't comply. We must move forward. This plan passed with overwhelming and bipartisan support from the Legislature, and I will make sure it stays the law."

The letters of response to the Notices of Intent have been posted on the Department of Education's Web site at <http://www.maine.gov/education/supportingschools/index.html>

Governor Creates Oral Health Task Force

September 14, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today created by Executive Order the Task Force on Expanding Access to Oral Health for Maine People. Recognizing that significant disparities exist in access to oral health services across the state, the Governor said that barriers to care must be identified and short- and long-term solutions found so that all Maine citizens can obtain these important health services.

Joined at the State House by Rep. Nancy Smith, and Sen. Nancy Sullivan, and the Maine Dental Access Coalition, Governor Baldacci said, “The need for this Executive Order is clear. While we’ve been working to improve oral health, a severe lack of access to such care continues to exist, and the availability of care is not evenly distributed across the state.”

The Governor outlined a number of initiatives that have been undertaken by the State and partners such as the Maine Dental Access Coalition to address this public health issue.

“We’ve worked together to increase the number of dental providers in designated dental health professional shortage areas, with funding programs to increase local capacity, and a state funded dental education loan program, among other strategies,” said Governor Baldacci. “The Coalition has been instrumental in guiding approaches to providing needed dental care, in MaineCare policies and procedures, and in an increased awareness among policy-makers, legislators, health professionals, and others of the role that oral health plays in total health. Maine also has a long-standing and well-respected school oral health program, administered by our state Oral Health Program.”

The Governor said more preventive health services are needed for the people of Maine. The dental health profession is not able to keep up with the populations’ needs throughout parts of the state.

Governor Baldacci’s Executive Order establishes a task force to identify barriers to access to oral health services and to make recommendations to expand access. Working with public and private partners, including members of the medical and oral health professions, the task force will report no later than Dec. 1, 2008, the recommendations to ensure that the opportunity for critical oral health services are available to all Maine citizens.

“Through this collaborative effort, I am confident we will find solutions to this long-standing access problem and that we can improve the health care of all Mainers, especially our children,” said Governor Baldacci.

The text of the Executive Order follows.

AN ORDER ESTABLISHING THE GOVERNOR’S TASK FORCE ON EXPANDING ACCESS TO ORAL HEALTH CARE FOR MAINE PEOPLE

WHEREAS, oral health is essential to the general health and well-being of all Maine people; and

WHEREAS, access to oral health care services and programs should be available to Maine people; and

WHEREAS, there is a severe shortage and maldistribution of oral health care professionals in the State of Maine; and

WHEREAS, Maine's most vulnerable citizens do not have equal opportunity to access oral health care;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the Governor's Taskforce to Expand Access to Oral Health Care for the Benefit of Maine Citizens (hereinafter "Task Force").

Purpose

The purpose of the Task Force is to develop recommendations for short-term and long-term solutions to expand access to high quality oral health care programs for all Maine citizens, particularly children, the elderly, the underinsured and the uninsured. The Task Force must identify existing barriers to access and provide recommendations for removing those barriers and for expanding access to adequate oral health care for Maine citizens.

The Task Force shall review relevant data and information on the status of oral health in Maine, as well as national studies on access to oral health care. The Task Force shall define a multi-year systems development approach to improving oral healthcare infrastructure, access to dental services and oral health status in Maine.

It shall consult with public and private individuals and organizations that provide medical and oral health care currently for the purpose of building upon existing relationships and partnerships.

It shall develop and recommend short-term and long-term solutions to expand the oral health care provider workforce; provide more comprehensive public awareness and education programs; evaluate and improve oral healthcare delivery systems; and increase funding of and reimbursement for oral health care services.

Membership

The Governor shall appoint up to 16 members to the Task Force, who will serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

- The Commissioner of the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation or a designee who shall serve as Chair;
- The Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services or a designee;
- The Commissioner of the Department of Education or a designee;
- A representative of the Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance;

- Two members shall be public members not associated with a formal organization but who have an interest in oral health;
- A representative of a dental insurance company;
- A representative of the Maine Board of Dental Examiners;
- One member shall be a graduate level educator specializing in oral health education; and
- Seven (7) members shall represent the following organizations respectively--Maine Dental Association, Maine Society of Denturists, Maine Dental Hygienists Association, Maine Primary Care Association, Maine Medical Association, Maine Equal Justice Partners, and Maine Dental Access Coalition.

The President of the Senate may appoint two members of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House may appoint two members of the House of Representatives to serve. Members shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority.

The Chair will schedule, set the agenda for, and preside at Task Force meetings. All members shall serve without compensation.

Staff

The departments of state government named above shall provide appropriate staff to assist the Task Force.

Meetings

Public meetings in locations throughout the state will be scheduled and publicized, as needed.

Report

The Task Force shall submit a written report with recommendations to the Governor and the Joint Standing Committees on Business, Research and Economic Development and Health and Human Services no later than December 1, 2008, after which the Task Force shall dissolve.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is September 14, 2007.

Governor Unveils Maine's Public Health Infrastructure

September 14, 2007

A key achievement of Dirigo Health Reform

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced details about the emerging Maine public health system. Joined by Healthy Maine Partnerships members and the Public Health Work Group, the Governor said that the evolving system will lead to more efficient and effective delivery of health care statewide.

“The public health system is an integral part of Dirigo Health Reform, with the goal of making Maine the healthiest state in the nation,” said Governor Baldacci. “We are maximizing resources and building collaborations that will yield better health for our citizens.”

The Governor said health services will be better organized and delivered. Among the improvements, the Maine Centers for Disease Control is creating eight Public Health Units within Department of Health and Human Services regional offices. Health Inspectors, Public Health Nurses, and other staff will be located together in these health districts and will be able to be a better resource to the public.

Dr. Dora Mills, Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said, “A statewide system of comprehensive community health coalitions now exists, funded by five combined sources of Federal and Tobacco Settlement funds. A true coordination between public health, disease prevention, mental health, substance abuse treatment, services to children and the elderly and others will be possible with the new public health infrastructure. The coalitions are working closely with school health programs in 41 school districts.”

Another benefit of the emerging public health system is the maximizing of resources, stretching critical funding to meet the benefit of all Mainers. “With current consolidation efforts going on throughout government at all levels, I'm pleased to see that our public health community has worked hard to stretch dollars to do more and cover more,” said Governor Baldacci. “We've consolidated more than 100 grants and contracts that did not provide statewide coverage, to 28 statewide Healthy Maine Partnerships that will.”

The Governor presented apple tree saplings to the Healthy Maine Partnerships present at the event today, symbolizing the foundation of a system with strong and seamless connections from local, regional, and state levels. “An apple a day is the symbol of good preventive health, but these saplings - like our emerging public health system - need to be nourished through the hard work of the people here today and the Healthy Maine Partnerships,” said Governor Baldacci.

Governor Baldacci and Son “Take It Outside” to the Allagash

September 17, 2007

AUGUSTA – This summer, Governor John E. Baldacci introduced the “Take It Outside” initiative, to encourage parents to take their kids outside and enjoy the Maine outdoors. Over the weekend, Governor Baldacci and his son, Jack, enjoyed the outdoors in Northern Maine, canoeing one of the most scenic rivers in North America, the Allagash Wilderness Waterway.

“Maine has so much to offer from the southern-most tip to Aroostook County and all points in between,” Governor Baldacci said. “A couple of months ago I was lucky enough to climb Mount Katahdin with my son and I’m thrilled that I was able to share this experience in the Allagash with him as well.”

Governor Baldacci and Jack made the trip along with ten other paddlers, including Department of Conservation Commissioner Patrick McGowan and his daughter, Senior Policy Advisor Karin Tilberg and her daughter, and longtime Maine guides Gil Gilpatrick and Phyllis Jalbert. The group put in at Umsaskis Friday afternoon, paddling a total of 33 miles over three days, staying at the Long Lake Dam camp site and Jalbert Camps along the way. The Governor’s group finished the trip at Michaud Farm, after paddling 15 miles on Sunday morning.

“We had some rain, we had some cold air, but we also had bright sunshine and beautiful views over the weekend,” recalled the Governor. “The structure of the Allagash is one where you can enjoy a week-long trip or a weekend trip. With the right amount of gear and prep, it can be a wonderful journey for people with varying levels of paddling experience. The Allagash is a gem worth sharing. It’s peaceful, serene and scenic. It is truly a spectacular section of the great State of Maine.”

Governor Baldacci is the first sitting Governor to canoe the Allagash since Governor Kenneth Curtis in the late 1960s, according to various sources.

“I hope Maine families will spend a lot more time together outside. You do not necessarily have to canoe the Allagash or hike to the top of Mt. Katahdin. A hike in a park or on a town trail or a paddle in a local pond will get the job done. Step outside and smell the autumn fresh air in Maine. It will make all of us feel better,” the Governor said.

The Allagash Wilderness Waterway is a 92-mile-long ribbon of lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams winding through Northern Maine. Each year, tens of thousands of Maine citizens paddle all or part of the waterway. It was established in 1966 by the Maine Legislature to preserve, protect and enhance the natural beauty, character, and habitat of a unique area.

Governor Baldacci on the Passing of Sylvia Lund

September 19, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci extends his deepest sympathy to the family of Sylvia Lund upon hearing of her passing yesterday.

"This is a terrible loss for the City of Augusta and the State of Maine," Governor Baldacci said today.

"Sylvia served her community in many capacities over the past decades, giving 100% to the people of Maine. She will be remembered for her public service and for her dedication to many civic, cultural, and educational organizations."

Lund has been most recently serving as an at-large city councilor in Augusta. Among her extensive list of contributions to the state, she previously served as a member of the State House of Representatives, chair of the Augusta School Board, member of the State Board of Education and the Task Force for Kennebec Valley Higher Education. She was the Chair of the United Way of Kennebec Valley in 1999. She served as director of the State Office of Substance Abuse Prevention until 1996. Lund had been recognized for her community work by the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce with a lifetime achievement award.

"Sylvia was a thoughtful, caring public servant, a great credit to Augusta and to the state," said the Governor. "Her loss is deeply felt."

Governor Baldacci Honors State Employees for Longevity

September 19, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci thanked about 350 state employees today for at least 25 years of service to Maine.

“This is an important ceremony for me because it gives us a day to honor the employees who have been loyal to their state for more than a quarter of a century,” Governor Baldacci said. “Your loyalty is evident in the work that you do. It shows me that you love the state where you live, work and play.”

Governor Baldacci attended the Longevity Luncheon and Awards at the Augusta Civic Center with members of his staff as well as members of the Blaine House staff and First Lady Karen Baldacci. Among the recipients were Jane Lincoln, the Governor’s Chief of Staff who was honored for working in state government for 30 years; and Mary Gilbert of the Blaine House staff who was honored for working in state government for 25 years.

“We are all working here because we want to make Maine the best place it can be for our friends, families and neighbors,” the Governor said. “All of you should be proud of your work. People don’t always realize just how many calls come into your offices every day and how many services are actually provided to the people of Maine. This state is a better state because of the work all of you are doing.”

Governor Baldacci honored two specific employees for their longevity in state government. Lois Woodcock was honored for 45 years of service and Allison Todd was honored for 50 years of service. Both received plaques and pictures with the Governor.

Governor Baldacci Congratulates Hannaford Supermarkets for Environmentally Friendly Approach

September 19, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Augusta Mayor Roger Katz and Hannaford CEO Ron Hodge today to unveil a proposal for a new Platinum-certified LEED supermarket at the site of the former Cony High School. The store would be the first Platinum-certified LEED supermarket in the world and the first green supermarket in the State of Maine, according to Hannaford.

“For those of us living in Augusta, this means that we will be shopping in a more environmentally friendly supermarket, with the highest environmental building standard certification possible,” Governor Baldacci said. “For people who live outside Augusta, it means that you can expect future Hannaford stores – and hopefully other businesses – to apply the successful energy saving techniques used in this future store.”

Hannaford plans on using the store as a research laboratory for the company to test new innovations that would be better for the environment. The proposal consists of a 49,000-square-foot store, with many of the features and services seen in other Hannaford stores throughout the region.

Governor Baldacci said that he is proud that Hannaford is proposing this state-of-the-art design in Maine’s capitol city because the state has been a leader in energy conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

“We were one of the first states, if not the first state, to use biodiesel to heat state offices, and we were one of the first states to adopt the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED building standards for new and renovated state buildings,” Governor Baldacci pointed out. “On top of all that, Maine is the first state government in the nation to buy 100 percent of its electricity from renewable sources. We are leading by example, and I’m proud to see that Hannaford is following the lead of state government and doing more to save energy, save money and to help save our environment.”

Hannaford, based in Scarborough, said it expects for the store to be built at the site next year.

Governor Baldacci Helps Break Ground on Bangor Courthouse

September 21, 2007

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Maine Supreme Judicial Court Justice Warren M. Silver today to break ground on Bangor's new courthouse. The Penobscot County Judicial Center will be located on the corner of Exchange St. and Washington St. in Bangor, and will house both the Penobscot County Superior Court and the 3rd District Court.

"We value the important work that takes place in our courts, and we've known for a long time that a new facility was needed here in Penobscot County – one that kept true to the history and character of the building that it replaces," Governor Baldacci said. "The Penobscot County Judicial Center will go a long way in addressing current and future space and security concerns."

Governor Baldacci thanked Sen. Joe Perry (D-Penobscot) for sponsoring legislation in 2005 that authorized the new courthouse and provided start-up funds for construction.

Groundbreaking will officially begin on the site Oct. 1. The 90,000 sq. ft. courthouse is expected to be completed by late 2009.

Governor Baldacci Congratulates Company on Wireless Internet Access

September 21, 2007

DEDHAM – Governor John E. Baldacci joined officials from VVD Networks today to announce the company's launch of high-speed wireless Internet service to communities around the greater Bangor area. The company uses Motorola Canopy, a point-to-multipoint wireless networking system, to deliver the service to communities where cable broadband and DSL previously were unavailable. VVD Networks say they currently have four towers in Eastern Maine, with plans for more in the near future.

"High speed connectivity to the information highway is critical to the expansion of business and development in all areas of the state," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine businesses are competing globally and require access to this technology – wherever they are in the state."

VVD Networks is based in Bangor and is about a year old. VVD Networks' mission is to bring high-speed broadband Internet access to the communities in Maine that remain without service or are underserved. That is a mission shared by Governor Baldacci's Connect ME initiative.

"We created an independent authority to focus on this infrastructure need – one that can stay out ahead of technology and spur private investment in broadband and cellular service in Maine," the Governor said. "This public private partnership is essential to realizing our goal of enabling Maine individuals and businesses to compete in the 21st Century economy and to have access to information and education opportunities no matter where they live."

Governor Baldacci said that Maine now has about 90% of the state covered in terms of broadband accessibility.

"VVD Networks understands the importance of an economy that is founded on a community in which every member of it can be involved," Governor Baldacci said. "I am proud of the work they have done and look forward to hearing about their continued success."

Governor Baldacci Announces Moosehead Manufacturing Back in Business

September 21, 2007

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Joshua Tardy today to announce that Moosehead Manufacturing is back in business. The announcement came just a short while after the deal to reopen the facility was finalized.

“Today, we announce that Moosehead Manufacturing will continue making some of the finest furniture in the world at its Monson facility,” Governor Baldacci said. “Thanks to a group that includes Josh Tardy, Moosehead Manufacturing will rehire about 40 people in the next couple of weeks, with the intent to boost the work force to where it was a year ago.”

The group that purchased the Monson facility was put together by Josh Tardy of Newport. Tardy is a lawyer, as well as the Republican Leader of the Maine House of Representatives.

“We’re very excited about this business opportunity,” Josh Tardy said. “Moosehead furniture, as everyone knows, has a great history and we believe that it has a great future as well. We think it’s a quality product, made by quality people in a quality place.”

Additionally, there are plans to redevelop Moosehead’s Dover facility.

Jack Clukey, Town Manager in Dover, said, “It is great that Moosehead Manufacturing has found a buyer for the Monson plant and will be putting people back to work at the facility. It is also exciting that Moosehead is pursuing the redevelopment of the Dover-Foxcroft facility. This investment will be a great boost to the community, particularly in the downtown area.”

Julie Anderson, Town Manager in Monson, said, “We are pleased that someone has seen the potential in this mill and the product it produces and realizes this facility is a great asset to the Town of Monson and this area. It returns employment opportunity to this area again. We want to wish the new owners good luck in their new venture and the town will endeavor to support them in any way we can.”

Russ Page, President of the Piscataquis County Chamber of Commerce, said, “What a great day for Piscataquis County. This beautiful late summer day has been made even better with this infusion of hope and opportunity. The Piscataquis Chamber of Commerce welcomes the new owners in Monson and the developers in Dover-Foxcroft. We pledge our support to assure the long-term viability of both endeavors.”

Thomas Kittredge, Executive Director of the Piscataquis County Economic Development Council, said “The closing of Moosehead Manufacturing was a terrible blow to the economy of Piscataquis County. The PCEDC is pleased that the Monson facility will be operational again, employing area workers, and we are looking forward to working with the new ownership to help ensure the operation's long-term viability. Likewise, we are thrilled about the prospect for the redevelopment of the Moosehead Dover-

Foxcroft facility, and welcome the opportunity to assist in it again becoming a vibrant, integral part of the Dover-Foxcroft downtown.”

“We recognize the great tradition of furniture making at Moosehead furniture, and it’s a tradition that will continue,” the Governor said. “It’s part of Maine’s forest products industry, adding much value to our natural resources. The jobs are extremely important to not only Piscataquis County, but to the entire state.”

Moosehead Manufacturing announced in February that it would be closing after 60 years of making furniture. The state immediately offered assistance to the displaced workers and began efforts to find a buyer for the facilities in Dover and Monson.

Tardy said he expects that workers will report to work within 30 days.

Governor Recognizes Community College System Anniversary, Increased Enrollment

September 24, 2007

SOUTH PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated the fifth anniversary of the Maine Community College System and a 57 percent increase in enrollment over that time.

The Governor said the transformation of the system, an initiative from the early days of his Administration, is critical to work force and economic development.

“When I helped to create the community college system, I believed in its potential to make higher education more accessible and affordable,” said Governor Baldacci. “The system is fundamental to our economy and to ensuring that Maine has a highly skilled workforce that will attract new jobs and ensure long-term prosperity for our citizens.”

“Today we are here to celebrate the system’s tremendous accomplishments,” continued the Governor. “This is one of Maine’s great success stories.”

Now is the time to continue to promote Maine’s community colleges, Governor Baldacci said. Question 3 on the Nov. 6 ballot gives Maine voters the opportunity to bond for \$15.5 million in repairs and upgrades so that the system can better respond to the growing enrollment and provide top quality educational experiences for current and future students.

“These bonds are important to Maine’s future,” said Governor Baldacci. “We need to continue these efforts and we need everyone’s help.”

Governor Celebrates Groundbreaking for Expansion of Maine Medical Center Research Institute

September 24, 2007

SCARBOROUGH – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Maine Medical Center officials at an expansion groundbreaking at the Maine Medical Center Research Institute. The addition will enhance the facility's ability to conduct clinical trials. The Governor used the occasion to highlight the importance of expanding biomedical science in Maine.

"There is great potential – in human and economic terms – for biotechnology and biomedical science in Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "These are the kinds of jobs we want to grow here in Maine. Currently, research and development activity directly supports more than 11,000 jobs in Maine."

The Maine Medical Center Research Institute is one of the invaluable biomedical research institutions in the state, the Governor said. The facility contributes to the educational communities of Maine, as well as enriching local science education programs, including high school biology classes, undergraduate summer interns and University of Maine PhD programs.

The Governor reminded attendees of the great return on the dollar on R&D investments. "In the past seven years, the Maine Medical Center Research Institute has received \$44 million in federal awards," said Governor Baldacci. "This is a seven-to-one return on State of Maine investment in the Institute. That translates directly into jobs and revenue here in Maine."

The Baldacci Administration is committed to building Maine's biomedical capacity. "Building our research and development capacity has been a cornerstone of my economic plan to grow good paying jobs in Maine, and moving our economy into the 21st Century," said Governor Baldacci. "We are competing globally, and our people - with education and training – are up to the challenge, ready to access these opportunities."

The Governor urged support for Question 2, a \$50 million bond issue headed for referendum this Nov. 6 which will continue Maine along the path of growing R&D investments. If voters approve this important bond, the funds will be distributed by the Maine Technology Institute through a competitive process and will be a source of investments for continuing biomedical development in Maine.

Governor Celebrates Ban on Flavored Cigarettes

September 25, 2007

AUGUSTA – At a Blaine House ceremony, Governor John E. Baldacci joined students, legislators and public health officials and organizations to celebrate two recent laws limiting marketing and access of tobacco products to minors.

The laws: LD 1361, “An Act Concerning Certain Flavored Cigarettes and Cigars,” and LD 184, “An Act to Protect Children’s Health on School Grounds,” together augment Maine’s reputation as one of the most successful states in tobacco prevention and treatment.

The Governor thanked those in attendance for keeping this issue in the forefront among policymakers. He said continued vigilance is necessary because tobacco companies are relentless in their pursuit of addicting new – and often young – people.

“I was outraged to see the candy and fruit flavored tobacco products being sold,” said Governor Baldacci. “Tobacco companies focus on young people because they know that two-thirds of smokers start by the age of 18. Not surprisingly, the tobacco companies are becoming more and more aggressive with their flavored tobacco products and other means to target youth.

The Governor said now is not the time to become complacent. Despite recent progress, including Maine earning straight A’s on the Lung Association’s Annual Tobacco Report card.

“Sixteen percent of our high school students still smoke,” said Governor Baldacci. “This number is too high. The tobacco industry has not given up and neither can we.”

The flavored cigarette and cigar ban, sponsored by State Sen. Peter Mills, prohibits the sale or distribution of such products beginning July 1, 2009. The school grounds law, sponsored by State Sen. Karl Turner, makes schools tobacco-free environments, including when school is not in session, such as during sporting events.

“These bills protect our children from the adverse effects of tobacco,” said Governor Baldacci. “This is a shared commitment by government, schools, advocate groups, and communities across our state. I am proud that Maine is again on cutting edge on tobacco use, an important part of our goal to have Maine be the healthiest state in the nation.”

Governor Baldacci Honors Murder Victims Statewide

September 25, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci proclaimed Sept. 25, 2007, as a Maine Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims during a ceremony held at the State House today. The Governor issued the proclamation in line with the inaugural National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims.

“We think of Maine as a relatively safe state,” Governor Baldacci said. “While this is true by national standards, we still had 23 homicides reported in our state last year. That number does not represent the family and friends attached to each victim – mothers, fathers, children, brothers, sisters, friends, co-workers and neighbors.”

About 100 friends and relatives of murder victims gathered in the Hall of Flags for the ceremony. In addition to Governor Baldacci, speakers included Attorney General Steve Rowe, advocates of domestic violence prevention and family members of murder victims.

“My mother used to tell me – she had eight children – she used to say that the most unnatural thing to occur in anyone’s life is for a parent to have to bury their children,” said the Governor. “To the parents of murder victims that are here today, my heart goes out to you, to realize the tremendous loss that you have endured and it can never be replaced.”

To mark the National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims, the Parents of Murdered Children (POMC) Murder Wall was scheduled to be unveiled today in Washington, D.C. The murder wall is a series of 26 panels, each containing 120 names of murder victims. In Augusta, the Maine chapter of POMC unveiled their Loved Ones Memorial Murder Afghan. The afghan’s colors symbolize the suffering, bloodshed and death of loved ones. It contains photos and names of Maine murder victims as well.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, in 2006 twenty three homicides were reported in Maine; and

WHEREAS, the death of a loved one is a devastating experience, and the murder of a loved one is exceptionally difficult; and

WHEREAS, the family and friends of murder victims cope with grief through a variety of support services, including counseling, crisis intervention, professional referrals, and assistance in dealing with the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, the Maine Chapter of the National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children is dedicated to helping families faced with the death of a child by providing ongoing emotional support, individual assistance, advocacy, and information about the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, the designation Maine Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims provides an opportunity for the people of Maine to honor the memories of murder victims and recognize the impact on surviving family members,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim September 25, 2007 as

MAINE DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR MURDER VICTIMS

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

Governor Baldacci Honors State Employees of the Year

September 25, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci honored 22 state employees Tuesday morning during a reception at the Blaine House. Each employee was named as “Employee of the Year” within their respective departments.

“Employees like you give state workers a good name and exemplify the spirit and ethics of the work force that Maine is known for,” Governor Baldacci said. “Being Employees of the Year, I know you must be chomping at the bit to get back to work, but it is great pride we honor you today at the Blaine House.”

About 60 honorees, family members and commissioners were on hand for the 5th annual ceremony. The “Employee of the Year” recipients were nominated by the heads of their departments or agencies for their distinguished service and accomplishments in the service to the State of Maine.

A list of award recipients follows.

2007 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Baxter State Park Bruce White, Campground Ranger

Department of Administrative & Financial Services Laurie Brann, Senior Tax Examiner, Maine Revenue Services

Department of Agriculture Paul Schlein, Public Information Officer, Board of Pesticides Control

Department of Audit Brian Jellison, Principal Auditor

Department of Conservation Don Cameron, Botanist, Maine Natural Areas Program

Department of Corrections Sandy Scarpelli, Correctional Sergeant

Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management Paul R. Lapointe, Engineer Technician III

Department of Economic and Community Development Ron McKinnon, Business Development Specialist/Regional Coordinator

Department of Education Tom Coulombe, Management Analyst

Department of Environmental Protection Douglas B. Burdick, Environmental Specialist III

Department of Health and Human Services Robert Couture, Human Services Caseworker

Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Lindsay Tudor, Biologist I, Wildlife Resource Assessment Section

Department of Labor Cindy Edwards, CareerCenter Consultant

Department of Marine Resources Robert Russell, Marine Resources Scientist I Department of
Professional & Financial Regulation Ingrid Garand, Accounting Associate I

Department of Public Safety David Blake, Fleet Services Manager, Maine State Police

Department of the Secretary of State Cindy Lincoln, Exams Supervisor

Department of Transportation Susan Towle, Accounting Associate I

Office of the Attorney General Amy Bailey, Legal Secretary

State Planning Office Jon Kachmar, Habitat Restoration Coordinator

Office of the State Treasurer Alma Hazzard, Senior Staff Accountant

Worker's Compensation Board Carol Ferreira, Clerk IV

Governor Opposes Tolls on Existing Interstate System

September 26, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released the following statement after learning of action in the Legislature's Transportation Committee authorizing the Maine Turnpike Authority to conduct a feasibility study of adding tolls to Maine's Interstate highway system.

"I oppose the idea of adding tolls to Maine's existing Interstate highway system, and I can assure you it will not happen during my term in office," Governor Baldacci said. "Before they start talking about tolls on the Interstate, we need to cut the administrative costs of operating a separate Turnpike Authority and Department of Transportation. We must find every possible efficiency in the way we manage our transportation network, and we must make sure that our current resources are being used effectively."

Governor Baldacci Applauds Generosity of State Employees

September 27, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci helped Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap kick off the 2007 Maine State Employees Combined Charitable Appeal (MSECCA) Thursday morning. This is the 28th year of the appeal, which collects donations from state employees to benefit more than 500 charitable organizations in the State of Maine.

“State employees donated more than \$451,000 last year to assist these charitable organizations through this campaign,” Governor Baldacci said. “These are local, state and national charities that impact everything from environmental protection to fighting diseases and supporting the most vulnerable in our state.”

This year’s MSECCA is being chaired by Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap, who also led the successful effort last year. State employees have until the end of the year to decide if they wish to donate to the appeal.

The state agencies that participate in the appeal each designate a volunteer to spearhead the agency’s efforts. Each agency sets a goal for contributions they would like to see from their department. Employees have the option to donate a lump sum, or a certain amount from each paycheck throughout the year. They are also given the choice of which charitable organization they would choose for their money to be given.

“If everyone gives a little, it can quickly add up to a lot,” the Governor said. “Helping our neighbors is what living in Maine is all about. We take care of our people and communities.”

On the Web: <http://www.maine.gov/msecca/index.htm>

Governor Baldacci Encourages Outdoor Activities this Weekend

September 27, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has joined the Boys & Girls Clubs of Waterville, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and Nickelodeon to encourage children to turn off the television, get up, get out, and go play this weekend.

“One of our most important jobs is to do what we can to improve the health and welfare of the next generation,” Governor Baldacci said. “Encouraging our children to participate in a healthy, active lifestyle makes a great impact on their future and the future of Maine.”

To encourage kids to play on Saturday, which has been proclaimed a Worldwide Day of Play, all Nickelodeon networks will be “going dark” for three hours from noon until 3 p.m. The network, which appeals to children, will not air any programs on its three television stations, Nickelodeon, NickToons, Nick GAS, or on its Web site, www.nick.com.

The Waterville Area Boys & Girls Clubs will demonstrate their participation by walking and running along the Kennebec River Trails in the Waterville area. Wellness Director of the Boys & Girls Clubs, Amber Desrosiers, will lead hundreds of the after-school youth, ages 6-12 years of age, in activities along the Kennebec Trails, according to the Club.

“The Waterville Area Boys and Girls Clubs have focused on healthy alternatives for our youth members since the beginning of the Club’s charter in 1924,” Ken Walsh, CEO of the Club, said. “Now in the new age of overweight issues with our kids, we are ahead of the curve by working with fitness experts, the local hospitals and the school systems to provide fun, safe and playful activities for our kids through the development healthy challenges in our Club.”

Governor Baldacci introduced his “Take It Outside” initiative in July. It is designed to encourage young people to reconnect with Maine’s outdoors and participate in an active, healthy lifestyle. The Governor enlisted the help of two Olympic gold medalists, Joan Benoit Samuelson and Seth Wescott, to promote the idea.

“Getting outside and getting active improves the mental and physical well-being of our children,” the Governor said. “We have a beautiful state. Spending a few hours outside seems like a great way to spend the first full weekend of autumn in Maine.”

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Waterville Area cover Boys & Girls Clubs of Northern and Central Maine. They are a part of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, a national network of more than 3,300 neighborhood-based facilities that annually serve some 4 million young people. The Waterville Area Boys & Girls Clubs serve more than 8,000 youth members and more than 125 towns.

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation is the result of a partnership between the William J. Clinton Foundation and the American Heart Association in May 2005. The goal of the Alliance is to stop the

nationwide increase in childhood obesity by 2010 and to empower kids nationwide to make healthy lifestyle choices.

On the Web: Waterville Area Boys & Girls Clubs: <http://www.aplaceforkidstogo.org/> Boys & Girls Clubs of America: <http://www.bgca.org/> Alliance for a Healthier Generation: <http://www.healthiergeneration.org/> Nickelodeon: <http://www.nick.com/>

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, Nickelodeon, a cable television channel targeting children, has joined the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America in celebrating Worldwide Day of Play and in promoting a healthy lifestyle; and

WHEREAS, Worldwide Day of Play is an entire day dedicated to the celebration of being active and living healthy that encourages kids and families to go outside for a day of exercise and fun in their community; and

WHEREAS, childhood obesity is a serious issue threatening today's youth; and

WHEREAS, some of today's children and adults do not get as much physical activity as they should; and

WHEREAS, physical activity and good eating habits are an important component to living a healthy lifestyle and reducing disease; and

WHEREAS, Maine's "Take It Outside" initiative is designed to encourage young people to re-connect with Maine's outdoors; and

WHEREAS, Maine's lakes and rivers, parks and recreation areas, and hiking and biking trails provide wonderful opportunities for children and families to experience our great outdoors in a healthy way; and

WHEREAS, Maine is committed to working to support kids in becoming the healthiest generation and in making Maine the healthiest state in the nation,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim September 29, 2007 as

WORLDWIDE DAY OF PLAY

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

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Gold Star Mother's Day is Sunday

September 28, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has proclaimed Sunday, Sept. 30, 2007, as Gold Star Mother's Day throughout the State of Maine. Governor Baldacci issued the proclamation to honor the State's Gold Star Mothers.

Gold Star Mothers have endured the death of a son or daughter in military service.

"My mother used to say that the most unnatural thing to occur in anyone's life is when they have to do is bury their own child," Governor Baldacci said. "Our hearts go out to the mothers who have had to endure such a horrible pain."

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 115 of June 23, 1936, (49 Stat. 1895 as amended) has designated the last Sunday in September as "Gold Star Mother's Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in its observance.

Governor Baldacci has also proclaimed the day in Maine and encourages all Mainers to display the American Flag on this day as we honor Maine's Gold Star Mothers for their courage and perseverance and the memory of their sons or daughters who gave their lives in the service of the United States.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, throughout our rich history, men and women from every town in Maine have willingly answered the nation's call to military service; and

WHEREAS, by answering the call to duty and risking their lives to protect their fellow countrymen, these patriots have inspired our State and Nation with their courage, compassion, and dedication; and

WHEREAS, many of these heroes fell in battle, leaving behind family, friends, and loved ones who grieve their loss to this day, none more than their mother; and

WHEREAS, Gold Star Mothers have long borne the hardships of war with dignity and devotion; and

WHEREAS, through heartbreaking loss and unimaginable grief, their strength, compassion, and determination are an inspiration to all and a source of great pride for our State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, on Gold Star Mother's Day, we honor the mothers of the service men and women who have given their lives in the defense of our great Nation, their courage and perseverance and the memory of their children; and

WHEREAS, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 115 of June 23, 1936 (49 Stat. 1895 as amended), has designated the last Sunday in September as "Gold Star Mother's Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in its observance,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim September 30, 2007 as

GOLD STAR MOTHER'S DAY

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

Governor Celebrates Good Will-Hinckley Addition

September 28, 2007

HINCKLEY – Governor John E. Baldacci today praised Good Will-Hinckley for their work with children and youth of Maine at the open house and dedication of the new residence facility, the Alfond Family Cottage.

The Governor told Harold Alfond, the Board of Directors, staff, students and supporters, “Good Will-Hinckley has served more than 6,000 Maine families in need since opening its doors more than a century ago. Providing comprehensive services for at-risk children and youth, Good Will-Hinckley continues to fulfill a valuable role in Maine: providing a safe home; a high quality education; and a nurturing environment for young people to become adults with skills and self-confidence.”

Harold Alfond established a challenge grant for the construction of the new facility.

“The name Alfond is synonymous with giving back to the community, a trait we as Mainers admire and try to emulate,” Governor Baldacci said.

Good Will-Hinckley was founded in 1889 and currently serves up to 300 youth per year. In addition to a residential program, Good Will-Hinckley offers day programs for youth and families.

“Good Will-Hinckley is a valuable partner with the State,” said Governor Baldacci. “I applaud everyone at the facility for the quality work that is achieved here. It’s nothing short of life-altering, and it means a great deal to the families you serve and to the State of Maine.”

Governor Applauds New Facility for Center for Grieving Children

September 28, 2007

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined community members for the dedication of the new facility for the Center for Grieving Children.

“For nearly 20 years, the center has provided caring, thoughtful services and support for families suffering from loss,” said Governor Baldacci. “The campaign for this permanent home will only enhance the Center’s ability to reach out and to bring in families, and to train and support the community about important issues impacting children.”

Earlier this week, the Governor met with family members at the State House who gathered for the first annual Maine Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims.

“Research indicates that one child in 15 will experience the death of a loved one before reaching the age of 18,” said Governor Baldacci. “The pain of losing a loved one lingers. This is especially true for children. The Center for Grieving Children exists to help these kids deal with an awful burden.”

The Center serves 300 families a year, providing bereavement support programs that take into account the children and the whole family. Services are available for those in need for as long as they need them – all at no charge.

The Center is also meeting the needs of the immigrant population in the region. Many of these new residents have fled strife in their native lands. These children are offered special services through the Multicultural Program.

The Governor thanked the staff, board members and volunteers who have supported the fundraising campaign that led to the new building that will support the Center’s work. “Clearly, the Center provides invaluable resources and services to the Greater Portland community,” said Governor Baldacci.

Governor Joins Long Creek Family Day Celebration

September 30, 2007

SOUTH PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined families, businesses and local organizations for the first Long Creek Family Day Celebration. The event, sponsored by the South Portland Land Trust's West End Trails Committee, highlighted the opening of a new 1.2-mile trail around Clark's Pond and included events to involve families in outdoor and children's activities.

"Earlier this summer I challenged Mainers to 'Take it Outside' and this project serves as a great model for that initiative," said Governor Baldacci. "This trail will serve to encourage families to join up and get outside to experience this scenic and historic area, and it's accomplished in a way that honors our commitment to the natural environment."

The Governor praised the revitalization of the Long Creek watershed, which he called a true public-private partnership. The cleanup of Long Creek and the plan to establish recreational walkways, bike paths, trails and parks in this urban area are coming to fruition because of the collaboration of the Land Trust, the City of South Portland, the Appalachian Mountain Club, Youth Alternatives and area businesses.

"Long Creek Family Day brings us together to celebrate the outdoors, recreational pursuits, our families, and the entire community," said Governor Baldacci as he cut the ribbon on the new trail. Activities during the rest of the day included a public cookout, fly fishing and kayaking sponsored by L.L. Bean, and children's activities at Jordan Park.

Governor Baldacci's Statement on the Announcement that John Witherspoon is Stepping Down at FAME

October 1, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci made the following statement following the announcement that John Witherspoon will be stepping down as the Chief Executive Officer of the Finance Authority of Maine.

“The Finance Authority of Maine had a tremendous leader in John Witherspoon,” Governor Baldacci said. “He is well respected within the agency and within the business and financial community. His background, knowledge, experience and expertise will be missed at FAME. I thank him for his successful service and wish him well with his new position at Skowhegan Savings.”

The Governor will appoint an Acting CEO to manage the day-to-day affairs of FAME until a successor is nominated and confirmed.

Governor Baldacci Swears In Six to Maine Court System

October 1, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci issued the oath of office this morning to six individuals who were sworn in to Maine's court system.

"Each of these nominees exemplifies the quality we have on the bench of our court system," Governor Baldacci said. "They have individually earned the respect of both their peers and their communities, and I am proud to have each of them in our judicial system."

Oaths administered this morning in the Governor's Office were:

Ellen A. Gorman of Falmouth – Justice, Maine Supreme Judicial Court S. Kirk Studstrup of Augusta – Active Retired Justice, Maine Superior Court Patricia G. Worth of Belfast – Judge, Maine District Court M. Michaela Murphy of Rome – Justice, Maine Superior Court Richard W. Mulhern of Falmouth – Judge, Maine District Court John C. Nivison of Winslow – Justice, Maine Superior Court

Governors Encourage Maine Students to Take Advantage of Opportunity Maine

October 1, 2007

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined former Governors Angus King and John McKernan and Maine students to highlight the Opportunity Maine program. The new law, a result of overwhelming approval by the State Legislature earlier this year, enables Maine students to use tax credits to help pay for their student loans if they live and work in Maine following graduation. The benefit will be available to students beginning January 1, 2008.

The governors praised the work of the young people who lead the campaign to pass Opportunity Maine and said that Maine students should think ahead and get information about the new tax credit as they consider pursuing their higher education goals.

Governor Baldacci addressed the students at the event: "You have proven, and continue to show, that Maine indeed has a bright future ahead, but to secure this future, we have to see the promise of Opportunity Maine fulfilled. We need to keep our bright, talented students here in Maine. Our future economy depends on it. That's what the law is designed to do. We have many quality institutions of higher education in the State of Maine. This law ensures that our students can afford to go to these excellent schools and stay in Maine to build their future."

Governor King said, "What this proposal is all about is eliminating one of the great barriers to education for our young people, which is the fear of taking on so much debt that they'll never be able to recover once they leave school. If you stay in Maine, all of a sudden that cloud will be lifted."

Governor McKernan said, "As important as higher education was when I was governor and Governor King was governor, it is even more important in the 21st century as we look forward. That is why Governor Baldacci has been such a supporter of this tax credit idea."

Opportunity Maine complements other initiatives the Baldacci Administration has pursued to make higher education more affordable for Mainers.

"We created the Community College System and forged new links between them and the University of Maine System so that more students can move seamlessly between the two," said Governor Baldacci. "We also enhanced Maine's college savings plan, NextGen, so that more families begin saving earlier. We are working toward getting this November's Question 3 passed, which will provide \$43.5 million for improvements at the community colleges, state universities, and the Maine Maritime Academy."

In addition to helping make higher education more affordable for Maine students, Opportunity Maine benefits Maine businesses by helping to create a well-educated work force.

"We will keep more of our home-grown graduates here, and we will attract more back to the state," said Governor Baldacci. "I strongly support this law being implemented so that we get as many students as possible to sign up for the credit."

2007 Archive of Governor Baldacci's Press Releases

For more information on Opportunity Maine, visit

<http://www.opportunitymaine.org/>

Governor Recognizes Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October 2, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Maine's First Lady Karen Baldacci and other advocates to kick off Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The event at the Blaine House marks the 22nd Anniversary of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which has been celebrated in Maine since 1985.

"During National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and all year long, health care professionals, educators and others continue to educate all women about guidelines for prevention and early detection of the disease," said Governor Baldacci.

Every three minutes a woman in the United States learns that she has breast cancer. The disease will affect 1 in 8 women in the U.S. during their lifetimes.

Due to research breakthroughs and early detection, breast cancer mortality rates continue to show a slow, steady drop. Between 1990 and 2003, age-adjusted breast cancer mortality in Maine women declined 17.3 percent. A breast cancer diagnosis is no longer a death sentence.

Governor Baldacci said, "Maine's on the right track, and a lot of credit goes to the partners present here today and the many other partners helping across all our Maine communities. The promotion of policies that increase access, quality and affordability of health care makes a difference in detecting and treating cancer."

The Governor encouraged continued support for patients and for the lifesaving research being conducted on breast cancer, some of which is taking place at Maine research institutions such as The Jackson Laboratory.

Question 2 on the Nov. 6, 2007, statewide ballot calls for issuing \$50 million in research, development and commercialization bonds for targeted technology sectors. The competitive process for allocation of funds would be administered by the Maine Technology Institute. Eligible expenditures could include biomedical research projects.

The text of the proclamation for October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month follows.

WHEREAS, every three minutes a woman in the United States learns that she has breast cancer – a serious disease that will affect 1 in 8 women in the U.S. over their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, 980 Maine women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and 190 will die from the disease; and

WHEREAS, early detection through regular screenings could spare as many as one-third of those lives; and

WHEREAS, only 81.3% of women 40 and older in our state are getting screening mammograms in accordance with nationally accepted guidelines; and

WHEREAS, regular mammography is the single best method for detecting breast cancer; and

WHEREAS, between 1990 and 2003, age-adjusted breast cancer mortality in Maine women declined 17.3% due to research breakthroughs and early detection; and

WHEREAS, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is celebrating its 22nd year of educating women about the importance of breast cancer prevention and early detection,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim October, 2007 as

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and encourage all Maine women over 40 to be aware that they are at risk for breast cancer, to get annual exams, and to check with their health care provider to see when they should get a mammogram.

Governor Baldacci Presents Amelia Earhart Award

October 3, 2007

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci presented the Amelia Earhart Award Wednesday evening to Cadet Captain Christopher Slininger. Cadet Captain Slininger is in the Civil Air Patrol, 35th Maine Wing Composite Squadron, Bangor.

“Your commitment to service has earned you this Amelia Earhart Award. You have shown yourself to be of the kind of character we want to see in all our Maine youth,” Governor Baldacci said to Cadet Captain Slininger. “You truly stand as a model for young people throughout this great State.”

The Amelia Earhart Award is a milestone award for a cadet to receive. Cadets earning the award must complete the first 11 segments of the program, and pass a 100-question exam on aerospace topics, leadership theory and other topics. As of June 20, 2007, 13,894 cadets have earned the award since its inception 33 years ago.

The Cadet Program of the Civil Air Patrol provides leadership opportunities to more than 26,000 young Americans from 12 to 20 years of age.

Governor Directs Flag to be Flown at Half-Staff for Fallen Firefighters

October 5, 2007

AUGUSTA – In accordance with federal Public Law 107-51, the first Sunday in October is set aside to remember fallen firefighters throughout the nation. Accordingly, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Sunday, Oct. 7, 2007, in remembrance and honor of firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

“Our firefighters are the guardians of public health and safety,” Governor Baldacci said. “Firefighters are first responders in times of great distress and during times when everything is going wrong. Sometimes a steep price is paid by these heroes. We must remember to honor those who have paid such a price while protecting us and our families from disasters.”

Governor Recognizes Maine Firefighters

October 6, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined firefighters from across the state for Firefighter Recognition Day. The Governor said that firefighters are selfless public servants, guardians of our public health and safety.

“You charge in, when the instinctive thing to do is run away, and sometimes you pay a steep price,” said Governor Baldacci. “We’re here today to honor firefighters who have sacrificed themselves to protect others. It’s humbling to stand here, at this memorial, and realize the dedication and commitment to community that firefighters demonstrate every day.”

The Governor said it’s important to take care of our valued first responders. “Last year I signed into law a bill that corrects inequalities in retirement benefits that have made it challenging to recruit and retain qualified personnel at the municipal and county level,” said Governor Baldacci. “We made sure that firefighters will have access to health insurance after they hang up their axes. It was the right thing to do, and I am proud that I was a part of it. But it was you who made it happen. With your patience and commitment, you made sure the Legislature understood what was at stake.”

The Governor also praised firefighters for being instrumental in getting a bill passed this session, which eliminates the chemical deca from a number of household products. “Our firefighting community plays a valuable role and is an important partner in our efforts to protect our children and our environment. Your expertise and advocacy were critical in the successful passage of this far-reaching law.”

The Text of the Proclamation for Firefighter Recognition Day follows.

WHEREAS, Maine has over five hundred fire departments across the state and a great number of them depend heavily on volunteers to serve their communities; and

WHEREAS, over 90% of the trained firefighters in Maine are volunteers and many of these volunteers carry on a family tradition of service to the fire department; and

WHEREAS, firefighters have one of the most dangerous professions imaginable, rescuing people from life-threatening situations; and

WHEREAS, recent events have helped all of us to focus on the crucial role that firefighters play in each community and we should make a great effort to remember this role and thank these men and women for their dedication and selflessness in serving all the citizens of Maine,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim October 6, 2007 as

FIREFIGHTER RECOGNITION DAY

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

Governor Celebrates UNE Biomedical Research Center

October 7, 2007

BIDDEFORD – Governor John E. Baldacci participated today in the groundbreaking of the University of New England's Pickus Center for Biomedical Research. The \$6 million facility is being built, in part, with state funds. Previous bond issues have contributed more than \$1.2 million to the project. The facility will compliment the work of the College of Osteopathic Medicine and attract more research scientists to Maine.

"This is another good example of the impact of research and development investments in Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "R&D investments promote education and our state's economy, generating business growth, better jobs, higher wages and a better of standard of living for us all."

Last month, the Governor attended the groundbreaking of a new addition to the Maine Medical Center Research Institute in Scarborough.

The Governor said that research and development activity directly supports more than 11,000 jobs in Maine. He said more must be done to build Maine's biomedical capacity.

"Building our research and development capacity has been a cornerstone of my economic plan to grow good paying jobs in Maine, and moving our economy into the 21st Century," said Governor Baldacci. "We need to compete globally, and our people – with education and training – are up to the challenge, ready to access these opportunities."

This November, a \$50 million bond question is headed for referendum. If voters approve this important bond, the funds will be distributed by the Maine Technology Institute through a competitive process, and will be a source of investments for continuing biomedical development in Maine.

Governor Thanks Maine Volunteers

October 9, 2007

ORONO – Governor John E. Baldacci opened the 21st Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism by thanking the volunteers for their work and dedication. A record number of volunteers participated in this year's conference.

"Maine people count on volunteers and volunteer programs to complement the work of government in providing essential services to Maine's communities," said Governor Baldacci. "Young and old, Mainers hear the call and are willing to serve their communities because taking care of each other is what being a Mainer is all about. This strength – citizens engaged in community volunteer service – is something we need to cherish."

The keynote speaker for this year's conference is David Eisner, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The Governor praised the attendees for their leadership and encouraged them to spread the word about the rewards of volunteering. "Volunteers will all tell you they get back at least as much as they give," said Governor Baldacci. "They get satisfaction from using and honing their skills; a sense of usefulness that they do meaningful work that would not be done if they were not around; and a sense of connection to local people that only comes from direct involvement."

To learn more about volunteering opportunities in Maine, go to <http://www.maineservicecommission.gov/>

Governor Announces District Health Forums

October 10, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the beginning of the process to establish the next State Health Plan. The first step includes statewide forums for local health officials and the interested public to provide input to the priorities for the next State Health Plan. This is the first in a series of forums as the draft plan is developed.

The forums will also have a section about Maine's emerging public health infrastructure, with a focus on the Local Health Officer System. This follows the unveiling last month of the new infrastructure that will lead to more efficient and effective delivery of health care statewide.

"Maine is a national leader in ensuring health care access for its citizens, but we also have room to improve when it comes to the efficiency and cost of our system," said Governor Baldacci. "More than one-third of our premium costs come from treatment of often preventable chronic illness like heart disease and diabetes."

"Making the system more efficient and effective is a cornerstone of Dirigo Health Reform. These meetings will provide critical input from local health officials and the public, which will help determine what we can do to be even better, and to bring Maine closer to the goal of being the healthiest state in the nation."

The meetings will be held in the eight new public health and human services districts, established as part of the broader effort to streamline public health and develop a robust and localized public health system for Maine. State health officials, including Trish Riley, Director of the Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance, and Dr. Dora Anne Mills, Director of Maine Center for Disease Control, will provide an overview of the current State Health Plan and its accomplishments, a review of the local health officer system, and health profiles of each district. Attendees will be asked to provide comment on their priorities for the next State Health Plan.

Established as part of the Dirigo Health Reform legislation in 2003, the State Health Plan contains specific tasks to improve our health and lower health care costs.

"Maine has been a leader in broadening access and reducing costs in health care. Through these meetings and working with the public, we hope to identify new and innovative ways to lower health care costs further," said Riley.

There will be opportunities for the public to monitor and weigh in on the State Health Plan as it is being developed. Those unable to attend the initial forums may review the proceedings and register their opinions on the Dirigo Health Web site (<http://www.dirigohealth.maine.gov>) starting October 15. The draft State Health Plan, to be released in coming months, will be subject to future hearings, including evening hour events.

The initial meetings will take place at the following times and at the following locations.

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Date, Town, Time, Location

October 15th, Waterville, 12:30pm -4:00 pm, Governor's Restaurant

October 16th, Ellsworth, 8:30am-12:00pm, Holiday Inn

October 16th, Bangor, 12:30pm -4:00 pm, Ramada Inn

October 17th, Caribou, 8:30am-12:00pm, Caribou Inn & Convention Center

October 24th, Wells, 8:30am-12:00pm, Village by the Sea

October 24th, Portland, 12:30pm -4:00 pm, Holiday Inn by the Bay

October 29th, Auburn, 12:30pm -4:00 pm, Hilton Garden Inn

October 30, Rockland, 8:30am-12:00pm, Samoset Resort

For more information, contact Elaine Lovejoy at 287-3266 or elaine.lovejoy@maine.gov.

Governor Presents State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals to Veterans

October 11, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today presented State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals to four veterans in a Hall of Flags ceremony. The medal was first awarded to Maine veterans in August of 2006, and is presented to those who have been wounded while serving their country. Of the four veterans honored today, two were wounded in World War II and two in Vietnam.

"When this country sends its men and women into harm's way, we have a moral obligation to make sure we take care of them, not only when they are in combat, but also when they come home," Governor Baldacci said. "I honor you and your commitment today with these medals."

The Governor has made it among his highest priorities to ensure that current and past soldiers and their families are provided for. This year Governor Baldacci worked with the Legislature to make sure veterans received benefits for which they are entitled, including:

- Providing significant funds to the Veterans Financial Assistance Program and for the veteran's cemetery;
- Helping to fund and signing into law a special license plate to honor Maine residents serving our country;
- Beginning the process of establishing the Maine Veterans' Home "Veterans Campus," which will create a one-stop shop and to expand services in Bangor, and which is intended to serve as a model for similar projects around the state; and
- Passage of the Governor's bill, "An Act To Protect the Lives and Health of Members of the Maine National Guard," model legislation that will help safeguard the health of members of the Maine National Guard.

The Governor thanked the veterans and their families for their deep and abiding sense of duty and love for their country, and for their support of troops currently serving overseas.

"I've found that it is always the veterans who are leading the way and telling me that we have to make sure our troops are taken care of when they come home," the Governor said. "To all of you – your work overseas and your work here at home is the work of true heroes."

Below is the list of veterans recognized today, and the town in which they reside.

World War II

Robert V. Boggs, Augusta; Arnold L. Leavitt, Auburn

Vietnam

Ronald N. Nowell, Cape Neddick; Martin G. Ellis, New Sharon

In addition, eight other veterans injured in combat were not present at the State House event today:

World War II

Keith F. Colpitts, Bangor; Victor U. Listor, Athens

Korea

Josephat N. Levesque, South Paris; Vernon W. Clark, Brooks; Howard S. Wacome, Madison

Vietnam

Gordon M. Gillies, Bath; Gary D. Corson, Cornville; Robert J. Locklin, Vassalboro

Governor Baldacci Proclaims October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October 11, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci and First Lady Karen Baldacci hosted the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence Thursday afternoon for a reception at the Blaine House. The Governor has proclaimed the month of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in the State of Maine.

"It is my hope that in proclaiming Domestic Violence Awareness Month, people will become more aware of this issue and the havoc it creates in families," Governor Baldacci said. "A coordinated community response is necessary to reach into the heart of a problem that I know everyone here is committed to ending."

During the reception at the Blaine House, the Projects and Coalition staff honored community members who have contributed to the effort to end domestic abuse in Maine.

Governor Baldacci acknowledged some of the Legislation that was passed by the 123rd Legislature earlier this year, including making various forms of domestic violence a Class D crime.

"For repeat offenders of domestic violence, the consequences become more serious," the Governor said. "That is landmark Legislation. You should be proud of the work that you did to get the Legislation passed, working with the bill's sponsor Senate President Beth Edmonds."

First Lady Karen Baldacci also congratulated the group for working toward eradicating domestic violence.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, domestic violence is a widespread community problem, affecting Maine families regardless of geography, income or education; and

WHEREAS, dating violence and intimate partner violence are parts of the problem of domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, the effects of domestic violence are felt not only by victims, who are robbed of their dignity and sense of security, but also by their children, families, those that care about them and the community as a whole; and

WHEREAS, the most effective way to prevent domestic violence is through a shared commitment to ending the problem from every individual and community in Maine; and

WHEREAS, the most effective way to utilize the collective resources committed to ending domestic violence in Maine is through coordinated community-based response, involving a partnership with law enforcement agencies, courts, advocacy programs, social service agencies, schools, the health care profession, employers and all Maine citizens; and

WHEREAS, domestic violence is not only a crime, but a violation of a person's basic rights as a human being, and, as such, all victims deserve our support, and all offenders need to be held accountable; and

WHEREAS, consistent with our tradition of neighborly concern for one another, sense of fairness and justice, Maine's citizens are encouraged to report to law enforcement all suspected incidents of domestic violence,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim the month of October, 2007 as

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

Governor Baldacci Outlines Consolidation Plans to Judges

October 11, 2007

OGUNQUIT – Governor John E. Baldacci went into detail about his past, present and future consolidation plans to a group of judges Thursday evening. The Governor talked about his plans while addressing the New England Appellate Judges Conference at the Cliff House Resort in Ogunquit.

“As you may have heard, I am working to revamp and restructure the way Maine government does business,” Governor Baldacci said. “It has long been a priority of mine to make sure I leave the people of Maine with a system of government that better meets their needs and does so in a more efficient way. That’s what the people deserve, and I will settle for nothing less.”

Governor Baldacci talked about consolidation that occurred within state government during his first term in office. The Governor merged the Department of Human Services and the Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services into the Department of Health and Human Services, a move that has saved money and improved services. Legislation known as LD1 was passed in 2005, putting spending caps in place for local, county and state governments. The Governor also consolidated financial, information technology, payroll and human services under the Department of Administrative and Financial Services.

“We must continue our efforts to streamline state government by controlling spending, while growing personal incomes and our economy,” the Governor said.

Governor Baldacci proposed a major reform of K-12 education earlier this year. His plan was revised with an end result of a reduction in the number of school districts to fewer than 80. “By eliminating unnecessary administrative duplication, we can put more resources into the classroom where they belong and provide real tax relief to Maine families,” the Governor said.

Governor Baldacci’s forthcoming proposal to consolidate the 15 county jail systems into the state corrections system is another initiative the Governor says will help to lower property taxes and improve efficiencies. “There have been too many studies and too little action. We cannot wait any longer – the system must change now,” Governor Baldacci said. “Without consolidation, four counties and the state are considering major new construction projects. We can’t afford them and with a unified system we don’t need them.”

Governor Baldacci says that he will continue to move forward with more consolidation ideas, including some that were put forth by citizens through a Web site set up by the Legislature. Among those ideas is one to combine the Maine Turnpike Authority with the Department of Transportation.

“Just talking about the ideas has prompted plenty of screams,” the Governor said. “But the conversation – and the argument in many cases – is absolutely necessary.”

Governor Baldacci is in the process of proposing the most significant restructuring and reforming of state spending since Governor Kenneth Curtis more than 30 years ago. The consolidation of

administration in K-12 schools is currently being implemented, with more than 80% of school districts having made significant progress thus far.

Governor Celebrates Bowdoin College Museum of Art

October 14, 2007

BRUNSWICK – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials and students of Bowdoin College, and members of the public to celebrate the grand reopening of the college's Museum of Art.

"Today Bowdoin enhances its reputation as a premier institution by reopening one of the oldest collegiate art collections in the country," said Governor Baldacci. "The redesigned facility symbolizes the rededication of Bowdoin to the arts, honoring tradition and exploring the contemporary with a particular focus on opening up the spectacular building and its contents to the community at large."

The Governor said that great care was taken in holding to the historic preservation of the building and to ensuring its accessibility.

"This underscores that the museum is truly transformed into a national treasure," said Governor Baldacci, "one that will undoubtedly attract visitors from Maine, from the region, and from afar, adding the museum as a 'must see' cultural experience for the public who visit. The museum is truly something that the entire state can take pride in."

State Government Continues to Be Model Employer for People with Disabilities

October 15, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials from a number of quality Maine businesses to sign the Working Together Pledge. The pledge is part of an effort to further employment of workers with disabilities.

Today's signing continues the Governor's goal for the State to be a model employer of workers with disabilities. In February, 2006, the Governor signed an Executive Order to review the State's hiring policy for people with disabilities.

"This is an important effort for the state and for Maine businesses. Employing people with disabilities just makes good business sense," said Governor Baldacci. "We are proactively engaging in a dialog about employing people with disabilities, and the importance of tapping into an underutilized source of great employees."

Current businesses in the Working Together effort include valued Maine employers such as L.L. Bean, Time Warner Cable, UNUM, Stonewall Kitchen, and R.H. Reny. The coalition will hold its first symposium on Friday at the Maple Hill Farm Conference Center in Hallowell. The Governor will be addressing the group at 9:00 a.m.

Maine faces a workforce shortage in the coming years in part due to an aging population. The Governor said that the state also needs to diversify its workforce so it's reflective of our communities and ready to compete in a global marketplace.

"This is the only way to stay ahead of the curve, to stay agile and be prepared for tomorrow's business challenges," said Governor Baldacci.

One result of the Governor's 2006 Executive Order was to survey current Maine State government employees to review disability in the State workforce. The survey compiled some of the ways the State, as an employer, is successful and also places where we can improve.

More than 3,000 employees responded to the survey. Among findings, 10% of employees surveyed indicated that they had a disability. The results also showed more about how valuable and loyal these workers are: 56% of our employees with disabilities worked 11 years or more for the State; overall, 78% had worked 6 years or longer.

As part of his effort to highlight the importance of hiring people with disabilities, the Governor signed a proclamation declaring October 2007 as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The text of the proclamation follows.

WHEREAS, across Maine, individuals with disabilities are making important contributions as members of the state's workforce; and

WHEREAS, while progress has been made, the employment rate of persons with disabilities in Maine is below 37 percent and less than half the employment rate for Mainers without disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Maine's Commission on Disability and Employment, under its "Working Together" Strategic Plan to Maximize Employment for People with Disabilities, leads many current efforts to remove barriers to employment for people with disabilities and thus limit Maine's economic potential; and

WHEREAS, many employers in both the private and public sectors in Maine are now coming together to share experiences and resources about how to best engage this underutilized group in order to expand Maine's workforce; and

WHEREAS, more needs to be done to reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that the opportunities in Maine are available and accessible to every citizen; and

WHEREAS, it is to the benefit of all people in Maine that we include persons with disabilities in our workforce development efforts to ensure the continued growth of the Maine economy; and

WHEREAS, through Executive Order signed in 2006 and as a focus of significant effort this year, Maine State Government is taking steps to become a model employer of workers with disabilities, to continue as a recognized leader among states regarding affirmative efforts to hire qualified workers with disabilities in state positions,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim the month of October, 2007 as

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

Governor Requests Feds to Reconsider Restrictions Impacting Maine Lobstermen

October 15, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today sent a letter to Dr. William Hogarth, Director of Fisheries at the National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries). The letter responds to a recent decision by the federal office that establishes a Dynamic Area Management (DAM) zone in the area of many Washington County fisheries. The impact of the federal decision would be to force lobstermen to use sinking ground line to protect large whales in the area.

The federal government said that this DAM zone establishment is the result of an aerial survey showing right whales in the area.

The text of the letter from the Governor follows.

15 October 2007

Dr. Bill Hogarth, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

NOAA

1315 East-West Highway

Room 14555

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Dr. Hogarth:

I am writing to ask for your urgent attention and action regarding the recently announced Dynamic Area Management (DAM) restrictions in eastern Maine. My office has taken many calls today from lobstermen in the affected area, and along Maine's coast, asking for my help with this critical issue. This letter follows my phone conversation with your office of earlier this afternoon.

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has established a Dynamic Area Management (DAM) zone effective for 15 days from Oct 20-Nov 3, in an area southeast of Machias, Maine totaling approximately 841 square nautical miles. This DAM zone completely encompasses Jonesport, Beals and surrounding Washington County fishing communities and is triggered by an aerial survey sighting 3 right whales in the proximity. Under a DAM zone, all fishing gear must be rigged with neutrally buoyant or sinking rope on all groundline with a maximum of 1/3 float rope on the main trap.

Maine lobstermen have expressed strong concern about the imposition of the DAM because (1) they haven't seen whales close to shore, (2) sinking groundline hasn't been shown to work in rocky bottom, (3) fishermen will not have time to comply which will turn them into violators of the law, something they would abhor, and (4) the sinking groundline isn't available to comply with this DAM restriction.

I ask that you consider the following issues regarding this critical situation for Maine's downeast lobstermen.

Conduct a flyover as soon as weather permits to confirm the presence or absence of whales from the area in question.

Recognize that lobstermen are unable to comply with this rule because of the difficulty of bringing gear home and the lack of availability of sinking groundline and the time that would be needed to switch gear over during the busiest time of the lobstering season.

3) Begin immediate consultations with the Canadian government to address fishing gear in areas of whale concentration in Canadian waters. This is particularly important because the whale sightings in the DAM are very close to the US / Canada line.

My office and the Department of Marine Resources are available to engage with your office on all of these issues to ensure that together we protect whales and Maine's lobstering families.

Sincerely,

John Elias Baldacci

Governor

Cc: Commissioner George Lapointe, Department of Marine Resources

Feds Reconsider Restrictions Impacting Maine Lobstermen

October 17, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci learned today that the federal government has reconsidered a decision to impose temporary restrictions on the type of equipment used by Maine lobstermen in Washington County.

The Governor had contacted the Director of Fisheries at the National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries), Dr. William Hogarth, requesting a review of the Dynamic Area Management (DAM) restrictions. He argued, among other reasons, that Maine lobstermen would be unable to comply with the regulations and that these regulations would therefore severely impact the ability of lobstermen to operate.

“I am pleased that the state and the federal government, including our Congressional Delegation, have been able to work cooperatively on this serious issue impacting Maine lobstermen,” said Governor Baldacci. “I thank Director Hogarth for his willingness to immediately review this situation. While the short-term situation is resolved, this latest issue has highlighted the difficulties facing our lobster industry as final rules regarding fishing lines are imposed next year. I continue to be concerned about the impact to this community.”

NOAA Fisheries decided to forgo the imposition of the temporary DAM restrictions after conducting a flyover to determine if right whales were in Maine waters. The overfly found no evidence of the whales being in the area.

Governor Baldacci Celebrates 35th Anniversary of Clean Water Act

October 18, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci joined Legislative leaders, officials from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and others Thursday morning at the Kennebec Arsenal to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act. Maine Senator Edmond Muskie crafted the legislation in the 1960s that aimed to make waters both fishable and swimmable.

"Rivers that once ran thick with pollution are now dramatically cleaner and are treasured by the communities through which they run," Governor Baldacci said. "These cities and towns now embrace the natural beauty of their rivers which spur economic development and community revitalization along their banks."

Governor Baldacci said that his "Take It Outside" initiative has encouraged parents to share in Maine's natural beauty with their children. He said the cleanliness of Maine's rivers and lakes are added incentive for families to participate in activities such as canoeing or fishing throughout the state.

"We're right next to the Augusta Greenway trail that runs along the river," the Governor said. "And just across the river we can see part of the Kennebec River Rail Trail. These provide excellent recreational opportunities for local residents along this beautiful river."

The Governor said that the Clean Water Act has changed bodies of water throughout the country, but there is still more work that can be done.

"Maine has been a national leader in dramatically reducing the amount of mercury emitted to the environment in our own state, but we need the issue to be addressed by the federal government," Governor Baldacci said. "Until we have regional and national solutions that follow the example we have set up in Maine, we won't be able to eat the fish that have come back to our waters without consulting health advisors."

Five unsung heroes who have contributed to the success of the Clean Water Act were also honored at the celebration. Michael Sinclair, Marshall Cole on behalf of his father John, Dotty Dudley, Dr. Jane Disney and Jerome Guevremont were all honored for exemplifying the vision of Senator Muskie when he wrote the Clean Water Act 35 years ago.

Governor Baldacci Announces Blaine House Conference on Aging

October 18, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today made the announcement that he will convene a second Blaine House Conference on Aging. The Governor made the announcement during a Maine Association of Area Agencies on Aging luncheon held in his honor.

“As part of my ongoing commitment to improve the lives of older Mainers and ensure that Maine is doing all it can to prepare for its future,” the Governor said, “I’m pleased to announce today that I will convene a Blaine House conference on Aging in October of 2008.”

The first Blaine House Conference on Aging was held at the Augusta Civic Center in September of 2006. Over 200 people attended that conference to discuss a variety of topics, including community involvement and volunteerism, creative housing and services, elder abuse, employment and transportation. The Governor said the first conference gave his administration valuable information concerning Maine’s aging population.

“Since the conference, I have asked my Cabinet to explore ways to implement the resolutions that were voted on,” the Governor said. “An inter-agency group of department heads has been formed with a focus on the steps that need to be taken to realize the full advantage of the strengths Maine’s older citizens offer, and to plan for the service needs of those older citizens who might need them.”

Governor Baldacci credited the aging population in the state for providing valuable experience to younger generations, and a willingness to stay actively involved in their communities. The Governor said that 15 percent of Maine’s population is 65 years or older now, and that number will increase to 22 percent over the next 25 years.

“Rather than view this as a problem, I believe this presents a real opportunity for our state,” Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Baldacci was honored by the group for his leadership during the most recent legislative session, and for organizing the 2006 Blaine House Conference on Aging.

Governor Baldacci Honors Businesses for “Working Together”

October 19, 2007

HALLOWELL – Governor John E. Baldacci honored three Maine businesses today for their contributions to the formation of Working Together. Working Together is a program designed to create a business-to-business network where Maine businesses can communicate about the employment of people with disabilities. The Governor honored the businesses during the coalition’s first symposium at the Maple Hill Farm Conference Center in Hallowell.

“While the state can offer programs and incentives to help get people with disabilities into the workforce, ultimately if we’re going to continue to grow economically, it’s business that needs to lead the way in finding solutions to workforce issues,” Governor Baldacci said. “Businesses will come up with the most efficient, creative and forward thinking solutions to workforce challenges.”

Maine Mutual Insurance Company and Wild Oats Bakery & Café of Brunswick were honored with Business Leadership Awards at the breakfast. Stonewall Kitchen was honored with the Workforce Achievement Award, which is given to a business that “rolls up its sleeves and sets about bringing workers with a disability into the workplace.”

Other businesses currently in the Working Together effort include valued Maine employers such as L.L. Bean, Time Warner Cable, UNUM, and R.H. Reny.

“We’re looking forward to assisting you in whatever way we can,” Governor Baldacci said, “and I want to thank you all for leading the way to a diversified, agile and creative Maine workforce.”

Governor Baldacci Presents Yarmouth High School with Energy Grant

October 23, 2007

YARMOUTH – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Public Utilities Commissioner Chair Kurt Adams today at Yarmouth High School to present a Voluntary Renewable Resource Fund (VRRF) grant to the school. The grant will support a student initiated working solar power project at the school.

“When I see young people with all of the challenges that you ladies and young men are undergoing in terms of getting ready for college and getting ready for life,” Governor Baldacci said, “you found the time to get involved in something larger than yourselves. You got involved in something that is going to be able to impact the globe and you’re acting locally to be able to do it and responsibly.”

The grant provides the students with \$26,400, or 80 percent of the cost of the project. Students are now working to fundraise the remaining 20 percent needed for completion through t-shirt sales, a school dance and donations.

“The economy and the environment are one in the same,” the Governor said. “In the old days they used to compete against each other. Now with your brains, your energy and abilities, you’re going to be able to figure out how those things tie together.”

The three students who initiated the grant are Emma Roose, Nell Pierce and Hannah Yardley. Cody Shankman and Louis Waxman, also students at Yarmouth High School, are working on raising the remaining \$6,000+ for the project.

The project involves the construction of an energy system through solar panels that will produce about 3,600 kilowatt-hours of clean electricity for the school each year. Governor Baldacci and Chairman Adams honored the students at an assembly held in the school’s auditorium in front of peers, parents and teachers.

“It’s you young people that are going to be tied together around the world and change the world and the way we operate in the 21st Century,” Governor Baldacci said.

The VRRF was established by the Legislature in 2000 and is supported by voluntary contributions made by consumers on their electric bill. The Maine Public Utilities Commission, which operates the VRRF, offers grants of up to \$50,000 to qualifying Maine-based nonprofits for the development of a project utilizing renewable resources. This year the VRRF awarded a total of \$362,889 for ten projects. The list of other 2007 grant awardees follows:

GRAY – NEW GLOUSTER HIGH SCHOOL - \$36,450

KITTERY – WASTE TRANSFER STATION - \$50,000

LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL – PORTLAND - \$37,200

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NORWAY WASTEWATER DEPARTMENT - \$50,000

OCEAN ENERGY INSTITUTE – VINALHAVEN PROJECT - \$18,915

DOWNEAST SALMON FEDERATION – EAST MACHIAS - \$50,000

MIDDLE SCHOOL OF THE KENNEBUNKS - \$35,213

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT PRESQUE ISLE - \$50,000

THE WINTER CACHE PROJECT – PORTLAND - \$8,711

Governor Baldacci Congratulates School Bus Safety Poster Award Winners

October 23, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated 13 students today in grades K-8 for winning School Bus Safety Poster Awards. The students were honored during a reception at the Blaine House.

"Your teachers, fellow students, families and friends – as well as bus drivers all over the state – are proud of your work," Governor Baldacci said. "School bus drivers often perform their duties in the midst of adverse conditions, while exercising caution and following the laws of the road to maximize the safety of their passengers."

First, second and third place awards were handed out in four divisions based on grade levels. School bus drivers vote on the posters to determine the winners in each division. All winners receive a trophy and a check - \$75 for first place, \$50 for second place, and \$25 for third place. First place winners in each division are sent on to the national competition.

The School Bus Safety Poster Contest is a program sponsored by the Maine Association of Pupil Transportation and organized by the Student Safety Training Committee. All Maine schools with appropriate grade levels are invited to participate. A list of winners follows:

Division I (Kindergarten, 1st Grade & 2nd Grade)

1st Place – Ethan Randolph – North Berwick Primary, North Berwick

2nd Place – Caroline Finley – Crescent Park School, Bethel

3rd Place – Anja Schwieterman – Sebago Elementary, Sebago

Division II (Grade 3 – 5)

1st Place – Alicia Tilley – Wayne Elementary, Wayne

2nd Place – Jessica Bragg – Windsor Elementary School, Windsor

3rd Place (tie) – Luke Arsenault – Manchester Elementary School, Manchester

3rd Place (tie) – Nicole Sproul – Waterboro Elementary School, East Waterboro

Division III (Grade 6 – 8)

1st Place – Issac Tobey – Windsor Elementary School, Windsor

2nd Place – Garrett McCarthy – Wescott Junior High School, Westbrook

3rd Place – Rachel Crawford – Wescott Junior High School, Westbrook

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Division IV (Special Needs Students)

1st Place – Angela Morris – Windsor Elementary School, Windsor

2nd Place – Michelle Beckwith – Windsor Elementary School, Windsor

3rd Place – Keith Bouchard – Coffin School, Brunswick

Governor Baldacci Promotes State and Federal Programs that Help Struggling Homeowners Avoid Foreclosure

October 24, 2007

AUGUSTA - Although Maine has one of the lowest foreclosure rates in the country, Governor John E. Baldacci is taking steps to protect wary homebuyers and existing homeowners who may be struggling to pay their mortgage.

Last month, Governor Baldacci signed into law the Maine Homeownership Protective Act, which will be effective on January 1, 2008. The Act is designed to fight excessive fees and abusive lending practices that strip home equity and put consumers at risk. The Act is also intended to protect consumer rights in court and make predatory lenders more accountable.

"Today more than ever we need to help Maine people know the pitfalls as well as the benefits of homeownership, and how they can avoid default once they own a home," Governor Baldacci said. "Better informed homebuyers and homeowners will help prevent the American dream of homeownership from becoming the American nightmare."

In addition, last week Governor Baldacci met with Taylor Caswell, regional director of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to announce a \$123,000 housing counseling grant to Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing). HUD-approved housing counseling agencies provide an invaluable service by offering advice on buying a home, renting, defaults, foreclosures, credit issues, and reverse mortgages.

Part of the grant will be used to provide a two-day foreclosure prevention training course in November for 35 non-profit organization workers who counsel people facing foreclosure, noted MaineHousing Director Dale McCormick.

"This excellent course examines every aspect of default and delinquency," McCormick said. "It covers reasons for defaults, ways to maximize income and reduce expenses, loan workout procedures, and legal information about foreclosures. Many people in jeopardy of losing their homes could prevent it if they have a better understanding of their mortgage and how to avoid foreclosure once they became delinquent."

Governor Baldacci and Mr. Caswell also discussed FHA Secure, a new federal program that could help struggling homeowners avoid foreclosure.

FHA Secure is designed for people who have adjustable rate mortgages that are expected to reset to a higher rate, which could cause a hardship for families who are already struggling to pay monthly household expenses. The program is administered by the Federal Housing Administration, the branch of HUD that insures mortgages against default.

Under the new FHA Secure plan, families with strong credit histories who had been making timely mortgage payments before their adjustable loans reset to a higher rate—but who are now in default—will qualify for refinancing.

“FHA Secure is designed for people who are good borrowers but were steered into high-cost loans with teaser rates,” said Caswell. “The program will give eligible families who were in good financial standing before their loans reset a chance to keep their homes.”

Eligible homeowners will be required to meet strict underwriting guidelines and pay a mortgage insurance premium, which offsets the risk to FHA’s insurance fund at no cost to the taxpayer.

To qualify for FHASecure, eligible homeowners must meet the following criteria:

A history of on-time mortgage payments before the borrower’s teaser rates expired and loans reset;

Interest rates must have or will reset between June 2005 and December 2009;

Three percent cash or equity in the home;

A sustained history of employment; and

Sufficient income to make the mortgage payment.

Since its inception in 1934, FHA has helped almost 35 million people nationwide become homeowners, making it the largest insurer of mortgages in the world.

For more information about FHASecure and other FHA products, please call 1-800-CALL-FHA, contact your lender, or contact a local HUD-certified housing counseling agency. For a list of certified housing counseling agencies in Maine, please

visit <http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hcc/hcs.cfm?webListAction=search&searchstate=ME>

For more information on information and programs offered by MaineHousing, please

visit <http://www.mainehousing.org/>

Donations Best Way to Aid with California Disaster Relief

October 25, 2007

AUGUSTA — Governor John E. Baldacci and the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) remind Mainers that the best way to help with disaster relief for the victims of California fires is to support a disaster relief agency working in the area.

The Governor said that his office has received a number of calls from Maine citizens anxious to aid the people of southern California.

“Whenever there is a disaster, Mainers step forward to help,” said Governor Baldacci.

MEMA Director Rob McAleer said, “The best way to help right now is with monetary donations to a relief agency working in the disaster area.”

The State of California has established a Donations Hotline at 1-800-750-2858. Other relief organizations can be found through the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (<http://www.nvoad.org>) or the Network for Good (<http://www.networkforgood.org>). Local chapters of disaster relief agencies often can also accept targeted donations for relief efforts.

Monetary donations allow relief agencies in the area to purchase what is needed, when it is needed, as close to the disaster area as possible. This minimizes transportation and distribution costs, and helps support the local economy.

For those concerned about family or friends in the area, Governor Baldacci notes that FEMA and the American Red Cross have activated their services to assist in making connections with those displaced by the fires.

American Red Cross Safe and Well List: <https://disastersafe.redcross.org/>

FEMA’s National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System:

Register you and your family: 1-800-588-9822

Find family or friends (over 21): 1-800-588-9822

Find a missing child (under 21): 1-866-908-9570

Those wishing to volunteer to help and who are not already affiliated with a relief agency should contact a local agency or visit <http://www.volunteermaine.org/> to learn about volunteer opportunities, and how to get training as a disaster volunteer.

Governor Baldacci Cuts Ribbon on River~Link Trail

October 25, 2007

NEWCASTLE – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Department of Conservation Commissioner Patrick McGowan and conservation enthusiasts this morning to cut the ribbon on the River~Link Trail. When completed, the project will connect the Damariscotta and Sheepscot Rivers in Lincoln County.

“The Land for Maine’s Future program has much to celebrate for its 20 years of work,” Governor Baldacci said. “The lands preserved are some of Maine’s conservation jewels. Camden Hills State Park, the Aroostook Valley Rail-Trail, Frenchman’s Hole and River~Link are the kinds of places that make Maine special.”

The Maine Departments of Conservation and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife have been lead sponsors of the River Link Project. Sherman Marsh on Route 1 and Dodge Point Reserve are two anchor properties that are connected by the River~Link trail. Both IF&W and Conservation have signed two Land for Maine’s Future project agreements with local partners involved for a total of four parcels of land that have been secured thus far. Partners include several local land trusts and towns.

Governor Baldacci, who introduced the Take It Outside initiative in July, said that the Land for Maine’s Future program is a perfect partner for the new initiative.

“We need great places for people to recreate when we ask them to Take It Outside,” the Governor said. “I took my son Jack to two of Maine’s most beautiful spots over the past few months – we climbed Mount Katahdin and canoed the Allagash River. You don’t necessarily need to go to the Allagash or Katahdin though – taking it outside in Maine is as easy as walking out the front door.”

Governor Baldacci asked thirteen-year-old Noah Begin of Newcastle to stand with him at the press conference. Begin is a 7th grader at Great Salt Bay School and is a councilor-in-training in the Damariscotta River Association Junior Naturalist Program. Begin says that he has been hiking the trails at Dodge Point for years with his parents. The Governor was happy to see the enthusiasm for the outdoors held by someone at such a young age, and encouraged more young people to reconnect with the natural world.

During the ribbon cutting, Governor Baldacci also stressed his support for Question 4 on the upcoming ballot. A “yes” vote Question 4 will provide \$35.5 million for natural resources. \$17 million of the \$35.5 million will provide new funding for the Land for Maine’s Future program. The question will appear on the ballot on Nov. 6.

Governor Baldacci Congratulates Hancock Lumber on Company Wide FSC Certification

October 25, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci issued the following statement Thursday afternoon, after learning that Hancock Lumber has received company wide Forest Stewardship Council certification for its three Eastern White Pine sawmills and six retail locations:

“I want to congratulate Hancock Lumber for becoming Forest Stewardship Council certified throughout its entire company. Consumers are starting to demand more products from certified wood. Forward thinking companies like Hancock Lumber are not only meeting the customer demand, but realizing that FSC certification is an important component for the company’s future success and the success of the forest products industry in general.”

Governor Announces Operation Keep ME Warm 2007

October 26, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci announced the fourth year of Operation Keep ME Warm, an important initiative to help some of Maine's most vulnerable citizens prepare for the cold winter months. The Governor also said that as the season changes, all Mainers can explore ways they can address potentially high heating costs this year.

"The State of Maine has developed a comprehensive list of information and programs that help Maine residents prepare for the coming cold season," said Governor Baldacci. "With prices of heating oil and other heating fuels expected to be higher than last year, it's important that we think ahead. By undertaking some home efficiency and conservation measures, we can cut costs and make our homes more comfortable."

A compilation of resources and information on keeping warm this winter is being made available this year in a brochure called, Operation Keep ME Warm: Use Less Fuel, Save Money. The brochure provides a list of "top 10" energy saving tips, a list of programs that help consumers reduce energy use and information on free "warm kits" available to eligible Mainers needing further assistance. These kits contain a number of useful items, including compact fluorescent light bulbs, a low-flow shower head, caulking and interior storm windows.

The Governor said he continues to pursue energy independence and other efforts to rein in rising energy costs. "My Administration continues to be active in helping Maine's struggling families deal with high energy prices," said Governor Baldacci.

Maine has been a leader in addressing energy issues. Upon taking office, Governor Baldacci established the Office of Energy Independence. Accomplishments include:

Maine is the first state government in the nation to buy 100% of its electricity from renewable sources;

Establish tax credits for production of biofuels in Maine;

Provide an 8 cent per gallon state excise tax reduction for diesel motor fuel containing at least 2 percent biodiesel;

Offer rebates for purchasing and installing solar electric, hot air and hot water systems;

Set a goal of 10 percent new renewable power in Maine by 2017.

Maine citizens interested in receiving a "warm kit" should contact their local Community Action Program (CAP) agency. These will be available on a first come, first serve basis. People who would like to help needy Mainers keep warm this season should also call or visit their local CAP agency. For a list of agencies, please call 2-1-1 or visit <http://www.mainecommunityaction.org/members.htm#wmca>.

The Governor's Office of Energy Independence, in conjunction with the Maine Public Utilities Commission, MaineHousing, Maine Community Action Association and Catholic Charities of Maine have joined in this effort to help Maine citizens. Brochures can be obtained at local CAP agencies, Maine CareerCenters, Catholic Charities and state general assistance offices. Additionally, 2-1-1 Maine is serving as a clearing house for home heating resources. Mainers can also obtain information from the Governor's Web site

at http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/contact/citizen_services/safeandwarm.html.

Donations can be made to the Keep ME Warm Fund at: Keep ME Warm Fund, PO Box 200, East Wilton, ME 04234.

Governor Baldacci Says Economy and Environment are Tied Together

October 26, 2007

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci opened the Growing Maine's Green Economy Conference this morning by saying that economic and environmental policies no longer compete. This theory represents a change in mindset from years past, when it was largely thought that a vibrant economy could not exist while trying to protect the environment.

"The old paradigms were that there is competition between the economy and the environment," Governor Baldacci said. "Those paradigms no longer exist. Businesses must realize the potential that exists in making good environmental decisions."

Governor Baldacci opened the day-long conference, which included sessions throughout the day on a variety of topics including green chemistry, workforce development and potato-based plastics. The conference was held at the University of Southern Maine Abromson Community Education Center in Portland.

"Making sustainable bio-plastics from Maine potatoes – what an innovative idea," Governor Baldacci said. "With seed funding from the Maine Technology Institute, researchers at the University of Maine are working with Interface Fabric on research and development to prove the concept."

The Governor said that research and development is not only important for the economy and the environment, but for all of Maine. The Governor encouraged a "yes" vote on the R&D bond issue, Question 2, on Nov. 6.

"The research and development bond will create opportunities for different business ideas in the state," the Governor said. "We need resources to invest in R&D because we need the latest in cutting edge technology to be able to compete."

The Governor said that he has led by example, trying to create a link between environmentally friendly standards and good business decisions. Since Governor Baldacci took office, the Omnibus Energy Bill was passed to provide an excise tax reduction for biodiesel; Maine adopted the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED standards for reduced energy consumption in state buildings and institutions of higher learning; and the state has increased the number of hybrid vehicles in the state fleet, allowed preferential parking for van- and carpools, and expanded ride-sharing.

"I've been trying to use state government as a model," Governor Baldacci said. "It's hard to tell people in business and life what they need to do, but if we could use the purchasing power of state government to show people positive results, I thought that it could make a difference."

Governor Baldacci Congratulates World Champion Boston Red Sox

October 29, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci offered congratulations tonight to the Boston Red Sox for winning the 2007 World Series.

“Congratulations to the players and the fans of Red Sox Nation,” Governor Baldacci said. “The Red Sox displayed a tremendous effort to once again come from behind in the American League Championship Series and prevail in the World Series. Waiting 86 years was too long for a World Series title in Boston and New England. I join with other Red Sox fans throughout Maine celebrating the Sox’ second World Series title in four years and I look forward to once again welcoming the World Series trophy to Maine.”

The Governor spoke with Red Sox President and Chief Executive Officer Larry Lucchino Monday evening by phone while on a trade mission in South Korea. The Governor also sent a letter to the team’s front office earlier in the day inviting them to tour Maine with the World Series trophy, as they did in 2004.

“Mr. Lucchino said that he is very proud of the team and all of the fans in Maine,” the Governor said. “Mr. Lucchino told me that he is looking forward to the prospect of the World Series trophy tour in Maine and throughout New England.”

Governor Baldacci said that this championship is particularly special to Maine because of the Portland Sea Dogs connection. Several Portland Sea Dogs alum were on the Red Sox World Series roster, including Josh Beckett, Dustin Pedroia, Jacoby Ellsbury, Kevin Youkilis, Jon Lester and Jonathan Papelbon.

Governor Baldacci on the Passing of Jerry Desmond Sr.

October 31, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci extends his deepest sympathy to the family of Jerry Desmond Sr. upon hearing of his passing.

"Jerry contributed greatly to his community of Mapleton and to the State of Maine through his dedication to youth in the classrooms and as an adviser, mentor and coach," Governor Baldacci said. "A veteran of World War II, Jerry never stopped serving, as evidenced by his leadership in and commitment to many professional and community endeavors. I extend my condolences to Jerry's family for their loss."

Jerry Desmond's wife of 56 years, Mabel, also a longtime educator, was confirmed to sit on the Maine State Board of Education in September.

ConnectME Authority Announces First Round of Grants

November 1, 2007

Seven Grants Totaling More than Three-Quarters of Million Dollars Awarded

AUGUSTA – The ConnectME Authority has awarded seven grants to expand broadband and mobile communications services to unserved and underserved areas in Maine. A total of more than \$787,000 has been awarded to the recipients, expanding services to an estimated 14,400 residents. A list of the grantees and the communities served are shown below and fully listed on the ConnectME Authority's website.

Governor Baldacci, in conjunction with the Legislature, created the ConnectME initiative in 2006 to expand broadband and cellular infrastructure throughout Maine. The grants were awarded Oct. 31.

"The ConnectME initiative is spurring private investment in broadband and cellular service in Maine. These investments are enabling people in rural areas enhanced access to technology, transforming our state economy, and expanding business opportunities for more Mainers," said Governor Baldacci.

Grant applications were judged based on a number of criteria, including the projected percentage of households that would be served; the level of public-private partnerships created; the level of community support for the projects; and the financial viability of the projects. Generally, successful projects are to be completed within one year of receiving the grant funding.

Created under the Connect ME legislation, the Authority contains five members representing the public and private sphere. The ConnectME Authority is established to stimulate investment in advanced communications technology infrastructure in unserved or underserved areas.

"We were pleased to receive seventeen great, and creative, applications and were able to select seven to receive funding which in turn will bring broadband service to over fifty communities that had little prospect of receiving service," said Phil Lindley, Acting Executive Director of the ConnectME Authority. "The applications were competitively scored by a review team that said the decision was made more difficult by the quality of the applications and the high level of interest," he added.

Applicant, Communities Served or Service Provider Partner

Midcoast Internet Solutions, Town of Edgecomb

Somerville, Town of, Midcoast Internet Solutions

Monson, Town of, Cornerstone Communications

Chebeague.net, Inc., Chebeague Island and Mainely Wired

Cornerstone Communications, 25 Communities in Piscataquis County

Axiom Technologies/Mitton Mtn, 18 Communities in Washington County

Redzone Wireless, Mount Desert and Cranberry Isles

The ConnectME Authority expects to conduct another round of grant awards next summer, based on funding availability.

For more information on the ConnectME initiative, please go to <http://www.maine.gov/connectme/index.shtml> or contact Phil Lindley, Acting Executive Director at 287-1598.

Maine Scores 7th in National Health Ranking

November 5, 2007

AUGUSTA - The United Health Foundation and the American Public Health Association released its Health Report Ranking, showing that Maine moved from 9th healthiest state last year to 7th this year. The rankings specifically credit Maine's success in lowering its rate of cardiovascular deaths and its rate of uninsured.

Governor Baldacci applauded Maine's ranking: "Dirigo Health Reform set us on a course to lower costs, improve quality and increase access to health care. Clearly our efforts to expand access to coverage through MaineCare and DirigoChoice are working. Our State Health Plan has been working to make us the healthiest state and we are beginning to see results, based on years of work by the public health community to build the foundation to improve our health."

"The Maine Quality Forum has been working for more than two years with Maine's hospitals and physicians to improve cardiovascular care and chronic disease management and reduce cardiovascular deaths through the 'In A Heartbeat' program, designed to make sure everybody gets the right care at the right time if a heart attack hits."

"But the report shows us we have more work to do," said Governor Baldacci. "Just as we have worked hard to improve cardiovascular care, we need to intensify our efforts working with physicians, nurses, hospitals and other providers as well as consumer groups to improve prevention, detection and treatment of cancer."

Maine was also commended for reducing smoking rates. The Governor credited a comprehensive approach to the reduction of smoking, noting that Maine has increased taxes on tobacco, outlawed tobacco use for minors and won national awards for using tobacco settlement funds for tobacco prevention and related health activities through the Fund for Healthy Maine.

The Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance, working collaboratively with the Department of Health and Human Services' Center for Disease Control and Prevention, has just completed eight public forums around the state to develop the State Health Plan for the next two years.

"Maine people have a long tradition of working together to make Maine a healthier state and we have just heard through forums concerns that echo the findings of the United Health report," said Trish Riley, Director of the Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance. "Our next State Health Plan needs to set priorities that will assure Maine continues to be a leader among the states and achieve good health."

Governor Baldacci Spends Election Day Morning with Students

November 6, 2007

OLD TOWN – Governor John E. Baldacci spent the first part of Election Day with students at Old Town Elementary School. Governor Baldacci visited Mrs. Mary Keane's second-grade class to talk with the students about voting, the State of Maine, the Boston Red Sox and what it is like to be Governor.

"This is one of the best parts about being Governor. Seeing the enthusiasm and energy these children have," Governor Baldacci said after the visit. "It's important to come in and spend time with the kids, especially on Election Day. The teachers and parents in Old Town are clearly doing a wonderful job with these children and I am happy to see that first hand."

The students presented Governor Baldacci with a gift of chocolate chip cookies as a thank you for answering their questions. Students submitted questions for the Governor, including "Do you go on vacation for a break?" and "What does it feel like to be Governor?"

"You try to do the right thing and try to make sure that you're making decisions that impact people over the long term," Governor Baldacci said in response to the question. "I've always looked at whatever I'm doing is not to be something that is good for the moment, but will last for a lifetime."

The Governor visited the class because the students are studying Maine and Monday was their official "Maine Day." To mark Election Day, the Governor also read the book "Duck for President" to the class, a book that First Lady Laura Bush read at the White House for the 2007 Easter Egg Roll.

"Sometimes you get frustrated with decisions that are being made," the Governor explained about the book as it relates to life. "You don't understand how somebody could make those decisions. Then when you run for office and you're in that office and you're making those same tough decisions, you say 'now I understand why these decisions are hard to make and it's really never easy.' But, (Duck) had to go through the process and learn."

Governor Baldacci told reporters after meeting with students that support of the bond questions (2, 3 and 4) on Tuesday's ballot will directly benefit current students throughout the state. Question 2 would provide \$50 million in research and development funds; Question 3 would provide over \$43 million for Maine's higher education facilities; and Question 4 would provide over \$35 million for investments in land conservation and investments in state parks.

"Today's bond questions are about providing better opportunities through investments," the Governor said. "We want our young people to continue to find opportunities here in our state. By investing in research and development, higher education and our quality of place, we are investing in our children and their future."

Governor Baldacci Says Regionalization will Move Maine Forward

November 7, 2007

LEWISTON – Governor John E. Baldacci this morning told a group of business leaders interested in regional partnerships that regionalization and wise investments will move Maine forward. He spoke to a conference called “The Dating Game, Courting Regional Partnerships” about his efforts to regionalize administration throughout the state.

“It was with the leadership of Lewiston-Auburn that helped make me comfortable trying to establish partnerships on a statewide basis,” Governor Baldacci said. “I congratulate this community on these efforts. I know it’s difficult.”

Earlier this year, the Legislature enacted a school administration reform plan proposed by the Governor. The law calls for no more than 80 school administrative units throughout the state. The Governor has also proposed a plan to consolidate county jails into one unified statewide system. Governor Baldacci has said that such consolidation plans will save taxpayers money and provide better services in schools and jails.

The Governor also stressed investments in Maine’s people and natural resources instead of administration and overhead. He said that those types of investments will make Maine successful.

“We need to have resources for broadband Internet service, we need to have resources for a foundation for higher education, we need to equip businesses with the latest technology and innovations for R&D so they can compete in a global marketplace,” the Governor said. “We don’t need to have an administration for every 1,500 people.”

Voters approved an R&D bond question Tuesday, which will provide over \$50 million for research and development in Maine. Voters also approved bonding for Maine college campus improvements and the Land for Maine’s Future program.

Governor Baldacci talked briefly about the Pine Tree Zone program during the conference, saying that he would like the public to be more aware of it.

“We also need to let people know that this program is not about taxes,” Governor Baldacci said. “It’s about people.”

Governor Baldacci Congratulates Rhoades Building Supplies on Expansion

November 8, 2007

HOLDEN – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Chris Rhoades of Rhoades Building Supplies to congratulate the CEO on his company's expansion. Rhoades announced this morning that he has purchased Granville Lumber. Governor Baldacci said that this purchase is another example showing that the entire State of Maine is open for business.

"We have a lot of things that a lot of places don't have. If we can recognize the opportunity to expand markets, to have access to the markets, broadband Internet connections, and to be able to add value to our natural resources, Maine's future is going to be very bright," the Governor said. "That's why the investment in research and development, the investment in training and education, and working with young business leaders like Chris, is going to make Maine even stronger."

In addition to Governor Baldacci and Chris Rhoades, Senator Dennis Damon (D-Hancock), Chair of the Joint Select Committee on Future Maine Prosperity, and Steve Veilleux, President of Rhoades Building Supplies, were on hand for the announcement at the Granville Lumber Holden facility.

Rhoades owned Rhoades Building Products in Ellsworth and HF Pinkham Building Supplies in Machias and Milbridge before purchasing Granville Lumber. All locations will be renamed as Rhoades Building Supplies. The sale of Granville Lumber became official Tuesday.

Governor Baldacci Honors Veterans

November 12, 2007

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci was the Honorary Grand Marshall of the Bangor Veterans' Day Parade Monday morning. The Governor participated in the parade along with veterans, local dignitaries, bands, supporters and other organizations.

Governor Baldacci also honored veterans during his Weekly Radio Address, which aired on radio stations throughout Maine over the weekend. In the address, the Governor spoke of plans to submit legislation in January to create a veterans campus in Bangor.

"Our priorities are to add a new hospice facility, an outpatient clinic and new independent housing for veterans to the existing facility," the Governor said in the radio address. "The changes won't happen overnight, but we have a vision for what that campus should be, and we will work to make it happen. We have similar plans in northern, Downeast, and western and southern Maine – to submit these kinds of models to better take care of our veterans, their families and the support that they need."

Joining Governor Baldacci on the reviewing stand at the Bangor parade was Charles Norman Shay of Indian Island. Shay is a veteran of World War II, the Korean War and the Cold War. Shay was honored earlier this year as Governor Baldacci proclaimed Native American Veterans History Day on June 6.

Shay's unit was one of the first to land on Omaha Beach as part of the D-Day invasion. Shay was a 19-year-old combat medic in the 16th Regiment of the First Infantry Division at the time, and earned a Silver Star for his heroism on D-Day. Shay later returned to action serving in the Korean War as a combat medic. In the Korean War, he was promoted to Master Sergeant and awarded the Bronze Star.

"We can never express our thanks enough to those who have served," Governor Baldacci said. "We honor them today, and keep them in our thoughts, prayers and hearts always."

Maine Receives Recognition for Clean Energy Leadership

November 14, 2007

AUGUSTA – Maine was honored Wednesday for its leadership in promoting renewable energy and conservation. Maine earned a Silver Star for Environment America, a national environmental advocacy organization.

“This has been an issue of great importance in my Administration,” Governor John E. Baldacci said. “I have made it a priority to increase conservation efforts, to protect our environment and to reduce energy costs and make the state more energy independent. We need to look no further than the historic high heating oil fuel prices to know why this is important.”

The report judged states on five areas regarding clean energy: renewable electricity standards; the Clean Cars program; utility energy efficiency programs; energy efficiency standards for appliances; and building energy codes. Maine is one of five states highlighted as “Silver Star” states for adopting strong policies in at least two areas of energy policy and meaningful policies in one or two others. The states honored in addition to Maine are Massachusetts, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Vermont.

The Governor said that Maine leads by example in energy and the environment. Maine is the first state government in the nation to buy 100 percent of its electricity from renewable resources; Maine tracks greenhouse gas emissions from State government energy consumption; Maine signed the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, building on the commitment to lower emissions and fund new investments in cleaner technologies and energy efficiency and conservation; and the State encourages investments in green technologies, which will improve competitiveness for Maine’s businesses and lower electricity rates for consumers, individuals and businesses.

“We in Maine get it,” the Governor said. “We understand that we have to be less dependent on foreign sources and on fossil fuels. We recognize that we need to be more dependent on our own indigenous resources, so that we have the sustainability of our energy sources and stimulating our economic development.”

The Governor joined House Speaker Glenn Cummings, House Majority Leader Hannah Pingree and other environmental leaders at the press conference in asking Congress to develop a national energy policy. The Governor said that efforts in states are important, but a federal energy policy is a necessity for the future.

“For too long, we’ve been without a national energy strategy, and we are paying the price when we fill our gas tanks or pay our home heating oil bills,” Governor Baldacci said. “With the price of gas likely to continue to increase and people worried about staying warm this winter, we can’t be satisfied with inaction in Washington.”

Governor Baldacci's Statement on Election Results

November 7, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci issued the following statement on the apparent results of the statewide election Tuesday.

"The people of Maine have made the right choice to invest in education and innovation," Governor Baldacci said. "Their support for Questions 2 and 3 means a brighter future for all Maine people."

"With their strong support for Question 4, voters have also affirmed our joint commitment to preserving Maine's special places," Governor Baldacci said.

"I believe that a quality education system and increased private sector job creation can move the state forward, and this election shows that the people of Maine agree with that vision."

"But the close results on Questions 2 and 3 also show that Mainers want government to be careful with their money. We have to show people the results of this investment and make the process as transparent as possible."

"Coupled with our continuing efforts to make government more effective, efficient and affordable, the investments approved today will make Maine's economy stronger and protect our most important assets – our children and our natural resources."

"Building our education and research and development capacity, and preserving Maine's special places have been cornerstones of my economic plan to grow good paying jobs in Maine and move our economy into the 21st Century."

"We must also keep the focus on reducing administration at all levels of government to make sure we have the resources to wisely invest in a prosperous future."

Regarding Question 1:

"I know that there is a lot of disappointment in Washington County, and particularly in Calais. We will continue to work with local leaders on sustainable economic development," Governor Baldacci said. "I hope that this vote will allow us to move forward and work together cooperatively for a strong economy not only in Washington County but in the entire state."

Governor Baldacci Says Time is Right for Alternative Energy

November 15, 2007

FALMOUTH – Governor John E. Baldacci said today that now is the time for Maine to capitalize on its potential to become a significant producer of renewable energy. Speaking during the opening of the E2-Tech Conference on energy and the environment, the Governor said tidal, wind and solar energy are viable remedies to the country's dependence on foreign oil.

"We need to get off the petroleum habit," Governor Baldacci said, "and Maine is keyed up better than most states when it comes to finding alternative sources of energy."

Governor Baldacci told the group that he created a Windpower Task Force in part to bring together stakeholders in wind power and develop a consensus on how best for the state to move forward. Ultimately, the Governor said, he would like to streamline the process new wind energy projects need for approval.

"We have a wonderful opportunity to do good by being good," the Governor said. "This is something I feel strongly about. I remember what it feels like to have sales of gasoline banned on Sundays when you depend on Sunday business to survive. We shouldn't have to go through that again."

Governor Baldacci also lauded the passage last week of a \$55 million research and development bond, which will be administered through the Maine Technology Institute. The Governor said the competitively awarded grants could be used to spark new innovation related to environmental technology and renewable energy, a cluster that is likely to expand.

"This is an area which will continue to grow," the Governor said. "You'll see more and more people and more and more businesses get involved. It's a smart thing to do."

Governor Baldacci said that research is already being done on tidal projects Downeast and that the state has great potential in the development of wind power, bio-fuels and solar power.

"We are Mainers. We can figure this out," the Governor said. "Maine can lead by example as we have already done in so many areas. Winter is going to happen in this state every year and oil prices are not going to drop significantly anytime soon. The time to act is now."

Governor Baldacci Presents Gold and Silver Star Honorable Service Medals

November 15, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined military officials Thursday afternoon to present Gold Star Honorable Service Medals to families who have lost soldiers post-September 11, 2001. The Governor also presented Silver Star medals to Purple Heart recipients of various wars.

Total, 3 families of fallen soldiers were honored with Gold Stars, and 23 Purple Heart recipients were honored with Silver Star Medals: 2 who fought in the Iraq War; 7 soldiers from World War II; 1 soldier from the Korean War; and 13 soldiers who fought in Vietnam.

Before the presentation of the medals, Governor Baldacci announced that he will submit legislation in January to create a veterans campus in Bangor.

“This campus is going to build upon the features at the facility that is there now. We are going to be adding a new hospice facility, an outpatient clinic and new independent housing for veterans to the existing facility,” Governor Baldacci said. “This campus design was done not just for the Bangor facility, but it was one that can be mirrored in Downeast Maine, Aroostook County and every place that we have a veterans home facility.”

The list of soldiers honored at the ceremony follows:

Gold Star Honorable Service Medals

LCDR Robert E. Clukey III Orono SGT Nicholes D. Golding Addison CPT Daniel J. Tranchemontange Sanford

Silver Star Honorable Service Medals

IRAQ

SGT GEORGE V. GREENE, JR.; DEXTER SGT WILLIAM R.L. STOVER; AUGUSTA

WORLD WAR II

EDGAR F. ALLEN, BELFAST

LEON A. AUDET, WINSLOW

EMERY A. BILODEAU, WALDOBORO RUDOLPH J. CHAMPAGNE, READFIELD

DELL R. HYSSONG, ROCKPORT

NORMAN R. ROSSIGNOL, BANGOR

DONALD L. TUTTLE, AUGUSTA

KOREA

ARTHUR J. BONENFANT, FARMINGDALE

VIETNAM

GARY D. CORSON, CORNVILLE

DAVID P. CRESWELL, PALMYRA

DOMINIC M. DISTASIO, WESTBROOK

HUBERT E. JERNIGAN, GARDINER

JOHN G. JUDD, LIVERMORE FALLS ROBERT J. LOCKLIN, VASSALBORO

ROBERT L. LUCE, UNION

GARY D. NEPTUNE, INDIAN ISLAND

LEO S. RENY, PORTLAND JOHN C. RENY, PORTLAND

RANDALL J. SIMONSE, NORTH YARMOUTH

MALCOLM E. SPENCER, WINSLOW

NEAL A. WILLIAMS, GREENVILLE

Governor Unveils Measures to Help Mainers Deal with High Energy Costs

November 16, 2007

AUGUSTA – With energy prices near historic highs, Governor John E. Baldacci today announced efforts his Administration is taking to help Mainers cope with rising heating and transportation costs and to keep Maine people safe and warm this winter.

“Maine people are resilient. We’ve dealt with harsh winters before, and working together, helping each other, we’ve made it through. But this year brings unprecedented energy costs with little assistance from the federal government,” said Governor Baldacci.

“For real lasting improvements, we must demand leadership from Washington. For far too long, the federal government has failed to deliver a national energy policy that reduces our country’s dependence on foreign oil. States have been left to lead the way on energy policy, and that’s what we have done in Maine. We have the opportunity in Maine to develop renewable, clean energy right here in our state, which is good for our environment, our pocket books, and our economy. My Administration will continue to explore these opportunities.”

“But we face short-term difficulties that need addressing now, and there are some practical things we can do. Joining with the Maine Oil Dealers Association, financial institutions, and other organizations, we will work cooperatively to mitigate high energy costs,” said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor outlined the following steps he is taking immediately.

- An Executive Order signed today will activate a Response Team that will help the state prepare for an energy emergency. This energy task force will bring together the resources of State government in one place and will make sure that we are ready with shelters, warm centers, emergency transportation and other basic services if energy supplies or high prices create a crisis. If the situation worsens and there is a shortage of energy resources, the Governor will declare an “Energy Emergency” and take the steps necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of Maine citizens.
- Working with the Attorney General, the Governor’s Office will closely monitor oil and gas prices to make sure that our citizens aren’t being victimized by price gouging or illegal collusion.
- The Governor today sent a letter to Maine’s Congressional Delegation urging them to continue their efforts to increase funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program. “I appreciate the hard work of the Maine Congressional Delegation in pushing for additional Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds,” said Governor Baldacci.
- The Governor will continue to work with the Coalition of Northeast Governors to make sure the Northeast, which is heavily dependent on heating oil, gets the support it needs.

- The Public Utilities Commission has committed an additional \$400,000 to provide weatherization and efficiency assistance for families and seniors served by fuel assistance programs. In cooperation with MaineHousing, this effort will expand the reach of the State's weatherization efforts and save on average \$300 per household.
- Operation Keep ME Warm is also helping families reduce their energy bills by providing free efficiency kits, which are available from Community Action Agencies. This public private partnership is also raising money that will be put to work helping families who don't qualify for low-income assistance.
- The Keep ME Warm Fund continues to operate through the Maine Community Action Agencies. The money collected will be distributed to local agencies helping citizens with heating assistance.
- Cutting down on driving, with "Free Fare Friday," starting next week on the Friday after Thanksgiving, people can take the bus for free. For six weeks, you can ride the bus for free. The idea is to introduce people to a cheaper and easier way to get around on Fridays and that will translate into greater use of transit the other six days of the week.
 - o Participating providers include: Aroostook Regional Transportation, Downeast Transportation, Bangor Area Transportation (BAT), KVCAP, Western Maine, Lewiston/Auburn, and Greater Portland Regional Transportation (which includes York County).
 - o The Governor has directed his cabinet to look at ways to adjust the schedules of their workers to allow for telecommuting, and car and van pooling.
 - o The Governor has talked to the President of Maine State Chamber of Commerce – and will address their board of directors next week – on ways the Chamber can help the business community make the same adjustment.
- The Governor has directed the Department of Environmental Protection to expedite the availability of gasoline treated with ethanol into the Maine market. In the past, ethanol has made gasoline more expensive. That's not the case now, and we will work with fuel suppliers to bring the lower-cost alternative to Maine just as it is available in other New England states.

"Costs are high right now, but the worst of winter is still in front of us," said Governor Baldacci. "The work we do today will put us in a better position to respond in case of an emergency this winter."

Resources to help citizens prepare for and deal with high energy costs can go to http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/contact/citizen_services/safeandwarm.html . Information is also available by calling the state's information hotline at 211.

Contributions can be made to The Keep ME Warm Fund by going to www.mainecommunityaction.org or by calling: 1-800-393-7175.

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07 FY 08/09

November 16, 2007

AN ORDER ESTABLISHING A PRE-EMERGENCY ENERGY TASK FORCE ON ESCALATING HOME HEATING OIL AND DIESEL FUEL PRICES

WHEREAS, the global price of a barrel of crude oil has dangerously surged to nearly \$100/barrel creating record prices, volatility and uncertainty in the world energy markets; and

WHEREAS, approximately 80% of Maine homeowners and renters heat with petroleum-based fuels such as Kerosene or #2 heating oil; and

WHEREAS, the average Maine household consumes approximately 70% of their energy use in heating their home; and

WHEREAS, households in Maine consume approximately 430 million gallons of home heating fuel per year and the average household consumes more than 1,000 gallons of heating fuel per year; and

WHEREAS, the statewide average cost for heating oil is approximately 20% higher than last year and 100% higher than heating oil prices in 2001; and

WHEREAS, as of mid-October 2007 the heating oil inventories in New England stood at approximately 12 million barrels, 727,000 barrels less than last year; and

WHEREAS, the households and businesses in the state of Maine spend more than \$1 billion on space heating with petroleum-based fuel oil, natural gas and propane; and

WHEREAS, the price of gasoline and diesel fuels have soared to record heights to nearly \$3.50/gallon for diesel and \$3.24 for regular gasoline, 20% to 25% above last years prices; and

WHEREAS, the State of Maine is overly dependent on foreign petroleum products to power its public and private transportation systems, its vehicles, planes and boats; and

WHEREAS, the citizens, businesses and all levels of government spent more than \$2 billion a year on petroleum-based products to fuel our vehicles and transportation systems; and

WHEREAS, these high heating and transportation fuel prices are not projected to decline significantly in the near future, will create burdens on Maine people and businesses and threatens the safety and well-being of our people and harm our economy;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the Pre-Emergency Energy Task Force on Escalating Home Heating Oil and Diesel Fuel Prices.

Purpose and Duties

The purpose and duties of the Energy Task Force shall be to:

Undertake the actions specified in the Maine Energy Emergency Plan (10/31/07) that shall include, but not be limited to, situation assessment, inter-government communication and coordination, proactive provision of public information, and readiness for emergency communication, sheltering and travel; and

Analyze specific steps that can be immediately taken to reduce the deleterious effects of high heating oil and diesel fuel prices on Maine people and businesses and recommend to the Governor and Legislature measures to help alleviate the safety risks and burdens these high prices are imposing on Maine people and businesses; and

Once preparedness steps and immediate action have been taken, propose specific measures to promote the availability and use of alternative fuels, including biodiesel and ethanol for use as heating and transportation and explore mechanisms for a home energy efficiency program for homes that heat with liquid fuels.

Membership

Membership of the Energy Task Force shall include, but not be limited to representatives of the following agencies, organizations and entities:

- Office of Energy Independence and Security
- State Planning Office
- Office of the Attorney General
- Maine Department of Transportation
- Maine State Housing Authority
- Department of Administrative and Financial Services
- Public Advocate's Office
- Public Utilities Commission/Efficiency Maine
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Governor's Office
- Maine Emergency Management Agency
- Charitable Organizations, Religious Institutions and Non-Governmental Agencies with relevant expertise
- Oil suppliers, dealers and distributors
- Business and industry and trucking companies

- Citizens with relevant expertise

Meetings

The Energy Task Force Chair shall be appointed by the Governor and shall report no less frequently than weekly directly to the Governor. The Chair shall call meetings of the Task Force and sub-groups of the Task Force as needed.

Members of the Committee shall serve without compensation. The Task Force shall be disbanded upon completion of its tasks and written approval of the Governor.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is November 16, 2007.

John E. Baldacci, Governor

Governor Baldacci on the Passing of Harold Alfond

November 16, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci extends his deepest sympathy to the family of Harold Alfond upon hearing of his passing.

“Harold was truly one of a kind. He was my friend, and I will miss him,” said the Governor. “He was an impeccable business man, a deeply devoted family man, and tremendous benefactor to Maine people and communities. It’s impossible to quantify what he has meant to the State of Maine. His impact will truly be lasting.”

Governor Baldacci has joined Harold Alfond at many events celebrating the generous gifts Alfond has made to education, athletic and health care institutions and organizations.

“You can’t go anywhere in the state without seeing something he contributed to,” said Governor Baldacci. “Most importantly, Harold built partnerships. He brought people together and helped them achieve their goals. Harold was always generous, especially with children. He reached out to help communities. His efforts will be felt for years to come. Maine has lost one of its greatest men.”

“Harold had a huge heart, always giving selflessly. He has left the State of Maine a legacy of hope and inspiration. He was my friend; he was a friend of the State of Maine,” said Governor Baldacci.

Governor Creates Council on Competitiveness

November 19, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the creation of a business advisory group that will support his Administration's efforts to move Maine's economy forward. The Governor created the Council on Competitiveness and the Economy by Executive Order.

"These are preeminent business leaders in our state, and they have generously agreed to serve on the Council," said Governor Baldacci. "This group will continue to support our work in implementing the recommendations of the Brookings report and other important initiatives."

The Council is the successor group to the Council on Jobs, Innovation and the Economy, which successfully completed its work by initiating the proposal that was passed as the jobs bond question this November. The Governor created that group last fall to focus on finding efficiencies and cost savings in the way government does business, and turning those savings into investments that will grow the state's economy and produce prosperity for all Maine citizens.

"The Council I am creating today will be the foundation of a public-private partnership that provides nonpartisan perspectives on issues related to business and economic growth within the state," said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor outlined a number of initiatives his Administration has led, including:

- o Reducing unemployment taxes;
- o Expanding Pine Tree Zones, enabling more existing Maine businesses tax benefits for their expansions;
- o Investing in areas that will result in future returns for businesses through R&D, quality places and transportation bonds;
- o Providing for funds for industry cluster development through the Maine Technology Institute;
- o Repealing Business Equipment Property Tax Reimbursement so that new investments in business equipment will not be taxed – this helps our businesses to expand and hire new employees; and
- o Working with Maine's Chamber of Commerce on a budget that controls spending while making crucial investments to create sustainable, private sector jobs.

The Governor said there is more that needs to be done to realize opportunities for business and private sector job growth in Maine.

The Council will provide expertise and advice on such areas as:

- o Opportunities to attract federal investment in key sectors such as energy, technology and bio-science;
- o Strategies to improve trade and export opportunities;

- o Investment opportunities in research and development and higher education;
- o Coordination of workforce development;
- o Access to capital and investment in innovation for traditional and emerging industry clusters;
- o Explore strategies to make Maine's regulatory process more user friendly.

Karen Mills is the Chair of the Council. Members include:

- o Karen Gordon Mills, MMP Group
- o Gena Canning, Pine State Trading
- o Mike Dubyak, Wrights Express
- o Michelle Hood, Eastern Maine Healthcare
- o Leon Gorman, L.L. Bean
- o Dana Connors, Maine Chamber
- o Jim Conlon, Bangor Savings Bank
- o Julia Brady, Via

"I thank these individuals for dedicating their time and expertise to the Council and to helping all of Maine succeed," said Governor Baldacci.

Text of the Executive Order creating the council follows.

08 FY 08/09

November 19, 2007

AN ORDER ESTABLISHING THE GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON COMPETITIVENESS AND THE ECONOMY

WHEREAS, the economy of Maine evolves and responds to competitive challenges; and

WHEREAS, many Maine policy options, from cutting spending and reducing taxes to investment in research and development and higher education present themselves on a daily basis; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's Council on Jobs, Innovation and the Economy was created by Executive Order 23 FY 06/07 to develop a recommended action plan for moving the state forward on the innovation-focused and cluster development activities that will define the state's investment strategies and to propose structures, entities and activities that support the realization of these investments; and

WHEREAS, it has been helpful to have an additional non-partisan business oriented voice actively engaged in this discussion;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John Elias Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the Governor's Council on Competitiveness and the Economy (hereinafter "Council").

Purpose

The Governor's Council on Competitiveness and the Economy is being formed as a council of business leaders in Maine to continue and to support the work of the Governor and the Legislature in implementing the recommendations of the Brookings report and other important initiatives regarding the state's economic future. This Council is the successor group to the Council on Jobs, Innovation and the Economy which was created by Executive Order 23 FY06/07 in December, 2006.

The Council will be the foundation stone of a public/private partnership that provides non-partisan perspectives on issues related to business and economic growth within the state, particularly with regard to investments and cost reductions necessary for the state and its key economic sectors to compete in the global economy.

Duties

The Council will bring a business perspective to a number of potential issues including:

Efforts of the Governor and the Legislature to reduce the cost of state government and at the same time make it more effective.

Investment opportunities in research and development and higher education including potential future bond issues.

Opportunities to attract federal investment in key sectors such as energy, technology and bio-science, and to access existing funds designated for rural and other regional development.

Strategies to improve trade and export opportunities, particularly with our Canadian neighbors.

Coordination of workforce development, access to capital and investment in innovation for traditional and emerging industry clusters which have the potential to create new private sector jobs.

Explore strategies to make Maine's regulatory process more user friendly (particularly with regard to real estate development).

Membership

The Governor shall appoint up to 20 members to the Council and each member will serve a two year term. From among this membership, the Governor shall appoint the Chair who will preside at, set the agenda for, and schedule meetings of the Council.

Council members shall serve without compensation.

Effective Date

2007 Archive of Governor Baldacci's Press Releases

The effective date of this Executive Order is November 19, 2007.

John E. Baldacci, Governor

Governor Encourages Nominations of Fellow Mainers for National “Above and Beyond” Recognition

November 19, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci is joining the Congressional Medal of Honor Society in encouraging nominations for the Above and Beyond Citizen Honors. The annual awards recognize and honor three civilian Americans who have made a difference in the lives of others through a singular act of extraordinary heroism, or through their continued commitment to putting others before themselves, without regard for personal gain.

One finalist will be chosen from every state. Of the 50 finalists, three will be chosen to receive the Above and Beyond Citizen Honors during a ceremony in Washington D.C. on March 25, 2008. The ceremony will be hosted by Brian Williams of NBC News and will be televised nationally on March 30. Former U.S. Secretary of State and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell, and Presidents William Jefferson Clinton and George H.W. Bush are all co-chairs of the event and will take part in the televised event.

“Maine has some of the hardest working, most generous and most caring individuals in the country,” Governor Baldacci said. “We take great pride in recognizing our heroes here at home, but there is no reason why their stories shouldn’t be told on a national stage. I invite the citizens of this state to take a moment to recognize their friend or neighbor for their extraordinary work putting service before self by submitting a nomination for the Above and Beyond Citizen Honors.”

Nominations are being accepted now through December 16, 2007. Potential nominees cannot submit their own form. More information and online nomination forms are available by visiting www.aboveandbeyond365.com.

Governor Celebrates Private LEED-Certified Building in Saco

November 26, 2007

SACO – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated the opening of the LEED-certified Saco & Biddeford Savings Operations Center. The designation means the center incorporates sustainable green building standards developed by the United States Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design.

"Saco & Biddeford Savings has grown from its beginnings in 1827 and has become an important community partner in Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "The institution is now counted as one of the most forward thinking, achieving the high Silver Level Certification LEED assessment. I'm pleased to say that as Saco & Biddeford Savings leads the way, there are many others that are matching their efforts, including Hannaford and other quality Maine companies."

The newest LEED-certified building adds to the growing list of green buildings in Maine, including the Gold-certified USM Community Education Center and the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf addition of Brewster Hall.

"Maine has been leading the way when it comes to energy independence and environmental standards," said Governor Baldacci. "The work of Saco & Biddeford Savings continues that leadership, showing that our private sector partners are concerned about being good stewards when it comes to the environment. I am confident that when other companies see what Saco & Biddeford Savings is able to do here, they too will look to apply the successful energy saving techniques used in this facility."

Governor Baldacci said that when he first came into office, he set Maine as an example of being a leader in protecting the environment. He established the Office of Energy Independence and Security in 2003 when, to many, energy was a relatively new issue. Oil was selling at that time at \$20 per barrel.

"I created that office because I wanted to make Maine a leader in energy conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy," said Governor Baldacci.

Maine became one of the first states to use biodiesel to heat state offices and to adopt the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED building standards for new and renovated state buildings.

"We have improved the fuel economy of the state fleet, increased the number of hybrids in the fleet, doubled the size of the state vanpool program, and overall reduced the number of miles that state employees travel," said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor outlined earlier this month a number of additional initiatives to help Mainers prepare for the cold winter months, including:

Cutting down on driving, with "Free Fare Friday," a pilot program that started this past Friday and will run every Friday through the end of December. People can ride the bus for free. For more information about Free Fare Friday, visit <http://www.maine.gov/mdot-stage/freefarefridays/index.htm>

The Keep ME Warm Fund continues to operate through the Maine Community Action Agencies. The money collected will be distributed to local agencies helping citizens with heating assistance. For more information on the Keep ME Warm Fund, visit www.mainecommunityaction.org or by calling: 1-800-393-7175.

The Governor has directed the Department of Environmental Protection to expedite the availability of gasoline treated with ethanol into the Maine market. In the past, ethanol has made gasoline more expensive. That's not the case now, and Maine will work with fuel suppliers to bring the lower-cost alternative to Maine just as it is available in other New England states.

For additional resources to help citizens prepare for and deal with high energy costs, call 2-1-1, or click on http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/contact/citizen_services/safeandwarm.html.

Blaine House Christmas Tree Energy Efficient

November 26, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and First Lady Karen Baldacci announced the initial lighting of the Christmas Tree outside the Blaine House this evening for the 2007 holiday season. The LED lights used on the tree are energy efficient, an important aspect of the holidays for the First Family. This is the fourth year in a row that the LED lights have been used on the holiday tree.

“We hope to show that these lights are energy efficient and affordable,” said Governor Baldacci. “This is one small step we can do to save energy. During this season we hope all Maine families consider doing what they can to put in place energy saving ideas.”

The Governor noted that LED (Light-Emitting Diode) holiday lights on the Blaine House tree use one-tenth the power and last ten times longer than conventional bulbs.

For energy saving tips and additional resources to help keep safe and warm this season, call 2-1-1, or click on http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/contact/citizen_services/safeandwarm.html.

Governor Baldacci Attends Transportation Summit

November 27, 2007

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci heralded the advancement of public transportation in Southern Maine Tuesday morning, saying that the partners are effectively balancing current needs with ideas for the future. The Governor spoke to about 60 transportation and city officials at the 2nd Transportation Summit at the Portland Ocean Terminal.

“I have really been impressed with your work on the transportation network here in Southern Maine,” Governor Baldacci said. “You continue to improve and upgrade it, creating a better system for your customers. This is important for people who live, work and visit southern Maine, a vital link of our Maine economy.”

The Governor said that Maine needs to make wise choices about where to spend money. Maine Incomes are lower than the national average and the needs of the state are greater.

“It’s about being smarter and knowing where to invest our money,” the Governor said.

Governor Baldacci noted bridge repair as an area that will require additional resources in the coming years. He said that the bridges will need to be fixed as they get older, and that funding these repairs presents challenges.

“The challenges we face maintaining our roads and bridges necessitate a change in the structure of our transportation system,” Governor Baldacci said. “This change will be hard, but it will enable us to use our transportation funds more wisely.”

At the summit, a joint resolution was signed to endorse the spirit of the PACTS Transit Coordination Study. The study explored four areas for improvement in organization and delivery of service: communication, coordination, collaboration, consolidation and the formation of a regional transit authority.

Governor Receives "Keeping Our Bridges Safe" Report

November 28, 2007

AUGUSTA -- Governor John E. Baldacci announced today that he has received a report on inspections and capital programming for the state's bridges from the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT).

The report, entitled "Keeping our Bridges Safe," was prepared in response to the Governor's executive order, issued following the collapse of the I-35W Bridge in Minneapolis, Minn., in August. In its major findings, the report determined that Maine's bridges are safe and that the current inspection program is effective. "I want to thank this team of state and private-sector experts for their hard work and plain talk about our bridges," said Governor Baldacci. "This is an unvarnished look at our bridge inspection program and what we need to do to assure that the bridges in Maine remain safe. Fifteen of Maine's best engineers have given me an honest assessment of our inspection program. It gives me confidence that the professionals at MaineDOT are diligently monitoring the condition of our bridges."

The document was written by a team of 15 professional engineers with more than 284 years of combined engineering experience. The team included engineers from MaineDOT, the University of Maine, the Federal Highway Administration, the Associated General Contractors of Maine and a consulting engineer.

"The buying power of federal funding for bridges has declined in recent years," according to the Governor. "The tragedy in Minnesota shows that this is a national issue. The federal government needs to step up its funding to address bridge needs. Meanwhile, we're going to do what's necessary to continue to assure the safety of the traveling public."

In carrying out the Governor's executive order, the team reviewed bridge safety risks, Maine's bridge inspection and capital improvement programs, and the nature and extent of Maine's bridge funding needs.

Key findings include that bridges in Maine are currently safe and that the "safety net" of bridge inspection, posting and closure is strong, and will be improved even further. The report also says that unless additional sources are identified to fund bridge replacements and rehabilitations, additional bridge weight restrictions and closures will occur.

Among the 25 recommendations contained in the report, the team suggested strengthening the inspection and posting safety net by implementing certain bridge engineering practices, adopting a bridge inspection cycle of no more than 24 months, adopting a new bridge posting policy, improving documentation and changing Maine law to allow closer monitoring of overweight vehicles on critical bridges. The report also estimates that between \$50 and \$60 million in additional funding per year is needed to pay for bridge repairs and replacements (up from the current level of about \$70 million per year).

"I'm directing MaineDOT to implement the recommended enhancements to the safety net," the Governor said. "We need to continue to look for efficiencies at all levels of government so we can invest in Maine's critical assets, including transportation. I'm calling on MaineDOT, the Legislature, and the university to work on innovative solutions, including new composite technologies. We also must look at new strategies for funding, including enhanced federal support, more efficient operations and purchasing, and other potential resources." The report was finalized Monday and delivered to the Governor late Tuesday night. It is available online at: www.mainedot.gov . Editors: For more information, including copies of the report, FAQs and an updated Bridge Watch List and related map, contact Herb Thomson (MaineDOT) at 207-624-3030.

Governor Baldacci Introduces Business to Belfast

November 29, 2007

BELFAST – Governor John E. Baldacci presented athenahealth to Belfast Thursday morning. athenahealth will occupy the former MBNA building and will create hundreds of jobs over the next several years.

“Maine won a multi-state competition to attract one of the most innovative young companies in the U.S. today,” Governor Baldacci said. “The company also considered Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. But Maine won out.”

Governor Baldacci cited available real estate, workforce and state support such as Pine Tree Zones and state training programs as some of the reasons athenahealth chose Maine. One of the major factors, according to the Governor, was the reputation of Maine people.

“athenahealth knew about Maine people and their desire to work and be the best at what they do,” the Governor said. “In return, athenahealth is committed to offering a competitive wage and strong benefits package.”

Governor Baldacci credited the team effort between state departments, Maine’s Congressional Delegation, Maine & Company, local officials and Bank of America. The Governor thanked the Bank of America team for partnering to help redevelop the former MBNA properties – including those in Belfast, Farmington, Fort Kent and Presque Isle.

athenahealth CEO Jonathan Bush, first cousin to President George W. Bush, applauded the partnership that existed in the state to draw the company to Belfast. Bush said that the local efforts paired with state assistance such as the Pine Tree Zone program helped attract athenahealth to Maine.

Governor Baldacci said that Mainers should be proud to have athenahealth in the state because of its reputation and sustainability.

“This company has won ‘Best Places to Work’ awards for their corporate headquarters in Watertown, Massachusetts, they want to be involved and participate in community activities, they want to be an employer-of-choice for the region and the state, and they had the 3rd most successful Initial Public Offering of 2007,” Governor Baldacci said. “This is further proof that the best companies in the world choose Maine.”

athenahealth was founded in 1997 by Jonathan Bush and Todd Park. athenahealth is a provider of on-demand business services to physician practices, employing over 500 people and serving over 11,500 providers nationwide. The company plans to hire 100 employees in Belfast to start, with plans to expand over the next several years.

Governor and First Lady Open Economic Summit on Early Childhood

November 29, 2007

ROCKPORT – Governor John E. Baldacci and First Lady Karen Baldacci today opened the two-day Governor's Economic Summit on Early Childhood. Funded in part by a grant from the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, the summit brings together business leaders, Legislators, law enforcement and others to focus on the needs of children from birth to age five. The goal of the summit is to build collaborations that will aid in crafting and implementing strategies to support comprehensive early childhood development.

"The best research on brain development and social policy shows that investing in our infants and toddlers is the best down payment we can make toward the future success of Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "We must use the opportunity before us to collectively embrace early care and education, engage in active partnerships, shift policy and give tools to Maine families to succeed."

Through the Governor's Children's Cabinet, which is chaired by First Lady Karen Baldacci, and the cabinet's Task Force on Early Childhood, Maine has placed a particular focus on investing early in children. Last year, the state's Early Childhood Initiative plan was encapsulated in the State Plan for Humane Early Childhood Systems for Maine. The Baldacci Administration has pursued policies to streamline programs serving children to ensure more effective use of resources. He has promoted family unification efforts and the expansion of prevention and early intervention.

"We want the 67,628 children under age 5 in Maine to grow in healthy ways and ultimately contribute to Maine's skilled workforce," said Governor Baldacci. "We hope to build on the public-private approach to design the best and most effective services to benefit Maine's youngest children."

The Governor said families with young children need access to high-quality learning experiences from the pre-natal period through the start of formal education and beyond. As public resources remain scarce, investments must be both wise and effective.

The Governor and the State Legislature have added 800 million new dollars to K-12 education in the last four years and are reforming K-12 administrations to make Maine's education system more effective and efficient.

"We need to make sure kids are ready to take advantage of those investments," said Governor Baldacci. "The better prepared children are for kindergarten, the more success they'll have in later years. That matters for the child personally, but it also matters for the state and our overall economy. We need to spread that message through our communities."

"This summit brings together the people in Maine who can get the job done," said First Lady Karen Baldacci. "This takes a great amount of commitment, but there is nothing more important than what we do today to help our kids tomorrow."

The summit includes presentations from a number of national leaders in the area of early childhood research and programs. Keynote speakers include Dr. Hiro Yoshikawa, Professor of Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education and Robbin Johnson, businessman and innovator of the early learning initiative in Minnesota. George Kaiser, businessman and founder of the George Kaiser Family Foundation, is the dinner speaker this evening.

Joint Statement on Threat Against NAACP Members

November 30, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and Joseph Perry, President of the Bangor Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), today issued a joint statement regarding the recent threat against NAACP members. The threat from a single individual in the Bangor area has resulted in the cancelation of the community's Kwanzaa celebration.

The joint statement follows.

"There is no place in Maine for this kind of hatred. We will not stand aside and allow intolerance to infiltrate our communities. While this may be an isolated incident – one which does not represent the values of Maine - there remain underlying racial issues that we must continue to address. All Maine people deserve respect and fair treatment, regardless of their race, color, gender, or creed. We call upon all people of this state – especially as we enter into this holiday season – to embrace the Maine values of tolerance and respect for their fellow Mainers."

Governor Issues Declaration of Civil Emergency

November 30, 2007

AUGUSTA -- Governor John E. Baldacci today signed a Declaration of Civil Emergency regarding the high price of diesel fuel and its impact on the State's forest products industry.

"Diesel prices in Maine are at all-time highs, and it is having a devastating impact on our economy, and particularly on the forest products industry," Governor Baldacci said. "This emergency order will allow us to take further steps to help truckers and loggers in the State, and place more pressure upon Washington to take action."

Governor Baldacci signed the declaration after meeting today with representatives from the trucking and logging community.

The declaration is an important step in mobilizing action and seeking the assistance of the President in addressing the diesel fuel price crisis that is severely burdening the forest products industry.

In addition to the declaration, the Governor also announced that the following steps will be taken to further support the forest products industry.

Currently off-road diesel users may apply for a refund of State fuel taxes paid at the pump. The Governor's Office is offering to facilitate an arrangement with private vendors to ease the administrative burden of applying for the refund. Instead of paying the tax and seeking a refund, the arrangement would adjust the price automatically at the time of purchase.

In the interim, the State will expedite returns of State taxes paid on diesel fuel purchase for off-road use, and encourages users to apply weekly for their refund.

The Governor directed the Maine Department of Transportation to identify useable road networks that can tolerate Gross Weight of 105,000 lbs. for trucks registered in Maine hauling forest products, with assurance that those trucks are safe and well-maintained.

Under the Declaration, the Governor will petition President George W. Bush to waive federal weight restrictions for four months on I-95 and I-395 north of Augusta. (The state weight limit is 100,000 lbs.; the federal limit is 80,000 lbs.)

The Governor will submit emergency legislation in January to speed up the reimbursement for 2007 property taxes paid on forest products equipment eligible under the BETR program. Rather than waiting for reimbursement until the start of the next fiscal year, the legislation will make funds available early next year to those in the forest industry. Examples of the type of equipment that would qualify for both programs would be: saw mills, paper machines and related equipment, non-excised road equipment road equipment, skidders, log loaders, bulldozers, harvesters, chippers, chain saws, trailers, chains and tire chains.

The Governor will submit emergency legislation to rescind the sales tax on the purchase of parts and supplies needed to repair and maintain forestry trucks and equipment; sales tax exemption for motor vehicle parts, accessories and tires purchased for motor vehicles owned and operated by businesses in the logging and forest products industries. The exemption is estimated to cost \$160,000 in FY 2009.

The Administration will postpone proposed rule changes to Chapter 4, Maine Motor Carrier Safety Regulation until the spring of 2008.

The Governor will ensure representation for the forest products industry during the development of long-term strategies for energy independence in Maine based on the Governor's plan for creating a sustainable energy culture in our State.

"We can't do everything ourselves. This is a national issue that demands national attention," Governor Baldacci said. "But we're going to do what we can, as soon as we can to protect this vital industry."

State Sen. Elizabeth Mitchell of Augusta also attended the meeting.

"The Legislature shares the Governor's concerns about the high cost of diesel," Sen. Mitchell said. "We know that people are hurting, and we will work closely with the Governor to find meaningful and equitable solutions to these problems. In addition, we must all work together to keep the pressure on Washington to address the high cost of fuel this winter."

State Sen. Elizabeth Schneider participated by telephone.

"I'm glad that Senate leadership and the Governor are working together to respond to calls for assistance," Sen. Schneider said. "I appreciate the leadership of the Governor in stepping up to the plate to tackle soaring costs of fuel."

Soldier with Maine Ties Dies in Iraq

December 3, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci has learned of the death of a soldier with Maine ties.

Corporal Blair William Emery, 24, originally from Lee, Maine, died Nov. 30 when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle in Baqubah, Iraq.

Corporal Emery served with the 571st Military Police Company, 97th Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade.

“Our deepest sympathies go to the Emery family,” Governor Baldacci said. “I know that all of Maine mourns the death of another young soldier. We will keep the Emery family in our thoughts and prayers, and provide any assistance we can as they cope with this terrible loss.”

Corporal Emery’s parents live in Lee.

Corporal Emery is the second soldier with connections to Lee to die this year in Iraq. Sgt. Joel A. House was killed June 23 by an IED in Taji, Iraq. Sgt. House’s parents also live in Lee.

“The people of Lee have paid a high price,” Governor Baldacci said. “This small Maine community has been hit especially hard. The entire community needs our support.”

Flags will be ordered flown at half-staff on the day of Corporal Emery’s funeral.

Governor Baldacci Honors Maine Organ Donors

December 3, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci honored five organ donors Monday, issuing a proclamation naming Dec. 3, 2007, as Organ Donor Awareness Day in the State of Maine. The five honorees include two organ donors, two mothers of organ donors and one volunteer. “These individuals are helping to get the word out about saving lives through organ donation,” said Governor Baldacci. “I am happy to honor these five people and all donors on Organ Donor Awareness Day. I encourage Mainers to think about giving, if they can, to help save a life.”

The Governor honored the following individuals:

Hiromi Dolliver of South Portland - Dolliver's daughter, Nancy, died in 2002. Through multiple organ donations Nancy saved many lives. Hiromi has since become a volunteer at the New England Organ Bank and a strong advocate for organ and tissue donation.

Rosa McGrail of Solon - McGrail honored the wishes of her 16-year-old son, Jonathan, by donating his organs and tissue upon his death. She has since become an advocate for organ and tissue donations.

William Cross of Portland - Cross donated a kidney to his sister, Cathy. Four years later, he was diagnosed with non-Hopkins lymphoma. Cross is currently in remission.

Ronald Colley of Brewer – Colley, a veteran of the U.S. Air Force 101st Air Refueling Wing, husband and father of three who donated a kidney to save a life.

Martha Black of Portland - Black volunteers for the National Kidney Foundation of Maine. Black recently had open heart surgery, but continues to spread the word about organ donation and what it can do for people.

According to state law, the Governor shall designate an organ donor, recipient or listed individual to be recognized each year on Dec. 3. Organ Donor Awareness Day was put into place eight years ago to commemorate the life of Kate James, who was born on Dec. 3, 1980. James died in 1999 while awaiting a double lung transplant.

The Organ Donor Awareness Day proclamation text follows:

WHEREAS, nearly 98,000 men, women, and children were on the organ transplant waiting list as of November 28, 2007; and

WHEREAS, donation and transplantation save lives, but the need for organs far exceeds the number donated; and

WHEREAS, in Maine, 130 men, women and children are on the waiting list for kidney and pancreas transplants as of November 23, 2007; and

WHEREAS, in New England, more than 4,000 men, women, and children were on the organ transplant waiting list as of November 23, 2007; and

WHEREAS, more than 38,000 blood donors are needed each day in our nation, and thousands of Americans need corneal, other tissue transplants, and marrow; and

WHEREAS, those who donate organs, tissue, marrow and blood are life savers and life enhancers who share gifts beyond measure,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim December 3, 2007 as

ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS DAY

throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to mark this observance.

State Government to Close at 2 p.m.

December 3, 2007

AUGUSTA – Maine State government will close at 2 p.m. today, Monday, Dec. 3, due to a winter storm that hit the State early this morning.

The storm is expected to increase in intensity at about 3 p.m., with greater accumulation of snow and high winds. The 2 p.m. release will reduce the number of drivers on the road after daylight hours.

“Maine people expect their government to be open for business,” Governor Baldacci said. “At the same time, we must balance that expectation with public safety. The early release is a responsible reaction to the poor weather.”

Public Hearing on Trucking Rules Canceled

December 3, 2007

AUGUSTA – A public hearing scheduled to discuss changes in regulations concerning Maine's trucking industry has been canceled.

The hearing was originally scheduled for 5 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 4, at the Maine Department of Public Safety in Augusta.

The public hearing was scheduled for comments on amendments to the Maine Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.

The meeting was canceled as part of the State's response to high diesel fuel costs that are threatening the forest products industry.

"Maine's trucking industry is under great pressure right now with diesel fuel prices reaching record highs," Governor John E. Baldacci said. "We need to make sure that the industry is stabilized before we start changing the rules on them. High diesel prices have created a crisis. Now is not the time to make these changes."

The State of Maine adopts Federal Motor Carrier Safety Rules through the State Police Chapter 4 rule. The hearing would have considered current state exemptions to the federal rules.

Governor Receives Quality of Place Report

December 4, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today received the report from the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place. The Council was created by Executive Order in March to examine the way land-use decisions are made and to recommend ways to protect, invest in and enhance Maine's distinctive quality of place.

"Maine's quality of place is important to our future," said Governor Baldacci. "This summer I saw the beauty of Maine from Mt. Katahdin's summit, and saw that Millinocket is the gateway to a park that attracts 80,000 visitors each year. I traveled to Asia on a trade mission and met high level officials who want to make Maine their home in retirement. I welcomed athenahealth to Belfast and learned that the Maine Coast and our excellent workforce helped lock in the CEO's business location decision. I know that the quality of this place and our people is Maine's calling card to the world."

The Governor's Administration has been working to streamline government at all levels and invest in research and development, education and Maine's natural resources. In November, the voters of Maine approved a number of bond questions to make investments in Maine's education, economy and land preservation.

"Now with the Quality of Place Council's report, we can add to our economic development toolkit," said Governor Baldacci. "What we love about Maine – trees, lakes, mountains, our history is also our chief economic advantage. Investing in new ways in our traditional industries—such as tourism—will reap greater economic rewards."

The Governor accepted the report and thanked Richard Barringer, Chair of the Council, and the other 16 members of the group for their work over the last few months. He said he looks forward to reviewing the recommendations.

"The ideas laid out in this document will enable us to review how to make economic development more effective and efficient, preserve the quality of life in Maine, and present opportunity to Maine people," said Governor Baldacci.

The report can be found at www.maine.gov/spo/qualityofplace

Governor Baldacci on ISO-NE Report: 'Status Quo is Unacceptable'

December 5, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci issued the following statement concerning a draft report released Wednesday by the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

The report examines the costs and benefits of withdrawing from ISO-New England, a regional transmission organization that includes Maine.

According to the report, Maine's participation in ISO-NE exposes consumers to high, volatile, and in some cases, inequitable costs and limits the State's ability to meet environmental policy objectives, including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. ISO-NE's regional cost allocation policies exacerbate issues of Maine's reliance on natural gas, and limit the region's ability to fight climate change.

"The PUC report confirms that the status quo is unacceptable," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine has not been treated fairly and our people pay the price with higher electricity rates. We must develop energy policies that protect Maine ratepayers and stabilize the electricity market."

"Our electricity prices are too high, and they're hurting Maine families and Maine businesses," Governor Baldacci said.

"As one possible avenue to improving our current situation, I will also continue to engage the Canadian Maritimes. A partnership with our neighbors to the north offers numerous opportunities. We are both rich in natural resources that could provide clean, non-greenhouse gas emitting electricity and help lower prices and improve reliability."

"Maine must take control of its energy future, and I will work with the PUC and the Legislature to protect our decision-making authority," Governor Baldacci continued.

Governor Orders Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff on December 7

December 6, 2007

AUGUSTA – In remembrance and honor of Sgt. Blair William Emery, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Friday, Dec. 7, 2007.

Sgt. Emery died as a result of an IED attack in Baqubah, Iraq, on Nov. 30, 2007.

His funeral services are scheduled for noon on Friday at the Lee Academy Gym.

Additionally, the President has urged the United States flag to be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Friday in honor of those who died as a result of their service at Pearl Harbor.

Governor Baldacci Applauds Land Deal

December 10, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Millinocket and state officials this morning to applaud a deal that will mean more predictable land use in the Katahdin region for the future.

In the deal, the State has signed an option to acquire 11,500 acres of land in the Katahdin region from a corporation owned by Roxanne Quimby. The state must raise \$3 million within two years to purchase the land. Additionally, Quimby has purchased the 8,900-acre Wassatquoik Valley from Gardiner Lands for \$6.1 million. Quimby has granted deeded access to the public for specific purposes, such as pedestrian hiking and snowmobiling along specified trails on some of her various properties. Quimby has also committed to further dialog regarding ATV trails on the land.

“For the people of Maine and for those who come to Maine to enjoy our outdoors, this agreement creates more certainty for trails, recreation and hunting,” Governor Baldacci said. “For the option period, lands optioned will be open to hunting and motorized recreation.”

Governor Baldacci applauded the collaboration between the town, State and private sector to reach a deal that achieved everyone’s goals. Millinocket Town Manager Gene Conlogue, Gardiner Lands, Roxanne Quimby, Trust for Public Land, the Bureau of Public Lands, the Department of Conservation and Commissioner Patrick McGowan all worked cooperatively to achieve the end result.

“This simply couldn’t have happened without the Trust for Public Land,” the Governor said. “Their contribution of negotiators and lawyers and interim financing was absolutely necessary, absolutely valuable. We all brought to the State a shared vision, and with that vision, the details then were able to be negotiated in a way that everyone wins, especially the people of Maine who have enjoyed and now will continue to enjoy recreational pursuits in this part of the state.”

Governor Baldacci and PUC Announce Winners of Energy Savings Contest

December 10, 2007

AUGUSTA — Governor John E. Baldacci awarded six students with iPod Shuffles and solar-powered chargers today for winning the 5th Annual Energy Savings Tip contest. The contest was open to 4th, 5th and 6th graders from around the state and asked students to submit the energy saving ideas for homes and schools. Prizes were awarded to winners of both categories in each grade level.

"This winter we are seeing record high prices for home heating oil, diesel and gasoline," Governor Baldacci said. "Because of this, we are seeing more and more families struggle to make ends meet as we hunker down for what could be another brutally cold Maine winter. We need for everyone to do his or her part and to educate students about the importance of conservation."

The Governor said that the State is trying to encourage energy conservation in addition to providing low-income heating assistance and programs such as "Free Fare Fridays" to help ease the strain of high energy prices. He said that increased energy conservation and renewable resources instead of depending on foreign oil will save money in the long run and make Maine's economy more secure.

Governor Baldacci honored the students for their creativity in trying to identify ways to conserve energy both at home and at school.

The winners of the contest were:

4th Grade Home tip – Tiffany Mills, Gilbert Elementary School, Augusta; Teacher – Mrs. Rollins "Unplug chargers when not using them."

School tip – Erica Turmel, Hermon Elementary School; Teacher – Mrs. Caddell "When we build buildings, we can use energy efficient windows and heating systems, insulation, roofing materials and lighting."

5th Grade Home tip – Reed Bridge-Koenigsberg, Crooked River Elementary School, Casco Teacher – Sharon Ridley "Un-insulated attics can be energy hogs: so, ask your parents to place some insulation on your attic floor."

School tip – Josie Ford, Bangor Christian School, Bangor Teacher – Mrs. McDonald "Don't use lights when it is sunny because the sun will light the room."

6th Grade

Home tip – Aurora Sullivan, Leonard Middle School, Old Town Teacher – Mrs. Birmingham "You could dry laundry outside on a clothesline rather than using a clothes dryer and thereby save electricity."

School tip – Danielle Garry, York Middle School, York Teacher – Mrs. Fortier "Take school bus to school if you can, then less people will use gas."

The 5th Annual Energy Savings Tip contest was sponsored by Governor Baldacci's Office of Energy Independence and Security and the Maine Public Utilities Commission's Efficiency Maine program. For more information, visit www.energymaine.com.

Governor Baldacci Pays Tribute to Fallen Heroes

December 10, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci paid tribute to fallen members of the military Monday by taking part in an inaugural wreath laying ceremony at the Maine State House. The Wreaths Across America campaign kicked off a weeklong celebration of America's veterans and their service to country.

"The holidays are especially difficult times for family members who have lost loved ones," Governor Baldacci said. "As we are spending time with our families and friends during the holiday season, we should take time to remember those who have died and honor those who are still overseas."

The wreath used at the State House ceremony was also donated by the Worcester Wreath Company from Harrington. In addition to the 10,000 wreaths on the way to Virginia, 230 more wreaths are being donated to veterans' cemeteries and monuments across the nation.

"I want to say thank you to Morrill Worcester and the people who work so hard to help make and transport the wreaths," the Governor said. "It reflects Maine values so well."

The Hermon High School JROTC and the 195th Army Band of the Maine Army National Guard also participated in the ceremony. The formal Wreath Laying Ceremony as part of the Arlington Wreath Project will be held this Saturday. The event will mark the 16th anniversary of Maine wreaths being donated to decorate veterans' graves in Arlington.

Harold Alfond College Challenge Unveiled

December 11, 2007

AUGUSTA – A new challenge grant encouraging Maine families to prepare and save early for their children's higher education continues the legacy of Harold Alfond. Governor John E. Baldacci today joined members of Alfond's family, the Harold Alfond Foundation, the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME), Maine hospitals and Maine's higher education institutions for the unveiling of the grant, a dream of the late Harold Alfond, who was working with the partners on this effort prior to his death last month.

Calling Harold Alfond a State treasure, the Governor said that this challenge is yet another shining example of how Alfond created partnerships to benefit all of Maine's people.

"Harold had the desire to make sure every child in Maine gets a fair shake and a chance for a good life," said Governor Baldacci. "The Harold Alfond College Challenge brings together the ideals that drove Harold's lifetime of philanthropy and will serve to raise the aspirations and opportunities of countless Maine children."

The Harold Alfond College Challenge, beginning as a pilot program for all babies born in Maine General facilities starting January 1, 2008, will become another key to opening up opportunity for Maine's young people. Parents who begin a NextGen account for their children by their first birthday will be eligible for a \$500 grant.

Mr. Alfond hoped that the families taking advantage of this seed money would contribute additional funds. FAME estimates that alone, the \$500 grant will grow to \$1,924 by 2026. Returns will be much greater with family contributions, so that, under FAME estimates, a \$50 a month contribution to the child's fund combined with the \$500 grant would translate into a value of more than \$25,000 by 2026. Mr. Alfond also wished that others in the community, including businesses and philanthropists, would match contributions.

Governor Baldacci said that the 21st Century economy requires a higher degree of education attainment.

"Harold believed that in this new economy that a person should get a college degree regardless of the cost," said Governor Baldacci. "The benefits, he said, would last a lifetime. But he wasn't blind to life's hard realities. For some families, college can appear like a distant dream – unattainable or forbidden. With the Alfond College Challenge, the dream is a little easier to reach, is more attainable, is less distant."

"A community's greatest assets are its children," said Governor Baldacci. "It's our collectively responsibility today to take care of our children. In the future, it will be their responsibility to take care of the world. Harold was dedicated to making sure they have the tools they need to be successful."

For more information about the Harold Alfond College Challenge, please visit www.famemaine.com.

Red Sox World Championship Trophy to Visit Maine

December 12, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor Baldacci today received confirmation from the Red Sox that the World Series trophy will be visiting the State of Maine on December 14th.

“I am pleased that the Red Sox will be visiting Maine with the World Series trophy, ensuring that Maine fans will be able to view the trophy and share the experience and excitement with their families,” said Governor Baldacci. “The visit to Maine shows that the team’s owners recognize how important the fans are to the success of the team.”

The Governor commended the City of Portland, home of the Sea Dogs, for their work with the Red Sox organization to facilitate the visit. Viewing of the trophy will take place in Portland at Hadlock Field from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

At 4:30 p.m., the Governor will join City officials and organization personnel for a closing press conference, followed by a visit to the Barbara Bush Children’s Hospital.

The Governor also thanked the Red Sox organization for their willingness to arrange an additional visit to the Bangor area in early 2008, ensuring fans across Maine have an opportunity to see the trophy.

Further details regarding the visit will be made available when confirmed.

Governor Addresses Recent Trade Mission Success

December 13, 2007

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci addressed students, educators and business people at the Governor's International Community Breakfast hosted by the World Affairs Council of Maine. The Governor spoke about the importance of expanding markets overseas for Maine goods. He also provided an update on the most recent trade mission sponsored by the Maine International Trade Center. The Governor led a delegation of Maine businesses, and education and community leaders to Japan and South Korea in November.

"Trade missions help grow our economy, introduce Maine products to fast-growing trade partners and create new jobs here at home," said Governor Baldacci. "I am pleased to report that as a direct result of the trade mission, participants have already secured \$3 million in export sales for the next 12-month period."

The previous three trade missions resulted in increased sales from Maine companies by at least \$12.8 million. This is a conservative number that only tracks new sales in the first year after the mission.

The Governor said that Maine companies are able to successfully compete around the globe. Increasing foreign trade opportunities have a ripple effect, growing Maine's economy, creating jobs and increasing State revenues.

"Maine has tremendous resources, innovative businesses and a reputation for quality," said Governor Baldacci. "Every indication is that Japanese and South Korean businesses appreciate the value of Maine people and products. They know that our workforce is among the hardest working and that we take great pride in a job well done."

This year's trip focused on a number of industries and areas that have particular growth potential for Maine in the Asian markets, including: seafood; tourism; agriculture and other natural resource based industries; manufacturing; building products and education.

The World Affairs Council of Maine is celebrating its 30th anniversary as the state's oldest and largest nonprofit public membership organization dedicated to public education in international affairs.

Governor Celebrates Maine's First Ethanol Distribution Facility

December 13, 2007

AUBURN – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials from Safe Handling at the opening ceremony for the first ethanol terminal in the state. The Governor commended Safe Handling for its environmental stewardship and leadership in support of alternative, clean, renewable energy.

“With crude oil prices hovering near \$100 a barrel, people in Maine are worried about keeping their families warm this winter and how they will pay for the gasoline they need every day to get to work,” said Governor Baldacci. “That’s why this distribution facility is so important and so timely. We have been actively working – both in the public and private sector – to achieve energy independence and promote sustainability.”

Safe Handling has been bringing biodiesel into the state by rail. According to the company, increased interest from Maine businesses has led to the construction of the new facility in Auburn. Additionally, Safe Handling has employed environmentally friendly practices, spreading the word about achieving success in the business world by going green.

“By bringing ethanol into Maine, Safe Handling will add new diversity to renewable energy resources available in the state and give retailers a choice,” said Governor Baldacci. “Ethanol-blended gasoline has a smaller carbon footprint, reduces our dependence of foreign oil, and could reduce prices in the long run.”

'Free Fare Fridays' Boost Bus Ridership Statewide

December 13, 2007

AUGUSTA – Public response to “Free Fare Fridays,” a program designed to introduce more Mainers to the benefits of mass transit, has been strong, increasing ridership around the state.

Since Governor John E. Baldacci kicked off the statewide campaign from the Bangor Area Transit “BAT” bus on the Friday after Thanksgiving, ridership in Maine’s largest transit communities has increased an average of 27 percent statewide, and it continues to grow.

“Our goal was to reintroduce Mainers to their local bus service and the commuter options available through the GO Maine Program,” said Governor John E. Baldacci. “In this case, our citizens definitely recognized a good deal when they saw one.”

Since the Free Fare Fridays program began three weeks ago, ridership on the South Portland Bus and Portland Metro service is up more than 22 percent on Fridays, Citylink in Lewiston/Auburn has seen a 38 percent ridership increase, and Bangor’s BAT has seen a 43 percent increase. The Biddeford-Saco-OOB Shuttle Bus and Zoom counted 263 more riders than the service’s average ridership on last week’s Free Fare Friday.

Along with the upsurge in transit riders, commuters are also flocking to the GO Maine Commuter Web site and signing up for carpools.

In the three weeks since the campaign began, Web activity is up 225 percent, with Mainers trying to find carpool partners and vanpool availability. More than 1,000 new ride matches were attempted and more than 75 new carpools registered during the same time period.

“Through partnering, investment and innovation, we’ve worked hard to build a modern, responsive transit network in our urban communities and seasonal transit systems, with new features including alternative fuel buses, bike racks and express routes,” commented MaineDOT Commissioner David Cole, reacting to the robust ridership numbers. “I’m very excited about the results we’re seeing.”

In late November, with gas prices soaring, Governor Baldacci, MaineDOT, the GO Maine Commuter Program and local bus providers teamed up to offer Free Fare Fridays. Every Friday, from Thanksgiving to New Years, local buses are absolutely free. The local bus services encouraged Mainers to take advantage of this low-cost alternative to driving solo, and, if local bus service wasn’t available, to sign up for carpooling or vanpooling at GOMaine.org.

Governor Receives Safer Chemicals Report

December 17, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today received a report and recommendations from the Task Force to Promote Safer Chemicals in Consumer Products. The Governor created the task force early last year to increase the development of safer alternatives to hazardous chemicals in consumer goods and services. The recommendations are timely in light of recent product recalls on children's toys due to chemical dangers.

"Maine families want assurances that consumer products are safe. We are here because there is nothing more important than protecting the health and welfare of our citizens, especially our children who are more susceptible to the dangers of chemicals in consumer products," said Governor Baldacci. "Gone are the days that protecting our people and environment run counter to business interests. In fact, we can encourage the use of safer chemicals that provide increased protection to human health and the environment while supporting innovation and economic opportunity right here in Maine."

The Governor said he will submit a bill in the coming legislative session that will likely incorporate some of the Task Force recommendations.

The Task Force calls for a comprehensive chemicals policy; expanded consumer and retailer education; and for the Maine Innovation Economic Advisory Board to expand efforts of the University of Maine System and private industry to become leaders in the field of Green Chemistry.

The Governor gave a number of examples of areas in which Maine has not only been a leader in the nation in protecting the health of its people, but has promoted new economic opportunity by going green.

Maine signed the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, building on the commitment to lower emissions and fund new investments in cleaner technologies and energy efficiency and conservation. The State encourages investments in green technologies, which will improve competitiveness for Maine's businesses while reducing harmful chemicals in many products. Maine has been in the forefront of banning many mercury-containing products.

Recent legislation has increased the level of safety demanded by consumers of many products used every day.

"Democrats and Republicans in the last legislative session worked together to pass legislation to ban brominated flame retardant in televisions, computers and mattresses," said Governor Baldacci. "My Administration strongly supported this effort, and passage occurred despite intense lobbying to defeat the ban by out-of-state chemical companies."

This leadership is mirrored in many public-private initiatives. Green chemistry, including the development of bio-based products from Maine agricultural and forest resources, offers the potential for economic growth and job expansion.

As an example, about two years ago, task force member InterfaceFABRIC, with plants in Newport and Guilford, became the first company in the world to commercially produce a fabric using a revolutionary new bio-based plastic made from corn called Polylactic Acid, or PLA. PLA is non-toxic, petroleum-free, and compostable. With funding from the MaineTechnology Institute, InterfaceFABRIC determined it is feasible to replace corn as the main ingredient in PLA with Maine-grown potatoes. The next steps are under way to determine the economic viability of developing an in-state facility to extract the potato starch and convert it to PLA.

Even the recent toy recalls have led to positive developments by some Maine businesses that produce quality in-state produced goods. They are experiencing record demand for their safe toys during this holiday season as consumers have concerns with the safety of some imported products.

"Maine can and should lead the way in developing these kinds of technologies," said Governor Baldacci. "Innovative companies who can meet this growing consumer demand can realize economic benefits."

The Governor praised the work of the task force, which represents a variety of stakeholders. Additionally, Governor Baldacci noted that a number of bills are being considered in the upcoming legislative session. These efforts, he said, are complementary to the bill that he intends to introduce.

"Together we can protect consumer and environmental health and increase the demand for innovative products that Maine businesses are well positioned to develop and market," said the Governor.

To learn more about the task force's report and recommendations, please visit <http://www.maine.gov/dep/index.shtml>

Governor Orders Immediate Spending Reductions

December 18, 2007

Issues Executive Order Curtailing State Spending by \$38 million

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today issued an executive order directing State agencies to reduce the rate of spending in the current fiscal year by \$38 million.

The order, called a curtailment, will ensure that the State finishes the fiscal year with a balanced budget.

In November, the State's Revenue Forecasting Committee announced a \$95 million revenue downturn for the two-year budget period.

"Simply put, the amount the State is slated to spend for the rest of this fiscal year exceeds the money we have coming in by \$38 million. In fiscal year 2009, the amount is about \$57 million," Governor Baldacci said. "The revenue downturn is a serious challenge that we must begin to address now."

"I have a Constitutional duty to balance the budget," Governor Baldacci said. "Today's order will make sure that obligation is met while also protecting our State economy and the vital safety net for Maine people."

Under State law, the Governor has the authority to reduce spending on programs approved by the Legislature with a curtailment order. The curtailment order is temporary and serves to reduce the rate of spending until a supplemental budget can be passed to address the predicted revenue shortfall. The curtailment order applies only to the current fiscal year.

"People and businesses all around Maine are hurting. High heating oil prices and a struggling housing market are forcing people to make tough decisions. Families are struggling," Governor Baldacci said. "They have to tighten their belts, and government must do the same. We can't spend money that we don't have."

Governor Baldacci said that his supplemental budget for FY 2008-2009, which will be presented to the Legislature in January, will mirror many of the cuts implemented by the curtailment. The supplemental budget will also allow some of the curtailments to be adjusted.

"We're already about half way through the current fiscal year. Every day we wait for action, the task of balancing the budget gets more difficult and the cuts become larger and harder to make," Governor Baldacci said. "We are doing what is necessary right now."

The process to identify the curtailments began when State departments and agencies were assigned reduction targets. Each department or agency presented options and program impact analyses to meet the targets. The proposed reductions were evaluated based on a number of factors, including the effects on public health and safety, the extent that the impact could be minimized and whether the proposal, insofar as practicable, followed the intent of the Legislature.

“Until the supplemental budget is passed, the curtailment will ensure our spending doesn’t exceed our revenues,” Governor Baldacci said. “Right now, we have more money going out the door than we have coming in. That can’t continue. We must live within our means.”

For more information and supporting documents, please
visit <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/Curtailing.html>

Maine Community College System Announces Rural Initiatives

December 19, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials from the Maine Community College System (MCCS), TD Banknorth and Cary Medical Center at the unveiling of a new set of initiatives by the community colleges to expand programs to rural Maine.

“I applaud the community colleges for focusing attention and resources on the specific needs of rural Maine,” said Governor Baldacci. “Education is key to strengthening Maine’s rural economy, and the community colleges are uniquely positioned to deliver programs and services that lead to a more highly skilled workforce and an improved quality of life.”

The Governor said the Community College System has made great strides in the past four years. “When I helped to create the community college system, I believed in its potential to make higher education more accessible and affordable,” said Governor Baldacci. “The Community College System has seen great success. Enrollments have increased rapidly. The system is making education more accessible across the state, and providing fundamental training that ensures that Maine has a highly skilled workforce that will attract new jobs and ensure long-term prosperity for our citizens.”

“This is an impressive record, but we cannot become complacent,” said the Governor. “There is more work to be done to ensure that Maine people have the opportunity to enhance their skills and education, and to ensure Maine’s workforce is fully prepared for the needs of Maine business.”

The Community College System initiatives include establishing a scholarship fund for people living in rural communities; establishing a new Bring College to ME program to deliver two-year degree programs on an intermittent basis to rural parts of the state based on industry need and student demand; expanding distance learning opportunities; and increasing access to the colleges for high school students.

The Governor credited the MCCS President, John Fitzsimmons, for talking to people in rural communities earlier this year to ask how the system could better meet their needs. The initiatives outlined by President Fitzsimmons today are important next steps in the ability to offer higher education and training opportunities to people in rural Maine. The Governor also thanked the Bernard Osher Foundation, the TD Banknorth Charitable Foundation and the Betterment Fund for contributing significant funds to support the new programs.

“Maine’s community colleges are uniquely positioned to deliver programs and services that lead to a more highly skilled workforce, a stronger economy, and an improved quality of life,” said Governor Baldacci. “The community colleges have listened closely to the needs of rural Maine, and they have responded in a comprehensive way. I commend them for taking these steps and for working closely with the people of rural Maine to build a stronger future.”

2007 Archive of Governor Baldacci's Press Releases

For more information about the Maine Community College System, please visit <http://www.mccs.me.edu/>

Governor Orders Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff on December 22

December 20, 2007

AUGUSTA – In remembrance and honor of Sergeant First Class Jonathan Allen Lowery, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Saturday, Dec. 22, 2007.

Sergeant First Class Lowery was serving with the 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, III Corps. He was killed Friday, Dec. 14, in Mosul, Iraq. He was 38.

His funeral services are scheduled for 11 a.m., Saturday, at the Houlton Wesleyan Church, 18 Kelleran Street in Houlton.

Governor Commends Regional Banks for Establishing Mortgage Relief Fund

December 20, 2007

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today said a new initiative by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and participating regional banks will help many Mainer homeowners who are in fear of foreclosure due to the national subprime loan crisis. The institutions - Citizens Bank, Sovereign Bank, TD Banknorth, Webster Bank and Bank of America - have established a \$125 million account called the Mortgage Relief Fund to help eligible New England homeowners refinance high-rate loans.

"I commend the Federal Reserve and participating lending institutions for taking this collaborative approach that has the potential to help thousands of people in Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "This effort will help keep the dream of home ownership alive for Maine families."

The Governor had been scheduled to join Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, Boston Mayor Thomas Menino and the representatives from the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and the five participating banks. Due to weather conditions, the Governor was unable to travel to Boston for the event.

The Governor said the initiative complements State and Federal efforts to bring relief to those who are facing difficulties due to subprime loans. "This is an example of good corporate citizens coming together to give some homeowners a better mortgage opportunity," said the Governor.

In September the Governor signed into law the Maine Homeownership Protective Act, sponsored by Maine Speaker of the House Glenn Cummings, which will be effective on January 1, 2008. The Act is designed to fight excessive fees and abusive lending practices that strip home equity and put consumers at risk. The Act is also intended to protect consumer rights in court and make predatory lenders more accountable.

Additionally, in October the Governor joined Taylor Caswell, regional director of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to announce a housing counseling grant to Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing). HUD-approved housing counseling agencies provide an invaluable service by offering advice on buying a home, renting, defaults, foreclosures, credit issues, and reverse mortgages.

For more information about the Mortgage Relief Fund and eligibility criteria, please visit www.MortgageReliefFund.com

For more information on information and programs offered by MaineHousing, please visit <http://www.mainehousing.org/>

Irving Oil Donates \$100,000 to Keep ME Warm

December 21, 2007

BANGOR – Irving Oil presented a donation of \$100,000 worth of heating oil to Governor John E. Baldacci today for the Keep ME Warm Fund. The Governor accepted the ceremonial check during a press conference held at Penquis, formerly known as Penquis CAP. Community Action Programs throughout the state administer the Keep ME Warm funds.

Darren Gillis, Director of Irving Oil's Residential and Commercial Energy Business, presented Governor Baldacci with the check. "We're very proud of the relationship we have with Maine, which goes back nearly 40 years," Gillis said. "When we heard Governor Baldacci express concerns about the challenges Mainers could face this winter, and about his commitment to help Mainers through a variety of measures, including the Keep ME Warm Program, we knew we wanted to help. We hope this donation will help make life a little easier for the people of Maine this winter."

"Maine has already been hit hard by cold temperatures and in some areas, several feet of snow," Governor Baldacci said. "The first day of winter is still a day away and there are people in this state who are already struggling to stay warm. Thanks to Irving Oil, there is some relief in sight."

Governor Baldacci and Darren Gillis were joined at the press conference by John Kerry of the Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security, Dale McCormick of Maine Housing, and Charlie Newton from Penquis.

"Penquis and its sister agencies are pleased to partner with the Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security, Irving Oil, and MaineHousing to accomplish the goal of ensuring all Maine residents are warm this winter season," Newton said. "On behalf of all the citizens we serve, we extend a sincere thank you to Irving Oil for its generosity."

The Keep ME Warm fund is a public-private collaboration aimed to help Mainers most in need cope with the rising cost of fuel. The money collected will be distributed to local agencies helping citizens with heating assistance. The Irving heating oil donated today will be delivered to Maine families over the winter months by Irving's team of heating oil delivery drivers.

Maine citizens interested in the program should contact their local Community Action Program (CAP) agency. People who would like to help needy Mainers keep warm this season should also call or visit their local CAP agency. For a list of agencies, please call 2-1-1 or visit <http://www.mainecommunityaction.org/members.htm#wmca>.

The Governor's Office of Energy Independence, in conjunction with the Maine Public Utilities Commission, MaineHousing, Maine Community Action Association and Catholic Charities of Maine has joined in this effort to help Maine citizens. Brochures can be obtained at local CAP agencies, Maine CareerCenters, Catholic Charities and state general assistance offices. Additionally, 2-1-1 Maine is serving as a clearing house for home heating resources. Mainers can also obtain information from the

Governor's Web site

at http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/contact/citizen_services/safeandwarm.html.

For information about donating to the Keep ME Warm Fund,

visit <http://www.mainecommunityaction.org/kmw/index.htm> or mail your donation to: Keep ME Warm Fund, PO Box 200, East Wilton, ME 04234.

Governor Signs Proclamation to Assist Heating Oil Deliveries

December 21, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today signed a emergency proclamation to ensure heating oil deliveries are made to Maine residents.

"This action I take today extends the hours that delivery trucks can be on the road so that Maine homes stay warm during this difficult time," said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor said three factors have converged impacting the workload of those delivering heating oil to make his declaration necessary: prolonged periods of cold weather have increased demand; recent snowfalls have made deliveries difficult and time consuming to make; and the high price of heating oil means that many homeowners are purchasing smaller amounts at a time. "It is my hope that with this declaration, oil companies will be able to help customers who are struggling with high costs and that it will make it easier for them to make small delivers. Nobody should go without because they can only afford a few gallons at a time."

"As we approach the holidays, it's important that Mainers can focus on being together with friends and family and not worry about whether their oil delivery will come in time before the tank runs dry," said Governor Baldacci.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, the northeastern United States, including Maine, has recently experienced above average snowfall, as well as experiencing cold temperatures and wind chills; and

WHEREAS, petroleum fuels and other heating fuels in Maine are in great demand because of the cold and because supplies have lagged behind demand; and

WHEREAS, record prices for heating fuels has resulted in the delivery of smaller quantities of fuel, necessitating more trips and hours on the road for drivers; and

WHEREAS, federal rules determine the number of hours the drivers of fuel delivery and transport vehicles may operate; and

WHEREAS, many drivers in the state will shortly be approaching their federal limit on hours of operation, and may have to cease fuel delivery and transport; and

WHEREAS, these conditions threaten public health and safety and endanger public property if fuels cannot be transported or delivered; and

WHEREAS, the declaration of a State of Emergency will facilitate the granting of a waiver from the Federal Department of Transportation pursuant to 49 CFR part 390.23 to allow relief from 49 CFR parts 390 through 399 subject to the limitations described below, and therefore allow fuel delivery and transport drivers to operate additional hours; and

WHEREAS, nothing in this declaration shall be construed as an exemption from other federal or state regulations;

NOW THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of Maine, find that these conditions constitute a civil emergency under 37-B M.R.S.A. section 742, and for the purpose of facilitating a waiver to Federal Department of Transportation Rules pursuant to 49 CFR part 390.23 do hereby declare that a State of Emergency exists as of December 21, 2007.

In testimony whereof, I have caused the Great Seal of the State to be hereunto affixed GIVEN under my hand at Augusta this twenty-first day of December in the Year of our Lord Two Thousand and Seven.

John E. Baldacci

Governor

Governor Signs Proclamation to Assist Heating Oil Deliveries

December 24, 2007

Governor Signs Proclamation to Assist Heating Oil Deliveries

Updated December 24, 2007 Governor's Office

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci on Dec. 21 signed a regional emergency proclamation to ensure heating oil deliveries are made to Maine residents.

"This action I take today extends the hours that delivery trucks can be on the road so that Maine homes stay warm during this difficult time," said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor said three factors have converged impacting the workload of those delivering heating oil to make his declaration necessary: prolonged periods of cold weather have increased demand; recent snowfalls have made deliveries difficult and time consuming to make; and the high price of heating oil means that many homeowners are purchasing smaller amounts at a time. "It is my hope that with this declaration, oil companies will be able to help customers who are struggling with high costs and that it will make it easier for them to make small deliveries. Nobody should go without because they can only afford a few gallons at a time."

"As we approach the holidays, it's important that Mainers can focus on being together with friends and family and not worry about whether their oil delivery will come in time before the tank runs dry," said Governor Baldacci.

The order will remain active for 30 days, beginning on Dec. 21, the day the order was issued, or until the Governor declares the emergency is over.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, the northeastern United States, including Maine, has recently experienced above average snowfall, as well as experiencing cold temperatures and wind chills; and

WHEREAS, petroleum fuels and other heating fuels in Maine are in great demand because of the cold and because supplies have lagged behind demand; and

WHEREAS, record prices for heating fuels has resulted in the delivery of smaller quantities of fuel, necessitating more trips and hours on the road for drivers; and

WHEREAS, federal rules determine the number of hours the drivers of fuel delivery and transport vehicles may operate; and

WHEREAS, many drivers in the state will shortly be approaching their federal limit on hours of operation, and may have to cease fuel delivery and transport; and

WHEREAS, these conditions threaten public health and safety and endanger public property if fuels cannot be transported or delivered; and

WHEREAS, the declaration of a State of Emergency will facilitate the granting of a waiver from the Federal Department of Transportation pursuant to 49 CFR part 390.23 to allow relief from 49 CFR parts 390 through 399 subject to the limitations described below, and therefore allow fuel delivery and transport drivers to operate additional hours; and

WHEREAS, nothing in this declaration shall be construed as an exemption from other federal or state regulations;

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In testimony whereof, I have caused the Great Seal of the State to be hereunto affixed GIVEN under my hand at Augusta this twenty-first day of December in the Year of our Lord Two Thousand and Seven.

John E. Baldacci

Governor

State of the State Address

December 31, 2007

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci announced today that he will deliver his State of the State address to the Maine Legislature and the people at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 9.

The Governor was invited to address the Joint Session of the 123rd Legislature by Senate President Beth Edmonds and Speaker of the House Glenn Cummings.

The Maine Public Broadcasting Network, as in years past, will simulcast the Governor's address on their radio and television stations.