

2008

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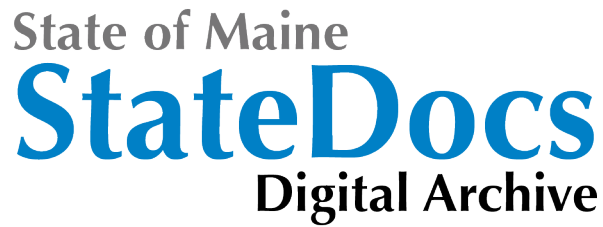
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2008 Archive of **Governor Baldacci's Press Releases**

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Governor Baldacci Supports Girl Scout Cookie Sale

January 3, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci welcomed 11 girls from Girl Scouts of Maine to his office Thursday morning for the annual Girl Scout Cookie Sale Kick-Off. The Scouts hail from the Augusta area, Clinton, Albion, Eddington, Lisbon and Gray. Along with staff and volunteers, the Girl Scouts visited the Governor to offer him a chance to purchase his first boxes of Girl Scout Cookies for this year's sale.

"I am always proud to see the work that is being done by the Girl Scouts of Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "And who could resist a Girl Scout cookie? My favorites are Thin Mints. This is a great project and a great tradition for the Girl Scouts of our State."

Governor Baldacci purchased \$20 worth of cookies from the girls. Proceeds from the cookie sale will enable Girl Scouts of Maine to continue to offer programs to girls between the ages of five and 17 throughout the state. Each box of Girl Scout Cookies costs \$3.50 and this year's sale runs from Jan. 5 through Mar. 30.

Governor Congratulates New England Telehealth Consortium on Health Care Grant

January 7, 2008

BANGOR - Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated the New England Telehealth Consortium today for receiving a \$24.6 million Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rural health care grant. The grant is the largest award issued by the FCC under the Rural Health Care Pilot Program. The Consortium's winning proposal calls for the connection of rural and urban nonprofit health care centers in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

"The system that will be created will enable citizens, especially in rural areas of Maine, to receive top quality care through enhanced telemedicine and information sharing," Governor Baldacci said.

ProInfoNet of Bangor developed the coalition that sought the award. The New England Telehealth Consortium consists of 31 members, representing 555 health care sites in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, including hospitals, the University of Maine, the University of New England, The Jackson Laboratory and others. The consortium will link regional health care providers with urban public practices, research institutions, academic institutions and medical specialists to provide greater efficiency in the sharing of information relevant to health care applications. Once the network is complete, the opportunity exists to connect with a similar network in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island.

"The network created will help all these institutions – hospitals, clinics, and other providers – along with academic and research facilities – to share professional knowledge and research that will ultimately benefit the patient whether that patient is in Bangor, Rockport, Lubec or Millinocket," the Governor said. "This project moves us forward on the critical goal of my Administration of improving health care for all Mainers."

Total, the FCC dedicated \$417 million over three years for the construction of 69 statewide or regional broadband telehealth networks in 42 states and three U.S. territories.

For more information on the FCC grant, please visit <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/rural/rhcp.html>

Governor Baldacci Names Judicial Nominees

January 8, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today renominated Justice Robert W. Clifford to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court and Justice Paul A. Fritzsche to the Superior Court.

"Justice Clifford and Justice Fritzsche serve the State with great distinction. I am pleased to renominate them to the bench, where they will continue to dedicate their extensive experience and knowledge to uphold the law of the state," said Governor Baldacci.

Justice Clifford, of Lewiston, was appointed by Governor Joseph E. Brennan to the Maine Superior Court in 1979. Seven years later, he was appointed to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court, where he has served for 21 years, having been renominated under each successive Governor of the state.

Clifford served as an associate and partner at the Law Offices of Clifford & Clifford from 1964-1979. He sat on the Lewiston City Council from 1968 to 1970 and was a two-term Mayor of the City of Lewiston (1971-1972). He served in the Maine State Senate for two terms (1973-1976).

Justice Clifford received a B.A. from Bowdoin College and a J.D. from Boston College Law School.

Justice Fritzsche, of Kennebunk, has served 21 years on the Maine Superior Court. Prior to this service, Fritzsche represented Maine consumers as Public Advocate from 1982-1986. He worked at Pine Tree Legal Assistance Inc. from 1975 to 1981.

Fritzsche is a graduate of Worcester Polytechnic Institute and earned a J.D. at the University of Maine School of Law.

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

Governor's State of the State Address

January 9, 2008

Madam President, Mr. Speaker, Madam Chief Justice, members of the Legislature, members of the Cabinet, distinguished guests and my fellow citizens:

We come together tonight as Maine stands on the verge of a new era.

The choices we make in the coming days will help to define who we are as a State, and what we hope to become.

I will not splash varnish on the hard truths before us.

Home heating oil and gasoline prices are at record highs.

Winter, just a few weeks old, has already shown its teeth.

The national economy is struggling under the weight of declining home values.

State revenues are not immune from the national condition and are falling short of expectations by \$95 million dollars. We are forced to make hard decisions and set priorities.

And we remain a country at war, with men and women called to duty in far-off and dangerous lands.

Every word I have spoken is the inescapable truth. But there's more to Maine's story than those challenges we face.

In the five years since I first addressed you as Governor, much has changed in Maine.

Today I am proud to say that we are better prepared and more able to weather economic storms.

You, my friends, have done much of the hard work. You have not only balanced budgets, and demanded efficiencies. You've also come together – often in a spirit of bipartisanship -- to solve problems.

Five years ago, we faced a \$1.2 billion dollar budget gap.

Our financial reserves were gone.

The State was borrowing hundreds of millions of dollars just to keep the lights on. Our credit rating was headed down.

Those days are gone – hopefully banished forever.

Today, we have rebuilt our reserves to almost \$160 million dollars, and no longer take out payday loans to keep government open.

We have closed that budget gap and by the end of next year we will have invested more than \$1 billion new State dollars in local education.

And we have done it all without raising the sales tax or income tax.

I want to repeat that, because it's something the entire State should be proud of.

We have invested more than \$1 billion new dollars in local education, rebuilt our reserves and stopped short-term borrowing.

Standard and Poor's has raised our financial rating.

All without raising the sales or income tax.

That, my friends, is an accomplishment.

It has put us in a position of strength to deal with a fickle national economy.

Tonight, standing before you and with full knowledge of the challenges we face, I report that the State of this State is strong and determined to meet the future head on.

The revenue downturn we face in the two-year budget is a serious challenge that demands action.

On Dec. 18, I issued an executive order that reduced State spending by \$38 million dollars for the rest of this fiscal year.

The Constitution of Maine requires the governor to ensure the State budget is balanced.

Every part of State government was called upon to make recommendations on how to reduce spending while maintaining their core missions.

I understand that these decisions touch real lives.

The cuts were not easy, but we are moving forward in a way that makes sure that we can protect our most vulnerable citizens while also meeting my Constitutional duty.

On that point, according to the Kaiser Foundation, Maine ranks first among the States in Medicaid spending for children, second in Medicaid spending for adults and fifth in Medicaid spending for the disabled.

Overall, according to Kaiser, Maine spends more per Medicaid enrollee than any other State.

So, tomorrow, when I unveil the details of my revisions to the two-year budget I can promise you this:

We will not pull the safety net out from under our most vulnerable citizens.

We will not take from our financial reserves to balance the budget.

And we will not increase taxes.

If we are to have the resources to invest in higher education, economic development and universal health care, we cannot continue to spend millions on systems built in the 1950s.

We must transform government at all levels. We must strengthen it to meet the demands of a new age. And we must prioritize our spending.

Government has an important role to play, but it cannot be all things to all people.

At the same time, beware of quick fixes and people who promise gain without change. They sell a bill of goods layered in promises that cannot be kept.

They say: You can have it all. The decisions aren't difficult.

We all know that's not true. The decisions ARE difficult.

We've made them and will continue to make them.

Since taking office in 2003, we have reduced the rolls of State government by more than 600 jobs. We have merged two major State departments, eliminating a commissioner, deputy commissioners;

And we have centralized back-office and administrative functions in all State departments. In just the first two years, that saved \$11.5 million dollars.

It's not the stuff of headlines. It's good government, and it's done.

Last year, the Legislature passed a truly historic reform of local education.

The new law reduces the number of school administrative units from 290 to 80.

School administrative units: That's a mouth full. It sounds very government-like, very bureaucratic.

That's because it is.

And that's the problem.

Since the early 80s, the number of students in Maine has declined by almost 40,000 and is expected to decline by 20,000 more in the next five years.

During the same time, the number of school administrators has increased by 400.

For 50 years, we have done the same old thing, the same old way, and it hasn't produced the excellence and results that we need.

It's not sustainable and drains resources from students and teachers.

Now we are on our way to a new structure that will better serve our people. It will save taxpayers money and provide a better education for our children.

Legislation introduced this year and already approved by the Education Committee will further strengthen the new law.

Even so, the fighting around it has not stopped.

We cannot return to the dysfunction of the past.

In 1937, President Franklin Roosevelt talked about the tendency of government to fall victim to inertia and to retreat from important gains when put under pressure by powerful special interests.

“Shall we pause now and turn our back upon the road that lies ahead?” he asked. “Shall we call this the promised land? Or, shall we continue on our way?”

As President Roosevelt knew then and the people of Maine know today, progress and growth are in front of us, not in the past.

As President Roosevelt said then, “We will carry on.”

In August, we began a conversation about the way we treat inmates in our prisons and county jails and about the financial hardships created by our current, fragmented system.

It is bad for taxpayers and bad for mentally ill and drug-addicted prisoners who do not get the care they need to break the cycle of crime.

It must change.

Tomorrow I will submit legislation to unify the state prison system with the 15 county jail administrations.

The plan has evolved from when we first began talking about it. We have listened to concerns from counties. And we have made changes to improve our plan.

I would like to say tonight that all the differences between the counties and the State have been resolved. They haven't.

But I can say that progress has been made. Sheriffs and commissioners have come a long way from the starting point, and so have we. I believe that common ground is still possible.

And I believe a solution exists that will save taxpayer money and improve the treatment of the people in our care.

President Lincoln wrote to Congress in 1862: “The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew.”

You don't have to face the deepest crisis in the history of the Republic – as Lincoln did – to understand the necessity of thinking about old problems in new ways.

We live in a complex world that requires government to carry an increasing load. Natural resource and environmental issues demand experts with broad experiences.

In a time of declining revenues and increasing financial pressures in other areas of the budget, we can't continue funding silos that keep our experts separate and our attentions divided.

It's been more than 30 years since we developed our approach to the stewardship of Maine's natural resources.

In those three decades, the world has changed dramatically. There have been amazing advances in science and technology.

And Maine's natural resource agencies haven't been allowed to keep up. The structure hasn't kept up pace with the changing times.

Already, we've brought together those agencies' back-office staffs, accountants and IT experts. We created a single natural resource service center to do all those jobs that aren't part of the agencies core responsibilities.

That's done. But we need to do more.

In my budget, I will propose a process that will result in no more than two natural resources agencies, where today we have four.

We will seek efficiencies and combine programs that shouldn't be separated by bureaucracies.

I know that I don't have all the answers, but I do believe we can find them together.

The merger process will seek input from those willing to come to the table.

Our goal is to enhance the services provided to natural resource-based businesses; To increase outdoor recreation; And to improve natural resource management.

We need to end the duplication in administration that stands in the way.

Our efforts are not confined to a single area of government. We are looking at government at every level, and we're looking for improvement.

Earlier this month, Maine selected a private company, Unisys Corporation, a nationally respected company, to fix a troubled part of the Department of Health and Human Services.

For almost three years, we have struggled with a Medicaid computer system that has never lived up to expectations. It's caused countless headaches and heartaches for Maine businesses and created financial difficulties for the State.

With this work, we will move on to a better way of doing business.

I am also proposing a reorganization of the upper and middle management at Health and Human Services that will give my commissioner the flexibility she needs to run Maine's largest department.

It will empower frontline workers, reduce from 10 to 6 the number of central offices in the agency and consolidate management at the regional level.

To be successful, you must be able to adapt. We will give them that ability.

But success also depends on innovation.

Maine has led the country on health care reform, an innovation that matters to families and businesses alike.

When the federal government passed a poorly designed Medicare drug benefit that actually hurt some senior citizens in our State, Maine stepped forward to ease the transition.

When the federal government failed to deliver on affordable health care, Maine stepped forward.

We will continue to step forward.

In my budget, we will bring together three of the largest purchasers of health care in the State for a new initiative to save taxpayer money and provide better care to consumers.

The Maine State Employees Health Commission, the University of Maine System and the Maine Education Association will join forces and put their enormous buying power to work to lower prescription drug costs.

This cooperative effort will save money for thousands of workers who need medicine, for taxpayers whose dollars contribute to the system and it will increase the amount of money available to fund health care for retired teachers.

More than 28,000 Mainers have been insured through our Dirigo Health program. We've extended coverage to more families and more small businesses, and we've done it in a way that has saved millions of dollars in health care spending.

Last year, we were close to taking the next step with Dirigo. This year, we'll do it.

I will support Legislative efforts to provide meaningful market reform that will make coverage more affordable for individuals.

And I will work with the Legislature to find a new way to fund Dirigo that is less contentious and more sustainable.

I believe health care is a fundamental and basic right. Every man, woman and child should be able to count on receiving the care they need when they need it.

I am very pleased that the Dirigo Health Agency has contracted with a new partner, Harvard Pilgrim Health.

Harvard Pilgrim is a nonprofit health plan that is consistently ranked No. 1 by consumers nationally. The company brings new and important competition to Maine's health care marketplace.

I'm pleased to welcome Harvard Pilgrim to Maine, and I want to recognize in the gallery the company's CEO, Charlie Baker. We're glad you're here, and we look forward to working with you.

Charlie, I ask you to rise and accept the greetings of the Chamber.

When I think about what matters most to me, and to the people I meet when I travel around the State, it's not the ins and outs of a particular policy. It's not the details that we will wring our hands over from now until April.

What matters most is more basic. It's family and friends.

Tonight, as I speak to you, Maine has 102 members of the National Guard deployed overseas.

Soon, more men and women will be joining them.

This month 130 members of the 126th Aviation Regiment from Bangor will go to Iraq for the second time. These men and women save lives by putting their own at risk; they fly into danger to rescue other soldiers.

Another 16-person team of National Guard Soldiers will also leave this month for Afghanistan to train that country's military.

They deserve our appreciation; they deserve our support. Please join me in saluting their service and sacrifice by recognizing Major Brian Veneziano, the commander of the 126th.

Please rise and accept the greetings of the Chamber.

These brave men and women want the same things as you and I: A good job with benefits, a college education for their kids, and to know that their families are nearby and secure.

Family is the most important thing.

Yesterday, my wife and I celebrated our 25th anniversary. It has been an amazing journey.

You could not have a first lady more committed to Maine's children, to education and to the State. She is a tireless advocate for literacy, and promotes Maine wherever she goes.

I'd like to ask Karen to stand and be recognized by the Chamber.

My family's not that much different than a lot of others in Maine.

We have our family discussions, agreements and disagreements.

But I have never lost sight of what it means to work hard and still struggle to pay the bills.

I have met countless men and women who play by the rules, go to work everyday and still can't seem to get ahead.

In 1965, President Johnson understood the great divide in our country and spoke about it.

He said: "In a land of great wealth, families must not live in hopeless poverty. In a land rich in harvest, children must not go hungry. In a land of healing miracles, neighbors must not suffer and die unattended."

If President Johnson were speaking today and lived in Maine, I think he would have added at least one more line:

In a land of technology, science and abundant natural resources, no family should go to bed wondering if their fuel oil will last until morning, worried that they will wake up cold.

I know families and businesses are struggling with high energy costs.

I have talked to the truck drivers and small business owners who are being pushed to the brink.

And I have heard the call for help.

We will answer that call.

My administration began working on this problem when the weather was still warm and before oil topped out at \$100 dollar a barrel.

Working with the United Way, Eastern Maine Funders and the Maine Community Action Agencies, the Keep Maine Warm Fund has raised more than \$1 million dollars to provide emergency fuel assistance.

The effort is gaining momentum.

I am pleased to announce tonight that LL Bean will be making a contribution of \$250,000 to the Keep Maine Warm Fund, joining such organizations as Irving Oil, The Libra Foundation, The Fisher Foundation, Wright Express, Maine Bank and Trust, and TD Banknorth.

I'd like to thank Leon Gorman, LL Bean's chairman, for his company's efforts. Please stand Leon, and accept the greetings of the Chamber.

The Fund is an example of Mainers taking care of Mainers.

I know not everyone is able, but I'd ask those of you who can to join the effort to Keep Maine Warm by making a charitable contribution to this very worthy cause.

Working closely with Maine's Congressional Delegation, we will continue to put pressure on Washington to release funding for energy assistance.

The money's there; and we need to put it to work.

I have signed an executive order making it easier for companies to make small fuel deliveries to families in need.

I have sought relief for truck drivers devastated by high diesel costs. During this session, I will submit legislation to help safeguard the forest products industry, which has been particularly hard hit and is so important to our rural economy.

We are doing what we can for as many people as we can. And those efforts will not cease.

For too long, our country and our state have been dependent on costly foreign oil.

Eighty percent of Maine's homes are reliant on oil for heat.

As prices have risen, we have sent billions of dollars out of state to pay for it. Money that otherwise would have remained with the families and businesses in Maine.

We must move forward aggressively to heat our homes with resources we have or can make right here.

We have made great strides in the development of wind energy. We cannot be shy about new projects. We will rewrite the rulebook to make wind power development easier without compromising our environment.

Maine has tremendous potential for wind power. Already \$2 billion worth of investments have been approved or are awaiting consideration. And an equal amount is being explored.

Just last week a new project on Stetson Mountain won approval. We can harness the tremendous power of the wind and tides to power our industries and light our homes.

And we are also working closely with Maine's Native American Tribes to support and promote alternative energy projects.

The future rests within reach, and we must seize it.

Tonight, I am announcing a "Wood-to-Energy Initiative" to bring Maine-made sources of heat to the homes and businesses of Maine.

This partnership will bring together the public and private sectors to explore what is possible and what is practical.

I have asked Maine entrepreneur Les Otten, who is here tonight, to bring together business leaders and our Department of Conservation to lead my Administration's efforts on a conversion initiative that will use our forests and natural resources to relieve consumption of nonrenewable oil.

As a first step in this Initiative, my Administration will pursue a transition to biofuels such as wood pellets and wood chips.

We will identify those state buildings where conversion to wood pellets, wind or other renewable sources of energy can reduce costs by 30 to 50 percent.

This not only saves money for Maine taxpayers, it generates the investment and business activity to grow Maine's economy.

The lessons learned from these demonstration projects will be made available to every home owner and business in Maine. As part of this Initiative, we will identify and promote the financial tools to enable Maine homeowners and small businesses to move away from their reliance on costly foreign oil.

We can encourage the alternative energy industry in way that benefits Maine without disadvantaging existing businesses reliant on wood for other products.

We are already working on a collaborative effort with New Brunswick and Nova Scotia that will take stock in our natural resources and develop new technologies and new market opportunities.

We should look to our Canadian neighbors for new partnerships that can reduce the cost of electricity in Maine and help us to better understand the energy potential of our forests.

In this energy crisis, we will develop renewable sources of energy made in Maine, by Maine businesses for Maine people.

I was still a young boy when President Kennedy was elected in 1960. My father served as a delegate for him at the national convention. Kennedy's words still hold power today.

He said: "The dynamic of democracy is the power and the purpose of the individual, and the policy of this administration is to give to the individual the opportunity to realize his or her own highest possibilities."

It's an ideal that helps guide us today.

Through our workforce training initiatives, investments in research and development, and Pine Tree Economic Development Zones, we want to enhance the power of the private sector to create good jobs with good benefits.

Between November 2006 and November 2007, Maine's economy created 4,400 new jobs despite slow growth in New England and nationally.

Since 2003, Maine's economy has created more than 24,000 new jobs.

Our incomes have grown.

And we've empowered our people to become entrepreneurs.

According to the Kauffman Foundation, Maine ranked in the top five in 2006 for people who, for the first time, started their own new businesses.

This is the spirit of Maine.

In November, voters approved a \$55 million dollar investment that will help those entrepreneurs develop new ideas and bring them to the market.

It's the kind of investment that turns good ideas into good jobs.

This significant infusion of resources would not have been possible without Karen Mills and my Council on Jobs and Innovation, which she led.

Karen, thank you very much for your leadership.

Our people are strong, they are resilient and they should not be underestimated.

Given the chance, they can achieve great things.

I know it, I've seen it. There's evidence of it in every part of Maine.

In Brewer, Cianbro Corporation will be creating hundreds of new manufacturing jobs.

In Lincoln, Millinocket, East Millinocket and Old Town, mills threatened with extinction are alive and successful. People are back to work.

In Belfast, athenahealth, an impressive company, has created 200 new jobs with more to come.

Maine was able to beat out Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York to attract this company.

When Maine learned that MBNA, a major employer in the State, was merging with Bank of America, there was a lot of pessimism and worry about the future.

And for good reason. There was no secret that MBNA's workforce would be reduced and that facilities would be closed.

Now, with athenahealth and other new companies, we have successfully put people back to work in former MBNA facilities in Farmington, Portland, Presque Isle, Fort Kent, Rockland and now Belfast.

The jobs that were lost will be grown back. And hope has replaced despair for those communities.

We know we can do it.

But we must redouble our efforts to spur economic development. We cannot be lulled into a posture that sees us only able to lurch from one crisis to the next.

We must be prepared to stop trouble before it arrives at our doorstep.

I've asked my economic development Commissioner John Richardson and Maine State Chamber of Commerce President Dana Connors to work with the Legislature to change the way we do business for business.

We can better serve Maine's business community with a local and regional emphasis and greater coordination and partnership.

We need to move our economic development efforts away from Augusta and into the communities and regions where it can do the most good.

The State's top economic development priority should be to provide them with the support, resources and vision to help them accomplish their goals.

We all understand the Maine economy is in a time of dramatic, even historic, change.

And we all understand that our future economic success will be built upon the foundation of our people and the special qualities that define our neighborhoods, towns and our state.

People are drawn to Maine. We have what they're looking for and what's missing from their everyday lives.

Look at tourism, one of the bedrocks of Maine's economy.

Last year alone, almost 42 million people visited our State.

They come for our natural beauty, our people and our vibrant historical and cultural sites.

Last year, voters showed that they understand that. They approved significant investments in conservation and in our environment. Soon, that money will be put to work.

Economic prosperity demands that we invest in our workforce, in our open landscapes, and in our historic downtowns.

Even now, we cannot become so focused on today that we sacrifice the investments that will make us stronger tomorrow.

When I visit places like Lewiston and Auburn, Biddeford and Saco and Waterville, I see the enormous potential for redevelopment. The Hathaway Creative Center in Waterville is a prime example of what is possible.

Tom Niemann is here tonight. Thank you very much.

That's why I am supporting an historic rehabilitation tax credit. For a modest investment, we can attract millions of dollars worth of growth, which will bring new jobs, new revenues, affordable housing and new life to our cities and towns.

It's my goal that children start school ready to learn, and graduate from college ready and able to succeed here in Maine.

Early childhood was the heart of my economic Summit held in November. More than 200 Maine business and community leaders came together to understand the positive economic returns from early childhood investments.

I will continue to work with those Mainers to transform the Children's Cabinet Task Force on Early Childhood into a Children's Growth Council.

We can propel the powerful momentum of the Summit into our communities.

Through the power of community, we can create a legacy for our children.

Not long ago, Maine lost one of our most generous and inspiring leaders – speaking of children - Harold Alfond, the man who built Dexter Shoe.

It's impossible to estimate Harold's impact on Maine. He has touched so many lives and so many communities with his leadership and his philanthropy.

Harold challenged us all to do more, to build partnerships and to overcome hurdles.

Harold didn't go to college, but he recognized early on that the days of making a good living with just a high school diploma were disappearing.

But Harold wasn't blind to life's hard realities. For some families, the promise of college is financially out of reach.

With the Alfond College Challenge that he established, the dream is a little closer.

The Challenge provides a \$500 dollar education grant to every child born in Maine that will help them start a college savings account.

It began last week in Augusta and will expand statewide in 2009. And no, you don't have to name your first child Harold.

Working through the Finance Authority of Maine and in cooperation with Maine's hospitals, families in this State will have been given a head start on higher education.

In his book, Harold wrote that he hoped to retire 10 years after he passed away. He was serious and Maine will be a much better place because of it.

Harold's son, Bill Alfond, and his wife, is in the gallery tonight. Please stand and be recognized by the Chamber.

Last year, the Legislature overwhelmingly approved Opportunity Maine, a tax credit program that will help students overcome college debt if they live and work in the State after graduation.

With these tax credits, we will keep more of our home-grown graduates here, and open the door of opportunity for the next generation of Maine entrepreneurs and leaders.

My friends, I am filled with hope. We are taking the steps necessary to grow our economy and improve the lives of the people of Maine.

We are streamlining government and cutting administration.

And we're controlling spending.

We are investing in education and innovation so our children and families can succeed here in our state.

We are helping increase incomes by creating good jobs with good benefits.

That's the roadmap that gets Maine where it needs to be.

This year, the Legislature will be called upon to take bold action, to protect the gains that have been made and to push forward on the reforms that will guide State government into the future.

We must ask ourselves: What do we want State government to do? What is fundamental to the health and welfare of our people?

We cannot be content with a legacy of work undone.

We owe it to our children, and we owe it to our State.

That is our task. That is our duty.

God Bless you and God Bless the State of Maine.

Thank you.

Good night.

Supplemental Budget Unveiled

January 10, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci's Administration unveiled the Fiscal Year 2008-2009 supplemental budget and a companion piece of legislation on the Governor's jail consolidation proposal. The supplemental addresses a \$95 million revenue downturn projected for the two-year budget period and continues the Governor's efforts to streamline government, reduce administration and control spending.

The Governor had issued an executive order in December directing State agencies to reduce the rate of spending in the current fiscal year by \$38 million. The action was necessary because the Governor has a Constitutional duty to make sure the budget is balanced this fiscal year.

"The budget I am unveiling today continues the many goals of the spending reductions from the curtailment order of late last year, meeting my obligation to balance the budget in a fiscally responsible way, while protecting our State economy and the vital safety net for Maine people," said Governor Baldacci.

Echoing the message he delivered Wednesday night in his State of the State address, the Governor said that there are hard choices in this supplemental budget. "I understand that these decisions touch real lives," said the Governor. "That is why I have vowed to not pull the safety net out from under our most vulnerable citizens. At the same time, we need to address this revenue downturn. My supplemental proposal does not increase taxes or fees and does not raid the financial reserves to balance the budget."

As proposed to the Legislature, the supplemental budget closes the \$95 million revenue shortfall and balances the budget for the remainder of the biennium. Nearly 90 percent of the FY 2009 reductions are ongoing, meaning that savings from spending reductions will continue into the next biennium, thereby reducing that expected shortfall.

Continuing government streamlining, the Governor's supplemental budget puts into motion consolidation efforts impacting departments administering natural resources, health and human services and others. Joint purchasing for prescription drugs for public employers and joint purchasing for schools are also major initiatives within the proposal.

A companion bill to the supplemental budget was also released today, formally presenting the Governor's proposal to unify county jails under the state corrections system, resulting in significant savings, end overcrowding and improving services designed to maintain prisoner health and decrease recidivism.

The corrections unification legislation proposal eliminates the need for new construction of four facilities and combines administrative services. Under the plan, the State will assume operation of jail functions and establish regional facilities organized by the eight existing prosecutorial districts.

"My plan ends the current fragmented, wasteful system that does a disservice to inmates, taxpayers and the people of Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "My Administration has been working extensively with stakeholders since August on this issue, and we have made progress. I look forward to continuing to work with stakeholders and Legislators to achieve a solution that will save taxpayers money and improve the treatment of the people in our care."

Governor Baldacci said, "In all, the proposals I offer today take the steps necessary to protect our economy and improve the lives of the people of Maine in a way that is fiscally responsible. Through controlling spending and reducing administration, we will balance this budget and make the critical investments needed to grow our economy now and into the future."

For more information on the supplemental budget, please visit: <http://www.maine.gov/budget>

Governor Celebrates Redevelopment of Hathaway

January 10, 2008

WATERVILLE - Governor John E. Baldacci today joined supporters of the Hathaway Creative Center for the official groundbreaking of the multi-use project. Calling the revitalization of the facility a triumph in economic development, downtown revitalization and quality of place, the Governor praised the many partners who worked to secure financing and other support for the center.

"Today we celebrate more than a single facility's revitalization," said Governor Baldacci. "Hathaway's transformation mirrors the transformation of Maine's economy: refurbishing, preserving and re-invigorating our downtowns and adding vitality to our historic places."

In recent years, the Bates Mill Complex in Lewiston and the Georgia-Pacific mill in Old Town have been redeveloped, housing a range of business opportunities and providing new jobs. The Eastern Fine Paper mill in Brewer is currently being renovated into a manufacturing facility.

One of these crucial pieces of the puzzle that made the Hathaway project possible was the state historic preservation tax credit, sponsored by Representative Lisa Marrache. The Governor reiterated his support today for an expansion of the tax credit, as he did in his State of the State address on Wednesday. "For a modest investment, we can attract millions of dollars worth of growth, bringing new jobs, new revenues, affordable housing and new life to our cities and town," said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor recognized Hathaway Creative Center developers Tom Niemann and Paul Boghossian. Both men are from out of state, though Boghossian graduated from Colby College in Waterville. "The developers of Hathaway have recognized, as have many others – from athenahealth and Notify MD, to Proctor & Gamble – that Maine is a great state in which to do business," said the Governor.

The Hathaway developers have hired a Maine construction company and are encouraging the use of local contractors for work on facility.

Governor Baldacci said that many in the community had a hand to play in the success of the Hathaway project going forward. Community partners include Colby College, MaineGeneral and the HealthReach Network, the Waterville Main Street program, Bank of America and local, regional, state and federal government officials.

Emergency Heating Aid Released to Maine

January 16, 2008

AUGUSTA – Maine will receive an additional \$8.8 million from the federal government to support heating assistance for low-income families.

The money represents Maine's share of \$450 million in Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program contingency funding released Wednesday by the federal government. Another \$156 million remains in the contingency fund.

"Maine is struggling under the grip of high oil prices and faces a difficult economy. This additional money will help a lot of Maine families," Governor Baldacci said. "Unfortunately, it won't solve our heating crisis by itself. We must continue to look out for our friends and neighbors, and work toward alternatives to costly foreign oil."

Governor Baldacci thanked Maine's Congressional Delegation for its efforts in Washington to have the money released by the federal government.

MaineHousing Director Dale McCormick also praised Maine's delegation for its efforts to secure additional heating funds for Maine's low-income households.

"The \$8.8 million falls far short of what many families are going to need this winter to stay warm," she said. "At today's prices, the funding translates to an average of approximately 52 additional gallons for the 48,000 households that depend on LIHEAP to help heat their homes. The total benefit available this year won't even buy one tank of oil."

The base LIHEAP budget of \$27.5 million currently is providing an average benefit of \$579 for each eligible household. The supplemental \$8.8 million will increase the average benefit to \$750, McCormick said.

MaineHousing has not been notified when the additional LIHEAP funds will be available.

"But as soon as the money is transferred we will get it out to our oil dealers within a couple of days," McCormick promised. "The oil dealers who participate in LIHEAP will be going the extra mile to deliver the oil to people who need help, because small deliveries are costly for them to make."

Maine had requested an additional \$20 million to \$25 million in LIHEAP money from the contingency fund so that this year's benefit would buy as much heating oil as last year's.

Governor's Statement on NewPage's Closure Announcement

January 16, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement today upon learning of NewPage's announced closure of a number of their facilities, including a paper machine in Rumford, which will impact about 60 employees.

"This is unfortunate news that underscores the difficult economy the state is dealing with right now," Governor Baldacci said. "We will do everything we can to help the workers who are hurt by this decision at NewPage, and we will continue to work with the company to find alternative uses for the paper machine that's being shut down."

The Maine Department of Labor is actively working with NewPage to assist the employees. A number of workers are expected to take early retirement that is being offered by NewPage, and that would reduce the number of layoffs that would come at the end of February. The mill had already received Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) certification, which enables workers to apply for benefits including job search assistance, training, relocation allowances, additional weeks of unemployment benefits and tax credits for health care costs.

A Rapid Response team from Maine DOL will be dispatched to Rumford to work with laid off employees in February.

Red Sox World Championship Trophy to Visit Eastern Maine

January 17, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor Baldacci today received confirmation from the Red Sox that the 2007 World Series trophy will be returning to Maine on January 21.

“It’s exciting to welcome members of the Boston Red Sox organization back to Maine with the World Series trophy,” Governor Baldacci said. “Much like in 2004, the Red Sox owners have shown a commitment to their fans by allowing people throughout Red Sox Nation to see firsthand baseball’s most sought-after prize. This is an opportunity that Sox fans in Maine – and baseball fans in general - should not miss.”

The World Series trophy will first be on display to the general public at the University of Maine in Orono. Fans can see the trophy at the Harold Alfond Sports Arena between 1:30 p.m. – 4 p.m. The event is free and open to the public with plenty of free parking available near the arena.

Starting at 5:30 p.m., the trophy will be on display at WZON’s annual Hot Stove Baseball Night at the Bangor Civic Center. This event is a ticketed event and is sold-out. The trophy will also be on display for members of the Maine National Guard and families of soldiers earlier in the day.

“I appreciate the Red Sox for keeping our soldiers and their families in mind when bringing this piece of history to Maine,” the Governor said. “This will be a memorable day for sports fans.”

The Governor also thanked the Red Sox organization for their willingness to arrange an additional visit to Maine so fans in the eastern and northern parts of the State have a chance to see the World Series trophy. The trophy was on display in Portland on Dec. 14.

Further details regarding the visit will be made available when confirmed.

Governor Baldacci Signs Bill to Help Forest Products Industry

January 22, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 2155, Resolve, To Assist Maine's Forest Products Industry, just hours after it was passed by the House and Senate. The resolve will temporarily allow for a 5 percent increase in the amount of weight trucks hauling forest products can carry.

"We know that our forest product industry and Maine's truckers are being hurt by record high diesel prices," Governor Baldacci said. "They are struggling right now; and they need help. With the quick action on this legislation, they'll get some relief right now."

The Governor was joined by bill sponsor, Rep. Boyd Marley (D-Portland), lead Senate sponsor, Sen. Elizabeth Schneider (D-Penobscot), other co-sponsors, and transportation and energy officials for the signing. Governor Baldacci said that the bill is just one step that can be taken to ease the burden on Maine's forest products industry.

"My Administration is also working on additional legislation that will help ease the tax burden for truck drivers hauling forest products," the Governor said. "We will submit a bill that will speed their refund through Maine's BETR program and also temporarily exempt them from the sales tax."

The Governor thanked the legislature for its quick action to help Maine's truckers. Because the bill was enacted as an emergency, the legislation takes effect immediately. The temporary weight increase will expire April 1, 2008.

Governor Announces Nominations to Courts

January 22, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today nominated nine individuals to Maine Superior and District Courts.

"This is an impressive list of candidates, each bringing a wealth of professional, civic and community experience to the bench," said Governor Baldacci. "They are individuals of high integrity and are dedicated to upholding the laws of this State. I am confident that they will serve the people of Maine with great distinction."

The nominations to the Superior Court are:

Reappointment – Roland A. Cole of Wells. Justice Cole has served on the Superior Court for 21 years. Prior to this experience, he served on the Maine District Court for more than five years. Justice Cole earned his college degree from the University of Maine and his J.D. from the University of Maine School of Law.

Reappointment – Robert E. Crowley of Kennebunk. Justice Crowley has served on the Superior Court since 1993. He sat on the Maine District Court from 1987 to 1993. Justice Crowley received his undergraduate degree from Georgetown University and his J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center.

Active Retired Appointment– Donald H. Marden of Oakland. Justice Marden has served on the Superior Court for 13 years. Prior to service on the bench, Justice Marden was a partner in the firm of Marden, Dubord, Bernier & Stevens, where he practiced for 30 years. He has had extensive military experience, having served in the Army, the Army Reserve and the Maine Army National Guard, where he served as Deputy Adjutant General from 1987 to 1994. He graduated from Cornell University and received his J.D. from Boston University School of Law.

New Appointment – William R. Anderson of Morrill. Anderson has been serving as District Court Judge since 1993. Previous to this experience, Anderson served as District Attorney for Prosecutorial District Six, encompassing Lincoln, Knox, Waldo and Sagadahoc Counties. He is a graduate of Trinity College in Hartford, CT, and received his J.D. from the University of Maine School of Law.

The nominations to the District Court are:

Reappointment - Paul A. Cote Jr. of Auburn. Cote has served as District Court judge for 14 years. Prior to sitting on the bench, Judge Cote served as Workers Compensation Commissioner. He co-founded the first Youth Court in Maine. Judge Cote earned a B.A. from Colby College and received his J.D. from Boston University School of Law.

Reappointment – Andre G. Janelle of Saco. Judge Janelle has served on the Maine District Court for 21 years. Prior to serving on the bench, Janelle served two years as Legislative Counsel to Governor Joseph

Brennan. Janelle earned his undergraduate degree from the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA, and his J.D. from the University of Maine School of Law.

Active Retired Appointment – Jane S. Bradley of Freeport. Bradley has served as Judge on the Maine District Court for nearly 22 years. Prior to this service, she served as the Commissioner of Maine Workers Compensation Commission for three years. Bradley received her B.A. from Vassar College and her J.D. from the University of Connecticut School of Law.

New Appointment – Jeffrey H. Moskowitz of Saco. Moskowitz currently serves as Assistant District Attorney with the York County District Attorney's Office. He has served at the D.A.'s office for 20 years. Moskowitz is a graduate of St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York, and received a J.D. from Syracuse Law School.

New Appointment – Susan A. Sparaco of Farmingdale. Sparaco currently serves as Assistant Attorney General at the Office of the Maine Attorney General. She has held this position for more than 19 years. She is currently assigned to the litigation and consumer protection divisions at that office. Sparaco is a graduate of the University of Maine and received her J.D. from the University of Maine School of Law.

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

Governor Baldacci Honors Maine Soldiers Headed to Afghanistan

January 23, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci saluted 18 members of the Maine Army National Guard Wednesday morning during a Hero's Sendoff ceremony at the Augusta Armory. The Embedded Training Team will be deploying to Afghanistan to provide advisory support and direct access to enhance the ability of Afghan National Army forces to operate independently.

"The State recognizes what these young men and women are doing," Governor Baldacci said, "and what their families have to endure to have this experience - worrying every minute of every day what's happening to you."

The Embedded Training Team is made up of soldiers from throughout the State – from Caribou to Westbrook. Many of the team members have been training together for a few months to prepare for this mission.

Governor Baldacci recalled a moment when a soldier asked for help with their families.

"He told me, 'Governor, would you remind everybody to look out for our families. Because if you guys back in Maine are looking out for our families and our loved ones then we can do the work that we're supposed to be doing,'" the Governor said. "And I know that all of the soldiers feel the same way today. Our responsibility is to each other, is to you, the families, the extended families in this State. And that's when we're the strongest."

The soldiers were joined by their families and friends for the sendoff ceremony, as well as Major General John W. Libby, Command Sergeant Major Greg Small and representatives from Maine's Congressional Delegation.

Governor Highlights Importance of Science and Math In Maine Schools

January 24, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today participated in the Maine STEM Summit. The event at the Augusta Civic Center is part of an effort in Maine to increase student aspirations in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and to build collaborations between educators, business people and legislators.

Governor Baldacci noted that STEM disciplines are critical to the 21st Century economy. "Maine's economy is transforming from one based largely on living off the land and on manufacturing, to one that is using technology to provide services to people worldwide, and to add value to our natural resources," said Governor Baldacci. "What we all know is that a college education is becoming more important in this information and technology-based economy. We need to join forces now and work together to ensure the health of Maine businesses and the ability of Maine people to access good paying jobs."

The Baldacci Administration has been building capacity and research and development in a variety of economic clusters that hold promise to create opportunities for Maine's economy and new jobs.

"We are embracing technology, and that's why my Administration – through ConnectMe, R&D, Pine Tree Zones and cluster development – has been working to attract companies and the good paying jobs that come with this new economy," said Governor Baldacci. "Crucial to our success in Maine is to ensure our young people have the tools they need to be prepared for these technology-based jobs now and into the future."

The Governor praised those attending the day-long event. Representatives from some of Maine's cutting-edge employers, including The Jackson Laboratory, Correct Building Products and National Semiconductor, conducted sessions with Maine educators to discuss growing opportunities in areas such as biotechnology, composites and precision manufacturing.

"Maine is uniquely placed to grow business and jobs in these clusters," said the Governor. "These are sectors that are promising for Maine's future and which require a workforce trained in math, science and technology. Now is the time to take advantage of the expertise we have in the State. We must maximize the power of resources during challenging fiscal times and to foster partnerships among K-12 schools, higher education, the business community, parents, and other organizations, that can create the educational opportunities our children need to succeed in the 21st century."

Today's event was hosted by the Mathematics and Science Alliance. Participants included educators, business and economic development leaders, legislators and state government officials.

More information on the STEM initiative is available at www.mainestem.org.

Governor Nominates Maine Insurance Superintendent

January 25, 2008

AUGUSTA -- Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the nomination of Mila Kofman as superintendent of the Maine Bureau of Insurance, the State's insurance regulatory agency. The Bureau is responsible for overseeing more than 1,100 insurance companies and nearly 60,000 agents licensed to do business in Maine.

"Mila brings a tremendous level of experience and balanced judgment to the role of superintendent. I am confident that she will bring all her strengths to bear to lead this important agency and its excellent staff, which plays a crucial role in monitoring the financial soundness of the insurance industry and enforcing consumer protections," said Governor Baldacci.

With experience in the academic, government and not-for-profit sectors, Kofman currently serves as Associate Research Professor at the Georgetown University Health Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. She has led research projects at the Institute focused on public and private mechanisms to address the issue of the uninsured, health care fraud and other issues. Other projects she has spearheaded have been funded through such groups as the Robert W. Johnson Foundation, The Commonwealth Fund, and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, among others.

Prior to joining Georgetown University, Kofman was a regulator at the U.S. Department of Labor, where she specialized in developing guidance for state and federal health care reforms and initiatives. She held this position from 1997 to 2001.

Kofman has served as a consumer representative at the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) since 2002. She was appointed co-editor of the Journal of Insurance Regulation in 2005. She has been a presenter at a variety of state and national health care meetings and briefings during her career, and has been widely published.

Kofman has a bachelor's degree in government and politics from the University of Maryland. She earned a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center.

"I am excited about this opportunity," Kofman said. "I have worked with insurance departments around the nation. The regulators at Maine's Bureau of Insurance, through their dedication to protecting the public, their high level of competence and professionalism, set the standard for the rest of the nation."

The Superintendent of Insurance is responsible for overseeing Maine's insurance industry, including licensing, examination of insurance companies, review of rate change and policy filings, and investigations of insurance-related complaints. The Bureau of Insurance is part of the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation.

If confirmed by the Legislature, Kofman would fill the position through April 2009, the expiration of the five-year term of former Superintendent Alessandro A. Iuppa.

Governor, Counties Agree in Principle to Corrections Reform

January 28, 2008

Compromise Would Create State Board of Corrections, Save Taxpayers Money

AUGUSTA – In negotiations over the weekend, an agreement in principle was reached between Governor John E. Baldacci and representatives of Maine's counties and sheriffs' departments over a plan to create a new structure for the State's Department of Corrections and county jails.

Under the compromise, a nine-member State Board of Corrections will be created to determine the best use for county facilities, approve budgets and develop uniform policy and procedures for consistent system-wide pre-trial, revocation and re-entry practices.

The Board will also establish a "Certificate of Need" process to consider future State and county capital construction projects, develop a plan for a system-wide information network and implement bulk purchasing of commodities, medicine and services.

The State Department of Corrections will be responsible for managing bed space throughout the system, inspecting and investigating county facilities, approving mental health placements and staffing the Board of Corrections. The DOC will also recommend a downsizing plan and re-investment strategies to the Board of Corrections.

Jail employees will stay county employees and day-to-day operations of jails will remain with sheriffs.

"The goal all along has been to create a new system that is more efficient, but that also delivers better rehabilitative services to the men and women in our care," Governor Baldacci said. "I want to thank the counties and sheriffs for their willingness to work toward a better way of managing corrections in the State. The agreement over the weekend took a good-faith effort by both sides, and I'm gratified that we are near a solution that will work for everyone, and especially Maine taxpayers."

The State will assume the debt service of counties, about \$10.25 million per year, and will cap property tax assessments at their current level.

The broad outline of the plan was unveiled during a meeting of the Legislature's Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, which was schedule to hear testimony on competing plans offered by the Governor and a coalition of counties and sheriffs.

Corrections Compromise Plan

State Board of Corrections

A State Board of Corrections is created.

Composition:

The Board consists of 9 members.

One representative will be a sheriff selected from a list of 3 nominations submitted to the Governor by a statewide organization representing Sheriffs.

One representative will be a county commissioner selected from a list of 3 nominations submitted to the Governor by a statewide organization representing county commissioners.

Two representatives will be representatives of the State.

Five representatives will be chosen at-large by the Governor.

All representatives will be appointed by the Governor and are subject to confirmation by the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

Duties:

The Board will have the following duties:

Determine individual facility use (including location of Mental Health specialty unit(s), women's units, etc.) and appropriate staffing levels at each facility.

Set yearly growth limit for each county and approve any budget requests to exceed set limit.

Create uniform policy and procedures for consistent system-wide pre-trial, revocation and re-entry practices.

Establish a "Certificate of Need" process for any future state or county capital construction projects.

Implement—where appropriate—bulk purchasing of commodities and services.

Develop a plan for deploying a system-wide information management system.

Work within established timeframe to achieve systemic cost savings through downsizing or other efficiencies. Any cost savings achieved will be re-invested in the system, placed into a reserve for future capital needs, or to the extent possible, sent back to the taxpayers as property tax relief.

Focus on re-investment strategies in system to achieve better outcomes for offenders.

Assist counties with working toward national accreditation.

Set a fixed boarding rate for the system with a goal of eventually eliminating boarding costs.

Report at least annually to the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

Corrections Working Group

An informal working group consisting of representatives of the Department of Corrections, Sheriffs and County Commissioners will be established. The group will meet regularly to engage in information

sharing and to discuss and resolve any issues or problems experienced in daily operation of the corrections system.

Department of Corrections

Under this plan, the Department of Corrections is responsible for:

Managing offender bed space throughout the system. Counties will report available bed space daily to the DOC.

Carrying out directives of the Board of Corrections.

Recommending a downsizing plan and re-investment strategies to the Board of Corrections.

Recommending uniform policies and procedures for pre-trial, revocation and re-entry services to the Board of Corrections.

Inspecting and investigating county facilities consistent with current practice.

Approving of Mental Health placements.

Staffing the Board of Corrections.

Financing

The State will pay the counties' current debt service of \$10.25 million.

The State will restore \$4.6 million of the subsidy to the counties for FY09 (achieved by eliminating \$3.1 million cost to board State inmates with the counties and \$1.5 million in reductions to DOC budget).

The counties will provide 100 beds to the State without charge effective July 1, 2008.

The State will freeze counties' property tax assessments for jail services at the 2008 budgeted jail costs not including debt service. The baseline for Somerset County assessment is the operational and maintenance costs of the new facility when opened.

The State will assume the cost for future growth to the corrections system.

When the system can accommodate federal boarders, a county will maintain any revenue it receives for the boarders.

The State Board of Corrections will have its own budget line. The Community Corrections Act money and subsidy will be removed from the Department of Corrections budget and transferred to the State Board of Corrections for distribution.

Governor Presents State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals to Veterans

January 29, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today presented State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals to fifteen 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.

"You've given us a wonderful example. You've given us a role model and a standard to adhere to, to rise to, and to try to strive for, and I thank you for that," Governor Baldacci said. "It's an inspiration to the troops who are now serving to live up to, and try to exceed the standards that our greatest generation has laid for us."

The Governor was joined by Maine Adjutant General John W. Libby and Director of Veterans Services Peter Ogden in awarding the service medals to the veterans.

"We – the General, myself, your friends and family – are all here to thank you for what you have given for your country," the Governor said. "You know all too well the meaning of sacrifice and service."

Since then, a total of 36 Gold Star Medals and 123 Silver Star Medals have been presented to Maine veterans.

Below is the list of veterans recognized today, and the town in which they reside.

World War II - Raymond J. Cyr, Lewiston - Ernest A. Henderson, Winthrop - Romeo A. Huppe, Lewiston - Bertrand E. LaFrance, Lewiston - Leroy W. Linnell, South Paris - Louis P. Pare, Brewer - Rosaire Poulin, Augusta - Raymond E. Reitze, Buxton - Joseph R. Woodward, York

Vietnam - Gary K. Brooks, Turner - Robert A. Darveau, Jr., Levant - Carl R. Douglass, Hebron - Wayne H. Elkins, Winslow - Leon S. Gallant, Morrill - Peter B. Sargent, New Gloucester

In addition, fifteen other veterans injured in combat were not present at the State House event today:

World War II - Clifford J. Ayotte, Augusta - Ernest H. Brian, Portland - George L. Pacillo, Windham - Alfred B. Sherman, Boothbay

Korea - William O. Malone, Portland - Joseph A. Paradis, Lewiston

Vietnam - Louis J. Aceto, Jr., Portland - Albert G. Gower, Buxton - Philip E. Knowlton, Woodland - Eugene A. Lugdon, Greenbush - James P. Lussier, Portland - Reginald C. Parker, Jr., Auburn - Lester O. Paul, Pittston - Theodore A. Perry, Westbrook - Jerald E. White, Waterville

Pittsfield Chosen for New Contact Center

January 29, 2008

Global Contact Services to Create 200 New Jobs

PITTSFIELD –Governor John E. Baldacci welcomed the decision of Global Contact Service (GCS) to open a contact center in Pittsfield at the former ICT site, leading to the creation of 200 new jobs. Maine was one of three states selected for consideration competing with Virginia and Ohio.

“This decision to bring new jobs to Pittsfield is good news, bringing opportunities to a community that recently received difficult news,” said Governor Baldacci, referring to the decision announced earlier this week by San Antonio Shoe that it was closing its factory in the town. “The exemplary work ethic, advanced telecommunications infrastructure and quality workforce combined to attract this national company to Somerset County.”

GCS is headquartered in Salisbury, North Carolina and has 11 contact centers throughout the country with a workforce of approximately 1,500 employees. Global Contact Services is a leading provider of integrated customer management solutions for major corporations throughout the United States.

“This is a great example of the state stepping up to attract a well-respected business to Maine,” said John Richardson, commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development. “This was truly a team effort, from the Governor and DECD, to the regional and local leaders.”

Richardson mentioned that the company indicated to him that the deciding factor in the decision was the attitude of shared success exhibited by the state and community that moved Maine to the top of their list.

“It was a great combination of work ethic, qualified applicants, community, and both public and private support that drew us to Pittsfield,” said Greg Alcorn, C.E.O. of GCS.

The DECD collaborated with state and local officials, including Pittsfield Town Manager, Kathryn Ruth. Through the efforts of all parties involved, GCS was able to confidently choose Maine as the new location for their growing business. The DECD is currently assisting GCS with the application process for Pine Tree Zone certification.

Interested applicants for the GCS jobs can apply online at www.gcsagents.com or in person at the Pittsfield Town Office.

Governor's Statement on Proposed Changes to Medicaid Rules and the Impact on Maine

January 30, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released the following statement regarding proposed federal rule changes for Medicaid. The changes will reduce federal funding for significant programs for the elderly, persons with developmental disabilities, school-aged children and persons with mental illness.

“The proposed federal changes will have a disastrous effect on children and vulnerable populations in Maine,” Governor Baldacci said. “If these changes are allowed, families and elders will be put at risk, more people will end up in shelters, on the streets, in hospitals or in jail.”

“This is a short-sighted strategy that will increase costs in the long run. These programs are effective and compassionate, and lead to better overall outcomes. Every community in Maine will be hurt by these changes.”

“If the new Medicaid rules are imposed, they will damage not only our citizens but also the health care sector of our economy. While I support efforts in Congress to quickly pass a stimulus package to jump start our lagging national economy, the good it does will be limited by the damage done by these cuts.”

“Maine stands to lose significant federal funding, much of it for services that the state and local communities are required to provide,” Governor Baldacci said. “These changes will result in a significant shift of federal responsibilities onto the people of Maine. The impact of these cuts will be felt by people who depend on these services and by Maine taxpayers.”

“Given the uncertainty of the national economy and the \$95 million revenue downturn we’re already dealing with, it will be difficult for Maine to replace the federal funding.”

“We have been working with the State’s congressional delegation, the National Governors Association and Rep. Henry Waxman, who is planning hearings on the changes, to oppose the proposed new rules,” Governor Baldacci said. “Unless Congress intervenes, these new rules will impact vulnerable children and adults across the country.”

The Departments of Health and Human Services and Education conducted a press briefing earlier today on the impact of the rule changes.

Governor Baldacci Joins in Maine Welcome for NBA Officials

January 1, 2008

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci helped welcome officials from the National Basketball Association to Maine Thursday. The officials were in Portland to tour the city and basketball facilities to determine the likelihood of an NBA Development League franchise in the city.

“Maine’s basketball history is rich,” Governor Baldacci said. “For decades, high school basketball tournaments have packed the Bangor Auditorium, Augusta Civic Center and Cumberland County Civic Center with thousands of people cheering on their hometown teams. And the University of Maine has seen basketball greats Skip Chappelle and Cindy Blodgett not only play in Orono, but return as coaches.”

Chappelle joined Governor Baldacci in Portland to welcome the NBA delegation. The Governor also brought with him former Cleveland Cavaliers President and current Deputy Commissioner of the Maine Department of Community Development Thaxter Trafton.

K.C. Jones and Jon Jennings, two individuals with prior coaching experience with the Boston Celtics, are involved in the group looking to attract the franchise to Portland, along with Bill Ryan Jr., owner of Oxford Plains Speedway, and Bill Ryan Sr., chairman of the board of TD Banknorth.

The Governor said that Maine is not only a state that embraces basketball, but that Portland already has had success with other minor league sports.

“The Portland Pirates are affiliated with the reigning Stanley Cup Champion Anaheim Ducks of the NHL,” the Governor said. “And the Portland Sea Dogs are the Double-A Franchise for the reigning World Series Champion Boston Red Sox. We would love to help the Celtics win championship no. 17 if they don’t do it on their own this year.”

Governor Baldacci said that watching current baseball superstars who are former Portland Sea Dogs such as Josh Beckett, Kevin Youkilis and Jonathan Papelbon makes it easy to dream of seeing the next wave of basketball superstars get their start in Portland as well.

There are currently 14 NBA Development League teams, mostly in the western parts of the country. The league hopes to add an additional 16 teams and expand further east. Should Portland be successful in attracting a team, play could begin in the fall of this year.

Maine Receives \$2 Million Grant for Brunswick Redevelopment

February 1, 2008

AUGUSTA – Maine has received a \$2 million BRAC Implementation Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. Funding will support a workforce and economic development project in the greater Brunswick area as the region prepares for the closure of Naval Air Station Brunswick between 2009 and 2011.

The purpose of the grant is to enhance the information technology cluster, stimulate job creation in the cluster and develop skills among secondarily impacted workers affected by the closure of Brunswick Naval Air Station. The grant creates a unique partnership between the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Maine Department of Labor, and private industry, including TechMaine, the Technology Association of Maine.

“We feel like we have made significant progress in the planning for the redevelopment of Brunswick Naval Air Station, but we also know that the impact on families and on the region’s economy will be significant,” Governor John E. Baldacci said. “This grant will help give workers the skills they need to transition to new careers in the growing IT sector.”

Maine is working aggressively with local and regional economic and workforce development organizations to prepare for the air station’s eventual closure, which is scheduled for 2011.

“With these resources, the Maine Department of Labor will be able to help workers prepare for good jobs before the base is closed,” Governor Baldacci said.

The project will involve curriculum development and instructional programs for basic information technology skills sought by Maine employers; creation of an information technology skills scholarship program to support the targeted workforce in obtaining certificates or degrees in information technology related fields; intensive reemployment services for the targeted workforce through Maine’s CareerCenter system; and employment and training opportunities for high school students that will expose young workers to careers in emerging industry clusters like information technology.

By focusing on information technology the project aims to expand use of new information and communications innovations to help existing Maine businesses improve productivity and global competitiveness. The project also responds to recent trends in the Information Technology industry to locate back end operations in rural regions where there is a skilled and available workforce and high quality of life.

The grant will be administered by the Maine Department of Labor. The Department applied for the grant in December 2007.

Maine Receives \$10 Million to Fight Homelessness

February 5, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci was joined today by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Field Office Director Bill Burney to announce that the State of Maine has received more than \$10 million in federal grants to provide housing opportunities for people who are homeless. Maine's funding this year is an increase of \$700,000 more than last year's grant.

"This grant helps the State, municipalities and community-based organizations attack the problem of homelessness in Maine. This funding makes a real difference in our communities, providing shelter, stable housing, and supportive services to the homeless through 48 homeless programs throughout the state," said Governor Baldacci. "These grants are critical in helping us to address long-term needs and move forward in our goal to end homelessness in Maine."

Maine received two grants from the federal government. The Continuum of Care grant is awarded through a competitive process. This year Maine received \$9.2 million from the Continuum of Care program, which supports comprehensive services such as counseling, job training, child care, shelter and housing. Additionally, Maine was awarded more than \$860,000 in Emergency Shelter formula grants, which support shelter, transitional housing and support services for the homeless.

"I'm very pleased that MaineHousing could compete on a national level and help secure this funding for Maine," said MaineHousing Director Dale McCormick. "HUD's continuing support makes it possible for us to provide more people who are homeless with longer term, more stable housing."

Nancy Fritz, Director of Homeless Initiatives for the State of Maine, said 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 addition rental and supportive housing.

"Ending homelessness in Maine will take coordinated, sustained efforts from the federal and state governments, as well as our municipal and community partners," Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Addresses Portland Chamber of Commerce

February 6, 2008

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today addressed the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce at the Chamber's "Eggs and Issues" breakfast at the Holiday Inn by the Bay. The Governor emphasized the importance of taking steps now to secure Maine's economic future by reforming and restructuring administration at all levels of government.

"We must take the opportunity to make crucial fundamental changes to better align our spending and revenues," said Governor Baldacci. "Much like a business, we have to make changes now that will enable us to balance the books and enable us to invest in the future."

The Governor outlined the challenges facing Maine families and businesses, including a national economic downturn hastened by the subprime mortgage crisis; the national dependence on foreign oil at a time when energy prices are rising threaten to break state, municipal and family budgets; and the continuing conflict overseas, depleting resources available from the federal government.

"These times are challenging – to individuals, families, businesses, communities, and to the State," said Governor Baldacci. "These challenges I've mentioned combined put all our budgets, including the State of Maine, in a precarious position, requiring us all to make hard choices."

In order to balance the State budget, which is required by the Constitution, the Governor has proposed a supplemental budget that is focused on achieving long-term savings.

"If we want to realize opportunities for ourselves and importantly, for our children, we have to prioritize our resources," said the Governor.

The State's education system is reorganizing for the first time in 50 years, putting resources back in the classrooms where they will do the most good. Change, while difficult, is occurring.

"Just yesterday we celebrated two reorganizations moving forward: SAD 51 and RSU 1," said Governor Baldacci. "SAD 51 and Falmouth have the first plan to be approved conditionally under the new law. RSU 1 in Bath is notable because the citizens there came together before the education restructuring effort began in Augusta, showing that, indeed, good ideas are taking shape across the state, and that the process can succeed when the best interests of our children are the top-most priority."

The Governor also highlighted the recent compromise plan his Administration has reached with counties and sheriffs to reform corrections statewide. The new compromise plan will stop the growth in property taxes to pay for jails and will lead to better outcomes for prisoners, which will make Maine communities safer.

"Working together, we can achieve great things, saving money and providing better quality services," said the Governor. "There is more we need to do. We have hard choices ahead, and I will work with

anyone who wants to roll up their sleeves and get to the hard work with me – to help make this State a better one for us all, and especially for our children.”

Governor Declares Digital TV Awareness Day

February 7, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor Baldacci today joined members of the Maine Association of Broadcasters and legislators to intensify outreach efforts informing citizens about the conversion of analog to digital television broadcasting. The transition, mandated by the federal government, will be complete February 17, 2009, when analog channels will stop broadcasting.

An estimated 87,000 Maine households currently receive only over-the-air signals through analog TV sets. The Governor said that it's important that these households understand the options available to them so that they do not lose reception to free TV programming when the transition is complete.

"I am particularly concerned with the impact to public safety and emergency preparedness," said Governor Baldacci. "We want to make sure that all Mainers are prepared to make the switch, so that no one loses access to important life-saving information. In the winter months in Maine, people need access to uninterrupted TV service in order to stay informed about severe weather, school closings and road conditions."

The Governor said that people in at-risk groups in particular – the elderly, low-income families, the disabled, non-English speakers – may need help with getting a converter box coupon, hooking up their converter box, or purchasing a new digital TV. The converter boxes will allow older televisions to receive the new digital signals.

The Governor proclaimed today Digital TV Awareness Day in the State of Maine.

"As we did during the ice storm ten years ago, we ask Mainers to reach out to their friends and family to make sure they understand the changes that are coming, and to help them overcome the technological challenges of this transition," said the Governor.

For more information on the DTV transition, please visit www.DTV.gov

Governor Nominates Midcoast Redevelopment Members

February 8, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today named four to the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority. The Authority was created by legislation two years ago to manage implementation of the redevelopment plan for the Naval Air Station Brunswick.

The Governor nominated Heather Collins, Gary Brown, Beth Nagusky and Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) Commissioner John Richardson to fill vacancies on the panel. The Governor noted the candidates' leadership in promoting economic and job growth, saying that their backgrounds will enhance the ability of the authority to continue the locally driven process for the base reuse plans and to promote the economic vitality of the area.

"These individuals bring valuable expertise to the table as we continue to work to mitigate the effects of the closure of Brunswick Naval Air Station," said Governor Baldacci. "The Authority is doing the critical work of expanding the ability of this region to realize the promise of economic and job growth. I am pleased to have such highly qualified candidates that are dedicated to rolling up their sleeves for these communities."

Governor Baldacci's Administration has been working with the impacted towns, the Maine Legislature, the Maine Congressional Delegation and others to bolster the Midcoast region's economy with the impending base closure. The successful Pine Tree Development program was expanded to the area. In addition, earlier in February, Governor Baldacci and the Congressional Delegation announced the receipt of a \$2 million BRAC Implementation Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. The grant will help give secondarily impacted workers the skills they need to transition to new careers in the growing information technology sector.

Gary Brown, of Topsham, is currently employed as the Town of Brunswick's Assistant Town Manager. He has served as the Town Manager of Topsham, and prior to that experience was employed by the Town of Vassalboro. Brown is a graduate of the University of Southern Maine.

Heather Collins, of Orr's Island, is currently employed as the President & Executive Director of the Southern Midcoast Maine Chamber of Commerce. She serves as a member of the Governor's Advisory Council for Redevelopment. Among her civic affiliations are the Midcoast Council for Business Development and the Midcoast Economic Strategy Committee. Collins is a graduate of Boston University.

Beth Nagusky is currently employed with GrowSmart Maine. She had served as Governor Baldacci's Director of Office of Energy Independence from 2003 to 2006. She carries substantial background in renewable energy issues, which is a significant growth sector for the state and a key component of the redevelopment plan. Nagusky currently resides in Litchfield. She is a graduate of the University of Michigan and has a J.D. from Case Western Reserve Law School.

Commissioner Richardson has been involved in the redevelopment efforts of the Brunswick area since the closure announcement by the federal government. In his role as Speaker of the Maine House of Representatives, he worked with local, state and federal representatives to oppose closure of the base, and led passage of the state laws that created the Authority and began efforts to help transition the Brunswick Area economy. He has continued to focus on economic development on the Midcoast as DECD Commissioner.

Nominees must be reviewed by the Business, Research and Economic Development (BRED) Committee and confirmed by the full Senate.

Governor Mourns Passing of Colonel Allan Weeks

February 8, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci was saddened to learn of the death of Retired Maine State Police Colonel Allan Weeks, who passed away this morning at his home in Wiscasset. Weeks served the State Police for 37 years, from 1950 to 1987. He served as Colonel from 1976 to his retirement. For three of those years (1976 to 1979), Colonel Weeks also served as Commissioner of Public Safety. Weeks served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He was 86.

“Colonel Weeks set the highest standard for the State Police,” said Governor Baldacci. “He embodied the State Police’s core values: integrity, fairness, compassion and excellence.”

“Colonel Weeks dedicated his life to the State Police and was a decisive, no-nonsense administrator who had deep loyalty from the hundreds of troopers who served under him,” said State Police Colonel Patrick J. Fleming. “Among the many improvements he established during his years as Colonel was the State Police tactical team, canine program, hostage negotiator team, the internal affairs unit and the crime laboratory. He was a dynamic speaker on the job and at dozens of retirement events that he attended in recent years.”

Colonel Weeks is survived by his wife, Jen, and a son, Floyston "Bud" Weeks. Funeral arrangements are pending.

Governor Welcomes New Brunswick Premier to Maine

February 12, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today welcomed New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham to Maine. Arriving in Bangor, the Premier joined Governor Baldacci in addressing area and State business people at two events, the Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce's Early Bird Breakfast and the Governor's Conference on Tourism.

Later in the morning Premier Graham addressed a Joint Session of the Maine Legislature in the House Chamber in Augusta.

Last year Premier Graham visited Bangor to sign an agreement between the State of Maine and the province of New Brunswick to explore greater energy cooperation. Governor Baldacci followed up the signing of the agreement by traveling to Fredericton to address the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick, where he extolled the benefits of regional collaborations.

Governor Baldacci said today that cooperative agreements with the government of New Brunswick show great promise on both sides of the border.

"Our efforts to share electricity interconnectivity show great promise for our region," said Governor Baldacci. "This is just one of the many economic ties we have and hope to expand upon with the Province of New Brunswick."

The Governor pointed to the 20 year relationship between Bangor and St. John. The sister city relationship has transformed into "Access Atlantica," a partnership that promises to develop transportation and energy infrastructure and other investments to benefit the region.

Governor Baldacci said, "I am eager to move ahead with Premier Graham to expand the efforts that we have begun to focus on regional investments, enhance trade partnerships, and I am committed to mutual growth and regional prosperity."

"I have been very encouraged with the growing friendship and spirit of cooperation between Governor Baldacci and myself and between our two jurisdictions," said Premier Graham during his address to the Joint Session of the Maine Legislature. "Of course, we are building on a very long tradition of friendship between our provinces – a friendship that extends back centuries and generations. As geographic neighbors, Maine and New Brunswick share similar issues relating to our economies and our place in the world of globalization."

Governor Baldacci and Premier Graham also welcomed the participants of the Governor's Conference on Tourism.

"Tourism presents another opportunity for Maine and New Brunswick to work together," said Governor Baldacci. "Our region offers some of the finest natural resources. Collaboration between Maine's Office

of Tourism and Tourism New Brunswick can be a mutually beneficial alliance that will enhance the tourism experience in our border towns and beyond.”

“Together, Maine and New Brunswick will build a stronger economy, benefiting our region for generations to come. I look forward to continuing discussions with Premier Graham,” said Governor Baldacci.

Governor Declares Emergency to Help Restore Power

February 13, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has signed an Emergency Declaration allowing power crews from other states to come to Maine and to help restore electricity.

The Emergency Declaration was signed around 8 p.m. today to expedite power restoration for the approximately 66,900 households in the State currently without electricity. Lewiston, Augusta and Alfred are the hardest hit areas.

Governor Baldacci has participated in several calls regarding the winter storm that hit the State today and the power outages, and has been briefed by 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.

“Conditions tonight are likely to get worse as the temperature drops. If possible, people should stay off the roads,” the Governor said. “If you have neighbors who are vulnerable or who could be at risk, check on them.”

The State of Emergency proclamation will facilitate a waiver from the Federal Department of Transportation to extend the hours of service for electrical workers and allow additional crews from other states to assist with repairs.

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 49 CFR part 390.23 to allow relief from 49 CFR parts

390 through 399 subject to the limitations described below, and therefore allow these power crews 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 pursuant to 49 CFR part 390.23 of facilitating a waiver to Federal Department of Transportation Rules, specifically 49 CFR part 395 Hours of Service of Drivers, do hereby declare that a State of Emergency exists as of February 13, 2008..

John Elias Baldacci

Governor

Date: February 13, 2008 8:00 pm

Governor Issues Safety Message as Storm Clean Up Continues

February 14, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today continued to work with officials at the Maine Emergency Management Agency, county emergency agencies, Maine Department of Transportation, American Red Cross and others as clean up continues from Wednesday's snow and ice storm.

The Governor signed an Emergency Declaration Wednesday evening allowing power crews from other states to come to Maine and to help restore electricity. Power outages may take a few days to resolve.

The Governor urges Mainers to observe safety precautions while cleaning up and dealing with power outages.

"If you have lost power and are using a generator or alternate heat and light sources, follow instructions carefully to avoid dangerous fumes or fire hazards," said Governor Baldacci. "If not used safely, these devices can cause carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas formed when burning most types of fuels. Using gas-powered generators, kerosene heaters, charcoal grills, and gas grills can cause poisoning if CO gas builds-up in closed in spaces."

Some shelters and warming centers are opening up today. Dial 211 for an up-to-date list of places to stay warm.

Roads in some areas are still blocked because of flooding. Please respect all barricades, and report any areas of flooding to local officials.

Yesterday's snow was heavy and wet, and driveways and walkways are icy. "Use care as you venture out today. Snow shoveling will be more of a chore than usual; so take care and pace yourself," said Governor Baldacci.

Check your roof to see if you need to remove snow. Heavy wet snow and ice can damage your roof. When using ladders, stay clear of electrical service to the house, and make sure the ladder has solid footing.

Gusty winds today could cause more tree limbs to fall, and more power outages. Stay clear of downed power lines, and report them to your electrical utility. If you are working outside, please look out for falling branches.

"We are working diligently to get life back to normal across the state," said Governor Baldacci. "As we continue our efforts, please take time to check on friends and neighbors who might need some extra help, or who might not have heard this safety message."

More safety information is online at: <http://www.maine.gov/mema>

Important phone numbers:

2008 Archive of Governor Baldacci's Press Releases

To report a life-threatening emergency: 911

To find if there is a shelter in your area: 211

(<http://www.211maine.org>)

To check on road conditions: 511 (<http://www.511maine.gov>)

To report power outages: Your utility's emergency number

Governor Receives Wind Power Task Force Report

February 14, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today received the final report of the Wind Power Task Force. The Governor created the task force by Executive Order last May and charged the group with reviewing the regulations that affect the development of wind power projects and recommend any changes that would assure that Maine has a balanced, efficient and appropriate regulatory framework for evaluating proposed projects.

The Governor thanked the members for their thorough review and commitment to reaching a consensus on the controversial issue of wind power development and siting. “You represent diverse interests and you worked diligently to produce this extraordinary consensus document. The title of your report: ‘Finding Common Ground – for a Common Purpose’ recognizes the unique achievement of this report,” said Governor Baldacci.

The Baldacci Administration has been committed to reducing Maine’s dependence on fossil fuel and doing so in a way that is environmentally sound.

“Maine’s natural resources are second to none,” said the Governor. “There is tremendous potential for Maine to become a leader in clean, renewable energy – wind, wood and new technologies like tidal power are just a few.”

“We recognize, though, that there are barriers that must be addressed so we can move forward – and we want to move forward in terms of environmental protection, energy security, protecting Maine’s quality of place and economic growth,” said Governor Baldacci.

The report produced for the Governor includes specific recommendations for improving the permitting process that will be more predictable for everyone involved.

“I am also pleased to see the level of wind power development endorsed by this report, which would involve billions of dollars of capital investment in Maine,” said the Governor. “This kind of investment would create jobs and increase tax revenues.”

The Governor announced his intention to move quickly to incorporate the Task Force’s suggestions into a Governor’s bill for consideration in this legislative session.

For more information on the Wind Power Task Force and their report, please go to <http://www.maine.gov/doc/mfs/windpower>

Governor Saddened by Death of Richard K. Warren

February 15, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement today after learning of the death of Richard K. Warren, former publisher of the Bangor Daily News.

“Dick Warren was quite a guy,” Governor Baldacci said. “He was an important part of the community both in Bangor and around the State. He made sure that the Bangor Daily News maintained its connections to the community and never lost its local and regional touch.”

“He was very involved and helped guide the growth of the Bangor Daily News into the modern era. Family newspapers are becoming scarce. It’s under the stewardship of Dick Warren and now his son, Rick, that this important community asset continues to serve the people of Maine.”

Governor Celebrates Federal Designation for Maine Health Care Quality Effort

February 20, 2008

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Deputy Secretary Tevi D. Troy to recognize dynamic efforts in the State to increase health care quality and affordability. The federal government awarded "Chartered Value Exchange" (CVE) status to a group of Maine health care partners, enabling them to enhance ongoing efforts to increase public access to health care quality information and to reduce health care costs. Maine's successful application was one of only 14 to be awarded by the federal government earlier in February.

The successful group of stakeholders applying for the CVE designation includes the Maine Quality Forum (an independent division of Dirigo Health), the Maine Health Management Coalition, Maine Quality Counts and HealthInfoNet.

"Through the collaborative we have established in Maine, we are moving forward with improving health care quality," said Governor Baldacci. "The receipt of the Chartered Value Exchange status by the federal Department of Health and Human Services illustrates our early success in embracing change that will improve health care for Maine people."

Upon taking office five years ago, Governor Baldacci moved quickly to enact Dirigo Health Reform, a comprehensive effort to increase access to quality, affordable health care and to constrain costs. An important accomplishment is the establishment of the Maine Quality Forum, which works with stakeholders to advocate for high quality healthcare and help each Maine citizen make informed healthcare choices.

Also as a result of Dirigo Health Reform legislation, the State has worked with local health providers and other stakeholders to grow Maine's public health system. In addition, earlier this year the State of Maine and the other partners of the New England Telehealth Consortium received a \$24.6 million rural health care grant from the Federal Communications Commission. The consortium will link regional health care providers with urban public practices, research institutions, academic institutions and medical specialists to provide greater efficiency in the sharing of information.

The CVE status granted by the federal government will help Maine do more to offer information to Maine people about the health care they receive. The Maine partners will share best practices with the other CVEs across the country, and will be able to access federal data on quality of care. Such information can then be shared with patients, who can use the performance measures as guides when seeking health care services.

"We are embracing technology and embracing collaborative approaches to health care, and Maine people will be the benefactors," said Governor Baldacci. "This federal recognition is yet another sign that stakeholders are working together for the benefit of all Mainers."

Governor Names New Chair of Board of Environmental Protection

February 20, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has appointed Ernest Hilton as the interim Chair of the Board of Environmental Protection (BEP). The term of the previous Chair, Virginia Plummer, has ended.

“I thank Virginia for her service as Chair of the Board of Environmental Protection,” said Governor Baldacci. “I am pleased that Ernest Hilton is eager to serve as the Chair of the Board. His past service to the BEP along with his breadth of experience, knowledge and judgment of the issues before the Board have been invaluable. I am confident that his leadership of the BEP will ensure responsible public participation in Department of Environmental Protection decisions, protecting Maine’s valuable natural resources and environment for future generations.”

Ernest Hilton has served as a member of the BEP for nine years. He will remain as interim Chair for the remainder of his term, which concludes when matters currently pending are completed.

Hilton, of Starks, is an attorney and a civil engineer. He has also worked as a contractor for the Maine Public Utilities Commission. Hilton has been active in local government, having served the Town of Starks as Selectman, a member of the Board of Appeals, a School Board member of SAD #59 and as a Board member for Madison Area Health Council.

The Board of Environmental Protection, which was created by the Legislature, provides regulatory authority over environmental decisions through rulemaking, review of appeals from DEP decisions, and consideration of selected permit applications and licensing decisions.

Governor Celebrates Preble Street Grant Award

February 21, 2008

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci joined U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness Executive Director Philip Mangano and Preble Street officials at an announcement of a \$1 million grant to Preble Street from the Kresge Foundation. The challenge grant will enable Preble Street to expand efforts to end homelessness under its new “Home for Good” campaign.

“Preble Street has long been recognized for providing a critical safety net to those in need in the community,” said Governor Baldacci. “Its leadership in addressing homelessness is making a difference, and benefits individuals and families. The “Home for the Good” initiative holds the promise to make great strides to end chronic homelessness for in the Portland area.”

The Governor noted that Preble Street has successfully built broad support for its efforts from many different partners, a critical step in addressing the often complex issues surrounding homelessness.

“We need to continue to coordinate the response to homelessness across government, nonprofit and private sectors,” said Governor Baldacci. “I’m proud of the work that’s been done and I’m committed to working together to reduce and eliminate the symptoms and underlying causes of homelessness.”

Governor Swears In Judges

February 21, 2008

AUGUSTA –Governor John E. Baldacci today swore in five individuals to Maine Supreme Judicial Court, the Superior Court and District Courts.

Sworn in this afternoon in the Governor's Office in the State House were:

Justice Robert W. Clifford, of Lewiston, to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. This was a reappointment.

Justice Paul A. Fritzsche, of Kennebunk, was reappointed to the Superior Court.

Justice William R. Anderson, of Morrill, was appointed to the Superior Court. He has served as District Court Judge since 1993.

Judge Jeffrey H. Moskowitz, of Saco, was newly appointed to the District Court.

Also newly sworn in to the District Court today was Judge Susan A. Sparaco, of Farmingdale.

Judicial nominees were reviewed by the Judiciary Committee and confirmed by the full Senate.

"Maine will be well served by these outstanding individuals," said Governor Baldacci. "I am confident that they will exhibit great dedication in upholding the laws of this State."

Governor Reacts to Revenue Forecasting Committee

February 25, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released the following statement regarding the Revenue Forecasting Committee's findings.

"The news today from the Revenue Forecasting Committee confirms our concerns. The national economy continues to slow, and Maine has not escaped the impact," Governor Baldacci said.

"We began a process earlier this month in preparation of a downturn. I asked every department and agency in State government to prioritize the programs and services they provide. Next week, I will submit a plan to the Legislature that will make adjustments to balance the budget," Governor Baldacci said.

"I know many people are asking about higher taxes. I believe we must first have a comprehensive discussion about spending and our priorities as a State. We must be cautious about adding to the burden that Maine people and businesses must carry."

"I have been reluctant to consider using money from the budget stabilization fund to offset the earlier \$95 million revenue downturn. Using one-time resources to resolve what appears to be an ongoing problem is not a real solution. However, with only a few months remaining to bring the current fiscal year back into balance, this option will be considered."

"The State faces a difficult budget, but we must not forget that every Mainer is facing increasing financial pressures. I will continue to work with the Legislature on a budget that protects the State's most vulnerable people and sets us on a path toward sustainable economic growth."

"I also spoke today with President Bush and the chairman of the Federal Reserve, Ben Bernanke, and stressed the importance of a strong response from the federal government to the weakening national economy. In the past, increased funding for Medicaid and flexible block grants have helped to stabilize the economy and protect vulnerable people during downturns. At the very least, the federal government shouldn't change policies or rules that shift costs onto states or impose new unfunded mandates."

The Governor spoke with the President and Bernanke during the National Governors Association Winter Meeting in Washington, D.C., where a bipartisan group of governor's requested additional federal assistance in responding to the national economic downturn.

Governor Baldacci Congratulates Two Scholarship Programs for Regional Recognition

February 27, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined officials from the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) today to honor two programs that expand access to higher education for Maine students. The Senator George J. Mitchell Scholarship Research Institute and the Harold Alfond Foundation both received 2008 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 two great Mainers,” said Governor Baldacci. “Both programs do exactly what they should be doing – providing additional opportunities for success to the people of Maine.”

The Senator George J. Mitchell Scholarship Research Institute was selected to receive the Maine State Merit Award. The Mitchell Institute annually awards one graduating senior from every public high school in the State with a Mitchell Scholarship, increasing the likelihood that young people from every community in Maine will aspire to a college education.

The Harold Alfond Foundation was selected to receive a Special Recognition Award from NEBHE. The Harold Alfond Foundation was established in 1950 and most recently announced the Harold Alfond College Challenge, which will provide a \$500 grant to every child born in Maine to start a college savings account. The Harold Alfond College Challenge is currently being implemented for babies born at MaineGeneral Medical Center in Augusta and Waterville, and will be expanded statewide beginning Jan. 1, 2009.

“The recognition of these two programs by NEBHE is another example of Maine being a leader in New England and raising the bar with higher education,” said Rep. Emily Cain (D-Orono), Maine Chair for NEBHE. “These two programs were an easy choice for the awards. Both programs are models of excellence that offer inspiration to other New England states.”

“Maine kids are smart, motivated and can compete with kids anywhere else in the country or the world,” the Governor said, “but we have to give them a fair chance to do so. Thanks to these programs, the doors to higher education are opened wider than ever before for the people of this State, and our students are given a better opportunity to succeed.”

The 2008 New England Higher Education Excellence Awards ceremony will take place on Friday, March 14, at Boston’s Fairmont Copley Plaza. For more details about NEBHE’s New England Higher Education Excellence Awards, visit <http://www.nebhe.org/excellence2008>.

Maine Will Not Tax Stimulus Checks

February 27, 2008

Current Law Does Not Allow Taxation of Rebates

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci said today that Maine will not tax federal rebates that were passed by Congress and signed by the President in an attempt to stimulate the slowing national economy.

“Maine will not tax the stimulus checks. There’s no provision in State law to do so and I will aggressively oppose any effort to the contrary,” Governor Baldacci said in reaction to legislation introduced by Republican Rep. Scott Lansley of Sabattus.

Rep. Lansley has submitted unnecessary legislation that exempts the rebates from Maine taxation, which is already prohibited.

According to the Maine Revenue Service, the federal law that established the rebates says that the money cannot be included as part of federal adjusted gross income. Maine’s income taxes start with AGI.

“This legislation has the potential to cause a lot of confusion and worry people unnecessarily. I can assure you, Maine will not tax the rebate checks,” Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Nominates Board of Environmental Protection Members

February 28, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has nominated three people to the Board of Environmental Protection. He has nominated for reappointment Donald Guimond of Fort Kent. He also nominated as new appointees P. Andrews Nixon of Brunswick and Lissa Widoff of Freedom.

“The Board of Environmental Protection is charged with important tasks that help ensure that Maine’s valuable natural resources and environment are protected for future generations,” said Governor Baldacci. “These nominees bring unique experience and knowledge to the Board and will greatly enhance the BEP’s pursuit of ensuring responsible public participation in Department decisions.”

Donald Guimond has served on the Board of Environmental Protection since 2004. He has served as the Town Manager of Fort Kent for 15 years. Prior to that service, Guimond worked as a program assistant at the Farm Service Agency. Guimond is also a partner and operator of a family farm. He received a B.S. in business administration from Husson College in Bangor and a masters degree in business administration from Norwich University in Northfield, Vt.

Nixon is Chair and CEO of Dead River Company of Portland. He has worked at the company for 38 years. Nixon served on the Environmental Improvement Commission, the predecessor of the BEP, from 1972 to 1973. He earned his undergraduate degree from Yale University.

Lissa Widoff has served as Executive Director of the nonprofit Robert & Patricia Switzer Foundation for eight years. The foundation, located in Belfast, focuses on environmental leadership development. Widoff has also worked for the Maine Community Foundation, the State Planning Office and the Nature Conservancy, Maine Chapter. She received a Masters in Public Administration from the JFK School of Government, Harvard University, and a B.S. in Forest Biology at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, New York.

As members of the Board of Environmental Protection, which was created by the Legislature, the nominees will provide regulatory authority over environmental laws through review of selected permit applications, licensing, enforcement actions and rulemaking. Nominations must be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources and approved by the full Senate.

Maine KIDS COUNT Data Book Released

February 28, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor Baldacci joined the Maine Children's Alliance and stakeholders today at the public release of the 14th annual Maine KIDS COUNT Data Book. The information in the data book is a marker of how Maine succeeds in caring for its youngest citizens.

The Governor noted the report gives his Administration a good measure of many aspects of children's well-being across the state. "KIDS COUNT has become a valuable tool for myself and other policymakers interested in providing a safe, stable environment for the children of our state," said Governor Baldacci. "In the 14th annual report being released today, we find that we have made progress, but face real challenges in helping children and families realize opportunity here in Maine."

The 2008 KIDS COUNT report shows that Maine has achieved progress in a number of areas, including reducing risk behaviors among youth. Notably, use of tobacco, marijuana and alcohol is down. Youth smoking decreased from 39 percent usage in 1997 to 14 percent in 2007. Teen suicides are down and the rate of disconnection among youth also decreased.

Maine remains consistently better at providing health services for its youngest citizens. The rate of health insurance for children in Maine remains higher than the national average for all children and for those in low-income families. Babies born in Maine are also more likely to be born full-term, and the rate of infant mortality remains lower in Maine than it does nationally.

At the State level, the Governor has been working with the Legislature to support Maine families and children.

"Since I've been Governor, we've launched the Dirigo Health program, and the State has contributed greatly increased dollars to support Maine's public school system," said Governor Baldacci. "My Administration has supported prevention and early intervention, which we know reaps rewards in helping families succeed. We recently held a Governor's Economic Summit that focused on investing in our youngest citizens and the need for private-public partnerships that enhance opportunities for Maine's children. We also created the Division of Early Childhood within the Office of Child and Family Services to bring an enhanced focus on Maine's infants and toddlers. And Maine has led the nation in promoting access to the Food Stamp program so that more of our children and families can be food secure and ready to succeed.

The Governor credited the work of Maine's First Lady Karen Baldacci, who has led the Children's Cabinet since 2003. "She has greatly helped me and the State build collaborations so that families are given the tools they need to realize their dreams," said the Governor.

The KIDS COUNT report noted a number of areas for improvement. Of greatest concern to the Governor in this year's report is the increase in the rate of children in Maine living in poverty. Across the nation a growing number of children are living in poverty. This is true in Maine as it is in many other states.

"We are committed to working to ensure all our children succeed," said the Governor. "Even as our State works through tough economic times, we are committed to maintaining the vital safety net for children and families. We need the federal government to be a partner with us."

Federal aid for the critical safety net for Maine families has been cut almost every year. Maine has seen decreases in federal funding to the Food Stamp program for nutrition, the Head Start program for early childhood learning, and the Child Care allowances working parents rely on to support their families. Recently, the Governor has expressed deep concern regarding President Bush's additional cuts to Medicaid. Progress Maine has made in covering children under the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP, is also threatened by underfunding from the federal government.

"Despite the challenges of the State budget, we will do everything we can to maintain our support for vital programs," said Governor Baldacci. "We know that this year will be a trying one for many families, and even more difficult for many of their kids, but we are committed to working together to ensure that our future – our children – have the support they need to thrive. We know their success is Maine's success."

For more information on the 2008 KIDS COUNT Data Book, please visit <http://www.mekids.org/am/publish/catindex2.shtml>

Governor Creates Working Group to Pursue Sustainable Fishery Certification for Lobster Industry

February 28, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today named an informal working group to pursue certification of the Maine lobster industry as a sustainable fishery by the national Marine Stewardship Council (MCS), an independent nonprofit organization that promotes responsible fishing practices.

“The Maine lobster brand is known the world over for its quality and high value,” Governor Baldacci said, “and we know that the lobster resource is sustainable thanks to the efforts of Maine lobstermen. Obtaining certification by the Marine Stewardship Council is an essential step in protecting and enhancing our brand and making sure that Maine lobsters can compete in markets around the world.”

Governor Baldacci said a growing number of major food retailers, including Wal-Mart, Whole Foods, Target and Cosco, will only carry seafood that carries the sustainable certification by the Marine Stewardship Council. And seafood industries – including Western Australia Rock Lobster, Alaskan salmon and Oregon shrimp – have already achieved sustainable certification.

“If we fail to take this step toward sustainability, Maine lobsters could be shut out of major markets in this country and particularly in Europe where the market is demanding sustainability for many products,” Governor Baldacci said. “This could cost Maine jobs and diminish Maine’s brand. Certification is an opportunity to celebrate the fact that Maine lobstermen already practice good stewardship. We just need it to be documented and certified.”

Coinciding with the start of today’s Fishermen’s Forum in Rockland, the Governor said the working group will include George Lapointe, Commissioner of the Department of Marine Resources, John Hathaway, president and owner of Shucks Maine Lobster of Richmond, and Linda L. Bean, owner of Port Clyde Lobster in Port Clyde. Other members are to be named later.

Building on two pre-assessments that the industry completed a year ago, the working group will develop a plan, encourage voluntary participation from the lobster industry and seek funds from private businesses to cover the cost of the eight-month process of analysis and third-party endorsement of the lobster industry’s sustainable practices. Once completed, the industry can apply for certification through the MSC, which describes itself as an independent, global organization whose role is to recognize well-managed fisheries and harness consumer preference bearing the MSC label.

The certification process for the Maine lobster industry follows Maine’s leadership in green certification of the State’s woods products and timberlands.

“The State as a whole should be recognized as achieving sustainable, responsible practices for all its natural resources. Given the market demand for sustainable products, this is a positive and powerful calling card for our fishing, farming and paper industries,” Governor Baldacci said.

The Marine Stewardship Council is an international nonprofit organization that was created in 1997 to promote solutions to the problem of overfishing and its impacts on the world's oceans. The MSC runs an internationally recognized environmental certification and eco-labeling program for sustainability in wild capture fisheries.

Governor Baldacci Swears In Four to Maine Court System

March 3, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today swore in four individuals to the Maine District and Superior Courts.

“This group of appointments has more than 70 years of experience serving the people of Maine,” Governor Baldacci said. “They are an impressive group because of their leadership, integrity and fairness. I look forward to their continued service and thank them for what they have already given to our State.”

Oaths administered today in the Governor’s Office were:

Jane S. Bradley of Freeport – Active Retired Judge, Maine District Court Donald H. Marden of Oakland – Active Retired Justice, Maine Superior Court Andre G. Janelle of Saco – Judge, Maine District Court Paul A. Cote Jr. of Auburn – Judge, Maine District Court

Midcoast Redevelopment Announces First Tenant

March 4, 2008

BRUNSWICK – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined members of the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority (MRRRA) and others to announce the first tenant at Naval Air Station Brunswick, which is scheduled to close in 2011. Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University has committed to establishing a permanent campus on site at the base.

“Embry-Riddle has been a consistent, good partner with the State of Maine,” said Governor Baldacci. “That’s why we are pleased today to recognize Embry-Riddle as they rededicate their mission here in Maine. To have an institution of Embry- Riddle’s caliber commit to the region is an enormous contribution to workforce development.”

Embry-Riddle has offered undergraduate classes at the Naval Air Station Brunswick since 1994. They expanded their center in 2004 and began offering masters degree level classes on-site in 2005.

Governor Baldacci’s Administration has been working with the impacted towns, the Maine Legislature, the Maine Congressional Delegation and others to bolster the Midcoast region’s economy with the impending base closure. The successful Pine Tree Development program was expanded to the area. In February, Maine received a \$2 million Base Realignment and Closure Implementation Grant to support a workforce and economic development project in the greater Brunswick area. The grant will help give workers the skills they need to transition to new careers in the growing IT sector.

“As today shows, we are building on the strong relationships we have with our higher education institutions, as well,” said Governor Baldacci. “Along with Embry-Riddle, we have commitments from Bowdoin College and Southern Maine Community College to relocate to the base when it closes in 2011. I commend Charlie Whitten, Director of Academic Support at the Brunswick Campus, and his staff, as well as Art Mayo, Board Chair for the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority – and all the members of the MRRRA who have worked so hard to prepare the region for the opportunities of the future here in the Midcoast.”

For more information about the redevelopment authority, please visit: www.mrra.us

For more information on Embry Riddle, please visit <http://www.erau.edu/>

Details of Budget Revisions Released

March 5, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released the details of his proposed changes to the 2008-2009 State budget.

The supplemental budget addresses a \$95 million revenue downturn that was predicted for the two-year budget during the February meeting of the Revenue Forecasting Committee (RFC).

The package contains no tax increases and does not rely on funds from the State's Budget Stabilization Fund to balance the budget.

"The slowing national economy has placed Maine in a difficult financial position," Governor Baldacci said. "But the same factors are also hurting Maine families and businesses. Now is not the time to add to their burdens. We must prioritize State spending, restructure government and make sure that our State is on firm financial footing going forward."

The revenue downturn is the second during fiscal year 2008. In December, the RFC also reduced revenue projections by \$95 million. All told, revenues have declined by \$190 million. Today's package builds on an earlier package of spending cuts, which was submitted to the Legislature in January.

"The temptation is to rush forward, use our reserves now and avoid the toughest choices," Governor Baldacci said. "We can't do that. We don't know how long the current economic trends will continue, and we won't know until April just how bad circumstances are. Things could still get worse."

Governor Baldacci also said that using the reserves could hurt the State's cash flow and force the State into short-term borrowing to pay its obligations.

"Short-term borrowing to keep the lights on is bad fiscal policy, and we should avoid it," Governor Baldacci said.

The budget revisions include a reorganization of the Department of Health and Human Services, changes to Medicaid and job reductions. Slightly more than 71 State government positions will be cut, including 20 as part of the DHHS reorganization.

Every State department and agency was required to make reductions. Efforts were made to limit the impact of cuts to health and human services, to protect Maine's poorest, oldest and sickest, and to reduce the effects on local school districts.

"There's no way to cut \$190 million out of the State budget without creating new hardships for some people," Governor Baldacci said. "But I honestly believe that Maine taxpayers are near the end of their capacity to pay."

Of the \$190 million, about \$65 million is in fiscal year 2008, which ends June 30, and \$125 million is in fiscal year 2009. With the changes proposed today, spending will decrease by \$60 million in 2009 from 2008 levels.

"We must continue to push forward with government restructuring. Government has outgrown our ability to pay," Governor Baldacci said. "It's imperative that we continue to reduce administrative inefficiencies in education, to unify corrections and streamline government."

"It is our responsibility to act today in a way that not only solves our short-term fiscal problems, but also puts us on the path of sustainability in the future," Governor Baldacci said. "We must prioritize and cut spending."

For more information on the budget, please visit <http://www.maine.gov/budget/budgetinfo/index.htm>

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Summary of Revisions

Spending in 2008, \$3,127,119,975

Spending in 2009, \$3,067,133,844

It is only the fourth time in 35 years that spending has been reduced from one year to the next.

71.3 State positions eliminated

\$8.2 million in one-time money

GPA reduced by \$34.1 million, but \$11 million does not come from allocations to the districts.

- \$5.5 million overall increase in K-12 funding.
- \$6.5 million in education cuts from miscellaneous accounts, such as Learning Results implementation;
- \$5.2 million in delayed debt service, delayed projects and a one-year hold on funding for capital construction for tuitioned students at private academies.
- Reduces mil expectation to 6.54 for fiscal year 2008-2009
- Incentivizes participation in statewide purchasing pool that will reduce the requirement to raise local taxes without jeopardizing state allocations. Savings are estimated at least \$4 million.
- Extends ramp for State K-12 education funding to reach 55 percent from four years to five years.

The Department of Health and Human Services accounts for net reductions of \$27.5 million. Of that, about \$16 million, or more than half, of the net reductions are not in cuts to services.

- Reorganizes the Department of Health and Human Services, eliminates 20 administrative and management positions.
- Adds a \$25 enrollment fee to some MaineCare participants.
- Accounts for \$8.4 million in services that are no longer reimbursed by the federal government as part of changes in TCM rules. (Additional reductions in federal support were included in revenue reforecast.)
- Delays until June 19, 2010, the implementation of fiscal agent to timeline approved by CMS.
- Further caps enrollment for childless adult MaineCare participants and eliminates the group's pharmacy benefit.

To protect State Trooper staffing levels, raises the fee for State-conducted background checks from \$25 to \$31, raising \$533,174. It also raises the license fee on certificate of approvals for out-of-state manufacturers of malt liquor and wine from \$600 to \$1,000. Fee for in-state manufacturers remains \$1,000. Approximately \$117,000 in new revenue is raised.

Includes language to clarify the role of the agencies serving the natural resources sectors by requiring a plan that will consider all ideas and organizational configurations, eliminate duplication and create greater efficiencies to improve the delivery of services associated with the natural resources merger. This is compromise language developed jointly with stakeholders and committees of jurisdiction.

Includes language to eliminate barriers to school reorganization, including clarification of budget procedures, duties and responsibilities, transition procedures, debt service obligations, school closure, cost-sharing and audit requirements.

Governor Proclaims Consumer Protection Week

March 6, 2008

AUGUSTA – In recognition of Consumer Protection Week, Governor John E. Baldacci joined specialists from the Maine Department of Professional and Financial Regulation on Thursday to focus attention on the escalating nationwide problem of financial fraud, and to highlight resources available to safeguard the public from these types of scams.

“Advances in technology and an aging population have combined to increase the number of people in Maine targeted by those who perpetrate financial scams,” Governor Baldacci commented. “Although many State and local agencies aggressively pursue these criminals, and provide services to victims, it’s important for Maine people to have the information and tools needed to prevent these crimes from occurring.”

Acting Commissioner Lloyd P. LaFountain III and Superintendent of the Bureau of Consumer Credit Protection Will Lund presented the Governor with the first copy of a new publication called Consumer Credit 101 being offered to the public by the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation. The 60-page consumer protection guide provides detailed information on a range of topics including mortgage loans and reverse mortgages, personal and payday loans, foreclosure and bankruptcy, credit cards and credit reports, and ways to report potential fraud.

“The Department of Professional and Financial Regulation is one of many State agencies actively addressing cases involving financial scams. We have increased our educational outreach to consumers, particularly seniors, in an effort to reduce the number of people who fall victim to these crimes,” Acting Commissioner LaFountain stated.

During Thursday’s event, the Governor signed a proclamation designating March 2-8, 2008, as Consumer Protection Week throughout the State of Maine. The proclamation language is below.

WHEREAS, the Federal Bureau of Investigation estimates that more than 500,000 consumers are the victim of identity theft or other financial scams each year in the United States; and

WHEREAS, consumers in Maine are not immune from fraud and deception perpetrated through online messages, websites, telephone solicitations and the mail; and

WHEREAS, Maine’s older population may be especially susceptible to scams involving unsuitable or fraudulent investment products, requests for charitable contributions, and bogus insurance products; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement authorities are currently reporting a substantial increase in fraud related to phony tax refunds; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the need to safeguard the public from escalating problems associated with financial scams and predatory practices, the Legislature enacted strong, protective mortgage lending laws last year; and

WHEREAS, the State is aggressively pursuing those who commit fraud or deception and working proactively to raise awareness and provide the tools needed for consumers to safeguard their identity and monetary assets; and

WHEREAS, consumers are encouraged to protect themselves by never giving out their Social Security Number or other personal identifying information to strangers and by obtaining and reviewing their credit report without cost or obligation each year from www.annualcreditreport.com,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim March 2 - 8, 2008 as

CONSUMER PROTECTION WEEK

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

Maine Insurance Superintendent Sworn In

March 7, 2008

AUGUSTA -- Mila Kofman was sworn in today as superintendent of the Maine Bureau of Insurance, the State's insurance regulatory agency.

"I am pleased to welcome Mila Kofman to Maine and to the leadership of this important office," said Governor Baldacci. "I am confident she will provide balanced judgment as she fulfills the crucial role in monitoring the financial soundness of the insurance industry and enforcing consumer protections."

Kofman, who had most recently served as an associate research professor at the Georgetown University Health Policy Institute, is an experienced regulator, having worked from 1997 to 2001 at the U.S. Department of Labor. At the federal agency, Kofman specialized in developing guidance for state and federal health care reforms and initiatives. At Georgetown, Kofman led health-related research projects on the uninsured and fraud, among others. Additionally, Kofman served as a consumer representative at the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC).

The Superintendent of Insurance is responsible for overseeing Maine's insurance industry, including licensing, examination of insurance companies, review of rate change and policy filings, and investigations of insurance-related complaints. The Bureau of Insurance is part of the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation.

Kofman begins her work as superintendent today.

Plans Announced for Energy Efficiency Summit

March 7, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci will open the first Governor's Energy Efficiency Summit & Expo on April 3 at the Augusta Civic Center.

The Summit will engage individuals, businesses and industry in discussing practical options for energy efficiency in small and large industrial businesses, financing energy efficiency, sharing success stories and more. Attendees will learn from the experts about how best to reduce energy costs while improving business operations and hear from business owners how energy efficiency measure have helped them while protecting Maine's environment.

"It's crucial for Maine to reduce its dependence on costly, foreign oil," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine has enormous potential to become energy independent, and to become a national leader in the development of clean, renewable sources of energy. In addition, we must also strive to be a leader in conservation, which is the quickest path toward reduced energy consumption. This Summit will help businesses better understand the opportunities that exist and to implement strategies that will give their companies an energy advantage."

The keynote speaker, Thomas R. Casten, has spent 30 years developing highly efficient decentralized energy recycling projects. He recently co-authored a chapter in Energy Myth and American Society, Thirteen Myths (Sovacool & Brown), challenging the assumption that the U.S. electric system is optimal.

"We've invested \$2 billion in local generation plants that recycle otherwise wasted energy. These plants generate over 75 billion kilowatt hours per year, avoid 10 million tons of carbon dioxide, reduce fossil fuel use by more than half, provide substantial savings and all are profitable," Casten said.

Panelists in eight breakout sessions throughout the day include local and national experts with practical experience achieving energy efficiency and productivity. They will share strategies to leverage and deploy technologies. Participants will be introduced to evolving public policies surrounding energy, environment and economic development.

The expo will provide attendees with technical, financial and programmatic solutions and services for increasing efficiency and improving the bottom line. The exhibit area will showcase current and emerging technologies in energy efficiency and smart energy solutions.

The planning committee for this event comes from a wide cross section of government, business and the environmental sectors. It includes representatives from the Office of Innovation at the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, the Office of the Governor, Maine State Chamber of Commerce, Efficiency Maine at Maine Public Utilities Commission, Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security, MaineHousing, Maine State Planning Office, Natural Resources Council of Maine and Sierra Club-Maine.

Registration for this all day event is \$25 and includes lunch and conference materials. Pre-registration is required. To register, go to www.maine.gov/governor and click on The Governor's Energy Efficiency Summit. For more information, please email Susan@GreatGatherings.com or call 207-622-5330.

Governor Celebrates Old Town Canoe and Kayak Facility

March 7, 2008

OLD TOWN – Governor John E. Baldacci spoke today at the Grand Opening Celebration of Old Town Canoe and Kayak's new 144,000-square-foot facility. With more than 100 years providing the highest quality outdoors equipment, Old Town Canoe and Kayak is recognized around the world.

"We often hear from people 'Maine built is best built,' and they are right," said Governor Baldacci. "Old Town Canoe and Kayak is widely known because of the quality, pride and craftsmanship of Maine workers. These quality employees have made Old Town not just a great place to live, work and raise a family, but also a brand name like no other."

The new Gilman Falls Center, which opened December 2007, houses office, distribution and thermoform manufacturing operations under one roof, enabling Old Town Canoe and Kayak to expand and enhance their top-quality production and customer service.

The Governor congratulated Johnson Outdoors Inc. for their commitment to keeping Old Town Canoe local, and to the employees of Old Town Canoe. The building is state-of-the-art, built in partnership with a locally-owned company, Humble Beginnings LLC.

"Today's celebration is an example that good things are happening in Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "This is largely due to Maine's quality workforce and for public-private partnerships that are working hard to help businesses succeed in this state."

Governor Baldacci Honors Three for Arts Advocacy

March 10, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and First Lady Karen Baldacci presented three 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.

“I appreciate being Governor at a time when we can make sure that arts education is part of learning results, overall learning and education,” Governor Baldacci said. “I understand the importance of diversity in education, the diversity in our culture and traditions, and hope others recognize the richness that the arts bring to our society and culture.”

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

The Outstanding Advocate for Arts Education Award was presented to Jo-Ann Staffiere, principal of the Capri Street and State Street Schools in Brewer.

The Bill Bonyun Award was presented to Kal Elmore, chair of the art department at Bangor High School. The award is named after Bill Bonyun, a folklorist, storyteller, singer, writer and educator for more than 50 years from Westport Island, Maine.

The Maine Alliance for Arts Education also recognized Kimberly Pearson as an honored nominee for 2008. Pearson is an art teacher from Martel Elementary School in Lewiston.

During the ceremony, Gwyneth Frazier, a 6th grader at the Carrie Ricker Middle School in Litchfield spoke about the importance of the arts to young people; Chris Ellis, a senior at Oak Hill High School performed a monologue from “Shadowlands”; and music was provided by the Cheverus High School jazz combo, directed by Chris Humphrey.

Governor Baldacci Proclaims MS Awareness Week

March 12, 2008

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci has proclaimed March 10 – 14, 2008 as MS Awareness Week throughout the State of Maine. The Governor presented the proclamation during the Women Against MS Leadership Luncheon Wednesday afternoon in Portland.

“The facts about multiple sclerosis in Maine are startling,” Governor Baldacci said. “Maine has a 70 percent higher incident rate of MS than the national average. More than 3,000 people in our State - nearly one in 400 - have MS. It’s one of the highest per capita rates in the nation. That’s why the work that you are doing is so important to so many people.”

Multiple sclerosis is an unpredictable neurological disease that affects about 400,000 people in the United States. The disease interrupts the flow of information between the brain and the rest of the body and causes a wide variety of symptoms.

Women Against MS is a nationwide education and fundraising program founded in 1999. The program has raised over \$2.5 million to support the work of the National MS Society since its inception in 1999.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, every hour in the United States, someone is newly diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system; and

WHEREAS, most people with MS are diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, with more than twice as many women as men contracting the disease; and

WHEREAS, MS has no cure, and MS affects more than 400,000 people in the U.S., and 2.5 million worldwide; and

WHEREAS, approximately 3,000 families in Maine are affected by MS - nearly one in every 400 Maine residents has MS – one of the highest per capita rates in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the National MS Society is a driving force of MS research, pursuing prevention, treatment and cure; and

WHEREAS, the Maine Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society pledges to raise over one million dollars in 2008 through contributions and special events, beginning with the Women Against MS Luncheon and the annual Walk MS; and

WHEREAS, the Maine Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society has provided quality services and programs for people with MS in Maine since being founded in June of 1954; and

WHEREAS, the National MS Society is a movement by and for people with MS, moving together toward a world free of multiple sclerosis,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim the week of March 10 - 14, 2008 as

MS AWARENESS WEEK

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

Governor Baldacci Calls Maine Peace Corps Volunteer Serving Overseas

March 12, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci placed a phone call this afternoon to Ted Mooney of Scarborough. Mooney is currently serving as a Peace Corps Country Director in Lesotho, Africa.

"I really appreciate what you are doing," Governor Baldacci said. "We are honored to have you and your family call Maine home and we appreciate the work that you are doing. This is a special part of the recognition of Peace Corps Week – when we can talk with someone who is actually on the ground, doing the work that other Peace Corps volunteers have done, and we thank you for all that you have been doing."

Governor Baldacci placed the phone call as part of recognition of Peace Corps Week in the State of Maine. The Governor presented the proclamation during the Blaine House ceremony, which brought approximately 20 past and future Peace Corps volunteers to Augusta.

"It is not surprising to me that of states with residents currently serving overseas in the Peace Corps, Maine ranks 6th per capita," the Governor said. "It is indicative of the characteristics we have come to expect of Mainers – a strong work ethic, dedication, generosity and a sense of responsibility to aid those in need."

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, the Peace Corps has become an enduring symbol of our nation's commitment to encourage progress, create opportunity, and expand development at the grass-roots level in the developing world; and

WHEREAS, more than 190,000 Americans have served as Peace Corps Volunteers in 139 countries since 1961; and

WHEREAS, over the past 47 years, 1,631 men and women from the state of Maine have responded to our nation's call to serve by joining the Peace Corps; and

WHEREAS, Peace Corps Volunteers have made significant and lasting contributions around the world in agriculture, business development, information technology, education, health and HIV/AIDS, and the environment, and have improved the lives of individuals and communities around the world; and

WHEREAS, Peace Corps Volunteers have strengthened the ties of friendship and understanding between the people of the United States and those of other countries; and

WHEREAS, Peace Corps Volunteers, enriched by their experiences overseas, have brought their communities throughout the United States a deeper understanding of other cultures and traditions, thereby bringing a domestic dividend to our nation; and

WHEREAS, it is indeed fitting to recognize the achievements of the Peace Corps and honor its Volunteers, past and present, and reaffirm our country's commitment to helping people help themselves throughout the world,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim February 25 – March 3, 2008 as

PEACE CORPS WEEK

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

Governor Baldacci Honors AARP's 50th Anniversary

March 13, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci celebrated AARP's 5th decade of service today by proclaiming March 13, 2008, as AARP 50th Anniversary Day throughout the State of Maine. The AARP took the opportunity to award Carrabec High School of North Anson with the Ethel Percy Andrus Legacy Award for Innovation and a corresponding \$10,000 check.

Carrabec High School was chosen for the award because of the school's "Will Power Program." The program uses weight training as a vehicle for transforming lives through challenge, mutual support and a commitment to excel. The school has seen course failure rates in the school drop sharply since the program was started in 2005.

Governor Baldacci applauded the program's ability to encourage students to set and meet goals primarily through physical fitness.

"We have been working with the Department of Conservation on our 'Take It Outside' initiative," Governor Baldacci said. "The point of this program is that we have the biggest playground in the world right in our backyards, but we should be doing more to expose our youth to the benefits of Maine's outdoors. As all of you have proven, it's not just about physical fitness and health, but it's about learning to set and achieve goals. There should be more programs like this one throughout the State."

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, AARP is a voluntary, nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization with a 50-year history of leading positive social change by harnessing the individual and collective power of its members to make life better for all Maine residents as they age; and

WHEREAS, since being founded in 1958 by retired educator Ethel Percy Andrus, AARP has taken as its motto "To serve, not to be served"; and

WHEREAS, AARP's "army of useful citizens" in our state includes more than 350 volunteers whose selfless service includes money management and tax preparation assistance, safe driving courses, advocacy, job training, intergenerational learning, community rebuilding, home visitation and nonpartisan voter education; and

WHEREAS, AARP has amplified its members' voices on issues of statewide importance such as quality affordable health care, lifetime financial security, and consumer protection; and

WHEREAS, AARP has helped to foster proactive policies that enable Maine citizens to achieve the quality of life and peace of mind they deserve; and

WHEREAS, AARP shares Maine's belief that diversity in age, economic status, attitudes, ability, and lifestyles is a source of profound state and national strength; and

WHEREAS, AARP continues to advocate for an economic environment in Maine that supports and promotes the loyalty, reliability, flexibility, and potential of mature workers; and

WHEREAS, AARP recognizes that ensuring the protection, safety, integrity, involvement, security, health, lifestyle, and well-being of citizens 50+ is a continuing journey,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim March 13, 2008 as

AARP 50TH ANNIVERSARY DAY

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

Governor Baldacci Honors Nine Nominees for 2009 Teacher of the Year

March 14, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Education Commissioner Susan Gendron today to honor nine nominees for the 2009 Maine Teacher of the Year.

“Teachers are the foundation of our future,” Governor Baldacci said. “Our children spend at least 6 hours a day in school as they are growing up, and in the years that shape their minds the most. The teachers that our kids spend the day with have the opportunity to help them learn everything from coloring inside the lines to the complexities of Algebra and everything in between. We should not only honor Maine teachers today, but every day.”

The 2009 Maine Teacher of the Year will be announced during a surprise assembly at the winning teacher's school during the fall of 2008. The 2008 Maine Teacher of the Year, Martin McKeon of Sanford High School, was also at the ceremony.

The nominees for the 2009 Teacher of the Year Award follow:

Christine Bossie, Montello School, Lewiston, Grades 1&2 Elementary Education

Shari Brinkman-Young, Biddeford High School, Grades 9-12 English

Michelle Gagne, Sherwood Heights School, Auburn, Grade 1 Elementary Education

David Giroux, Maine Vocational Region Ten, Brunswick, Grades 9-12 Automotive Technology

Lois Kilby-Chesley, Mast Landing School, Freeport, Grades 3-5 Elementary Education

Gloria Noyes, Congin Elementary School, Westbrook, Grade 5 Elementary Education

Diane Pitman, Marshwood Great Works School, South Berwick, Grades 1-5 Special Education

Jonathan Sylvester, Thornton Academy, Saco, Grades 9-12 Special Education

Diana Tomasello Waterman, Alfred Elementary School, Grades K-6 Music

Governor Mourns Passing of Former State Representative Ed Povich

March 14, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci was saddened to learn of the death of Ed Povich, former State Legislator from Ellsworth. Povich served in the 117th to the 120th Legislatures in the Maine House of Representatives.

“Eddie was a hard worker and a kind and generous man,” said Governor Baldacci. “He owned and operated a small business, and still found the energy to give 100 percent to his constituents during his tenure in the Maine Legislature. Eddie was a man of integrity who cared deeply about public service. He believed in giving back to the community and ensuring that government helped people achieve their goals.”

The Governor expressed his sympathies to Ed Povich’s family on Friday.

Governor Baldacci will order flags to fly at half-staff in the City of Ellsworth on the day of Ed Povich’s funeral. No information on services is available at this time.

Draft State Health Plan Available for Public Comment

March 14, 2008

AUGUSTA - The Governor's Advisory Council for Health Systems Development (ACHSD) has made the draft 2008-09 State Health Plan available for public comment and will hold a public hearing at the Augusta Civic Center on March 18 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The State Health Plan is issued every two years by the Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance.

"A key element of Dirigo Health Reform, the State Health Plan is a roadmap to make Maine the healthiest state in the nation with a cost efficient high performing health system," said Governor Baldacci. "It will take all of us – consumers, providers and payers – working together, to successfully address the complex issues of Maine's health care costs, quality and access."

The 2008-09 State Health Plan outlines actions that respond to issues identified as primary cost drivers in the report "ACHSD Data Book: Investigating Maine's Health Care Cost Drivers" issued in October, 2007. The report points to the problems that Maine is paying more for its healthcare, but not necessarily getting more quality or efficient delivery of care.

- The U.S. spends twice as much per person on health care compared to other industrialized nations, but we only get the right care half the time;
- Maine has the second highest per person health care cost in the US (\$6540, compared to the national average of \$5283);
- The cost of treating the same patient for the same illness in different Maine hospitals varies between 20-60%;
- Chronic, and largely-preventable, diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, chronic lung disease and stroke contribute to 37% of cost increases in the state; and
- Maine has a higher utilization rate of emergency departments and outpatient services than the US and has a higher rate of hospital beds than other New England states, with a lower hospital occupancy rate.

While challenges exist, the State Health Plan also identifies some of the progress Maine has made since the Dirigo Health Reform was passed in 2003.

- Dirigo Health has covered 23,800 people and generated \$111 million in savings;
- The public health system has been streamlined, bringing health planning and programs closer to the community and regional level;
- Maine is on a path to reducing deaths due to cancer, coronary disease, stroke and chronic lung disease;

- Maine is national leader in reducing the percentage of people without insurance; and
- Pilots have been launched to institute models of care that demonstrate improved methods of increasing quality and access without increasing costs.

The newly released draft State Health Plan recommends continuing Maine's progress by:

- Establishing a pilot to coordinate patient healthcare needs by a team of professionals;
- Developing strategies that decrease the variation in cost and quality among healthcare providers;
- Developing strategies to redirect care from high cost services to more effective lower cost, high quality services; and
- Ensuring better long-term planning through efficient capital investments.

For more information on the draft 2008-2009 State Health Plan and other healthcare information, please visit:

http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/cabinet/health_policy.html

Governor Introduces Veterans Campus Legislation

March 14, 2008

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the introduction of legislation to create a veterans campus in Bangor. The project is designed to create a one-stop-shop for veterans to access services and information on state and federal veterans programs they have earned by virtue of their service to their nation.

“Maine veterans and their families deserve the highest quality health care, housing and other benefits,” said Governor Baldacci. “They’ve served our country, giving selflessly of themselves, and it’s our responsibility as a nation to make sure they are taken care of when they come home. The project we are proposing with this legislation will incorporate the needs of Maine veterans now and into the future, providing access to comprehensive services.”

Last May the Governor created a planning committee through an Executive Order to develop the recommendations for moving forward with the veterans campus. Saxl Park, Dorothea Dix, Maine Veterans Housing Coalition and Maine Veterans Homes, as well as the other committee members, all played key roles.

The integrated veterans campus would include the current site of the Maine State Veterans’ Home in Bangor. Independent housing, long-term skilled nursing care, residential care, outpatient clinical care, hospice care, and the information and programs administered by the state’s Bureau of Maine Veterans Services would all be available in a single place, improving convenience, access, efficiency, coordination and quality.

“I look forward to continuing to work with the partners represented here today, including our Congressional Delegation, so that we can achieve our shared goal of providing the best quality services to our Maine veterans and their families,” said the Governor.

The Governor’s bill is sponsored by State Senator Joseph Perry (D-Penobscot).

Governor Directs Work to Begin on Second Curtailment

March 17, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today directed the Commissioner of Administrative and Financial Services to prepare for a possible second curtailment order in response to the Revenue Forecasting Committee's March 1 downward revision of \$27 million.

The order would ensure that Maine's budget is balanced by the end of the fiscal year.

"We are preparing to further slow spending until the Legislature acts to bring the State's budget into balance," Governor Baldacci said. "We're taking prudent action to make sure that State spending does not exceed revenues while we diligently work toward a bipartisan budget."

A 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. Governor Baldacci issued a \$38 million curtailment order on Dec. 18, 2007. The amount of the second curtailment would be \$27 million.

The current fiscal year ends June 30. The potential curtailment order would curb spending in the fourth quarter, which begins April 1.

"Time is short, and we must have a plan for slowing state spending in place before April 1," Governor Baldacci said. "As we get closer to the end of the year, it becomes much more difficult to make the necessary cuts."

Governor Baldacci made the decision to begin work on the curtailment order after speaking late Monday afternoon with Democratic and Republican leaders from the House and Senate.

No details of the proposed curtailment are available. Department of Administrative and Financial Services Commissioner Rebecca Wyke will send a letter informing Legislative leaders of the process on Tuesday.

On Feb. 25, Maine's Revenue Forecasting Committee met and revised the projected revenues down by \$95 million. It was the second downward revision of \$95 million in this biennium. Taken together, the State faces a \$190 million revenue reduction.

"The struggling national economy is taking a terrible toll on most states," Governor Baldacci said. "According to the New York Times, at least 25 states are facing budget shortfalls. Unemployment is creeping up, energy prices are sky high and the national economy is either in a recession or on the edge. We must be prepared."

Instability in financial markets and falling home prices suggest that the current economic downturn could continue for some time. Predictions from leading economists are mixed and do not offer a complete picture of how long the national economic downturn will last.

"The difficulty created by the national economy doesn't begin or end with State revenues," Governor Baldacci said. "Families are suffering. Their wages aren't keeping up with food and oil prices. Everyone has to make tough decisions, and State government must do its part to live within its means."

Proposed reductions will be 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.

"Our process will be thoughtful and deliberative," Governor Baldacci said. "We will do everything we can to limit the impact on Maine people. But it is my responsibility to make sure the budget is brought into balance."

Governor Announces Court Nomination

March 18, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today nominated Judge Rae Ann French of Augusta for Active Retired status to the Maine District Court.

Judge French had been reappointed last July. While she is retiring from her position as Judge effective in April, she has expressed a deep desire to make her services available when needed by the Court, and therefore requested the Active Retired status so that she may serve in this capacity.

"Judge French is a dedicated public servant. She has served more than 37 years helping to ensure Mainers have access to justice," said Governor Baldacci. "I am pleased to nominate her as an Active Retired Judge so that the State can continue to rely on her exceptional expertise and experience."

Judge French has served as Judge to the Maine District Court since 1991.

Judge French joined the Attorney General's Office as an Assistant Attorney General after graduating from law school in 1972. After working in the Attorney General's Office for 19 years, she 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. She is a graduate of Gardiner Area High School in Gardiner, the University of Maine in Orono, and the University of Maine School of Law.

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

Governor Announces Nomination to Maine Turnpike Authority

March 20, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today nominated Thomas B. Federle of Manchester for membership of the Maine Turnpike Authority Board of Directors.

"Tom is an incredibly hard worker. He is a critical thinker and seasoned strategist," said Governor Baldacci. "His leadership and expertise will serve the Board well as it makes crucial decisions about some of Maine's most critical infrastructure. His background in municipal government, land use and environmental law makes him particularly well-suited to serving in this important position."

Federle has owned his own law firm for the past 15 months, and prior to that served as Chief Legal Counsel for Governor Baldacci, a post he held from July 2005 to December 2006. He served as an owner and managing member of Dyer Goodall and Federle, LLC for six years before working in the Governor's Office.

Federle is a graduate of Waterville High School. He received a B.A. from Colorado College and earned his J.D. from Vermont Law School.

The Maine Turnpike Authority operates and maintains Maine's toll express highway through its short term and long term capital improvement plans.

Turnpike nominees must be reviewed by the Transportation Committee and confirmed by the full Senate before being appointed.

Governor Baldacci Celebrates Groundbreaking of Freeport Village Station

March 20, 2008

FREEPORT - Governor John E. Baldacci joined local officials and representatives from L.L. Bean and Berenson Associates today to celebrate the groundbreaking for the Freeport Village Station. The new development is slated to open in the spring of 2009, with more than 118,000 square feet of new retail space and a parking garage with more than 500 free parking spaces.

"Tourism is Maine's largest industry," Governor Baldacci said. "We draw in more than three and a half million people per year – almost three times the Maine population. This new facility will be an even bigger draw to the region and will encourage further development."

In addition to L.L. Bean, stores for Calvin Klein, Izod and Nike are among the first tenants announced for the new facility.

Governor Baldacci praised L.L. Bean for their work in Maine. "L.L. Bean is a vibrant company, making great contributions to the State," said the Governor. "The company is among our most valued employers, as well. We are lucky to have this phenomenal company in Maine."

Chris McCormick, President of L.L. Bean, thanked Governor Baldacci for his hands-on approach to economic development in Maine.

"I can tell you from direct experience, there is not a more committed champion of Maine economic development than our Governor. He brings a thoughtful, balanced, yet aggressive approach to promoting Maine, Maine business and our economy," said McCormick.

The Freeport Village Station is being developed by Berenson Associates and is a part of the Town of Freeport's Vision 2010 Plan, which aims to reinforce key principals for the revitalization of the town's core.

Governor Applauds Appropriations Committee Budget Work

March 20, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci tonight applauded the work of the Legislature's Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee. "The budget work done by the Appropriations Committee is a significant accomplishment," Governor Baldacci said. "We have worked through a \$190 million revenue downturn without raising taxes or using money from our Budget Stabilization Fund."

"I think we all recognized that the working men and women of Maine couldn't afford to see their burdens increased. At the same time, we needed to balance our priorities and make sure that we take care of our neighbors."

The Appropriations Committee's work followed the broad principles outlined by the Governor in his supplemental budget.

"With this budget, we have brought State spending in line with our revenues, we've restructured government to make it smaller and more efficient, and we've taken major steps toward improving our financial position in future years," Governor Baldacci said.

"The Appropriations Committee has acted in a way that not only solves our short-term fiscal problems, but also puts us on a path of sustainability in the future," Governor Baldacci said.

The budget approved by the Appropriations Committee partially restores funding to important programs, including the university and community college systems and Medicaid, that serve Maine people.

"Working together, we have crafted a budget that protects the State's most vulnerable, invests in higher education and mitigates the effects of reduced K-12 funding on classrooms."

Much of the budget won bipartisan support in the committee. In the end, however, Democrats and Republicans could not agree.

"This budget is better because the Republican members of the Appropriations Committee stayed at the table and worked with Democrats. Everyone compromised, and at the end of the day it made the result stronger," Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Baldacci Signs First in the Nation Legislation on Novelty Lighters

March 24, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci signed LD 2081 into law today, An Act to Prohibit the Retail Sale and Distribution of Novelty Lighters.

“Many novelty lighters resemble toys,” Governor Baldacci said. “With statistics that show that more than 5,000 household fires are caused each year by children under the age of 5, anything we can do to prevent children from playing with lighters will serve to save lives and homes.”

The legislation was sponsored by Rep. Richard Sykes (R-Harrison) and was supported by Maine State Fire Marshal John Dean, president of the National Association of State Fire Marshals. The national association is hoping that the ban on novelty lighters will be extended across the country.

Governor Baldacci said that tragedies involving novelty lighters are a reality around the country, including here in Maine.

“According to the Associated Press, two children died last year from a fire caused by a novelty lighter shaped like a tiny motorcycle,” said the Governor. “Additionally, a child in Maine was hurt when he played with a baseball bat-shaped lighter in a convenience store.”

Because the bill was passed as emergency legislation, the law takes effect immediately.

Governor Mourns Loss of Soldier with Maine Ties

March 24, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today mourned the loss of an active duty Army soldier with Maine ties. Private Tyler Jacob Smith died as a result of wounds received from indirect fire in Iraq on Friday, March 21. Private Smith was 22 years old.

Private Smith was serving in Iraq with Company E, 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team out of Fort Stewart, GA. His parents reside in Bethel, Maine. Governor Baldacci spoke with Private Smith's family earlier today.

"As a State, we join together and mourn the loss of another young soldier from Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "This is a terrible loss for his family, his friends and his community. We honor Private Smith's sacrifice and will keep his family in our hearts and prayers."

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 Sends REAL ID Letter to DHS

March 25, 2008

Letter Outlines Improved Security of Maine Driver's Licenses

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security asking that Maine residents not be penalized under the federal REAL ID Act.

Homeland Security has set a March 31 deadline for states to request a waiver that would give them more time to move toward compliance with the REAL ID Act of 2005.

Maine law prohibits the state from complying with the act. In his letter to DHS, Governor Baldacci asked that Maine's residents not be penalized by the rules set to take effect on May 11.

"On May 11, the Department of Homeland Security could impose new travel restrictions on residents of states that have not received a waiver, but no state will be in compliance on that date. Maine's driver's license will be the same whether we receive the waiver or not. The same is true for every other state that has requested and received a waiver," Governor Baldacci said. "We have been working diligently to improve our driver's license, and we will continue those efforts regardless of REAL ID."

DHS has threatened to impose new travel restrictions on residents of states that do not seek the waiver and to deny them access to federal buildings.

In 2007, Maine passed a law that prohibits compliance with REAL ID.

"REAL ID will impose a massive financial burden on Maine at a time when our resources are extremely limited by a slowing national economy," Governor Baldacci said. "In addition, I share the concerns of other Maine lawmakers that REAL ID could put in jeopardy the personal information of every Maine resident. The federal law raises real privacy issues."

In his letter, Governor Baldacci outlined the numerous steps that have been taken to improve State issued credentials. Of 18 individual benchmarks for REAL ID, Maine meets or partially meets 10.

Maine has moved to central distribution of credentials, digital photograph retention, machine readable technology, and tamper-proof security features. Maine has also revised its statutes to mandate collection of a Social Security Number (SSN) or absent a SSN, written proof of ineligibility.

Maine does not accept for identification affirmation any document issued by a foreign government that has passed its expiration date; and pending legislation awaiting final action would establish a requirement that only Maine residents may obtain Maine credentials, and that those applicants would need to present documentary evidence of their physical Maine address in order to obtain a Maine credential.

The Legislature has requested that the Secretary of State work with the federal government to develop an authoritative list of documents acceptable to determine lawful presence, in anticipation of further

legislative action on this policy area next year. Also, we are examining the Enhanced Driver's License (EDL) under Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

"Maine has made tremendous progress in improving our driver's license, and our State has made it clear that we do not support REAL ID," Governor Baldacci said. "But I also felt it was necessary to send this letter to the Department of Homeland Security. I do not want to see Maine people used as a political pawn in a dispute between federal and state authorities. Come May 11, Mainers should be able to travel without extra security or unnecessary delays. To target them would be unfair."

Governor Baldacci also said today that there is an alternative to REAL ID.

"Maine Rep. Tom Allen has submitted bipartisan legislation that would repeal REAL ID and replace it with a process that will improve national security without placing an enormous financial burden on states or compromising civil liberties," Governor Baldacci said. "There is an alternative to the path we're on. I hope Congress and the President will take it."

Rep. Allen's bill, H.R. 1117, re-establishes a negotiated rulemaking process involving all stakeholders to develop standards for state driver's licenses. Maine was engaged in this process, which was working before its repeal by the REAL ID Act.

Language of the letter follows:

March 25, 2008

The Honorable Michael Chertoff

Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

As you know, the State of Maine has been at the forefront in the national discussion of identity security. Maine has consulted with your department extensively as you have worked to develop practical methods to implement a host of federal statutes, including the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), under the auspices of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, and the Real ID Act of 2005. While the development of the rules, policies and procedures have taken longer than had originally been anticipated, the State of Maine has moved vigorously in the meantime to improve the security of its credentials.

The Maine Secretary of State has jurisdiction over the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. In our analysis of Maine's policies and procedures for issuing driver's licenses and non-driver identification cards, we have found that our procedures completely meet or partially meet a large portion of the requirements noted in the Final Rule implementing the Act. Specifically, in Appendix A of the Final Rule vetted before publication in the Federal Register, 18 individual benchmarks were listed for certification of compliance. Maine meets or partially meets items 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, and 15.

Since 2002, Maine has moved to central distribution of credentials, digital photograph retention, machine readable technology, and tamper-proof security features. Maine has also revised its statutes to mandate collection of a Social Security Number (SSN) or absent a SSN, written proof of ineligibility; Maine does not accept for identification affirmation any document issued by a foreign government that has passed its expiration date; and pending legislation awaiting final action would establish a requirement that only Maine residents may obtain Maine credentials, and that those applicants would need to present documentary evidence of their physical Maine address in order to obtain a Maine credential. The Legislature has also requested that the Secretary of State work with our federal partners to develop an authoritative list of documents acceptable to determine lawful presence, in anticipation of further legislative action on this policy area next year. Also, we are examining your department's proposals to implement the Enhanced Driver's License (EDL) under WHTI.

While Maine citizens and their elected representatives in the Legislature have accepted and endorsed these enhancements, the Maine Legislature enacted and I signed into law LD 1138, An Act to Prohibit Maine from Participating in the Federal Real ID Act of 2005. This legislation received wide bipartisan support. Title 29-A MRSA section 1411 says explicitly "(t)he State may not participate in the federal Real ID Act of 2005 ... (t)he Secretary of State may not amend procedures for applying for a driver's license or nondriver identification card under this chapter in a manner designed to conform to the federal Real ID Act of 2005." While REAL ID is voluntary, section 1411 of Title 29-A MRSA is not.

Maine was a participant in the Negotiated Rulemaking Advisory Committee on Minimum Standards for State-Issued Driver Licenses and Identification Cards that was an original section of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, and that was subsequently repealed as a provision of the Real ID Act. We were very encouraged by the progress that was made on these issues in the brief time that committee met, and hope to revisit that mechanism in the future as a way to ease the procedural and jurisdictional difficulties that currently face Real ID. Additionally, we would encourage more such dialogue around the creation, issuance and usage of vital and probate records as source documents as well as clearer communication on best practices in the protocols surrounding the usage of federal travel documents.

We remain committed to improving the security of our credentials.

Given the progress that Maine has made in improving the security of our driver's license, it is my hope that the State's credentials continue to be acceptable for federal purposes, including commercial air travel and entry into federal buildings, and Mainers not be penalized.

Sincerely yours,

John E. Baldacci

Governor

Governor Baldacci Celebrates One-Year Anniversary of Mars Hill Wind

March 25, 2008

MARS HILL - Governor John E. Baldacci joined Conservation Commissioner Patrick McGowan and officials from UPC Wind and the Town of Mars Hill to celebrate the one-year anniversary of Maine's first fully operational wind farm.

"The State of Maine is poised to be a national leader in renewable energy production and use," said Governor Baldacci. "This project is a great example of private investment working with government in economic development. In addition to serving as a source for renewable energy, these projects help reduce Maine's dependence on imported fossil fuels, provide economic development, and promote security. Based on the success of Mars Hill Wind and the recently-completed recommendations of the Wind Power Task Force, I believe that Maine can lead the way in producing clean, renewable energy."

Mars Hill Wind began operating on March 27 of last year. In its first year of operation, the site has generated more than 133,500 megawatt-hours, or enough power for more than 19,000 New England homes. UPC Wind employed more than 300 local residents during construction of the project and has created 6 full time jobs on site. Governor Baldacci said that Maine should continue its pursuit of leaning more towards green energy projects and that Maine could be a "hub" for renewable energy in the future.

"Maine has the natural resources necessary to create energy in a greener, cleaner way," the Governor said. "We should be harnessing the possibilities with solar and tidal power. And throughout the State we have over two billion dollars worth of wind power projects either approved or waiting to be approved. Using our natural resources to cut our addiction to foreign oil and to create a more environmentally friendly power source is something we should be doing sooner rather than later."

UPC Wind is planning future developments in the State including a project in Stetson, which the company hopes to have operational by the end of this year.

Governor Baldacci Signs Bill to Change Name of Bridge Between Lewiston and Auburn

March 25, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 2101, Resolve, To Change the Name of the South Bridge Between Lewiston and Auburn. The bridge will now be known as the Bernard Lown Peace Bridge, named after former Lewiston resident Dr. Bernard Lown.

Dr. Lown was born in Lithuania and immigrated along with his family to Lewiston at the age of 13. He graduated from the University of Maine and later went on to invent the defibrillator. He was a founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility and the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. In 1985, on behalf of the latter organization, he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize.

“Dr. Lown has dedicated his life to peace,” Governor Baldacci said. “Dr. Lown is quoted as saying, ‘The most valuable gift one can give to a student is a good example.’ He has certainly set that good example for all of us, and with this bridge renaming, people well into the future will see his name and will hopefully learn the story of this incredible man.”

Both the Auburn and Lewiston City Councils unanimously approved the renaming of the bridge. The legislation was sponsored by Rep. Richard Wagner (D-Lewiston). Dr. Lown was at the ceremonial bill signing, as was Lewiston Mayor Larry Gilbert, Auburn Mayor John Jenkins and a number of legislative co-sponsors of the bill.

Governor Honors Red Cross Donors, Volunteers and Staff

March 26, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci honored those who contribute to the Maine chapter of the American Red Cross today during a ceremony in the Hall of Flags in Augusta. The Governor thanked the donors, volunteers and staff of the Red Cross, and proclaimed the month of March 2008 as American Red Cross Month throughout the State of Maine.

“Maine appreciates the work of the Red Cross,” Governor Baldacci said. “Without the nearly 4,500 men and women involved in the Red Cross in this State, this organization would not be able to offer the assistance it gives to our friends, family and neighbors every day.”

Governor Baldacci went on to say that the Red Cross is an example of the willingness of Mainers to give back to their community, through volunteering, charitable contributions and blood donations.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, every day, American Red Cross volunteers and employees carry out their mission by providing essential services to people in their communities with the help of generous donors across Maine; and

WHEREAS, for more than 90 years, the American Red Cross has provided disaster relief to the people of Maine, responding to an estimated 325 disasters, serving the needs of 380 families annually; and

WHEREAS, over the past year, more than 46,000 people have enrolled in American Red Cross Health and Safety Courses in Maine, preparing for disasters through first aid and CPR training, water safety training, and learning how to use automated external defibrillators; and

WHEREAS, the American Red Cross of Maine services more than 37 hospitals and transfusion centers around the State and serves as the bridge between more than 72,000 generous blood donors and millions of patients in need each year; and

WHEREAS, the American Red Cross is entrusted with providing volunteer aid in time of war to the sick and wounded of the Armed Forces by deploying staff members to provide emergency communications and a caring presence; and

WHEREAS, without the help of 4,400 tireless volunteers and employees, the American Red Cross of Maine would not be able to fulfill the humanitarian mission that is the cornerstone of the organization,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim the month of March, 2008 as

AMERICAN RED CROSS MONTH

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

Governor Baldacci Signs Bill Relating to Insurance Coverage for Colorectal Cancer Early Detection

March 26, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 2109, An Act Relating to Insurance Coverage for Colorectal Cancer Early Detection. The bill requires health insurance policies issued or renewed after Jan. 1, 2009, to provide coverage for colorectal cancer screenings.

“We know that the five-year survival rate for those who detected their colon cancer early is 90 percent, but only 39 percent of colon cancers are diagnosed at this stage,” Governor Baldacci said. “That’s why this bill is so important. The bill requires coverage for colorectal cancer screening recommended by health care providers.”

Governor Baldacci was joined at the signing by bill sponsor, Rep. Edward Mazurek (D-Rockland), co-sponsors of the legislation, cancer survivors, caregivers and representatives from the American Cancer Society.

Earlier in the year, Governor Baldacci proclaimed the month of March as Colon Cancer Awareness Month in the State of Maine.

Governor Baldacci Addresses Girls' Day at the State House

March 27, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today spoke to about 100 participants involved in Girls' Day at the State House. The annual event is put on by the Maine Women's Policy Center.

"We have a strong tradition of women's leadership in this State," Governor Baldacci said. "Women have a strong role in shaping public policy in Maine, from our leaders in the Maine House and Senate, to the women leaders among by Cabinet and staff. Examples of women leaders are all around you, and I hope you will be inspired by them to run for office one day, or to find another way to develop as a leader in your community."

In addition to meeting the Governor, 8th grade girls from all over Maine had the opportunity to meet with legislative leadership, participate in a mock public hearing and mock press conference, job shadow legislators and learn about the history of the Maine State House.

This is the 12th year the Maine Women's Policy Center has organized Girls' Day at the State House.

Maine Festival of the Book To Celebrate Love of All Literary Genres

March 27, 2008

-- Maine's First Lady to chair event honoring authors--

PORTLAND – The second annual Maine Festival of the Book will give fans of many different genres a chance to celebrate their love of reading through a three-day event to take place in and around Portland May 15-17. It is being presented by the nonprofit Maine Reads and is chaired by First Lady Karen M. Baldacci.

"I am delighted that Maine Festival of the Book is turning into an annual tradition," said Mrs. Baldacci. "While promoting literacy, we have the opportunity to bring members of Maine's literary community together in one place for a celebration of the written word."

The festival's goal is to encourage a dialogue between authors and readers through programs that feature readings, performances and panel discussions. All events, with the exception of Opening Night on May 15 at Merrill Auditorium, which is a benefit for Maine Reads, are free and designed to appeal to a broad range of ages and interests.

Opening Night will feature David Baldacci, bestselling author of *Stone Cold*, poet Annie Finch and performer Michael Maglaras. Tickets are \$50 per person (available by calling 871-9100) to attend the A Reception with the Authors party, and \$10 per person (available through PortTix and the box office starting in April) to attend the program in the auditorium that follows.

All other programs are free and will be held May 16 - 17 at Monument Square, the Portland Public Library, Maine Historical Society and other venues. Books will be for sale on the Square and more than 40 authors will be available for signings.

Children's events will include the opportunity to meet many of their favorite authors, performers and storytellers under the big tent on Monument Square and in the Portland Public Library's children's room. The list of participants includes Phil Hoose, Paul Janeczko, and Lynn Plourde.

Other scheduled events include panel discussions, writing workshops, mystery, maritime fiction, nonfiction and young adult fiction. At Portland Stage Company, the Theatre of the Unexpected will feature work of emerging playwrights throughout the weekend.

"What is exciting to me about the festival is that we are really reaching out to fans of all different types of books," said event organizer Sarah Cecil of Maine Reads. "There is truly something for everyone, from people who love graphic novels, to kids, to poetry devotees."

Authors will be speaking throughout Friday and Saturday about their craft. Most of the presenting authors will be discussing and reading from books just released. David Baldacci will have a new book out, as will Elizabeth Strout, bestselling author of *Amy and Isabelle*. Portland's own Amy Sutherland will

be reading from her new book, *What Shamu Taught Me about Love, Marriage and Life*. Author Crystal Zevon will read from her 2007 critically acclaimed biography of her former husband Warren Zevon.

Established in 2002 by the Office of the First Lady, Maine Reads is dedicated to promoting a more literate Maine through meaningful programs that create awareness, raise funds, and encourage collaboration among literacy providers. For more information, please visit www.mainereads.org or call (207) 871-9100.

Governor Orders Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff on March 31

March 28, 2008

AUGUSTA – In remembrance and honor of Private First Class Tyler Jacob Smith, 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 Monday, March 31, 2008.

PFC Smith died as a result of wounds received from indirect fire in Iraq on Friday, March 21, 2008.

His funeral services are scheduled for 2 p.m. on Monday at the West Parish Congregational Church, 10 Church Street in Bethel.

Governor Congratulates Newest Members of the Maine State Police

March 28, 2008

VASSALBORO - Governor John E. Baldacci today gave the keynote address at the graduation ceremony for the newest members of the Maine State Police. The nine graduates were sworn in by State Police Colonel Patrick J. Fleming and received their badges. The graduates have completed 18 weeks of basic law enforcement training followed by nine weeks of training and instruction at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.

The Governor complimented the new Troopers as they enter service to Maine people, noting the high level of professionalism, compassion, and dedication of the State Police.

"I appreciate all your hard work and the time spent away from family. Maine Troopers have an increasingly complicated job. Our law enforcement community is second-to-none. As new Troopers, you will continue to build on that reputation, and through your strong work ethic and commitment to uphold the law of this land, you will become role models for our youth and for all citizens of Maine," said Governor Baldacci.

The nine new Troopers have been assigned to the following patrols:

Troop A – York County

Benjamin H. Smith, of South Berwick

Matthew R. Williams, of Portland

Troop B – Androscoggin and Oxford Counties

Paul D. Casey, of Rumford, will patrol Oxford County

Thomas A. Pappas Jr., of Bowdoin, will patrol Androscoggin County

Jason E. Wing, of Auburn, will patrol Oxford County

Troop C – Kennebec and Somerset Counties

Jon F. Brown, of St. Albans, will patrol Somerset County

Breanne S. Petrini, of Winthrop, will patrol Kennebec and Somerset Counties

Troop D - Waldo County

Thomas B. Welch, of Lincolnville

Troop J - Hancock and Washington Counties

Christopher D. Smith, Hancock

"As you begin your career, I wish you the courage of all those who came before you," said Governor Baldacci. "Congratulations. Good luck. May you always be safe."

Governor Baldacci Signs Revisions to State Budget

March 31, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci tonight signed a package of revisions to the State's 2008-2009 budget.

"This has been a difficult budget process," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine has been forced to deal with a \$190 million revenue downturn caused by a struggling national economy. The decisions have been difficult, but the end product is a reasonable and responsible budget that puts us on firmer financial footing moving forward."

The supplemental budget does not include new taxes and does not use resources from the State's Budget Stabilization Fund.

"Our economy remains uncertain," Governor Baldacci said. "The Legislature has acted prudently and put us in a better position to weather this national economic storm. We have prioritized State spending and restructured government to make it more affordable, and we will continue to work toward better, more efficient ways for government to fulfill its responsibilities."

The supplemental budget passed without a two-thirds margin in the House or Senate. In order for the budget to take effect before the end of the fiscal year on June 30, the Legislature was required to adjourn.

The Governor also signed tonight a proclamation calling the House and Senate back into special session at 10 a.m. Tuesday, April 1, so that the bodies can continue their work.

Governor Highlights Successes of Maine's North Star Alliance Initiative

April 1, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today welcomed partners of Maine's North Star Alliance Initiative (NSAI) to the State House. The initiative was created from a \$14.4 million U.S. Department of Labor WIRED grant received in 2006. The grant enabled the promotion of the major workforce and economic development initiative in Maine targeting the economic cluster that includes the industries of boatbuilding, composites and marine trades. The industry-driven, industry-focused project was established to grow these industries through workforce development, R&D market outreach and infrastructure development.

"Maine's North Star Alliance Initiative helps us build on our strengths, creating quality jobs and keep the state's marine and composites industries competitive in the global economy," said Governor Baldacci. "This is promising, but there's more that we must do to expand Maine's research and development fields and to provide economic opportunities to all of Maine's residents."

The Governor recognized the public and private partners who are active in Maine's North Star Alliance Initiative, including industry and association representatives, state agencies, education institutions and Maine's Congressional Delegation. He outlined a number of opportunities that have been created through the work of the initiative, including:

- o Developing Maine's high quality workforce through the creation of two new state-of-the-art training centers to provide basic and specialized skills in these industries: the Maine Advanced Technology Center and the Marine Systems Training Center; and
- o Expanding technology, especially composites technology at the University of Maine. This technology contributed to the new high-speed boat the U.S. Navy SEALs bought from Hodgdon Yachts;
- o Expanding market outreach. Maine Built Boats is starting a new global marketing campaign to brand Maine's boatbuilding industry.

The Alliance unveiled today a survey of the boatbuilding industry in Maine. Conducted in 2006, the survey provides data on the health of the industry and of potential for growth. The report also identifies major challenges facing the future of boatbuilding in Maine, including workforce recruitment and retention, high cost of health and liability insurance and high coastal property values.

"The survey findings give us a valuable snapshot of the industry right now and of areas where funding will be able to make the greatest impact to improve the ability of the industry to compete and expand," said the Governor. "We have great opportunities to grow this cluster and provide good paying jobs now and for future generations."

Maine's North Star Initiative doesn't operate in a vacuum. Combined with the Administration's initiatives on quality education, Pine Tree Development Zone program and funding for research and

development, the North Star Alliance works to make strategic investments where they will have the greatest impact.

For more information on Maine's North Star Alliance Initiative, please go to <http://www.maine.gov/wired/index.shtml>

Maine Receives REAL ID Extension

April 2, 2008

Governor Baldacci Will Submit Legislation to Place New Restrictions on Driver's Licenses and State Credentials

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci learned today from the Department of Homeland Security that Maine has been granted an extension to the May 11, 2008, implementation deadline for the REAL ID Act of 2005.

Earlier today, Governor Baldacci responded to a March 31 letter from DHS that asked Maine to take certain steps to improve the security of its driver's license before an extension would be granted. In his letter to DHS, Governor Baldacci agreed to all the requirements.

"I have an obligation to make sure that State government acts in the best interest of all the people of Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "I believe the requests made by the Department of Homeland Security are reasonable, and I will use the resources at my disposal to make sure they are implemented. I look forward to continuing to work with the Legislature and Secretary of State on these important issues."

Without the extension, after May 11, 2008, Maine driver's licenses would not have been acceptable for federal purposes, including travel on commercial airlines and entry into federal buildings.

"One of our goals in working with the federal government on this issue is to ensure that our people aren't penalized because they're from Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "That's unacceptable to me."

"Our other goal is to enhance the security of our driver's licenses," Governor Baldacci said. "It's time that Maine adds new safeguards to our credentials."

The Governor was notified that Maine had been granted the extension during an early afternoon telephone call with Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security Stewart Baker.

"I want to thank Secretary Chertoff and Assistant Secretary Baker for working directly with me on behalf of Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "We've had a constructive dialogue, and I look forward to working with them as we implement these improvements."

The Governor will submit legislation today that will limit state credentials to U.S. citizens or to others who can establish their legal presence in the country. In addition, the legislation will make the following changes to the process of issuing state credentials:

Maine will enter into an agreement with USCIS and utilize the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program to verify DHS documents presented by non-citizens. Maine will set the term for any license that it issues to lawfully present non-citizens so that the license's term expires when the alien's legal status ends. Maine will commit to looking into the most cost-effective way to ensure

that customers do not have more than one driver's license or identification card already issued by the state, such as facial recognition or similar technology.

Maine will also change its driver's license procedures so that photographs are taken at the beginning of the process so that images are captured even if applications are not completed in their entirety.

The text of the Governor's April 2 letter follows:

April 2, 2008

The Honorable Michael Chertoff Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Washington, D.C.
20538

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

In response to your March 31, 2008, letter, I can assure you that the State of Maine can make the commitments you identified.

Specifically, based on our conversation, Maine is prepared to commit to the following security measures.

First, I will seek legislation to halt Maine's current practice of issuing licenses to those not present lawfully in the United States.

Second, today I will submit legislation, which includes a funding source and appropriations, that will adopt three changes in Maine's licensing processes:

Maine will enter into an agreement with USCIS and utilize the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program to verify DHS documents presented by non-citizens. Maine will set the term for any license that it issues to lawfully present non-citizens so that the term expires when the alien's legal status ends. Maine will commit to looking into the most cost-effective way to ensure that customers do not have more than one driver's license or identification card already issued by the state, such as facial recognition or similar technology.

Finally, Maine will begin capturing and maintaining photographs of each individual applying for a license or state identification card, even if no license is issued.

I expect the policy and programming changes to be enacted by Dec. 15, 2008. The change in photograph procedures will be accomplished within 60 days. I understand that, if these timelines are not met, the Department's extension of the May 11, 2008, deadline will come to an end.

I trust that these assurances are sufficient, and I appreciate the efforts that you and your staff have made to work with Maine in this matter.

Sincerely,

John E. Baldacci Governor

Governor Baldacci Opens Energy Efficiency Summit

April 3, 2008

AUGUSTA – More than 550 Maine business people, environmentalists and others crowded the Augusta Civic Center today for the first-ever Governor's Energy Efficiency Summit.

Subtitled "Strengthening Business Through Energy Savings," the summit highlighted in speeches and breakout sessions the enormous potential that aggressive energy efficiency investments hold for Maine's economic future.

"As a state, we spend more than \$5 billion on energy annually – and three quarters of those dollars flow straight out of Maine to pay for imported fuels and power," said Governor John E. Baldacci.

"I have a selfish goal for Maine: I want us to do everything that we possibly can to keep our energy dollars in our own pockets," the Governor said. "I want us to reduce our energy bills by eliminating energy waste. I want us to have the most energy efficient economy in New England. And I want us to create new jobs in the energy services sector."

The summit offered Maine businesses and other participants a day-long forum for learning about energy efficiency strategies that can save them money, and to share their experiences coping with today's high energy prices. It included an expo of the latest energy-efficient technologies and the unveiling of a new report commissioned by the State Planning Office that details the economic opportunities energy efficiency presents for Maine.

The Governor announced that the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) was adding \$1 million to boost an existing Efficiency Maine program operated by the Maine Public Utilities Commission that makes low-cost small business loans for efficiency investments. The new program will raise the loan limit from \$35,000 to \$250,000.

"This is one of many steps we will take in the days, months and years ahead to help Mainers and Maine businesses take control of their energy future," Governor Baldacci said.

Kurt Adams, Chairman of the Maine Public Utilities Commission, noted that efficiency investments benefit not only the bottom line, but reduce energy-related emissions of carbon dioxide, a prime contributor to global warming.

"The PUC's Efficiency Maine program has already partnered with Maine residents and businesses to produce some \$187 million in lifetime benefits for the state's economy," Adams said. "Today's summit demonstrates that momentum is building to save far more, and that Maine will be a leader in the fight against climate change."

Governor Baldacci was presented with the new white paper, written by Muskie School of Public Service professors Charles Colgan and Samuel Merrill, and Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center professor Jonathan Rubin.

"Perhaps the single most effective action to enhance Maine's business climate and economic competitiveness is to aggressively increase the energy efficiency of the Maine economy," the authors write.

Based on previous studies, they estimate that Maine could effectively spend six-to-eight times more on energy efficiency than now and still save \$450 million a year in avoided energy costs. And that could aid the creation of up to 2,500 new jobs by 2020.

"Maine businesses are highly motivated on this issue, as the attendance at today's event amply demonstrates," said Dana Connors, president of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce. "Efficiency saves money and reduces carbon emissions. This is one of those cases where you can indeed do good and do well at the same time."

Brownie Carson, Executive Director of the Natural Resources Council of Maine, agreed. "Improving energy efficiency saves Maine people money, strengthens our economy and protects our environment," Carson said. "Maine can't control the price of oil or electricity, but we can control how much of them we need to buy."

Also at the summit, internationally recognized authority on "energy recycling" and Chairman of Recycled Energy Development LLC, Thomas R. Casten, gave the keynote address: "Profitably Reducing Carbon Emissions for Maine."

The summit was organized by:

The Office of the Governor

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Innovation

The Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security

The Maine Public Utilities Commission's Efficiency Maine program

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce

The Maine State Planning Office

MaineHousing

The Natural Resources Council of Maine

Sierra Club-Maine

For more information about the summit, please

visit <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/EnergySummit.html>

For more information about State efforts to increase energy efficiency and for energy saving tips, please

visit <http://www efficiencymaine.com/>

Governor Baldacci Proclaims Alcohol Awareness Month

April 3, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today presented a proclamation naming the month of April 2008 as Alcohol Awareness Month in the State of Maine.

“Last year, the Office of Substance Abuse issued a report which found that the total estimated cost of substance abuse in Maine in 2005 was nearly \$900 million,” Governor Baldacci said. “That’s \$682 for every resident of the State of Maine. That is an unbelievable economic impact.”

The Governor presented the proclamation during a Hall of Flags kickoff ceremony for the “Call to Action” campaign in Maine. Over two dozen Town Hall meetings are scheduled throughout Maine this spring to further the Surgeon General’s Call to Action on preventing underage drinking. First Lady Karen Baldacci, Public Safety Commissioner Anne Jordan, Department of Health and Human Services Commissioner Brenda Harvey and Attorney General Steve Rowe were on hand for the event, and are all taking part in the various Town Hall meetings around the State. Two youth groups – Peer Leaders from Nokomis Regional High School in Newport and A Company of Girls – were also at the kickoff.

“We can help to slow alcohol abuse in the future by working to prevent underage drinking now,” the Governor said. “Parents can educate themselves and their kids about the risks; kids can be a good role model to younger kids and feel comfortable refusing alcohol; and the community can be aware of the problems with alcohol and substance abuse.”

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, each April since 1987, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) has designated April as “Alcohol Awareness Month” and the Maine Alliance to Prevent Substance Abuse is highlighting alcohol abuse prevention as a statewide effort; and

WHEREAS, alcohol abuse and addiction impacts our communities on many levels, from the workplace, to school and the home, and the total cost for substance abuse in Maine is estimated to be \$898.4 million with the majority of this due to alcohol abuse; and

WHEREAS, during this year’s Alcohol Awareness campaign, the important issue of preventing underage drinking is being highlighted by a “A Call to Action” at Community Town Hall meetings across the state; and

WHEREAS, alcohol is the number one drug of choice for Maine’s young people and is a growing problem with potentially devastating consequences; and

WHEREAS, in Maine, among eighth graders, about 1 in 13 reported having five alcoholic drinks or more at least once in the past two weeks, nearly 1 in 5 10th graders and about 3 out of every 10 12th graders reported being drunk at least once in the last month; and

WHEREAS, a 2008 Alcohol Awareness Month, with the theme of "A Call to Action" will serve the community through joint efforts between parents, schools, community organizations, business leaders, government agencies and young people; and

WHEREAS, this partnership is necessary to change our communities and to create comprehensive education, prevention, intervention and treatment resources,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim the month of April, 2008 as

ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH

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

Governor Welcomes Barclays to Wilton, Maine

April 3, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today welcomed Barclays PLC, a major global financial services company, to Maine. Barclays will open a customer care center in Wilton in June, hiring up to 50 full-time employees at the outset. The company projects an additional 150 jobs could be added over the next ten years as it continues to grow its credit card operations.

"I am pleased that Wilton will be the new home to Barclays expansion," said Governor Baldacci. "We know Barclays has a great reputation and is known as a high-quality employer."

Governor Baldacci pointed to a number of factors that Barclays said resulted in their decision to establish a facility in Maine. Maine's skilled workforce, high quality of life and the ability to participate in incentives like the Pine Tree Zone program attracted Barclays to the state, according to the company.

"Barclays has recognized, as have many others – from athenahealth and Notify MD, to Proctor & Gamble – that Maine is a great state in which to do business," said the Governor.

"In Wilton, Barclays will be able to attract employees from a skilled work force with experience in different service industries," said Joe Purzycki, Chief Operating Officer, Barclaycard US. "We're proud to be the newest member of the Wilton business community and look forward to building deep roots and strong ties throughout the region."

"With incentives like our Pine Tree Zone program, we are moving forward and will continue to work to give Maine people the opportunities they deserve," said Governor Baldacci. "Congratulations to Barclays and all those in Wilton and in Maine who worked so hard to bring this project to fruition."

Barclays PLC is a major global financial services provider engaged in retail and commercial banking, credit cards, investment banking, wealth management and investment management services. Headquartered in Wilmington, Del., Barclaycard US has more than 60 partnerships with some of the country's most successful travel, entertainment, retail and financial institutions including US Airways, Lufthansa, Barnes & Noble, Best Western, BJ's Wholesale Club, Travelocity and Carnival Cruise Lines. The company employs more than 1,200 associates and was named a Top Employer in Delaware in 2007. For more information please visit www.barclaycardus.com.

Governor Mourns Passing of Former Bangor Mayor Albert Weymouth Jr.

April 3, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci was saddened to learn of the death of Albert Weymouth Jr., former Mayor of Bangor. Weymouth had served as a professor at Husson College for more than three decades before retiring. He served on the Bangor School Committee and on the Bangor City Council.

“Al was a dedicated educator and public servant, a true gentleman who served the City of Bangor for many years with great commitment,” said Governor Baldacci. “I was honored to serve on the Bangor City Council with Al, and will remember him as a very hard worker who loved serving the people of Maine.”

Governor Mourns Death of Soldier from Maine

April 5, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has learned of the death of a soldier with Maine ties.

Sgt. Nicholas A. Robertson of Old Town, Maine, died April 3 at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. He was wounded April 2 while serving in Afghanistan.

“Sgt. Robertson gave his life in the service of his country,” Governor Baldacci said. “We owe him a tremendous debt. His sacrifice will be remembered.”

“At this terrible time, we will keep Sgt. Robertson’s family and friends in our prayers,” Governor Baldacci said. “All of Maine mourns the death of another brave soldier.”

Sgt. Robertson was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Bragg, N.C.

Flags will be ordered flown at half-staff on the day of Sgt. Robertson’s funeral.

No additional information is available at this time.

Governor and Legislators Support Next Step of Dirigo Health

April 7, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today led a press conference in support of LD 2247, An Act to Continue Maine's Leadership in Covering the Uninsured. The bill, which expands the ability of Mainers to access affordable health insurance, could be voted on by the House and Senate as early as this week.

The bill includes market reforms to make individual health insurance more affordable. The legislation also reforms the funding for DirigoChoice, replacing the controversial Savings Offset Payment (SOP) with a more predictable source of funding.

"On day one of my Administration, I began working to reform health care, because healthy families and healthy businesses make a healthy economy," said Governor Baldacci. "DirigoChoice has made a difference to employers and their employees, many of whom were unable to afford health insurance before."

Governor Baldacci was joined by legislators, including bill sponsor House Majority Leader Hannah Pingree, DirigoChoice insurance carrier Harvard Pilgrim's president and CEO Charles Baker, and small business owners who currently subscribe to DirigoChoice.

The Governor recognized Charles Baker of Harvard Pilgrim. The nonprofit insurer, ranked the nation's No. 1 health plan in consumer satisfaction by US News & World Report, became the carrier for DirigoChoice in January 2008.

"Harvard Pilgrim has fast become a valuable partner with the State of Maine in our nation-leading effort to expand health insurance," said Governor Baldacci.

Rep. Hannah Pingree spoke on behalf of her legislation. She noted that more than 28,000 Mainers have had coverage thanks to Dirigo Health. The State's leadership in the area of extending health care coverage has resulted in Maine having the distinction of being one of the only states in the nation that has seen a reduction in the number of uninsured.

A number of small businesses in Maine who offer coverage to their employees through DirigoChoice also offered their support for LD 2247.

Paul Hollingsworth co-owns Henry & Marty's Restaurant in Brunswick. He said that seven of his 12 employees have DirigoChoice coverage. All but one of these employees could not have afforded health insurance prior to the restaurant's participation in DirigoChoice.

Skip Moskey owns Meadowshire Communications in Limerick. He relocated to Maine a year ago. He said DirigoChoice is an economic driver, as it was one of the critical factors that encouraged him to move back to Maine.

Bill Keleher operates MicroTechnologies Inc. in Richmond. DirigoChoice has put his company at a competitive advantage, he said, as he's able to provide health insurance to his employees at a reasonable rate. One of Keleher's employees, Rebecca Boulanger, spoke eloquently about her experience years ago of having to find health insurance for her children. She said she was terrified years ago when she had to scramble for health insurance for her kids, and that because of DirigoChoice, she now has affordable coverage for herself and her children, which has meant that she has been able to begin saving for her children's college education.

Governor Baldacci said, "Maine has succeeded in bucking the trend of a rising national rate in the uninsured, and we were the first state in the nation to make universal insurance a goal. It is vital for our hardworking families and businesses that we reduce health care costs and make health insurance more affordable for everyone."

"I urge the Legislature to swiftly pass LD 2247 so that we can continue Maine's leadership to achieve universal coverage," said the Governor.

Governor Celebrates Statewide Adult Education Programs

April 7, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today welcomed members of the Maine Adult Education Association and adult education students at a Hall of Flags event highlighting the importance of adult education in Maine.

The Governor said that adult education is a key to workforce development in Maine.

“Adult education promotes economic growth in the State, providing more qualified, trained workers for new and expanding technologies and industries,” said the Governor. “Adult education is a critical link to expanding job prospects and enhancing opportunities for those participating in the programs.”

The Governor praised the Maine Adult Education Association for working effectively with the Community College and University systems as well as worker programs such as the Maine Career Centers and other agencies. The links between the systems assist adults in attaining economic security and greater opportunities and help promote lifelong learning.

Governor Celebrates “Pink Plate”

April 7, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 775, An Act to Create a Specialty License Plate to Support Breast Cancer Services in Maine. Surrounded by legislators and advocates, the Governor congratulated Rep. Meredith Strang Burgess, sponsor of the bill and breast cancer survivor.

The Governor said that a diagnosis of breast cancer impacts not only the patient, but a much larger circle of family and friends. The Pink Plate enables people to contribute to support for those with breast cancer.

“Due to medical breakthroughs and early detection, breast cancer mortality rates continue to show a slow, steady drop,” said the Governor. “A breast cancer diagnosis is no longer a death sentence. A lot of credit goes to the partners present here today and the many other partners helping across all our Maine communities. But still far too many women and families are impacted by breast cancer, and a diagnosis of breast cancer is traumatic in itself, let alone the treatment. These individuals need support from our health care providers, and our communities, and that’s what this Pink Plate does.”

The Pink Plate becomes available Oct. 1. According to Rep. Strang Burgess, proceeds from the sale of the plate will support the work of the Maine Cancer Foundation, the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition and the Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program.

Governor Vetoes LD 1932, An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding School Funding

April 7, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today vetoed the bill LD 1932, An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding School Funding. The Governor said that the bill contains provisions that are counter to the education reform law passed last year, and thus that he cannot sign the bill in its current form.

The text of the veto message follows.

To The Honorable Members of the Maine Legislature:

I am enclosing S.P. 741, L.D. 1932, “An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding School Funding,” which is being returned without my signature or approval.

This bill began as a means to eliminate technical barriers to the school administrative reorganization law enacted last year. The elements of the original bill are non-controversial and were supported by all 13 members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.

During the legislative process, the bill was significantly amended and its original purpose was lost. The non-controversial technical changes became encumbered with language that I cannot support.

In its current form, L.D. 1932 would undermine the effectiveness of the education reforms that passed the Legislature last year with broad bipartisan support. Specifically, the bill would allow for the formation of “super unions,” which would encourage more bureaucracy and allow for the expansion of an inefficient means of school governance. Maine would likely end up with more school districts, not fewer. Further, the bill would decrease the transparency of the budget validation process and increase confusion, making it more difficult for voters to get a complete picture of how their tax dollars are being spent on education.

Nonetheless, agreement still exists on the need for the technical amendments that prompted L.D. 1932. Most schools districts have been working diligently since January to reduce school administration, improve student outcomes and save tax dollars. Unfortunately, in some places this good work has stopped as Reorganization Planning Committees, School Board members, town officials and citizens have been forced to wait for the tools they need to move forward.

To help them move forward, I have submitted legislation that includes the non-controversial elements of L.D. 1932. The new legislation will allow school units to negotiate local cost-sharing agreements, will allow districts that receive the minimum special education subsidy to continue to do so when they join a new school district and will remove the 2 mill requirement. The bill will also correct a technical error by creating a single budget format for all districts.

Maine must continue to push for the highest quality education for our children, but we must also continue to seek greater efficiencies in the way the State delivers services. For these reasons and the others outlined above, I firmly oppose L.D. 1932 and respectfully urge you to sustain my veto.

Sincerely,

John E. Baldacci

Governor

Governor Recognizes Army Reserve's 100th Anniversary

April 8, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today recognized the 100th Anniversary of the U.S. Army Reserves. In a proclamation signing ceremony in the State House, the Governor welcomed Capt. Brian White, Commanding Officer of the 619th Transportation Company based in Auburn, Maine, and other members of the Army Reserve and thanked them for their commitment to preserving the safety of Maine citizens and the nation.

"The 619th Transportation Company, and all our U.S. Army Reservists, serve this nation in remarkable ways," said Governor Baldacci. "They put their lives on the line. This isn't something any of us take lightly. We know that our Army Reservists are there to answer the call. They do amazing work, and we can never thank them enough for what they do day in and day out."

The 619th Transportation Company served a year in Iraq, arriving back home in 2005. While in Iraq, the Company ran convoys of equipment and supplies in northern Iraq.

Governor Baldacci signed a proclamation recognizing April 23 as Army Reservist Day. The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, the United States Army Reserve is rooted in the tradition of the American Colonists who served, protected and defended this country; and

WHEREAS, in 1908, Congress established the Medical Reserve Corps to provide a reservoir of trained officers in times of war; and

WHEREAS, Army Reserve soldiers have since trained and served with excellence during many of the world's most serious conflicts; and

WHEREAS, the role of the Army Reserve has changed over time, moving from a strategic reserve to an operation force that can support the Army during peacetime, contingencies and war; and

WHEREAS, though the Army Reserve makes up only 20 percent of the Army's organized units, it provides about half of the Army's combat support and one quarter of the Army's mobilization base expansion capability while using only 5.3 percent of the Army's budget; and

WHEREAS, as the United States Armed Forces face a constantly changing world theater, the Army Reserve has played a critical role in the Army's transformation into a smaller, lighter, and quicker force; and

WHEREAS, with over one million soldiers available at any time, the Army Reserve continues to produce a highly skilled, flexible force that can provide the Army with the support needed to face the ever-changing demands of the 21st century,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim April 23, 2008 as

ARMY RESERVE DAY

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

Initiative Would Increase Funding for State Bridges

April 8, 2008

Governor Introduces Legislation to Invest \$160 million in Bridges

AUGUSTA – Responding to growing concern over the condition of bridges around the State and to a November 2007 study, “Keeping Our Bridges Safe,” Governor John E. Baldacci today submitted bipartisan legislation that will invest an additional \$160 million over four years in bridge construction and preservation.

“The tragedy last year in Minneapolis showed the world that we must remain vigilant when it comes to our bridges. We had a team of engineers review our bridge inspection program and funding levels, and they found that we need to make a significant investment,” Governor Baldacci said. “With this plan, we’ll put \$160 million in new funding to work alongside existing resources to rehabilitate and improve the State’s bridges.”

The initiative will supplement current bridge funding of about \$70 million per year with an additional \$40 million per year over the next four years.

The initiative would fund 246 bridge projects around the State, including 80 bridge replacements. Of the 246 projects, about two-thirds of the bridges being improved are currently on the Maine Department of Transportation’s Bridge Watch List. The remainder will prevent bridges from falling into poor condition.

To pay for the bridge investment, three fees would be increased. The State’s vehicle registration fee would increase from \$25 per year to \$35 per year; the title fee would increase from \$23 per year to \$33 per year; and the vanity plate fee would increase from \$15 per year to \$25 per year. With the modest increases, Maine’s fees will remain at or below those of New Hampshire and the New England average.

“This initiative is important for our economy, and it’s important to our ability to safely move people and goods around the State and around the country,” Governor Baldacci said. “We want our bridges to be reliable, safe and secure, and that requires us to make investments. The initiative is balanced and responsible.”

Governor Baldacci introduced the bill after receiving a letter from the co-chairs of the Legislature’s Transportation Committee, who encouraged him to submit legislation for bridge improvement.

“The Transportation Committee has struggled to find ways to meet the needs of Maine motorists and businesses at a time when major portions of Maine’s transportation network are nearing the end of their service life,” wrote Sen. Dennis Damon and Rep. Boyd Marley. “To succeed at this time, we strongly believe you must lead this effort, starting with a Governor’s bill.”

The bill has 29 sponsors and co-sponsors, including Rep. Marley, Sen. Damon, Transportation Ranking Member Sen. Christine Savage, Rep. Richard Cebra, Rep. Charles Fisher, Rep. Charles Ken Theriault, Rep. Kimberley Rosen, Rep. Edward Mazurek, Rep. George Hogan, Rep. Ann Peoples, Rep. Patsy Crockett,

Rep. James Campbell, Rep. Robert Walker, Rep. Sean Faircloth, Rep. Michael Carey, Rep. Leila Percy, Rep. Glenn Cummings, Rep. Christopher Barstow, Rep. Ted Koffman, Rep. Jeremy Fischer, Rep. Hannah Pingree, Sen. Karl Turner, Sen. Beth Edmonds, Sen. John Martin, Sen. Elizabeth Mitchell, Sen. Dana Dow, Sen. Peter Mills, Sen. Walter Gooley and Sen. Joe Perry.

More information is available at: www.mainedot.gov.

Governor Recognizes Maine POWs

April 9, 2008

SOUTH PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today presented State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals to 13 former Prisoners of War. The ceremony was held at the new Maine Military Museum and Learning Center. The Governor also presented a proclamation at the event joining President Bush and other governors in recognizing April 9 as Former POW/MIA Recognition Day.

“I am honored to present these medals to you on behalf of the State of Maine,” said Governor Baldacci. “You know all too well the meaning of sacrifice and of service. This is one important way that the citizens of Maine can thank you for your commitment to this nation.”

The Governor said that Maine has the highest proportion of veterans of any state in the country. The Governor has presented dozens of State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals since August 2006. The intent is to recognize all veterans in Maine who have been wounded or been held captive during conflicts overseas.

The Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services has identified more than 425 Prisoners of War who have lived in Maine.

Governor Baldacci also recognized the efforts of Lee Humiston, founder and curator of the new museum to honor veterans. The museum features a large collection of POW artifacts.

“The military museum is another way we can preserve the history of the people who have so valiantly served their country,” said Governor Baldacci.

Of the 13 veterans who received medals today, seven were held captive during World War II, two during the Korean War and four during the Vietnam War.

Below is the list of veterans recognized today, and the town in which they reside.

World War II

Stanley B. Durgin, South Paris

Ernest A. Henderson, Winthrop

Alfred B. Hills, Ocean Park

Arnold L. Leavitt, Auburn

Emilien A. Levesque, Hallowell

Harry H. Melcher, Bingham

Raymond E. Reitze, Buxton

2008 Archive of Governor Baldacci's Press Releases

Korea

Vernon W. Clark, Brooks

Delvin B. Merrill, Naples

Vietnam

Charles E. Crafts, Livermore

Robert S. Fant, Topsham

Markham L. Gartley, Westbrook

Norman W. Spear, Windham

Governor Orders Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff on April 11

April 10, 2008

AUGUSTA – In remembrance and honor of Sgt. Nicholas A. Robertson, 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, April 11, 2008.

Sgt. Robertson died as a result of wounds received in Afghanistan on April 2, 2008. He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Bragg, N.C.

Services for Sgt. Robertson are being held on Friday in Brewer.

Governor Baldacci Signs Ban on Smoking in Cars with Children Present

April 10, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 2012, “An Act To Protect Children in Vehicles from Secondhand Smoke.” The bill’s sponsor, Rep. Brian Duprey (R-Hampden), was at the ceremony, as well as numerous supporters of the legislation.

“Tobacco use costs too many lives and too much money,” Governor Baldacci said. “Especially at risk are our youngest citizens who don’t have the choice of whether or not to be exposed to dangerous secondhand smoke. That’s why I am proud that today we add another tool in our arsenal of protecting our most valuable resource – our kids.”

The legislation was modeled after the Bangor ordinance to ban smoking in cars with passengers younger than 18 years old. The Bangor ordinance took effect last year. Bangor pediatric dentist, Jonathan Shenkin, was instrumental in the Bangor ordinance and was at today’s bill signing as well.

The statewide law will prohibit smoking in vehicles with passengers younger than 16 years old.

“Put simply, this bill is important because it will protect children’s health in Maine,” the Governor said. “I am proud that Maine has been a leader in education and prevention on tobacco, and this legislation has brought us to the next level.”

Spaghetti Supper Raises Money for Scholarship Fund

April 10, 2008

OLD ORCHARD BEACH – A spaghetti supper at Old Orchard Beach High School drew more than 750 people Thursday night and raised more than \$12,500. The proceeds from the supper will benefit the Joshua Richard Bolduc Scholarship Fund.

Joshua Bolduc and his parents, Christopher and Carol, were killed earlier this year while at their home in Old Orchard Beach. Joshua was a freshman at Old Orchard Beach High School. A scholarship fund was created in Joshua's memory for students of Old Orchard Beach High School, specifically those interested in the arts or with a need for financial assistance to further their education.

Spaghetti sauce from Baldacci's Restaurant in Bangor was available for those attending the dinner, along with spaghetti, ziti, salad, deserts and soft drinks. The Old Orchard Beach Community in conjunction with the Old Orchard Beach Public Safety Municipal Staff hosted the dinner, and Governor Baldacci was on hand to help serve the food.

For those who would like to contribute to the Joshua Richard Bolduc Scholarship Fund, but could not attend the dinner, checks can be mailed to:

The Joshua Richard Bolduc Scholarship Fund

Old Orchard Beach High School

Attn. Rick Matthews, Superintendent of Schools

28 Jameson Hill Road

Old Orchard Beach, ME 04064

Governor Mourns Death of Soldier from Maine

April 11, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has learned of the death of an active duty Army soldier with Maine ties.

Spc. William Charles Koelsch III, died in on Wednesday, April 9, in a training accident at Fort Polk, Louisiana. He served with the 509th Infantry (Airborne).

Spc. Koelsch's mother lives in Fort Fairfield. He also has a sister who lives in Maine.

"All of Maine mourns the death of another brave soldier," Governor Baldacci said. "We will keep SPC Koelsch's family and friends in our prayers during this difficult time."

Flags will be ordered flown at half-staff on the day of Spc Koelsch's funeral.

No additional information is available at this time.

Governor Baldacci Signs Bill to Reduce Carbon Dioxide Emissions

April 15, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 2126, An Act To Minimize Carbon Dioxide Emissions from New Coal-Powered Industrial and Electrical Generating Facilities in the State. Bill sponsor Rep. W. Bruce MacDonald (D-Boothbay) was in the Governor's Office for the ceremony, as were other co-sponsors and supporters of the legislation.

The bill requires the Board of Environmental Protection to develop greenhouse gas emission standards for coal gasification facilities. It also puts a moratorium in place on building any new coal gasification facilities until the standards are developed.

"Maine has been in the forefront in protecting our natural resources, our environment and our public health," Governor Baldacci said. "This bill continues Maine's leadership."

The legislation will go into effect 90 days after the close of the legislative session.

Governor Vetoes L.D. 701, An Act to Authorize the Operation of Slot Machines on Indian Island in Old Town

April 15, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today vetoed the bill L.D. 701, An Act to Authorize the Operation of Slot Machines on Indian Island in Old Town. In vetoing the bill, Governor Baldacci restated his position that an expansion of gambling must be approved by voters through the signature-gathering and referendum process.

The text of the veto message follows.

April 15, 2008

To the Honorable Members of the 123rd Maine Legislature:

I am enclosing L.D. 701, “An Act to Authorize the Operation of Slot Machines on Indian Island in Old Town,” which I am vetoing pursuant to Art. IV, Part III, Section 2 of the State Constitution.

My opposition to the expansion of gambling in Maine is well-documented and unwavering. In my view, such expansions must gain the approval of Maine’s voters via the signature-gathering and referendum processes set forth in Art. IV, Part III, Section 18 of the Maine Constitution. That is how expansions of gaming have traditionally been brought forward. While I recognize that L.D. 701 proposes a more modest expansion than prior proposals have, that should not alter the process. Gambling expansions of any size and scope 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. Creating some sort of de minimis exception to this principle sends Maine down a perilous path, fraught with risk of unfair, arbitrary treatment among future gaming proposals.

I encourage the supporters of L.D. 701 to follow the examples from the past and give all of Maine’s citizens the opportunity to decide whether this expansion of gambling is in the best interests of the State.

With these concerns and commitments, I hereby veto L.D. 701 and respectfully urge you to sustain it.

Sincerely,

John E. Baldacci

Governor

Governor Baldacci Signs Bill to Maintain Land Reserved for Hunting

April 16, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 648, An Act To Maintain the Amount of State Land That Is Open for Hunting. The bill ensures that the number of total acres of land open to hunting on public reserved lands and lands owned and managed by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife does not fall below the acreage available for hunting as of Jan. 1, 2008.

“This bill recognizes the importance of hunting in Maine and specifically the management of public lands,” Governor Baldacci said. “I think this speaks to the importance of preserving this historic use of public lands.”

Governor Baldacci talked about the work his administration has done conserving land throughout the State.

“Since 2003, the Bureau of Parks and Lands has acquired more than 860,000 acres in conservation lands and easements,” the Governor said. “One-hundred percent of these lands guarantee public access for hunting, subject only to existing state laws and rules or municipal ordinances.”

LD 648 was passed unanimously in both the House and Senate. The Governor was joined for the signing by bill sponsor, Rep. Troy Jackson (D-Allagash) and co-sponsors of the legislation.

The law will go into effect 90 days after the close of the legislative session.

Governor Signs Bill to Contain Health Insurance Costs and Expand Coverage

April 16, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 2247, An Act to Continue Maine's Leadership in Covering the Uninsured. The bill seeks to contain rising costs of insurance and will enable DirigoChoice to expand enrollment after the bill becomes law.

"Maine has been a leader in providing quality health care coverage," Governor Baldacci said. "When we began working on Dirigo Health Reform in 2003, Maine was the first state in the nation to make achieving universal coverage a goal, and today states across the country are following our lead. When we began Maine had the highest rate of uninsured in New England, today we have the lowest. This bill continues our leadership. We will continue to make insurance more affordable and work to contain rising health care costs."

Specifically, LD 2247 provides rate relief to about 40,000 people who don't have employer-based coverage and who buy individual health policies in the private market. It establishes a pilot program of new products for people under 30, designed to meet their needs at a price they can afford and to bring healthy people back into the market to help spread risk and lower costs. Forty-four percent of Maine's uninsured are under 30 years of age.

The legislation also replaces the controversial Savings Offset Payment (SOP) with a more predictable source of funding and enables DirigoChoice enrollment to reopen to small businesses and the self-employed. Currently, more than 700 small businesses participate in DirigoChoice and the program has increased competition in the individual market.

The majority of both houses of the Legislature supported funding Dirigo Health in part with funds generated from taxes on health-related activities like those included in the new law -- beer, wine and soda. The bill also includes a fixed 1.8 percent surcharge on paid claims. Additional funding will come from the Fund for a Healthy Maine, which was created in 1999 to receive Maine's annual tobacco settlement payments and is dedicated to promoting good health for Maine citizens.

"DirigoChoice has provided affordable insurance for more than 28,000 Mainers since its inception," the Governor said. "This program has saved millions of dollars in Maine's health care system and has literally saved lives. With the passage of this legislation, Mainers will continue to have health coverage and Dirigo can continue to provide quality health care coverage to about 18,000 Mainers who would otherwise have to go without."

Bill Keleher, owner of Micro Technologies Inc. in Richmond, said that DirigoChoice has enabled him to provide health insurance to his employees at a reasonable price. One of Keleher's employees, Rebecca Boulanger, said that affordable DirigoChoice coverage enables her to provide the security of health insurance for her children and save for their college education.

The bill was sponsored by House Majority Leader, Rep. Hannah Pingree (D-North Haven) and was co-sponsored by other members of leadership from both the House and Senate.

"I would like to thank the members of the House and Senate for the long hours and hard work they have contributed on this bill," Governor Baldacci said. "Thanks to the efforts of the Legislature, we are ensuring that more Mainers will receive health care coverage with DirigoChoice. I am proud to say that we're moving toward a day when health insurance will be affordable for, and available to, all Mainers."

The Governor said he will continue to work with stakeholders and through Dirigo Health Reform efforts such as the Maine Quality Forum, the State Health Plans, and other mechanisms to address underlying costs of health care.

"It is vital for our hardworking families and businesses that we reduce health care costs and make health insurance more affordable for everyone," said Governor Baldacci.

For more information on Dirigo Health Reform, please

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

Governor Baldacci Signs Bill to Provide Property Tax Breaks to Senior Citizens

April 16, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 2202, An Act To Allow a Municipality To Adopt a Program To Provide Property Tax Benefits to Senior Citizens. The legislation allows municipalities by ordinance to adopt a program that permits residents older than the age of 60 to volunteer to provide community service in exchange for up to \$750 in property tax benefits.

“The people of Maine are feeling the squeeze of a slowing national economy that is either on the edge of recession or already in recession,” Governor Baldacci said. “It is becoming increasingly difficult for people to afford the necessities and there is no way to know how long the economy will continue to stall. This bill is a great example of forward thinking leadership. It provides seniors, some of whom are on fixed incomes, with a way to ease their financial burden a little bit if they can contribute to their communities in other ways.”

Bill sponsor Rep. Walter Wheeler (D-Kittery) was in the Governor’s Office for the signing, as were co-sponsors and supporters of the legislation.

The law will go into effect 90 days after the close of the legislative session.

Governor Signs Bill that Makes Major Investment in Bridges

April 17, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed L.D. 2313, An Act to Keep Bridges Safe.

The Governor's bill won broad bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate.

"The Legislature has taken a strong step forward in protecting Maine's bridges," Governor Baldacci said. "I am gratified by the support this measure has received. It makes sure we can move our people and goods across the State and across the country, and it will put people to work, improving our economy and our infrastructure."

The measure will invest an additional \$160 million over four years in bridge construction and preservation, supplementing the current bridge funding of approximately \$70 million per year.

Following the tragedy last year in Minneapolis, Governor Baldacci charged the Maine Department of Transportation to review the safety of Maine's bridge program, inspections and capital planning. The enacted legislation is a significant response to the recommendations issued in the November 2007 study, "Keeping Our Bridges Safe."

"The Keeping Our Bridges Safe report was authored after a team of engineers reviewed our bridge inspection program and funding levels, and they found that we need to make a significant investment," Governor Baldacci said. "With this plan, we'll put \$160 million in new funding to work alongside existing resources to rehabilitate and significantly improve the State's inventory of bridges."

The measure, when combined with other anticipated resources, will fund 246 bridge projects around the State, including 80 bridge replacements. Of the 246 projects, about two-thirds of the bridges being improved are currently on the Maine Department of Transportation's Bridge Watch List. The remainder will prevent bridges from falling into poor condition.

To pay for the bridge investment, three fees would be increased. The State's vehicle registration fee would increase from \$25 per year to \$35 per year; the title fee would increase from \$23 per year to \$33 per year; and the vanity plate fee would increase from \$15 per year to \$25 per year. With the modest increases, Maine's fees will remain at or below those of New Hampshire and the New England average.

The revenue generated by the fees will allow the State to bond \$40 million a year for four years.

"We want our bridges to be reliable, safe and secure, and that requires us to make investments. The initiative is balanced and responsible," Governor Baldacci said.

"I applaud the Transportation Committee, especially the sponsor and Committee Co-Chair Rep. Boyd Marley, lead co-sponsor Sen. Christine Savage, Senate Chair Dennis Damon and Rep. Richard Cebra for their leadership on this issue and delivering such a strong, bipartisan vote. They understand the

challenges brought on by the failure of the federal government to meet the infrastructure needs of the states, and put the safety of Maine's citizens first by enacting this significant program."

Additional information, including the four-year bridge investment plan, is available at www.mainedot.gov.

Governor Signs Minimum Wage Increase

April 17, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 1697, An Act To Ensure Fair Wages. The bill raises the minimum wage from the current \$7 an hour to \$7.25 on Oct. 1, 2008. On Oct. 1, 2009, the minimum wage will increase to \$7.50 an hour.

“We need to make sure we do everything we can to reward work,” said Governor Baldacci. “Maine men and women should be able to earn a living wage so they can support their families. There is no safety net better than a job with benefits.”

This Governor said that the legislation makes sure that wages in Maine keep pace with the rest of New England.

“This is an important step, and it’s another in a series of efforts that we have joined together on to ensure all Maine people have access to good paying jobs and a brighter future,” said the Governor.

Governor Signs Corrections Reform Legislation

April 18, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 2080, An Act To Better Coordinate and Reduce the Cost of the Delivery of State and County Correctional Services. The bill, a product of much compromise by the Administration, the Legislature, Maine's counties and sheriffs' departments and other stakeholders, creates a new structure for the State's Department of Corrections and county jails. The new system will be more efficient, will serve inmates better and will reduce rising property taxes.

"This bill is a tremendous example of dedicated individuals working toward the common goal of better serving the people of Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "We began this process with a system that everyone agrees is too costly and which does not work well for inmates or for taxpayers. We have today the prescription for a unified system that reduces costs and improves services."

The legislation, which passed with strong bipartisan support, creates a nine-member State Board of Corrections that will determine the best use for county facilities, approve budgets and develop uniform policy and procedures for consistent system-wide pre-trial, revocation and re-entry practices.

The Board will also establish a "Certificate of Need" process to consider future State and county corrections capital construction projects, develop a plan for a system-wide information network and implement bulk purchasing of commodities, medicine and services.

The State Department of Corrections will be responsible for managing bed space throughout the system, inspecting and investigating county corrections facilities, approving mental health placements and staffing the Board of Corrections.

Jail employees will stay county employees and day-to-day operations of jails will remain with sheriffs.

The property tax contributions for jail expenditures will be capped at the 2008 budgeted jail costs.

A ceremonial bill signing will be scheduled in the near future.

Governor Signs Wind Power Legislation

April 18, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed LD 2283, An Act to Implement Recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on Wind Power Development. The bill improves the permitting process for wind power developments, making it more predictable for all involved.

“Maine’s natural resources are second to none. There is tremendous potential for Maine to become a leader in clean, renewable energy, including wind energy,” said Governor Baldacci. “This kind of investment would create jobs and help to expand Maine’s economy.”

LD 2283 passed with unanimous support in both houses of the Maine Legislature. The Governor credited the large number of stakeholders, including his Wind Power Task Force and state legislators, who worked hard to reach a consensus.

“This bill recognizes that we need to remove barriers to wind development so we can move forward – and we want to move forward in terms of environmental protection, energy security, protecting Maine’s quality of place and economic growth,” said the Governor.

Red Shield Environmental Earns Federal Grant for Energy Project

April 18, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci learned today that Red Shield Environmental in Old Town has been awarded a U.S. Department of Energy grant of up to \$30 million.

The grant will support the development of a cellulosic biorefinery at the pulp mill.

“Maine has tremendous potential for the production of energy from renewable resources,” Governor Baldacci said. “But this project has an added benefit. It holds the potential to revitalize our state’s paper industry. It’s my hope that the technology developed in Old Town by Red Shield and the University of Maine can help other mills around the state become more diversified and more profitable.”

The grant award to Red Shield is one of three announced by the U.S. Department of Energy today. Projects in Vonore, Tenn., and Washington County, Ky., were also awarded grants.

In awarding the grant, DOE said that the process developed by Red Shield and the University of Maine Orono has been proven on a laboratory and pilot scale. The grant will allow Red Shield to prove the viability of the process at the plant level and to commercialize the process that allows for the extraction of hemicelluloses from wood chips as part of the pulp making process.

In February 2008, Red Shield received a \$500,000 grant from the Maine Technology Institute to support the development of the extraction process.

“This technology will allow Maine to lead the way in the production of cellulosic ethanol,” Governor Baldacci said. “Because the energy resource is produced as part of the pulp making process, it adds no additional strain to the wood basket and makes more efficient use of the wood fiber.”

Governor Signs Bill that Makes Changes to Education Reform Law

April 18, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed L.D. 2323, An Act To Remove Barriers to the Reorganization of School Administrative Units. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Peter Bowman (D-York), won final approval in the Legislature Friday morning.

“The Legislature has acted responsibly in passing legislation that makes necessary changes to the school administration consolidation law that was passed last year,” Governor Baldacci said. “They understand that the need for reform and the need for less administration in our schools is real. The original law needed some changes to make it successful for all of Maine’s school districts, and this bill makes those changes. Now is the time to move forward and continue the hard work that has already started on the local level and push for the highest quality education for our children.”

Among the highlights of LD 2323, the bill allows local communities to create their own cost-sharing agreements; removes the 2 mill minimum requirement; allows minimum special education subsidy receivers to remain eligible for minimum subsidy if they join a new regional school unit; and includes other technical corrections and clarifications.

LD 2323 also gives the Commissioner of Education the ability to approve a plan for an alternative organizational structure if the plan fits within the purposes of the original reorganization law.

“We have held firm on our commitment to reduce school administration in Maine,” the Governor said. “This bill will help children get a better education and save taxpayers’ money.”

The House approved the bill 92-41 earlier in the week and the Senate voted 22-12 this morning in favor of the legislation.

Governor Commends Legislature at End of Session

April 18, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci commended the 123rd Legislature this evening as they ended their session.

“Thank you.

I was in the State Senate for 12 years, I was a member of Congress for 8 years and this is my 5th year as Governor. I have never seen a more productive session in a short session in the years of my service.

You have accomplished a tremendous amount of work.

And I know that I have talked with you outside, I’ve sat at some of the picnic tables and conversed with some of you hanging around by the back door, and I know it’s been exhausting. And I know that sometimes it may even get a little frustrating and you wonder when you’re going to go home.

And I have said to a few of you that I think you don’t realize what you have all done as I have taken the Legislation and examined it and signed it and recognized all of the good work that you have done.

It’s not to say that there weren’t disagreements. But I think that there were more agreements than disagreements.

And Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you and your leadership. I think that you’ve demonstrated that work can get done and parties can work together...

Governor Baldacci continued...

“I have appreciated the Speaker’s leadership. I have appreciated his forcefulness on many issues that kept us ahead of the rest of the country on predatory lending and lead paint and environmental issues and educational issues.

So I think Speaker, I know that this is your last term as Speaker and as a member of the House of Representatives, at least for a short while. I just want to thank you on behalf of the citizens for just doing a tremendous job. Congratulations.”

(Applause)

“And let me just say, Mr. Speaker, I’ve enjoyed working with your leadership team. Sometimes I am reminded of my age when I work with House Majority Leader Pingree and Deputy Leader Faircloth. But I have to appreciate their drive and enthusiasm to advance health care issues and to continue to challenge the status quo and try to make the lives of working men and women and small businesses just better. So, congratulations to you and your leadership.

To Leader Tardy and Rep. Crosthwaite, I have really enjoyed serving with you and to work with you on so many different issues. I've enjoyed our travels north and I swear that we are going to have our 'voluntary ambassador' with us at all times. He was such a good soul to work with in helping to establish stronger ties and cross-borders that are so important to our region and to our future.

And Rep. Tardy, I have enjoyed working with you and your involvement in business and economic development and not only just talking the talk, but walking the walk. And to be able to work with the caucus on both sides of the aisle on some very difficult issues and I want to thank you for that, I've enjoyed it tremendously.

I think the service for all of us is, we recognize we're in different parties, but at the same time we're Maine people. And coming together and recognizing what was important in moving our State ahead, we put Maine people first and I think the people of Maine should be very proud about that.

Now, I started to list some of the things that we're accomplishing, and I can't ever get all of it together. But I was very proud of the fact that you recognized the importance of working on getting a budget balanced, keeping our financial house in order, and to recognize that we were going to change the way certain government operations were conducted.

And, where we came together on the Corrections bill, and we recognized that it wasn't going to be my bill or the county bill, but we were going to sit down and use some common sense. We were going to say, 'what can we do together?'

The leadership of Rep. Stan Gerzofsky and making sure that we were able to keep our feet to the fire and do the people's business, I think we ended up with a very good product where we had both parties, or all parties working together to make it successful.

I was really pleased that we were able to make new investments in roads and rails and bridges. We recognized it's the importance of bridge safety. We realized that we needed to advance rails and we needed to know that we continue to have work that needs to be done on our roads.

And what you've done, we're going to create jobs. We're going to protect the infrastructure and make sure that we can move our people and goods efficiently. I'm proud of what you have done.

As I said, we've had our disagreements, but you've always put the people of Maine first. We put people of Maine first by recognizing we needed to raise the minimum wage, making sure that Mainers are rewarded when they go to work. And, recognizing that work, in a way, has a way of raising people's standards in self-sufficiency and resilience.

Although the debate was long and sometimes divided, we came together in the last days to eliminate the barriers to school reorganizations, giving communities the tools they needed to move forward.

So, I know as this session ends, that you'll be welcoming your families and your summer as it gets here, finally. But I just want to thank you on behalf of the people of Maine for a job well done.

Congratulations and have a great summer.

Thank you very much.

Governor Baldacci Declines to Sign Four Bills

April 22, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci announced today that he will not sign four bills enacted by the Legislature: LD 1878, An Act to Generate Savings by Changing Public Notice Requirements; LD 2134, An Act to Authorize Low-Stakes Cribbage Games by Charitable and Fraternal Organizations; LD 2236, An Act to Clarify the Laws on Licensing for Charitable and Fraternal Organizations and Games of Chance; and LD 2320, An Act to Stimulate Capital Investment for Innovative Businesses in Maine.

While recognizing the importance of seeking savings throughout government at every level, Governor Baldacci said that LD 1878 puts at risk transparency in government.

"I appreciate the need to adopt new technologies. The State is already moving its employment advertising to the Internet," Governor Baldacci said.

"But this bill would reduce public access to the workings of government and make it less open. Estimates suggest that between 25 percent and 30 percent of people in Maine do not have access to the Internet, and others are not comfortable using it to access information."

"Further, the bill could change the way local governments communicate with their citizens by allowing public notices to be printed in 3rd Class publications, which are delivered less reliably. The State has an obligation to ensure that its citizens have access to information about what their government is doing."

"The State also has a responsibility to be frugal, and it is my understanding that through negotiations with the Legislature, publishers have agreed to rate reductions that will save more than \$1.1 million over five years while maintaining public notices in newspapers."

LD 2134 and LD 2236 both represent unacceptable expansions of gambling, Governor Baldacci said. LD 2134 would allow for super tournaments in which as many as 1,000 people could participate in a single event.

"LD 2134 represents a tenfold increase in the size of card tournaments," Governor Baldacci said. "The bill would make the tournaments difficult to regulate, and it places new demands upon the State Police. The bill is also drafted in a way that makes it unclear whether there could be a single super tournament in Maine each year or if there could be many."

"LD 2236 essentially deregulates gambling events held by nonprofit organizations," Governor Baldacci said. "Under the provisions of this bill, the State would rely solely upon groups to self-report the amount of money they earn from gambling and the number of events they host. While groups would be required to register, this bill would eliminate proper scrutiny of gaming activities."

LD 2320 would create a significant potential liability for the General Fund, Governor Baldacci said. If it became law, the bill could cost the General Fund \$18.96 million per year and up to \$75.8 million over the life of the plan.

"I recognize the importance of attracting venture capital and new investments to Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "This idea deserves more investigation and discussion and holds the potential to be a new economic development tool. However, as it is currently written, the bill carries enormous risk. Given the instability in financial markets and in the national economy, Maine must be very cautious in how it invests the people's money. This bill would guarantee a rate of return for venture capital investors while Maine would shoulder all the risk. The potential liability for the State is too great for me to sign this bill."

Governor Orders Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff on April 24

April 22, 2008

AUGUSTA – In remembrance and honor of Spc. William Charles Koelsch III, 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 Thursday, April 24, 2008.

Spc. Koelsch died in a training accident at Fort Polk, Louisiana, earlier this month. He served with the 509th Infantry (Airborne).

Visiting hours for Spc. Koelsch are from 6-8 p.m., Wednesday, April 23 and a funeral service is planned for 11 a.m., Thursday, April 24. The visiting hours and the funeral service will be held at Lary Funeral Home, 31 Elm Street in Milo.

Governor Announces Release of 2008-2009 State Health Plan

April 25, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the release of the 2008-2009 State Health Plan. The State Health Plan is issued every two years by the Governor and the 19-member Advisory Council on Health Systems Development (ACHSD) after considerable public input. The plan initiates actions to slow the growth in health care spending by making us healthier and by actions to make health care delivery more efficient and effective.

“Dirigo Health Reform laid out a multi-pronged strategy to health care improvement in Maine,” said Governor Baldacci. “MaineCare and DirigoChoice are our strategies to cover lower income families, while the State Health Plan lays out a roadmap to make coverage affordable for everyone.”

Among the findings:

Nearly 37 percent —or \$1.2 billion – of Maine’s increase in health care spending between 1998-2005 is a result of chronic illnesses that are often preventable.

Maine is above the national average in supply of health care services such as MRIs and staffed hospital beds; years of research by the Dartmouth Atlas has found excess capacity drives utilization that increases costs while doing nothing to improve patient outcomes.

85 percent of premium dollars is spent on medical claims; 11 percent on insurance administration and 4 percent on profit. The most effective way to reduce premium growth is to reduce medical claims.

Maine can be proud of the significant progress that it has made since the 2006-2007 State Health Plan, including:

Achieving a streamlined public health system by coordinating efforts within eight newly created districts and through the Maine Center for Disease Control consolidating 150 grants into 28.

Dirigo Health has covered 28,300 people and Dirigo Health Reforms generated \$111 million in saving over its first three years.

HealthInfoNet in cooperation with four hospitals progressed toward one of the first statewide health information exchanges in the country.

Dirigo’s insurance rate regulation resulted in insurers refunding \$6.6 million to small businesses.

Maine Quality Forum and hospitals worked together to implement the “In A Heartbeat” program, an evidence-based treatment plan for providers to use in treating heart attacks.

Average annual costs from hospital capital projects approved under the Certificate of Need program were 17 percent lower than the average in the eight years prior to the Capital Investment Fund – which

governs expenditures on new equipment, buildings and technologies, resulting in projected reduced costs of \$22 million from 2006-2009.

The 2008-2009 State Health Plan will build on that success and continue the work being done by many groups and organizations by laying out new goals and objectives and setting place collaborative workgroups to address those goals. Specific tasks include:

Strengthening the system of local health officers and developing regional health plans, including an assessment of adult and childhood immunization needs.

Implement a pilot program to re-design how medical care is delivered by creating patient centered medical homes, which focus on enhanced prevention, chronic care management, and care coordination to improve quality and patient health, while reducing variation and unnecessary utilization.

Review DirigoChoice to develop options to reduce costs and increase efficiencies in order to cover more people.

Investigate the costs and causes of Maine's high Emergency Department use, and recommend solutions, if appropriate.

Examine and report on strategies to stem the rising cost of insurance in the small business market and monitor and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of Maine's insurance carriers in all markets.

Begin using Maine's recently-completed, first in the nation all payer claims database to develop a detailed, regional analysis of health care cost drivers.

Analyze and advocate for national solutions to achieve universal access to health care.

Address issues in oral health.

Increase Mainers' access to health care services through telemedicine, when appropriate.

Examine ways for Veterans Health Services to be offered locally through federally qualified health centers.

Reduce cost shifting and increase the flow of federal funds to Maine by: seeking federal action to improve Medicare reimbursement to Maine's hospitals, and increasing use of Medicare's hospice benefit.

Reduce rates of hospital acquired infections through a hospital collaborative, and strengthen Maine's sentinel event (i.e., medical errors) reporting law to improve patient safety.

"This is an action plan that makes the health system more affordable for all Mainers," said Trish Riley, Director of the Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance. "To that end, our Advisory Council will assure accountability, meeting regularly with the parties responsible for all the tasks. This is a collaborative public-private undertaking and we will regularly report to the Governor, Legislature and the public about progress made."

For more information about the State Health Plan and Dirigo Health Reform, please visit:

http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/cabinet/health_policy.html

Governor Address Disabled American Veterans

April 25, 2008

BANGOR - Governor John E. Baldacci today addressed the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Convention.

The Governor commended the members for their continued advocacy on behalf of Maine communities. In war and in peacetime, the Governor said, veterans provide models of service.

"You are part of a tradition of service, and I am proud to be with you today," said Governor Baldacci. "You've served our country, giving selflessly, and it's our responsibility as a nation to make sure you are taken care of when you come home."

The Governor outlined a number of initiatives related to veterans that were passed during the 123rd Legislature.

Among the new laws is the authority for the State to lease land in Bangor for a new Maine Veterans' Homes veterans campus. When completed, the campus will enable veterans to obtain a comprehensive array of services, including house Independent housing, long-term skilled nursing care, residential care, outpatient clinical care, hospice care, and the information and programs administered by the state's Bureau of Maine Veterans Services. The services will be available in a single place, improving convenience, access, efficiency, coordination and quality.

The Governor also praised a bill sponsored by Senate President Beth Edmonds that appropriates funds for a contracted mobile Veterans Service Officer (VSO) position. The VSO will assist with appeals at Togus, as well as case manage the newest veterans who have been wounded.

Governor Baldacci said that veterans are true heroes.

"Thank you for the deep abiding sense of duty and love for your country," said the Governor. "I look forward to continuing to work with you so that we can achieve our shared goal of providing the best quality services to Maine veterans and your families."

20th Annual Governor's Service Awards Announced

April 28, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and the Maine Commission for Community Service today recognized the winners of the 2008 Governor's Service Awards for their exceptional contributions to Maine communities. At a separate afternoon ceremony, at the Maine State Museum, 410 volunteers were inducted to the Roll of Honor for their outstanding service to the State. Inductees have collectively donated 405,100 hours of service.

"You know the enormous impact citizens can have on their communities when they give their time and talents," said Governor Baldacci to the awardees. "During these challenging economic times, it's even more important that there are caring individuals who are willing to give their time and efforts to help their neighbors. You get things done not once a year, but every day."

The following volunteers were recognized in the categories indicated:

Volunteer of the Year - Anne B. Pringle, Portland

National Service Volunteer Award - Irene Diffin, Perry

Outstanding Public Sector Volunteer Award - Tina McLaughlin, Bangor

Excellence in Volunteer Administration Award - Cynthia Smith, Orono

Corporate Volunteerism Award - L.L. Bean, Freeport

Small Business Volunteerism Award - Trans-Tech Industries, Inc., Brewer

Nonprofit Award –The Culinary Arts program at Washington County Community College, Calais

The Governor also presented Exemplary Service Awards to the following:

Joy Kelly of Bar Harbor

Denise Doyon of Biddeford

Patricia Oh of Bowdoinham

Mary Henderson of Brewer

Howard Bliss of Brunswick

Diane Kirkman of Camden

L. J. McPeake of Durham

Joseph Taylor of Ellsworth

Jacquelyn Flynn of Gardiner

Robert Kraus of Kennebunk

Bill & Martha Leavitt of Northport

Beverly Sinclair of North Waterboro

Tom Franklin of Portland

Bruce Hopkins of Portland

Christine Venditti of Rockport

Bill Vickerson of Scarborough

George Moore of Topsham

Penny Markley of Winthrop

Patricia Galgano of Wilton

Nina Scribner of Yarmouth

The Governor's Service Awards were created in an effort to celebrate and recognize the exemplary work of Maine's volunteer community. Nominations are accepted November through February from citizens, nonprofits, government volunteer programs, educational institutions and businesses. The event is hosted annually by the Governor's Office and the Maine Commission for Community Service as part of National Volunteer Week. This year's ceremony was sponsored by the National Emergency Response Team.

Additional information about the Governor's Service Awards, including nomination criteria, is available online at www.volunteermaine.org, or by contacting Rochelle Runge, Public Relations Representative at the Maine Commission for Community Service at 287-8933 or Rochelle.runge@maine.gov.

Governor Baldacci Honors Naval Personnel Home from Deployment

April 28, 2008

BRUNSWICK – Governor John E. Baldacci honored more than 90 military personnel from Naval Air Station Brunswick Monday who have been deployed on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan alongside Army and Marine Corps soldiers. The Individual Augmentees were deployed - and returned home - as individuals, not as a part of a unit or squadron. The celebration was held because organizers feel that the Individual Augmentees have not yet received the recognition that is deserved by those returning home from war zones.

"I read through the outline of your service," Governor Baldacci told the sailors and their families. "I don't know if the people of Maine and America know what you have been through. On behalf of the State – we appreciate your service, thank you for that service and thank you to the families for all that you have done."

In 2006, the United States Secretary of Defense asked for the Air Force and the Navy to provide 10,000 personnel each as their fair share to supplement Army and Marine Corps personnel on the ground.

More than 35 sailors and their spouses attended the ceremony, which was held at Naval Air Station Brunswick. 96 sailors from NASB have been deployed and returned home both as active duty and reservists. There are 33 sailors from NASB still serving overseas as members of Joint Forces.

All four branches of the military, Army, Marine Corps, Air Force and Navy, coordinate missions on the ground and in the air throughout the theater of operations as a single, unified Department of Defense team.

Governor Baldacci Declares State of Emergency for Aroostook County

April 29, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci this evening has declared a State of Emergency for Aroostook County.

Severe storms, combined with snow on the ground, have created dangerous flooding conditions in Aroostook County, and particularly in the Fort Kent and Wallagrass areas.

“The National Weather Service is predicting that parts of Aroostook County could be hit by record flooding,” Governor Baldacci said. “The Maine Emergency Management Agency and my office are monitoring the situation and working closely with local emergency management officials to protect public safety.”

Resources, including water craft and wardens from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, are being shifted to Aroostook County from other areas of the State to assist local authorities, and the Red Cross has made preparations for shelters in the event evacuation becomes necessary.

In addition, Governor Baldacci has given Vernon R. Ouellette, the director of the Aroostook County Emergency Management Agency, the authority to direct and compel evacuation if he determines the action is necessary for the preservation of life or other disaster mitigation, response or recovery.

“We must do what is necessary to protect the lives of residents of Aroostook County and the lives of emergency personnel who might be called upon during a rescue,” Governor Baldacci said. “The situation in Aroostook County is changing rapidly, and Director Ouellette is in the best position to determine when an evacuation order should become mandatory. Hopefully, it won’t be necessary.”

Governor Baldacci participated in a conference call with emergency responders statewide earlier today, and spoke directly with Director Ouellette during a briefing at MEMA late in the day. During the briefing, Ouellette outlined preparation underway for the storm’s aftermath and explained that mandatory evacuations could become necessary.

Waters are expected to continue to rise in the Fort Kent area until early morning on Thursday and aren’t expected to fall below flood stage until Friday afternoon.

“People need to be careful and not take any unnecessary risks,” Governor Baldacci said. “Things can change quickly. We want everyone to be safe, use common sense and report any trouble.”

MEMA offers these flood and flash flood safety tips: • Avoid all flooded roadways. If a road is barricaded, take an alternate route. If you come on a road that is flooded and not marked, please notify local officials.

- Keep away from fast-moving streams. Swiftly moving water is extremely powerful and can easily

overpower a person. • Keep children and pets inside and away from flooded streets, culverts, and streams. • Report any flooded roads to local officials. • If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

Visit www.maineprepares.com for more flood safety and preparedness information. Visit www.511maine.gov for current road conditions.

Text of proclamation and letter:

STATE of MAINE PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, there is a severe storm causing heavy rain across the State of Maine, widespread concerns for flooding in many areas and the potential for severe flooding in Aroostook County; and

WHEREAS, a disaster appears imminent; and

WHEREAS, the public health and safety is imperiled, and public property is endangered by such emergency conditions; and

WHEREAS, the resources of communities in Aroostook County are or will soon be exhausted; and

WHEREAS, the resources of the State may be needed to protect the citizens and property of those communities; and

WHEREAS, it may be necessary to order evacuations to be undertaken in endangered areas;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the Statutes of the State of Maine, do hereby declare that a State of Emergency exists in Aroostook County in the State of Maine.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have caused the Great Seal of the State to be hereunto affixed GIVEN under my hand at Augusta this twenty-ninth day of April in the Year of our Lord Two Thousand and Eight.

JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI Governor

XX

April 29, 2008

Vernon R. Ouellette Director, Aroostook County Emergency Management Agency 158 Sweden Street
Caribou, Maine 04736

Mr. Ouellette:

By the powers vested in me by the Constitution and the Statutes of the State of Maine, today I declared a State of Emergency for Aroostook County. The declaration comes in response to a severe storm that has brought heavy rain across the State and creates the potential for severe flooding in Aroostook County.

Predictions suggest that flood waters could exceed record levels in Aroostook County, creating life-threatening situations for residents in affected areas and emergency personnel who could be called upon for rescue.

First and foremost, it is my responsibility to protect the health and welfare of Maine residents. Given the rapidly changing situation on the ground in Aroostook County, I am delegating to you my authority under Title 37-B, section 742(1)(C)(6) to direct and compel evacuation if you determine the action is necessary for the preservation of life or other disaster mitigation, response or recovery.

Under a mandatory evacuation order authorized, all Maine residents are expected to leave an affected area.

I will continue to monitor the situation in Aroostook County in conjunction with the Maine Emergency Management Agency. I expect a report from you, as the situation permits, if mandatory evacuations are ordered.

The Maine Emergency Management Agency and my office are both fully engaged during this emergency and will provide the support necessary to protect the people of Aroostook County.

Thank you and good luck during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

John E. Baldacci Governor

Governor Baldacci to Survey Aroostook County Flooding

April 30, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci will survey Aroostook County this afternoon for a firsthand account of the effects of the flooded rivers in the St. John Valley. The Governor will be touring the county by air with Emergency Management Agency officials.

Tuesday night, Governor Baldacci declared a State of Emergency for Aroostook County because of the dangerous conditions caused by flooding, particularly in the Fort Kent and Wallagrass areas. As of this morning, the St. John River has reached nearly 27 feet, with cresting predicted to occur overnight tonight. Some homes have been evacuated in the area.

The Governor is expected to depart Augusta at 1:30 p.m. and survey the area by air. Governor Baldacci will speak with the media following his tour of the area at the Frenchville airport. Additional media availability is scheduled for 6 p.m. at the Maine Emergency Management Agency, 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta.

Governor Declines to Sign LD 446

April 30, 2008

Legislation Would Have Changed Maine's Sex Offender Registry

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci announced today that he will not sign LD 446, An Act to Improve the Use of Information Regarding Sex Offenders to Better Ensure Public Safety and Awareness.

The legislation would have narrowed the circumstances under which someone convicted of a sex crime between 1982 and 1992 would be required to register under the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act.

According to Department of Public Safety estimates, as many as 580 currently registered sex offenders would no longer be required to register. The legislation attempts to differentiate between dangerous criminals and individuals who are less likely to reoffend.

"The Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee spent a year trying to improve the Maine Sex Offender Registry. They have worked thoughtfully and diligently in their efforts to better define who should be required to register as a sex offender," Governor Baldacci said.

"I cannot, however, support this legislation. It would remove from the Sex Offender Registry perhaps as many as 580 people who have been convicted of a sex crime. While the Committee applied safeguards to make sure repeat offenders will remain on the list, we do not know which individuals will be removed from the registry and what level of risk they present."

"I believe that the Maine Sex Offender Registry can be improved, and I look forward to working with the Legislature to find a screening process that will better evaluate the risks posed by individuals before they are removed from the registry."

"By Joint Order, this summer the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee will convene to study issues related to the sex offender registration laws, including better ways to classify offenders based on risk. It would be premature to change the current law with this important review about to commence," Governor Baldacci said.

"I have no doubt that there are people on the registry who shouldn't be required to register because they no longer pose a risk to public safety. But until we have a better system to judge who those people are, we should continue with our current law. When it comes to sex offenders on the registry, we should err on the side of caution."

Governor Baldacci Surveys Flood Damage in Aroostook County

April 30, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci tonight recapped what he saw earlier in the day while surveying the flood damage in Aroostook County.

He says that the people of Aroostook County are resilient and self-sufficient, but they are experiencing one of the worst natural disasters to hit the area in recent memory.

The Governor said that resources and supplies were sent to Aroostook County in preparation for the flooding, but Mainers should keep fellow citizens in their thoughts and prayers.

“There are people who are losing their property, their homes and their livelihoods in a lot of cases,” Governor Baldacci said. “I looked at the International Bridge that connects Maine and Canada and it’s ready to wash away.”

The Governor continued, saying, “I encourage everyone to think of the people in Northern Maine and keep them in your thoughts and prayers.”

On Tuesday night, Governor Baldacci declared a State of Emergency for Aroostook County because of the dangerous conditions caused by flooding, particularly in the Fort Kent and Wallagrass areas. The St. John River has reached more than 29 feet, with cresting predicted to occur overnight tonight. Governor Baldacci said about 140 homes have been flooded in the area and around 600 people have been evacuated. The National Guard has been activated for assistance.

“It was hard to take to see the church flooded out, having been in that region and done a spaghetti supper in the basement of that church,” the Governor said. “Seeing that church and cars floating around in the back of it and seeing water splash up against the door of the credit union – it’s all very hard to take. What I kept trying to tell people is that nobody has lost a life and that is the most important thing.”

Wednesday evening, Governor Baldacci sent a letter to the Federal Emergency Management Agency regional office, requesting disaster response and recovery assistance for Aroostook County.

Governor Baldacci toured the flooded areas by air on Wednesday and met with local emergency responders at their headquarters in Fort Kent. He briefed reporters at MEMA upon returning from Aroostook County.

“We’ve had a coordinated response that has brought together local, state and national resources,” Governor Baldacci said. “Even the Boy Scouts have been involved spreading information about evacuations. People are helping people. In the worst of times, you see the best of people. I’m very proud of the way people have reacted to this disaster.”

Governor Baldacci described the damage as significant and warned that the flood waters have not begun to recede.

"We're not through it yet," Governor Baldacci said. "Our first focus is on making sure people are safe. After the water levels have dropped, we will move forward quickly with cleanup and recovery efforts."

Kurt Adams Leaves as Chair of PUC

May 1, 2008

Governor Baldacci Appoints Commissioner Reishus as New Chair

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today accepted the resignation of Kurt Adams as the Chairman of the State's Public Utilities Commission.

Governor Baldacci has named Sharon Reishus, a current PUC Commissioner, as the new Chairman.

"Kurt has led the PUC during a time when it has faced enormous challenges," Governor Baldacci said. "He has accomplished a tremendous amount and protected the public interest. Kurt has been an asset for the people of Maine."

Adams will join First Wind, formerly UPC Wind, a national wind development company, as Senior Vice President for Transmission Development.

Reishus joined the PUC in 2003. Before her appointment, she was the Director of North American Power at Cambridge Energy Research Associates, a staff analyst with the Maine PUC and a planner with Central Maine Power Company. She also was an intelligence analyst for the CIA, during which time she served as senior duty officer in the White House Situation Room. She received a B.S. degree from Stanford University and an M.B.A from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

"I'm sorry to see Kurt leave the PUC, but I know without reservation that Sharon will be a strong Chairman. She is a proven, dedicated public servant with broad experience and expertise," Governor Baldacci said. "I know that she will provide the leadership necessary to protect Mainers' from unreasonable utility rates. She is a person of unquestionable personal and professional integrity, and I'm confident she will do a great job."

Adams joined the PUC in 2005 after serving for two years as Governor Baldacci's Chief Legal Counsel. Before that, he was an energy sector attorney specializing in electricity markets, transmission and interconnection, and power plant development for Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer and Nelson.

During his tenure at the PUC, Adams promoted energy efficiency and reformed Efficiency Maine, saving consumers millions of dollars. He also worked with other State agencies, the Legislature and other stakeholders to achieve consensus on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. He also worked to expand cell phone coverage in the state through policies that allowed wireless companies to access millions of dollars in federal money for specific rural cellular build-out plans. He also led the PUC during the merger of Fairpoint Communications and Verizon, ensuring that the public interest was protected.

"Kurt has been a tireless advocate for Maine consumers, and he has fought for lower electricity rates," Governor Baldacci said. "He has steadfastly defended Maine's ability to control its own energy future. He has left a positive impact on Maine that will be felt for years to come."

Adams' last day at the PUC will be May 16.

The PUC consists of three commissioners appointed by the Governor to staggered six-year terms. A search will begin immediately for a person to complete the remainder of Adams' term, which expires March 31, 2011.

"Energy costs are one of the biggest problems facing businesses and families in Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "As I consider this appointment, I will be looking for someone who brings a keen understanding of business in Maine and who has the ability to analyze the complex financial transactions that come before the commission. I also need someone who will continue Kurt's campaign to protect Maine's energy sovereignty and to lower the cost of electricity."

An appointment could be made in time for a Senate confirmation session later this year.

Governor Celebrates Corrections Reform Legislation

May 1, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci welcomed Legislators and supporters of the bill LD 2080, An Act To Better Coordinate and Reduce the Cost of the Delivery of State and County Correctional Services. The Governor had signed the emergency bill into law on April 18.

The Governor specifically thanked Representative Patsy Crockett (D-Augusta) for her work as sponsor of the legislation. He also recognized the leadership of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety for their work on the legislation.

“The final product is a tremendous example of the Legislature working together with the Administration, Maine counties, sheriffs and municipalities to benefit the people of Maine,” said Governor Baldacci.

“The new system created under this law will be more efficient, will serve inmates better and will reduce rising property taxes.”

The legislation, which passed with strong bipartisan support, creates a nine-member State Board of Corrections that will determine the best use for county facilities, approve budgets and develop uniform policy and procedures for consistent system-wide pre-trial, revocation and re-entry practices.

The Board will also establish a “Certificate of Need” process to consider future State and county corrections capital construction projects, develop a plan for a system-wide information network and implement bulk purchasing of commodities, medicine and services.

The State Department of Corrections will be responsible for managing bed space throughout the system, inspecting and investigating county corrections facilities, approving mental health placements and staffing the Board of Corrections. The day to day operations and development of jail budgets remain the responsibility of the counties.

Governor, FEMA and Congressional Delegation Will Visit Aroostook

May 1, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci will visit Aroostook County Friday with Maine's Congressional Delegation and representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Waters in the St. John and Fish rivers crested early Thursday morning and continued to recede throughout the day. Personnel from the Army Corps of Engineers tonight are inspecting a levee in Fort Kent to determine when it will be safe for people to return to their homes.

"We still have trouble spots that we must watch," Governor Baldacci said. "But it's also important that we begin the work of recovery. We will put all of our efforts – federal and state – into helping Aroostook County rebuild from this devastating flood."

Governor Baldacci, FEMA 1 Regional Administrator Art Cleaves and members of Maine's Congressional Delegation will review damage caused by flooding from the air and then meet local emergency management authorities at the Lonesome Pines Ski Lodge in Fort Kent at 11:30 a.m., where an incident command post has been established.

A media availability will follow at approximately 12:15 p.m. Governor Baldacci will also be available to the media at approximately 2:15 p.m. at the Augusta Airport upon returning from the visit. Times are subject to change.

On Thursday, Governor Baldacci spoke with Secretary Michael Chertoff of the Department of Homeland Security.

"The federal response has been good," Governor Baldacci said. "Secretary Chertoff wanted to make sure that we are receiving the assistance we need. We have. The U.S. Coast Guard has been a tremendous resource, and FEMA personnel are already at work in the State."

The International Bridge, which connects Fort Kent to Canada remains closed, and will not reopen until it can be thoroughly inspected. Maine's Department of Transportation is working closely with its counterparts in Canada on the bridge. An inspection is scheduled to begin Saturday if flood waters continue to recede at the current rate.

"I spoke with Premier Shawn Graham of New Brunswick today, and we are both committed to reopening the bridge if it can be deemed safe. If the bridge has been damaged, we'll work together to get it repaired," Governor Baldacci said. "The bridge is an important commercial link, and we have to work as quickly as possible to make sure it's safe and open."

As Maine begins to recover from the effects of the storm, it's important for individuals to document the damage done to their property.

Maine will apply for federal disaster assistance, but before the President will grant federal aid, the State must document damage done to both public property, such as roads and bridges, and private property. For more information, Mainers affected by flooding can call 211.

For road conditions and closures, call 511 or visit www.511maine.gov.

"People from all over Maine have really rallied to help Aroostook County," Governor Baldacci said. "It's the Maine way – neighbor helping neighbor. It's impressive how volunteers have come together during this time of need. I would encourage people to visit www.volunteermaine.org to learn how they can help during an emergency."

Governor Requests Presidential Disaster Declaration

May 2, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has formally requested expedited federal assistance to assist the State in responding to the major disaster resulting from the record breaking flooding in Aroostook County. The letter to the President and FEMA notes that the severe rain storms, snow melt and flooding began April 28 and is continuing.

“This was an extraordinary storm that displaced hundreds of northern Maine families and caused significant damage to public and private structures, including the International Bridge connecting Fort Kent to New Brunswick,” said Governor Baldacci. “We will put all of our efforts into helping Aroostook County rebuild from this devastating flood.”

The Governor toured the area by air this morning with FEMA 1 Regional Administrator Art Cleaves and members of Maine’s Congressional Delegation. They also met with local emergency management authorities in Fort Kent, where an incident command post has been established.

The Governor reminded residents to document the damage done to their property, which will facilitate approval of federal assistance to individuals if the federal declaration is given by President Bush.

The text of the letter requesting the federal declaration follows.

May 2, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush

President of the United States

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20500

Through: Mr. Arthur Cleaves, Regional Director

FEMA Region One

99 High Street, 6th Floor

Boston, MA 02110

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I request that you

declare a major disaster for Aroostook County in the State of Maine as a result of severe rain storms, snow melt and flooding which impacted the State beginning April 28, 2008 and is continuing.

After a winter in which 16 and a half feet of snow fell in Aroostook County, breaking the historical record for a seasonal snowfall, warming temperatures and a severe rainstorm beginning on April 28 caused record flooding on the Fish, St. John and Aroostook Rivers. The US Geological Survey calculates the flooding event to be a 100- to 500-year event on these rivers.

On April 28 the National Weather Service warned of potential record flooding. As the event developed, floods water rose well above levels that have been measured in 81 years of record-keeping. In the town of Fort Kent, the rising water came within inches of overtopping the 30-foot levee that protects the downtown. In the small rural towns of Wallagrass, Van Buren, Washburn, Masardis and many others, families were removed from their homes.

In response to the situation, I have taken appropriate action under State law. In anticipation of emergency conditions, I directed the execution of the State Emergency Plan on Monday, April 28, 2008 in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act.

In order to release all State resources to respond to this event, I declared a State of Emergency as of 5 p.m. on April 29, 2008. That State of Emergency remains in effect.

Thanks to the decisive action of local officials who acted under my authority to order evacuations, and the heroic efforts of responders, no deaths have been attributed to the flooding. I have now surveyed the County twice by air, and on the ground in the Town of Fort Kent, and can personally certify the devastating damage the County suffered. We estimate that over 200 homes have been damaged, many receiving major damage. We know that between 600 and 1,000 people were removed from their homes.

I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local governments and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary. I am specifically requesting Individual Assistance, including the Individuals and Households Program, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, Hazard Mitigation and Small Business Administration disaster loans. I intend to implement the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program statewide. The State has a FEMA-approved Standard State Mitigation Plan in place.

I have also requested a joint federal-state Preliminary Damage Assessment for Public Assistance in Aroostook County and several other Counties in the state that have reported substantial damages, and intend to request additional assistance as the need is verified.

State, local and private resources that have been or will be used to alleviate the conditions of this disaster include: repairs to the Federal Aid Highway System and state highways and temporary repair assistance to local governments by the Maine Department of Transportation; alerting, warning, and traffic control by the Department of Public Safety, Department of Transportation and local public safety agencies; search and rescue and evacuation by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, public

health activities by the Department of Health and Human Services; environmental cleanup by the Department of Environmental Protection; coordination with electrical and telecommunications utilities by the Public Utilities Commission; operational coordination by the Department of Conservation; shelter operations by the American Red Cross and local officials and volunteers; emergency assistance to private citizens by local responders and volunteer agencies; emergency coordination and damage assessment by the Maine Emergency Management Agency and Aroostook County Emergency Management Agency; damage assessment by the Department of Transportation and power restoration by public utilities.

I certify that for this major disaster the State and local governments will assume all applicable non-federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act.

I have designated Robert McAleer as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. He will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in damage assessments and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,

John Elias Baldacci

Governor

Governor Ceremonially Signs Lead-Free Toys Bill

May 5, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 2053, “An Act To Ensure That Children’s Toys and Products Are Free of Lead.” The bill’s sponsor, Rep. Jill Conover (D-Oakland) was at the ceremony, as well as Rep. Conover’s five-year-old son and inspiration for the legislation, Matthew.

“We know from the last Christmas season that this is an issue that many parents have been worried about. No parent wants to bring a toy into their home that could have potentially harmful effects on their child’s development,” Governor Baldacci said. “This bill will help ensure that parents are not left in the frightening position of finding toys with lead in their homes.”

The bill prohibits the manufacture, distribution and sale of products designed for children that contain lead in the State of Maine. The legislation gives Maine the highest health protective standard in the country.

The new law says that the manufacture, sale or distribution of children’s products with lead is prohibited as of July 1, 2009.

Governor Receives Quality of Place Report

May 6, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today received the final report from the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place. The Council was created by Executive Order in March 2007 to examine and recommend ways to protect, invest in and enhance Maine's distinctive quality of place.

"Quality of place is Maine's calling card to the world," said Governor Baldacci. "It's the ingenuity of our people, our quality of life, the natural beauty of our wilderness and the distinctive downtowns that mark our State from one end to the other. Our economic future is closely tied with our success in preserving and expanding Maine's competitive economic advantage."

The Quality of Place Council made initial recommendations in December 2007. That report provided the research-based case that Maine's quality of place is an economic asset.

Even before this final report was produced, a number of initiatives based on the findings of the first report have already been achieved, including:

Passage of the Historic preservation tax credit;

Passage of uniform building codes;

Planning for a statewide trail network; and

Initial research being conducted at the State Planning Office on conservation best practices, funding and alignment of land use laws.

The Governor accepted the final report and thanked Richard Barringer, Chair of the Council, and the other 16 members of the group for their work over the last year. He said he looks forward to reviewing the recommendations. The report focuses on an investment strategy for propelling Maine's efforts to protect and grow our natural, built and community assets.

These recommendations include enhancing workforce development involving the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System. It also calls for a State Quality of Place Council that would help align and coordinate across state departments and regional councils a Quality of Place Investment Strategy.

"The ideas laid out in this document will enable us to put into motion initiatives 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 Governor said he looks forward to developing legislation for the next Legislative session based on the report's recommendations. He will be implementing an Executive Order to begin the process of developing legislative initiatives.

The report can be found at <http://www.maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/qualityofplace/index.htm>

Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill Accrediting Landing School

May 6, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 2025, "An Act To Provide Degree-granting Authority to the Landing School of Boatbuilding and Design." The emergency legislation enables the Landing School in Arundel to expand its educational offerings. The school may now proceed for national accreditation for its new Associate Degree in Applied Science program from the U.S. Department of Education.

"This is an important milestone for the Landing School and for the State of Maine," said Governor Baldacci. "Marine trades are a vital economic cluster, with huge growth potential for Maine business and jobs. The Landing School is invaluable for providing workforce development in this sector. With the growing success of the Landing School and the continuing work of the Maine North Star Alliance Initiative, Maine is well-positioning our 400-year tradition in boatbuilding and marine trades for success in the 21st Century."

For more information about the Landing School, please visit:

<http://www.landingschool.org/>

Governor Celebrates ACES Day with Students

May 7, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined children from Farrington Elementary School to participate in Project ACES: All Children Exercise Simultaneously. The annual event, which is set for the first Wednesday of May, provides a fun way for children in every state and in approximately 50 nations to learn about the importance of exercise. The hope is that the children are encouraged to continue to exercise throughout the years.

“Your future is Maine’s future,” said Governor Baldacci to the 3rd through 6th graders. “Today is important because exercise and eating healthy, balanced meals not only helps you grow up strong, but helps you succeed in school and outside of school.”

“Exercise like the kind you are doing today helps build lifelong habits and fitness,” said the Governor. “This, in turn, helps to build your health for the future, your self-esteem and, importantly, is really fun to do.”

The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness coordinates Project ACES in Maine.

The Administration began the “Take it Outside” initiative last summer to encourage parents to enjoy the Maine outdoors with their children.

Governor Offers Further State Disaster Assistance to Aroostook County; Tours Fort Kent and Clair, N.B., with Premier Graham

May 8, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today visited Aroostook County for the third time since the area was hit by severe flooding last week and announced the availability of State assistance programs to help with recovery.

Governor Baldacci also met with New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham, and both leaders toured impacted areas in Fort Kent and in Clair, New Brunswick.

“We’re here today because we want the people of Aroostook County to know that we are ready to help,” Governor Baldacci said. “The immediate danger has passed and the flood waters have receded, but the recovery process is just beginning.”

Maine has sought a disaster declaration from President Bush that could provide significant resources for individuals, businesses and communities for rebuilding and repair.

The Maine Department of Economic and Community Development has available \$100,000 in the Urgent Need Grant Program that can provide gap funding to communities to address serious and immediate threats to health and welfare after a federal declaration. The funding can be used when immediate action is required and when no other source of funding is available.

The Finance Authority of Maine and the Maine State Housing Authority also have low-interest loan programs available to help businesses and individuals recover.

FAME has made available low-interest economic recovery loans for Maine-based businesses in designated disaster areas. FAME is partnering with Northern Maine Development Commission to facilitate the application and origination of the loans. FAME also has available special insurance terms for lenders who provide bridge business loans to borrowers hurt by the storm. For more information, contact FAME at 800-228-3734 or www.famemaine.com; contact NMDC at 800-427-8736 or www.nmdc.org.

MaineHousing has low-interest rate loans for home replacement and for home repair. The damaged homes must be a primary residence. For more information, contact the Homeownership Department at 800-452-4668. Savings Bank of Maine will be the local lender in Aroostook County. The bank can be reached at 834-2282.

In addition, the Maine Office of Tourism will provide additional marketing assistance for impacted areas to limit the potential impact on the tourism-based economy.

“We are standing as one, thankful that no lives were lost,” Governor Baldacci said. “Our goal is to help businesses and families get back on their feet and to get to work on recovery quickly while we’re waiting

for federal assistance. We believe we will receive the federal disaster declaration, but we're not waiting to begin our work."

After visiting impacted areas on both sides of the border, the Governor commented on the cooperative efforts among State agencies and with New Brunswick and Canada.

"We are bringing a coordinated response to this disaster. State agencies throughout the government are bringing their expertise to make sure we protect the health of our people, our environment and our economy. Once we receive the federal declaration, we will integrate their response with ours" Governor Baldacci said. "We also have a great relationship with New Brunswick, and couldn't ask for better cooperation. Emergency management folks on both sides of the border were talking before it started to rain."

Governor Ceremonially Signs Health Study Resolve

May 9, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1072, “Resolve To Conduct an Updated Study of the Feasibility of Establishing a Single-payor Health Care System in the State.” The resolve calls for a privately funded study of Maine’s health care system and whether a single-payer health care system may be an improvement. A similar study was conducted for the Legislature in 2002.

“It has been nearly six years after the last report was delivered on the possibility of a single payer health system working in Maine,” said Governor Baldacci. “The hope is that a new study will help us as we work with the Federal Government to broaden the reach of Dirigo Health Reform and take the next steps.”

The Governor said, “I am proud of the achievements we have made since 2003, when we enacted Dirigo Health, comprehensive reform that is working to make Maine the healthiest state in the nation. In passing Dirigo Health Reform, Maine was the first state to adopt a universal health insurance goal.”

Unlike the most of the nation, Maine’s uninsured rate has remained stable, and Maine continues to have one of the country’s lowest rates of uninsured.

Legislation passed this session to cover more Maine people through reforms in the funding mechanism for DirigoChoice and in individual health insurance.

“I am pleased that this year we made important progress with passage of Legislation that secured funding for Dirigo and provided rate relief in the individual market,” said Governor Baldacci.

President Declares Disaster in Aroostook County

May 9, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci received word today that President Bush has signed a major disaster declaration for Aroostook County as a result of the record flooding that struck the County last week. Assistance has been granted for individuals and businesses.

Individuals and business owners can begin the application process immediately by calling 1-800-621-3362; 1-800-462-7585 (TTY). Individuals can also register at www.fema.gov.

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.

The assistance for individuals will come in the form of grants or low interest SBA loans. SBA loans for uninsured damage or economic injury are available to businesses.

"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."

FEMA and the State are currently conducting assessments of damage to roads and other public infrastructure in several Maine counties including Aroostook. Depending on the results of these assessments, additional assistance may be made available for local governments.

Anyone who has called 211 to report damages should also call FEMA to begin the application process for assistance.

Governor Receives Task Force to Engage Maine's Youth Report

May 12, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today received the final report of the Governor's Task Force to Engage All Maine Youth. The Governor created the Task Force to explore barriers to youths' ability to successfully engage in school and/or work.

"Maine's youth and young adults are the key to the State's future," said Governor Baldacci. "Our economy – present and future – depends on a well-educated and well-trained workforce. The recommendations in this report will help us put forward policies and initiatives to more effectively invest in our youth."

The Task Force report highlights specific long- and short-term strategies, policies and legislation to support active youth engagement in their communities, school and/or work. The recommendations promote collaboration and improved communications among the various state agencies and community-based partners in identifying gaps in services and impacts of success.

As a result of the work of the Task Force, legislation was passed last spring that established a process to recognize academic work for youth who experienced a disruption in their education due to homelessness, in-patient psychiatric hospitalization, correctional facility placement or foster care placement.

The final report includes four other recommendations:

- Increase capacity to identify, track and analyze the status of youth to inform decision making, allocate resources, and assure accountability to Maine's youth and families;
- Provide equitable access to a spectrum of high quality learning and service opportunities utilizing a youth-driven, family-centered approach to policy development, services and supports;
- Collaborate to develop a process so agencies can cross-reference outcomes or policies and services for implementation, efficiency, and reduction of cross-purpose programming; and
- Calls for an annual cross-departmental report to the Governor that cites the status of the action steps contained in this report and the impact on policy and program changes.

The Governor said that he will work to implement many of recommendations of the report.

"Later this spring, I will announce the creation of the Shared Youth Vision Council that will incorporate the findings and recommendations of the Task Force report," said the Governor. "The youth in Maine are our future, and we must support their high aspirations and successful transitions to adulthood."

For more information on the Task Force, please visit:

<http://www.mainesupportnetwork.org/taskforce/>

Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill to Allow Blended Sentencing for Juveniles

May 13, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1897, “An Act To Allow Blended Sentencing for Certain Juveniles.” The bill’s sponsor, Sen. Bill Diamond (D-Cumberland) was at the ceremony, as were members of the Attorney General’s Office and a family who advocated for the bill after the loss of a family member at the hands of a troubled teenage boy.

Ted Johnston, his wife Marlene and their son, Alec, were at the ceremonial signing of the bill referred to as “Marlee’s Law.” Ted Johnston approached the Governor to talk about the need for the bill after suffering the loss of his daughter Marlee. Special circumstances were involved in this case, but had that not been the situation prosecutors would have had to choose between sending the juvenile to an adult prison, or sending him to a juvenile facility but allowing him to be released at the age of 21. LD 1897 allows for a “blended sentence,” where prison time can be split between a juvenile and an adult facility.

“This bill allows prosecutors, in the most egregious cases, to charge juveniles as an adult,” Governor Baldacci said. “The juvenile will serve the initial portion of their sentence in a juvenile facility and then they will finish the remainder of their sentence in an adult facility.”

Governor Baldacci commended the Johnstons for recognizing that the person who took their daughter’s life was a juvenile and should be treated as such.

“We all hope that tragedies like the loss of a young person, like Marlee Johnston, won’t occur again in Maine,” the Governor said. “This law, Marlee’s law, will ensure that if such a tragedy does occur, the perpetrator will serve a sentence that befits the crime in an age-appropriate facility.”

French Ambassador Awards Legion of Honor to Mainer

May 13, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today hosted French Ambassador to the United States Pierre Vimont, and Francois Gauthier, Consul General of France in Boston, at an award ceremony at the State House. The French representatives were in Maine to present Severin Beliveau with the Legion of Honor, France's highest honor.

"Severin Beliveau is a proud Franco-American who holds dear his French heritage," said Governor Baldacci. "He has served as a liaison for the French people and interests for many years, and has helped to establish stronger ties between Maine and France economically and culturally."

Beliveau has served for 16 years as the Honorary Consul for France. He is also President of the Forum Francophone des Affaires, the mission of which is to create and promote business partnerships and economic development.

Beliveau has promoted the French culture and the promise of closer ties to the French and French-Canadian neighbors. He helped to facilitate the State trade mission to France in 2005. He has moderated and sponsored Franco-American symposiums and conferences at university and college campuses across the state.

The Legion of Honor was established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte. The decoration is the highest honor in France, bestowed upon those who have contributed outstanding service to the people of France.

Beliveau's father, Albert J. Beliveau Sr., was the first Franco-American Justice of Maine Supreme Court.

In 1967, Senator Edmund Muskie noted Severin Beliveau's rise to the Maine State House of Representatives. According to the Congressional Record, the Senator attributed part Severin's tenacity and drive to his heritage, saying that he benefited from the "resourcefulness and determination of his French ancestry."

The decoration ceremony included youth singers from the L'Ecole Francaise du Maine. The students of the only French immersion school north of Boston sang La Marseillaise and the Star Spangled Banner.

"As you can see, the Franco-American community of Maine is a proud one," said Governor Baldacci. "The notions of liberty, equality and fraternity are universal values on which justice and democracy rests."

The Ambassador was scheduled to visit the Franco-American Heritage Center in Lewiston at 2:30 p.m. and L'Ecole Francaise du Maine in Freeport at 3:40 p.m.

Governor Swears In New Maine Warden Service Colonel

May 13, 2008

AUGUSTA – Joel T. Wilkinson of Windsor was sworn in today as the new Colonel of the Maine Warden Service. Governor Baldacci conducted the ceremony in his office with Col. Wilkinson's family and members of the Maine Warden Service and Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife present.

Col. Wilkinson has spent more than 15 years in the Maine Warden Service, starting as a deputy game warden in the Gray-New Gloucester area in 1992. Since then, Col. Wilkinson has worked as a district game warden, an investigator, a sergeant and as a captain. Col. Wilkinson has served as Acting Major since November while the process to select a new Colonel was underway.

"Col. Wilkinson has displayed a tremendous loyalty to the Maine Warden Service," Governor Baldacci said. "He has proven himself to be knowledgeable, experienced and well-respected within the department. His leadership skills and overall expertise are valuable assets to the Maine Warden Service and to the people of Maine."

Col. Wilkinson's responsibilities will include supervising about 125 officers in fish and wildlife management and conservation, recreational vehicle law enforcement and search and rescue.

Col. Wilkinson takes over for Major Gregory Sanborn of Sidney, who has been serving as Acting Colonel for the past six months. Sanborn will continue his role as Major with the Maine Warden Service.

Governor Directs Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff

May 13, 2008

AUGUSTA – In accordance with the Presidential proclamation and in remembrance and honor of all our law enforcement officers, especially those who have given their lives in the line of duty, 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 on Thursday, May 15, 2008 in recognition of Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week May 11 through May 17, 2008.

Governor Requests Additional Federal Disaster Designation

May 13, 2008

Requests Public Assistance for Additional Areas

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci on Friday sent an additional request to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) seeking public assistance covering Aroostook, Knox, Lincoln, Piscataquis, Somerset and Waldo Counties.

On Friday, President Bush signed a major disaster declaration for Aroostook County as a result of the record flooding that struck the County two weeks ago.

FEMA and the State have conducted preliminary damage assessments to roads and other public infrastructure in several Maine counties including Aroostook. As a result of these assessments, the Governor is pursuing additional assistance that may be made available for local governments.

“The preliminary reports indicate severe impacts to public infrastructure,” said Governor Baldacci.

“More than \$2.3 million in response costs and damages statewide have been incurred.”

The granting of Public Assistance would enable the State and affected local governments to obtain additional federal assistance and would make Small Business Administration disaster loans available, as well as Hazard Mitigation Assistance for the designated counties.

The Governor toured Aroostook County three times since the rain storm. He thanked local and state emergency personnel, the Maine Congressional Delegation, and FEMA 1 Regional Administrator Art Cleaves, for their support and assistance in addressing the needs of Maine people following the severe storm.

Feds Approve Public Assistance for Six Counties

May 14, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the approval of the additional request for public assistance covering Aroostook, Knox, Lincoln, Piscataquis, Somerset and Waldo Counties.

Record flooding occurred in the counties two weeks ago, causing significant damage to roads and bridges, water control facilities and other public infrastructure. More than \$2.3 million in damage was tallied under a preliminary damage assessment.

The Governor made the request on Friday. The approval enables the State and local governments to receive federal assistance in defraying costs incurred in response and for recovery to public safety and infrastructure.

"I am pleased that assistance has been granted quickly so that communities hit hardest by the storm can focus on repair and recovery," said Governor Baldacci. "In my visits north since the flooding, I have been amazed at the extent of the damage, but also by the resilience and the warmth of the people I have met. Maine people don't complain, but roll up their sleeves and work together. These communities are strong, and will recover quickly."

President Bush signed on May 9 a major disaster declaration for Aroostook County, enabling individuals and businesses to begin to seek assistance.

The Governor reminded Aroostook County individuals and business owners that they should call to register for aid as soon as possible. The federal assistance may be used for temporary housing, repairs and for disaster-related expenses not covered by insurance or other assistance programs. Even if they are unsure of coverage, they should apply by calling 1-800-621-3362; 1-800-462-7585 (TTY). Individuals can also register at www.fema.gov.

Governor Baldacci recognized the hard work of the municipal, county and state emergency responders. He also thanked Maine's Congressional Delegation for its support.

The Governor also announced a schedule of public assistance briefings in the six counties for which federal aid has been granted. The meetings are designed for public officials in the localities seeking assistance to repair public property and infrastructure, though the public is welcome. The schedule is as follows:

MAY DAY 2008 FLOODING

Somerset County

Wednesday, May 14th at 8 a.m.

Location: Somerset County Communications Center

EOC/Training Room

8 County Drive

Skowhegan, Maine

Aroostook County

Wednesday, May 14th at 2 p.m.

Location: Northern Maine Community College

33 Edgemont Drive

Presque Isle, Maine

Piscataquis County

Thursday, May 15th at 9 a.m.

Location: County EMA Office

Superior Court Room

163 East Main Street

Dover-Foxcroft, Maine

Waldo County

Thursday, May 15th at 2 p.m.

Location: Liberty Town Office

7 Water Street

Liberty, Maine

Knox County

Friday, May 16th at 9 a.m.

Location: Knox County Courthouse

Commissioners' Hearing Room

62 Union Street

Rockland, Maine

2008 Archive of Governor Baldacci's Press Releases

Lincoln County

Friday, May 16th at 1 p.m.

Location: Communication Center

34 Bath Road

Wiscasset, Maine

Governor Ceremonially Signs Family Child Care Provider Bill

May 14, 2008

AUGUSTA – Surrounded by family child care providers and children, Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 2095, “An Act To Ensure the Freedom of Family Child Care Providers To Jointly Negotiate with the State.” The legislation enables family child care providers to collectively negotiate with the State.

“Maine family child care providers fulfill an important role, and are invaluable to thousands of families across this State,” said Governor Baldacci. “The 2,200 family child care providers care for 17,000 children. They provide care in their homes, enabling parents to work and have the comfort of knowing that their children are well cared for.”

The Governor said that these caregivers, as small businesspeople, have to comply with a large number of rules and regulations, including those for safety, training and education.

“We expect a lot from these dedicated individuals. It’s a hard job, but when I talk to these providers I know they love what they do – they love the children they care for,” said Governor Baldacci. “I am happy to sign this legislation to give a voice to this very important group of caregivers.”

The Governor recognized House Speaker Glenn Cummings, sponsor of the bill, for his leadership in addressing this issue.

Governor Ceremonially Signs Mental Health Bill

May 14, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1967, “An Act To Establish a Consumer Council System of Maine.” The creation of a Consumer Council System enhances the responsiveness of the mental health services and programs for adults that are administered by the Department of Health and Human Services.

“This legislation establishes a State-level Advisory Council composed of consumers of mental health services, with local affiliates that will enhance the consumer voice and encourage participation of consumers in the care that is provided by the State,” said Governor Baldacci.

The Councils will review resource allocation as well as policy and program decisions. Each year the State Council will assess current programs and will make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature regarding the impact of those programs and regarding new legislative proposals. The local councils will support accountability at the local level and will be able to effectively address more local concerns.

“Our shared goal is ensuring the best care possible is being provided,” said the Governor.

Maine Festival of the Book to be Held May 15-17

May 14, 2008

PORTLAND – The Maine Festival of the Book will bring together writers, illustrators and performers for a three-day literary extravaganza to take place on Portland's Monument Square May 15-17. The public is invited to attend the more than 50 readings, panel discussions and performances designed for all ages and tastes. With the exception of Opening Night, a benefit Thursday evening, programs are free.

The festival is presented by Maine Reads and chaired by First Lady of Maine Karen M. Baldacci. "We hope that anyone who attends the festival will find several presentations of interest to them," said the First Lady.

The festival includes free readings and discussions for the adult audience. These will run Friday, May 16, starting at noon and throughout the day Saturday, May 17, starting at 9:30 am. Children's programs will be offered on Saturday, May 17. Programs will run concurrently for approximately an hour each, giving attendees the opportunity to spend a day or two immersed in new literature and meeting some of their favorite authors while moving from programs ranging from new fiction, poetry, and graphic novels, to cooking and gardening, to writing panels and inspirational discussions. In addition, more than forty authors will be signing books under the tent on Monument Square on Saturday, May 17.

Fiction fans will have the opportunity to hear from a range of authors. David Baldacci, bestselling author of *The Whole Truth*, will speak Thursday evening at Opening Night event at the Merrill Auditorium. On Friday, Peter Clennott will read from his new war-torn suspense novel, *Hunting the King*, and translator Sagaree Sengupta will read from her newest translation and discuss the popularity of writing from India. On Saturday, bestselling author Elizabeth Strout will read from her new novel, *Alice Kitteridge*. Ellen Cooney, who like Strout has had stories featured in *The New Yorker*, will read from her new novel, *Lambrusco*. She will be joined by rising star Ron Currie Jr., fresh New York where he was one of five emerging authors honored by the Young Lions of the New York Public Library last month. He will read from his debut novel, *God is Dead*.

Other fiction writers will be represented on various writing panels including a mystery writing panel, a maritime writing panel and a young adult fiction writing panel.

In an illustrated Powerpoint presentation, award-winning graphic novelist/cartoonist Brian Wood, author of *DMZ*, *Local* and other series, will discuss his work.

When rock star Warren Zevon was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 2002, he asked his ex-wife, Crystal, with whom he remained close, to write his biography upon his death. On Saturday, Crystal Zevon will read from her book, told in the voices of those who best knew the brilliant but troubled rock star. Critic Janet Maslin of the *New York Times* included *I'll Sleep When I'm Dead: The Dirty Life and Times of Warren Zevon* on her list of the Top 10 Books of 2007.

For history buffs, in addition to the maritime writing panel, there is author Christos Papoutsy giving a talk with slides on the story of the rescue of the Greeks at Smyrna. Earle Shettleworth will give a talk with slides about Victorian architecture, and Bruce Snider and Brian Vanden Brink will present a slide program featuring images from their new book, *At Home by the Sea: Houses Designed for Living at the Water's Edge*.

For those whose interests lean toward gardening and cooking, Brooke Dojny will give a talk on how she went about researching her newest cookbook, which focuses on using Maine's new artisanal products. Aurelia C. Scott, author of *Otherwise Normal People: Inside the Thorny World of Competitive Rose Gardening*, will share some of her literary and horticultural adventures, and discuss what she learned about all kinds of obsession after spending time with rose addicts.

For inspiration, festival attendees may hear the Rev. Peter Panagore of the First Radio Parish Church of America, who will read from his new book, *Two Minutes for God*, and discuss his broadcast work and the art of writing inspirational stories based on life experiences. Amy Sutherland will read from her new book, *What Shamu Taught Me about Life, Love and Marriage: Lessons for People from Animals and Their Trainers*, which she wrote after the success of her entertaining New York Times essay that launched an outpouring of responses, a movie option and an appearance on *The Today Show*.

The festival is not just for adults, and Saturday's young adult and children's programs are full of activities for children of all ages. Events will range from a sing-along and storytelling program by Phil Hoose, author of *Hey Little Ant*, to Maria Padian reading from her new young adult novel *Brett McCarthy: Work in Progress*. Art and writing programs will be offered under the tent throughout the day on Saturday as well.

Other scheduled events include poetry readings with Lee Sharkey and Henry Braun, as well as a poetry party and slam on Saturday evening at the Eastland Hotel to celebrate the launch of the new WMPG poetry program.

The Maine Festival of the Book kicks off with Opening Night, a benefit for Maine Reads on Thursday evening, May 15, at Merrill Auditorium, which will feature a talk by bestselling suspense novelist David Baldacci, and dramatic readings by poet Annie Finch and performer Michael Maglaras. General admission tickets to the Opening Night 7:30 p.m. program of author readings and remarks are \$10 and are available through PortTix at 842.0800. All other Maine Festival of the Book events are free. For more information, please visit www.mainereads.org or call 207-871-9100.

Governor Baldacci Celebrates Maine Irish Heritage Center

May 14, 2008

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci joined former Sen. George J. Mitchell and other dignitaries and Irish men and women to celebrate the raising of the bell at the Maine Irish Heritage Center, formerly St. Dominic's Church, in Portland. The bell fell from the tower about two years ago. Organizers see the bell raising as the first step in the restoration and renovation of the Maine Irish Heritage Center.

"The Maine Irish Heritage Center is doing an amazing job in gathering resources and making this facility a remarkable resource for those who want to investigate their Irish heritage, as well as for those in Portland and the State who want to explore the significant contributions of Irish Americans in Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "I am pleased to be here to celebrate the restoration of the tower. It is a project that the community has rallied behind and one that we are all proud of."

The former St. Dominic's Church opened in 1892 and was a landmark seen from the waterfront that served many purposes, providing multiple services. In 1997, St. Dominic's was closed. In 2001 the Maine Irish Heritage Center was created to preserve the building so it could continue to serve as a center of community activity. In May of 2006, the 4,000 lb. bell crashed down through the tower, causing the building to close.

Governor Baldacci said it's important to embrace one's heritage and carry it on to future generations.

"My grandmother used to make a dish, it was a Middle Eastern dish called B'Leban - today it's known more as yogurt," recalled Governor Baldacci. "To make it, you have to take a little bit of the old batch and apply it to the new batch. It works the same way with our heritage – we hold on to our heritage, traditions and cultures throughout our lives and we pass them on to our children and grandchildren. That is exactly what is happening here today with the bell, with the church and with the Irish Heritage Museum."

Today's celebration was the first chance for the public to see the restoration work at the former church. On June 21, the Center will host its first wedding in the restored structure and will ring the bell again for the first time in over a decade.

Governor Requests Individual Assistance for Penobscot County

May 15, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today sent a request to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) seeking to add individual assistance for Penobscot County to the disaster declaration received for recent severe flooding. If approved, individuals and businesses in Penobscot County would be eligible for grants and loans for temporary housing, repairs and for disaster-related expenses not covered by insurance or other assistance programs.

On May 9, President Bush signed a major disaster declaration for Aroostook County as a result of the record flooding that struck the County two weeks ago. The federal government on May 14 approved public assistance covering Aroostook, Knox, Lincoln, Piscataquis, Somerset and Waldo Counties.

“Maine and federal officials have determined that significant damage to homes and businesses occurred in Penobscot County,” said Governor Baldacci. “Many of these homes had private wells that were flooded, and the majority of people impacted did not have flood insurance. The State will continue to work with those in Penobscot County to assist in the recovery process, and the federal designation of the area as a disaster area will serve to expedite this process.”

According to the United States Geological Survey, the flow on the East Branch of the Penobscot River near Grindstone during the flood that occurred two weeks ago was a 100 to 500 year event. The concentration of damages in the impacted communities in Penobscot County, according to preliminary damage assessments, is equivalent to that suffered in similar small towns in Aroostook County.

The text of the letter to FEMA follows:

May 15, 2008

Carlos J. Castillo

Assistant Administrator

Disaster Assistance Directorate

Federal Emergency Management Agency

500 C Street SW

Washington, DC 20472

Through: Arthur W. Cleaves

Regional Administrator

FEMA, Region One

99 High Street, 6th Floor

Boston, MA, 02110

Through: Mr. Philip E. Parr

Federal Coordinating Officer

FEMA-DR-1755-ME

Dear Mr. Castillo:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I request that Penobscot County in the State of Maine be added to the area covered by disaster designation FEMA-DR-1755-ME for Individual Assistance.

Joint Federal, State, and local Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs) of Penobscot County indicate severe impacts to homes and businesses, similar in nature to that incurred in the contiguous County of Aroostook, already designated eligible for Individual Assistance under this disaster.

The weather conditions that resulted in catastrophic flooding in Aroostook County were likewise experienced in Penobscot County. Flood conditions persisted on the Penobscot River until May 2nd and on the Mattawamkeag River until May 6th. The USGS has calculated the flow on the East Branch of the Penobscot River near Grindstone to be a 100 to 500 year event.

The PDA teams visited 10 towns in Penobscot County on May 7 and 13. These limited PDAs found 63 impacted homes. Of these, one was destroyed and 32 sustained major damages. Only a very low percentage (12%) indicated that they were insured for these damages. 13.6% were low income households. These homes had experienced significant water depths, with 2 feet of water or more on the first floor. Most homes had private wells and many were flooded. The state has supplied water test kits to the area, but test results are not yet known.

We have engaged the voluntary agency community in providing short-term assistance to the affected households. However, these agencies report to us that the needs in these areas are beyond their ability to assist. In Maine, although county government exists, counties provide no financial resources to the organized communities within their borders. The State has no available fund to provide disaster assistance to the affected households.

This concentration of damages in these communities is equivalent to that suffered in similar small towns in contiguous Aroostook County during the same weather and flooding event. Therefore we request that Penobscot County similarly be made eligible for Individual Assistance.

In response to the situation, I have taken appropriate action under State law. In anticipation of emergency conditions, I directed the execution of the State Emergency Plan on Monday, April 28, 2008

in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act. I declared a State of Emergency as of 5:00 pm on April 29, 2008. That State of Emergency remains in effect.

I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local governments and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary. I am specifically requesting Individual Assistance, including the Individuals and Households Program, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, Hazard Mitigation and Small Business Administration disaster loans. I intend to implement the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program statewide. The State has a FEMA-approved Standard State Mitigation Plan in place. The need for Public Assistance in Penobscot County is still being assessed.

I certify that for this major disaster the State and local governments will assume all applicable non-federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act.

I have designated Robert McAleer as the Governor's Authorized Representative for this request. He will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in damage assessments and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,

John Elias Baldacci

Governor

Governor Baldacci Pays Tribute at Law Enforcement Officers Memorial

May 15, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci honored the work of Law Enforcement Officers Thursday morning during a ceremony in Augusta to pay tribute to Maine's fallen officers.

"Words cannot adequately express our sorrow," Governor Baldacci said. "To those who were left behind, I convey to you, on behalf of the people of Maine, our heartfelt sympathy, and our deep gratitude for the valor and sacrifice of these exceptional public servants."

About 100 people were at the annual service, which was held on the State Street side of the State House grounds in Augusta. In addition to the Governor, Kate Braestrup, a Chaplain from Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and the widow of a fallen officer, was also a keynote speaker. Braestrup's husband, James A. Griffith, a trooper with the Maine State Police Department, was killed in an automobile accident more than 12 years ago. The United States flag that was draped over Griffith's casket at his funeral was the same flag that was flying at half-staff above the Memorial for the ceremony.

"Many of those whose names appear on this monument died protecting us from immediate harm," the Governor said. "Some were pursuing dangerous felons. Others were trying to keep innocent people out of harm's way. All, however, in the course of their career, worked to uphold the core of what it means to be an American by protecting our Constitutional rights."

The service featured the laying of a wreath at the memorial, the reading of all 82 names etched on to the Memorial, the playing of "Taps," and the attendance of State and local dignitaries including Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap, Attorney General Steven Rowe and Maine State Police Colonel Pat Fleming.

In accordance with the Presidential proclamation and in remembrance and honor of all our law enforcement officers, Governor John E. Baldacci had directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset today in recognition of Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week May 11 through May 17, 2008.

Governor Baldacci Presents Awards to Seven Young Authors

May 16, 2008

HALLOWELL – Governor John E. Baldacci presented seven high school juniors with awards for their entries in the fourth 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 2008 Governor's Young Writer of the Year Awards.

"Writing is important. It's an important form of communication," Governor Baldacci said. "My hat is off to you. The way that you are able to articulate yourself, be succinct about it and do it in a short story format is to be commended. I am really impressed by your work."

The 2008 Governor's Young Writer of the Year Awards generated 218 entries from representing 65 high schools throughout Maine. 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 mom to be present in her place). All semi-finalists received a \$250 check and a plaque. The three winners also received a framed certificate and a total of \$2,500.

"I want to congratulate you for your hard work and putting on paper your thoughts and feelings as it is not easy," the Governor said. "You have an ability to put together stories about things that really drive you. You have a passion and a talent that can become a career."

The semi-finalists are listed below. The three winners are marked with a "*" in front of their names:

Berkley Heath – Morse High School Ryan Henderson – Erskine Academy Lindsay LaJoie – Van Buren District Secondary School

Shannon Martin – Fort Kent Community School Julianna Mateyko – Brunswick High School Hannah Montalvo – Freeport High School

Katherine Rich – 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, administrators and judges.

Since the program's inception in 2004, 1,065 high school juniors have submitted entries to the contest for consideration.

Flood Assistance Expanded to Penobscot County

May 16, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci received word late today that President Bush has expanded the major disaster declaration to include Penobscot County as a result of the record flooding that struck the County earlier this month. Assistance has been granted for individuals and businesses.

Individuals and business owners can begin the application process immediately by calling 1-800-621-3362; 1-800-462-7585 (TTY). Individuals can also register at www.fema.gov.

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.

The assistance for individuals will come in the form of grants or low interest SBA loans. SBA loans for uninsured damage or economic injury are available to businesses.

"People shouldn't be reluctant to apply for assistance. Even if they have insurance or aren't sure if they're eligible, people impacted by the flooding should register with FEMA," Governor Baldacci said. "This program is intended to help people get back on their feet after a disaster, and it should be put to use."

Aroostook County has also qualified for assistance to individuals and businesses. Aroostook, Knox, Lincoln, Piscataquis, Somerset and Waldo counties have qualified for assistance in repairing public property, such as roads, bridges and water treatment facilities.

Anyone who has called 211 to report damages should also call FEMA to begin the application process for assistance.

Maine Junior Golf Day Encourages Kids to 'Take it Outside'

May 19, 2008

Golf Clubs Around the State Offer Free Clinics on June 8

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today applauded the efforts of Maine golf enthusiasts to spread their sport and to attract new participants with Maine Junior Golf Day.

On June 8, golf clubs around the State will offer free clinics for children and teens between the ages of 9 years old and 18 years old.

The free clinics will provide a broad introduction to the sport, including instructions on all facets of the game. Students will learn the proper stance, swing techniques and practice elements of their chipping and putting. They will also be introduced to basic golf etiquette.

"Golf is one of my passions. It's a great way to get exercise and bring young people outside," Governor Baldacci said. "As adults, we have a responsibility to help our children develop healthy lifestyles, which includes outdoor activities and exercise."

In July 2007, Governor Baldacci announced his "Take It Outside" initiative, a program intended to motivate adults into getting young people outside for activities.

"Maine has tremendous natural beauty and opportunity for outside recreation," Governor Baldacci said. "Whether you love golf, hiking, canoeing, fishing or team sports, Maine has it all. Going outside should be about having fun and being healthy."

At least 19 golf clubs are participating in the Sunday, June 8, Maine Junior Golf Day. The day will be broken into two clinics: 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. for teenagers between 14 years old and 18 years old; and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. for children between 9 years old and 13 years old.

A list of participating courses follows. Others could be added. Registration is required in advance and slots are limited.

Bangor Municipal, 941-0232, Bangor;

Sunday River, 391-4247, Newery;

Sugarloaf Golf Club, 237-6812, Carrabassett Valley;

Val Halla, 829-2225, Cumberland;

The Ledges, 351-3000, York;

Webhannet, 967-2061, Kennebunk;

Cape Arundel, 967-3494, Kennebunk;

Norway Country Club, 743-9840, Norway;

Mid coast (Rockland, Samoset, Boothbay, Northport, Goose River, Megunticook, Wawenock), 594-9322;

Castine Golf Club, 326-8844, Castine;

Nonesuch River, 838-5731, Scarborough;

Bethel Inn, 824-2175, Bethel;

Samoset, 594-1431, Rockland;

Golf Learning center, 776-2363, Cumberland;

Riverside, 797-3524, Portland;

First Tee of Maine, 286-1911, Portland;

Sanford CC, 324-5462, Sanford;

Spring Meadows, 652-2586, Gray;

Falmouth CC, 878-2364, Falmouth;

JW Parks, 487-9280, Pittsfield.

Maine Celebrates Arbor Week

May 19, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Maine students, municipal officials and others at a State House celebration of the beginning of Arbor Week in Maine. Since 1978, the State has recognized the third full week in May as Arbor Week. This year's theme is "Planting trees to fight global warming."

"Maine people care about preserving our environment," said Governor Baldacci. "Maine's identity is inseparable from its natural resources and our future economic prosperity depends upon our ability to distinguish what makes Maine so special."

According to the Maine Forest Service, forest products are a \$6 billion per year industry in the State, employing more than 25,000 Maine workers. Outdoor recreation and the fall changes in Maine foliage are important to tourism, Maine's largest industry.

"Our sustainable forestry and forest certification initiatives have made Maine a leader in those areas, filling markets with 'green' products," said Governor Baldacci.

More than three-quarters of a million acres of forest land has been conserved in the last five years, more land conserved than any other administration since Percival Baxter's administration.

The State House celebration concluded with awards recognizing individuals and municipalities active in promoting tree management.

Fifth-grader Megan Reed of Friendship Village School won the poster contest. The 2008 Community Forestry Excellence Award was presented to Thomas C. Hoerth, Bath City Arborist.

The 16 municipalities that participate in Tree City USA received awards: Auburn, Augusta, Bangor, Bath, Camden, Farmington, Hallowell, Hampden, Kennebunkport, Lewiston, Orono, Portland, South Portland, Waterville, Westbrook and Yarmouth. Tree City USA is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation. Member communities meet standards for community tree management.

For more information on Arbor Week in Maine, please visit

<http://www.state.me.us/doc/mfs>

Downeast Lakes Forestry Partnership Completes Fundraising Campaign

May 20, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today praised the partners of an ambitious fundraising effort to permanently protect a large portion of land and water in Washington County. The Governor joined members of the New England Forestry Foundation and the Downeast Lakes Land Trust to celebrate the completion of a seven-year, \$34.8 million capital campaign to conserve 342,000 acres of forest and hundreds of miles of lakes and streams in Downeast Maine.

“This effort was launched by local guides, foresters, lodge owners and residents, building a legacy that will benefit generations to come,” said Governor Baldacci. “The livelihoods, landscapes and legends that define the Grand Lake Stream region are secured forever with the completion of this project, sustaining the local economy that is dependent on an intact and healthy natural resource base.”

The Governor praised the Downeast Lakes Forestry Partnership, which has achieved national recognition because of its scale, its cross-border connections and the quality of its partners. The New England Forestry Foundation was also critical to the project’s success, having mortgaged its oldest forest to secure the option on the Downeast land at the price that was negotiated early on in the process.

“From a natural resource and economic perspective, this is a critically important project,” said Governor Baldacci. “I am pleased to celebrate the success of the Downeast Lakes Forestry Partnership and all that it means to the future of Maine’s people, economy and landscapes.”

Governor's Statement on Senator Edward Kennedy

May 20, 2008

AUGUSTA – Upon learning of Senator Edward Kennedy's diagnosis of a malignant brain tumor, Governor John E. Baldacci today issued the following statement.

"Senator Kennedy is one of the hardest working and most dedicated public servants of our time. The people of Maine owe a great debt of gratitude to Senator Kennedy for his tireless advocacy on behalf of working families. He has championed countless laws that have improved the health and welfare of all Americans. As he begins his fight with cancer, I add my hopes and prayers for his speedy recovery."

Earlier today the Governor called members of Senator Kennedy's family and staff to convey his well-wishes and offer of support.

Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill to Allow Community Service in Lieu of Fines

May 20, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 1938, “An Act To Allow Community Service in Lieu of Fines.” The legislation allows courts, in certain circumstances, to require community service of an offender upon default of a fine payment.

“The community receives the benefit of the offender’s work, it is a restorative justice approach,” Governor Baldacci said. “The offender is paying his or her debt to society in a meaningful way, and the taxpayers are not paying for incarceration.”

The bill does not affect restitution, or payment to the victims. It only authorizes the exchange of community service for outstanding fines.

The bill was sponsored by Rep. Richard Cleary (D-Houlton).

Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill Allowing Use of Emergency Medication

May 20, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 2084, “An Act To Protect Vulnerable Children by Allowing the Use of Emergency Medication.” The legislation allows municipal employees and volunteers who work at recreation programs or camps to possess and receive training on asthma inhalers and epinephrine – or “epi” – pens.

“Time is of the essence when a child suffering from asthma is having an attack, or when a child with an allergy has a severe reaction,” Governor Baldacci said. “It is of great public benefit that staff will explicitly have access to, and the ability to administer, this emergency assistance.”

The bill was sponsored by Rep. Elizabeth Miller (D-Somerville). The law took effect when the Governor originally signed the bill on April 9 to allow employees and volunteers to receive proper training before the 2008 summer recreational season begins.

Governor Urges People Impacted by Flood to Seek Aid

May 20, 2008

MILFORD – Governor John E. Baldacci today visited two homes in Milford and one in Bradley that were damaged by the flooding of the Penobscot River. The Governor visited the homes with representatives from the Penobscot County Emergency Management Agency and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), as well as Robert McAleer, Director of the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA).

“What I’m seeing here is that much like Aroostook County, everyone has been in this together,” Governor Baldacci said. “We have agencies and resources that are available to support people. People that have damage should contact FEMA to apply for federal assistance, even if they have insurance or are not sure if they qualify.”

Two counties have qualified for individual assistance, Aroostook and Penobscot. Residents who have home damage due to flooding can contact FEMA to apply for the assistance by calling 1-800-621-3362 between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. People can also apply online at www.fema.gov.

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.

The assistance for individuals will come in the form of grants or low interest SBA loans. SBA loans for uninsured damage or economic injury are available to businesses.

Governor Baldacci praised the efforts of the local officials in Penobscot County, saying that damage could have been much worse without their work.

“When I have been visiting areas that are hard hit, I have heard the endless stories of the fire departments and police departments working with the County Emergency Management Agencies to make the difference,” the Governor said. “It is the local people on the ground working together with State officials that prevented this disaster from being catastrophic and my hat is off to them.”

Aroostook, Knox, Lincoln, Piscataquis, Somerset and Waldo counties have qualified for assistance in repairing public property, such as roads, bridges and water treatment facilities. Assessments are still underway to determine if Penobscot County will qualify for public assistance.

Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill to Reduce Toxins

May 21, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated the signing of LD 2048, "An Act to Protect Children's Health and the Environment from Toxic Chemicals in Toys and Children's Products." The Governor commended House Majority Leader Representative Hannah Pingree for her continued leadership in the area consumer product safety.

"Thanks to the partnership developed between the Administration, our Legislative leadership and dedicated advocates, Maine is a leader in protecting our children from harmful chemicals," said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor said that encouraging the use of safer chemicals that provide increased protection to human health and the environment supports innovation and economic opportunity.

"The development of bio-based products from Maine agricultural and forest resources offers the potential for economic growth and job expansion," said the Governor. "Maine can and should lead the way in developing these kinds of technologies."

Representative Pingree's bill requires the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to maintain a list of the most worrying chemicals that our children come into contact with on a daily basis. The goal is to eventually replace these chemicals with safer alternatives when they are proven to be available.

"I want to thank Governor Baldacci and the dozens of health, safety and environmental advocates, the DEP, the CDC and hundreds of concerned Maine parents from across the State who came together in support of this critical mission," said Representative Pingree. "The chemical industry hired an army of lobbyists to work against this bill, but the fact that it passed with near-unanimous support shows that in Maine, common sense can still prevail. This is incredibly important for our children, our state and our country. I'm proud that Maine has again taken the lead in protecting kids from toxic chemicals, and I hope that our congressional delegation has taken notice."

The bill passed unanimously in the Senate and by a near-unanimous vote in the House. It was signed by the Governor on April 17.

Governor Accepts Check for Veterans' Cemetery Flag Fund

May 21, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined Senate President Beth Edmonds today to accept a check for the Veterans' Cemetery Flag Fund. A new law passed last year established the fund to provide American flags at veterans' graves in Maine Veterans' Cemeteries. Donald A. Simoneau, Department of Maine Past State Commander of the American Legion, presented the check to Governor Baldacci.

"I want to commend Don (Simoneau) and his fellow veterans for the dedication they exhibit to their entire communities," Governor Baldacci said. "They not only served their country proudly during war, but they continue to serve here at home."

Simoneau presented a check for \$2,637.38 to Governor Baldacci. The money will be set aside to pay for replacement flags and for new flags on additional grave sites. This is the first year excess private donations will go to the flag fund.

"As a leader of the American Legion, he has organized an army of volunteers," Senate President Edmonds said of Simoneau. "When nobody else would step up to pay for the flags, he said, 'fine I'll raise the money.' To date he has raised enough money for over 13,000 flags - flags that we will put out this weekend."

Simoneau said that those who wish to help place flags on veterans' graves are more than welcome to do so. Volunteers are asked to arrive at 9 a.m. Saturday at the Maine Veterans' Cemetery on Civic Center Drive in Augusta.

Governor Opens Small Business and Entrepreneurship Conference

May 21, 2008

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci today told about 300 small business leaders and entrepreneurs that their success is important to the entire State. The Governor made the remarks while opening the 2008 Governor's Regional Conference on Small Business and Entrepreneurship at Eastern Maine Community College.

"What you have in this conference is the opportunity to tap into resources that are available to help you," Governor Baldacci said. "If you are successful, then the State will be successful and that will benefit everyone."

Governor Baldacci said that businesses with 1-4 workers account for 138,000 employees out of the 700,000 Maine people working statewide. More than 96 percent of Maine's private employers have fewer than 50 employees and those employers account for more than half of the State's private sector workforce.

Governor Baldacci also encouraged international trade, saying that Maine is no longer just doing business regionally, but is also engaged globally. He said that Maine businesses can compete on a worldwide stage thanks, in part, to Maine's reputation all over the world.

"People absolutely love coming here," the Governor said. "Summer vacations turn in to winter vacations, which eventually turn into a lifetime of living here. Maine has it all and people from all over the world realize that this is the place to be."

Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill on Passenger Rail Funding

May 21, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 2019, “An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Governor’s Task Force on Passenger Rail Funding.” The bill’s sponsor, Rep. Boyd Marley (D-Portland), was at the ceremony, as were cosponsors and supporters of the legislation.

“Long before near-\$4 a gallon gas prices, I joined with rail advocates to support extending our rail system for both passenger and freight in Maine,” Governor Baldacci said. “Rail is an increasingly viable option – in economic and environmental terms.”

The Governor created the Task Force on Passenger Rail Funding in 2005. The legislation puts some of the recommendations of the Task Force into action. This legislation specifically provides funding for rehabilitation of the Portland to Brunswick rail line.

“The capital expansion will enable the Downeaster – which has been extremely successful in the Northeast corridor – to extend service to Brunswick and hopefully further west and north in the future,” the Governor said. “This is an important step toward the goal of expanding rail in Maine.”

Feds Deny Appeal for Assistance for March Snowfall in Aroostook County

May 21, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci was disappointed today to learn that the Federal Emergency Management Agency has denied his appeal for an emergency declaration covering Aroostook County for winter storm conditions that took place March 19 through March 22, 2008.

“Aroostook County suffered under historic snowfall which severely hampered the budgets of municipalities and area businesses,” said Governor Baldacci. “I believe that the severe budget impacts combined with the cumulative effect of the snow on the ground should have moved FEMA to approve Federal assistance.”

Governor Baldacci said he will continue to work with people and businesses in the County during the ongoing recovery efforts from the flooding that took place there three weeks ago.

The Governor reminded Aroostook County residents that they should apply for federal assistance to cover damages incurred during the flooding, even if they are unsure of their eligibility. Individuals and business owners can begin the application process immediately by calling 1-800-621-3362; 1-800-462-7585 (TTY). Individuals can also register at www.fema.gov.

Governor Requests Public Assistance for Penobscot County

May 22, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today sent a request to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) seeking to add public assistance for Penobscot County to the disaster declaration received for recent severe flooding. If approved, State and local governments would be eligible to receive federal assistance in defraying costs incurred in response and for recovery to public safety and infrastructure.

On May 9, President Bush signed a major disaster declaration for Aroostook County as a result of the record flooding that struck the County three weeks ago. The federal government on May 14 approved public assistance covering Aroostook, Knox, Lincoln, Piscataquis, Somerset and Waldo Counties. On May 16, the federal government expanded the major disaster declaration to include Penobscot County for individuals and businesses.

“Penobscot County, like the six other Maine counties that have already been approved for this type of assistance, has incurred significant damage to roads, recreation facilities and other public infrastructure,” said Governor Baldacci.

According to the United States Geological Survey, the flow on the East Branch of the Penobscot River near Grindstone during the flood that occurred two weeks ago was a 100 to 500 year event. The concentration of damages in the impacted communities in Penobscot County, according to preliminary damage assessments, is equivalent to that suffered in similar small towns in Aroostook County.

Individuals and business owners in Aroostook and Penobscot Counties with flood damage should register with FEMA. The application process for assistance can be accessed by calling 1-800-621-3362; 1-800-462-7585 (TTY). Individuals can also register at www.fema.gov.

Governor Orders Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff on Monday, May 26

May 22, 2008

AUGUSTA – In remembrance, honor and deep respect for all of our servicemen and women who have given their lives for our freedom, Governor John E. Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise until noon on this Memorial Day, Monday, May 26, 2008. At noon, flags are to be raised to full-staff in honor of our nation's battle heroes.

Maine International Trade Day Highlights Green Marketing

May 22, 2008

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today addressed the closing dinner of the 28th Annual Maine International Trade Day. The theme of this year's event was "Marketing Green to the World," highlighting the opportunities for Maine businesses to leverage new technology and sustainable products to expand their reach internationally.

Speaking on Maine's leadership in green certification and environmental technology, the Governor said, "We have many innovative companies, supported by vast natural resources and new technology that are taking advantage of the opportunity to grow green businesses. Maine can and should lead the way in developing these kinds of technologies."

The Governor detailed some of the green certification efforts under way in the state.

"In partnership with the Maine Restaurant Association, the Maine Innkeepers Association, the Maine Tourism Association and the Maine Office of Tourism, Maine became the first state in the nation to certify restaurants based on their green practices," said the Governor. "We have certified over a dozen restaurants from York to Bar Harbor who are leaders in energy and water conservation, solid waste reduction, use of green products, recycling and purchase of local food sources. Maine also certifies hotels, motels and bed & breakfasts in one of the first green lodging certification programs in the country, and this program has served as a model for other states. Nearly 80 lodging establishments have received green certification."

Governor Baldacci recognized Amy Robertson of InterfaceFABRIC for her company's leadership in promoting commercial production of fabric using a bio-based plastic made from corn. The company is now leading an effort to develop an in-state facility to extract the potato starch and convert it to plastic.

"I applaud the work of InterfaceFABRIC and its partners, as well as all the other innovative companies in Maine that are going green and finding that it's good for the environment and for the bottom line," said the Governor.

Throughout the day-long Maine International Trade Day event, participants were given the opportunity to network and hear from other Maine businesses that produce green products and are involved in exporting.

A record \$2.7 billion of Maine products were exported in 2007 to more than 166 foreign destinations. Exports have increased 20 percent through the first quarter of 2008 over the same period last year.

The Governor also participated in presenting the following awards:

Exporter of the Year: The Baker Company, Sanford; Innovator of the Year: Safe Handling, Auburn; Service Provider of the Year: Greg Hansel, Preti Flaherty, Portland; and Maine's Foreign Direct Investor of the Year for 2008 is Fontaine Inc. of Canada.

Governor Visits Flood-Damaged Areas of Aroostook County

May 23, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today visited Aroostook County for the fourth time since the area was hit by severe flooding earlier this month.

“It takes time for communities to recover from a natural disaster,” Governor Baldacci said. “The process has begun, but it’s far from over. All of Maine wants to make sure the folks hurt by the flooding know that we will not forget their struggles and stand ready to help.”

Today Governor Baldacci visited Fort Kent, Soldier Pond, Wallagrass, Portage and Island Falls during the trip. On Tuesday, the governor visited flood-damaged areas in Penobscot County.

On May 9, President Bush signed a major disaster declaration for Aroostook County as a result of the record flooding that struck the County three weeks ago. The federal government on May 14 approved public assistance covering Aroostook, Knox, Lincoln, Piscataquis, Somerset and Waldo Counties. On May 16, the federal government expanded the major disaster declaration to include Penobscot County for individuals and businesses.

On Thursday, Governor Baldacci requested that Penobscot be added to the list of six counties already approved for public assistance.

“Maine people are resilient,” Governor Baldacci said. “We will come back from this year’s floods stronger than ever.”

Governor Baldacci also urged people affected by the flood to complete their applications for federal assistance and for the Small Business Administration’s disaster loan program. Even if people don’t accept the loans, the completed application makes them potentially eligible for other aid programs.

Those who have questions about their application, or who want to apply for disaster assistance, should call FEMA's toll-free number, 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). Registration can also be done online at www.fema.gov. Those with speech or hearing impairment should call, TTY 1-800-462-7585. Information on SBA loan applications is available by calling the SBA helpline at 1-800-659-2955 or visiting the SBA Website at www.SBA.gov/disaster.

Feds Approve Public Assistance for Penobscot County

May 23, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci received word late today that President Bush has expanded the major disaster declaration to include public assistance for Penobscot County. The approval enables municipalities and the State to receive federal assistance in defraying costs incurred in response and for recovery to public safety and infrastructure from the flooding that occurred earlier this month.

“I am pleased that towns hit hard by the clean-up related to the flooding will be able to receive this assistance from the federal government,” said Governor Baldacci. “With the beginning of the summer tourist season, it’s important that the impacted communities can quickly recover.”

On May 9, President Bush signed a major disaster declaration for Aroostook County as a result of the record flooding that struck the County three weeks ago. The federal government on May 14 approved public assistance covering Aroostook, Knox, Lincoln, Piscataquis, Somerset and Waldo Counties. On May 16, the federal government expanded the major disaster declaration to include Penobscot County for individuals and businesses.

Earlier today the Governor visited impacted areas in Aroostook County. It was the fourth trip he has made to the county since he declared a state of emergency following the flooding. Governor Baldacci has also visited Penobscot County to view the damage and recovery efforts there.

The Governor announced a public assistance briefing designed for public officials in Penobscot County seeking assistance to repair public property and infrastructure. The meeting will take place on Thursday, May 29, at 10 a.m. at the meeting room at Milford Town Hall.

Individuals and business owners in Aroostook and Penobscot Counties with flood damage should register with FEMA. The application process for assistance can be accessed by calling 1-800-621-3362; 1-800-462-7585 (TTY). Individuals can also register at www.fema.gov.

Governor Participates in Memorial Day Ceremonies

May 26, 2008

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci participated today in ceremonies commemorating Memorial Day. He marched in the annual Memorial Day parade in Bangor. The Governor also awarded state medals and certificates to veterans at an event at the Cole Land Transportation Museum.

“This Memorial Day, we remember all those in the Armed Forces, National Guard, and Reserves who gave their lives for the protection of our freedoms and liberty,” said Governor Baldacci. “They served their country bravely. Their sacrifices will never be forgotten.”

At the Cole Museum, the Governor recognized more than 40 veterans from World War II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars by awarding them State of Maine Silver Star and Honorable Service Medals and Wartime Service Certificates.

“Maine is thankful to our heroes past and present,” said the Governor. “Time and time again, our soldiers have answered the call and stood ready to support the defense of our families, communities and country.”

Governor Supports New Correctional Facility in Washington County

May 27, 2008

MACHIAS – Governor John E. Baldacci today visited the Downeast Correctional Facility and the Washington County Jail. Touring the facilities and meeting with county commissioners and correctional officials, the Governor reiterated his support for a new facility to house both operations.

“A joint facility would be a shining example of the collaborative efforts between the State and the counties and would provide a model for the rest of the State,” said Governor Baldacci. “The new facility would provide more effective programs in a safer environment and would be more efficient.”

The Maine Department of Corrections has been engaged with regional officials and State representatives to begin laying out the detailed work involved with building a new facility. A stakeholder meeting held last fall produced a number of ideas about the type of facility and programs that could be built.

Next steps in developing the facility include contracting for a conceptual design of the building. Sighting and financing are also major issues to be resolved.

The Governor said that the legislation signed into law this session, based on his proposal to seek efficiencies in State and county corrections, will guide the process for a new Washington County correctional facility. The law created a nine-member State Board of Corrections that will establish a “Certificate of Need” process to consider future State and county corrections capital construction projects.

“We are committed to putting this proposal forward jointly with Washington County,” said the Governor.

Governor Welcomes Aquaculture Research Facility to Hancock County

May 27, 2008

FRANKLIN – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated the opening of an aquaculture research facility, which will focus on increasing the efficiency and sustainability of the Atlantic salmon culture. The National Cold Water Marine Aquaculture Center, located in Franklin, includes 40,000 square feet of laboratory and office space adjacent to the University of Maine's Center for Cooperative Aquaculture Research.

"Aquaculture is a growing industry in Maine and accounts for more than 550 jobs statewide with about 225 of those located Downeast," Governor Baldacci said. "Aquaculture is growing by almost 10 percent each year and now accounts for about 30 percent of all the seafood consumed. This facility represents a significant investment by the federal government and the State of Maine to make sure our domestic aquaculture farmers are better able to compete with global competition."

The new facility allows for state-of-the-art research to be conducted in Downeast Maine. It also increases collaboration with University of Maine scientists and industry partners to solve aquaculture production problems.

Governor Baldacci said that the facility's end product of healthier fish, better security and improved production will translate into new and better jobs and more economic security in Maine's fishing communities.

"Expanding aquaculture in Maine has been a goal of my administration," the Governor said. "I am encouraged by the industry's recovery. We have a strong base and by 2009 we expect to have as many fish in production as we did during our previous peak."

Governor Ceremonially Signs Logging Industry Aid

May 28, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 2225, “An Act To Provide Tax Relief to Maine's Forest Products Industry.” The Governor’s bill, sponsored by Senator Elizabeth Schneider, was an emergency act that became law when originally signed by the Governor on April 18.

“This law is just one way in which the State and Legislature have worked to address the concerns of our forest products industry,” said Governor Baldacci. “Maine people and businesses are really hurting with the escalating cost of diesel and gasoline. Knowing that this is a national and international issue, my Administration continues to review options to mitigate the impact of rising energy costs where we can.”

The law celebrated today provides a sales tax exemption for repair and maintenance parts for vehicles used in transporting forest products. The exemption is in place for such parts and supplies purchased before October 1, 2008.

The Governor celebrated the signing of the tax relief law with members of Coalition to End High Fuel Prices.

Earlier this year, the Governor signed a law that temporarily increased the truck weight limits on Maine roads, enabling more freight to be carried by trucks. The increased weight limit expired on April 1, 2008.

Governor Mourns Loss of Soldier with Maine Ties

May 29, 2008

AUGUSTA – The death of a soldier from South Portland has been confirmed by the Department of Defense. Governor John E. Baldacci mourned the soldier, who has ties to Maine. Spc. Justin L. Buxbaum died as a result of wounds received in a non-combat related incident on May 26 in Kushamond, Afghanistan. Spc. Buxbaum was from South Portland.

“All of Maine joins in mourning this promising young man,” said Governor Baldacci. “The loss is difficult to bear for the family, and we recognize that the community of South Portland has now suffered its third loss in the wars overseas. My prayers are with Spc. Buxbaum’s family and friends.”

Spc. Buxbaum was assigned to the 62nd Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Brigade, Fort Hood, Texas.

According to the Department of Defense, the non-combat death is under investigation.

Governor Baldacci spoke with Spc. Buxbaum’s mother this morning. A memorial service is planned for Wednesday, June 4. The Governor has ordered flags to be lowered to half-staff that day in honor of Spc. Buxbaum.

Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill to Reduce Drunken Driving

May 29, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 856, An Act To Reduce Drunk Driving. The law increases license suspension periods and allows the Secretary of State to reinstate the license of a person with OUI offenses if the person installs an ignition interlock device on their motor vehicle. The person must also satisfy all other requirements for license reinstatement imposed by the Secretary of State.

“The total cost for substance abuse in Maine is estimated to be \$898 million with the majority of this due to alcohol abuse,” Governor Baldacci said. “This law we celebrate today seeks to stem one of the most devastating effects of alcohol abuse, drunken driving.”

Under the law, a person who has his or her license suspended for OUI offenses must pay a fee of \$50, in addition to the regular license fee, before the suspension is terminated.

The ignition interlock device does not allow a driver to start a vehicle if his or her breath has a concentration of alcohol that is above a preset level. A vehicle with the device was on display at the State House Thursday morning.

Bill sponsor Sen. Lynn Bromley (D-Cumberland) was at the ceremonial signing along with a number of co-sponsors and supporters.

First Lady Announces Book Selection for Read With ME. 2008

May 22, 2008

GEORGETOWN - First Lady of Maine Karen M. Baldacci kicked off the ninth year of Read With ME. today at the Georgetown Central School. A statewide program of Maine Reads, Read With ME, is aimed at improving literacy and reading skills among Maine's students. The First Lady read kindergartners *The Cat at Night* and was joined by Dahlov Ipcar, the book's ninety-year old author/illustrator and a resident of Georgetown. Read With ME. is made possible by FairPoint Communications.

Through Read With ME., every kindergartner in the state has the opportunity to receive a book bag, which includes a copy of this year's featured book *The Cat at Night*. The book will be distributed to Maine's more than 18,000 kindergartners in the fall as part of the literacy outreach program Read With ME.

The special edition of *The Cat at Night*, designed and published by Islandport Press, a Maine-based independent publisher that develops books about Maine and Northern New England, will feature additional pages for Read With ME that include activities for young readers. Each book bag also includes literacy information and a bookmark developed by the Maine Department of Education and illustrated by Ipcar. Schools have been provided with DVDs about reading aloud produced by Maine Public Broadcasting and the Maine State Library. Each year the featured book is selected by a committee of educators, parents, teachers, librarians, literacy professionals, and authors.

"This year we honor Maine artist and writer Dahlov Ipcar," said Baldacci. "We're approaching the forty year anniversary of the original release of *The Cat at Night*, so we celebrate that anniversary and all the Dahlov has contributed to the literary and art worlds. We also are happy to announce that FairPoint Communications is the new sponsor of Read With ME."

Recently, the First Lady contacted principals in each school in Maine that has kindergarten students inviting them to take part in the program. Each participating school will receive the books and literacy information as school opens in September. Packing and delivery of program materials to the schools will be handled by the Maine National Guard and a 100-person volunteer corps. Last year, Read With ME. reached more than 18,000 students' families across the state.

Through their support of Maine Reads, FairPoint Communications has awarded Read with ME. a \$75,000 grant to help underwrite the program and provide all of the books and information at no cost to the schools and students. Maine Reads is one of the local community programs supported by FairPoint. For more information log onto www.mainereads.org.

Governor Ceremonially Signs Oral Health Care Bill

May 29, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 2277, An Act Regarding the Sunrise Review of Oral Health Care Issues. The law allows dental hygienists to operate an independent practice without supervision by a dentist. The independent practitioner must be a licensed hygienist, meet additional educational requirements and provide a patient with a referral plan to a dentist for any necessary dental care.

“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,” Governor Baldacci said. “We have increased the number of community-based dental centers in Maine, but this law recognizes that access to preventive dental care persists.”

Last fall, Governor Baldacci created the Oral Health Task Force to identify barriers to access to oral health services and to make recommendations to expand access.

Maine now joins more than 20 States that have enacted similar laws allowing dental hygienists to provide services without supervision by a dentist.

Bill sponsor Rep. Nancy Smith (D-Monmouth) was at the signing as were a number of supporters of the legislation.

Governor Baldacci Pledges Support for Millinocket after Katahdin Paper Announcement

May 29, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement today after learning that Katahdin Paper Co. plans to indefinitely shutdown its mill in Millinocket.

“Record-high oil prices have put Katahdin Paper’s Millinocket mill in a difficult position. The mill is one of the few in Maine that relies almost entirely on oil to generate heat and steam for the paper-making process,” Governor Baldacci said. “My administration is fully engaged in an effort to see the mill re-opened. I believe the company’s energy problem can be solved.”

Governor Baldacci said that the rapid response team from the Department of Labor is ready to support workers affected by Katahdin’s decision.

“Millinocket won’t be left on its own,” Governor Baldacci said. “We stand ready to help the community and the families hit by this unacceptable situation. And we will work with the company to design an alternative business plan that relies on a more efficient energy source.”

The Governor has named Rosaire Pelletier, Senior Forest Products Adviser, as the point person in the administration on the issue.

Pelletier has more than 40 years experience in the pulp and paper industry, including group controller and business manager for Fraser Pulp and Paper Group.

“Energy costs are hurting the entire economy,” Governor Baldacci said. “Businesses of every size are struggling to account for oil and gas prices that seem to set new records every day. There are alternatives, however, and we must aggressively pursue them.”

In April, Governor Baldacci held the Governor’s Energy Efficiency Summit, which brought together businesspeople and some of the nation’s leading energy innovators to discuss ways to reduce consumption and save money.

In addition, the Finance Authority of Maine, MaineHousing and Efficiency Maine have programs that can help businesses and families complete energy efficiency upgrades.

Maine has been aggressive in its pursuit of alternative energy, passing this year groundbreaking legislation that will make it easier to develop wind power in the State.

“We can’t allow our economy and our people to be held hostage by foreign oil,” Governor Baldacci said. “We must make every effort to end this dangerous addiction.”

Governor Baldacci called Millinocket Town Manager Eugene Conlogue and has also reached out to members of Maine’s Congressional delegation.

"We will all work together to help Millinocket," Governor Baldacci said. "But we also need a national energy policy that moves the country away from costly foreign oil. We need the federal government to act."

Governor Orders Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff on June 4

June 3, 2008

AUGUSTA – In remembrance and honor of Spc. Justin L. Buxbaum, 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 Wednesday, June 4, 2008.

Spc. Buxbaum died in a non-combat related incident last month in Kushamond, Afghanistan. He was assigned to the 62nd Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Brigade, Fort Hood, Texas.

Visiting hours for Spc. Buxbaum are from 2-6 p.m., Tuesday, June 3, at the Conroy-Tully Crawford South Portland Chapel, 1024 Broadway in South Portland. A funeral service is planned for 10 a.m., Wednesday, June 4, at Holy Cross Church on the corner of Broadway and Cottage Road in South Portland.

Governor Saddened by Death of Former State Rep. George Carroll

June 3, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement today after learning of the death of former State Rep. George Carroll of Limerick.

“George was a good friend and an impressive public servant. You would have to call him Mr. Transportation for Maine,” Governor Baldacci said. “There’s not a road or bridge in the State that he didn’t support. He had a long and distinguished career working in the public interest. George was a wonderful man. We will keep his family in our hearts and prayers during this difficult time.”

Governor Baldacci said he will order flags flown at half-staff in Limerick on the day of Carroll’s funeral. No further information is available at this time.

Governor Urges Support for Investment Package

June 3, 2008

AUGUSTA – With only one week to go before the June 10 election, Governor John E. Baldacci today spoke of the importance of Question 1 on the ballot.

The question will ask voters to approve a \$29,725,000 bond issue for transportation and environmental projects. If approved, the bond will leverage an additional \$29,780,000 in other funds.

“Maine voters have an important opportunity to invest in the State’s economy, in safe roads and bridges, and in important environmental projects,” Governor Baldacci said. “Smart investments pay off now by creating jobs, and they pay off later when we see the lasting economic impact of better roads, improved passenger and freight rail service, increased mass transit and a cleaner environment.”

Question 1 reads, “Do you favor a \$29,725,000 bond issue for natural resource, agricultural and transportation infrastructure that will leverage \$29,780,000 in other funds?” If approved, the state would issue \$29,725,000 in general obligation bonds that would fund projects throughout the state.

The bond would provide \$23,025,000 for transportation purposes and these funds would be administered by the Maine Department of Transportation. Of that amount, \$10 million would leverage \$16 million in matching federal funds that would be used for highways and bridges.

The remaining \$13,025,000 would be used for multimodal improvements to the State’s rail system that serves both passenger and freight, fund bus purchases for existing passenger service systems, provide funding for improved safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, provide money for port and ferry facility improvements, and provide funding for infrastructure improvements to the State’s publicly owned airports.

“This bond will help fund critically needed repairs to Maine’s roads and bridges,” said David Cole, Commissioner of the Department of Transportation. “This bond also invests significantly in alternate modes of transportation, and with gas prices nearing \$4 a gallon, it is a timely investment for Maine people.”

The bond also would provide \$4.4 million in funds to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to help communities deal with failing septic systems, clean up hazardous waste sites that threaten public health and water quality, clean up abandoned landfills and modernize air-quality monitoring equipment.

“This bond issue includes infrastructure investments that are important to protect the environment and Mainers’ public health,” said David Littell, Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection. “Funds will be used to clean up abandoned hazardous waste sites and landfills across our state, assist communities with replacement of the worst failing septic systems which discharge untreated sewage, and to provide needed monitoring of our air quality. The environmental investments in this bond issue will benefit Maine’s environment for many generations to come.”

The remaining \$2.3 million would be administered by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to upgrade wastewater treatment systems at the state's fish hatcheries and to repair several IFW-owned dams that regulate water flow and protect waterfowl and other wildlife habitats.

"The passage of this bond will provide a great opportunity to renovate some of our facilities that are not currently meeting state water quality standards," said Roland "Dan" Martin, Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. "It is imperative that we give our support to upgrade our fish hatcheries and ensure the continuation of our fish stocking programs at current or improved levels. Also, a portion of the funds will be used to repair dams that have been damaged by weather, thus protecting valuable waterfowl and wildlife habitats. It is these habitats that we Mainers view as one of our most treasured natural resources."

Governor Baldacci Opens Summit on Cardiovascular Health

June 4, 2008

AUBURN – Governor John E. Baldacci spoke about the importance of health care and the State Health Plan Wednesday morning to a crowd gathered for the 11th Annual Governor's Summit on Cardiovascular Health at the Hilton Garden Inn, Auburn.

"Health care is one of those topics where there is no silver bullet and no 30-second sound bite to explain it," Governor Baldacci said. "But the fact is that you cannot have a healthy economy without healthy people and you cannot have healthy people without a healthy environment. It is up to us to encourage and foster that healthy environment."

The summit, themed "Achieving Higher Performance in Primary Care: The Patient-Centered Medical Home," featured speakers from across the country and panel discussions for almost 200 health care professionals in attendance.

The Governor thanked the participants for their work on the 2008-2009 Maine State Health Plan, saying that results are already being realized thanks to their efforts. He said that the State Health Plan, which is part of Dirigo Health reforms, has made significant inroads in establishing best practices and improving health for the people of Maine.

"Dirigo Health has covered more than 28,000 hard working families and children, and the Bureau of Insurance has found that Dirigo Health reforms generated more than \$110 million in savings over the first three years since Dirigo's passage," the Governor said. "As a result of Dirigo Health Reform rate regulation in the small employer group market, insurers refunded \$6.6 million to small businesses."

Additionally, the Governor said that care of heart attacks is being improved through the Maine Quality Forum's In-A-Heartbeat initiative; MaineCare launched a pilot to improve the health status of its highest cost users; and the Maine Practice Improvement Network has initiated improvements in care in more than 100 practices across the State.

"I was in Washington for eight years and have been Governor for six years," Governor Baldacci said. "I can tell you that the best ideas don't come from Washington or Augusta. They come from laboratories like this summit. No one, single person has all the answers. But we need to work together to find the answers and that is my commitment to you."

Governor Baldacci Rolls Out Program to Save Diesel Costs and Reduce Pollution

June 5, 2008

Multi-agency effort boosts business loans to \$250,000 for energy-saving equipment

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today unveiled an initiative to help truckers in Maine who are hard hit by skyrocketing diesel fuel prices. The new program sponsored by several state agencies will help truckers reduce their costs by \$12,000 or more per rig, while improving air quality.

“Energy costs are hurting the entire economy,” said Governor Baldacci. “Businesses of every size are struggling to account for oil and gas prices that seem to set new records every day. We need our Maine truckers to stay on the road, and this initiative can help keep them rolling. This is a terrific example of state agencies working together to get something done for Mainers.”

The program provides low-cost loans to trucking and other businesses for investments in energy-saving equipment. Truckers are already lining up for funds to purchase “Auxiliary Power Units,” or APUs, which drastically reduce diesel consumption when a truck is idling.

Governor Baldacci hailed the program for providing much-needed relief for Maine’s small trucking companies, which have been squeezed by diesel prices that have nearly doubled over the last year to more than \$4 a gallon.

“These loans are available right now at 3 percent for small businesses in Maine and that can go a long way toward easing the pain of high energy prices,” he said. “And the program has another important benefit -- reducing emissions from burning diesel fuel, which contribute to lung disease and global warming.”

The Governor noted that the initiative marks a significant expansion of a low-cost energy conservation loan program administered by the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC).

Funds provided by the Finance Authority of Maine have boosted the loan cap to \$250,000 for energy-saving equipment, including APUs, bunk heaters for truck cabs and other technologies.

In addition, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection plans to secure \$100,000 in federal funds to be matched by the PUC funds, and dedicated to loans for APUs and other diesel pollution-reduction technologies.

“At today’s diesel prices, I’ll save enough to pay back the loan in 13 months,” said Larry Sidelinger of Yankee Pride Trucking in Nobleboro. “After that I can use the savings to completely cover the payments on two of my trucks.”

Sidelinger’s company is one of two that took early advantage of the energy conservation loan program to secure APUs. Also speaking on Thursday were Lonnie and Diana Adams of L&D Trucking in Caribou.

PUC Chair Sharon M. Reishus said the loan program would result in significant energy savings for successful applicants. "Under our mandate, we must make sure that actual, quantifiable savings do occur," Chairman Reishus said. "We are projecting that each truck with an APU installed will save an average of 2,900 gallons of diesel fuel a year."

Bill Norbert, Governmental Affairs Manager of FAME, stated: "During this time of rapidly increasing energy costs, FAME is eager to be partnering with the PUC to make available to businesses such as truckers increased funds at lower interest rates for energy conservation purposes."

David Littell, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, added, "The DEP is pleased to be able to bring additional funding to this project to protect public health and Maine's air quality. It will reduce diesel emissions and save truckers real money on the fuel used to idle trucks. Diesel emissions, even at low levels, pose a serious health hazard and can cause respiratory problems, increase the risk of lung cancer, and trigger asthma attacks. This year, the Maine legislature enacted anti-idling legislation designed to save fuel and improve air quality. Increasing truckers' usage of APUs will greatly reduce idling emissions on a year-round basis."

The conservation loans are available to small businesses in Maine for APUs and other energy-saving technologies. For more information, call Shirley Bartlett, Program Manager for State Energy Programs, at 207-287-3318. She can also assist small Maine businesses with a free energy audit to help them identify potential energy-saving investments.

Governor Baldacci said that this initiative is one of many tools that the Administration has available to help hard working families and businesses address rising energy costs. Below is a list of programs.

Efficiency Maine/Public Utilities Commission

<http://www.maine.gov/mpuc>

<http://www.energymaine.com/>

- Efficiency Maine Business Program
- Small Business Energy Audit Program
- Small Business Low Interest Loan Program
- Auxiliary Power Units (for trucks)
- ENERGY STAR® Residential Lighting Program
- The Maine Home Performance with Energy Star® (MaineHP)
- Building Operator Certification Program
- Anemometer Loan Program

- Low Income CFL Program (Efficiency Maine, Residential Initiative for Maine [RIFME] and local housing authorities)

- Renewable Energy Programs (Biofuels, Solar, Wind, Voluntary Renewable Resources Fund)

- EfficiencyMaine Training Programs

Finance Authority of Maine (FAME)

<http://www.famemaine.com/>

- Energy Conservation Loan Program

- Economic Recovery Loan Program

Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA)

<http://www.mainehousing.org/>

- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

- Low Income Assistance Program

- Weatherization

- Appliance Replacement Program

- Home Energy Loan Program (HELP)

- Multifamily Home Energy Loan Program

- Additional Efforts (pilot programs for alternative energy, green building standards, and carbon marketing program)

Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

<http://www.maine.gov/dep>

<http://www.mainedep.com/>

- Governor's Carbon Challenge Technical Assistance and Energy Audit Program

- Environmental Leaders of Maine: Smart Production

- Environmental Leaders: Green Business Certification

For additional information on ways you can prepare for the winter season, visit

http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/contact/citizen_services/safeandwarm.html

Youth and Adults Honored for Efforts to Help Kids Complete High School

June 5, 2008

First Lady Karen Baldacci presents awards to five youth and seven "Great People Who Rock"

AUGUSTA – Five inspirational youth and seven "Great People Who Rock" were honored today at a Blaine House ceremony attended by First Lady Karen Baldacci and others involved in the Keeping Maine's Children Connected initiative. Keeping Maine's Children Connected is a coordinated effort of the Children's Cabinet, the departments of Education, Labor, Health and Human Services, Corrections and Public Safety, and Maine's Chief Justice Leigh Saufley. The initiative aims to improve educational outcomes for youth whose schooling is disrupted because of homelessness, hospitalization, incarceration, foster care placement or high mobility.

Mrs. Baldacci is chair of the advisory committee to the Keeping Maine's Children Connected initiative, and chair of the Maine Children's Cabinet which oversees the program.

"Despite challenges, these youth have graduated from high school," said the First Lady. "They have shown us that with perseverance, hard work and determination you can pursue and reach your dreams."

The First Lady said the awards for the adults "were created to recognize those who have gone above and beyond. These are individuals who, through extraordinary effort and leadership, created change so youth at risk can complete their education and achieve their dreams."

The awards title "Great People Who Rock" was created by an advisory panel of youth.

The honorees include five youth who have experienced many challenges in their lives but persevered, stayed in school and worked toward a high school diploma. The youth are from all over Maine, from York County to Aroostook County.

Two of the youth received educational scholarships worth \$200 each, thanks to grants made by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and Saco and Biddeford Savings Institution.

The seven "Great People Who Rock" are: Betsy Morrison from Southern Maine Advisory Council on Transition; Brianne Masselli from THRIVE, based in Lewiston; David Brenner from South Portland High School; Jeff Keating from Mount View High School in Thorndike; Kristen Carlson from Biddeford Middle School; Janie Small from Washington County Career Center; and Jenna Bolduc from Spurwink, Inc.

The First Lady also recognized one "Great Team" that has done an amazing job to support youth and their families: GEAR, a statewide parent-to-parent support organization.

Governor Praises Environmentally Friendly Auto Dealership

June 6, 2008

SACO – Governor John E. Baldacci today participated in the grand opening celebration of Prime Motor Group's newest location in Saco. The dealership's new facility encompasses a wide range of environmental benefits, from its energy efficient lighting to its car wash that uses recycled water and a furnace that is fueled by recycled motor oil.

"I commend Ira Rosenberg and all the management and staff of Prime Motor Group for their commitment to quality and to promoting high environmental standards with this new facility," said Governor Baldacci. "Ira is leading by example in our business community, showing that doing what's right for the environment makes great economic sense, too."

Elementary students from Young School in Saco were among those in the community invited to tour the building for the "Prime Time for the Environment" event.

"Doing business in Maine is about caring about the community in which you operate," said the Governor.

Governor Sets Policy to Promote Quality of Place

June 6, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed an Executive Order setting the State strategy for promoting Maine's Quality of Place. The order signed today continues the momentum of the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place, which presented its final report to the Governor last month.

"Maine's Quality of Place is about protecting, investing in and enhancing Maine's competitive economic advantage," said Governor Baldacci. "Expanding our efforts and building an investment strategy around our outstanding assets and qualities will grow Maine's economy now and into the future."

The Executive Order focuses State policy to pursue a Quality of Place Investment Strategy. The strategy will complement Maine's traditional economic and community development programs.

The order also establishes a State Quality of Place Council that will help align and coordinate investment strategies across state departments and regional councils. The State Planning Office will convene regional government and economic leaders to promote the Maine Quality of Place investment strategy no later than November 1, 2008.

More information about Maine's Quality of Place can be found at <http://www.maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/qualityofplace/index.htm>

The text of the Executive Order follows.

AN ORDER TO CREATE A MAINE QUALITY OF PLACE JOBS AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

WHEREAS, Maine is rich in resources and potential for economic growth based on the state's unique character and Quality of Place; and

WHEREAS, entrepreneurs, employers, and skilled workers in today's high-growth industries especially value Quality of Place, making it a critical driver of economic growth and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, Maine's place-based assets, both natural and built, are diverse and plentiful, yet are today at risk from sprawling development and the lack of investment in downtowns and historic assets, the selling off of industrial forest ownership to new investor groups with diverse interests, and the loss of agricultural land and access to working waterfronts and outdoor recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Quality of Place is a compelling framework for local and regional economic and community development, and a needed complement to traditional development strategies and programs to expand the workforce and create new high-value jobs; and

WHEREAS, Maine has underway a variety of promising, Quality of Place investment initiatives in the creative economy, nature-, adventure-, and heritage-based tourism, land conservation, and transportation planning; still, Maine government could be better organized to carry out these and other Quality of Place investment efforts; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate have enacted the Northern Border Regional Commission, patterned after the Appalachian Regional Commission, which promises to bring substantial federal assistance to Maine in support of place-based investment strategies and initiatives.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby order that it shall be the policy of the State of Maine to pursue a Quality of Place Investment Strategy as a complement to its traditional economic and community development programs, as follows:

Definition

A "Quality of Place Investment Strategy" is one that builds on exceptional and marketable, local and regional strengths, resources, and opportunities, to create new high-value jobs, products, and services. In practice, Quality of Place investment is market-based, locally-driven, regionally-organized, strategic from both a regional and statewide perspective, involves broad cross-sections of people in decision-making, and engages the private, public, and nonprofit sectors in its planning, financing, and implementation. At a minimum, it includes the five sequential steps of: 1) asset-mapping, 2) strategic planning, 3) education and training, 4) financing, and 5) marketing.

Goals

The goals of this strategy are to:

- A. Protect, strengthen, and develop Maine's Quality of Place assets, both natural and built;
- B. Make the State's several regions more economically competitive and prosperous through increased investment, job opportunities, regional incomes, and public revenues; and
- C. Create new jobs and valued products and services in Maine that will succeed in national and global markets for local, regional, and state benefit.

Maine Quality of Place Council

There is established a Maine Quality of Place Council to provide overall direction and support for this strategy. The Council comprises eleven members including five state executives and, to be appointed by the Governor, five public members and one representative of regional councils, as follows:

- A. Five state executive: the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development or designee, the Commissioner of Transportation or designee, the Commissioner of Conservation or designee, the Director of State Planning or designee, and the Director of the Maine Arts Commission or designee;
- B. Five public members selected for their knowledge of and commitment to protecting, enhancing, and building upon the State's natural, historic, cultural, recreational and downtown assets; and
- C. One representative of the state's regional councils of government that are designated as federal economic development districts;

All members serve without compensation for three-year terms, staggered to assure continuity. No public member may serve more than two consecutive terms. For those members serving initial one- and two-year terms, the first term will be considered a full term.

The Chair of the Council will be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor, call meetings of the Council as needed, but not less than three times annually, and establish their agendas.

Duties

The duties of the Council are to:

- A. Identify opportunities for improved coordination among all related state executive agencies in regard to their missions, policies, plans, programs, funding practices, activities, and, where applicable, regulations;
- B. Create standards for regional Quality of Place investment plans and strategies;
- C. Develop a process to award Quality of Place investment strategy planning and implementation grants to the state's regional councils of government/federal economic development districts;
- D. Create standards and a process to award planning and implementation grants for broad Quality of Place investment projects of statewide significance;
- E. Develop, apply, and report on quantifiable measures that will effectively assess progress toward meeting the goals of the Maine Quality of Place investment strategy;
- F. Consult and coordinate with the Governor's Council on Competitiveness and the Economy, the Maine Economic Growth Council, Community Preservation Advisory Committee, and Intergovernmental Advisory Commission; and
- G. With the State Planning Office, prepare legislation for the Governor's consideration by December 1, 2008, to establish a statewide and regional Quality of Place investment strategy for Maine.

Staffing, Guidelines, and Legislation

The State Planning Office shall provide staff support to the Council. At the direction of the Council, the State Planning Office shall prepare and publish guidelines for creating regional Quality of Place investment strategies to preserve, strengthen, and market Maine's place-based assets, both natural and built. These guidelines must present means to:

- A. Develop the region's place-based assets and identify new and creative ways to generate investment, new jobs, income, and revenues from them;
- B. Create regional inventories of cultural, natural, structural, and leadership resources, for use in developing strategies to increase their economic and social value to communities and regions;
- C. Identify best practices for carrying out regional Quality of Place investment strategies; and

D. Identify performance standards to measure and evaluate the progress of such regional investment strategies' toward meeting the Maine Quality of Place goals.

Reporting

The Maine Quality of Place Council shall regularly report to the Governor, but not less than annually on December 1 of each year, including any suggestions for legislation.

State Government Support of Maine's Quality of Place Assets

The Commissioner of Conservation, the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, the Commissioner of Transportation, and the Director of State Planning shall lead an effort by the executive agencies of state government to provide a continuing and sustainable framework to advance regional Quality of Place investment strategies. At their direction, the commissioners and heads of all executive agencies of state government shall:

- A. Review their missions to identify how they can better actively protect, strengthen, and support efforts to build upon Maine's Quality of Place assets;
- B. Examine their statutes, missions, policies, programs, activities, and funding practices and make appropriate administrative changes and propose statutory changes needed to support statewide and regional Quality of Place investment strategies;
- C. Examine use of public resources to determine if they support regional Quality of Place implementation initiatives, with priority given to those that have potential for significant future economic growth and where the expected long-term return on public investment will be greatest;
- D. Examine revising grant program requirements to reward regional Quality of Place investment strategies by providing set-asides or establishing preferences for them;
- E. Review regulatory practices to identify where they compromise or run counter to advancing the Maine Quality of Place Investment Strategy and its goals; and
- F. Identify opportunities for leveraging federal and state agency partnerships and resources toward these ends.

The State Planning Office shall invite the Maine State Housing Authority, the Finance Authority of Maine, the University of Maine System, and the Maine Community College System to join the effort to examine missions, policies, plans, programs, activities, and funding practices; to identify where and how they may best advance the Maine Quality of Place investment strategy; and to report as described below.

The State Planning Office shall develop guidelines to assist agencies in examining the impact of their mission, policies, plans, statutes, programs, activities, funding practices, and regulations on Maine's Quality of Place efforts and related regional investment strategies.

Prior to November 1, 2008, the lead executives specified above shall report to the Maine Quality of Place Council and to the Governor with a comprehensive, state government-wide blueprint for implementing this investment strategy, complete with specific task and responsibility assignments, timelines, and benchmarks to measure the progress of each state agency toward aligning its mission, policies, plans, programs, activities, funding practices, and regulations with this strategy. By December 1, 2008, the State Planning Office shall prepare for the Governor's consideration any legislation necessary to implement findings under this section. The Council shall monitor progress toward fully implementing the blueprint and report annually to the Governor on the several agencies' progress toward this end.

Regional focus

Prior to November 1, 2008, the State Planning Office shall convene regional government and economic leaders to promote the Maine Quality of Place investment strategy, as follows:

A. The Office shall convene representatives of all the regional councils of government (COGs) designated as federal economic development districts (EDDs), namely, the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments, Mid-coast Economic Development District, Kennebec Valley Council of Governments, Northern Maine Development Corporation, Eastern Maine Development Corporation, and Southern Maine Economic Development District. The Office shall consult with the Maine Quality of Place Council in preparing for this meeting.

B. At the meeting of COG/EDDS, the State Planning Office shall provide information on planning and implementing regional Quality of Place investment strategies, including how each COG/EDD may:

Create and staff at least one regional Quality of Place Council within the geographic region covered by each COG/EDD, as follows:

a) Each regional Quality of Place Council comprises public officials, community and non-profit leaders, and stakeholders engaged with local and regional business, tourism, and downtown development, with a special effort to include those knowledgeable about the main, marketable quality of place assets within the region including but not limited to natural resources and the landscape, historical and cultural assets, intellectual and educational assets, and transportation and recreational assets.

b) Each regional Quality of Place Council:

- 1) Maps and inventories significant, marketable regional assets;
- 2) Develops regional place-based investment plans that conform to overall regional development plans;
- 3) Establishes strategic priorities among potential regional investments and initiatives; and
- 4) Evaluates and recommends proposals for implementation project grants, using criteria developed by the Maine Quality of Place Council.

Establish a joint regional council where the relevant geographic area and assets lie within the jurisdiction of more than one COG/EDD and councils for sub-regions within their coverage areas where such sub-

regions are appropriate to address particular or unique market-based opportunities, the advancement of which is consistent with overall regional development strategies.

If available, administer State Quality of Place planning and implementation grant funds, including contract administration;

Leverage federal, private, and philanthropic funding to advance the Maine Quality of Place Investment Strategy and their regional counterparts;

Provide technical assistance to regional nonprofit organizations seeking to develop funding proposals for Quality of Place investment initiatives; and

Coordinate with neighboring COG/EDDs on Quality of Place plans and projects that cross regional boundaries.

Funding

Funding for regional Quality of Place investment strategy planning and implementation shall come from reconfiguring and reallocating existing state and federal resources, from private and philanthropic sources, and from such other funding sources as may be approved by the Legislature. In preparing legislation for the Governor's consideration prior to December 1, 2008, the State Planning Office shall include any recommendations for funding Quality of Place investment strategies developed in consultation with the Maine Quality of Place Council, state agencies, and COG/EDDs.

Effective Date

The effective date of this order is June 6, 2008.

John E. Baldacci, Governor

Governor Baldacci Visits with Saco 4th Graders

June 6, 2008

SACO – Governor John E. Baldacci paid a visit to 4th graders from the C.K. Burns School in Saco Friday afternoon.

The students visited the State House in Augusta recently and were hoping to meet the Governor. Because the Governor's schedule had him in another part of the State that day, Rep. Linda Valentino (D-Saco) brought the students into the Governor's Office but they did not get to meet him. Students wrote thank you letters to Rep. Valentino and indicated that they were sorry they could not meet Governor Baldacci. Rep. Valentino told the Governor about it and he paid a visit to the 4th graders during an assembly at the C.K. Burns School Friday afternoon.

Several students wrote questions on cards for the Governor to answer during the assembly. The Governor also took questions from students verbally. Questions touched on topics that ranged from his favorite thing about being Governor, to asking about his family's two springer spaniels, to advice for young people who might want to get involved in politics.

"I tell young people that if they want to be Governor, they should do three things," Governor Baldacci told the students. "You should be yourself, tell the truth and work hard. It's a lot easier to tell the truth than to do otherwise because when you tell the truth you can look at yourself in the mirror at the end of the day and know that you are doing what is best. And you should always be true to yourself, no matter what you do when you get older."

Rep. Valentino joined Governor Baldacci at the school, as did Rep. Don Pilon (D-Saco) and Sen. Barry Hobbins (D-York).

ConnectME Authority Announces Second Round of Grants

June 9, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and the ConnectME Authority announced today that applications are now available for the second round of its grant program to expand Mainers' access to broadband service. More than \$1.5 million is expected to be available; nearly twice what was available for the first round. The grants will continue to be targeted to areas of the state that have no form of broadband or high-speed internet service available.

"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.

The first round of grants awarded last year funded broadband service to more than 50 unserved communities, representing 14,400 households and businesses – a 2.8 percent increase in broadband availability. The ConnectME Authority received 17 grant applications requesting more than \$2.4 million in gap funding, for projects totaling more than \$6.7 million. The Authority awarded seven grants totaling nearly \$800,000, for total project amounts of more than \$1.7 million. The grant projects range in size from \$38,000 to \$368,000 from Chebeague Island to 26 communities in Piscataquis County; from single projects in Somerville and Monson, to a project serving 18 communities in Washington County; and to a project that provides wireless service to Mount Desert and Cranberry Islands.

Eligible applicants are municipalities, co-ops, community groups, and broadband service providers.

"Among the many reasons that we believe that access to broadband service is a necessity, are: the ability to telecommute, access to government services, and better access to health services and educational opportunities," said Jean Wilson, the Authority's Chair. "And, according to a recent Brookings Institution Report, for every one percentage point increase in broadband penetration in a state, employment is projected to increase by 0.2 to 0.3 percent per year."

The application form is available on the ConnectME website (<http://www.maine.gov/connectme/>). The filing deadline for the application is July 18, 2008. The Authority hopes to make funding commitments within two weeks of the submittals.

The members of the Authority are Jean Wilson, Vice President of Information Services at LL Bean, Chair; Mitchel W. Davis, Chief Information Officer for Bowdoin College; Richard B. Thompson, Chief Information Officer for Maine State Government; and Sharon Reishus, Chair of the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

For more information:

To arrange an interview with Authority Chair Wilson or the other Members of the Authority, please contact Phillip Lindley at (207) 624-9970 or by e-mail at phil.lindley@maine.gov. The Authority's website may be accessed through the Maine School and Library Network at all public libraries in Maine.

Governor Baldacci Celebrates Oxford Networks' Fiber Optic Expansion

June 10, 2008

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated the expansion of Oxford Networks' fiber optic network to the Bangor area. The company is investing more than \$4 million in the project, which will bring advanced telecommunication and data services to businesses in Bangor and Brewer.

"We know that Maine can attract talented people and innovative companies that can compete anywhere in the world," Governor Baldacci said. "But their success depends upon a reliable network that connects them with customers and partners in the United States and overseas. This announcement is good news for Bangor and Brewer, and it's good news for the State."

Oxford Networks began construction on the 34.5-mile fiber optic network last fall. The project connects Bangor and Brewer to Oxford Networks' existing 600-mile fiber optic network that stretches to Boston. The network is the first of its kind in Bangor and Brewer, allowing for greater broadband capacity to businesses in both cities.

Governor Baldacci said that the availability of reliable broadband connections is a significant selling point when bringing new businesses to Maine.

"Expanding and improving broadband communications in Maine is one of the cornerstones of this State's economic future," the Governor said. "These are critical investments that enable people enhanced access to technology, transforming our State economy, and expanding business opportunities for more Mainers. Today illustrates how important are our private partners in this effort, and we celebrate Oxford Networks' investment of more than \$4 million in the Bangor-Brewer area."

Oxford Networks is a Maine business, founded in Oxford County, Maine in 1900. The company, now headquartered in Lewiston, has been constructing the fiber optic network that now connects Bangor, Waterville, Augusta, Lewiston, Auburn, Portland, Biddeford, Sanford, Portsmouth, NH and Boston, MA since 2001.

In addition to Governor Baldacci, Craig Gunderson, President of Oxford Networks, was at the celebration, as were several city and State officials.

Maine Receives Federal Designation to Improve Health Care Quality

June 11, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today welcomed federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Deputy Secretary Tevi Troy to the State House for the announcement of Maine's designation as a demonstration site for a new health care quality initiative. The Medicare project, which will begin next year, will enable Maine primary care physicians to access up to \$29 million over five years for implementing federally-certified electronic health records technology, reporting data to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and showing improvement in performance on quality measures.

"As this federal recognition shows, through the collaborative process we have established in Maine we are moving forward with improving health care quality," said Governor Baldacci. "This is part of the overall goal of Dirigo Health Reform to improve access and quality of health care and to reduce costs for all our hard working Mainers."

An important accomplishment of Dirigo Health Reform is the establishment of the Maine Quality Forum, which works with stakeholders to advocate for high quality health care and help each Maine citizen make informed health care choices. The Dirigo Health Agency's Maine Quality Forum, headed by Dr. Josh Cutler, was the lead in the application for the Medicaid demonstration project. The other partners include the Maine Health Management Coalition, Maine Quality Counts and HealthInfoNet.

The Governor also thanked Gordon Smith, Executive Vice President of the Maine Medical Association, for engaging membership on this issue. Dr. Michael Szela, a primary care physician, spoke at the event about the usefulness of health information technology in physician practice.

Earlier this year, Deputy Secretary Troy came to the state to award to a group of Maine health care partners with a new "Chartered Value Exchange" (CVE) status, enabling them to enhance ongoing efforts to increase public access to health care quality information and to reduce health care costs. The partners in that designation are the same that applied for the new initiative.

The federal program provides incentive payments based on performance to participating providers. Adoption of electronic health records is expected to improve health care quality by – among other benefits – reducing medical errors and redundant procedures, increasing the timeliness of preventive care and reducing patient waiting times.

"We are working to provide greater efficiency and to increase the quality of health care that Maine people receive. This is one more step we can take to embrace technology and embrace collaborative approaches to health care, and Maine people will be the benefactors," said Governor Baldacci.

Earlier this year, the New England Telehealth Consortium was awarded a \$24.6 million rural health care grant from the Federal Communications Commission. This was the single-largest award issued by the FCC for this pilot program. The consortium will link regional health care providers with urban public

practices, research institutions, academic institutions and medical specialists to provide greater efficiency in the sharing of information relevant to health care applications.

Governor Names Maine Quality of Place Council Members

June 12, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today named the public members of the Maine Quality of Place Council created last week by Executive Order. The Order to Create a Maine Quality of Place Jobs and Investment Strategy established the Council to guide and support a State Quality of Place investment strategy, and to coordinate investment strategies across State departments and regional councils.

The Maine Quality of Place Council is comprised of eleven members including five State executives, five public members and one representative of regional councils.

The Governor is appointing the following members:

- Richard Barringer, Portland, to serve as chair. Professor, USM's Muskie School of Public Service; Senior Fellow, New England Environmental Finance Center.
- Eleanor Kinney, Bremen. Board President, Natural Resources Council of Maine; Board Member, GrowSmart Maine.
- Edward Barrett, Bangor. Bangor City Manager.
- Robin Zinchuk, Bethel. Executive Director, Bethel Chamber of Commerce; Maine Tourism Commission.
- Matthew Polstein, Millinocket. President, New England Outdoor Center; Maine Tourism Commission; Millinocket town councilor.
- Robert Thompson, Litchfield, to serve as the regional council/economic development district representative. Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments Executive Director.

"I am pleased that these individuals who have long been dedicated to economic development will be adding their significant expertise to promoting the statewide Quality of Place initiative," said Governor Baldacci. "They will be working to enhance the strategy to use our outstanding assets and qualities to grow Maine's economy now and into the future. I thank them for their commitment to this initiative and their willingness to serve the public good."

The other members, as named in the Executive Order, are:

- The Commissioner of Economic and Community Development or designee;
- The Commissioner of Transportation or designee;
- The Commissioner of Conservation or designee;
- The Director of State Planning or designee; and
- The Director of the Maine Arts Commission or designee.

The State Planning Office will convene regional government and economic leaders to promote the Maine Quality of Place investment strategy no later than November 1, 2008.

More information about Maine's Quality of Place can be found at <http://www.maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/qualityofplace/index.htm>

Governor Addresses First Joint Meeting of Aroostook County Economic Development Organizations

June 12, 2008

PRESQUE ISLE – Governor John E. Baldacci addressed the first joint meeting of the Aroostook Partnership for Progress and Leaders Encouraging Aroostook Development this morning. The Governor praised the groups for showing the benefits of consolidating regional economic development initiatives.

“As I’ve gone around the State talking about the virtues of streamlining to improve quality and efficiency, you are practicing it here in Aroostook County,” said Governor Baldacci. “You have recognized that combined, your efforts will have a greater impact on the economy of Aroostook County.”

The Governor said that there is too much duplication of economic development efforts at too many levels across Maine.

“We in Augusta need to help you and the regional economic development groups do their work,” said the Governor. “Providing you with the tools and resources you need so that you can pursue economic development strategies that make sense for you.”

Governor Baldacci also spoke about rising transportation and energy costs and its drag on the national and state economies. He said he has instructed his Administration to begin reviewing options to encourage Mainers to use less oil and gas, and to ensure that no one will be left out in the cold because of high heating costs in the winter months.

“We must take measures to wrench us from this oil dependency in Maine,” said the Governor. “We’ve had a string of beautiful summer days, but I see the trouble that’s coming this winter will be very difficult. My goal is that we not only get through this year, but take actions that put us in a better position next year.”

“This means aggressively pursuing home-grown, clean, renewable energy, like wind, solar and tidal power,” continued the Governor. “It also means encouraging homeowners and businesses to weatherize and in some cases change their energy sources so that our dependency on oil is reduced.”

While energy prices remain a significant challenge for Maine businesses and hard working families, the Governor expressed optimism. “I am excited about Maine’s future,” said the Governor. “And am pleased that the Aroostook Partnership for Progress and Leaders Encouraging Aroostook Development have joined to combine your efforts to promote business development in The County. Your success is Maine’s success.”

The Governor later toured two area Pine Tree Zone-designated businesses: Acme Monaco and Maine Mutual Group Insurance.

Governor Ceremonially Signs Dental Access Bill

June 12, 2008

PRESQUE ISLE – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 2192, “An Act To Increase Access to Dental Care.” The law recognizes the need to increase access to dental care in rural, underserved areas of the state. A pilot program is established to provide tax credits to encourage dentists to practice in these areas for five years. At the conclusion of the pilot, the Legislature will determine whether to continue, alter or suspend the program.

“There are fewer issues that are more important than health care. Maine citizens need access to affordable, quality health care – including access to oral health care,” said Governor Baldacci. “I want to thank all those here today who have worked collaboratively on this very important issue. It’s a great step to ensure that access is broadened in areas where their services are needed most.”

The Maine Dental Association and Maine Primary Care Association supported the legislation, which was sponsored by Rep. Pat Sutherland (D-Chapman). A number of area dentists also attended the signing ceremony.

The Governor noted that these groups and individuals have worked together over the years to increase the number of dental providers in designated dental health professional shortage areas, to fund programs to increase local capacity, and on a state funded dental education loan program, among other strategies.

The bill was originally signed by the Governor on April 24.

Governor Celebrates Opening of Horizon Wind Office

June 12, 2008

PRESQUE ISLE – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated the opening of Horizon Wind Energy's office in Presque Isle.

Horizon Wind, the country's third largest producer of wind power, is proposing an 800 megawatt wind development for Aroostook County. Investment from the project could top \$1.6 billion. The new office is located at 34 North Street, Suite 5 in Presque Isle.

"Maine has the opportunity to be a national leader in the production of clean, renewable energy," Governor Baldacci said. "Other places talk about it, but Maine is doing it. We must aggressively develop new energy resources so we can reduce the grip that expensive foreign oil has on our country."

Horizon Wind is proposing a multiple-phase wind power development that could create more than 900 jobs during construction and between 135 and 150 ongoing jobs.

"This project is important for our State economy and our regional economy," Governor Baldacci said. "But it is also important for our country. We must take advantage of the resources we have, and we must reduce our dependency on oil."

Gabriel Alonso, Chief Development Officer for Horizon Wind, said the company expects to file for State permits later this year and hopes to have the first turbines spinning by the fall of 2010.

Governor Baldacci Promotes Outdoor Activities

June 13, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci is promoting the State's outdoor opportunities throughout the summer. The Governor's "Take It Outside" initiative is nearly a year old and was created to encourage young people to re-connect with Maine's outdoors. Part of the initiative was to initiate the Governor's Conference on Youth and the Natural World, which has now been scheduled for Oct. 2 at the Augusta Civic Center.

"It is important that parents enlighten their children to the natural beauty of Maine and the many opportunities that exist in our own backyard," Governor Baldacci said. "People travel thousands of miles to experience what we have, sometimes just a few miles down the road. We need to expose our kids to that and discuss the best ways to get them excited about it."

A Web site has also recently been launched, which features an events calendar for outdoor activities, a kids' page, outdoor recreation links and ideas for beginner outdoor adventure seekers. The Web site can be found at <http://www.take-it-outside.org/>

Additionally, the Governor has proclaimed the month of June 2008 as Great Outdoors Month in the State of Maine. The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, this State's natural beauty is rich and abundant and should be celebrated as such; and

WHEREAS, there are countless citizens who work hard and dedicate themselves to keeping our open spaces and natural resources beautiful, accessible and protected at local parks, lakes, rivers and working lands; and

WHEREAS, in Maine and throughout this country, the number of overweight children is on the rise; and

WHEREAS, the State of Maine's "Take It Outside" initiative encourages parents to take their children outside and experience their own backyards and Maine's many treasures in the great outdoors; and

WHEREAS, kids and adults are healthier and happier when they are exposed to the wonders of nature; and

WHEREAS, Maine is full of opportunities to swim or canoe, hike or bike, and enjoy the warm weather while paddling the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, climbing Mount Katahdin, or experiencing any number of golf courses, State Parks, trails or lakes around the State,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim the month of June, 2008 as

GREAT OUTDOORS MONTH

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

Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill Allowing Online Watercraft Renewals

June 13, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 2088, “Resolve, To Direct the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife To Allow Maine Residents To Renew Their Watercraft Online and To Direct the State Controller To Make Certain Transfers.”

“Since taking office five years ago, I have made it a goal for Maine government to be more open and accessible to her people and this includes making more government services available online,” Governor Baldacci said. “I’m very pleased that we are helping Maine people access an array of such services, putting everything from volunteerism opportunities to dog licenses and now boat registration renewals, at their fingertips.”

The legislation allows Maine residents to renew watercraft registration through a safe and secure Web site. The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife will continue to administer the registrations both online and in person. Officials estimate that 125,000 watercraft are registered in Maine.

Bill sponsor Rep. Timothy Driscoll (D-Westbrook) was at the ceremony, as were other supporters of the legislation.

Executive Order, Federal Grant Take Aim at Fires Set by Kids

June 17, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed an executive order meant to combat the growing problem of fires set by juveniles.

The executive order creates the Maine Juvenile Fire Safety Collaborative, which will focus on the prevention of injuries, loss of life and loss of property caused by fires set by young people.

“In the last eight years, Maine has seen more than 1,800 fires set by juveniles,” Governor Baldacci said. “The fires have caused more than \$30 million worth of damage and, worst of all, claimed 11 lives. It’s my hope that this collaborative can combat this dangerous problem.”

In addition, the State Fire Marshal’s Office has received a \$152,356 Fire Prevention and Safety grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for its juvenile fire setters initiative. The grant can be used to support the objectives of the Collaborative, with a focus on training educators, the judiciary, juvenile probation and parole and mental health providers.

“Members of Maine’s fire prevention community have worked very hard over the last 20 years to bring the problem of juvenile fire setting to the attention of the public,” said Anne Jordan, Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety. “This collaborative, and the federal funds received, will enable us to develop and further expand our programs to prevent such fires, help the troubled children and make Maine a safer place.”

The text of the executive order follows:

AN ORDER ESTABLISHING THE MAINE JUVENILE FIRE SAFETY COLLABORATIVE

WHEREAS, the occurrence of juvenile set fires is both pervasive and incredibly destructive; and

WHEREAS, each year fires set by juveniles, attributed to varied motivations, account for a large percentage of fire-related injuries, property damage and even deaths; and

WHEREAS, from 2000 to present in Maine, there were 1,803 juvenile set fires that accounted for 11 deaths and 91 injuries to civilians and fire service personnel, as well as \$32,538,672 in property damage; and

WHEREAS, a formal risk assessment conducted by the State Fire Marshal’s Office revealed that Maine has a juvenile fire safety problem; and

WHEREAS, literature on juvenile fire setting opines that fire setting behaviors associated with non-curiosity motivation can lead to other anti-social, negative behaviors; and

WHEREAS, Maine fire departments respond to several hundred incidents each year in which juveniles were involved with the ignition of a fire; and

WHEREAS, the risk to both civilian lives, the lives of fire service personnel and communities in Maine is a risk that can be mitigated through a reduction in juvenile set fires:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby create the Maine Juvenile Fire Safety Collaborative (hereinafter referred to as the JFS Collaborative) as follows:

Purpose

The Maine JFS Collaborative is established for the purpose of preventing injuries, the loss of life, and the loss of property from juvenile-set fires.

Membership

The JFS Collaborative shall be comprised of representatives from the following departments, agencies, and providers:

- The Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety or designee
- The Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services or designee
- The Commissioner of the Department of Corrections or designee
- The Commissioner of the Department of Education or designee
- The State Fire Marshal or designee
- A representative from Maine Fire Training and Education
- A representative from the Southern Maine Community College Fire Science Division
- A representative from fire services
- A representative from the mental health services community
- A representative from law enforcement
- A representative from the Pine Tree Burn Foundation

The Chief Justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court is invited to designate a representative of the Judicial Branch to serve on the JFS Collaborative. In addition, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House are invited to designate a representative from each chamber to serve.

The Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety or designee shall chair the JFS Collaborative.

The participation and involvement of all disciplines involved in the assessment, intervention and/or treatment of at-risk juveniles with fire setting behavior is encouraged to further the establishment of a statewide safety program.

The JFS Collaborative shall meet at times and places called by the Chair. Technical assistance will be provided to the Collaborative by staff of the Department of Public Safety and other entities, as they are willing and able to assist.

Objectives

The JFS Collaborative will focus on the prevention of injuries, the loss of life and the loss of property. This will be accomplished by:

- Developing and institutionalizing effective juvenile fire safety programs statewide by educating the public regarding the dangers of children and fire;
- Increasing the percentage of departments reporting juvenile related incidents to the Maine Fire Incident Reporting System and the National Fire Incident Reporting System;
- Strengthening existing juvenile fire safety collaboratives;
- Creating new collaboratives in areas of Maine where they do not exist;
- Developing and supporting effective intervention programs; and
- Institutionalizing and sustaining responsive services statewide.

Costs

Members shall serve without compensation. Costs associated with the administrative needs of the Collaborative shall be borne by the Department of Public Safety and/or by any grant funds awarded to participating entities specifically to accomplish the objectives of the JFS Collaborative.

Annual Report

The JFS Collaborative shall submit a report annually to the Governor and the Children's Cabinet by April 1 of each year.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is June 17, 2008.

Governor Baldacci Ceremonially Signs Drinking and Wastewater Management Bond Bill

June 17, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 2169, An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for Drinking Water Management and Wastewater Management. The bill allows Maine citizens to vote on a \$3.4 million bond for drinking water management and wastewater management. Governor Baldacci says that the investments will go to critical infrastructure improvements throughout Maine.

“These are vital improvements to clean our water and protect public health and the environment,” Governor Baldacci said. “I am pleased that Mainers will have the opportunity to advance these important public works, health and environmental projects. They are smart investments for Maine’s future.”

The question will ask voters if they favor a \$3.4 million bond issue to support drinking water programs and the construction of wastewater treatment facilities. A federal match of \$17 million will be available with the \$3.4 million investment.

The bond question will be on the ballot in November.

Bill sponsor, Sen. Philip Bartlett (D-Cumberland), and other supporters of the investments joined Governor Baldacci at the ceremony.

Governor Ceremonially Signs Bill to Integrate Secondary Education Institutions with Public Schools

June 17, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today ceremonially signed LD 2175, Resolve, To Ensure Support for a Model of Consolidated and Integrated Secondary and Postsecondary Education. The bill directs the State Board of Education to recommend a qualified applicant to serve as a model system, integrating public schools with higher education.

“I am pleased that the State now has this valuable tool to provide incentives for such innovation in our communities, so that our young people move successfully through school and gain postsecondary education and experience,” Governor Baldacci said. “This is truly an opportunity to have a model for other school districts throughout Maine.”

The bill encourages the integration through incentives that will ensure construction funding for the high school and career and technical high school portions of the recommended model and an increase in the debt ceiling in fiscal year 2011-2012 to create a pool of available funds for the innovative model.

In addition to bill sponsor Rep. Chris Rector (R-Thomaston) and other legislators, several representatives from the Midcoast region were at the ceremonial signing, showing support for their Many Flags-One Campus project. The goal of the project is to raise the education level of citizens with a major focus of redesigning high schools and access to higher education.

“They have done tremendous work, in advance of the administrative reform I put forward, to advance our goal of meeting the needs of our students,” the Governor said. “Combining two area high schools, one career technical center, higher education and business incubator opportunities on one campus is a true partnership between schools, community and business advancing education for the Midcoast region.”

The State Board of Education will select the applicant for the model system by the end of the year.

Governor Celebrates Hannaford Distribution Center Addition

June 17, 2008

SOUTH PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated a 130,000-square-foot expansion of the Hannaford South Portland Distribution Center. The expansion represents a \$16 million investment, which is the latest in a three-year, \$24 million capital improvement project.

“Each week 1.2 million cases of food and other grocery items are shipped to retail locations from this site,” Governor Baldacci said. “If that weren’t impressive enough, the South Portland Distribution Center and Hannaford Trucking Company together employ 425 people. Importantly, we celebrate Hannaford as a quality Maine employer and corporate citizen. Hannaford’s success is Maine’s success.”

The distribution center supports 109 corporate stores in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts and now comprises about 800,000 square feet of total building space. The expansion includes a number of environmentally friendly improvements, including a water-retention system beneath the parking lot to filter rainwater runoff and fluorescent lighting and motion detectors so lights only come on as needed.

“We are pleased that Hannaford chose to expand this facility,” the Governor said. “It is a testament to the quality of this workforce.”

Governor Baldacci Congratulates 2008 Clean Water Week Poster Contest Winners

June 17, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated two students from Central Middle School in Corinth Tuesday morning and one student from St. Michaels School in Augusta for being selected as the winners of the 2008 Clean Water Week Poster Contest. The 2008 theme was “What Clean Water Means to Me.”

The contest generated more than 100 entries from schools throughout the State of Maine. Governor Baldacci congratulated the students for being chosen as finalists.

“We use water in many ways every day – drinking, cooking, bathing, cleaning and in our gardens, lakes and rivers to allow for plants and animals to live and grow,” Governor Baldacci said. “We cannot overstate the importance of preserving our lakes and rivers and keeping our water supply clean.”

First place went to Makayla Moors of Corinth, a 7th-grade student at Central Middle School; second place went to Courtney White of Hudson, a 7th-grade student at Central Middle School; and third place went to Olivia Rancourt of Augusta, a 5th-grade student at St. Michaels School.

All three students received cash prizes for being finalists in the contest. Central Middle School also received a new microscope for being the sponsoring school of the first-place student.

Governor Baldacci was presented with a framed copy of the first-place poster by Makayla Moors for the Governor's Office.

Governor Addresses Forest Sustainability, Will Issue Executive Orders to Advance State Procurement of Certified Products

June 18, 2008

BAR HARBOR – Governor John E. Baldacci today addressed forest sustainability and growing Maine's forest products industry at the Gravure Association of America Workshop in Bar Harbor. The Gravure Association of America is a trade association that promotes the use of the gravure printing process.

"Maine has a thriving forest economy," said Governor Baldacci. "Keeping our mills up and running, competitive, and stocked with raw material is critical for Maine's future. I have personally been involved in efforts to keep open the Millinocket, East Millinocket, Lincoln, and Old Town mills. And I remain committed to ensuring their viability."

The Governor listed a number of areas in which Maine has solidified leadership regarding wood products.

"Our wood construction industry supplies both solid wood for framing, finish work and engineered wood products," said the Governor. "Maine also has an amazingly diverse specialty wood products industry. The Advanced Engineered Wood Composite Center at the University of Maine is a world leader in the development of advanced wood composite wood materials. Maine is also taking the lead defining appropriate uses for wood in the renewable energy picture."

Forest certification has been increasingly recognized as a measure of forest sustainability, and has become a crucial means for Maine to distinguish itself in the regional, national, and global marketplaces. Certification also makes sense for protecting our vital natural resources.

The Governor announced that he will sign two Executive Orders to enhance Maine's standing as a leader in certification and forest sustainability.

The first is an Executive Order on paper procurement by Maine state government. During state fiscal year 2008, Maine's state government will spend approximately \$2.3 million on paper purchases - mostly copier and printer paper, outsourced printing jobs, and general paper supplies. The executive order will establish procurement policies that by FY 2010 at least 80% of the paper fiber content purchased by the State directly or through outsourced print jobs will be either certified-source virgin fiber or recycled fiber.

The second Executive Order addresses wood procurement for Maine state government construction. Maine state government builds, finances, or administers approximately \$275 million in building construction and renovation each year. Certified wood is not currently playing much of a role in this state-supported construction, and green-rated designs and building materials are used only to a limited degree in state construction. The executive order directs State agencies to aggressively break through the obstacles – real or perceived - that hold green building back and prevent appropriate use of certified Maine wood when Maine taxpayer money is used for construction.

Governor Baldacci Addresses Girls State

June 18, 2008

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci spoke to the more than 300 delegates of Girls State Wednesday afternoon about his duties as Governor, his son's role as a Boys State delegate this year, and advice he received from his father when he was young.

"The advice my father gave me was the best advice I have been given," Governor Baldacci said. "He told me to always be myself, to always tell the truth and to work hard. Problems may change over the years, but the basics always remain the same. If you treat others with respect, they will return the favor."

The Governor answered questions from the students on everything from Maine's economy to the State's role in assisting the mill in Millinocket. The Governor also answered a couple of questions regarding the consolidation of school administration in Maine.

"The number of students in Maine schools has dropped over the past three decades, but the number of administrators continues to rise," Governor Baldacci said. "Things cost more and we do not have the money to afford excess administration. I know that this plan has not been the most popular, but I would never do anything to jeopardize your education. This plan is about, and always has been about, putting more resources into the classroom and having an educational system we can afford."

Governor Baldacci is scheduled to speak to Boys State Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. at the Thomas College Gymnasium in Waterville.

Governor Baldacci Congratulates World Champion Boston Celtics

June 18, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci offered congratulations tonight to the Boston Celtics for winning the 2008 NBA Finals.

“On behalf of the State of Maine, I send my congratulations to the players, coaches and staff of the 2008 NBA Champion Boston Celtics,” Governor Baldacci said. “It is a wonderful feeling to celebrate the first title in 22 years for this team, the most successful franchise in the NBA. I have watched this team with great enthusiasm this season and join with the rest of New England in celebrating the 17th title for the Celtics.”

The Governor spoke with Celtics Managing Partner Wycliffe “Wyc” Grousbeck Wednesday evening by phone to extend congratulations to the team on behalf of the State.

“I told Wyc that I was proud of how the team and the organization conducted themselves both on the court and off the court this season,” the Governor said. “They have handled themselves with class and respect and have acted in the true tradition of the Boston Celtics.”

The Governor also sent a letter to the team’s front office earlier in the day inviting them to tour Maine with the Larry O’ Brien Championship Trophy, as the Red Sox have done following World Series championships in 2004 and 2007.

Thursday morning, the Celtics will hold a rolling rally through the streets of Boston, starting at the TD Banknorth Garden, and finishing in Copley Square.

Maine to Host World's Leading Ocean Energy Conference in 2009

June 24, 2008

Announcement made today in Texas at EnergyOcean Conference 2008

AUGUSTA –Governor John E. Baldacci today announced that Maine will host the 2009 EnergyOcean Conference, the world's leading event focused on renewable and sustainable energy from the oceans. More than 300 technologists, financiers and policy makers from around the world will gather in June 2009 at this premier event to share and discuss opportunities for the renewable market of ocean-based energy.

"Maine is well positioned to become a world leader in ocean energy," said Governor John E. Baldacci. "We have a competitive advantage with our great potential for tidal, wave and offshore wind energy, and I want to thank the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and the others involved in hosting this conference for 2009."

The announcement was made by Elaine Scott, DECD's director of communications & marketing, at the 2008 EnergyOcean Conference in Galveston, Texas, where DECD was a sponsor of this year's conference. DECD also had a booth representing the state of Maine and strategic partners involved in ocean energy, including the Maine Technology Institute, Bigelow Labs, the University of Maine System, the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, the Maine Composite Alliance, Cianbro and the Ocean Renewable Power Company.

The 2009 EnergyOcean Conference will help further position Maine as a great place to live, work and play while supporting the State's efforts to harness our world-class tidal energy resource.

"We are very excited about bringing this international conference and exposition to Maine after seeing how much activity there is involving renewable energy, especially along the lines of tidal and wind power, and algae-derived biofuels," stated Dan White, organizer of EnergyOcean 2008 and president of Technology Systems Corp. "The close proximity to Nova Scotia also allows us to work with the Canadians and make this a strong North American event. We expect a very good turnout for EnergyOcean 2009 in Maine."

Governor Baldacci established a Task Force of Wind Power Development to promote the use and development of renewable energy sources to help reduce Maine's dependence on imported fossil fuels and provide economic development. The 2009 EnergyOcean Conference will serve to position Maine as a global leader of renewable energy technology and showcase the State's capabilities.

For more information please visit www.energyocean.com

Governor Celebrates New Hodgdon Interiors Facility

June 25, 2008

RICHMOND – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated the opening of a new manufacturing facility in Richmond. Hodgdon Interiors, a division of Hodgdon Yachts of East Boothbay, is moving operations to Richmond to accommodate its growth. The company says it expects to hire up to 35 employees within two years. Additionally, the move of Hodgdon Interiors from its current East Boothbay site will enable Hodgdon Yachts to expand its boat building operations in the future.

“This expansion of the Hodgdon family’s near-200 year old business provides yet another example of Maine’s leadership in the boat building industry,” said Governor Baldacci. “The company is recognized internationally for quality boat building and for boat interiors because it has remained committed to providing the highest quality product, investing in the latest technology and utilizing what we know is Maine’s best resource – our talented and productive workforce.”

Governor Baldacci recognized the work of the State’s Department of Economic and Community Development, the Town of Richmond, and Timothy Hodgdon, President and CEO of Hodgdon Yachts, for their commitment to the new manufacturing facility.

Hodgdon officials noted Richmond served as an excellent site for its expansion because of the Town’s aggressive support for the project, for the Pine Tree Zone designation, a CDBG grant from the DECD, and for the Town’s proximity to I-295 and a high quality workforce.

The Governor said that Hodgdon Yachts has been an important partner with the State in promoting boat building as one of Maine critical economic clusters.

“In this global economy, it is more important than ever that Maine focus on areas of strength, and our boat building, composites and marine trades are certainly such important industries,” said Governor Baldacci. “By helping Hodgdon Yachts and other Maine’s boat builders succeed, we are generating sustainable economic development, creating quality jobs for our residents and developing new revenue streams for our businesses.”

Governor Celebrates Locally Known Organic Farm

June 26, 2008

BOWDOINHAM – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated Locally Known, New England's first large-scale organic farm. Supplying greens such as arugula, baby kale and spinach to supermarkets such as Whole Foods and Hannaford's, Locally Known's goal is to offer high quality produce all along the eastern seaboard.

"Mainers have always known and appreciated the value of local farmers," said Governor Baldacci. "And our farmers are responding to consumer demand for high quality produce. While agriculture is one of Maine's traditional industries, it is hardly one that has stood still. Our farmers continue to explore new techniques and new markets. Ben Dobson and the other investors in Locally Known represent the true Maine entrepreneurial spirit, in their 20s they see an opportunity with increasing demand for organic foods grown regionally."

Maine has more than 7,100 farms, most of which are small, family-owned operations. The industry employs 65,000 workers, and has direct sales of nearly \$600 million a year. Maine is first in New England in the production of food, first in New England in the value of aquaculture sales, and first in the world in the production of wild blueberries.

Organic farming has grown significantly in recent years. There were 21 organic farms in Maine in 1987; 348 organic farms operated in the state in 2007.

"We can compete with operations around the world because we have the highest quality natural resources at our disposal," said Governor Baldacci. "My Administration has been committed to transforming our natural resource based industries. The Maine Department of Agriculture has been getting the word out about buying local, and working hard to ensure Maine farmers have the tools they need to compete."

Maine's Department of Agriculture provided a loan of nearly \$250,000 to the operation from the Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund. The operation has also leased several parcels from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

Locally Known's greens are competitively priced. High oil prices make transporting from regional sources a more attractive option. Locally Known also employs the latest technology for harvesting, which reduces the manpower needed for the laborious process.

The company is developing a training and apprenticeship program for new organic farmers, farmers looking to transition to organic practices, and existing organic farmers who would like to supply the Locally Known label.

Agriculture Commissioner Seth Bradstreet said that the company has met some of the most stringent standards required by the marketplace to ensure consumers have confidence in the food they eat.

“Ben and his crew have worked hard to meet food safety standards at every step of the operation – from the time the seeds are planted until the greens are washed, chilled and packed,” Bradstreet said. “The public wants assurances. And in Maine we can provide it with locally grown food from farmers you know.”

Governor Joins L.L. Bean at Job Creation Announcement

June 30, 2008

FREEMPORT – Governor John E. Baldacci joined L.L. Bean officials today to celebrate a new partnership that will create jobs in Maine. The company announced that it has formed a new affiliate credit card program to be serviced in Maine by Barclays PLC. Barclays, a major global financial services company, established its first presence in Maine in April.

“L.L. Bean has been a fantastic corporate citizen of Maine, providing jobs and opportunity, underscoring the State’s image as a great place to do business,” said Governor Baldacci.

The Barclays call center in Wilton will now service L.L. Bean cardmembers as well as the bank’s other partner companies. The Wilton center will have about 50 employees at the facility this year, with the potential of 150 more jobs that could be added over the next few years as Barclays continues to grow its credit card operations. L.L. Bean has partnered with Barclays to provide training to new employees.

In addition, the L.L. Bean-Barclays partnership is bringing 50 more jobs to Maine through the inbound telemarketing vendor ACS in Lewiston, which is used by Barclays to process program applications.

“This is another example of the L.L. Bean’s focus on driving the greatest value possible for its customers,” said Governor Baldacci. “It’s a focus we’ve long known about here in Maine and is one the entire State has benefited from over the years.”

Governor Baldacci Awards Six Students State Police Memorial Scholarships

June 30, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci congratulated six students from around Maine for being awarded State Police Memorial Scholarships. The Governor presented the students with their checks Monday afternoon in the Governor's Office.

"This is the 25th anniversary of the scholarship program," Governor Baldacci said. "I know that this year was especially competitive, illustrating the strength and talent of those being recognized."

Receiving the scholarships were Jill Armstrong of Monmouth, who will attend the University of Maine in Orono; Christopher Ellis of Litchfield, who will attend the University of Southern Maine; Caitlyn Lancaster of Cornville, who will attend Colby College; Ashley Levesque of Houlton, who will attend Albany College of Pharmacy; Kristin Marks of Gardiner, who will attend Colby College; and Ashley Williams of Vassalboro, who will attend the University of Vermont.

The scholarships were awarded to the children of an active, retired, or deceased State Trooper. The students are going into their first year of college.

Governor Celebrates Peter Dana Point Wastewater Treatment Upgrade

July 8, 2008

INDIAN TOWNSHIP – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined tribal, state and federal officials for a Smudging Ceremony and celebration of the completion of the Peter Dana Point Wastewater Treatment upgrade. The sewer system improvements were made over two phases, the last of which will be finished shortly.

“This project will result in improved protection of public health, improved protection of our precious environment, and improved opportunity for the Peter Dana Point area,” said Governor Baldacci. “I recognize the partnerships necessary to successfully finish the more than \$7 million project. The collaboration between the federal government, state and tribal governments made this project possible.”

The State’s contribution to the upgrade includes Maine Department of Environmental Protection funds of more than \$1 million and a Community Development Block Grant from the Department of Economic and Community Development of more than \$900,000.

Additional funds for the project came from federal Indian Health Services, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Environmental Protection Agency, USDA Rural Development, Housing and Urban Development and others. The Maine Congressional Delegation worked with tribal and state partners to secure some of these funds.

Olver Associates of Winterport and Sargent Corporation of Stillwater provided the engineering and construction expertise for the project.

“We know how vital this project is to the region. This is a critical and smart investment for the future of Indian Township,” said Governor Baldacci.

The facility is dedicated to George Stevens, Director of Public Works, in honor of his nearly 50 years of service to the Indian Township Passamaquoddy Reservation.

Governor Announces Enhanced Web Site with Energy Assistance Information

July 8, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci unveiled today a new Web page for consumers and businesses eager to find ways to reduce their energy costs. Part of a continuing effort to empower Maine people with information, the Governor said that prior to the development of this Web page, energy resources were scattered among various State government and private Internet sites, making information difficult to find.

"Mainers are very concerned about the cost of gas and heating oil and have expressed to me their frustration and fear," said Governor Baldacci. "While much more work needs to be done to address the energy crisis, there are many resources that already exist to help Maine residents and businesses. The tool we have created online puts this valuable information into a form that is convenient for people to access. I am pleased that we can offer this 'one-stop shop' of guidance to Mainers. This is one of many areas that I have tasked my Administration with developing, knowing that it may be a long time before federal efforts to address the energy crisis yield real relief."

The Web site can be accessed directly from the State government Web site, www.maine.gov – look for the "Energy Assistance" icon under the State Highlights section. The page is also accessible under the Governor's Web site at <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/energy.shtml>

Information on the site includes the most recent initiatives underway in Maine, including the Free Fair Friday transit program running in various communities throughout the State in July. Other resources are easily accessible through the site's organization under the categories of Homeowners, Businesses, Transportation, and "Get Help." A quick search tool enables people to pinpoint specific information.

Governor Baldacci stressed that while Mainers are enjoying the warm summer months, the time is right to think ahead to the heating season. In particular, homeowners and businesses can take a number of steps to prepare buildings for winter and thereby reduce the amount of energy needed to heat facilities. Additionally, as gas prices continue to climb, there are ways that Mainers can reduce their driving or otherwise conserve fuel, such as car or van pooling. Much more information, including low interest loans and alternative energy incentives, can be found now through the single Maine energy assistance Web site.

Governor Baldacci's Pre-Emergency Energy Task Force is currently developing options for the Governor to consider that will enhance current efforts to address the energy crisis. On Wednesday, the Governor is convening a New England Governors' Energy Summit in Boston to discuss regional action and approaches to common energy issues. Governor Baldacci is also participating in the National Governors Association annual meeting this weekend, a key issue of which will be the national energy crisis.

Long-term initiatives to reduce Maine's dependence on oil are underway. A key goal in this strategy is to make Maine a national leader in the production of clean, renewable energy. Last month Maine was one

of 12 states awarded a \$50,000 Clean Energy States grant from the National Governors Association. Grant funds will be dedicated to assist Maine in efforts to increase energy efficiency.

"We must aggressively develop new energy resources so we can reduce the grip that expensive foreign oil has on our country," said the Governor.

New England Governors Meet to Discuss Energy

July 9, 2008

BOSTON, MA - Governor John E. Baldacci today joined with three other New England governors at an Energy Summit held at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. The summit, convened by Governor Baldacci as Chair of the New England Governors' Conference, provided a platform for the governors to exchange ideas and to have a frank conversation about energy issues.

"Hard working families and businesses across the New England states are struggling under the rising cost of energy," said Governor Baldacci. "We have been building collaborative regional approaches to this issue, and this summit was an important step in mapping out the short- and long-term strategies we can take together to provide needed relief to our residents and businesses."

Governor Deval Patrick of Massachusetts, as Vice-Chair of the New England Governors' Conference, hosted today's summit. Governors John Lynch of New Hampshire and Donald Carcieri of Rhode Island also attended. Governors M. Jodi Rell of Connecticut and Jim Douglas of Vermont had prior commitments and could not attend.

The governors discussed various opportunities to work together on such issues as promoting energy efficiency and developing renewable energy. The governors agreed to send a letter to members of the New England Congressional Delegation seeking increased federal support for energy assistance programs. The letter will also be sent to congressional leaders, the President and the presumptive presidential nominees.

Coordinating energy issues further with the Eastern Canadian Provinces was also agreed to be an area to pursue. Maine is hosting the 32nd New England Governors & Eastern Canadian Premiers in Bar Harbor in September.

Since first taking office in 2003, Governor Baldacci has put energy independence high among his priorities. He established the Office of Energy Independence and Security to focus on these issues when the price of oil was at \$20 a barrel.

Long-term initiatives to reduce Maine's dependence on oil are underway. A key goal in this strategy is to make Maine a national leader in the production of clean, renewable energy.

"While this is a problem for which a national solution is needed, Maine has been working toward long-term solutions that include expanding clean, renewable energy using our abundant natural resources," said Governor Baldacci.

Governor Baldacci is also participating in the National Governors Association annual meeting this weekend, a key issue of which will be the national energy crisis.

The Governor has tasked his Pre-Emergency Energy Task Force with developing a set of recommendations for ways to address the critical energy issues facing Mainers today and with the

approach of the winter season. Around 80 percent of Maine households use oil to heat their homes. The Task Force will report to the Governor July 15 on the policy options they have developed for the Governor to consider.

On Tuesday, the Governor unveiled a new state government Web site to provide Maine people and businesses with a list of energy resources and information. The page is accessible under the Governor's Web site at <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/energy.shtml>.

Governor Honors Maine Veterans

July 10, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today honored Merrill Worcester of Worcester Wreath in Harrington and nearly two-dozen World War II veterans at a State House ceremony.

A portrait of Merrill Worcester commissioned by Maine Veterans Service Organizations was presented as a symbol of their appreciation for Worcester's efforts. The portrait was painted by renowned Bangor artist Normand Martin. Immediately following the portrait unveiling, veterans who were Prisoners of War or had received the Purple Heart were awarded the Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medal.

"It is an incredible honor to be here with Morrill Worcester, Normand Martin and our Maine veterans," said Governor Baldacci. "We recognize your service to our Nation and sacrifices to maintain our freedom and way of life."

Worcester began the Arlington Wreath Project in 1992 and the Wreaths Across America project in 2006 as a way to show respect and gratitude to the men and women who fought for their country. The Arlington Wreath Project uses volunteers to place donated wreaths on tombstones of veterans buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Wreaths Across America seeks to place at least one wreath in each veterans' cemetery in the country. Last December there were more than 286 participating locations in Wreaths Across America.

Governor Baldacci recalled the years he participated in the Arlington Wreath Project when he served as Congressman in Washington, D.C.

"I was deeply impressed with Morrill Worcester's contribution to the memories of our fallen heroes," said the Governor. "This is a special tribute for our nation's veterans."

The Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medal presentation followed the portrait unveiling. The ceremony recognized Maine veterans who served in World War II and who were POWs or recipients of the Purple Heart.

"You are a proud legacy of service, and know all too well the meaning of sacrifice," said Governor Baldacci. "We honor you and your commitment today with these medals. The men and women who serve in the military are all heroes."

A list of the World War II veterans recognized today follows.

POWs

Ralph S. Burckes, Thomaston, Army Air Corps

Emilien A. Levesque, Farmingdale, Army

Frank E. Sidelinger, Damariscotta, Army

Purple Heart Recipients

Leslie D. Ames, South China, Army

Philip A. Collins, Gardiner, Marine Corps

Warren G. Enos, Livermore, Army

Hubert B. Goggin, Pittston, Army

Ernest O. Jones, Brunswick, Army

Rolland O. Madore, Lewiston, Marine Corps

Austin L. Priest, Greene, Army

Robert F. Russell, Augusta, Army AC

Joseph R. Sciaraffa, Rumford, Marine Corps

William A. Shea, Randolph, Army

Erland N. Tucker, Poland, Army

Robert E. Warner, Vassalboro, Army

Richard S. Weeks, Randolph, Marine Corps

The following individuals were honored, but were unable to be at the State House in person:

POWs

Alvin C. Flint, Harrison, Army

Ernest A. Henderson, Winthrop, Army AC

Harry I. Scott, Winthrop, Army

John H. Tourtillotte, Boothbay Harbor, Army

Purple Heart Recipients

Roland J. Boucher, Sidney, Marine

Clifton L. Glidden, Vassalboro, Army

Elmore E. Morgan, West Gardiner, Army

Governor's Statement on East Boothbay Fire

July 11, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement today regarding the fire at Washburn & Doughty Associates, a shipbuilder in East Boothbay.

“Our first priority is to protect lives,” Governor Baldacci said. “We will make sure the firefighters and responders on the scene have the resources they need to fight this fire.”

Governor Baldacci was briefed about the fire by the Maine Emergency Management Agency, which is closely monitoring the situation. Response teams from the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Labor have been activated. The departments of Economic and Community Development and the Conservation are also standing by to respond.

“The State stands ready to provide whatever support is needed to fight this fire, and to help Washburn & Doughty and the community recover,” Governor Baldacci said.

Governor Baldacci will continue to monitor the situation.

“Our first responders, firefighters, police and emergency personnel are highly trained, professional and effective,” Governor Baldacci said. “We’ll make sure they have what they need to do their jobs.”

Governor Updates Situation on East Boothbay Fire

July 11, 2008

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci released additional information he has obtained regarding this morning's fire at the boatbuilding facility Washburn & Doughty Associates in East Boothbay. The Governor spoke to media at the Portland International Jetport before flying to Philadelphia for the National Governors Association annual conference.

"I have spoken to Bruce Washburn and Bruce Doughty, the owners of the shipyard," said Governor Baldacci. "They say the building is a complete loss, perhaps \$30 million in damage. This fire has been devastating to this quality company, and we will do what we can to help them rebuild and re-open. They are an important part of our economy and a significant employer in the region."

The Governor outlined steps the company and the State are taking in response to the fire. "The owners tell me they will meet with their workers on Monday and a Department of Labor Rapid Response team will be there to help the employees at 7 that morning," said the Governor. "We have an economic and community development specialist with the owners working on recovery efforts."

The Commissioner of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) is on his way to East Boothbay.

The Governor will be visiting the site on Tuesday with the owners and high-level representatives from DECD and the Maine Department of Labor, as well as other officials.

As of 3 p.m., the fire is still burning and may do so for several hours. The U.S. Coast Guard and Maine Department of Environmental Protection are monitoring water for contaminants. Lincoln County and Maine Emergency Management Agency officials are also at the scene.

The Governor praised local, regional and state officials and private organizations for responding quickly with assistance to the site.

"The company has already been contacted by a contractor who has offered to help with a temporary building. Also, Tim Hodgdon, whose company is located near Washburn & Doughty, has been providing meeting space and assistance," said Governor Baldacci. "When things are tough, Mainers always come forward to help one another."

Maine's Dirigo Health Reform Highlighted in Federal Hearing

July 15, 2008

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Maine's experience in pursuit of universal health coverage was a focus of a congressional hearing this morning. The House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee invited Trish Riley, Director of the Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance, to deliver testimony during a hearing on state health care coverage initiatives.

The Subcommittee, chaired by Congressman Pete Stark (D-CA), asked Riley to discuss how Maine enacted and implemented its own version of health reform, and to assess the difficulties in achieving universal health care and the need for national leadership in health reform. Riley, representing Maine, was one of two state officials who provided oral testimony. Massachusetts' Secretary of Health and Human Services, JudyAnn Bigby, M.D., also spoke at the hearing. A third member of the panel, Jack Lewin, M.D., Chief Executive Officer, American College of Cardiology, had served as Director of Health for the State of Hawaii from 1985 to 1994.

In her testimony, Riley noted the political difficulty of funding universal health care. She also stated that while coverage is a key goal of Maine's Dirigo Health Reform, this must be pursued in tandem with efforts to reduce health care costs for all while increasing quality.

Maine's Dirigo Health Reform effort addressed "an inefficient health care system which led to unaffordability of health insurance and a growing number of people who were under - and uninsured," Riley said.

Since Dirigo Health Reform was implemented, it has achieved \$110 million in documented savings by the Superintendent of Insurance. This year the Maine Legislature created an alternative funding mechanism for Dirigo Health and implemented new reforms in the independent insurance market. The new funding method for Dirigo is being challenged and may appear on the ballot this November.

Riley's written, submitted testimony follows. For more information on the hearing, including testimony of the other presenters, please

see <http://waysandmeans.house.gov/hearings.asp?formmode=detail&hearing=640>

Statement of Trish Riley, Director, Maine Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance, Augusta, Maine

Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Health of the House Committee on Ways and Means

July 15, 2008

Thank you for this opportunity to talk with you about lessons learned at the state level about health care reform. Perhaps the most important lesson about state health reform is that it comes in waves, each building on the lessons of the past and learning from the challenges states find in building sustainable health reform over time. But each wave ultimately collides with the critical question – who pays?

I have been fortunate to have been directly involved in many of these efforts as a former Medicaid director and to have worked closely with the reforming states in my service over the past several decades with the National Academy for State Health Policy. Enactment of Medicaid in the 1960s was arguably the beginning of state health reform, although the initial wave of state initiated reform began in the 1970s when Hawaii enacted the first mandate requiring most employers to offer health coverage, advanced soon after President Nixon's health reform -- that included a similar provision -- had failed. In the decade of the 1970s the first high risk pools were created. In the 1980s Washington State established the subsidized Basic Health Plan, Massachusetts enacted the Health Security Act and Oregon created the Oregon Health Plan. Children's health plans began in Minnesota and Vermont.

By the early 1990's 46 states had adopted insurance reforms, children's health programs grew in other states and Medicaid waivers yielded Arizona Access, TennCare and RiteCare, Medicaid managed care based programs to expand coverage. Each of these initiatives had their advocates and detractors, some failed, some changed, most held on in some form but following the failure of the Clinton health plan in the early 1990's state action again stalled and states were in the ebb of a third wave of reform.

In 2003, Maine led the fourth wave with the establishment of our Dirigo Health Reform. Our approach was comprehensive health system reform, focusing on affordability and driven by Maine's per capita health spending, which ranks the second highest in the U.S., by then the highest rates of uninsured in New England, decline in employer sponsored plans and by limits in state budget capacity. In 2002 state and local revenues in the United States had the slowest growth since records were kept. Absent any sustainable, new sources of revenue, Governor Baldacci sought to achieve health reform by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the health care system. By improving the system's efficiency, savings would be created and reinvested in health care access.

Clear goals are important: "Covering the Uninsured" is not the same goal as "making sure every man, woman, and child has access to affordable, quality care".

Covering the uninsured generally implies that we will find adequate financing to bring those now without coverage into the insured tent - covered through one or more of the myriad of coverage options available today or by creating special plans for the uninsured. Such an approach generally accepts the status quo in how care is delivered and coverage provided. But with growing pressure on the affordability of our employer based system, more costs are shifted to employees and coverage can become less comprehensive. As a growing number of people use more of their incomes for sometimes less coverage, more people are underinsured - forestalling needed care for fear of incurring out of pocket costs they cannot afford. And the literature is filled with data documenting concerns with quality of care. Our goal of assuring every man woman and child has access to affordable; quality care seeks to provide health security for all - those without coverage; those with inadequate coverage and those who fear rising costs will jeopardize their coverage.

Numerous studies have documented that the U.S. spends far more than other developed nations yet we leave 47 million uninsured and do not achieve better health outcomes or quality for that additional investment. In fact, we pay for redundancy, inefficiency, variation and oversupply. Recently, McKinsey

Global Institute published "Accounting for the Cost of Health Care in the United States" that concludes that even after adjusting for its higher per capita income levels, the United States spends some \$477 billion more on health care than peer countries.

McKinsey notes that higher health spending in the U.S. is not explained by higher disease burden but by these factors:

Higher input costs – salaries, drugs, devices and profits, (e.g.: we use 20% fewer drugs yet pay 50-70% more for them and we are the largest consumers of medical devices in the world).

Inefficiencies and complexity in the system's operational processes (e.g.: we have 3-6 more scanners than Germany, UK, France and Canada).

Costs of administration, regulation and intermediation of the system.

McKinsey's study reinforces Maine's approach to comprehensive, system reform, stating "most components of the US health care system are economically distorted and no single factor is either the cause or the silver bullet for reform". [1] While it is unlikely that Americans, who value choice, will adopt all the provisions that make other countries' health care more affordable, unless Americans are ready to embrace higher costs and a greater investment of our GDP in health, then the cost issues must be addressed head on.

In crafting the Dirigo Health Reform, Maine's strategy was to affect cost, quality and access together, reflecting our conclusion that we had an inefficient health care system which led to unaffordability of health insurance and a growing number of people who were under - and uninsured.

We built the program by expanding Medicaid for the poorest of our citizens, establishing a subsidy program for those just beyond Medicaid eligibility; launching comprehensive activities to improve health and reduce the costly burden of chronic disease; creating the Maine Quality Forum to remediate costly variation in the system; initiating a variety of cost containment mechanisms; requiring medical loss ratios in the small and non-group markets; increasing transparency through price posting and standardized reporting by insurers and hospitals; supporting electronic medical record diffusion; strengthening certificate of need; establishing a capital investment fund as an annual budget for new capital investment and facilitating collaboration among providers.

Our cost containment goal is to assure coverage remains affordable for those who buy it privately but subsidizing health coverage remains a tool to meet the affordability gap for those with lower incomes. The foundation of Maine's coverage expansion was Medicaid. From that base we built a sliding scale subsidized insurance plan, DirigoChoice, targeted to those 3 times the poverty level who were employed in small businesses with fewer than 50 employees, were sole proprietors or individuals – categories that include the majority of uninsured - and built the reform on the employer based system.

Specifically, the plan pooled small businesses to achieve economies of scale and purchasing power and adopted medical loss ratios in the small group and individual market to help make those markets more affordable. DirigoChoice is a voluntary program, recognizing that unless and until insurance became

more affordable, mandates would not be tolerated. The program is financed through an assessment on insurers and those who administer self-insured plans that can only be levied if Dirigo's comprehensive reforms result in documented savings.

When the Dirigo Health Reform began in 2003, Maine had the highest rate of uninsured in New England. In the years following, as Medicaid expansions took hold and DirigoChoice became the fastest growing product in the marketplace, every New England state saw its rate of uninsured increase; only Maine saw its rate fall to the lowest in the region by 2006.

But our progress has stalled, lacking adequate financing. While \$110 million in savings has been independently documented since the program began, those savings have been contentious, subject to court challenge and highlight the complexity of cost containment in health care. Payers of the surcharge assert that reducing the rate of growth of health care costs is not the same as cost savings. The Legislature enacted alternative financing this session, including taxes on beer, wine and sugared beverages, but this alternative is also being challenged.

Politics Trumps Policy –The process of enacting and implementing reform is as important as the reform.

To launch Maine's reform, stakeholders were convened in a Health Action Team that met often and in public to guide the Governor's office in developing the original proposal. The Legislature created a Special Joint Committee on Health Reform with bipartisan members from the health, insurance and appropriation committees.

The reform debate played out largely between two camps - those who wanted de-regulation and market based solutions like high risk pools, arguing that lower costs would assure more coverage and others who wanted more investment to sustain comprehensive coverage to cover all the uninsured. Long negotiations resulted in significant amendments to the original bill and found a middle ground that won a unanimous committee report and strong bi-partisan support in both chambers.

Both the Health Action Team and the Joint Committee were dissolved once the bill was enacted. Numerous commissions, workgroups and an independent Board of Trustees for the Dirigo Health Agency assured citizen input throughout the implementation of the reform, but each group was responsible for a part of the reform only. In hindsight, with oversight of the reform split among different legislative committees and no one single stakeholder group to provide guidance for the overall reform, a vacuum was created that allowed the parties to "return to their corners" when the inevitable implementation challenges occurred. Amendments to the original bill, that eliminated a planned global budget and a fixed assessment that could not be passed on to premium payers, reduced the ability to generate stable, predictable funding and attain the amount of cost savings initially envisioned. As the program was launched, additional revisions were required that further challenged the ability to meet enrollment target timetables developed with the original legislation and never revised. Rather than recognize that these unexpected factors would slow but not deter program enrollment, proponents of alternative strategies quickly declared Dirigo a failure and revived advocacy for their favored market based reforms, which created a challenging environment for program modification and mid-course improvements.

As Maine's experience clearly shows, enacting health reform is tough enough - few states have done so - but implementing reform is even tougher. The devil is indeed in the details and health reform is a work in progress. But to achieve that progress, all parties, with strong leadership, need to commit to it and to work together to make mid course corrections rather than to see each bump in the road as an opportunity to defeat reform.

Medicaid is a critical component for state- based reform but needs reliable, counter cyclical financing and clarity in its coverage for eligible, employed beneficiaries.

Should national health reform maintain the current employer based system, Medicaid's role will remain critical. Medicaid is the essential building block in state health reform and is of paramount concern to the states and to Congress. As states face recessions and budget challenges, Medicaid's funding formula needs to keep pace with rising costs and demand.

Since de-linking welfare and Medicaid eligibility and imposing work requirements, an increasing number of low wage and particularly part-time workers, work each day in firms large and small, and qualify for Medicaid - often ineligible for or unable to afford workplace coverage. The premium assistance provisions within the Medicaid program are difficult to administer, pay only for employee share of premium and require state match. Additional policy debate needs to address where the role of the Medicaid program ends and the role of the private employer begins. As costs escalate, private employers are increasingly reluctant to offer coverage to part-time workers and to make Medicaid eligible employees part of their workplace health plan. On the one hand, employers face difficult trade offs as the costs of health care grows. Increasingly employer- based coverage has passed more and more cost on to employees. As lower wage employees pay a larger part of their incomes for health care, we are witnessing a new and growing problem of underinsurance. But employers must balance the costs of health care against the ability to create jobs or increase wages and states need to be cautious in what demands they place on the very employers who assist in "welfare to work" programs or who, subject to state regulations they find intolerable, self insure, and abandon the consumer protections of the fully insured marketplace.

A design feature of the original Dirigo Health Reform sought to pool all revenues to the Dirigo Health Agency(employer contributions, employee contributions and others), and use those pooled state resources to match Medicaid for eligible employees and their dependents. CMS has rejected our approach, which will soon be reviewed by the courts.

The states that followed us in this fourth wave of state health reform relied heavily on Medicaid, unlike Maine which coupled system savings with program financing. Vermont accepted federal flexibility in exchange for a block grant - like approach to Medicaid.

Massachusetts built its program with \$400 million in Medicaid funds that had been supporting their uncompensated care. We appreciate the strength of Vermont's initiative but find the block grant approach, which abandons a long established health care entitlement program, to be counter- intuitive to efforts to expand access and, like most states, we did not have access to the Medicaid funds now supporting Massachusetts' landmark reform.

It's time for a national policy to achieve affordable, quality health coverage for all.

States serving as laboratories of innovation have gained public attention and achieved much, filling a void in the absence of national reform. The laboratories of democracy were at work testing reforms reflected in later Congressional action. Many states had adopted insurance regulations before HIPAA was enacted; had well running children's health programs before SCHIP was born and developed Patients' Bills of Rights before Congress took them up.

The many and varied state experiments have been operational since at least the early 1970's. While states have done extraordinary work to lay the foundation for reform, each state is operating relatively independently based on very different health systems, coverage and costs and reflecting different state priorities. While experimentation has generated significant reforms, it has also created state- to -state variation that may also account for fragmentation and complexity across the country which drives costs. Over three decades of state health reform, and the reams of studies and evaluations analyzing them, suggest to me that it is time to get out of the laboratory and learn from decades of state experimentation. This is certainly not to say that there will not be a role for the states in any emerging national health reform but that a national solution-and national financing - is essential. We cannot reform our health system piecemeal or even by further state by state imitative. In the spirit of federalism, the national government must commit to a national policy that achieves affordable, quality health care for all of us.

We need a national policy that makes the roadmap clear that will achieve the reforms needed to address cost and quality and to cover all of so that the U.S. can take our place as health leaders – not as the country that spends twice as much, doesn't get any better health or quality and leaves 47 million without any coverage.

There are several obvious first steps that the Federal government can take.

Complexity and redundancy are costs in the system. Streamlining and creating a single system – that does not necessarily require a single payer- would help. The Federal government should examine its considerable purchasing power across Medicare, Medicaid, FEHBP, Champus and others toward standardizing reporting, payment policy, benefits, eligibility and quality metrics. If states are to play a role in health care reform, they need the capacity to work in a level playing field. ERISA prohibits much creative work and even the collection of key data from self insured businesses.

In the end, then, the ultimate question remains – who pays? For those of us who believe we are already paying more than we need to through cost shifting of the uninsured and the inefficiency in our health care system, cost containment needs to be a part of any reform. But ultimately, the nation's uninsured, a growing number of under-insured and all of us who have coverage now and fear for its future, need a reliable and sustainable source of financing to affordable, quality care -that does not sacrifice the access expansions in place now- that only a strong and consistent national policy can assure.

[1] McKinsey & Company, Accounting for the Cost of Health Care in the United States, January 2007; p. 19.

Governor Baldacci Offers Assistance to Washburn & Doughty

July 15, 2008

EAST BOOTHBAY – Governor John E. Baldacci visited Washburn & Doughty Tuesday afternoon to meet with management and employees and offer assistance to put boatbuilders back to work at the facility as soon as possible. The boatyard was destroyed by fire Friday morning.

“This is the worst fire damage I have ever seen,” Governor Baldacci said as he looked at the steel remains on the waterfront. “I just cannot believe it.”

Governor Baldacci toured the area with owners Bruce Washburn and Bruce Doughty. He met with workers and told them that he would work to make sure they are taken care of. Officials from the Department of Labor and Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) have been on site since Friday, offering assistance to the workers.

“It is most important that there was no loss of life,” the Governor said. “But we need to dust ourselves off, get to work, and make sure that these workers are taken care of. They are our first priority.”

Governor Baldacci, Department of Labor Commissioner Laura Fortman, DECD Commissioner John Richardson, Finance Authority of Maine Acting Chief Executive Officer Elizabeth Bordowitz, other State officials and representatives from Maine’s Congressional Delegation met with Washburn and Doughty management after touring the damage to discuss a plan for moving forward. The Governor intends to work with various State departments to assist the company in its rebuilding efforts in any appropriate fashion.

\$3.1 million Study Focuses on Maine Youth Intervention Programs

July 17, 2008

AUGUSTA – Twelve community-based youth intervention sites in Maine will be the subjects of a \$3.1 million national research study into the effectiveness of an innovative approach to preventing substance abuse and other poor outcomes for youth. The twelve are among 65 Communities for Children and Youth statewide, state-local partnerships developed through the work of the Governor's Children's Cabinet, chaired by First Lady Karen Baldacci.

The RAND Corporation study, conducted in concert with the Search Institute, will examine the sites' use of two comprehensive and complimentary programs – "Getting to Outcomes" and "Developmental Assets". The programs are tools that help communities look at a variety of "developmental assets" such as family support, caring neighborhoods, high expectations, and caring school climate and seek to create or improve programs that support those assets. The Communities have helped create mentoring, early childhood services, after-school enrichment and other programs. The Governor's Children's Cabinet has supported the Communities with one of the largest contingents of AmeriCorps Vista volunteers in the United States working to help the Communities implement the various projects.

In addition to funding for the research itself, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) grant will pay for two full-time people to provide technical assistance over five years to the Communities participating in the study. In addition, the grant will provide direct financial assistance to the 12 Communities involved, research funds to the University of Southern Maine, and administrative support to the Children's Cabinet to conduct the study. Preliminary results of the research are expected in three years.

"RAND and the Search Institute chose Maine because of our Communities' pioneering work using the developmental assets model, and because of the relationships we have fostered with national experts and organizations on this work," Mrs. Baldacci said. "We believe this study will show that while individual programs can certainly have positive outcomes for youth, the biggest gains can be found when communities as a whole take a multi-pronged approach to address the needs of youth – from creating safe neighborhoods to building relationships between youth and adults, to enforcement and mentoring – and ensuring that everyone is working in partnership."

Susan Savell, executive director of the Children's Cabinet and head of the Communities for Youth and Children initiative, negotiated Maine's participation in the study. The results will benefit Maine's efforts and national efforts, she said.

"A lot of evidence shows certain interventions work, like reducing access to alcohol," she said. "We want to test whether intentional building of the 40 developmental assets is also an effective approach."

"If we can show this developmental assets approach is effective in preventing substance abuse, it will open the door for communities all over the country to receive funding for this work. Social science research has shown a correlation between a high number of developmental assets and positive, healthy

behavior; we think this study will show not only a correlation, but a direct positive impact on the reduction of substance abuse,” Savell said.

Other speakers included: Maine Attorney General Steven Rowe; Morgan Mitchell, a student leader from Boothbay; Brenda Harvey, commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services; Mary Ackerman of the Search Institute; Aleta Meyer of NIDA; and Matt Chinman of the RAND Corp.

Chinman said Maine was chosen because the communities are ready, passionate, and doing good work. He said he believed the developmental assets approach can be effective in Maine.

In the first three years of the study, RAND and the Search Institute will provide technical assistance to six of the 12 Communities as well as funding to help them continue and build on the developmental assets approach. The other six communities will be a “control group,” in order to compare the effectiveness of the new approach to that of Communities not actively focusing on it. The control group will receive some funding but not with the intent of focusing on the new approach. After three years, those six communities will also receive additional technical assistance from RAND and the Search Institute.

The 12 Communities for Children and Youth partners participating in the study are in: Kittery/Eliot/York, Old Orchard Beach, Portland, Boothbay, Skowhegan, Waldo County, Bucksport, Ellsworth, Oxford Hills, Augusta, Waterville, and Bangor.

The Children’s Cabinet is a multi-agency collaborative of Maine’s departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Public Safety, Corrections and Labor. Chaired by First Lady Karen Baldacci, the commissioners of each of the five agencies, as well as staff from the Governor’s Office, make up the Children’s Cabinet.

The RAND Corporation is a nationally-renowned nonprofit research institution that works in a broad spectrum of areas, including education, health, law, science and national security. The Search Institute is a national research and publishing company focusing on positive child and youth development, as well as community mobilization strategies.

Governor Congratulates FairPoint on Additional Jobs in Maine

July 18, 2008

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci joined FairPoint CEO Gene Johnson today to announce the addition of about 38 new jobs to the company's Bangor office. The jobs will be in the customer call center and finance department in Bangor. FairPoint has added 63 new jobs in Bangor and 57 in Portland at its local consumer and small business customer call center since acquiring Verizon's landline business in Northern New England.

"FairPoint is committed to growing employment and to helping families and business by expanding broadband in Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "FairPoint's broadband network growth is critical to growing our economic base, improving our educational system, enhancing our delivery of health and providing job opportunities for Maine people."

The Governor commended FairPoint for its willingness to work with the State. He said that FairPoint is one of the few companies that employs a person devoted to economic development.

"FairPoint has stepped up to the plate to offer its resources to partner with local groups in support of economic development," the Governor said. "I am pleased to hear Gene mention that FairPoint wants to play an active role in Maine providing jobs, partnering to support economic development, contributing and sponsoring local non-profit organizations, buying products and services from Maine companies and truly putting down Maine roots in our State."

FairPoint announced a hiring goal of 280 new positions in Maine last year. At this morning's press conference, FairPoint said that it had already met its original hiring goal in Maine and now plans to hire more people. The company said that the goal is now approximately 400 new positions in Maine when it completes its hiring plans.

Following the announcement, Governor Baldacci toured the call center and met with employees.

Governor Names Strong Financial and Regulatory Team

July 18, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the placement of four strong, experienced leaders of his Administration in key roles as Maine confronts a challenging national economy.

“These individuals have proven themselves over the past five years, succeeding in taking Maine from a time of budget deficits, heavy borrowing and depleted reserves, to a position of a stronger financial and regulatory footing,” said Governor Baldacci. “These key people, put in key positions in my Administration, will enable my strategic initiatives to move forward as we confront a tough, uncertain national economy.”

The Governor said that this new financial and regulatory team will greatly enhance the ability of the State to weather the turbulence in the national energy and financial markets. “We will continue, with these high-caliber nominees assuming strategic positions, the hard work to balance our state budget, build our reserves, restore our credit rating and grow Maine’s economy and jobs.”

The Governor has nominated for appointments in State government: Rebecca Wyke as CEO of the Finance Authority of Maine; Ryan Low as the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services; Jack Cashman as a member of the Public Utilities Commission; and Anne Head as the Commissioner of the Department of Professional and Financial regulation.

Wyke would replace John Witherspoon, who resigned in October 2007.

Wyke has served for the last five and half years as the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services. Before joining Governor Baldacci’s administration, Wyke served for eight years as the Chief Deputy Secretary of State, five years as the Director of Corporations and Elections and held a management position with Simoneau & Norton, Certified Public Accountants.

“Commissioner Wyke is one of the most capable and experienced leaders in State government,” Governor Baldacci said. “She has been instrumental in adapting State government to challenging economic times, has sparked innovation and served with the highest level of personal integrity and dedication to public service. She is the right person to lead FAME as it works to support business growth and expand access to higher education for all Mainers.”

Wyke earned a Master of Arts in public administration and a Bachelor of Arts in political science from the University of Maine.

Ryan Low, the Governor’s current deputy chief of staff, former State Budget Officer and former Associate Commissioner at DAFS, was nominated today to replace Wyke.

“Few people possess Ryan Low’s depth of knowledge and understanding of the State budget process,” Governor Baldacci said. “Ryan is well-respected and the best person to lead the Department of

Administrative and Financial Services going forward. He's a strong leader and manager, and will bring great insight to his new position."

DAFS' broad range of responsibilities for State government include budgeting and financial management, human resources, information technology services, facilities & fleet management, public improvements, procurement, self-insurance and risk mitigation, as well as other administrative services. In addition, the Department is responsible for managing the Maine Revenue Service, the State Lottery and the wholesale liquor business in Maine.

Low is a graduate of the University of Maine Farmington with a B.A. in political science.

Jack Cashman currently serves as Governor Baldacci's Senior Economic Adviser and was previously the Commissioner of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD).

"Jack Cashman has a distinguished career in public service that dates back more than 30 years," Governor Baldacci said. "He is well-known and well-regarded around the state, and has proven himself as a capable public servant."

Prior to serving in the Baldacci administration, Cashman's years in public service have included serving on the Old Town City Council and as the council's president. He also represented Old Town for 10 years in the Maine House of Representatives. While in the Legislature, Cashman was the Chair of the Joint Standing Legislative Committee on Taxation from 1985 – 1992.

In the private sector, Cashman has spent nearly 30 years in real estate development and commercial sales, and more than two decades as a partner with an insurance agency in Bangor.

"Energy costs are one of the biggest problems facing businesses and families in Maine," the Governor said. "Jack is an experienced businessman and entrepreneur, and has worked in a hands-on capacity to support business growth and development in Maine. He has worked extensively with businesses in Maine and has a deep understanding of the impact that high utility costs can have on the economy. Through his work with large industrial manufacturers, Jack has gained extensive insight into the demands created by high energy prices. He understands the larger issues affecting the economy and the impact that has on ratepayers and consumers. I am confident in his abilities and that he will continue to serve the State well in this position."

Anne Head, the Acting Commissioner for the Department of Professional and Financial Services and the Director of the Office of Licensing and Registration, was nominated to fill the commissioner's post.

As Commissioner, she will continue to serve as Director of the Office of Licensing and Registration.

"Acting Commissioner Head has done a great job leading PFR as we have worked to restructure the department," Governor Baldacci said. The Commissioner's post was restructured this year to require one of the Department's directors or superintendents to fill the dual roll of director and commissioner.

Head served as the Director of the Office of Licensing and Registration since 1996. Before joining PFR, she was general counsel and senior manager for Maine Health Care Finance Commission. She earned her law degree from Catholic University in Washington, D.C., and a B.A. in English from Ithaca College in Ithaca, N.Y.

"First and foremost, I know that Anne will continue to work to protect consumers in Maine. She has proven herself beyond question as Acting Commissioner and has earned this nomination. She's a valued member of my Cabinet, and it's my hope that the State can continue to benefit from her service there," Governor Baldacci said.

The nominations are subject to review by the committees of jurisdiction and confirmation by the State Senate. A confirmation session of the Senate has been scheduled for Aug. 20.

Governor Announces Nomination to Court

July 18, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced that he has reappointed Judge Roland Beaudoin to the District Court.

Beaudoin, a resident of Falmouth, has served on the District Court since 2001.

Prior to sitting on the bench, Judge Beaudoin served on the Administrative Court for 11 years, the last seven of which as Chief Judge. From 1985 to 1990, Beaudoin served as a Mainer Workers' Compensation Commissioner. He was a partner in the firm of Robinson, Kriger & McCallum in Portland from 1979 to 1985.

Judge Beaudoin earned a B.A. from Bowdoin College and received his J.D. from the University of Maine School of Law.

Judicial nominees must be reviewed by the Judiciary Committee and confirmed by the full State Senate. A confirmation session of the Senate is scheduled for Aug. 20.

Governor Takes Actions to Facilitate Power Restoration

July 21, 2007

AUGUSTA – On Saturday, Governor John E. Baldacci issued a proclamation to enable electrical crews to restore power to thousands of homes and businesses. The proclamation was in response to a series of severe summer storms that cut power to thousands of Mainers in southern and coastal Maine during Friday afternoon and evening.

On Saturday afternoon, Central Maine Power (CMP) reported to the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) that its restoration efforts could be curtailed by vehicle operators facing federal transportation Hours of Service limits. Operators had already worked many hours, crews were being requested from Massachusetts and accruing travel time, and crews were having to travel from their normal service areas to some of the areas hardest hit. In addition, more severe storms were expected Saturday night.

Accordingly, the Governor issued a State of Emergency for the express purpose of waiving hours of service rules on Saturday. The original declaration was for York and Cumberland Counties only, but was later extended to include Sagadahoc and Lincoln Counties as significant outages were experienced there, including St. Andrews Hospital in Boothbay.

With more summer storms expected this week, and two lives lost in Maine due to lightning strikes this weekend, the Governor reminded all Mainers and visitors to observe storm safety precautions:

Monitor weather warnings and local conditions; summer storms can develop quickly;

Seek shelter in a sturdy building immediately when you see lightning and hear thunder; stay in shelter until 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard;

Indoors, stay away from plumbing, corded telephones and electronic equipment;

Heavy downpours may cause flash flooding; never drive through a flooded roadway; and

Stay away from downed power lines; call your power utility immediately.

The text of the proclamation follows.

WHEREAS, the State of Maine has experienced strong summer storms with powerful winds that have left thousands of Maine homes and businesses out of power; and

WHEREAS, additional severe summer storms and wind may again impact the state; and

WHEREAS, work crews will have to work many hours to restore power; and

WHEREAS, power restoration crews will be requested from other states 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 in the Counties of YORK and CUMBERLAND 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 these power crews 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 pursuant to 49 CFR part 390.23 of facilitating a waiver to Federal Department of Transportation Rules, specifically 49 CFR part 395 Hours of Service of Drivers, do hereby declare that a State of Emergency exists in the Counties of YORK and CUMBERLAND as of July 19, 2008.

State Finishes FY 2008 with Modest Surplus

July 21, 2008

AUGUSTA – Maine has finished the 2008 fiscal year with a modest General Fund surplus of \$56 million. The State's Highway Fund also finished the fiscal year with a small surplus of \$2.5 million.

"The year-end surplus is the result of a disciplined budget approach," Governor John E. Baldacci said. "Maine faced a grim economic picture earlier this year that required the State to make many difficult decisions. That hard work has allowed us to finish the year in a good position. Unfortunately, high energy prices and a still-struggling national economy could further erode revenues in the next fiscal year."

Together, the Governor and the Legislature closed a \$190 million projected revenue shortfall for the 2008-09 biennial budget earlier this year.

Of the \$56 million General Fund surplus, \$47.4 million was surplus revenue, \$7.1 million came from lapsed account balances and \$1.5 million from other adjustments.

After all other accounting adjustments, the State will deposit \$10 million of the surplus into the Budget Stabilization Fund, which will reach \$128.9 million. With the Working Capital Reserve, the State has total reserves of about \$169.5 million. When Governor Baldacci took office, the reserve balance was zero.

In addition, \$935,000 of the surplus is budgeted for use in fiscal year 2009; the Contingent Account will be replenished with \$350,000 and the Loan Insurance Reserve Account will receive \$1 million.

The remaining \$43.7 million will be used by the Department of Health and Human Services to honor the State's commitment to hospitals by increasing prospective interim payments (PIP).

"We are building our reserves, which strengthen our overall financial standing, and we are honoring our commitments," Governor Baldacci said. "As we move forward with the 2010-11 budget, we must remain disciplined and continue to push for a more lean and efficient government."

Attached is the text of the memo from the State Controller, which informed the Governor of the surplus.

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI, GOVERNOR

REBECCA WYKE, COMMISSIONER

STATE OF MAINE OFFICE OF THE STATE CONTROLLER

STATION 14

AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

TELEPHONE: 207-626-8420

FAX: 207-626-8422

E-MAIL: EDWARD.A.KARASS@MAINE.GOV

TO: JOHN BALDACCI, GOVERNOR

REBECCA WYKE, COMMISSIONER

JANE LINCOLN, CHIEF OF STAFF

RYAN LOW, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF

FROM: EDWARD A. KARASS, STATE CONTROLLER

SUBJECT: RESULTS OF THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2008

DATE: JULY 21, 2008

CC: OFPR

The State of Maine has closed the Fiscal Year with a very modest surplus. This year, the surplus will be applied to the Budget Stabilization Fund and to continue to meet the State's obligation to pay down the passed due bills to hospitals. We concluded the fiscal year with revenues over budgeted estimates of approximately \$47.4 million. We should not draw any conclusion about the future of Fiscal Year 2009 revenues based on our better than expected Fiscal Year 2008 revenues. In addition, our General Fund cash position at June 30th remains very narrow. Although we did not finish the fiscal year with a robust cash balance in the General Fund, it is a noteworthy accomplishment that for the second consecutive year we did not require any outside cash flow borrowing through a TAN or a temporary line-of-credit to manage our affairs. As a result of our narrow cash position in the General Fund coupled with our plan to advance fund payment to the MePers for Teacher Retirement, there may be a need in the late winter and early spring to rely on temporary cash flow borrowing. However, 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.

After all accounting adjustments, other considerations, and the disposition of surplus approved by the Legislature in Chapter 240, Public Laws 2007, and the various subsequent budget amendments enacted by the Legislature, the State will have \$10 million to deposit to the Budget Stabilization Fund (BSF). With the \$10 million addition the BSF has total resources of \$128.9 million. When the Budget Stabilization Fund and the Working Capital Reserve are combined we have total reserves of approximately \$169.5 million. Since Fiscal Year 2002, the Administration has increased reserves each year. Over the past five years we have increased our reserve balance from zero to \$169.5 million.

At the end of FY 2008, after all accounting adjustments and budgetary commitments, the State ended up with a Net Unappropriated Surplus of approximately \$56 million of which \$935,000 is the budgeted balance forward to be used in Fiscal Year 2009. After other adjustments, replenishment of the Contingent Account and the Loan Insurance Reserve Account amounting to \$350,000 and \$1.0 million respectively, \$10.0 million to the BSF, the remainder of approximately \$43.7 million 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 most recent addition to the Budget Stabilization Fund strengthens the State of Maine's financial position going forward. Our next initiative should be to be more frugal with our year end balance to eliminate spending beyond our budgeted resources in order to build up a healthy balance in the General Fund Unappropriated Surplus Account to remove the volatility of our General Fund cash position. 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 while maintaining a balanced checkbook.

Finally, there are many adjusting entries pending our final review for the year end; however, at this time, I believe that these adjustments will not be material.

Governor Receives Energy Task Force Report

July 22, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today received the report from the State's Pre-Emergency Energy Task Force.

The report outlines seven short-term recommendations that can help Maine residents prepare for a difficult winter heating season.

"Maine faces a dangerous winter," Governor Baldacci said. "The recommendations put forth today will help us be better prepared, and will help to keep people safe and secure in an environment of high energy prices."

Among the recommendations:

- Create a single point of entry for Mainers seeking information about energy programs and services;
- Expand weatherization of Maine residences;
- Increase energy audits of homes and businesses;
- Provide statewide education and training for what Maine people can do to prepare for the upcoming winter;
- Expand energy efficiency financing tools for hospitals, schools, nursing homes, municipalities, social service agencies and businesses; • Increase transportation options and reduce fuel consumption; and • Create local teams that would help keep people safe, secure and warm in their homes.

"The Task Force has done a tremendous amount of work in a very short time," Governor Baldacci said. "I am particularly pleased that so many people – with so much expertise – volunteered their time to help develop the report I'm receiving today."

In addition to the recommendations in the report, the Governor also received the reports of the Task Force's subcommittees, which include valuable discussions of longer-term approaches to reducing Maine's dependence on foreign oil.

"This report highlights what we can do now," Governor Baldacci said. "It also describes things that we are already doing that we need to tell people about. But we still have much work to do, and I will closely examine all the ideas presented today."

Governor Baldacci also said that he would put forward an action plan soon built from the recommendations of the Task Force.

"Maine can't wait to tackle this problem. We have to begin work today, while it's still hot outside, if we want to be ready when cold weather arrives," Governor Baldacci said.

Among the ideas that the Governor addressed specifically, he said that creating a one-stop entry point for Mainer's seeking assistance with energy needs is a high priority.

"We will begin to implement that recommendation of the Task Force as soon as possible," Governor Baldacci said. "When someone calls 2-1-1, we will make sure they are connected to an energy specialist who can help them get the information they need, whether it's about a low-interest loan or receiving emergency energy assistance."

The Task Force was created by Executive Order Nov. 16, 2007. On June 11, Governor Baldacci directed the Task Force, which is chaired by John Kerry, Director of the Office of Energy Independence and Security, to produce a report with a list of recommendations on how to address the high cost of petroleum-based transportation and heating fuels in Maine.

The full report will be available on the Governor's Energy Information and Assistance Web page at <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/energy.shtml>

Governor Urges Calm as Bangor Hydro Works to Restore Power

July 24, 2008

AUGUSTA – According to the Maine Public Utilities Commission, the Bangor Hydro Electric Company's entire electricity delivery system is currently down.

The black-out began at approximately 7:50 a.m. The PUC reports that the company estimates that service will be restored in about two hours.

The outage affects the whole Bangor Hydro service area with the exception of a small section of Eastport that is running off a small generator.

"The first priority is to get power restored," Governor Baldacci said. "Once electricity service is repaired, we can begin to investigate what happened."

"The most important thing right now is for folks to remain calm. This is a large outage, but it's expected to only last a couple of hours. Emergency personnel are standing by to assist people who need help, and the Maine Emergency Management Agency is monitoring the situation," Governor Baldacci said.

"Everyone should stay calm as Bangor Hydro works to quickly repair this problem."

Governor Mourns Death of Former State Senator Erwin

July 23, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement after learning of the death today of former State Senator Ed Erwin.

“Ed was a thoughtful man and a thoughtful legislator. He always focused on working people, their problems and their issues,” Governor Baldacci said. “Whether you agreed with him or not, Ed was always a gentleman. He will be missed.”

Governor Baldacci spoke with members of the family this morning and expressed his condolences.

Governor Names Dirigo Health Board of Directors Nominees

July 30, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced four nominations to the Board of Directors of Dirigo Health. The Governor has chosen Sara Gagné Holmes, Marianne Ringel, Judy Foss and Joseph Bruno to serve on the Dirigo Board.

"Maine proudly leads the nation in addressing access to quality affordable health care," said Governor Baldacci. "We must maintain this positive momentum. Healthy families and healthy businesses make a healthy economy."

The composition and structure of the Dirigo Health Board was amended as a result of LD 431, "An Act to Enable the Dirigo Health Program to be Self-Administered," passed last year and signed into law by the Governor. The legislation added four additional voting members. These members are appointed by the Governor, but must be selected from candidates nominated for designated seats by the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, the Senate Minority Leader and the House Minority Leader.

Sara Gagné Holmes, nominated by the President of the Senate, lives in Augusta. She currently serves as Executive Director of Maine Equal Justice Partners. Prior to that experience, Gagné Holmes served two years at the Office of the Governor, the last year of which she provided policy and legal expertise specifically related to Dirigo Health. Gagné Holmes earned her undergraduate degree from Bowdoin College and a J.D. from the University of Maine School of Law.

Marianne Ringel, nominated by the Speaker of the House, is currently employed as a program specialist with Konbit Sante Cap-Haitien Health Partnership. Prior to this service, Ringel served as a special assistant to the Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance and as a Policy Director and Acting Deputy Director for the MaineCare Program. She also has experience with local government, having served on the Gardiner City Council from 1997 to 2001. Ringel received a B.A. from Yale University and a Master's from the University of Pennsylvania.

Ringel resides in Gardiner.

Judy Foss, nominated by the Senate Minority Leader, lives in Yarmouth. She is a retired consultant, having worked for six years with Stafford Business Advisors. She served as a member of the Maine House of Representatives from 1984 to 1994, and served as Chief of Staff to the President of the Maine Senate from 1995 to 1996. Foss is a graduate of Wellesley College.

Joe Bruno, nominated by the House Minority Leader, currently serves as Vice President of The Waldron Group of Falmouth. He is also the founder, president and CEO of Community Pharmacies, LP in Augusta. Bruno ran GHS Data Management Inc. from 1995 to 2004. Bruno has served on the Board of Selectmen for the Town of Raymond and five terms in the Maine House of Representatives, from 1999 to 2004 as the Republican Leader. He received a Bachelor of Science Degree from Northeastern University and a Master's from the University of Southern Maine.

Bruno resides in Raymond.

The nominations must be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Insurance and Financial Services and confirmed by the Senate. A confirmation session of the Senate has been scheduled for Aug. 20.

Governor Announces Nominations to Development Authorities

July 30, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced appointments to the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority and the Loring Development Authority. To the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority, the Governor is nominating Adam Cote and reappointing John Moncure. To the Loring Development Authority, the Governor is nominating Francis Bemis and reappointing Kathryn Rand.

"These highly knowledgeable, experienced individuals add great depth and commitment to our efforts to ensure economic development growth in these regions of the state," said Governor Baldacci. "I am confident that the leadership each of these nominees brings to the table will continue to expand opportunities for Maine people and businesses.

Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority Appointments

Adam R. Cote, of Portland, is an attorney with Pierce Atwood LLP, where he specializes in renewable energy and real estate development matters. He served in Iraq with the 133rd Engineer Battalion and currently remains a member of the Maine Army National Guard. Cote earned his undergraduate degree from Colby College and his law degree from the University of Maine School of Law.

John Moncure is being reappointed. Moncure is a senior partner at Moncure & Barnicle, where he concentrates on business law, commercial law, estate planning, and commercial real estate law. He is a current member of the Mid-Coast Health Services Board of Directors and a past chair of the Mid-Coast Hospital Board of Directors. Moncure received a Bachelor's of Science from the United States Merchant Marine Academy and a J.D. from the New York University School of Law.

Moncure is a resident of Harpswell.

Loring Development Authority

Francis Bemis, of Presque Isle, currently serves as an attorney at Bemis and Rossignol, LLC, where he specializes in criminal defense, probate and general civil litigation. Previous to this experience, Bemis was an attorney at Hardings Law Offices. He serves on the Presque Isle Industrial Council, and is a past member of the Presque Isle City Council. Bemis earned a B.A. from the University of Maine and a J.D. from Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law.

Kathryn J. Rand is being reappointed to the Loring Development Authority. Rand is currently employed as a managing director at Bernstein Shur Government Solutions in Augusta. She served eight years in the Office of Governor Angus King, first as Director of Policy and Legislation and then as Chief of Staff. Rand sits on the Board of Directors of the Kennebec Valley YMCA, Gulf of Maine Research Institute, KIDS Consortium and Small Woodlot Owners Association of Maine. She is a graduate of the University of Southern Maine.

Rand is a resident of Hallowell.

The nominations must be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Business, Research and Economic Development and confirmed by the Senate. A confirmation session of the Senate has been scheduled for Aug. 20.

Governor Announces Nominees to Board of Corrections

August 1, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced appointments to the nine-member State Board of Corrections. The Board was created by LD 2080, An Act To Better Coordinate and Reduce the Cost of the Delivery of State and County Correctional Services, which was passed this year and signed by the Governor.

“The new system created under this law will be more efficient, will serve inmates better and will control rising property taxes,” said Governor Baldacci. “I am pleased to have a list of distinguished experts in law and corrections to put forward for the membership of this important Board.”

The State Board of Corrections will determine the best use for county facilities, approve budgets and develop uniform policy and procedures for consistent system-wide pre-trial, revocation and re-entry practices. The Board will also establish a “Certificate of Need” process to consider future State and county corrections capital construction projects, develop a plan for a system-wide information network and implement bulk purchasing of commodities, medicine and services.

The following seven nominations must be reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety and confirmed by the Senate. A confirmation session of the Senate has been scheduled for Aug. 20.

Tom Brown, of Bangor, is an attorney at Eaton Peabody. Brown’s professional experience includes financial management and financial restructuring through bankruptcy work. He also brings an extensive background of civic service. Brown has experience in bringing together many municipalities in a collaborative solution to address the common problem of waste management. He fills the Public Member slot selected from names submitted by a membership organization of county commissioners.

Kimm Collins, of Falmouth, is a consulting clinician and would serve in a Public Member slot. Collins currently serves as the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Maine Women’s Lobby and Maine Women’s Policy Center. She served 11 years as a law enforcement officer and investigator for the Auburn Police Department. She served as a clinician for a year at Tri-County Mental Health Care and worked with county jail inmates. She has experience with systems change and improvement, victim services and trauma victims. Collins previously served on the Governor’s Advisory Council for the consolidation of the departments of Human Services and Behavioral and Developmental Services.

Neale Duffett, of Portland, would also serve as a Public Member. Duffett is an attorney at Cloutier, Barrett, Cloutier & Conley. He is a member of the Parole Board and past member of sentencing commissions. He has experience as both a prosecutor and defense attorney. He was extensively involved at the state level in past initiatives to improve sentencing practices and policy, and correctional practices and services.

Tim King, of Ellsworth, is the Executive Director of Washington Hancock Community Action. He has management experience delivering community based services, both in his current position and his past service as a former city manager. He also serves as a member of the Washington County prisoner reentry coordinating committee, the Downeast Correctional Facility Board of Visitors, President of the Board of Directors of Downeast Horizons, and Member of the board of Habitat for Humanity of Hancock County. King would serve as a Public Member on the Board.

Irving Faunce, of Wilton, is a Selectman for the Town of Wilton and Director of Program Operations at Western Maine Community Action. Faunce is a former member of the Board of Environmental Protection (2000-2005) and the Maine Human Rights Commission (1976-1981). He has experience in the health care field as a consultant to the Jackson Brook Hospital (now Spring Harbor). Faunce would fill the slot reserved for a member submitted by a membership organization of municipal officials.

George Jabar, of Waterville, is an attorney at Jabar, Batten & Ringer. He has served as a Kennebec County Commissioner for 16 years. Jabar is a member of the negotiating team that designed the new corrections system and proposed the creation of the Board of Corrections. Jabar would serve as a member selected from names submitted by a membership organization of county commissioners.

Scott Story, of Monroe, is the Sheriff of Waldo County. He has served more than 17 years with the Waldo County Sheriff's Office and has 23 years of law enforcement experience. Story is a member of the negotiating team that designed the new corrections system and proposed the creation of the Board of Corrections. He was co-chair of the Corrections Alternatives Advisory Committee and a leader in effective correctional practices. Story would serve in the slot reserved for a member selected from names submitted by a membership organization of sheriffs.

Not subject to confirmation:

Martin Magnusson, Commissioner, Maine Department of Corrections

Martha Freeman, Director, Maine State Planning Office

Governor Announces Nominations to Ethics Panel

August 5, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci today recommended Walter McKee and Edward M. Youngblood to serve on the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices. McKee, a new appointment, was chosen from names submitted by the Maine Speaker of the House, and Youngblood, who is being reappointed, was recommended by the Senate Minority Leader.

“The statute requires the candidates to demonstrate judgment, integrity and objectivity,” said Governor Baldacci. “These are qualities that these nominees have demonstrated during their professional careers.”

Walter McKee, of Hallowell, currently works as an attorney at Lipman, Katz & McKee in Augusta, where he practices personal injury, criminal defense and general litigation. He is a graduate of the University of Maine, and received his law degree from the University of Maine School of Law. McKee served as a Judge Advocate General officer in the Maine Army National Guard from 1996 to 2004.

Ed Youngblood is retired. Youngblood worked for three decades at Bangor Savings Bank, retiring as Senior Vice President in 2005. He is a former State Senator, having served from 2001 to 2004. He has an extensive record of community service, including having served as a member of the board of such organizations as the Brewer Economic Development Corporation, Katahdin Council of Boy Scouts of America, and United Way of Eastern Maine. Youngblood is a graduate of Husson College and completed graduate work at Fairfield University National School of Banking in Fairfield, CT. Youngblood is a resident of Bangor.

The five-member Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices is an independent state agency that administers Maine's campaign finance laws, the Maine Clean Election Act and the lobbyist disclosure law. It also issues advisory opinions and conducts investigations regarding legislative ethics.

The nominations will be reviewed by the Legal and Veterans Affairs Committee of the Legislature and must be confirmed by the Senate. A confirmation session of the Senate has been scheduled for Aug. 20.

Governor Baldacci Says Economic Stimulus Checks are Waiting to be Claimed

August 7, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has learned that as many as 31,000 economic stimulus checks designated for Maine have not yet been claimed. The unclaimed checks, worth \$300 or more per person, result in about \$9 million in the federal treasury that is available for Maine residents.

Maine residents who are not required to file a tax return and make at least \$3,000 of income did not receive the economic stimulus checks automatically. Those individuals are required to file a 1040A tax form to claim the stimulus checks.

“There is just no reason to miss out on \$300 or more,” Governor Baldacci said. “The required form is easy to fill out and does not require the work generally associated with tax forms. People are ready and standing by to help. AARP Maine, the Maine Revenue Service, local Area Agencies on Aging and even the IRS are standing by, ready to assist Maine people in receiving their money.”

Governor Baldacci addressed the unclaimed stimulus checks in his weekly radio address last month and has recorded public service announcements which have begun airing on radio stations around the State.

“The national economy is hurting. The high cost of gasoline and oil are hitting every household,” the Governor said in his weekly radio address on the topic. “The stimulus checks can help families make ends meet and offset the high cost of fuel. The extra money is especially important for senior citizens and Mainers living on a fixed income. Every little bit helps and it can make a real difference.”

People who have not yet received an economic stimulus check, but have more than \$3,000 income are encouraged to call their local Area Agency on Aging at 1-877-ELDERS-1 (1-877-353-3771).

Governor Honors Maine Veterans

August 7, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today honored more than two-dozen Maine veterans at a State House ceremony. The Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medal presentation recognized Maine veterans who were wounded while serving their nation.

"Today marks the second anniversary of these Maine Silver Star medals being presented to our heroes," said Governor John Baldacci. "Maine veterans throughout history have exemplified a proud tradition of service. We have one of the highest rates of veterans in the nation. We honor you and your commitment today with these medals."

The Governor and the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services first presented Maine veterans with the Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medal on Aug. 7, 2006, in a State House ceremony.

The list of the Korean, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq War veterans recognized today follows. They are listed by name, town of residence, branch of the military served, and conflict in which they earned the Purple Heart.

Myron E. Preston, Warren, Army, Korea

Mark F. Bastey, Freeport, Army, Vietnam

Friedrich T. Biermann, Waterville, Army, Vietnam

Laureat R. Compagna, Dresden, Army, Vietnam

Thomas E. Elliot Jr., West Bath, Navy, Vietnam

Robert E. LaBrie, Bangor, Army, Vietnam

Timothy C. Seavey, Bowdoin, Army, Vietnam

Darrell D. Tripp, Poland, Marine Corps, Vietnam

Michael S. Willis, Washington, Army, Vietnam

Russell Wolfertz, Owls Head, Army, Vietnam

Martin S. Bressler, Kennebunk, Army, Afghanistan

Abraham Q. Herling, Durham, Marine Corps, Iraq

Brent R. Muehle, Windham, Marine Corps, Iraq

The following individuals were honored, but were unable to be at the State House in person:

Charles M. Johnson, Owls Head, Marine Corps, Korea

Timothy D. Avery, Old Town, Marine Corps, Vietnam

Karl R. Byron, Newport, Army, Vietnam

Charles E. Cove, York, Marine Corps, Vietnam

William L. Keith, Gray, Army, Vietnam

Raymond J. Marr, Norridgewock, Marine Corps, Vietnam

Tom R. Martineau, Acton, Marine Corps, Vietnam

Michael V. Moffett, Farmington, Army, Vietnam

Solomon E. Orff, Waldoboro, Army, Vietnam

David G. Paradis, Augusta, Army, Vietnam

Maurice M. Peaslee, Scarborough, Army, Vietnam

Allen M. B. Mason, Waterville, Marine Corps, Iraq

Lucas N. Sassman, Saco, Army, Iraq

Governor Stresses Safety to Mainers Burning Firewood this Winter

August 7, 2008

FARMINGDALE - Governor John E. Baldacci and Department of Conservation Commissioner Patrick McGowan today encouraged Mainers who are planning on burning firewood for the first time this winter, or for the first time in a long time, to learn safe practices.

"As the most heavily forested State in the nation, we know that Maine people are turning to firewood this season to fight record high energy prices," Governor Baldacci said. "For those who are new or returning to burning wood, we want you to be safe and know how to burn wood properly."

Governor Baldacci was joined by Peter Lammert of the Maine Forest Service, who demonstrated proper methods for stacking, drying and burning firewood safely. Carl Blanche of the Department of Agriculture provided instructions on how to properly measure a chord of wood, which is 4 feet x 4 feet x 8 feet. Andy Allen of A.W. Allen Company in Farmingdale, the host for the press conference, also spoke of his first hand experience as a wood processor.

The Governor said that those planning on burning wood should follow important tips:

v Clean your chimneyv Ask your local fire department about safe installation of your woodstovev Make sure that you are drying your firewood as efficiently as possible if it is not dry or seasonedv Utilize the resources and information available to you through the Maine Forest Service, the Fire Marshal's Office and your local fire department.

The Governor also said that the State is seeking ways to help lower the overall cost of heating homes by taking steps such as expanding weatherization of homes and continuing to explore renewable forms of energy such as wind, tidal and solar power.

"Taking the step of burning firewood to offset some of the cost of oil is a smart one as long as you do it with safety as your first priority," the Governor said. "Together, we can work to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels and move toward a more secure energy future."

For more information about burning firewood, Mainers should visit the Maine Forest Service Web site at www.maineforestservice.gov.

For more information about staying warm this winter, visit the energy section of the Governor's Web site at http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/contact/citizen_services/safeandwarm.html

Governor Recognizes Private Partnership to Help Victims of Domestic Violence

August 8, 2008

WATERVILLE - Governor John E. Baldacci today recognized the leadership of Wal-Mart officials and employees in Maine for their work to help the victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Recently, 11 Wal-Mart stores in northern and eastern Maine began printing the phone numbers to Maine's crisis hot lines for domestic violence and sexual assault on their sales receipts.

"Wal-Mart is setting a great example, doing their part to get information out to the public about the resources that exist in Maine to help those who are victims of sexual assault and domestic violence," said Governor Baldacci. "Help for victims is only a phone call away, and each week these Wal-Mart stores are printing off almost 350,000 receipts with this valuable information. All of this is designed to get victims the information that will help them get the help they need and break the cycle of violence."

Participants in the ceremony today included Public Safety Commissioner Anne Jordan, Wal-Mart officials and employees, Nicky Blanchard of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence and Sarah Stewart of the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

The Governor recognized Don Emmons, who is the Community Involvement Coordinator for Wal-Mart's Brewer Store. "Don, who also sits with on the State's Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse, chaired by Commissioner Anne Jordan, came up with this idea to add the phone numbers to the receipts, and I want to thank him and Wal-Mart for taking on this important safety issue," said the Governor.

The Wal-Mart receipts give the numbers for Sexual Assault Support (800-871-7741) and the Domestic Violence Hotline (866-834-HELP).

"We all have a responsibility to stand up against sexual assault and domestic violence. It starts by getting information out and helping victims. I am proud of the work and advocacy these Mainers have put into helping our citizens stay safe," Governor Baldacci said.

Governor's Chief Counsel to Leave for Private Practice

August 8, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today announced that his Chief Legal Counsel, Michael Mahoney, will be departing the Governor's Office to return to private practice in early September.

"I will miss Mike's expansive knowledge and expertise. He has served my Administration and the People of Maine with distinction, providing key guidance in critical legal and policy issues during challenging economic times," said Governor Baldacci.

In addition to his duties as legal counsel, Mahoney was also an effective liaison with the Legislature and the Judiciary, and maintained a portfolio of policy areas including utilities, energy and labor.

Mahoney joined the Governor's office in December 2006.

Mahoney will be joining a new firm, FederleMahoney, with Tom Federle, who also served the Governor in the capacity of Chief Legal Counsel. Federle held that position from July 2005 to December 2006. FederleMahoney will be based in Hallowell.

Mahoney's departure is among a series of expected changes in the Governor's inner office as he prepares for the final two years of his administration. The Senate will meet on Aug. 20 for a confirmation session for two other departing members of the Governor's staff. Ryan Low, who currently serves as Deputy Chief of Staff, has been nominated to fill the position of the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services. Jack Cashman, who serves as Senior Economic Adviser to the Governor, is the nominee to fill the current vacancy at the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

Governor and Maine Technology Institute Announce \$30 Million in Maine Technology Asset Fund Awards

August 11, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and Maine Technology Institute (MTI) President Betsy Biemann today announced that the MTI Board of Directors has approved a total of \$30 million in awards to 14 applicants across Maine. Legislators, Maine Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner John Richardson, and a number of representatives from the organizations receiving the awards attended the State House event to release the list.

“The projects that are receiving support today will develop and bring new technologies to market, boosting the state’s economy and creating and sustaining good jobs for Maine people,” said Governor Baldacci. “These are smart investments in our State’s technology sectors to transition to a 21st century economy, building on our strengths. Over the years, these investments have generated new good paying jobs across our State and leveraged federal funding for path breaking centers of excellence.”

Awards covered projects that are located from Standish to Orono to Beals in all seven of Maine’s technology sectors and will help to develop technologies that build on traditional Maine industries in aquaculture, forestry, and agriculture, as well as genetics, nanotechnology, global positioning, high-resolution imaging, and ceramics and composites.

In November 2007, voters of the State of Maine approved \$50 million in bond funds to finance capital assets to help individual companies and research organizations, as well as collaborative efforts among them, move new technologies along the research and development (R&D) path to the market and benefit the Maine economy. MTI manages the Maine Technology Asset Fund (MTAF) and the award process.

This is the first of two rounds of competitive awards from the Maine Technology Asset Fund. The MTI Board expects to release a Request for Applications this fall for a second round of awards for the balance of the funds.

“With a strong field of 66 applications and requests for \$113 million, it was clear from the first that these awards would be highly competitive,” said MTI President Betsy Biemann. To oversee the initial written review of all applications, MTI contracted with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), a respected scientific organization that has worked with more than 30 states to implement research and technology commercialization programs. The applications ranked highest were interviewed in mid-July by AAAS experts and Maine reviewers experienced in Maine’s technology economy. Explained Biemann, “The reviewers from Maine and those from AAAS, who were from across the country, were uniformly impressed with the quality of the applicant pool.”

The reviewer panel scored and then rank ordered applications according to the following criteria: Economic Growth and Impact, Scientific or Engineering Merit and Feasibility, Team and Institutional

Merit and Commitment, Relevance to Maine's Innovation Economy Needs and Collaboration. The MTI Board approved the top-ranked 14 applicants for more than half the total MTAF funds available.

DECD Commissioner John Richardson noted that the applications clearly built on Maine's strengths and demonstrated the potential of collaboration among Maine technology developers to foster economic development across the state. The Commissioner also commented, "The competitive application process of the fund is extremely important because it encourages collaboration among our universities, nonprofit research laboratories and for-profit innovative businesses. Collaboration is proven to bring new technologies from the lab directly to the market, such as our composite technology and its application today in our boat building industry."

A new Request for Applications for the second round of Maine Technology Asset Fund awards will be announced in late 2008. Detailed information about the Fund and the general application process are available on the MTI Web site.

MTI was created by the Legislature in 1999 to stimulate and support research and development activity leading to the commercialization of new products and services in the state's technology-intensive industrial sectors. Programs are designed to enhance the competitive position of those sectors and increase the likelihood that one or more of the sectors will support clusters of industrial activity and create new jobs.

The list of award recipients and their projects follow. For more information on the award recipients and their projects, please visit Maine Technology Institute's Web site, www.mainetechnology.org.

AWARD RECIPIENTS FOR THE FIRST ROUND OF THE MAINE TECHNOLOGY ASSET FUND

AEWC Center, University of Maine Advanced Nanocomposites for the Renewable Energy Industry, Orono, \$4,999,460

Bar Harbor Biotechnology, Inc. Development of gene dense, high throughput qPCR arrays, Trenton, \$440,000

Center for Cooperative Aquaculture Research, University of Maine Building capacity & excellence in Maine's marine aquaculture R&D infrastructure, Franklin, \$2,619,807

CrossRate Technology, LLC

Portable non-magnetic compass/positioning/timing device, Standish, \$794,445

Dept. of Physics & Astronomy, University of Maine Ultra-High Resolution Imaging Facility, Orono, \$158,706

Downeast Institute for Applied Marine Research & Education Investing in Downeast Maine's Marine Resource-Based Economy, Beals, \$1,009,450

FHC, Inc. Development of Micro-fabrication Facility for Neurosurgical Devices, Bowdoin, \$438,077

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Forest Bioproducts Research (FBRI) Technology Center, University of Maine, Forest & Ag Bioproducts Research, Development, & Commercialization Facility,
Orono, Old Town, \$4,800,000

Laboratory for Surface Science & Technology (LASST), University of Maine,
Maine Nanofabrication R&D Infrastructure Enhancement,
Orono,
\$480,000

Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center,
Improvements to Maine's Aquaculture Business Incubation Infrastructure,
Franklin, \$360,548

Sappi Fine Paper Technology Center,
Aqueous Based Ceramic Green bodies Using Cellulose,
Westbrook, \$2,213,000

Seldon Technologies, Inc., Manufacturing nanocomposite material for structural and filtration applications, Old Town, \$2,905,953

The Jackson Laboratory,
Expanding The Jackson Laboratory Product Development Pipeline, Bar Harbor, \$4,700,000

University of New England, University of New England College of Pharmacy Drug Research & Development, Portland, \$4,000,000

Total: \$29,919,446

Natural Resource Task Force Solicits Public Input

August 11, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced the beginning of a public input phase of the Natural Resource Agency Task Force. The Task Force was created under the supplemental appropriations bill passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Baldacci earlier this year, and is tasked with creating and implementing a plan to eliminate duplication, promote integration and increase collaboration among the State's natural resource-based agencies and departments.

"Maine people expect and deserve the best service possible, delivered efficiently and effectively," said Governor Baldacci. "My administration has been committed to enhancing government services and putting us on the path of sustainability in the future. The Natural Resource Agency Task Force has begun its vital work. This next stage of soliciting public input is a crucial part of the public process to attain our goals of enhancing the services provided to natural resource-based businesses, increasing outdoor recreation, and improving natural resource management."

The Task Force members represent a diverse group of individuals and organizations who are connected to natural resource-based industry, science, recreation and appreciation. Among representatives of the private sector, nonprofit groups and citizens who use and enjoy Maine's natural resources, the group also includes legislators and state commissioners involved with the five existing agencies: Agriculture, Marine, Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, Conservation and Environmental Protection. After meeting three times, the task force is reaching out to the public for suggestions, ideas and recommendations for the group to consider.

All input will be compiled for a two-day meeting to be held in September. There will be additional outreach efforts to the public as the Task Force continues its deliberations.

Governor Baldacci said that now is the time to take advantage of opportunities for integrated approaches to tourism, outdoor recreation and rural economic development. "We need to explore all mechanisms to ensure farmers, forest owners, recreationists, fishermen and others who benefit from Maine's natural resource programs will receive the services that they need and that the government should provide."

To submit ideas or to find more information on the Task Force, please visit:<http://www.maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/naturalresourcesagency/index.htm>

Governor Celebrates Habitat for Humanity “Green” Home

August 12, 2008

PORTLAND -- Governor John E. Baldacci today joined a host of sponsors and contributors for a ceremonial wall raising of the newest Habitat for Humanity of Greater Portland home. The house is part of a green affordable subdivision in Portland, the first Habitat home built in Maine to meet the National Association of Home Builders National Green Building Standards.

“This project is a significant contribution to affordable housing in Maine, and sets a wonderful example of energy efficiency, which is vital to reducing our dependency on foreign oil,” said Governor Baldacci. “We’ve seen energy prices increase greatly since last year, and with no end in sight we all have to do our part to reduce energy consumption and increase efficiency in our homes and workplaces. While my administration is committed to pursuing renewable, clean, home-grown energy sources and ensuring that all Mainers are safe and warm this winter, each and every one of us can make some simple changes to make our homes more energy efficient.”

Partners in the home construction include Bank of America, The Sustainable Forest Initiative, the National Association of Home Builders, Maine Chapter and Portland West, Youth Build.

“Affordable housing is key to our goals of providing opportunity for all hard-working families in Maine,” said the Governor. “This energy efficient house meets the long-term goals of providing a family with a home, and one that will be more affordable to maintain. This is an important milestone for Habitat and for affordable housing efforts in Maine.”

Governor Withdraws Wyke as Nominee to Head FAME

August 12, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today withdrew the nomination of Department of Administrative and Financial Services Commissioner Rebecca Wyke as CEO of the Finance Authority of Maine.

Wyke will be joining the University of Maine System as Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration and will oversee all system-wide business, operational and administrative functions.

Wyke was nominated to lead FAME on July 18. Her confirmation hearing was scheduled for Friday, Aug. 15, before the Business, Research and Economic Development Committee. A special confirmation session of the State Senate is scheduled for Aug. 20.

“Commissioner Wyke has been a trusted adviser and invaluable to Maine as we have worked to improve the State’s financial footing,” Governor Baldacci said. “While I’m certain that she would have done a tremendous job at FAME, the University System needs her right now.”

“It’s critical for the University System to get its finances in order. Given the financial difficulties facing the University of Maine System and the recent troubles at the University of Southern Maine, Becky is the best person to help safeguard one of our State’s most important public assets,” Governor Baldacci said.

Wyke has served for the last five and half years as the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services. Before joining Governor Baldacci’s administration, Wyke served for eight years as the Chief Deputy Secretary of State, five years as the Director of Corporations and Elections and held a management position with Simoneau & Norton, Certified Public Accountants.

Wyke earned a Master of Arts in public administration and a Bachelor of Arts in political science from the University of Maine.

Acting FAME CEO Elizabeth Bordowitz will continue to lead the organization.

“We have a strong team at FAME,” Governor Baldacci said. “I have full confidence in Beth.”

Governor's Statement on Pinkham Mill Closure

August 12, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci issued the following statement after learning of Irving Forest Products' intent to permanently close the Pinkham Sawmill located in Nashville Plantation.

"This is a significant blow to the hard-working families and the surrounding communities," said Governor Baldacci. "I have instructed the Maine Department of Labor's Rapid Response Team to be deployed to the town to address the concerns of those impacted by the closure. A session with workers will occur as soon as possible."

About 60 workers are expected to be impacted.

Maine Governors to Celebrate 175TH Anniversary of the Blaine House

August 14, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and First Lady Karen Baldacci will celebrate the 175TH anniversary of the Maine Governor's Mansion -- the Blaine House -- this weekend. The current First Family will be joined by previous First Families for the two-day celebration.

"I have always considered it an honor for my family to live in what is essentially a museum," Governor Baldacci said. "The house is full of history and memories, and it is a Maine treasure. People should take the time to see the Blaine House in person if they can, particularly during this landmark celebration."

In addition to Governor Baldacci and First Lady Karen Baldacci, Governors Angus King, John R. McKernan Jr., Joseph E. Brennan, John H. Reed and their families are expected to attend portions of the celebration.

The Blaine House was built in 1833 and was purchased by James G. Blaine in 1862. The house was donated to the State of Maine by Blaine's daughter Harriet Blaine Beale in 1919. She made the donation in memory of her son Walker Blaine Beale, who was killed in action in World War I.

The landscaping surrounding the Blaine House was designed by the Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts. The brothers, along with their father also designed Central Park in New York City, Acadia National Park, as well as the landscape surrounding the United States Capitol Building and the White House.

The public is invited to tour the Blaine House this Saturday from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Other events in honor of the celebration are scheduled to take place in Capitol Park during the same time period, including trolley car rides, carriage rides, games and live music. The Maine State Library, Maine State Museum and Maine State House will also be open for tours during this time. In addition, a short fireworks display is scheduled to mark the celebration for Friday night at 9 in the Capitol Park area.

New Manufacturing Facility Celebrated in Brewer

August 15, 2008

BREWER – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials from Brewer, Maine's Congressional Delegation, Cianbro and others for the grand opening ceremony of the new Cianbro Eastern Manufacturing Facility. The Governor praised the local, state, federal and private partners for their achievement, the culmination of many months of planning and work to convert the former Eastern Fine Paper mill into a state-of-the-art modular manufacturing facility.

The event also highlighted a major client of the new manufacturing facility. Motiva Enterprises has contracted with Cianbro to build an oil refinery expansion for the company, and the modular work will be done at the new Brewer facility. William Welte, President and CEO of Motiva Enterprises, was on hand for the event. Welte described Cianbro Eastern Manufacturing as a world class facility with first class workers.

"Today marks a significant milestone in economic development for Brewer, the Greater Bangor area and the State," said Governor Baldacci. "The high quality workforce and collective efforts of the community partners attracted Cianbro and a national corporation of the caliber of Motiva to this area. Everybody here worked together in the true Maine fashion to make this day possible."

The Governor said that when Eastern Fine Paper closed in 2004, the entire community was deeply impacted.

"This community rallied to make the mill property attractive to other buyers, and relentlessly pursued investors," said the Governor.

Cianbro President and CEO Peter Vigue said that the company expects to employ 500 workers at the Brewer facility.

Governor Announces Short-Term Energy Strategy

August 15, 2008

Plan Addresses Immediate Needs Without a Special Session

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today unveiled the details of a short-term plan that will begin to immediately address the dangers posed by high energy prices this winter.

“I have developed an action plan that puts State resources to work immediately,” Governor Baldacci said. “My first priority is to protect vulnerable families and make sure everyone has access to the information and tools they need to prepare for winter.”

The Governor’s plan makes a special session of the Legislature unnecessary.

“I have consulted with our experts on fuel assistance, energy and human services, and we are able to take significant action without an expensive and uncertain special session,” Governor Baldacci said. “If that changes, I will use the full powers of the Executive Branch to address any emergency.”

The \$12.585 million plan includes new investments in weatherization, low-income heating assistance, alternative modes of transportation, voluntary alternative work schedules for State employees, business development, training and education, and is targeted toward specific, attainable results within the next five months.

“Our plan puts resources where they can be most effective between now and December,” Governor Baldacci said. “Our plan is responsible and will help keep people safe and secure in their homes.”

The plan:

- Dedicates \$4.25 million to increase the LIHEAP benefit to \$500 per eligible household. The current benefit is estimated at \$415.
- Creates a \$3.25 million emergency fund in January to help families who either participate in LIHEAP or are slightly above the entitlement threshold in the event of a fuel oil emergency.
- Increases weatherization funding by \$2 million, expanding our current program by about 500 homes. The new funding supplements an anticipated \$6.5 million in weatherization funding, which will improve another 1,500 homes. Typical weatherization improvements can reduce fuel use by 20 percent.
- Invests an additional \$1 million to clean, tune and repair the furnaces in an estimated 1,500 additional homes that are LIHEAP eligible. Typical CTEs can reduce fuel use by 10 percent.
- Reserves \$1 million of available funding in the Economic Recovery Loan Program at the Finance Authority of Maine for eligible energy conservation projects for businesses in the State.

- Reprograms \$1.01 million within the Department of Transportation to increase utilization of the GoMaine program, extends the Free Fare Fridays promotion, studies the State's Park & Ride network and improves access to rail services.
- Utilizes \$75,000 to provide energy saving recommendations and program contact information to low-income Maine household.
- Distributes 2,000 Keep ME Warm Kits through MaineHousing.

MaineHousing will pull funds forward from future quarters to use immediately. The Governor will work with the Legislature to reimburse those funds when Legislature returns. Additional funding is available by redirecting available Community Development Block Grants, from the Public Utilities Commission and by reprogramming funding within the Department of Transportation.

The money will be restored either through reductions in other government programs or, as a last result, from the Budget Stabilization Fund when the Legislature returns.

"In 2006, we were able to take quick action at the beginning of the Legislative session to address low-income fuel assistance," Governor Baldacci said. "We can do that again this year."

The Governor also signed an executive order creating an alternative work schedule pilot program within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services. The pilot program will evaluate the effectiveness of alternative scheduling for State workers as an energy reduction measure. The program is voluntary and open to other interested agencies. The goal of the pilot is to have 95 percent of eligible requests granted, and to allow for four-day work weeks and other alternative schedules.

Following through on recommendations of the Pre-Emergency Energy Task Force, the Governor is creating a single point of contact for energy calls. In cooperation with 2-1-1, the improved system will be able to route callers seeking assistance or information directly to appropriate state agencies.

As part of improving the 2-1-1 system, requests for information will be filled within one business day and applicants for assistance or loan programs will have their requests processed within 30 days. To facilitate the quick response, the Governor sent a letter to State agencies today directing them to appoint an energy liaison that will be responsible for responding to requests.

"We also understand that increased food prices go hand-in-hand with higher energy costs," Governor Baldacci said. "While we are working on energy issues, we are mindful that we need to make sure families have access to healthy and nutritious foods."

In July, Maine's Department of Health and Human Services requested an increase in food stamp benefits for LIHEAP eligible families based on high energy costs. Earlier this month, that request was granted for families who aren't receiving the maximum benefit.

The Governor will also launch a pilot program to test EBT card readers at Farmers' Markets around the State. The readers will allow food stamp recipients to buy fresh, locally produced foods using their EBT cards at the markets.

Other efforts include training DECD personnel to understand energy saving methods for business that can be applied during their normal outreach activities, increase training courses for weatherization technicians, and improve access for information for homeowners who wish to make improvements themselves.

Attached are the Executive Order and the letter sent to Cabinet members.

18 FY 08/09

August 15, 2008

AN ORDER TO PROMOTE ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES TO REDUCE COMMUTING COSTS

WHEREAS, the recent and sustained rise in the cost of gasoline does not appear likely to subside in the immediate future; and

WHEREAS, Maine government is seeking to provide immediate relief to its employees from rising commuting costs; and

WHEREAS, maintaining current services to the public remains paramount; and

WHEREAS, Maine is seeking new ways of doing business to reduce energy consumption; and

WHEREAS, Maine government has an opportunity to lead by example and encourage other businesses to increase conservation by implementing alternative work schedules and telecommuting practices; and

WHEREAS, alternative work schedules and telecommuting are currently allowed yet may not be fully utilized;

NOW THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby direct the following:

Supervisors and managers are encouraged to seek ways to grant voluntary employee requests for telecommuting or alternative work schedules, provided current services to the public are maintained and an agency's operations are not otherwise adversely impacted.

- a. State government will continue to serve citizens Monday through Friday during usual business hours.
- b. State agencies will be required to report its alternative work schedule efforts to the Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS), Bureau of Human Resources.

Employees who may not be interested in or may not be able to participate in telecommuting/alternative work schedule options are encouraged to pursue alternative travel options and their supervisors and

managers should seek ways to grant requests for schedules that would allow participation in these programs without adversely impacting an agency's operations.

a. This may include the use of the GOMaine vanpools and the Maine Commuter Connects carpool matching service available through GOMaine (www.gomaine.org), as well as the ZOOM Maine Turnpike Express and other shuttle bus alternatives, where available. (www.shuttlebus-zoom.com).

b. The Maine Department of Transportation maintains a number of Park and Ride lots to encourage and promote carpooling www.exploremaine.org/parkandride/index.htm).

Beginning immediately a specific pilot program will be implemented within DAFS that seeks to have 95% of eligible requests for an alternative work schedule by employees granted. This pilot will run through December 31, 2008 at which time the program will be evaluated to determine its impact on energy use, employee productivity, customer service, and employee satisfaction/participation.

a. Employees will not be mandated to change their schedules and participation will be voluntary.

b. The goal will be to increase participation by having supervisors and management more receptive to alternative work schedules.

c. The results of the pilot and the evaluation prepared by DAFS will determine if the program will be expanded to all state agencies and will provide valuable feedback and guidance to successfully implement statewide.

Effective Date

Effective date of this Executive Order is August 15, 2008.

John E. Baldacci, Governor

August 15, 2008

Dear Cabinet Members:

Today I am announcing my Short -Term Energy Plan that maximizes the amount of work that can begin immediately to prepare for a potentially dangerous winter heating season. This strategy will increase weatherization, prepare for increased support for LIHEAP, improve outreach and education, enhance transportation alternatives, make State facilities more efficient, create new options for the State workforce and support innovative local efforts to combat high energy costs. This Plan derives from the good work of the Pre-Emergency Task Force and their Report released a few weeks ago.

As part of this initiative, 2-1-1 will be strongly promoted as the primary referral entity for people to obtain information regarding energy, food and fuel. Some of the 2-1-1 calls will be referred to state agencies and I am asking that each agency have a designated "energy liaison" to accept 2-1-1 referrals. The energy liaison will be responsible for responding to each 2-1-1 referral call within 24 hours (1 business day) and to provide an answer within 30-days (this could range from a discrete piece of

information to a determination of eligibility for a grant or loan program). 2-1-1 will have the capability to track both the response time and the resolution of the referral.

I am asking that you send to John Kerry, Director of the Office of Energy Independence and Security, the name and contact information of the staff person at your department who is designated as the “energy liaison” to accept referrals from 2-1-1 during regular business hours. Please send this name to John by August 25th and copy my Chief of Staff, Jane Lincoln.

The designation of an “energy liaison” in your agency is a serious and important matter and will involve not only time in responding to 2-1-1 referrals, but also some training with the 2-1-1 program. I appreciate your participation in this Short-Term Energy Plan and your commitment of staff time to this extremely important effort.

Sincerely,

John E. Baldacci

Governor

Governor Highlights Health and Education Connection at Back to School Fair

August 16, 2008

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Bangor community leaders, U.S. Congressman Mike Michaud and area families at the Back to School Fair hosted by Penobscot Community Health Care.

“We know that children do better in school, and therefore have more opportunity before them later in life, if they eat right, exercise and have access to primary and preventive health care,” said Governor Baldacci. “Reverend Robert Carlson and his staff at Penobscot Community Health Care help families in the Greater Bangor area ensure that their children have such access to quality services. Today families across the region are offered a great variety of resources to help them get their children off to a great start.”

The day-long event held at the former Bangor Theological Seminary site included free health screenings, various health and education exhibitors and family entertainment. The Governor also noted that this is Health Center Week in the State of Maine by his proclamation.

“All of Maine’s community health centers serve a vital role, and they are valuable partners both in the communities they serve,” said the Governor.

Governor Announces Major Gift to Maine Maritime Academy

August 18, 2008

CASTINE – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Maine Maritime Academy (MMA) President Leonard Tyler and members of the MMA community to announce a \$2.5 million gift to the college. The gift is from American Bureau of Shipping, an international ship classification society, and is the largest corporate donation in Maine Maritime Academy's history.

"I want to recognize Robert D. Somerville, Chairman and CEO of ABS, for this generous contribution to Maine Maritime Academy," said Governor Baldacci. "Maine Maritime Academy is a premier institution recognized for the outstanding quality of education in burgeoning fields here in Maine."

The Governor noted that Maine Maritime Academy is a vital component of economic development efforts in the state, producing a quality workforce for the state's developing industries.

In addition, Maine Maritime Academy has been recognized in the US News & World Report as one of the 50 best public colleges in the Northeast. The college is part of an important and growing expansion into renewable technology, and has taken steps to review energy savings.

"With this gift, Maine Maritime Academy will be able to enhance their engineering program, better preparing Maine's workforce of tomorrow and benefiting Maine's economy. I thank ABS for their generous gift and congratulate Maine Maritime Academy for earning it," said Governor Baldacci.

According to President Tyler, the college intends to build an environmentally-friendly Center for Applied Engineering and Research facility named for ABS. The building will employ green technology and energy efficiency.

Governor Baldacci Swears In Jack Cashman as Commissioner of Public Utilities Commission

August 21, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has sworn in Jack Cashman of Brewer as a Commissioner of the Public Utilities Commission. Cashman joins Commissioner Venean Vafiades and Chair Sharon Reishus on the three-member commission.

“Energy costs continue to be one of the biggest problems facing not only family budgets but business budgets as well,” Governor Baldacci said. “Jack has worked successfully both in State government and in the private sector to support business and business development in Maine. I am confident that he will bring his business background and knowledge to this commission and compliment the existing Commissioners well to effectively serve the people of Maine.”

The swearing-in took place in the Governor's Office, with members of Cashman's family and several friends present.

Cashman replaces Kurt Adams, who left the PUC in May. Cashman will complete Adams' term as a Commissioner with the PUC, which will expire on March 31, 2011.

Cashman begins his term immediately.

Governor Celebrates Penobscot River Restoration Milestone

August 21, 2008

OLD TOWN – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined members of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust and federal and local dignitaries to celebrate the Trust exercising an option to purchase three dams in the Penobscot River. The dams are being purchased from PPL Corporation and will improve access for Atlantic salmon and 10 other species of sea-run fish.

“This vision to create a balance on the river between economic, recreational and Native American interests was both innovative and ambitious, and I have followed this project closely,” Governor Baldacci said. “This is a remarkable model for how Maine can maintain important hydropower generation on our rivers while taking the steps needed to restore our native sea-run fisheries.”

The three dams being purchased are the Veazie, Great Works and Howland dams. The Trust plans to remove the two dams closest to the sea – Veazie and Great Works – and construct a bypass around the Howland Dam. To compensate for the loss of hydropower at the three decommissioned hydroelectric dams, six other dams owned by PPL Maine will see energy increases.

“Today, the Penobscot is producing more power than ever before,” the Governor said. “Just down the road in Orono, PPL Maine is rebuilding the Orono Dam as part of this project’s innovative approach to maintaining energy production. In the end, the company will maintain virtually all of their current capacity.”

The partners involved in the project raised \$25 million from a variety of public and private sources to purchase the three dams. Governor Baldacci said that he is happy to see phase one of the Penobscot River Restoration Project come to fruition, and looks forward to phase two.

“In 2004, I pledged to seek State support for this project and for communities living along the river. In 2006, I introduced a \$5 million Riverfront Community Development Bond in Maine,” Governor Baldacci said. “I am pleased to say the Legislature and voters of Maine embraced this first-of-its-kind bond that will assist communities along rivers like the Penobscot to revitalize their riverfronts.”

More information about the restoration project can be found at <http://www.penobscotriver.org/>

Governor Swears In Commissioner of Department of Professional and Financial Regulation

August 22, 2008

AUGUSTA – Anne Head of Yarmouth was sworn in today as the Commissioner of the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation.

“Anne has displayed her ability to do this job during her tenure as acting commissioner of the department,” Governor Baldacci said. “Over that time, she has earned the respect of her peers and the PFR staff. I look forward to seeing Commissioner Head continue her leadership over the next few years.”

The Commissioner’s post was restructured this year to require one of the Department’s directors or superintendents to fill the dual roll of director and commissioner. As Commissioner, she will continue to serve as Director of the Office of Licensing and Registration.

Governor Baldacci conducted the ceremony in his office with members of Commissioner Head’s family and friends present.

World's Leading Ocean Energy Conference to be Held in Maine

August 22, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci announced today that the EnergyOcean Conference, the world's leading event focused on renewable and sustainable energy from the oceans, will be held at the Samoset Resort in Rockport on June 16-18, 2009. More than 300 technologists, financiers and policy makers from around the world will gather at this premier event to share and discuss opportunities for the renewable market of ocean-based energy.

“To help kick our country’s dependence on foreign oil, we need to be doing a better job harnessing our solar, wind and ocean energy,” Governor Baldacci said. “These are natural resources that are abundant in Maine. It is exciting and encouraging to me that we will be hosting some of the most forward thinking individuals on ocean energy in our State next summer. I hope that we can use this opportunity to learn from each other and see real progress with respect to ocean energy in Maine in the near future.”

The State will work with conference organizers and industry leaders to create a world-class event and the close proximity to Nova Scotia allows the organizers to work with Canada and make this a strong North American event. The 2009 EnergyOcean Conference will serve to position Maine as a global leader of renewable energy technology and showcase the state’s capabilities.

For more information please visit www.energyocean.com

Governor Requests Federal Assistance to Repair Storm Damage

August 25, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci has requested federal assistance to assist the State in recovering from major storms between August 8 and August 16th. Androscoggin, Cumberland and York Counties sustained nearly \$2.9 million in damages, primarily to road systems.

"All of northern New England has seen extraordinary weather this summer, and Maine is no exception," said Governor Baldacci. "These storms, coming on top of ground that was already saturated, literally tore roads apart."

The Towns of Freeport and Lebanon received almost \$600,000 worth of damage in a single day. State roads in Androscoggin County sustained over \$1 million in damages, and the small town of Minot had extensive road washouts.

The granting of Public Assistance would enable the State and affected local governments to be reimbursed by FEMA for 75 percent of the cost of repairing roads and other public property.

A copy of the request follows:

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I request that you declare a major disaster for Androscoggin, Cumberland and York Counties in the State of Maine as a result of heavy rain, hail, damaging winds, tornadoes and flash flooding which impacted the State during the time period of July 18th through August 16th, 2008, primarily during the period from August 8 through August 16, 2008.

According to the National Weather Service, during the period from July 18th through August 16th, 2008, the weather in Maine was influenced by a low pressure system that affected all of New England. This system moved into the region and gradually strengthened during the period. The system was the cause of severe weather including heavy rain, hail, damaging winds and tornadoes. Weak winds aloft contributed to slow-moving storms caused locally very heavy rainfalls and flash flooding. The rainfall through this period saturated the ground and undermined roadways and other infrastructure. Throughout the period, and specifically during the period of August 8th through the 16th in Maine, locally heavy downpours combined with saturated ground and caused powerful flash floods. Significant damage to roadways and other public and private infrastructure was reported as roads and culverts washed away.

On August 8th, 6 inches of rain were reported in the vicinity of Freeport, Maine. Dozens of roads were closed and homes were cut off in Cumberland and York Counties. The severe damage incurred in the towns of Freeport (Cumberland County, \$74.45 per capita verified damages) and Lebanon (York County, \$125.71 per capita) were typical of this event. A major water main was lost, a large part of the Town of

Freeport lost its water supply including water for firefighting, and the entire system was placed on a boil water order. In Lebanon, roads were flooded or destroyed and homes were isolated.

On August 16th, similar locally heavy storms, downpours and flash floods destroyed local and state road systems in the small Town of Minot (population 2,248, per capita impact \$34.29) and the surrounding area. National Weather Service radar showed rain falling at the rate of 2 to 3 inches an hour. Further damage was also incurred in York and Cumberland Counties.

In response to the situation, I have taken appropriate action under State law. In anticipation of emergency conditions, I directed the execution of the State Emergency Plan on Thursday July 17, 2008 in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act. The State Emergency Operations Center was on alert during this entire period, and activated on Friday, August 8 to provide support to the affected areas. On August 15, 2008, I requested a joint Federal, State, and local survey of the damaged areas in York and Cumberland Counties, and then extended that request to include Androscoggin County. Preliminary assessments indicated the most severe impacts were to roads, culverts and bridges in the affected counties.

During the response phase of this event, the resources of local communities, and those of State agencies available without a State of Emergency in place, were adequate to respond to local needs. Therefore, while prepared to do so, I did not declare a State of Emergency during this period.

The Joint Federal/State/Local Preliminary Damage Assessment for public damage began August 19, 2008. Town and state agency reports of damages, verified by the PDA, equate to almost \$2.9 million, \$2.26 per capita statewide.

Thankfully, no injuries or deaths were reported during this period in Maine. However, many private roads and driveways were flooded or damaged, isolating families and preventing emergency vehicles from accessing their homes. Officials in the affected counties provided individual support to isolated families and monitored their emergency needs closely; no shelters were opened. A number of homes also received some damage; we are currently working with our volunteer and service agency community, searching for avenues of assistance for those individuals with unmet needs.

State and local budgets, already adversely affected by a nationwide recession and skyrocketing fuel costs, have been exhausted by the convergent effects of five major disasters since May of 2006. A record snow year of 2007-2008, for which no federal assistance was received, further crippled local budgets across the state.

I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local governments and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary. I am specifically requesting Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation and Small Business Administration disaster (as applicable under the Public Assistance Program) at this time. I intend to implement the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program statewide. The State has a FEMA-approved Standard State Mitigation Plan in place.

Preliminary estimates of the types and amount of assistance needed under the Stafford Act are tabulated in Enclosure B. Estimated requirements for assistance from certain Federal agencies under other statutory authorities are tabulated in Enclosure C.

Damage assessments are ongoing in other areas of the state. If the need warrants, I intend to request additional assistance.

State, local and private resources that have been or will be used to alleviate the conditions of this disaster include: repairs to the Federal Aid Highway System and state highways, temporary repair assistance to local governments and damage assessment by the Maine Department of Transportation; alerting, warning, and traffic control by the Department of Public Safety, Department of Transportation and county and local public safety agencies; public health activities by the Department of Health and Human Services; environmental cleanup by the Department of Environmental Protection; emergency assistance to private citizens by local responders and volunteer agencies; emergency coordination and damage assessment by the Maine Emergency Management Agency and affected County Emergency Management Agencies and assistance to affected families by social service and voluntary agencies.

I certify that for this major disaster, the State and local governments will assume all applicable non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act. Total State and local expenditures are expected to exceed \$721,000, in accordance with the table in Enclosure D.

I have designated Robert McAleer as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. He will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in damage assessments and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,

John Elias Baldacci Governor

Governor's Statement on Wausau Paper-Otis Mill Machine Shut Down

August 25, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci issued the following statement after learning of Wausau Paper's intent to permanently shut down the #10 machine at the Otis Mill facility located in Jay.

"I am deeply concerned about the workers, their families, and the community as they face this difficult news," said Governor Baldacci. "I have instructed Rosaire Pelletier, the Administration's senior forest products adviser to visit with mill officials on site tomorrow, and will deploy Maine Department of Labor's Rapid Response Team to Jay shortly."

About 146 workers are expected to be impacted.

Governor's Statement on Millinocket Mill

August 26, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci learned today that the Katahdin Paper Co. mill in Millinocket that has been facing financial difficulties is expected to shut down on Sept. 2. The Governor and State officials continue to work with mill ownership to address energy costs for the mill which have precipitated the need for the current shut down.

“My Administration remains engaged with Fraser Papers, Brookfield Renewable Power and town and union officials to ensure that this shut down is only a short-term measure that will enable long-term solutions to be put in place so that the hard-working, skilled employees can go back to work as soon as possible,” said Governor Baldacci. “Among the most pressing issues is the pursuit of an alternative energy source for the mill.”

The Governor has instructed Rosaire Pelletier, the Administration's senior forest products adviser, to coordinate State efforts to re-open the mill.

“I have spoken to Peter Gordon, CEO of Fraser Papers, and Richard Legault, CEO of Brookfield Renewable Power, and they are committed to start the mill as soon as a new biomass gasification system is installed,” said Governor Baldacci. “They said that the mill will start its operation and will hire its employees as soon as possible. Meanwhile, the State stands ready to assist employees during this difficult time. These dedicated workers won't be left on their own.”

“We have seen oil prices place significant burdens on families and businesses in Millinocket, Jay and across this state, and that's why my Administration is aggressively tackling these underlying energy issues,” said Governor Baldacci.

Double-Digit Increase in Ridership During Free Fare Fridays

August 27, 2008

AUGUSTA – Faced with high gasoline and diesel prices, Mainers are turning to alternative modes of transportation including buses, carpools and vanpools in record numbers this summer.

“People are looking for ways to save money on their fuel costs, and this summer has been a good time for getting the word out the many transportation alternatives available here in Maine,” said Governor John Baldacci.

The Governor launched the Free Fare Friday campaign that ran throughout the month of July. In all, 159,000 people rode public transit on those three Fridays in July – 29,000 more riders than in 2007.

This week, the GO MAINE database – the number of commuters who are actively searching for or participating in carpools, vanpools and other gas saving alternatives – topped 7,000 registrants. That represents an 80 percent increase since the beginning of the year.

The Free Fare Friday campaign that offered free bus rides on the state’s largest bus services in Bangor, Biddeford-Saco, Lewiston-Auburn, Portland and South Portland, boosted ridership by 22 percent over three Fridays in July. A similar campaign that ran over five weeks in November and December 2007, saw an increase of 20 percent.

The Downeaster ridership is up by 14 percent over 2007. The Island Explorer, a free bus service that links attractions in Acadia National Park, has also seen ridership increase by 14 percent.

The biggest increases in bus ridership were seen in Biddeford-Saco and Lewiston Auburn. Riders using the ShuttleBus and ZOOM services in Biddeford-Saco increased by 94 percent over the same period in 2007. Lewiston-Auburn’s Citylink service ridership increased by 91 percent. METRO in Portland increased by 18 percent; South Portland by 37 percent; and the BAT in Bangor by 45 percent.

For more information about commuter assistance, call 1-800-280-RIDE or visit www.gomaine.org.

Governor's Statement on Prime Tanning Shut Down in Berwick

August 29, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci issued the following statement after learning of Prime Tanning's intent to shut down their Berwick facility. Company-wide restructuring will result in a loss of 150 jobs at the Berwick facility. The company plans to redirect about 75 of those jobs to its Hartland facility, which it plans to keep open.

"It is difficult to see a facility shut down and hard-working Mainers facing economic uncertainty," Governor Baldacci said. "We will continue to work with the company to ensure the valued employees, their families and impacted communities receive assistance."

The Maine Department of Labor will deploy the Rapid Response team to Berwick shortly.

The Berwick operation is anticipated to close at the end of September. Some of the workers in Berwick may be offered positions that are being added in Hartland. High energy and chemical costs were noted by the company as reasons for the changes in operations in the Maine facilities.

"We are seeing the significant impact that rising energy and oil prices are having on families and businesses in across this state, and that's why my Administration is aggressively tackling these underlying energy issues," said Governor Baldacci.

In the Governor's recently announced short-term energy strategy, \$1 million of available funding in the Economic Recovery Loan Program at the Finance Authority of Maine has been reserved for eligible energy conservation projects for businesses in the State. Interested business should contact FAME at 1-800-228-3734. Also, as recommended in the report from the Governor's Pre-Emergency Energy Task Force, the Business Development Specialists at the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development are receiving training to enable them to conduct informal energy audits, better preparing them to assist Maine businesses in identifying and addressing potential ways to save on energy costs. Maine businesses are urged to contact the Office of Business Development at 624.9804 for more information.

Governor Recognizes Maine POWs

August 30, 2008

SOUTH PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today presented State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals to former Prisoners of War. The ceremony was held at the new Maine Military Museum and Learning Center.

“I am honored to present these medals to you on behalf of the State of Maine,” said Governor Baldacci. “You know all too well the meaning of sacrifice and of service. This is one important way that the citizens of Maine can thank you for your commitment to this nation.”

The Governor said that Maine has the highest proportion of veterans of any state in the country. The Governor has presented the State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals since August 2006. The intent is to recognize all veterans in Maine who have been wounded or been held captive during conflicts overseas.

The Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services has identified more than 425 Prisoners of War who have lived in Maine.

Governor Baldacci also recognized the efforts of Lee Humiston, founder and curator of the new museum to honor veterans. The museum features a large collection of POW artifacts.

“The military museum is another way we can preserve the history of the people who have so valiantly served their country,” said Governor Baldacci.

The list of the World War II, Korean and Vietnam veterans recognized today follows. They are listed by name, town of residence and branch of the military served.

World War II

Lionel G. Barbin, Saco, Army AC

Donald H. Bosworth, Kennebunk, Army

Colby A. Davis, Canton, Army AC

William T. Fossett, Westbrook, Army

Chester R. Knowles, Scarborough, Army AC

Donald V. McDougall, Scarborough, Army AC

Norman J. Mee, West Newfield, Army

Arthur P. Mills, South Portland, Army AC

Richard R. Repp, Berwick, Army

Norman J. St Pierre, Old Orchard, Army

Girard J. Vaillancourt, Berwick, Army

Harry B. Winger, Portland, Army

Korea

Joseph A. Paradis, Lewiston, Army

Vietnam

Allan R. Carpenter, Springvale/VA, Navy

Arthur Cormier, Lovell, Air Force

Robert S. Fant Jr, Litchfield, Navy

John W. Grant, Portland, Navy

The following individuals were honored, but were unable to be at the museum in person:

World War II

Frederick W. Gowan, Westbrook, Army AC

William P. Hancock Jr, Cape Neddick, Army AC

Alvin K. Hersey, Kennebunk, Army

Robert E. McLain, Gorham, Army AC

Vietnam

James D. Layton, Cherryfield, Navy

Andrew J. York, Chelsea, Army

Governor Baldacci Urges Saving Early for College

September 2, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today issued a proclamation naming September 2008 as College Savings Month in the State of Maine. The Governor presented the proclamation to Beth Bordowitz, Acting CEO of the Finance Authority of Maine during a ceremony in the State House.

“As you know, September is back to school time 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.”

The NextGen College Investing Plan is Maine’s Section 529 college savings plan. Created by the Maine Legislature in 1999 as a qualified tuition program, NextGen is now the 5th largest college savings plan in the nation, with more than \$5.2 billion in assets. It is a tax-advantaged investing program administered by FAME, designed to help families prepare for higher education expenses.

The Governor said that among other NextGen benefits to residents, the Harold Alfond College Challenge enables Mainers to easily augment their savings for their children’s education. The first-in-the-nation effort provides a \$500 grant for every Maine newborn to be placed in a special NextGen savings account for future college expenses. This year, the Harold Alfond College Challenge \$500 Grant has been piloted at MaineGeneral facilities in Augusta and Waterville. The \$500 grant will go statewide in January 2009. There are no household income limits.

FAME Acting CEO Beth Bordowitz stated: “One of the extra benefits of working to educate Maine families about the Harold Alfond College Challenge has been that more families are learning about the advantages of saving for college through NextGen. Many Maine families with newborns are utilizing FAME’s Initial Matching Grant Program to open accounts for additional children. It’s never too late to start saving for college.”

Other NextGen benefits for Mainers include:

- A one-time \$200 initial matching grant to help Maine families with adjusted gross incomes of \$75,000 or less open their account;
- A 50% annual matching grant up to \$200 for income-eligible families for additional contributions made to their NextGen account;
- Up to \$250 per year, per beneficiary, tax deduction for Maine taxpayers who make contributions to a NextGen plan;
- Waiver of the annual account maintenance fee;
- Direct deposit available for Maine income tax refunds;

- For Maine workers, Life-long Learning Accounts that provide employer-matched individual NextGen accounts to help employees upgrade their skills and education while meeting the demands of businesses for a skilled workforce; and
- Annual scholarships for Maine students.

Governor Presents Forest Stewardship Award

September 2, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today recognized Roger Milliken Jr. CEO of Baskahegan Land Company, for his important contributions to the health of Maine's forests. Presenting Milliken with the fourth Austin H. Wilkins Forest Stewardship Award, the Governor said Milliken sets an example for other landowners.

"Roger Milliken's lifelong commitment to sustainable leadership in forestry embodies the sentiment of this award completely," said Governor Baldacci. "Roger has long been an advocate for the protection of the northern forest while at the same time recognizing the need to sustain Maine's timber industries."

The Governor said Roger played a critical role in crafting and forging ahead the 1989 Forest Practices Act, the legislation that brought balance between the environmental needs of our forest and forest products industries.

Governor Baldacci reiterated his commitment to sustainable forestry practices.

"From the start of my administration, the health of Maine's forests and forest products industries have been a priority," said Governor Baldacci. "We continue to work hard to keep our paper mills open in Maine. At the same time recognize the continued success of our Forest Certification Initiative has made Maine a leader in the growing market for 'green-certified' paper and forest products."

The Austin Wilkins Forest Stewardship Award is sponsored by the Maine Department of Conservation and the Maine TREE Foundation. The award recognizes people who have made significant contributions to Maine forests.

Governor Baldacci Celebrates Grand Opening of Assisted Living Expansion

September 2, 2008

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated the opening of an addition to The Cedars nonprofit community for seniors. The Osher Inn at The Cedars has 30 assisted living apartments, featuring specially designed common areas, a fitness area, recreation room and community center.

Governor Baldacci joined philanthropist and Maine native Bernard Osher and members of the Osher family for the celebration. The grand opening also featured the release of 25 doves to mark the occasion and to symbolize The Cedars moving forward to widen its circle of care for residents.

“Bernard Osher and the entire Osher family have certainly made an important and lasting mark on Maine,” Governor Baldacci said. “One of the nation’s most charitable philanthropists Bernard Osher has invested in Maine people and he has never forgotten the hardworking people of this State.”

As part of the ceremony, Governor Baldacci proclaimed September 2, 2008, as The Cedars Completing the Circle of Care Day in honor of the services provided by The Cedars to Maine seniors.

ConnectME Authority Announces Second Round of Grants

September 4, 2008

Six Grants Totaling More than \$1.75 Million Dollars Awarded

AUGUSTA – The ConnectME Authority has awarded six grants to expand broadband communications services to unserved areas in Maine. A total of more than \$1.75 million was awarded to the recipients, expanding services to an estimated 12,500 residents. A list of the grantees is shown below, and they are fully listed on the ConnectME Authority's Web site.

Governor Baldacci, in conjunction with the Legislature, created the ConnectME initiative in 2006 to expand broadband throughout Maine.

“This second round of grants shows that the ConnectME initiative is spurring private investment in broadband and cellular service across Maine,” said Governor Baldacci. “These investments are enabling people in rural areas enhanced access to technology, transforming our state economy, and expanding business opportunities for more Mainers.”

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 four 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 of Maine, with the emphasis on those areas that are unlikely to receive service from a traditional provider.

These Authority awards go to six innovative applications, five of which will expand access to high speed Internet service to more than 60 communities that had little prospect of receiving service. The sixth application proposes to build a fiber optic cable network that will connect three partnering medical centers and seven health care facilities in six towns across Franklin, Oxford, and Androscoggin counties, providing high speed telehealth services. The ConnectME funds will provide the match requirement for a \$3.6 million FCC Rural Health Care Pilot Project grant.

The following are the applicants and the communities served

Axiom Technologies, Town of Steuben

Axiom Technologies, 31 Towns in Washington County

Cornerstone Communications, 17 Towns in Moosehead Lake region

Mainely Wired, Town of Penobscot, surrounding area

Redzone Wireless, Mount Desert Island, surrounding communities

Franklin Community Health Network, fiber optic cable network

“While all six projects are exciting and effective solutions to the increasing necessity for broadband services in rural Maine, being able to assist the Franklin Community Health Network is particularly satisfying,” said Phil Lindley, Executive Director of the ConnectME Authority. “This project is a long-term investment in the technology infrastructure of a very rural area of Maine that will provide access to state-of-the-art health services as well as providing potential economic development benefits to businesses in the area,” he added.

The ConnectME Authority expects to conduct a third round of grant awards next spring, based on funding availability.

For more information on the ConnectME initiative, please go to <http://www.maine.gov/connectme/index.shtml>

The members of the Authority are Jean Wilson, Vice President of Information Services at LL Bean, Chair; Mitchel W. Davis, Chief Information Officer for Bowdoin College; Richard B. Thompson, Chief Information Officer for Maine State Government; and Sharon Reishus, Chair of the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

Governor Praises Maine Doctors for Role in Improving Health Care Quality

September 4, 2008

ROCKPORT – Governor John E. Baldacci today addressed the Maine Medical Association (MMA) 155th Annual Meeting at the Samoset. He praised Gordon Smith, Executive Vice President, and membership of the association for their active role in working with patients and the public to advance quality health care across Maine. The MMA is working with the Maine Hospital Association to address quality issues. The Maine Medical Association has also worked with the State and stakeholders to advance the Dirigo Health Agency's Maine Quality Forum.

"It is simply not acceptable that every other developed nation is able to assure everybody has coverage and gets the same quality and health outcomes as we do – at half our spending. With your help, my Administration is actively addressing these issues," said the Governor. "We also recognize, in talking about health reform, that health care is a very local experience and a very personal one between patient and physician. It is the physician who is on the front line and needs the support and the systems to assure quality care can be delivered."

The Governor continued: "The work you do is critically important to achieving our goals of the highest quality health care. We know there is inappropriate and costly variation all across our country and our State. It is time to end that variation and assure every Mainer gets the right care at the right time in the right way. Working together, we hold the promise for real reform in Maine's health care system."

Governor Responds to Aid Request from Louisiana

September 4, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today responded to a request for assistance from Louisiana to help victims of Hurricane Gustav.

“During an emergency, every state has the duty to assistance its neighbors,” Governor Baldacci said. “We will do everything in our power to help Louisiana and the Gulf Coast.”

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal contacted Governor Baldacci asking that Maine honor an executive order that grants exemptions, including weight and size limits, to motor carriers involved in emergency relief efforts. Governor Baldacci signed a similar executive order today for Maine.

“While Hurricane Gustav did not inflict the level of damage many of us feared as it approached land, the storm still did significant harm,” Governor Baldacci said. “We will honor Governor Jindal’s request and exempt carriers responding to this crisis from weight and size limits on State roads.”

The text of the executive order follows:

WHEREAS, the State of Maine has been requested to provide assistance to the Gulf Coast Region in response to Hurricane Gustav; and

WHEREAS, the State of Louisiana has declared a state of emergency; and

WHEREAS, the State of Maine may deploy both personnel and equipment to the State of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the State of Maine 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; and

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 pursuant to 49 CFR part 390.23 of facilitating a waiver to Federal Department of Transportation Rules do hereby declare that a State of Emergency exists for the purposes mentioned above in assisting the gulf coast states in their recovery efforts, effective on September 3, 2008. Any driver operating a vehicle pursuant to this waiver must, upon request, present sufficient evidence that the items being transported are bound for emergency relief to those areas where a disaster declaration has been issued.

Maine Receives Grant to Better Prepare Business Community for Natural Disasters

September 8, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today accepted a \$250,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration. The funds are targeted to enhance the ability of businesses to prepare for and recover from weather disasters. The State sought the funds specifically to aid the seven counties (Aroostook, Piscataquis, Penobscot, Somerset, Lincoln, Waldo and Knox) impacted by the severe storms that hit the region in April and May of 2008.

"I'm pleased that the federal government is providing additional resources to help Maine businesses," said Governor Baldacci. "My Administration has been working to build our capacity to help businesses and other employers in the State plan for and recover from disasters such as the flooding that impacted Aroostook County and others this spring. The U.S. Economic Development Administration grant will enable Maine's economy to better weather natural disasters and get back up and running as soon as possible."

Kelly O'Brien, Director of Public Affairs, Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, was at the State House this afternoon to discuss the importance of the grant. She said that the funds will help the State, in coordination with a wide group of stakeholders, create a disaster preparedness model that can be used throughout the State of Maine.

Governor Baldacci also recognized leadership of his Department of Economic and Community Development and the Maine Emergency Management Agency, who developed the plan for the grant funds.

"This is a thoughtful plan that will expand collaborative efforts across public and private stakeholders, all with the goal of preventing - as much as we can - the very serious and devastating impact disasters inflict on our economy," said Governor Baldacci. "The action plan that is being funded through the \$250,000 grant from EDA will enable Maine's economy to weather disasters and get back up and running as soon as possible."

Governor Baldacci Proclaims September as Preparedness Month

September 9, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci visited the Maine Emergency Management Agency today to kickoff National Preparedness Month. MEMA is sponsoring several activities throughout the day in conjunction with Preparedness Month in the State of Maine.

“This has been an eventful year already, with flooding up north this spring, nearly \$3 million in road damage just last month, and a near miss from a hurricane last weekend,” Governor Baldacci said. “As we designate September as Preparedness Month in Maine, we know that being prepared for emergencies is a year-round commitment to take care of ourselves and our neighbors.”

In addition to the kickoff ceremony with Governor Baldacci, MEMA’s activities for the rest of the day are scheduled to include displays of emergency supplies, disaster kits and shelters at MEMA headquarters.

On September 11, The American Red Cross, Boston Red Sox and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center are joining together for the 6th Annual September 11th Day of Remembrance Blood Drives throughout New England. Maine’s Day of Remembrance Blood Drive will be held at the Augusta Armory, 179 Western Avenue, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and is a featured event in Maine’s observation of Preparedness Month.

The text of the Preparedness Month proclamation issued by Governor Baldacci 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, this year has brought high winds, record snowfall, flooding, widespread power outages and damages to roads, utilities, homes, businesses and farms 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, 2008 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, 2008 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 Baldacci Orders Flags Lowered to Half-Staff for Patriot Day

September 9, 2008

AUGUSTA - In accordance with President Bush's proclamation and with Federal Public law 107-89, designating September 11th each year as "Patriot Day," Governor John Baldacci has directed that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise to sunset Thursday, September 11, 2008.

"We will never forget the horrific attacks on our country on September 11, 2001," Governor Baldacci said. "We lost many Americans that day. We should all take time to remember those who died seven years ago, and also honor the men and women who selflessly gave of themselves to try and save their fellow Americans during the attacks. They will never be forgotten."

This year marks the seventh anniversary of the attacks on September 11, 2001.

Federal Assistance Granted for Severe Summer Storms

September 9, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci learned today that President Bush has signed a disaster declaration for Androscoggin, Cumberland and York counties for severe storms and flooding that struck the State between July 18 and Aug. 16.

Governor Baldacci sought the declaration, which will provide federal support to repair damaged public infrastructure in the three counties, on Aug. 22. The granting of Public Assistance enables the State and affected local governments to be reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for 75 percent of the cost of repairing roads and other public property.

“Maine suffered significant damage, caused by fast moving storms and flash floods,” Governor Baldacci said. “Many communities have faced significant hardships as they have worked to make repairs. The federal assistance granted today will help them rebuild.”

In the Governor’s letter requesting federal assistance, damage in the three counties was estimated at \$2.9 million.

“State and local budgets, already adversely affected by a nationwide recession and skyrocketing fuel costs, have been exhausted by the convergent effects of five major disasters since May of 2006. A record snow year of 2007-2008, for which no federal assistance was received, further crippled local budgets across the state,” Governor Baldacci wrote in his letter to FEMA.

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State Business Development Specialists Receive Energy Training

September 10, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today addressed Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) specialists and their partners who work on business development across the State. The group, including staff from the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership and Small Business Development Centers, came together for the first of many training sessions to make economic development field staff, who interact daily with Maine businesses at their locations, aware of measures that can be taken and programs that can help businesses reduce their energy consumption and lower their energy bills.

“You don’t have to look far to see the impact that high energy prices have on Maine people and businesses. My Administration has put forward an aggressive plan to help Mainers weather high energy prices this winter,” said Governor Baldacci. “Today’s training session is another important step to ensure that assistance is ready and available to Mainers.”

Last month, the Governor released the details of his short-term energy plan, which included the goal of expanding energy efficiency financing tools for businesses and others. By receiving this training, economic development field staff members will be better prepared to help companies identify potential energy saving projects and be able to assist them in identifying State and federal resources to assist in completing these projects.

The Governor’s complete short-term energy plan totals \$12.585 million toward new investments in weatherization, low-income heating assistance, alternative modes of transportation, voluntary alternative work schedules for State employees, business development, training and education, and is targeted toward specific, attainable results within the next few months.

For more information about the Governor’s energy plan, please visit: <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/energy.shtml>

Governor Celebrates Washburn & Doughty

September 10, 2008

EAST BOOTHBAY – Governor John E. Baldacci today visited Washburn & Doughty Associates to celebrate the resurgence of the company. The boat builder set the keel of the second boat the company had under contract before a fire destroyed their facility two months ago.

“We celebrate today a remarkable achievement,” said Governor Baldacci. “It is a credit to this company, the community – including Hodgdon Yachts and others - and the partnerships that developed with the focus of getting this quality Maine company back up and running after a truly devastating fire. We look forward to the continuing progress and success of Washburn & Doughty and all its workforce.”

Governor Baldacci was invited to Washburn & Doughty by CEO Lee Smith. Setting the keel is the first step to producing a boat.

The Governor congratulated Washburn & Doughty employees and officials for the quick turn around for bringing people back to work this past Monday.

“These incredibly committed individuals are the reason for Washburn & Doughty’s success,” said the Governor. “They have taken what was a complete loss and are back to making the high quality boats. This is good for the Midcoast and good news for Maine.”

Immediately upon hearing of the fire in July, Governor Baldacci deployed State resources to assist the company to recover. The Department of Labor, Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Economic and Community Development, in particular, had officials on the ground after the fire to work with the company and employees to help in recovery and redevelopment efforts.

Governor Recognizes National Guard Sacrifices on 9/11 Anniversary

September 11, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined a solemn ceremony to recognize fallen Maine National Guard, who have died in service after September 11, 2001.

Marking the anniversary of the terrorist attacks that forever changed the nation, Governor Baldacci recognized the families of eight Maine Guardsmen who lost their lives overseas. He also participated in the dedication of a new Battlefield Cross Memorial.

“Our Maine National Guard have always been our heroes,” said Governor Baldacci. “Before September 11, they were called upon to serve domestically, such as during the Ice Storm. Seven years ago, this country was changed forever, and our Maine National Guard continues to answer the call.”

The families of the following soldiers were at the State House ceremony this afternoon:

Sergeant Christopher D. Gelineau

Staff Sergeant Lynn R. Poulin Sr.

Sergeant Thomas J. Dostie

First Sergeant Michael D. Jones

Staff Sergeant Dale J. Kelly

Staff Sergeant David M. Veverka

Captain Patrick D. Damon

Sergeant Richard K. Parker

An identification tag for each fallen soldier was placed on the memorial, and an identical ID tag was presented to each family in a ceremonial box designed for today's dedication. The Maine National Guard Battlefield Cross Memorial will be permanently placed in the public entrance to the Maine National Guard Headquarters at Camp Keyes. The Augusta Emblem Club #233 spearheaded the fundraising to purchase the memorial.

According to the Maine Bureau of Veterans Services, since 9/11 Maine has lost 39 Mainer's in the Global War on Terror and another 16 with ties to Maine. 230 Maine men and women have been wounded in combat operations since September 11, 2001.

Earlier today, the Governor addressed the closing of the four-day national convention of the Army National Guard Plans, Operations, Readiness, Training Advisory Council (PORTAC).

2008 Boston Celtics World Champions- New England State Trophy Tour

September 12, 2008

2008 Boston Celtics World Champions- New England State Trophy Tour Boston Celtics Championship Trophy to Visit Maine AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced that the 2008 World Champion Boston Celtics will bring their championship hardware to Maine. The Celtics plan to make stops in Portland and Orono with the Larry O' Brien Championship Trophy on Wednesday, September 24. In addition, Governor Baldacci will declare September 24 as Boston Celtics Day in the State of Maine.

"I want to thank the Boston Celtics for their willingness to bring their 2008 championship trophy to Maine for sports fans to see up close and in person," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine supports the Celtic Green and we watched with great anticipation and enthusiasm this season as they won their 17th NBA title. The State of Maine welcomes the Celtics, and we look forward to a visit from this first-class organization." A Celtics legend and current player are expected to accompany the trophy to both Portland and Orono, as are members of the Celtics Dancers and the team's mascot, Lucky the Leprechaun. Members of the Celtics front office are expected to join the entourage in Portland.

The NBA Championship Trophy will first be on display to the general public at The Expo in Portland. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. with events scheduled to begin at 11:30 a.m. Following a short rally, fans will be invited to see the trophy between 12 – 2 p.m.

From 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., the trophy will be on display at the Alford Arena on the University of Maine campus in Orono.

Mainers are encouraged to bring a camera to both events for photos with the trophy and Celtics personnel. Both events are free and open to the public. The trophy and the Celtics entourage will also pay a visit to the Barbara Bush Children's Hospital in Portland earlier in the day. Further details regarding the visit will be made available when confirmed.

About The Boston Celtics A charter member of the Basketball Association of America (which evolved into the National Basketball Association) since 1946, the Boston Celtics have won a record 17 NBA Championships, including eight (8) in a row from 1959-1966, and have won NBA titles in four different eras. In addition, 31 former Celtics players, management or staff have been inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. In December 2002 the team returned to local ownership for the first time since 1963. For more information on the Celtics, log on to www.celtics.com.

Maine To Host 32nd Conference of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers

September 12, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci said today that he is looking forward to hosting the 32nd Conference of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers in Bar Harbor next week. The Conference, which takes place Monday, Sept. 15, and Tuesday, Sept. 16, at the Bar Harbor Club, will focus on regional energy, transportation and economic development issues. Governor Baldacci is the current Chair of the New England Governors' Conference. He and New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham are the co-chairs for the Conference.

"This conference offers a unique opportunity to build on the combined strengths of our region as we tackle vital issues impacting our citizens and economy," said Governor Baldacci. "I look forward to enhancing these collaborative regional approaches. Working together, we achieve our shared goals to expand transportation, improve the quality of our environment, create clean and renewable energy, and increase our economic competitiveness."

All six New England Governors and all five of the Eastern Canadian Premiers are scheduled to participate in the two-day event. Also attending are the United States Ambassador to Canada David Wilkins, and the Canadian Ambassador to the United States, Michael Wilson.

Specific sessions on Tuesday include: Transportation Solutions for the 21st Century, Northeast CanAM Connections; Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Opportunities in Transportation; Regional Economic Competitiveness and the Innovation Economy; Report on Demographics; A Shared Energy Future; and The Regional Electricity System.

Resolutions are expected to be signed by participants to advance evolving collaborative efforts in a number of these areas.

"This is an historic opportunity for us to share ideas, work toward common goals and to build relationships," Governor Baldacci said. "While each state and province faces unique challenges, we are all connected by economics, culture and geography. We are all stronger when we recognize those similarities and build upon them."

Governor Baldacci: 'We Will Help Milo Rebuild'

September 14, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released the following statement after learning of the fire in Milo.

"Our first priority is always to make sure that we protect human life," Governor Baldacci said. "Fire crews from a number of towns have responded to help fight this devastating blaze in downtown Milo. The State Fire Marshal is on the scene, and the State will provide any support that the firefighters need."

"At this point, we know at least five businesses have been impacted and at least a third of downtown has been burned. Maine's Department of Economic and Community Development will send specialists to Milo to help the town and businesses recover," Governor Baldacci said.

"This is a terrible fire, but Milo and its residents will have the support of the State as they work to repair their community and recover from this disaster," Governor Baldacci said. "We will help Milo rebuild."

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32nd Conference of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers Concludes

September 16, 2008

BAR HARBOR – Governor John E. Baldacci praised the spirit of cooperation that characterized the 32nd Conference of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers in Bar Harbor. The Conference concludes this evening with a state dinner.

Governor Baldacci is the current Chair of the New England Governors' Conference. He and New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham co-chaired for the Conference.

Eight resolutions were signed by the participants of the conference. Topics ranged from regional energy, transportation and economic development issues.

"This Conference enabled the region's heads of state to strengthen our relationships and build on the momentum we have established in a number of areas vital to the lives of our citizens," said Governor Baldacci. "In that regard, this event was successful and productive," said Governor Baldacci. "These collaborative regional approaches will help us all to address the most challenging issues facing us today."

Specific sessions today included: Transportation Solutions for the 21st Century, Northeast CanAM Connections; Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Opportunities in Transportation; Regional Economic Competitiveness and the Innovation Economy; Report on Demographics; A Shared Energy Future; and The Regional Electricity System.

The resolutions were signed today are: - Resolution Concerning the NEG/ECP Transportation Air Quality Action Plan; - Resolution Concerning the Economic and Social Impacts of Demographic Challenges; - Resolution Concerning Energy Efficiency; - Resolution Concerning Energy; - Resolution Concerning the International Appalachian Trail; - Resolution Concerning Climate Change Adaptation; - Resolution Regarding Cooperation and Collaboration on Transportation and Economic Development; and - Resolution Concerning the Initiative for Truck Weight Harmonization.

"This was a historic opportunity to enhance cooperation across our borders," Governor Baldacci said.

For the text of the resolutions as agreed upon at the Conference, please go to: http://www.scics.gc.ca/confer08_e.html

Governor Baldacci Visits Milo

September 17, 2008

MILO – Governor John E. Baldacci visited downtown Milo Wednesday morning, pledging to help the area that was destroyed by fire over the weekend. Governor Baldacci saw the buildings affected by the fire firsthand and met with Town and State officials to discuss what can be done to help rebuild.

“This is a great community with great people who need to know that they’re not in it alone,” Governor Baldacci said. “It really amazed me seeing the devastation for the first time. It is an entire block. We cannot take for granted the work of the first responders – fire, police and ambulance. Thankfully, no one was hurt. Everyone pulled together not just in Milo, but from surrounding towns as well. Now we are starting from scratch to build it up again, but there is a plan in place and we will look to a bright future here in Milo.”

Governor Baldacci met with Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner John Richardson, other DECD officials, Milo Town Manager Jeff Gahagan, other Town officials, members of the Board of Selectmen, business owners and residents of Milo.

Over the last 12 months, the Town has been coming together to discuss redevelopment options for the downtown. A \$10,000 planning grant with an additional \$3,000 in matching funds had already been applied for, and received, to spur revitalization. A public hearing has been scheduled for Sept. 29 to discuss possibilities for the redevelopment.

Additionally, Governor Baldacci will work with the Town to explore Community Development Block Grants, the Community Development Housing Bill, which was recently passed, and other potential funding methods to assist in the rebuilding process.

A representative from the Maine Department of Labor will be at the Milo Town Hall on Friday from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. to meet with people about unemployment assistance.

Emergency Heating Aid Released to Maine

September 17, 2008

AUGUSTA – Maine will receive an additional \$7 million from the federal government to support heating assistance for low-income families.

The money represents Maine's share of the more than \$120 million in Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program contingency funding released Wednesday.

The additional funds bring Maine's total FY 2008 LIHEAP funds to \$46.5 million, which remains short of expected demand this winter. The combination of State and federal money will increase the average benefit this winter to \$600 for the 48,000 eligible households in the State.

"The release of additional federal funds is an improvement, and I appreciate the diligence of the entire Maine Congressional Delegation in their support of the State's efforts to seek additional monies to protect our citizens," said Governor Baldacci. "The \$7 million Maine will receive will go toward helping low-income, hardworking Maine families afford vital assistance, but more is needed."

Governor Baldacci has consistently sought increased funding for low-income heating assistance. Most recently, on Tuesday, the Governor, as Chair of the New England Governors' Conference, signed a resolution on behalf of the six New England Governors asking for at least \$2.5 billion in additional LIHEAP funding, which would bring LIHEAP up to the fully authorized level of \$5.1 billion. On Sept. 12, Governor Baldacci signed a letter as a member of the Coalition of Northeastern Governors addressed to the bipartisan U.S. House and Senate Leadership with the same request.

Last month, Governor Baldacci announced his short-term energy plan to help all Mainers meet the challenges of the upcoming winter. To aid in keeping people safe and secure in their homes, the Governor put forward a \$12.585 million plan including new investments in weatherization, alternative modes of transportation, voluntary alternative work schedules for State employees, business development, training and education. The low-income heating assistance portion of the plan dedicated \$4.25 million to increase the LIHEAP benefit.

Governor Baldacci Celebrates 10 Years of LifeFlight

September 20, 2008

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci this morning helped LifeFlight commemorate 10 years of serving the people of Maine during a celebration at Eastern Maine Medical Center. The Governor announced during the ceremony that LifeFlight has won the prestigious Program of the Year Award from the Association of Air Medical Services.

“This is a valuable organization that has saved lives across this State – 8,000 of them, in fact,” Governor Baldacci said. “LifeFlight has ensured that in this very rural state, there is access to speedy, experienced medical services no matter where in Maine someone might be in need. In just a short amount of time, LifeFlight has become an integral part of Maine’s emergency healthcare landscape.”

Governor Baldacci credited LifeFlight’s success and growth to working with hospitals and airports to create a comprehensive aviation infrastructure; purchasing new helicopters with advanced technology including night vision goggles to help the crew when flying after dark; and providing ground safety training and advanced medical training to emergency medical professionals throughout the State.

In addition to Governor Baldacci, other speakers at the ceremony included some of the program’s founding medical directors, two patients and President and CEO of EMMC, Deborah Carey Johnson, RN. The Governor credited those who helped create LifeFlight with changing Maine’s trauma system.

“Central Maine Healthcare and Eastern Maine Healthcare created the service for everyone in Maine,” the Governor said. “The medical visionaries at each of these healthcare organizations - Norm Ledwin, Dr. Norm Dinerman, Bill Young, Peter Chalke, and Dr. Larry Hopperstead - wanted all the hospitals in the state to feel like LifeFlight belonged to all of them. Michelle Hood, Dr. Dinerman, Peter Chalke and Dr. Hopperstead continue to work tirelessly to make this program successful.”

The 10th anniversary celebration in Bangor also featured tours of the helicopter with the flight crew and other local emergency medical providers, souvenirs and activities for kids. A separate celebration was held to commemorate the 10-year anniversary at Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston on Friday afternoon.

Players Announced for 2008 Boston Celtics World Champions - New England State Trophy Tour Presented by TD Banknorth

September 22, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today learned that 2008 World Champion Celtics players Tony Allen, Leon Powe and Brian Scalabrine will accompany the Larry O' Brien Championship Trophy to the rally being held in Portland on Wednesday, presented by TD Banknorth. Also joining the trophy at events in Portland and Orono will be Celtics legend JoJo White. "I am pleased to roll out the 'green' carpet for in the State of Maine for 2008 World Champions Tony Allen, Leon Powe and Brian Scalabrine. These three players handled themselves with great class and dignity on the court all year and have earned the respect of their peers and fans alike. It is an honor to have them in Portland," Governor Baldacci said. "It is also exciting to welcome JoJo White to our State. He is a basketball great who had a tremendous career with a legendary NBA franchise."

"TD Banknorth is proud to be an official partner of the 2008 World Champions and thrilled to bring the trophy to its home base of Portland, Maine," said Larry Wold, President and Senior Commercial Lender for TD Banknorth in Maine. The NBA Championship Trophy will first be on display to the general public at The Expo in Portland. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. with events scheduled to begin at 11:30 a.m. Following a short rally at noon, fans will be invited to see the trophy between 12 – 2 p.m. From 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., the trophy will be on display at the Alford Arena on the University of Maine campus in Orono.

In addition to the current players, members of the Celtics front office are expected to join the entourage for the rally in Portland. Members of the Celtics Dancers and the team's mascot, Lucky the Leprechaun will be accompanying Celtics legend JoJo White to both events. Governor Baldacci previously announced that September 24, 2008 will be proclaimed Boston Celtics Day throughout the State of Maine in honor of the visit.

Mainers are encouraged to bring a camera to both events for photos with the trophy and Celtics personnel. Both events are free and open to the public. About The Boston Celtics A charter member of the Basketball Association of America (which evolved into the National Basketball Association) since 1946, the Boston Celtics have won a record 17 NBA Championships, including eight (8) in a row from 1959-1966, and have won NBA titles in four different eras. In addition, 31 former Celtics players, management or staff have been inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. In December 2002 the team returned to local ownership for the first time since 1963. For more information on the Celtics, log on to www.celtics.com.

About TD Banknorth

TD Banknorth is a leading banking and financial services company headquartered in Portland, Maine, and owned by TD Bank Financial Group of Toronto, Canada. Following TD Bank Financial Group's acquisition of Commerce Bancorp Inc. on March 31, 2008, TD Banknorth and Commerce Bank merged on May 31, 2008, to form TD Bank, N.A., one of the 20 largest commercial banking organizations in the United States with over \$114 billion in assets, and provide customers with a full range of financial

products and services at nearly 1,100 convenient locations from Maine to Florida. TD Banknorth and Commerce Bank are trade names of TD Bank, N.A. For more information, visit www.TDBanknorth.com and www.commerceonline.com.

Governor to Host Statewide Energy Savings Tips Program

September 22, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci will host an energy savings program that is open to the public at 6:30 p.m. on October 1. The Governor and energy experts will be at the Kennebec Valley Community College, which will be linked up live to the other six Community Colleges across the state.

The seminar is designed for homeowners and businesses who want to learn more about a number of low-cost, do-it-yourself projects that they can accomplish to help save energy - and money - this winter season. Tips include basic home improvement repairs to stop cold air from leaking into buildings, such as filling holes around foundations and attics; sealing gaps in windows and doors; and finding trouble areas to add insulation to.

“By making some quick, low-cost improvements to their homes, Mainers can save an average of 5 to 10 percent on their heating bills this winter,” said Governor Baldacci. “This is just one way that the State of Maine is hoping to give residents and businesses the tools to prepare for the season.”

The one-hour program will be available after Oct. 1 on the State’s energy assistance Web site, <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/energy.shtml>, and instructional DVDs will be included in the Keep ME Warm kits that will be available mid-October.

In August, Governor Baldacci unveiled a short-term energy plan with the immediate goal of helping Mainers prepare for the cold winter months. The \$12.585 million plan includes new investments in weatherization, low-income heating assistance, alternative modes of transportation, voluntary alternative work schedules for State employees, business development, training and education, and is targeted toward specific, attainable results within the next four months.

“My first priority is to protect vulnerable families and make sure everyone has access to the information and tools they need to prepare for winter,” said the Governor. “This seminar is one of the many initiatives we are undertaking to help keep people safe and secure in their homes.”

Anyone interested in attending the weatherization demonstration is encouraged to register by e-mail or phone. Registration information and a list of the Community College locations follows.

GOVERNOR’S WEATHERIZATION INFORMATION SESSION

Wednesday, October 1, 2008

6:30 p.m.

TO REGISTER

Call 629-4000, or

Email winter@mccs.me.edu with:

Your Name

Your Email Address

Your Contact Telephone #

The LOCATION you plan to attend (listed below)

NOTE: Because space is limited, registration is on a first-come first-served basis.

List of Locations

Central Maine Community College, Auburn

Kirk Hall - Lecture Room 103

Eastern Maine Community College, Bangor

Rangeley Hall - Room 501

Kennebec Valley Community College, Fairfield

Carter Hall - Lecture Hall

Northern Maine Community College, Presque Isle

Christie Building - Lecture Hall

Southern Maine Community College, South Portland

Hildreth Hall - Room 101

Washington County Community College, Calais

Administration Building - Assembly Room

York County Community College, Wells

Administration Building - Function Room

Maine Community College System, Augusta

Board Room - 1st Floor

Governor to Commute Sentence of Carol Graves

September 22, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has begun the process to commute the prison sentence of Carol Graves. Graves learned of the commutation today.

Graves pleaded guilty to intentional or knowing manslaughter in the killing of her father in June 1997 and was sentenced to 17 years in prison. The crime happened in Ellsworth. Before the commutation and considering anticipated good time sentence reductions, Graves was scheduled for release on Sept. 9, 2011. The commutation will reduce the sentence by 18 months.

The Governor's decision begins the process whereby a warrant is drafted by the Office of the Attorney General for signature by the Governor. The warrant can take some time to draft and the commutation is not final until the warrant is signed.

Graves, 36 at the time of the killing in 1996, had been severely physically, emotionally and sexually abused by her father beginning at the age of 5.

At the time of the killing, Graves was suicidal, suffering from Battered Women's Syndrome and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Graves did not present that information during her trial, opting instead for a plea bargain.

While incarcerated, Graves has involved herself in many activities and educational programs, including participating in victim's impact classes, a women's domestic violence abuse group, a drug treatment program and a program for Native American women. She has also held several jobs in the Industries program.

"Twelve years ago, Ms. Graves was involved in a violent act that ended in the death of her father. But the violence did not begin or end on that day in May. For more than 30 years, Ms. Graves had been severely abused. That's not an excuse, but it does help to explain what happened that day," Governor Baldacci said. "Our understanding of Battered Women's Syndrome and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder has advanced greatly since 1996. Ms. Graves has served a long sentence, and she has earned an opportunity to show she has turned her life around."

Graves will be moved to the Department of Corrections re-entry center for women and may serve a period of community confinement until the end of her sentence in early 2010.

This is the first commutation granted by Governor Baldacci. Commutations are considered by the Governor's Board on Executive Clemency, which recommended the commutation.

Dirigo Health Savings Set at \$48.7 Million

September 24, 2008

AUGUSTA – Maine Superintendent of Insurance Mila Kofman yesterday announced her decision of the fourth year savings of the Dirigo Health initiative. After a process that included public hearings before the board and an Insurance hearing, Superintendent Kofman ruled that Dirigo Health has saved \$48.7 million to Maine's health care system. That figure is almost 50% greater than the amount approved by the Superintendent last year.

"The combined savings of Dirigo Health is more than \$158 million," said Governor Baldacci. "Every state in the nation is struggling to contain health care spending that is rising at a rate more than double that of inflation. Maine took a bold step five years ago to address rising costs, and we are achieving real and cumulative savings in the health care system through Dirigo."

"Meanwhile, Maine is succeeding in offering quality health coverage for more residents. While DirigoChoice is just part of the solution, it's an important part, and it has literally saved lives. More than 620 small businesses have DirigoChoice coverage, and Dirigo has been responsible for 29,000 Mainers having access to affordable insurance since its inception, and has increased competition in the individual market."

"The cornerstones of Dirigo are to reduce the rate of uninsured and to reign in out-of-control spending in Maine's health care system," said Governor Baldacci. "We must build on this success."

The Superintendent's determination of savings is the final step before the Dirigo Health Board of Trustees decides on the amount of the fourth year Savings Offset Payment (SOP). The SOP has been the funding mechanism by which Dirigo has been able to make affordable, quality health care available to the uninsured and underinsured in Maine.

Governor Participates in Bangor Hydro's Maine Winter Expo 2008: Weathering the Storm

September 24, 2008

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci this evening encouraged Bangor-area residents and businesses to take advantage of the information and new technologies available to increase their energy efficiency and save money this winter and beyond. The event, held at Spectacular Event Center and sponsored by Bangor Hydro, particularly focused on businesses, enabling them to become more familiar with the variety of options Bangor Hydro, community organizations and governments offer to help them meet the challenges of rising energy costs.

“Through new innovations and transmission development, Bangor Hydro is helping us forge a new path that is characterized by reducing our dependence on costly and volatile oil,” said Governor Baldacci. “This is no small task, but there are opportunities for Maine people and businesses to convert to efficient, clean and more-home-grown energy sources. In the short-term, it’s vital that Mainers are armed with information about steps they can take immediately to ease the burdens that high energy costs will bring this winter.”

The Governor reviewed the actions Maine State Government and many public and private partners are undertaking to ensure that Maine people remain safe in their homes this winter. Additionally, he outlined the long-term approach that is needed to achieve the goal of energy independence and security.

“Maine is already recognized as a leader in pursuing clean, renewable, sustainable and home-grown energy,” said Governor Baldacci. “This is good for our health, our environment, our domestic security, our wallets, and it’s even good business sense. Maine can and should be at the forefront of growing industries and jobs in the emerging environment and energy sectors. We’ll build it right here in Maine.”

Among many upcoming initiatives to help Maine people this winter, the Governor will participate in an event that will be open to the public through the Maine Community College System on Oct. 1 at 6:30 p.m.

The event will provide demonstrations of basic and inexpensive improvements that Mainers can make to their homes to reduce energy usage.

“This year it really is up to each and every one of us to do our part to reduce energy consumption and to look out for our neighbors,” said Governor Baldacci. “We in Maine are all about community, about working together to solve problems. We have seen in many times throughout Maine’s history that we rise to the occasion when there are great challenges ahead. Certainly this is one of those times.”

For more information about the Oct. 1 energy event open to the public, or to register for the event, please call 629-4000 or visit: <http://winter.mccs.me.edu/>

2008 Archive of Governor Baldacci's Press Releases

For information on energy assistance compiled by the State, please visit: <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/energy.shtml>

Governor Baldacci Says Carbon Allowances Auction is a Major Step Forward

September 25, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci said today that the first auction of carbon allowances occurring today is a major step forward in addressing climate change. The auction began at 9 Thursday morning. Six states participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) are involved in the Internet-based auction, including Maine.

“This auction shows what States working together are accomplishing,” Governor Baldacci said. “This effort requires detailed rules and program development through environmental and energy commissioners in 10 northeastern States. Two days ago, seven western States and four Canadian Provinces released design principles for a cap-and-trade program of their own. The States have recognized the need to act and Maine had a groundbreaking role in this effort.”

RGGI, passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in 2007, creates 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.

“I believe that this issue needs to move forward at the federal level,” the Governor said. “We recognize the gravity of the threats posed by climate change and other States are already supporting a cap-and-trade system to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. We must move forward to address global warming not just in the Northeast but throughout the United States.”

The results of the first U.S. carbon auction will be released after they are officially certified, which will likely occur at the beginning of next week.

Fire Damaged Town Receives \$15,000 Grant

September 25, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced that the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and the Office of Community Development have awarded an additional \$5,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to the Town of Milo. The Governor visited Milo after the fire on Sept. 14 destroyed part of the community's downtown. The total CDBG Planning Grant awarded to Milo is now \$15,000.

"The additional grant money is a step toward repairing this community's Main Street, and the State will continue to assist in helping Milo residents weigh all their options," said Governor Baldacci. "By working together, this town will be able to rebuild."

Michael Baran, Acting Director of the Office of Community Development (OCD), said, "In May, the Office of Community Development awarded Milo a \$10,000 Planning Grant for façade and streetscape work, but after the fire the town and Piscataquis County Economic Development Council quickly realized that there would be additional costs for its planning effort as a result of the damage. Luckily, the town was at an ideal phase in the process where they could request additional funds and won't have to wait to start planning to rebuild the heart of community."

The original CDBG grant was to be used for basic improvements to Milo's Main Street and since the fire has drastically changed the landscape of Main Street, the community must decide once more how best to move ahead in the rebuilding of their downtown. There will need to be additional public meetings allowing members of the community to make suggestions and provide input on the future of the downtown, and new possibilities will be discussed and renderings drawn by an engineering firm to provide Milo residents a sense of what could be created in the vacant space where stores and apartments once stood.

Governor Baldacci Honors Murder Victims Statewide

September 25, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci proclaimed Sept. 25, 2008, 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.

“Losing a loved one is always difficult,” Governor Baldacci said. “But losing them because of an act of human violence seems unbearable. Much like many tragedies, you never expect that it will happen to you. You never think it could happen to someone you know. But, the unfortunate reality is that it can happen - and it can happen in a split second.”

About 100 friends and relatives of murder victims were in the Hall of Flags for the ceremony. Governor Baldacci was joined by other speakers at the ceremony including Attorney General Steve Rowe, advocates of domestic violence prevention and family members of murder victims.

“Today marks the second annual National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims,” the Governor said. “It’s a day for all of us to remember their tragedies, honor their courage, and vow to help our friends, family and neighbors do whatever we can to help them rebuild their lives.”

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, in 2007, twenty-one homicides were reported in Maine; and

WHEREAS, although any death of a loved one is difficult, a death by murder is devastating; 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 and friends faced with the death of a loved one by providing ongoing emotional support, individual assistance, education, advocacy and information about and guidance through the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, the designation of a Maine Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims provides an opportunity for the people of the State of Maine to honor the memories of all murder victims, and recognize the impact on surviving family members and friends,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim September 25, 2008 as

A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR MURDER VICTIMS

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

Governor Receives Wood to Energy Task Force Report

September 26, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today received the final report of the Governor's Wood to Energy Task Force. The 28-member Task Force met 15 times over eight months to produce the set of comprehensive recommendations to move Maine towards more reliance on wood energy and away from fossil fuels.

"As a state, Maine is the most dependent on oil for heat. A full 80% of Maine homes are heated with oil, using 400 million gallons of #2 heating oil a year," said Governor Baldacci. "We are also the most forested state. Our challenges are great, but so are the opportunities to become energy independent and secure using, in part, our abundant wood resources."

The Governor said that his Administration has worked with the Legislature, the Congressional Delegation and many public and private partners to ensure that Mainers stay safe and warm in their homes this winter. Last month, the Governor developed a response effort totaling more than \$12.5 million to address immediate challenges ahead.

The report presented today by the Wood to Energy Task Force is a critical piece of the Governor's long-range goal to end Maine's oil dependency.

"In the long-term, we must be more aggressive in building our energy future together – a future that is built upon clean, renewable, home-grown energy sources," said Governor Baldacci. "Our starting point is assessing the wealth of natural resources we have at our disposal."

"We must be mindful of traditional uses of these resources, and of their supply," said the Governor. "And we must find a win-win solution that enables Maine saw and pulp and paper mills to have access to the wood they need while augmenting the supplies available for wood energy. The work the University is doing to develop bio-refinery technology to add and improve the return from pulp and paper mills is an example of how we can be smart about this, increasing energy supplies and while making our traditional industries more profitable."

The Governor thanked the Chair of the Task Force Les Otten, Commissioner Patrick McGowan of the Department of Conservation and the other members of the Task Force for their hard work in developing the report.

"I look forward to continuing to work with all of you to build on this product," said the Governor. "Together, we will ensure that more of the dollars of our hard-working Maine families stay here in the State instead of going to foreign nations. We'll grow industries and jobs in the emerging environment and energy sectors. And we'll build it all right here in Maine."

For more information about the Wood to Energy Task Force, please visit the Department of Conservation Web site: http://www.maine.gov/doc/initiatives/woodtoenergy/task_force.html

2008 Archive of Governor Baldacci's Press Releases

For a list of resources and information about energy costs and ways Mainers can better cope this winter, visit: <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/energy.shtml>

Governor Baldacci Visits Gas-to-Energy Facility

September 30, 2008

HAMPDEN – Governor John E. Baldacci today visited Maine's first gas-to-energy facility. The Pine Tree Landfill in Hampden has been in operation for more than six months as a power plant. The trash that has been deposited in the landfill generates methane gas, which is collected through a network of pipes underneath the landfill. The gas is converted into electricity.

"Turning the gasses produced from the decomposition of solid waste into energy is an important step in achieving a number of goals we have in Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "This reduces harmful greenhouse gases, it reduces our dependency on foreign oil and it helps to build our economy."

By harnessing methane gas, which is a large contributor to global warming, the Governor says that emissions will be reduced, which is better for the environment. He says that the system at the Pine Tree Landfill produces enough energy to supply electricity to 3,000 homes for 15 years, thus reducing dependence on fossil fuels.

"While the Pine Tree Landfill's power generation is the first of its kind in Maine, it probably won't be the last," the Governor said. "I know that we have aggressive goals and the State cannot do it alone. It will take the combined efforts of the public and private sectors to succeed and that's why today is so important."

Officials from Casella Waste Systems, operators of the Pine Tree Landfill, joined the Governor for the visit.

"I want to thank Casella for taking steps to help us as we continue along our path toward a better energy future," Governor Baldacci said. "It's a future that is built upon clean, renewable, home-grown energy sources. It's a transition that will not only benefit our generation, but more importantly the generations of our children and grandchildren."

Governor Baldacci Encourages Energy Efficiency for Businesses

September 30, 2008

HERMON – Governor John E. Baldacci today visited the Danforth Down Home Supermarket in Hermon to highlight a business that has reduced energy costs by investing in energy efficiency. The supermarket installed high-energy refrigeration units in the store to save on electricity costs and conserve energy. Store owners Dick and Marley Danforth estimate that the investments will reduce their electricity costs by \$42,000 annually.

“As a State, we spend more than \$5 billion on energy annually – and most of these dollars flow straight out of Maine to pay for imported fuels and power,” Governor Baldacci said. “More than 95 percent of the money that we spend on fuels to heat our homes leaves the State, landing in the pockets of energy companies with little interest in the future of Maine or America. I want us to do everything that we possibly can to keep energy dollars in our own pockets.”

In addition to the store owners, the Governor was joined at the supermarket by Rep. Josh Tardy (R-Newport), Executive Director of the Natural Resource Council of Maine Brownie Carson, and Peter Gore of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce. The group said that businesses can reduce energy costs with efficiency investments and the cooperation of government, environment and business groups working together can make energy savings a reality.

“Each retrofit, each piece of equipment makes a difference in reducing both energy demand and energy costs,” the Governor said. “Together, those savings are adding up.”

The Natural Resource Council of Maine, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce and Efficiency Maine are hosting efficiency workshops throughout the month for businesses to reduce their own energy costs. The workshops, titled “Surviving the Energy Crisis: How to Save Money,” will be held from 7:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. on Oct. 7 in Saco, Oct. 15 in Lewiston and Oct. 28 in Bangor. More information on the workshops can be found at http://www.nrcm.org/energy_workshops.asp

Governor Baldacci will also participate in an energy efficiency event for homes that will provide demonstrations of basic and inexpensive improvements that Mainers can do on their own. That event will be open to the public through the Maine Community College System on Oct. 1 at 6:30 p.m.

For more information about the Oct. 1 energy event, or to register for the event, please call 629-4000 or visit: <http://winter.mccs.me.edu/>

For information on energy assistance compiled by the State, please visit: <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/energy.shtml>

Keep ME Warm Brochures Available to Connect Mainers to Energy Tips and Assistance

September 30, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci announced the fifth year of Keep ME Warm, an outreach initiative to help Maine citizens prepare for the cold winter months. The Governor's Office began distributing Keep ME Warm brochures to partner organizations this week.

"The State of Maine has been working for months to ensure that residents are able to stay safe in their homes this winter," said Governor Baldacci. "This is another way to get information out to all Mainers about important steps they can take to conserve energy, to obtain energy assistance and to help each other in these difficult times."

Last month, Governor Baldacci announced his short-term energy plan to help all Mainers meet the challenges of the upcoming winter. To aid in keeping people safe and secure in their homes, the Governor put forward a \$12.585 million plan including new investments in weatherization, alternative modes of transportation, voluntary alternative work schedules for State employees, business development, training and education.

A compilation of resources and information on keeping warm this winter is on the State of Maine Web site. The Keep ME Warm brochures specifically point to energy saving tips, the expanded 2-1-1 system as a single point of contact for energy assistance calls, and ways Mainers can help each other, including donating to the Keep ME Warm Fund and volunteering with a local response team.

The Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security, in conjunction with the Maine Public Utilities Commission, MaineHousing, Maine Community Action Association, Maine State Planning Office, 2-1-1 Maine, United Ways of Maine and the Maine Commission for Community Service have joined in this effort to help Maine citizens. Brochures can be obtained at local Community Action agencies, town offices, certain charitable organizations, Maine CareerCenters and state general assistance offices. Brochures can also be downloaded from the Governor's Web page or by calling the Governor's Office at 287-3531.

The Governor said that as the season changes, all Mainers can explore ways they can address potentially high heating costs this year. The Governor is hosting a statewide energy savings tips seminar at 6:30 p.m. at each community college campus on Wednesday, Oct. 1. The program is free and open to the public, offering low-cost, do-it-yourself tips to weatherize buildings.

For more information on the Oct. 1 event, please call 629-4000 or visit <http://winter.mccs.me.edu/>

Mainers can also obtain information from the Governor's Web site at <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/energy.shtml>

The Governor also welcomed news that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR campaign is expanding its efforts to inform Americans about steps they can take to save energy and

reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions. More information on the federal initiative can be found at <http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=globalwarming.showPledgeHome>

Governor Mourns Passing of Dr. Robert Weiss

October 1, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci was saddened to learn of the death of Dr. Robert Weiss. Dr. Weiss moved to Orono after retiring from a long and distinguished medical career. A psychiatrist, Dr. Weiss started the Department of Psychiatry at Dartmouth Medical School, served as associate director of the Center for Community Health and Medical Care at Harvard University, and was dean of Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health.

After moving to Maine in his late 70s, Dr. Weiss remained active professionally and contributed greatly to the health and welfare of the community and to the State of Maine. Among his pursuits while living in Maine, Dr. Weiss worked with the Baldacci Administration on a variety of energy issues, including meetings with the University to encourage energy savings at the Orono campus.

"Bob Weiss was an amazing individual. He contributed greatly to patient-centered care and public health in this country. On a personal and professional level, he was deeply committed to expanding health care quality and access," said Governor Baldacci. "I admired Bob for the way he worked with people and how he applied his principles to every aspect of his life, whether it be direct patient care or universal health insurance. He was truly an inspiring man."

Governor Baldacci Honors State Employees for Longevity

October 1, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci thanked more than 500 State employees today for their more than 25 years of service. Those state employees were invited to the Governor's Longevity Luncheon and Awards at the Augusta Civic Center.

"You all do a great job. You are a valued group of people," Governor Baldacci said. "You should be proud of the work that you are doing and the years of service you have given."

The honorees included 197 employees with 25 years of service, 225 employees with 30 years of service, 69 employees with 35 years of service, 23 employees with 40 years of service, and one employee with 50 years of service.

"This day was established for you," the Governor said. "It is important to say a proper 'thank you' for all that you have done for the people of Maine through thick and thin. Your service is respected and appreciated by both your peers and the citizens of this State. Thank you."

Governor Announces Staff Reorganization

October 1, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced changes within his office as he prepares for an aggressive agenda during the last two years of his Administration.

David Farmer has been named Deputy Chief of Staff, replacing Ryan Low who is now the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services. Farmer has served as Director of Communications since January 2007. Before joining the Administration, Farmer was a reporter and editorial page editor for the Lewiston Sun Journal following a journalism career in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C. Farmer earned a B.A. in journalism from Emory and Henry College in Virginia, and an M.A. in government from The American University in Washington, D.C.

Farmer will be the Administration's lead in moving key initiatives through the legislative process, while also acting as the Governor's liaison to the Finance Authority of Maine, MaineHousing and the Maine Municipal Bond Bank.

"David has a broad understanding of the issues facing Maine, and is a trusted adviser," Governor Baldacci said. "He will work hand-in-hand with Chief of Staff Jane Lincoln as we develop our next two-year budget, reform government at all levels and work for tax relief and economic development."

Senior Policy Adviser Patrick Ende will replace Mike Mahoney as Chief Counsel. Before joining the Governor's staff in October 2004, Ende served for almost 16 years as a Staff Attorney and Directing Attorney for Pine Tree Legal Assistance Inc. He also served as Litigation Director for Maine Equal Justice Partners Inc. Ende earned his law degree from New York University School of Law and a B.A. from Queen College of the City University of New York. Mahoney left the Governor's Office to return to private practice earlier this year.

In addition to his role as Chief Counsel, Ende will continue to work on issues concerning health and human services.

"Pat is a brilliant lawyer and a dedicated public servant," Governor Baldacci said. "He provides strong moral leadership within our office. I know that he will excel in his new position as we continue to try to balance the demands of providing important government services with the need for fiscal discipline."

Deborah Friedman will join Governor Baldacci's staff as a Senior Policy Adviser for education, labor, Maine's cultural agencies and other assignments. Since 2004, Friedman has worked as the Policy Director to Senate President Beth Edmonds. Before joining Edmonds' staff, she worked as a legislative analyst and senior legislative analyst for the Legislature's Office of Policy and Legal Analysis for 16 years. From 1986 to 1988, Friedman was an associate attorney in the corporate and tax department at Verrill Dana. She received her J.D. from Boston University School of Law and a B.A. from Carleton College in Northfield, Minn. Friedman will join the staff Oct. 24.

"Deb is a great addition to our staff," Governor Baldacci said. "She has tremendous legal, legislative and policy experience. Her expertise will be an asset as we continue to work toward a stronger education system and toward crucial investments in innovation and higher education."

Policy Adviser Lance Boucher is being promoted to Senior Policy Adviser. His portfolio will include economic development. He will also continue as the Director of Governor Baldacci's Office of Redevelopment, Re-employment and Business Support and continue to coordinate the State's response to the closure of Naval Air Station Brunswick.

"Lance will bring a steady hand to our efforts to expand economic development and create jobs in Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "He understands the delicate relationship between federal, state and local governments, and knows how to bring people together for a common purpose. He is the right point person for my office as we work with businesses and communities to expand opportunities around our State."

Boucher has served the public in a number of positions since graduating from the University of Maine in 2000. Prior to joining the Governor's staff, Boucher worked as a Legislative Assistant in then-Congressman Baldacci's congressional office handling Homeland Security, Defense and Education issues. Additionally, Boucher has served as a Legislative Assistant in New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's Office of Federal Affairs in Washington, D.C.

The search has begun for a new Director of Communications.

Governor Opens Conference on Youth and the Natural World

October 2, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today addressed a large gathering of youth and adults who are focused on connecting Maine's children with the great outdoors. The Governor's Conference on Youth and the Natural World began this morning at the Augusta Civic Center and features breakout sessions throughout the day on outdoor-related topics such as helping schools connect with nature and building healthy communities.

"Part of reconnecting people with nature is reconnecting people with their families," Governor Baldacci said. "It's not just about being healthy, but also about creating memorable moments with family and friends. I canoed the Allagash Wilderness Waterway last year with my son, and I remember the scenery, the exercise and the overall feeling of the great outdoors. But I especially remember playing cribbage, talking and laughing with my son. Those are the special memories that I brought home from that trip."

Department of Conservation Commissioner Patrick McGowan opened the conference applauding Governor Baldacci for his work conserving land and investing in Maine's State Parks and natural resources. Governor Baldacci, in turn, thanked the people of Maine for understanding the importance of those resources.

"Last fall we sent to Maine voters, and they overwhelmingly approved, a bond question to replenish the Land for Maine's Future program, which since 1986 has protected nearly half a million acres of open space so that our children and grandchildren will know the Maine that we have loved," the Governor said. "That same bond included \$7.5 million to invest in our State parks, which welcome about 2.2 million visitors annually, and give Maine families an affordable place to swim and picnic, relax and reconnect."

The keynote address was delivered by Larry Selzer, President and CEO of The Conservation Fund. The Governor said Selzer has been at the forefront of the national movement to reconnect children with nature.

For more information on Maine's Take It Outside program, visit www.take-it-outside.org.

Governor Directs Flag to be Flown at Half-Staff for Fallen Firefighters

October 2, 2008

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. 5, 2008, in remembrance and honor of firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

“Firefighters put themselves in harms way every day to ensure the safety of our citizens,” Governor Baldacci said. “As first responders, firefighters battle flames that are sometimes unpredictable and always dangerous. They put their own lives on the line to protect the rest of us. I urge all Mainers to take time out of their day on Sunday to remember those firefighters who have died in the line of duty. They should not be forgotten.”

Governor Baldacci is planning to participate in a ceremony this weekend to honor the memory of firefighters who have passed away over the last year and thank all active firefighters for their service. The ceremony is scheduled for 1 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 4, at Capital Park in Augusta.

Governor Speaks at Childhood Obesity Forum

October 2, 2008

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci tonight addressed a public program on childhood obesity. Sponsored by Eastern Maine Medical Center in collaboration with other health care providers, the event identified the major health risk of obesity and strategies to address the public health issue. The featured speaker was Dr. Kim Eagle, Director of the University of Michigan Cardiovascular Center, who discussed the “Project Healthy Schools” program developed in the Ann Arbor School System.

“This is a critical issue impacting Maine children,” said Governor Baldacci. “A full 30% of Maine youth are obese or overweight. These are the highest rates in New England, and our obesity rates have doubled in the past 15 years. Addressing this issue is vital to the health and welfare of our most valuable resource, our children.”

Obesity and being overweight are key increase the risk of serious medical conditions, generating high costs to our health care system. Governor Baldacci said that coordinated health and wellness efforts through Maine schools and other public programs are important. “There are multiple causes to obesity, and that’s why the combined efforts of schools, health professionals, parents and others are needed to successfully address obesity in youth,” said the Governor.

Earlier in the day, the Governor gave opening remarks at the Governor’s Conference on Youth and the Natural World in Augusta. The conference addressed strategies to help schools connect with nature and build healthy communities. The Governor said other initiatives including the Governor’s Council on Physical Activity; Take it Outside; and Dirigo Health Reform’s strong preventive health focus and development of the State Health Plan are crucial pieces of the comprehensive work to address childhood obesity.

Governor Honors Maine Soldiers

October 5, 2008

WATERVILLE – Governor John E. Baldacci today welcomed home 36 members of the Detachment 1, 169th Military Police Company and other soldiers from select individual mobilization at a Freedom Salute ceremony at the Waterville Armory. The members of the 169th Military Police Company were attached to the 5th Marine Regiment. They served a year in Iraq , conducting extensive security operations and mentored the Iraqi police units.

“We publicly celebrate today all that you have achieved,” Governor Baldacci told the troops. “All of Maine thanks you. We are deeply appreciative of your efforts. You continue a great tradition in Maine of service.”

The Governor commented on the accomplishments of the unit while overseas and of the spirit with which they achieved their mission. “As soldiers, neighbors, friends and family members, you continually represent the best of this State,” said Governor Baldacci. “We are of one mind and heart when it comes to our soldiers. You always have our support.”

RGGI Funds Directed Toward Weatherization

October 7, 2008

Carbon Savings Trust Funds Allocates Up To \$750,000 to Help Low-Income Families

AUGUSTA – Maine's Energy and Carbon Savings Trust last week ordered that \$750,000 be made available to help low-income Mainers reduce heating fuel use through conservation efforts this winter.

The funds come from the first quarterly auction of pollution credits under the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, which was held in September and which produced \$2.6 million for disbursement by the Trust. The funding will be awarded to organizations that submit high-quality proposals to the Trust.

"When we enacted RGGI, our goal was to combat the emissions of greenhouse gases and to fund conservation efforts," Governor John E. Baldacci said. "High energy prices this winter are a real threat to working families and to our economy. By putting these resources to work, we can help families stay safe and secure in their homes and reduce our dependency on foreign oil."

The Trust funds may be used for a variety of energy conservation efforts under Maine's RGGI statute. The bulk must be dedicated to electricity conservation; however, a portion may be used to address other energy needs, such as fuel oil conservation and weatherization efforts.

"The Trustees are extremely gratified to be in a position to help reduce the impact of this winter's heating fuel prices on low-income Mainers through programs that will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions," said Stephen Diamond, the Chairman of the Trust. "Weatherizing residences and enhancing furnace efficiency produce both environmental and economic benefits for our State and should help reduce the risks faced by those least able to afford skyrocketing energy prices."

In response to the expected hardships high energy prices will place on Mainers this winter, the three members of the Trust decided to take quick action to put RGGI funds to use by adopting an emergency rule authorizing the immediate disbursement of a portion of the funds.

The Trust is working on adopting permanent rules that will govern disbursement of the proceeds remaining from this auction as well as the proceeds from future auctions. Once those rules are in place, the Trust will fund a variety of energy conservation measures that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions as effectively as possible among all customer classes, including residential, small business, commercial and industrial customers.

In addition to Diamond, who formerly served on the Maine Public Utilities Commission, the members of the Trust are Tom Tietenberg, Mitchell Family Professor of Economics, Emeritus, at Colby College and Andy Nixon, who recently retired from his position as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Dead River Company.

The Maine Legislature enacted RGGI in 2007, joining Maine in a 10-state effort to reduce regional carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions that are contributing to global climate change.

RGGI establishes a goal of reducing carbon emissions from large fossil fuel-fired power plants in the region by 10 percent by 2018. It sets a cap on the total carbon dioxide emissions that are allowed from the power plants. In Maine, there are currently six plants that fall within the RGGI program. In order to meet the requirement to have one allowance for every pound of carbon dioxide emitted, plants may purchase or trade “allowances” or they may reduce emissions through efficiency measures or by purchasing “carbon emission offsets.”

The allowances will be sold at quarterly auctions, with some states. Maine’s share of the auction proceeds will be received by the Energy and Carbon Savings Trust.

Under Maine’s RGGI law, the first \$5 of every allowance sold must be dedicated to efficiency measures – as decided by the Trustees. Any amount above the \$5 threshold will be turned directly back to electricity consumers in the form of electricity bill rebates.

The law also requires the Trustees to spend 85 percent of the efficiency funds on measures that reduce electricity use through the year 2011. The remaining 15 percent may be used for measures that directly reduce the consumption of fossil fuels.

The Trustees’ decisions will be coordinated with efficiency programs operated by the Public Utilities Commission. A separate body already appointed by the MPUC, the Energy Conservation Board, will advise the Trust and the MPUC on coordination of efficiency efforts. The Energy Conservation Board will also advise the Trustees and the PUC on the creation of a triennial energy plan for the state.

Governor Baldacci Helps to Break Ground on Southern Maine Veterans Cemetery

October 7, 2008

SPRINGVALE – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Major General John W. Libby and several State and local officials to break ground on the new Southern Maine Veterans Memorial Cemetery. The goal is to have the cemetery available to veterans and their spouses by October 2009.

“When the cemetery is complete, the Southern part of Maine will finally have a place to properly honor those veterans who have passed on,” Governor Baldacci said. “This is an important obligation we have to the men and women who have done so much for us.”

A \$4.2 million grant to establish the cemetery was announced late last month. The Southern Maine Veterans Cemetery will cover about 90 acres of land and will be built in three phases. The first phase includes a 12-acre development that will provide 3,196 full-casket burial sites and 1,298 in-ground cremation burial sites. The grant will provide funding for the construction of the main entrance, full-casket and cremation burial areas, an assembly area, maintenance building and supporting infrastructure.

Governor Baldacci talked about the State’s commitment to its veterans, including programs like the Silver Star Honorable Service Medal and legislation passed earlier this year to create a Veterans Campus in Bangor.

“The idea is to have an integrated campus to improve services for veterans,” the Governor said.

“Independent housing, long-term skilled nursing care, residential care, outpatient clinical care, hospice care, and the information and programs administered by the State’s Bureau of Maine Veterans Services, would all be available in a single place, improving convenience, access, efficiency, coordination and quality.”

The Southern Maine Veterans Cemetery will be the fourth such cemetery in the State. Two Veterans Cemeteries exist in Augusta and one in Caribou.

Governor Presents State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals to Veterans

April 1, 2008

SCARBOROUGH - Governor John E. Baldacci today presented State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals to four veterans in a ceremony at the Maine Veterans Home in Scarborough. The medal was first awarded to Maine veterans in August 2006, and is presented to those who have been wounded while serving their country.

"As we gather today in Scarborough, it is important to remember that many of our sons and daughters from Maine are still defending our country overseas," Governor Baldacci said. "Some are over there for the first time and some are serving on a repeat tour of duty. We must not forget those soldiers and their families as they serve our country thousands of miles away from home."

The Governor was joined by Maine Adjutant General John W. Libby and Director of Veterans Services Peter Ogden in awarding the service medals to the veterans.

"This past weekend we honored soldiers of the Detachment 1, 169th Military Police Company," the Governor said. "And earlier today we broke ground on the new Southern Maine Veterans Cemetery in Springvale. We must remember and honor our veterans not just when they first return home, but for ever and for always."

Since Governor Baldacci first dedicated the Silver Star Honorable Service Medal for veterans wounded in combat and former Prisoners of War, a total of 407 Silver Star Medals have been presented to Maine veterans. The next medal presentation will occur on Thursday, Oct. 9 at the State House in Augusta.

Below is the list of veterans recognized today, and the town in which they reside.

World War II

MAJ Edward I. Chappell, MVH – Scarborough

CPL Gerald F. Coffey, MVH – Scarborough

T/4 Earle A. Howard, Sr., South Portland

Korea

COL Albert N. Weidhas, Portland

In addition, four other veterans were honored who could not be present at the ceremony today:

World War II

PFC Edwin D. Moores, Buxton

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S/Sgt Luther E. Smith, Conway

CPL Carlton P. Wing, Falmouth

Vietnam

CPT Ronald Miller, Gorham

Governor Presents 2008 Hastings Award to Hancock Lumber

October 8, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today presented the fourth annual Philip C. Hastings Award to Hancock Lumber for the company's efforts in energy efficiency.

"Energy conservation has never been of greater concern for Mainers. As winter approaches and oil remains at sky-high prices, we know the very real dangers posed by dependency on foreign oil," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine businesses and residents are being squeezed by energy costs and that is why it is important for companies such as Hancock Lumber to take measures into our own hands to improve our energy efficiency."

The Hastings Award recognizes a group or individual that has advanced the mission and principles of Efficiency Maine and has provided superior service or support to Maine's energy efficiency community. It was established in 2005 in remembrance of the program's founding director, the late Philip C. Hastings.

In 2007, Hancock invested more than \$180,000 to improve the efficiency of lighting and compressor systems at its Bethel sawmill. Efficiency Maine provided incentives worth nearly \$46,000. Together those projects reduced consumption by more than 700,000 kilowatt hours.

"Since its creation in 2002, Efficiency Maine has led the way to significant electricity reductions and other energy savings for Mainers," the Governor said. "Maine businesses are smart about reducing energy use, and the partnership between Hancock Lumber and Efficiency Maine is a prime example of government and business working together to benefit both the bottom line and the public interest."

Accepting the award on behalf of Hancock Lumber was Mike Halle, facilities manager at the company's Bethel sawmill. Joining the Governor for the presentation were Public Utilities Chair Sharon M. Reishus and Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner John Richardson.

Governor and Brookfield Meet on Millinocket Mill

October 8, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and officials from Fraser Paper and Brookfield had a productive meeting today. During the meeting, company officials gave the Governor a full account of the Katahdin Paper Company Millinocket Mill's current status, the progress made to date and continued efforts underway to develop a plan to reopen it in the future.

"We continue to work together to ensure the shut down is a temporary measure and that the hard-working employees can get back to work as soon as possible," said Governor Baldacci. "I appreciate the commitment of Fraser Paper and Brookfield to address the energy costs that led to the shut down of the mill."

Fraser and Brookfield continue to dedicate significant time and financial and human resources to finding a technical solution that will reduce the mill's steam costs, the key component to restarting the mill. A comprehensive business plan is under development and it is hoped that conditions will be sufficiently attractive to find an investor to finance, install and operate a biomass boiler at Katahdin.

"We remain committed to a thorough analysis," said Peter Gordon, CEO, Fraser Paper. "We have told the Governor that we will report back to him by the end of November to brief him on our progress, specifically as it relates to project feasibility, equipment costs, electric transmission needs and environmental permitting schedules. To that end, Brookfield has engaged Cianbro Inc. to provide engineering assessment of the project. Additionally, Brookfield has engaged Babcock & Wilcox Inc. to assess existing boiler and steam equipment at the mill."

The Governor renewed his pledged to join Brookfield as a partner in identifying the most feasible, sustainable business solution to the complex set of issues facing the mill.

"We look forward to continuing to work with Brookfield and other key stakeholders on this important undertaking," said Governor Baldacci.

Governor Baldacci Honors State Managers of the Year

October 9, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci honored nearly two dozen managers within State government Thursday morning during a reception at the Blaine House. Each manager received the William Twarog Manager of the Year Award for their department.

“This is an important recognition,” Governor Baldacci said. “Each one of you and the hundreds of employees who stand with you do a terrific job. The quality of our workforce and the dedication to public service is tremendous. I appreciate your work, and it should be honored.”

Nomination criteria includes service to the agency, demonstration of leadership, stewardship and problem solving, a record of career growth and development, and overall service to the public or volunteer service.

Each of the 21 recipients were honored individually by the Governor and given a plaque for their service.

“You have all had to withstand some significant struggles,” the Governor said. “Since I have taken office, we have essentially flat funded State government with the exception of voter-approved increases in education aid. You have all had to reorganize, restructure and be more efficient with your resources. I know that it has not been easy, but we have to take those measures while our economy straightens out. You have done a wonderful job through difficult times and your State thanks you.”

2008 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Baxter State Park - Elizabeth Johnston, Personal Service Manager I

Department of Administrative & Financial Services - Susan A. Smith, Tax Section Manager

Department of Agriculture - Ann Gibbs, State Horticulturist

Department of Conservation - Andy Haskell, Park Manager II

Department of Corrections - Mark McCarthy, Assistant Fiscal Director

Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management - Philip N. Ceaser, Construction Supervisor

Department of Economic and Community Development - Michael D. Baran, Acting Director, Office of Business Development

Department of Education - Pauline Lamontagne, Coordinator, Due Process Office

Department of Environmental Protection - Carole Cifrino, Program Manager, Asbestos and Lead

Department of Health and Human Services - Gary Wolcott, Director, Brain Injury Services

Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife - Major Gregory Sanborn

Department of Labor - Karen Fraser, Manager, Service Improvement and Quality Assurance Unit

Department of Marine Resources - David Libby, Division Director, Resource Management/Biological Monitoring and Assessment

Department of Professional & Financial Regulation - Kendra Godbout, Director, Financial Analysis

Department of Public Safety - Sgt. Sean Hashey, Maine State Police

Department of the Secretary of State - Rhonda Boynton, Northern Region Section Manager

Department of Transportation - Steve Landry, Civil Engineer IV

Office of the Attorney General - Janice Stuver, Assistant Attorney General, Chief, Child Protection Division

Office of the State Treasurer - Timothy Rodriguez, Assistant Director of Internal Operations

State Planning Office - Catherine Reilly, State Economist

Worker's Compensation Board - Richard Dunn, Deputy Director of Business Services

Governor Presents State of Maine Gold and Silver Star Honorable Service Medals to Veterans

October 9, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci joined military officials Thursday to present Gold Star Honorable Service Medals to two families who have lost soldiers in combat. The Governor also presented Silver Star medals to Purple Heart recipients and Prisoners of War from various wars.

"You all are part of a proud legacy of service," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine has proportionately more veterans than any other State. This is not surprising because taking care of our community is what we as Mainers are all about. It's an essential part of our roots and character. You are part of this tradition of service and I am proud to be with you today."

The Governor was joined by Maine Adjutant General John W. Libby and Director of Veterans Services Peter Ogden in awarding the service medals to the veterans and families.

"In our State we have a proud tradition of military service dating back to Joshua Chamberlain and continuing through today," the Governor said. "It's important to recognize our veterans and their families, and to realize how important they are to our communities and our lives."

Since Governor Baldacci first dedicated the Silver Star Honorable Service Medal for veterans wounded in combat and former Prisoners of War, more than 400 Silver Star Medals have been presented to Maine veterans.

Earlier this week, Governor Baldacci presented four State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals at the Maine Veterans Home in Scarborough.

Below is the list of veterans recognized today, and the town in which they reside.

Gold Star Honorable Service Medal

SSG Raymond J. Bechard, Army, Vietnam, Augusta (Represented by his mother, Mercedes Bechard)

SGT Richard J. Goggin, Army, Vietnam, Augusta (Represented by his mother, Thelma Brooks)

Prisoners of War

SGT Ralph W. Lake, Army, Germany, Farmington (Represented by his wife, Nancy)

Purple Heart

PVT Arthur P. Bragdon, Army, Sicily, Oxford

PFC Jean Paul D. Guerin, Army, France, Augusta

SGM Alfred Green, Army, Korea, Bath

PFC Harold J. Pratt, Army, Italy, Windsor

CPL Richard B. Sargent, Marine Corps, Vietnam, Gardiner

In addition, four other veterans were honored who could not be present at the ceremony today:

Prisoners of war

PVT William F. Helm, Army, Germany, Sidney

PVT Richard S. Choate, Army, Germany, Farmingdale

1LT Newell E. Perkins, Army Air Corps, Germany, Augusta

GySgt Lawson A. Musick, Marine Corps, Japan, Augusta

T/Sgt Walter C. Rich, Army Air Corps, Germany, Union

Purple Heart

PFC Donald C. Smart, Army, France, Mattawamkeg

1SG Jack J. Munroe, Army, Vietnam, Stetson

SPC Robert J. Abrams, Army, Iraq, Farmington

SGT Christopher K. Ramsdell, Army, Iraq, Warren

Governor Baldacci Sees Bright Future on Maine Street in Brunswick

October 14, 2008

BRUNSWICK – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated the groundbreaking of what will become a mixed-use development featuring retail and office space, residential condominiums, an inn and a train station in downtown Brunswick. Officials expect the first phase of construction for Maine Street Station to be completed by next summer.

“This is a public-private partnership that is keeping to the special downtown culture of Brunswick and looking to expand and grow new business,” Governor Baldacci said. “The national economy is a challenge for everyone right now, but the Town of Brunswick has the right approach. This couldn’t come at a more opportune time as we continue to prepare for the closure of Naval Air Station Brunswick.”

Among the highlights in the plans for Maine Street Station are a 65-room hotel near Bowdoin College and downtown Brunswick; the creation of a passenger rail station which should enhance existing train services along the midcoast; and a multi-modal station to accommodate bus, taxi, auto, bicycle and pedestrian traffic in the middle of downtown Brunswick. Officials estimate at least 250 jobs will be created through the 130,000 square feet of mixed-use space.

“This will be an impressive facility and a fantastic testament to the work of countless individuals,” the Governor said.

The State was able to assist with project funding through the Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Transportation and the Department of Economic and Community Development. The Town of Brunswick has also taken steps to ensure that the project will implement green initiatives, including low-flow plumbing fixtures and Energy Star appliances.

“The green design being used helps conserve energy and that will be good for the environment and for the bottom-line,” Governor Baldacci said.

Governor and Bank of America Recognize Nonprofit Contributions

October 15, 2008

SOUTH PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Betsey Greenstein, President of Bank of America Maine and Bank of America associates serving Maine communities to present grants to 40 Maine nonprofits. The Bank of America Charitable Foundation awarded \$5,000 grants to each nonprofit.

“We have vibrant, more stable communities because of the work done by Bank of America not just for their employees, but for the nonprofits located within those communities,” said Governor Baldacci.

“Today we celebrate Bank of America’s commitment to being a good corporate citizen, and we recognize the incredible work that our nonprofits are providing on the front lines of our communities.”

The Governor said that in this time of great national financial upheaval, Maine families and businesses are feeling tremendous pressure. Nonprofits are doing amazing work in their communities, but are also having to stretch resources, he said.

“The funds provided today will help our nonprofits continue to serve hard working Mainers,” said the Governor. “It’s never been more true that to get through these hard times, it will take the combined efforts of all of us in this room - and many outside of it - to provide the safety net of support for hard-working Maine families. In times like these, we recognize how lucky we are to live in Maine, where people look out for each other and take pride in seeing that the health and welfare of their communities are protected.”

A list of the nonprofits receiving grants from The Bank of America Charitable Foundation follows.

Auburn-Lewiston YMCA

Holocaust & Human Rights Center of Maine

Kennebec Valley YMCA

Bread of Life Ministries Soup Kitchen

St Joseph Healthcare

Bangor YMCA

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern ME

Tedford Housing

Waldo CAP

Biddeford Free Clinic

Good Shepherd Food Bank NE Distribution Center

Oasis Health Netowrk

Friends of Casco Bay

Maine Audubon Society

Johnson Hall Performing Arts Center

Fair Tide

Downtown Education Collaborative

Sisters of Charity

Riding to the Top Therapeutic Riding Center

Sebasticook Family Doctors

Senior Center of Wells / Ogunquit

Cross Roads Ministries

Four Directions CDFI

Literacy Volunteers of Greater Portland

PCA

Dress for Success

PROP People's Regional Opportunity Program

Atlantic Challenge

Day One

Boys & Girls Club of Southern Maine

Biddeford / Saco Economic Development Corp

Sanford-Springvale YMCA

Project Grace

Ocean's Wide

Kennebec Valley CAP

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Laudholm Trust

Westbrook Services Corp Housing Authority

Healthy Futures

Royal River Conservation Trust

Footprints Food Pantry

Governor Baldacci Addresses Energy Issues with the Elderly

October 15, 2008

AUGUSTA — Governor John E. Baldacci told senior citizens from around Maine that this winter will be difficult, but the State has been working for months to ensure their safety and warmth throughout the season. The Governor made the comments to about 200 senior citizens at the Blaine House Conference on Aging held at the Augusta Civic Center Wednesday.

“Let there be no doubt, this will be a challenging winter for many older Mainers,” Governor Baldacci said. “The high cost of heating oil coupled with the downturn in the national economy will hurt almost everybody. Our elderly are particularly vulnerable, and that’s why the steps we take – working collaboratively – will make a huge difference in their lives.”

Governor Baldacci said that things are changing rapidly in Maine and around the world. He said that it is important to keep in mind that these changes will make life different for the elderly of today as compared to the experiences of earlier generations in America, specifically concerning employment and health care.

“Our aging population will fuel an increasing demand for primary, acute, and ongoing long-term health care services,” the Governor said. “At the same time, demographic and cultural changes are decreasing the availability of unpaid, informal care that traditionally has been provided by family members. As you can see by these examples alone, the needs and desires of our aging population are evolving and will have a great impact on all of Maine.”

This was the second Blaine House Conference on Aging in two years after a hiatus of more than 15 years. Topics discussed at the conference included fuel costs, creative housing and services, employment, health, and transportation for the elderly. The Governor said the first conference gave his administration valuable information concerning Maine’s aging population. He said that he looks forward to hearing from the Post-Blaine House Conference on Aging Committee about actions that were taken at today’s conference.

Governor Baldacci Proclaims Friday as Dr. Bernard Lown Day

October 15, 2008

AUGUSTA — Governor John E. Baldacci announced today that he will proclaim Friday, Oct. 17, 2008, as Dr. Bernard Lown Day throughout the State of Maine. The proclamation will be issued in conjunction with a ceremony to officially rename the bridge that connects Lewiston and Auburn as the Bernard Lown Peace Bridge in his honor.

“It was a proud day when we signed the legislation earlier this year to rename the South Bridge after such an impressive individual,” Governor Baldacci said. “It is the hope that with the bridge renaming, many future generations will see Dr. Lown’s name and will hopefully learn his story and his incredible humanitarian efforts.”

Dr. Lown was born in Lithuania and immigrated along with his family to Lewiston at the age of 13. He graduated from Lewiston High School and the University of Maine and later went on to invent the defibrillator. He was a founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility and the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. In 1985 on behalf of the latter organization, he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize.

The public dedication ceremony, including a monument unveiling and ribbon-cutting, is set to begin at 10:15 a.m. on the Bernard Lown Peace Bridge, formerly the South Bridge.

The text of the proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, Dr. Bernard Lown was born in Lithuania in 1921 and arrived with his family in Lewiston, Maine at the age of 13; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lown graduated summa cum laude from the University of Maine in 1942; and

WHEREAS, among Dr. Lown’s accomplishments after graduating from the University of Maine, he developed the direct current defibrillator, which has helped saved an overwhelming number of lives; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lown was a founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility and the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lown accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War in 1985; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Bernard Lown has devoted more than fifty years to the practice of medicine, the field of cardiology and the betterment of humankind; and

WHEREAS, through unanimous approval from the Auburn and Lewiston City Councils and as a result of Legislative action, the South Bridge between the two communities is being renamed as the Bernard Lown Peace Bridge; and

WHEREAS, the State of Maine officially recognizes Dr. Lown for his tremendous accomplishments throughout his career and his life,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim October 17, 2008 as

DR. BERNARD LOWN DAY

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

Maine to Receive Additional \$30 Million in LIHEAP Funds

October 16, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced good news for Maine low-income households concerned about keeping safe and warm this winter. Maine will receive an additional \$30 million in federal funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

“Today’s announcement, coupled with the higher funding and eligible income level previously announced for LIHEAP and falling oil prices, make the home heating situation for our low-income households brighter now than they appeared a month ago,” Governor Baldacci said.

MaineHousing Director Dale McCormick said today’s announcement of additional funding will bring the average federal benefit for eligible LIHEAP households to \$792. Prior to the release of additional funds, the average benefit was estimated at \$557.

“The total LIHEAP allocation has increased by 69 percent, but the number of households we anticipate serving has increased 65 percent. This means the average benefit is roughly the same, but more money is targeted at households that are most at risk,” said McCormick.

“Our goal at the start of this heating season was to ensure that the lowest income households in the state received as much heating oil this winter as they did last year through LIHEAP,” McCormick noted. “It looks as though we will be able to reach that goal.”

Last year, with an average benefit of \$779, the average LIHEAP household received about 230 gallons of heating oil, slightly less than a full tank.

The federal government now has approved LIHEAP spending of \$79 million for Maine for the coming heating season – but the number of households expected to receive LIHEAP benefits also has increased substantially because Congress increased eligible income limits.

Because of the higher income limits, MaineHousing estimates 84,000 Maine households will receive LIHEAP benefits this heating season. Last heating season the program served about 50,000 households.

“MaineHousing will be asking its Board of Commissioners next week to adopt an emergency rule that will allocate the LIHEAP funding equitably by need among all the families now eligible under the expanded income limits,” said McCormick.

Governor Baldacci cautioned that the increased funding for LIHEAP does not lessen the need for Maine government and Maine people to take steps to reduce energy consumption.

“We are continuing state plans to weatherize additional homes this winter, and it remains important that neighbors and volunteers help people who are most vulnerable this winter,” the Governor said. “Next week, on Oct. 25, we will have volunteer groups throughout the state distributing and installing the ‘Keep Me Warm’ kits on some 2,000 homes.”

Persons interested in applying for LIHEAP should contact their regional CAP agency. A list of CAP agencies and more information about LIHEAP is available at MaineHousing's website at www.mainehousing.org

Governor Addresses Concerns of Maine Lobstermen

October 17, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today expressed his concern about the impact of rapidly falling lobster prices on lobstermen, dealers and processors and Maine's coastal communities. He has directed members of his Administration to take measures that can alleviate credit and other issues that have significantly threatened the viability of this important industry to the state.

"Prices have fallen below the level needed to maintain the economic viability of the Maine lobster industry, caused by reduced demand and the lack of short term business credit that are part of the global economic crisis," Governor Baldacci said. "Maine's hard-working lobster families and businesses have been jolted by the world economic situation. While most of these issues are beyond our control, there are a few things that can be done to help, and it's critical that we take actions now to avert further harm to this vital industry."

Among immediate steps to alleviate the current financial situation of the industry, Governor Baldacci has directed the Department of Economic and Community Development, Department of Marine Resources, and the Finance Authority of Maine to meet with financial institutions and agencies to expedite measures to help families in tough financial straits.

"This crisis involves thousands of families spread along the coast," said the Governor. "We're talking about the very life-blood of many small towns. I expect the group I've called together to think outside the box and provide lobster families and businesses with options to help with their tough financial positions."

The Governor reiterated the importance of continuing efforts that have been underway to increase Maine lobster processing, sustainability, branding and certification. Such actions, said the Governor, help build the already stellar reputation of Maine lobsters and the industry as a whole.

"The Maine lobster brand is known the world over for its quality and high value," Governor Baldacci said, "and we know that the lobster resource is sustainable thanks to the efforts of Maine lobstermen. Obtaining certification is an essential step in protecting and enhancing our brand and making sure that Maine lobsters can compete in markets around the world. Additionally, expanding processing of lobster here in Maine will help the industry greatly."

Governor Baldacci is encouraging Mainers to participate in lobster specials being run at many seafood dealers. The Governor praised the efforts of Hannaford Brothers, Shaw's Supermarket, Weathervane Restaurants and many independent businesses to promote Maine lobster locally.

"Buying locally harvested lobsters now is an important way that we can show support for Maine's lobster industry and families as they go through this very difficult period," said the Governor. "Helping our neighbors is something Mainers are known for, almost as much as we are known for our lobsters."

Governor Baldacci Honors State Employees of the Year

October 17, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci this morning honored 24 State employees during a reception at the Blaine House. Each employee was named as “Employee of the Year” within their department.

“Every one of you is being recognized by the Commissioner and the leadership of your department and that is quite an honor,” Governor Baldacci said. “I know that you are doing the best work that you can and you aren’t looking for recognition. But it is important for us to let you know how valuable you are to the State of Maine and the people you serve.”

About 60 honorees, family members and commissioners were at the Blaine House for the 6th 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.

2008 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Baxter State Park - Brendan Curran, Campground Ranger

Department of Administrative & Financial Services - Diane Wiley, Position Control Analyst

Department of Agriculture - Peter Jandreau, Consumer Protection Inspector, Division of Quality Assurance and Regulations

Department of Audit - Brad Rodrigue, Senior Auditor

Department of Conservation - Keith Kanoti, Forester I, Maine Forest Service

Department of Corrections - Tima Ellsmore, Office Associate II, Adult Community Corrections, Interstate Compact Office

Maine Arts Commission - Darrell Bulmer, Communication Associate

Office of the Attorney General - Michael Colleran, Assistant Attorney General, Financial Crimes and Civil Rights Division

Office of the Public Advocate - Patty Moody-D’Angelo, Research Assistant

Department of Public Safety - Jeffrey Coon, Communication Technician, State Police Garage

Department of the Secretary of State - Vanessa Mehuren, Customer Representative Specialist - Elections

Department of Transportation - Bill Croce, Project Manager II

Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management - John K. Doherty, Security Guard

Department of Economic and Community Development - Debbie Elliott, Business Development Specialist

Department of Education - Ann Pinnette, Education Specialist II, Division of School Facilities

Department of Environmental Protection - Jeff Emery, Section Chief, Air Monitoring Section

Department of Health and Human Services - Michelle Nagle, Support Enforcement Agent

Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife - Russell Danner, Fish Pathologist

Department of Labor - Diane Morrison, Claims Specialist, Bureau of Unemployment Compensation

Department of Marine Resources - Jason Overlock, Conservation Aide

Department of Professional & Financial Regulation - Linda Dion, Senior Insurance Analyst

Office of the State Treasurer - Patricia Sanborn, Staff Accountant

State Planning Office - Brigitte Ndikum-Nyada, Planner II

Worker's Compensation Board - Terrie McLaughlin, Administrative Assistant

Governor Baldacci Flips the Switch on LED Lighting at Multi-Use Farm

October 20, 2008

NEW GLOUCESTER – Governor John E. Baldacci today helped celebrate the installation of LED lighting at Pineland Farms in New Gloucester by flipping the switch on the new system for the first time. The LED lights are expected to save the farm, educational and recreational center about \$30,000 a year and reduce pollution by supporting energy efficiency.

“This is a wonderful model for other public and private sector entities and Maine communities to emulate,” Governor Baldacci said. “The timing of this event couldn’t be better as we approach the winter season, a time of high energy use across the State. The economic downturn and continuing high energy prices are giving all of us evidence enough of the need to conserve energy. Pineland Farms is taking a proactive approach at conserving energy and saving money.”

Pineland Farms received financial support for the project from Efficiency Maine and Osram Sylvania worked to help make it a cost-effective project. Governor Baldacci recognized the many partners who were involved in creating the LED system and talked about what the State can offer to individuals and businesses that are looking to conserve energy and cut costs.

“I am proud of the comprehensive array of efficiency programs offered by State government, including education, training and information; technical expertise; energy audits; and financial incentives,” the Governor said. “But government cannot accomplish energy independence and security alone. Instead, it takes just this kind of partnership we see today.”

Joining Governor Baldacci for the ceremony were officials from Pineland Farms, Osram Sylvania, Maine Public Utilities Commission Chair Sharon Reishus and other local and State officials.

For more information about the programs and services offered by Efficiency Maine, visit <http://www.energymaine.com/>

Aroostook County Awarded \$290,000 in Business and Training Grants

October 21, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced that Aroostook County is receiving \$290,000 from two Community Development Block Grants.

“The CDBG grant program is an important tool for community development in Maine,” Governor Baldacci said. “The funds help communities compete in a challenging economy, help small businesses grow and help workers train for a new career.”

Commissioner John Richardson of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development presented the grants to Aroostook County Administrator Doug Beaulieu today.

The Office of Community Development presented the 2008 CDBG Special Projects Matching Funds in the amount of \$250,000 to Aroostook County. Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) will be the administrative agent of the grant for various Small Business Development Centers to provide training and counseling to micro-enterprise businesses.

A qualifying micro-enterprise business consists of five or fewer employees, where the owner of the business meets HUD's definition of being low- to moderate-income. These CDBG funds are leveraged by more than \$2 million in public and private funds to help foster the State's entrepreneurial efforts for development and sustainability.

A 2008 CDBG Public Service grant in the amount of \$40,000 was awarded to Aroostook County on behalf of the Aroostook Family Investment Center to provide training and education to at least 20 low- to moderate-income individuals interested in pursuing careers as Certified Nurse Aide Medical Techs. Funds will be used to administer the program as well as provide transportation, tuition, books, and childcare reimbursement to qualified participants. The CDBG funds are being leveraged by another \$41,000 provided through a HUD ROSS grant and Workforce Investment funding.

The CDBG program will award approximately \$13 million to Maine towns during its 2008 program year.

Governor Presents State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals to Former POWs at Togus

October 21, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today presented State of Maine Silver Star Honorable Service Medals to two veterans during a ceremony at the Togus VA Medical Center in Augusta. The veterans are former prisoners of war and Purple Heart recipients. The medal was first awarded to Maine veterans in August 2006, and is presented to those who have been wounded while serving their country and former POWs.

"These brave Americans we are honoring today served their country with great distinction," Governor Baldacci said. "I consider it an honor to be able to recognize them for their service on behalf of the State of Maine."

The Governor was joined by Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management COL Don Lagace and Director of Veterans Services Peter Ogden in awarding the service medals to the veterans.

Since Governor Baldacci first dedicated the Silver Star Honorable Service Medal for veterans wounded in combat and former Prisoners of War, more than 400 Silver Star Medals have been presented to Maine veterans.

Below is the list of veterans recognized today, and the town in which they reside.

PFC Donald O. Dore Brewer

CPL Rev. Roland M. Lord Bryant Pond

Governor Celebrates New Business in Midcoast

October 22, 2008

ROCKLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined local, state and federal officials to welcome Boston Financial Data Services to the Midcoast. The ribbon cutting at the former-MBNA facility celebrated another business entering the state.

“Boston Financial Data Services’ expansion to Rockland gives them access to the amazing workforce centered here in the Midcoast,” said Governor Baldacci. “We know that among the attractions to the Midcoast were the high quality workforce and local and State incentives such as Maine’s Pine Tree Zone program.”

The Governor said that the Pine Tree Zone program has been a valuable tool to attract businesses like Boston Financial Data Services to Maine. To date, 190 companies have been certified as Pine Tree Zone businesses, with the combined projected creation of 5,900 jobs. Boston Financial Data Services has projected to create about 200 jobs by next year at their Rockland facility, with more growth after.

“These are specialized jobs, offering services that are critical to the success of the company’s more than 100 clients, representing in excess of 25 million accounts,” said the Governor. “This is a great investment in Maine, with exciting job growth potential for the region.”

Boston Financial Data Services is a long-standing leader in financial services, serving the mutual fund industry, employer retirement plans and college savings 529 plans, among others. The 35 year old company specializes in providing transaction and operational support, with a focus on distinct investment products offered by client companies.

“Boston Financial Data Services has recognized, as have many others, that Maine is a great state in which to do business,” said the Governor. “With incentives like our Pine Tree Zone program, we are moving forward and will continue to work to give Maine people the opportunities they deserve.”

Governor Baldacci's Statement on Sale of Red Shield

October 23, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement today concerning the sale of Red Shield Environmental LLC in Old Town to Patriarch Partners. The sale is expected to be finalized on Oct. 27.

“This is good news for workers and good news for the community,” Governor Baldacci said. “I have spoken with Patriarch CEO Lynn Tilton, and I am impressed with her vision for the facility and her commitment to get people back to work.”

Governor Baldacci said he will meet with Tilton when she visits Maine during the next few weeks.

“The Old Town facility has great potential both as a producer of alternative energy and as a pulp mill,” Governor Baldacci said. “The work that has taken place in cooperation with the University of Maine is ground-breaking and offers the potential to ease our reliance on foreign oil and invigorate our forest products industry. I’m confident that work will continue.”

“The workers at the Old Town mill have been through a lot,” Governor Baldacci said. “They deserve this good news.”

Governor Baldacci Calls Climate Change a Global Problem

October 24, 2008

ORONO – Governor John E. Baldacci today opened the final day of the two-day Climate Change 21 public forum and environmental festival calling climate change one of the most serious challenges facing the planet.

“After the economic crisis passes, the climate crisis will still be with us,” Governor Baldacci said. “Leaving it for future generations is not an option.”

Governor Baldacci said that Maine has already begun to address the issue with the formation of the Governor’s Office of Energy Independence and Security in 2003. At the time oil was selling for \$20 a barrel. Since then, the price of oil has increased dramatically, but Maine has taken steps to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and reduce dependency on foreign oil.

Maine was the first State to purchase 100 percent of its electricity from zero carbon renewable sources. A number of state buildings are heated with biodiesel and the State is preparing to experiment with a fuel made from wood wastes. Hybrid vehicles were purchased for the State fleet and State employees are driving fewer miles.

Governor Baldacci touted the State’s participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

“Maine, along with nine other States, is part of the nation’s first cap and trade program meant to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases,” the Governor said. “We hope that RGGI will soon serve as the template for an all-sector national cap and trade program.”

The Governor applauded the nearly 70 businesses, municipalities and colleges and universities participating in the Governor’s Carbon Challenge. The Governor said that greenhouse gas emission reductions by the participants have been impressive, including a 10 percent reduction at the University of Maine.

“We must be more aggressive in building our future – the foundation of which is clean, renewable, and home-grown energy,” Governor Baldacci said. “Not only will this stem the flow of our hard-earned dollars from going out of State and out of the country, but it can grow jobs in Maine. We’ll grow industries and jobs in the emerging environment and energy sectors and we’ll build it all right here in Maine.”

The Climate Change 21 public forum and environmental festival has featured panel discussions on a range of topics including the physical science behind climate change, the impact it will have on the environment, and the federal legislative point of view on the topic. The conference is scheduled to wrap-up Friday afternoon.

Governor Baldacci Orders Immediate Cuts in His Office

October 10, 2008

Directs Administration to Begin Preparation for Curtailment of Government Spending

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci announced today that he will immediately reduce his office budget by 10 percent in preparation for a potential revenue downturn for the current fiscal year.

The reductions will continue for the 2010-2011 biennial budget, which will be presented to the Legislature in January.

“We are asking every State department and agency to plan for considerable cuts in their budgets,” Governor Baldacci said. “These cuts will touch families and businesses throughout Maine. As Mainers are forced to deal with a terrible national economy, it’s important for government to show that it is willing to do the same thing.”

The Governor will be cutting positions and will make other reductions in spending within his office.

In addition, the Governor has directed the Department of Administrative and Financial Services to begin the preliminary work on a potential curtailment, and to further tighten controls on State travel and hiring.

Under State law, the Governor has the authority to reduce spending on programs approved by the Legislature with a curtailment order. A curtailment order is temporary and serves to reduce the rate of spending until a supplemental budget can be passed to address a predicted revenue shortfall.

In September, Governor Baldacci directed all State agencies and departments to make contingency plans for a possible 10 percent reduction in their budgets for 2010-2011, which will take effect July 1, 2009. The Governor is implementing his cuts immediately.

The Governor has taken these steps in anticipation of a worsening revenue picture in Maine. While Maine’s revenues for July and August remained relatively consistent – down about \$6 million -- with current projections, the stalled national economy has had deep impacts on other States in New England and across the country.

“We are laying the groundwork now to ensure that Maine’s budget remains balanced,” Governor Baldacci said. “The choices we will face this year and for the next two-year budget will be extremely difficult. By moving today, before the crisis arrives in full, we will be in a better position later to deal with the worsening national economy.”

Governor Calls for Comprehensive Review of Lobster Industry

October 24, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today signed an Executive Order establishing a Task Force on the Economic Sustainability of Maine's Lobster Industry. The Task Force will make a comprehensive review of Maine's lobster industry and recommend to the Governor and Legislature no later than April 15, 2009, specific strategies to help maintain the viability of the lobster industry in Maine.

"The lobster industry - including the fishermen, dealers, processors and associated businesses - is absolutely crucial to Maine's economy and heritage," said Governor Baldacci. "We must make a thorough review of the industry in light of the current global economic, financial and energy challenges in order to ensure its long-term sustainability."

Last week the Governor directed a number of State departments to work on financial issues impacting lobster businesses and families. The Department of Economic and Community Development, Department of Marine Resources, and the Finance Authority of Maine have begun meeting with financial institutions and agencies to expedite measures that may bring relief.

After meeting with lobster industry representatives this week, the Governor determined that a broader strategy was needed to address the challenges to Maine's lobster industry.

Among the targets of the Task Force is identifying opportunities for expanding and diversifying both live and processed markets for Maine lobster, increasing product quality and profitability, and expanding marketing initiatives.

The text of the Executive Order follows.

19 FY 08/09

October 24, 2008

AN ORDER TO CREATE THE GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON THE ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY OF MAINE'S LOBSTER INDUSTRY

WHEREAS, lobstering is an industry with long-standing cultural and economic importance to the state of Maine; and

WHEREAS, lobstering is the cornerstone of the economies of Maine's coastal communities; and

WHEREAS, the recent global economic crisis has illustrated that Maine's lobster industry is vulnerable and that traditional ways of doing business may no longer be sufficient; and

WHEREAS, Maine's Department of Marine Resources is charged with conserving and developing the fisheries of the state of Maine;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the Governor's Task Force on the Economic Sustainability of Maine's Lobster Industry (hereinafter "Task Force").

Purpose and Duties

The purpose and duties of the Task Force shall be to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for improved marketing of Maine lobster in order to ensure the economic prosperity and long-term sustainability of the Maine lobster industry. This will include, but not be limited to:

- Identifying opportunities for expanding and diversifying both live and processed markets for Maine lobster;
- Identifying necessary improvements and expansions of the infrastructure in Maine, including processing capacity and state-of-the-art technology that maximizes the quality of lobster landed in Maine, and provides flexibility of product movement;
- Identifying opportunities for increasing the range of value added lobster products;
- Identifying possible changes to the structure of the lobster industry in terms of volume, quantity and timing of product landed;
- Identifying Best Management Practices for industry members (harvesters and dealers) to increase product quality and profitability;
- Identifying methodologies of protecting and promoting the Maine lobster brand in the global marketplace, including analysis of the value of Marine Stewardship Council certification, product substitution and food safety; and
- Identifying alternative business models.

The Task Force shall work with an independent contractor with expertise in the food industry, specifically in national and international markets and in market strategy, design, operations and implementation and technology development. The contractor shall develop a process through which members of the industry can provide information that can be used in the development of the contractor's recommendations.

Following the completion of this research, the contractor shall provide the Task Force with preliminary recommendations for their review. The Task Force shall consult with the lobster industry in its review of the preliminary recommendations. The comments of the Task Force will be used by the contractor to inform the development of a comprehensive plan for a marketing strategy for Maine lobster. The marketing strategy will present a blueprint for implementation, including timeframes, cost associated with various activities and expected outcomes.

Membership

The Governor shall appoint no more than eight (8) members to the Task Force. One member shall be the Commissioner of the Department of Marine Resources, or his designee; one member shall be the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development, or his designee; and one member shall be the Executive Director of the Maine Lobster Promotion Council or his designee. The remaining appointments shall include diverse members who represent the interests of the lobster industry, or have expertise in business operations, finance, community development, international trade, and/or marketing.

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 Department of Marine Resources. The members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation.

Resources

Pursuant to 12 MRSA §6465, the Commissioner of Marine Resources may authorize expenditures from the Lobster Research, Education, and Development Fund to carry out the work of the Task Force.

Report

The Task Force shall submit its recommendations to the Governor no later than April 15, 2009, after which the Task Force will dissolve.

Effective date of this Executive Order is October 24, 2008.

John E. Baldacci, Governor

Governor Addresses Energy Efficiency Workshop

October 28, 2008

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci served as the featured speaker at an energy efficiency workshop held today at Spectacular Events. The event, “Surviving the Energy Crisis: How to Save Money,” sponsored by regional and state organizations, drew interested individuals from businesses, nonprofits and other institutions who were seeking practical information on how to prepare for the winter months ahead.

“Bringing together Maine people and businesses to share information makes a big difference in how we tackle not only this winter season, but it will help us in our long-run efforts to decrease Maine’s dependency on costly, unstable foreign oil,” said Governor Baldacci.

The Governor described the actions his Administration has undertaken to address the short-term and long-term issues related to energy supply and costs.

“Our short-term plan, which focuses on things we can do to reduce energy consumption, includes resources for new investments in weatherization, low-income heating assistance, alternative modes of transportation, voluntary alternative work schedules for State employees, and business development, training and education,” said the Governor. “I’m pleased that we have made available initiatives, incentives and resources that will provide help to hard-working Maine families and businesses address their specific energy needs.”

The Governor said, “In the long-term, we are working hard to move Maine toward energy independence and security. As oil prices are falling, we can’t lose sight or momentum on kicking the habit of foreign oil. We must be more aggressive in building our energy future together – a future that is built upon clean, renewable, home-grown energy sources.”

“I’m committed to this goal,” said Governor Baldacci. “I will be unveiling to the new Legislature in January an ambitious plan to set the foundation to create clean energy that is created in Maine, growing jobs and protecting our natural resources. I’m excited about the opportunities we can create, working together. Mainers always rise to the occasion, and that’s what we have before us today, the opportunity to meet this challenge and make our state better for future generations.”

Sponsors of the event included the Natural Resources Council of Maine, the Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce, Maine Chamber of Commerce, WBRC and Efficiency Maine.

For more on energy information and assistance, please visit the comprehensive energy web site at

<http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/energy.shtml>

High Winds Overnight Could Cause Power Disruptions

October 28, 2008

AUGUSTA – Strong winds and heavy rains are expected to cover much of Maine Tuesday night.

According to the National Weather Service, wind gusts could be as high as 50 mph in Southern Maine and reach 60-65 mph in Downeast Coastal areas. The high winds have the potential bring down trees and branches and cause power outages.

The Maine Emergency Management Agency, power crews and the National Weather Service are monitoring the storm. Personnel are standing by to restore power quickly in the event of disruptions.

“Tonight’s storm will have high winds and it could knock power out around the State,” Governor John E. Baldacci said. “We want to remind folks to be careful around downed power lines and with candles or other heating and lighting alternatives. I would also encourage everyone to stay clear of power crews, who might be working to restore electricity service.”

While widespread damage is not expected, local emergency management directors are monitoring potential flooding, the possibility of a reverse tidal surge along the Penobscot River at high tide Tuesday night and damage to roads and bridges that could result in closures.

“High winds and heavy rain can cause significant damage, but this appears to be a fairly typical storm,” said Lynette Miller, a MEMA spokesperson. “If problems develop, we will be prepared to respond.”

Governor Applauds AT&T Grant to Jobs for Maine's Graduates

October 29, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced a significant grant from the AT&T Foundation to Jobs for Maine's Graduates. Jobs for Maine's Graduates (JMG) is receiving \$300,000 over four years to expand its programs, specifically to serve more students as they transition from middle school to high school.

"This grant recognizes the good work that Jobs for Maine's Graduates is achieving and will lead to greater opportunity for more Maine youth," said Governor Baldacci. "I thank AT&T for being a valued corporate citizen and a partner in our efforts to build a high-quality workforce and supporting young people in Maine."

The Governor serves as the Chair of Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), a national organization dedicated to preparing young people for high school graduation, work-based opportunities, and postsecondary education. Maine's program has been recognized as the "Best of the Best" in the 30-state network.

Joining the Governor at the State House celebration were Michelle Consalvo, AT&T Vice President for External Affairs New England; Craig Larrabee, President of Jobs for Maine's Graduates; and students, educators and administrators who participate in the JMG program.

Craig Larrabee, President of JMG, said, "Jobs for Maine's Graduates is committed to improving Maine's graduation rate. In the last 15 years, we've helped more than 20,000 students who face barriers to their education reach their potential in school and beyond. That's great, but it's not enough. Today, more than ever, we need to reach more Maine students. We need every high school student out there to graduate from high school prepared to compete in today's workforce, or to continue their education - with the ultimate goal of joining and strengthening Maine's work force. This grant from the AT&T Foundation will go a long way toward helping us reach those students and to reach the goal of a stronger workforce and economy for Maine."

"Those of us in the highly competitive technology industry realize that over the next 25 years there will be 25 million more jobs requiring a college degree than there will be college-educated workers," said Michelle Consalvo, Vice President, External Affairs, AT&T. "It is a great pleasure to be able to support the essential work that Governor Baldacci and JAG do in Maine to ensure this state and our nation have a labor force that is ready to work in the increasingly complex digital world."

The Governor said he has seen firsthand the dramatic impact the JMG program has had on the lives of thousands of Maine's young people. He recognized the students for exemplifying educational excellence, and their supporters, especially the teachers and administration officials who work with JMG for preparing our youth for the jobs of the 21st century.

"I've been so impressed with the young people I've met who have been involved with this program," said the Governor. "We in Maine work hard to ensure our children have opportunities for a good-paying job and a high quality of life now and for future generations."

Governor Highlights New Resources Available to Mainers to Keep Safe and Warm

October 31, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci thanked public and private partners for their efforts to keep Mainers safe and secure in their homes this winter. The Governor was originally scheduled today to travel to Portland to recognize the generosity of three major corporations for their donations to the Keep ME Warm Fund. LL Bean, Wal-Mart and TD Banknorth Maine have contributed a combined \$215,000 to the Fund, and TD Banknorth is making it easy for Mainers to contribute to the Fund by enabling patrons to donate at their branches statewide.

Because of the Stockton Springs Elementary incident this morning, the Governor remained in Augusta. John Kerry, Director of the Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security, represented the Governor at the Keep ME Warm Fund press conference at the 2-1-1 Maine call center in Portland. There the Administration also announced the enhanced 2-1-1 Maine information referral service that will go live on Monday, Nov. 3.

"As winter draws closer and the temperature drops, we know that the needs will be great here in Maine," said the Governor from Augusta. "Today we recognize the generosity of three valued corporate citizens for their contributions to the Keep ME Warm Fund. Their \$215,000 combined donations to the Fund will help buy winterization, provide emergency heating and food assistance and operate the 24-hour 2-1-1 Maine helpline service."

The Governor also thanked the United Way and Community Action agencies in Maine for administering the Keep ME Warm Fund. He reminded Mainers about opportunities to make a difference in the lives of their neighbors this season.

"Despite oil prices dropping in recent weeks, the impact of the global financial crisis and national economic downturn are causing a real strain on hardworking Maine families," said the Governor.

Another key component of the Governor's short-term energy plan to help Mainers this winter includes an enhanced 2-1-1 Maine information referral service for energy information and concerns. The enhanced 2-1-1 Maine service will go live on Monday, Nov. 3. At that time, Maine 2-1-1 will be the single point of contact for all energy information and resources across the state. They will route callers seeking assistance and information on State programs directly to the appropriate State agencies. State energy referrals will be made within one business day while applicants for direct energy assistance or loan programs will have their requests processed within 30 days. The Governor thanked the 2-1-1 staff and Youth Alternatives Ingraham, which administers 2-1-1 Maine.

For more information about the Keep ME Warm Fund, please visit www.keepmewarm.org or <http://www.211maine.org/> or call 2-1-1.

Governor Initiates Curtailment Process

November 5, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced that given updated revenue projections for the remainder of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, he is initiating a curtailment process. The Governor has a target to reduce the rate of spending in the current fiscal year by \$150 million.

“As the global financial and economic crisis deepens, we must continue to take the disciplined action to bring our budget into balance,” said Governor Baldacci. “While the choices we have before us are undeniably difficult, we must continue to prioritize the services that State government provides and continue to make crucial investments in our economy.”

“As President-Elect Obama stated so eloquently last night, we must approach these hard times in a bipartisan way,” said the Governor. “I look forward to working with both parties of the in-coming Maine Legislature as we face the difficult challenges ahead. While I am instructing my Administration to develop their curtailment plans, I will be reaching out to Legislative Leadership of both parties to ensure that they are informed about the choices before us, not just now, but as we develop the priorities for the Biennial Budget and the State of Maine for the next two years. I have faith in these leaders and in their caucuses that we can work together to protect the health and welfare of Maine citizens, improve Maine’s economy and create opportunities for Mainers now and into the future.”

On Monday, the Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission and the Revenue Forecasting Commission held a joint meeting at which it was discussed that incoming revenue is projected to drop between \$110 million and \$150 million for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2009.

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.

The Governor is also charged under State law with proposing a balanced biennial budget to the Legislature in January. The Governor continues to craft that budget for Fiscal Years 2010-2011. In preparation for developing the biennial budget, the Governor instructed his Cabinet to develop a plan that proposes a 10 percent reduction to their General Fund budgets.

Below is the text of the memo sent to Administration department heads.

STATE OF MAINE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL SERVICES

Bureau of the Budget

State House Station

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Augusta, Maine 04333

TO: All Commissioners and Agency Heads

FROM: Ellen Jane Schneider, State Budget Officer

RE: Preparation for Curtailment

DATE: November 5, 2008

cc: Ryan Low, Jane Lincoln, David Farmer

As you are aware, we have been quite concerned about the fiscal outlook for the coming biennium and, as we have mentioned at the budget one on one meetings, about the status of the General Fund for the current fiscal year. Over the past week or so, we have been able to formulate a clearer picture of our fiscal situation. The Consensus Economic Forecasting Committee met twice over the past few weeks and the Revenue Forecasting Committee has held two subcommittee meetings. On November 3rd, the CEFC and RFC held a special joint meeting to discuss their respective forecasts. As a result of that meeting, it is now apparent that the Revenue Forecasting Committee will be making substantial downward revisions to its forecast when it convenes on November 21st. The revision to the General Fund forecast will fall within the range of \$110 million and \$150 million for state fiscal year 2009; at the end of the day, the unfortunate likelihood is that the revision will be closer to the \$150 million mark.

5 MRSA §1668 requires the Commissioner of Administrative and Financial Services to notify the Governor whenever it appears that anticipated revenues will be insufficient to meet authorized expenditures. In turn, the requirement for a balanced budget compels the Governor to pose a solution for the revenue shortfall. In this instance that solution involves the curtailment of allotments.

Your department or agency has been assigned a prorated share of the total curtailment target. We have calculated these shares in the same manner as we have in the past. Specific appropriations for debt service, for example, have been removed from the base; the statewide target was distributed across agencies based on adjusted FY09 allotment exclusive of prior year encumbrances. No programs or branches of government have been excluded from the calculation. Targets have been developed on an agency-wide level; it will be up to you to decide how to implement them across your programs.

There are several guidelines to follow when developing your initiatives. First, you may not propose to eliminate any program in its entirety; any cuts which the Governor makes in expenditures must be amenable to prompt restoration by the Legislature. You may not meet your target by proposing to withdraw a supplemental request that you have already proposed. Since none of those initiatives are reflected in current budgets, there are no savings to be realized by withdrawing them at this point. You may not meet your target by reducing ISF payments; those programs are subject to their own targets. Also, you may not simply decide to terminate a contract (including those for leased space) to achieve savings; if you are interested in reducing contractual costs, please contact BGS for consultation. If you

are uncertain where to turn at BGS, you may contact the Bureau Director's office at 624-7314 for guidance.

In preparing the Supplemental Budget recommendations for the Legislature's consideration, we will either incorporate the Curtailment initiatives you provide or replace/augment those initiatives with alternatives that achieve the target savings but which require Legislative action for implementation. For example, program eliminations may be necessary to bring us back into balance. Such eliminations, though, may not be implemented via Curtailment. If you want to put forward such a proposal, we will need a Curtailment initiative and a "companion" Supplemental initiative to subsequently replace the expenditure cuts implemented via Curtailment.

We have established an accelerated schedule for implementation of a Curtailment Order so as to provide the longest period of time possible for the realization of savings. You will be advised of your target via email, when you receive this memo. All curtailment initiatives must be received in the Budget Office no later than noon, November 13, 2008. There will be no exceptions to this schedule. I understand that this is a very compressed time frame and I am aware that there is a State holiday next week. We intend to work on the submissions over the three following days and use the 17th through the 19th to follow up with agencies and "close" the Curtailment initiative. We will be setting up a time to either meet with you in person or by phone to review your submission; please make arrangements to be available to us during that span of time.

In order to effectively assess and implement your initiatives, we will need as complete and accurate information as possible. We are providing a template to be used to submit the needed information. Please augment the template with additional narrative information and back up materials, as necessary. Note that the template requires you to submit an impact statement, as is required by the curtailment statute. Please be as specific as you can in formulating that statement, describing how many people, for example, the initiative will impact in what manner.

In addition to completing and submitting the template to your Budget Analyst in the Bureau of the Budget, agencies must distribute the curtailment amounts by quarter in the Budget and Financial Management System (BFMS). To enter the curtailment amounts, select the Annual button on the Main Menu, select the appropriate department or agency from the Umbrella drop down in the Annual Work Program Selection window, select Statewide Financial Orders and click the Select button. In the Statewide Financial Order Summary window, insert and select the record for financial order 004576 F9. The curtailment amounts for offline agencies will be entered by this office based on information provided in the template.

This will be a very challenging process for all of us and for those we serve. I appreciate your cooperation and willingness to provide us with the assistance and input we need to accomplish this difficult task.

Governor Looks for Energy Options Off Maine Coast

November 7, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci announced today that he will review every option for alternative energy development off the coast of Maine as a key component of achieving his goals of energy independence and security for Maine, stabilizing and ultimately reducing energy prices and averting a climate crisis. The Governor today signed An Executive Order Establishing the Ocean Energy Task Force. The 21-member panel will be charged with reporting back to the Governor on strategies for ocean-based wind energy, tidal and wave energy as well as updating information regarding offshore oil and gas resources and technology. Interim findings will be due by April 1, 2009; final recommendations will be due by October 31, 2009.

“The recent decline in heating oil and gasoline prices does not change the necessity to free Maine from the unpredictable, costly and dangerous dependency on foreign oil,” said Governor Baldacci.

“Furthermore, developing clean, renewable sources of energy off Maine’s coast will grow ‘green’ jobs and businesses within our state and help us to address global warming. Maine is blessed with strong wind and tidal resources off-shore that, if properly harnessed, can complement wind and other renewable energy resources on-shore.”

The Governor said that a careful balance must be maintained regarding how we approach utilizing ocean energy resources.

“Development of energy sources off the coast of Maine holds great promise for economic prosperity and energy self-reliance,” said the Governor. “However, we must ensure that the benefits of any such enterprise are carefully weighed against the potential impacts on our natural resources, traditional marine industries and environment. That’s why it is vital that we convene a panel of experts in these various fields who can guide policymakers on the potential for and desirability of energy development.”

President Bush and Congress took action in recent months to enable offshore oil and gas drilling, which will allow exploration for these fossil fuels in the hopes of increasing domestic production. According to the Minerals Management Service, Maine does not appear to have significant oil and natural gas reserves. The Task Force is charged with evaluating the costs and benefits of new technologies and federal initiatives regarding exploration for oil and gas in the Outer Continental Shelf, including the impact of any such development on the potential for large scale offshore renewable energy developments.

The Governor said that the work of the Task Force will augment the actions he’s taken to pursue a long-term energy policy. Maine has expanded its Renewable Portfolio standard and has adopted incentives for solar, biofuel, wind and geothermal energy production. Maine has also led the country in adopting policies to reduce greenhouse gasses and promote conservation. He is currently drafting comprehensive energy legislation to introduce in January to the new Legislature.

"We must be bold and aggressive in building our future and preserving our planet for our children – the foundation of which is clean, renewable, and home-grown energy," said the Governor.

The text of the Executive Order follows.

20 FY 08/09

November 7, 2008

AN EXECUTIVE ORDER ESTABLISHING THE OCEAN ENERGY TASK FORCE

WHEREAS, Maine has a strong interest in developing Maine's vast indigenous and renewable ocean energy potential and recognizes its enormous promise to address state and regional energy-related needs, including: increasing the State's energy independence and security; limiting Maine's vulnerability to the unpredictable costs and possibly supplies of fossil fuels; attaining the state's overall goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to sustainable levels by mid-century and of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative's ("RGGI") CO2 reduction targets; and stimulating and growing diverse and vibrant ocean energy-related economic opportunities; and

WHEREAS, information prepared by the Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Research Laboratory ("NREL") and Minerals Management Service ("MMS") shows that the Gulf of Maine is a world-class wind power resource, which the Ocean Energy Institute estimates could equal around 100,000 MW (100 Gigawatts) of theoretical electric capacity, an amount that is 3 times larger than the total current installed capacity in New England; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's 2007 Task Force on Wind Power Development found that Maine can become a leader in wind power development while protecting Maine's quality of place and natural resources, and that Maine should seek to host at least 2,000 megawatts (MW) of installed wind power capacity by 2015, and at least 3,000 by 2020, of which at least 300 MW can be achieved with projects built offshore; and

WHEREAS, the fuel price from offshore wind power, tidal power and wave power is low and steady, enabling long term contracts with these clean sources of electricity at stable prices, as distinguished from generation of electricity from fossil fuels, whose prices fluctuate widely; and

WHEREAS, wind power is the fastest growing utility-scale source of energy in the United States and internationally, and offshore wind is the fastest growing component of the wind energy segment; and

WHEREAS, improvements in turbines and related wind technologies, with support from federal renewable energy tax credits, are now making wind energy competitive in many markets with conventional power source; and

WHEREAS, ongoing technological developments hold promise that wind power, and to a lesser extent tidal and wave power, can also come to play a vital role in addressing transportation and home heating needs as well as traditional electric power demands; and

WHEREAS, Maine's universities and independent research institutions provide the specialized research and development capabilities, and established marine construction firms provide the required industrial infrastructure, vital to support a robust offshore wind energy industry; and

WHEREAS, the State of Maine has the highly-skilled and productive workforce, developed waterfront industry, and hospitable business climate to serve as a national center for offshore wind energy development; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's 2007 Task Force on Wind Power Development recognized the potential for ocean-based wind energy development to contribute to achievement of state wind energy and related economic development goals, called attention to significant technological, financial and knowledge-based challenges and, to that end, recommended follow-up actions requiring heightened collaborative efforts among several partners including federal regulatory agencies; and

WHEREAS, subsequent to completion of the work of the Governor's 2007 Task Force on Wind Power Development, Congress did not extend the long-standing moratorium on oil and gas development on the nation's Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) and the Mineral Management Service is moving forward with its program for leasing OCS areas for alternative energy development and initiation of a new five-year plan for OCS oil and gas development; and

WHEREAS, information prepared by the MMS indicates that the Gulf of Maine does not appear to have significant commercially recoverable oil and natural gas reserves, while it does hold a significant potential for large-scale development of wind power, the development of which would help the state achieve its interrelated energy, environmental and economic goals; and

WHEREAS, Congress is likely to take up legislation this session pertaining to offshore oil and gas leasing, exploration, and development for federal waters, making it essential that Maine fully explore and understand the resource as well as the risks and benefits of harnessing that resource;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the Ocean Energy Task Force (hereinafter "Task Force").

Purpose and Duties

The Task Force is established to develop a strategy aimed at meeting or exceeding the goal established in the Maine Energy Act, Title 35-A, section 3404(2)(B), for ocean-based wind energy capacity as expeditiously as practicable, including a specific plan of action for implementation of that strategy. This strategy shall identify and recommend solutions to overcome potential economic, technical, regulatory, and other obstacles to vigorous and expeditious development of grid-scale wind energy generation facilities in Maine's coastal waters and adjacent federal waters. In developing the strategy, the Task Force shall consider and make recommendations regarding the following:

A. Technological Development: research and testing to facilitate siting of offshore wind generation facilities.

The merits of and options for establishing an ocean-based testing area in the Gulf of Maine to foster and expedite research and development of offshore wind energy facilities in a manner that addresses potential siting issues; and,

Specific research and development initiatives critical to facilitating siting of ocean-based wind energy generation facilities at appropriate locations in the Gulf of Maine, with due consideration of natural resources and existing uses.

B. Wind Power-related Economic Development: fostering in-state growth of diverse wind energy-related businesses.

Options, including public-private partnerships, for facilitating financing and/or siting and operation of offshore, grid-scale wind energy generation facilities located at appropriate locations on the Outer Continental Shelf proximate to Maine and built at a scale commensurate with the State's wind power and related renewable energy objectives, pertinent electric power demand, demand for wind assisted heating and transportation, and the available wind resource; and

Specific opportunities and means to facilitate creation of economic development clusters related to construction and operation of ocean-based wind development, manufacturing of wind generation-related components, provision of engineering and other professional services and basic and applied scientific research, and other enterprises to support growth of a diverse wind energy industry in Maine.

C. Tidal and Wave Power: encouraging ocean-based tidal and wave energy development where appropriate.

Compile existing information on potential locations in Maine's coastal waters for tidal and wave power generation and the primary technical, economic and natural resources-related constraints on their development; and

Identify ways in which the State can support continued research and development of tidal and wave power at ocean sites compatibly with Maine's overall energy, economic, and environmental goals and existing uses, including commercial fishing.

D. Potential Oil and Gas Exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf: updating information regarding offshore oil and gas resources and evaluating federal initiatives regarding exploration for oil and gas in the Outer Continental Shelf.

Compile objective, credible and scientific information on the offshore oil and gas resource, including: the latest technologies available for oil and gas exploration and extraction; the adverse environmental risks associated with development of this resource; the economic benefits Maine people would likely realize from developing this resource; the compatibility of offshore oil and gas exploration with development of the offshore wind power resource and existing uses, including commercial fishing; and the compatibility of developing this resource with Maine's overall energy, economic and environmental goals; and,

Identify ways in which state agencies can ensure well-informed and effective state participation in federal decision-making regarding energy development of both renewable and fossil fuel resources on OCS areas proximate to Maine.

Membership

The Governor shall appoint seventeen (17) members to serve on the Task Force, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor. Membership is as follows:

- Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection, or Commissioner's designee;
- Commissioner of the Department of Conservation, or Commissioner's designee;
- Commissioner of the Department of Marine Resources, or Commissioner's designee;
- Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development or Commissioner's Designee;
- Director, Office of Energy Independence and Security or Director's designee;
- Director, State Planning Office or Director's designee;
- Eleven (11) members shall include diverse members with relevant knowledge and experience in technological, engineering, financing and regulatory issues regarding ocean wind energy generation; marine resources management and conservation; and potential natural resources and environmental effects of wind energy generation.

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

The Governor shall appoint two co-chairs of the Task Force from among the members. The chairs will schedule and set the agenda for, and preside at Task Force meetings. The members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation.

Staff

The State Planning Office, the Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security, the Department of Conservation through the Maine Geological Survey and the Bureau of Public Lands and the Department of Economic and Community Development shall provide staff assistance to the Task Force. At the Task Force's request, other state agencies shall provide information and analysis to assist the Task Force in its deliberations.

Reporting

The Task Force shall prepare a written report to the Governor outlining its interim findings no later than April 1, 2009. The Task Force shall prepare a written report of its final recommendations to the Governor, including any recommended legislation, by October 31, 2009.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is November 7, 2008.

(signed)

John E. Baldacci, Governor

Governor Participates in Keep ME Warm Weatherization

November 7, 2008

WATERVILLE – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined a local team of volunteers to install weatherization materials in a residence in Waterville. Part of the Keep ME Warm initiative the Governor began in 2004 to help Mainers prepare for the cold winter months, this year's program utilizes volunteers to install 2,000 kits statewide.

The Governor reminded Mainers that the downturn in the economy has put a great strain on many of their neighbors, and that heating costs will remain a burden for residents and businesses alike.

"People across Maine are worried," said Governor Baldacci. "They are stretching every dollar. As tough as these times are, Mainers have faced hard times before, and we've always come out ahead because we work together to confront these challenges. We are lucky in Maine to be a part of a caring community. Today we see that community spirit in action, and I encourage all Mainers to do what they can this year to look out for their neighbors."

Keep ME Warm is one key components of the Baldacci Administration's short-term energy plan to help Mainers prepare for the upcoming winter season. In addition to the Keep ME Warm kit installation program, the Keep ME Warm Fund provides a good opportunity for people to help those in need this season.

Since 2003, Governor Baldacci has been pursuing energy conservation and efficiency. He has made energy independence and security a long-term goal and as such, has instituted incentives to promote clean, sustainable, home-grown energy sources.

For more information on the Governor's energy plan, please visit <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/energy.shtml>

For more information about the Keep ME Warm Fund, please visit www.keepmewarm.org or <http://www.211maine.org/> or call 2-1-1.

Governor's Statement on Veterans Day

November 11, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has released the following statement in honor of Veterans Day, observed on November 11, 2008.

"It is on this day that we honor our country's heroes who have sacrificed much for this great nation. Today we should all pause and reflect on the more than 150,000 veterans currently living in Maine, and all veterans who came before them, giving of themselves in immeasurable ways. With every veteran's name, it is important to remember that a family is attached to that name. A father, mother, husband, wife, son or daughter had to be without these brave soldiers for months, if not years, so they could fight for the liberties and freedoms we enjoy in America. Veterans Day is a day for the citizens of this country to say a proper 'thank you' to the men and women who have battled for it. I encourage all Maine citizens to do their part in honoring veterans from all wars, past and present, and thank them for their service."

Governor Applauds Grant to Literacy Volunteers of Bangor

November 12, 2008

BREWER – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined officials from Literacy Volunteers of Bangor, the Wal-Mart Foundation and the Brewer Super Wal-Mart for a \$15,000 grant presentation to the nonprofit organization. The money will be used by Literacy Volunteers of Bangor to expand its volunteer recruitment efforts in the region.

“Since 1969, Literacy Volunteers of Bangor has provided free tutoring to adults. They’ve opened up a new world for those who have struggled with literacy issues. They’ve empowered those they have served,” Governor Baldacci said. “I have seen personally the difference it makes for adults who have been helped by Literacy Volunteers of Bangor. With this grant, Literacy Volunteers of Bangor will be able to recruit more volunteers and help more people struggling with literacy issues in Eastern Maine.”

Literacy Volunteers of Bangor works to improve the lives of Bangor-area residents who have literacy barriers in their lives. Volunteers for the organization receive training to either assist an adult who is improving his or her reading /or learning to speak English as another language. The services are provided without charge through learner-centered instruction from the volunteers.

Literacy Volunteers of Bangor will be celebrating its 40th year of service in 2009 and plans to use the anniversary to heighten the awareness of the organization’s volunteer needs. Governor Baldacci said that people should consider volunteering their time to help others improve their literacy skills.

“I want to encourage people in the area who are able to volunteer some of their time to help their neighbors and give them an important resource that will truly last a lifetime,” the Governor said.

For more information about Literacy Volunteers of Bangor, visit www.lvbangor.org

For more information about the Wal-Mart Foundation, visit <http://walmartstores.com/CommunityGiving/203.aspx>

Katahdin Paper Workers Receive Federal Assistance

November 12, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci learned today that the Federal Department of Labor has awarded more than \$527,000 to the Maine Department of Labor to assist laid-off workers of the Katahdin Paper Company Millinocket Mill.

The Governor said that while his Administration continues to work with Fraser Paper and Brookfield to develop a plan to reopen the mill, the federal grant will enable impacted workers to gain access to important services, including career counseling, job search assistance and job placement.

“I remain committed to working with Fraser Paper and Brookfield to re-open the mill so that the employees can get back to work as soon as possible,” said Governor Baldacci. “In the meantime, the federal funds dedicated to provide dislocated worker services will give Katahdin Paper employees access to important support.”

Governor Baldacci Encourages Proactive Approach to Protecting Lobster Industry

November 13, 2008

YORK – Governor John E. Baldacci opened the Gulf of Maine Lobster Fishery Conference Thursday afternoon by discussing his strategies for meeting the needs of the lobster industry. The Governor said that stabilizing small businesses along Maine's coast is important in the short term, and proactive steps should be taken to protect the lobster industry in the long term.

"No one could have reasonably anticipated the series of events that have so impacted the Maine lobster fishery this fall," Governor Baldacci said. "This situation is unprecedented in our experience. But now that we know our vulnerabilities, it is critical that we proactively protect ourselves against similar circumstances in the future, and find better ways to do business."

Based on port sampling data collected by the Maine Department of Marine Resources, landings in the month of October, 2005, represented more than \$60 million. In 2008, it was less than \$20 million.

To deal with some of the issues facing the lobster industry in the short term, Governor Baldacci directed the Department of Economic and Community Development to work with the Finance Authority of Maine and the Small Business Administration to give small businesses the information and tools they need to keep their operations in tact over the next year. As a result, a team of financial representatives has visited each of Maine's seven lobster zones over the past month to share information.

For the long term, Governor Baldacci created the Governor's Task Force on the Economic Sustainability of Maine's Lobster Fishery. The group is made up of industry leaders, business experts and community development specialists to take a comprehensive look at the operation aspect of the lobster industry.

"I believe that this is the time for all ideas to come forward, for all possibilities to be considered," the Governor said. "I anticipate that this Task Force will be an important part of generating a blueprint for the lobster industry in the future."

The two-day Gulf of Maine Lobster Fishery Conference is gathering officials from four New England coastal states, Canada and national and regional marine fisheries groups to discuss the future of the lobster industry. The goal of the conference is to get a broader understanding of the many challenges facing the lobster industry. There are plans for future conferences, including the involvement of fishermen and other stakeholders, to gather more information and explore possible changes to improve lobster management.

"Lobstering is an iconic Maine industry, and I see no reason why it shouldn't always remain that way," Governor Baldacci said. "This is an opportunity to take a hard look at what we believe this industry could be in Maine, and work together to make that a reality."

Governor Baldacci Lauds Collaboration on New Service Plaza

November 13, 2008

WEST GARDINER – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined members of the Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA), Maine Department of Transportation (DOT), the Federal Highway Administration, the Maine Craft Association and other State and local officials to cut the ribbon on the new service plaza in West Gardiner. The plaza is positioned to serve travelers on both the Maine Turnpike and on Interstate 295 and is expected to be open to the public by Thanksgiving.

The new service plaza features a fueling station and a 16,000 square foot building containing a coffee shop, sandwich shop, fast-food restaurant, ice cream stand, convenience store, patio seating and a center for Maine crafts.

“As a first-class tourism destination and an attractive place to locate a business, we should have pleasant and welcoming service areas along the Maine Turnpike,” Governor Baldacci said. “In the spirit of the Maine Quality of Place initiative, the West Gardiner Service Plaza will feature a 2,500 square foot Center for Maine Craft – the first of its kind in Maine. The Center will be operated by the Maine Crafts Association and will serve as a showcase and retail outlet for hundreds of Maine craft artists.”

The Governor said that he was pleased with the collaboration of the different departments and agencies to create a service plaza that would effectively replace two DOT rest areas in Augusta and Sidney and two MTA facilities in Litchfield and Lewiston. The older facilities were in need of repairs and updates, which prompted the agencies to work together and combine resources to build the more convenient and cost-effective facility in West Gardiner.

“This service area will be the newest in the State, providing a safe, convenient and attractive place for truck drivers, tourists and Maine residents to rest and refresh when traveling,” the Governor said. “And by providing drivers what they need on the highway, we are able to keep large trucks and through-traffic off local roads and on the highway which is safer for everyone.”

DOT and MTA officials say that revenue collected from the West Gardiner facility is reinvested in highway maintenance and improvements which eases the financial burden on Maine toll payers.

Governor to Join Trade Mission to Canada

November 17, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci will be joining the 2008 Gubernatorial Trade Mission Thursday as part of the week-long trade mission organized by the Maine International Trade Center. The trade mission to Vancouver and Toronto began Sunday, Nov. 16, and runs through Friday, Nov. 21.

Due to current economic circumstances, Governor Baldacci scaled back his own travel to Canada for the trade mission and is paying his own way. The Governor is spending less than 24-hours on the ground in Toronto. He will be leading a number of events, concluding with a keynote address at the Economic Club of Toronto.

"I look forward to joining the trade mission participants as they conclude their networking and business meetings in Canada," said Governor Baldacci. "While Maine's economic situation and the need to conserve State funds precludes me from participating in the trade mission in its entirety, expanding international trade opportunities for Maine businesses is a crucial aspect of our economic development plan."

The upcoming trade mission connects Maine businesses to Canadian business leaders, potential business partners and dignitaries. Canada is Maine's largest trading partner. According to the Maine International Trade Center, Canada imported approximately \$900 million in goods and services from Maine in 2007.

"This trade mission will further the goal of building relationships that will result in new economic, cultural and educational ties," said Governor Baldacci. "Export growth enhances opportunities for increasing good paying jobs with benefits."

For more information on the Maine International Trade Center and the trade mission to Canada, please visit <http://www.mitc.com/>

Governor Baldacci Announces Initiation of STEM Pilot Program

November 17, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor Baldacci today announced with Sen. Elizabeth M. Schneider (D-Penobscot) the initiation of a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Astrobiology Pilot Program in several Maine schools. The title of the course, “Astrobiology: An Integrated Science Approach,” is being integrated into the curriculum of a combination of middle schools and high schools in Maine.

“We are transitioning from a manufacturing economy and work force to a global economy where the best jobs require a background in science, math and technology,” Governor Baldacci said. “I have been strongly supportive of STEM education and I am pleased to see a new, innovative course in the STEM category being tested in Maine schools.”

The National Governor’s Association has also been supportive of STEM education, stating in a publication called “Promoting STEM education” that it prepares students for the 21st century, improves the impact and effectiveness of the State’s K-16 education system and adds value to the State’s economy when the students enter the workforce.

The pilot program will teach students astronomy, biology and physical science using a hands-on approach and a “Five E” instructional model (engage, explore, explain, elaborate, evaluate). The model is designed to give students both a greater understanding of the content as well as a greater interest in the areas of science and technology. Teachers will receive a series of workshops over the course of the year with resources from NASA Ames and Lockheed/Martin, interactions with NASA Astrobiology Institute scientists, and field trips to astrobiology sites and facilities being integrated into the pilot teachers’ classroom instruction.

The Astrobiology curriculum is being implemented during the current school year in the following schools: Old Town High School, Penobscot Valley High School, Lake Region High School, Biddeford Middle School, Brunswick Middle School, United Technologies Center, Brewer High School, Nokomis High School and at Topsham Alternative Education. In all, 18 classes are being offered at nine Maine schools with one additional class being offered in both New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

“By bringing attention to STEM education and effective science education, we are making critical steps in achieving the goals of supporting our students and our State,” the Governor said.

The Astrobiology Pilot Program has involved a public/private partnership, with time, materials and/or human resources being provided by the Maine Department of Education, “It’s About Time” publisher, TERC, several Maine high schools, Lockheed/Martin, the Center for Science and Mathematics Education Research at the University of Maine. Many of the partners involved joined Governor Baldacci for the announcement Monday afternoon.

NotifyMD Expands to Winthrop

November 18, 2008

WINTHROP – Governor John E. Baldacci joined NotifyMD officials today for the announcement of the company's expansion in Maine. Local, regional and state representatives, along with Maine & Company officials, joined in celebration of NotifyMD's new operations center in Winthrop.

"I am pleased that in less than 2 years, we've not only welcomed NotifyMD to the State, but are now celebrating its expansion to another Maine community," said Governor Baldacci. "NotifyMD chose Maine for its expansion for the very same reason they originally looked to our State – our quality workforce and Pine Tree Zone program incentives. Maine again competed in a national search for this new center, and certainly these factors as well as NotifyMD's experience in Maine helped put us ahead of the pack."

NotifyMD first announced its move to Maine in December 2006, when it established a call center in Farmington.

According to NotifyMD officials, over the next 12 months, the company expects to have 100 new employees at the Winthrop facility, with additional job growth in the future. The center will be the largest operation of the company's seven centers nationwide.

NotifyMD is a provider of after-hours messaging, business hour call management, automated patient-reminders and patient care compliance for physicians. The company has a client base of more than 18,000 health care providers in more than 40 states.

Barclaycard US to Expand Wilton Care Center

November 18, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci announced with Barclaycard US, the credit card business of Barclays PLC in the United States, that the company will expand its customer care facility in Wilton, Maine, to support its growing operations. The facility, which opened May 5, 2008, and currently employs about 70, will add 25 new jobs by the first quarter of 2009.

“Just a few short months ago we announced the entry of Barclaycard to Maine,” said Governor Baldacci. “We knew then of the reputation of Barclaycard as a high-quality employer, and they have lived up to that promise, becoming a valued corporate partner to Wilton and to Maine. We are pleased that they have chosen to expand their operations in Wilton, providing opportunities for the dedicated work force there.”

Plans call for Barclaycard to expand its footprint on the second floor of its facility at 128 Weld Road from 44 to 112 work stations. The group will also add more conference room and administrative space.

“Barclaycard is very pleased with the workforce in Franklin County,” said Jen McEntee, Director, Wilton Care Center. “Our Maine colleagues have fantastic experience in various service industries, are quick learners and appreciate all that our company has to offer as an employer.”

Employees of the state-of-the-art customer care center provide customer support for cardmembers who participate in the 64 co-branded credit card partnership programs offered by Barclaycard in the U.S. Barclaycard also operates a customer care center in Wilmington, Del.

Barclaycard strives to give back to the community. The company provides organizational, financial and personnel support to several worthwhile charities and organizations in the communities in which it operates.

Barclaycard US is involved in several community programs in the Wilton area. In 2008, colleagues raised funds for the Franklin County Children’s Taskforce, a group dedicated to family support and the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Barclaycard US colleagues also donated yards of fleece fabric to teachers at Academy Hill School. Teachers will use the material to make blankets for students who are in need. As part of global “Make a Difference Day” activities this month, some 10 colleague volunteers will visit the Academy Hill School to read books about saving money and personal finance with the students which were written and illustrated by Barclaycard US employees and published by the company.

Barclaycard is currently working to fill these new customer service positions at the Wilton facility.

About Barclaycard US

Headquartered in Wilmington, Del., Barclaycard US creates customized co-branded credit card programs for some of the country’s most successful travel, entertainment, retail and financial institutions, including US Airways, Best Western, Carnival Cruise Lines, Travelocity, L.L.Bean, Barnes & Noble and BJ’s

Wholesale Club. The company employs 1,400 associates and was named a Top Employer in Delaware in 2008. For more information please visit www.barclaycardus.com

Globally, Barclaycard provides credit cards in the U.K., Germany, Spain, Italy and Portugal. In the Nordic region, Barclaycard operates through Entercard, a joint venture with Swedbank.

Barclaycard is a division of Barclays PLC, a major global financial services provider engaged in retail and commercial banking, credit cards, investment banking, wealth management and investment management services. With over 300 years of history and expertise in banking, Barclays operates in over 50 countries, employs 135,000 people and services accounts for over 27 million customers and clients worldwide. For further information about Barclays, please visit www.barclays.com

Governor Mourns Loss of Hartland Firefighter

November 18, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today expressed his condolences to the wife of Michael Snowman, a firefighter from Hartland. Snowman died yesterday in the line of duty while fighting a fire in Detroit, Maine. He collapsed while aiding the efforts to put out the fire at the home. He passed away at Eastern Maine Medical Center.

“I join with the family, friends and community members who are today mourning the tragic loss of Michael Snowman,” said Governor Baldacci. “Our firefighters put their lives on the line daily for the people of Maine. Michael was a valued public servant and his loss is one felt across the state.”

The Governor spoke with Mr. Snowman’s widow today. Governor Baldacci will direct that the United States flag and the State of Maine flag be flown at half-staff in Michael Snowman’s community on the day of his funeral. No details about the funeral are yet available.

\$2 Million Made Available to Maine in Response to Effects of Red Tide

November 18, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today received word from the United States Department of Commerce that Maine is eligible to receive up to \$2 million in disaster aid to assist Maine's shellfishing industries affected by red tide. The Department of Commerce says that the available funds should be used for projects that will assess the economic and social effects of the commercial fishery failure, restore the fishery, or prevent a similar failure in the future.

"The shellfishing industry in Maine is one of the backbones of our economy," Governor Baldacci said. "Red tide can have catastrophic results to the industry. But with these funds Maine will be able to take a proactive approach to help soften any potential harm, while finding long-term solutions for when red tide strikes in the future."

In addition to Maine, Massachusetts will also be eligible for up to \$2 million and New Hampshire will be eligible for up to \$1 million in disaster aid.

Governor Baldacci Orders Immediate Spending Reductions

November 19, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today issued an executive order directing State agencies to cut the rate of spending in the current fiscal year by almost \$80 million.

The order, called a curtailment, will help to ensure that the State finishes the fiscal year with a balanced budget.

Earlier this month, the State's Revenue Forecasting Committee estimated that State revenues would fall between \$100 million and \$150 million short of projections. The RFC is scheduled to meet again Friday to further refine its projections.

"Our country faces a dangerous recession, and Maine, like a majority of States, must deal with declining revenues," Governor Baldacci said. "We have an obligation to make sure we finish the year with a balanced budget. Today's curtailment is the first of a series of steps we must take to bring spending in line with available resources."

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.

"As we evaluated the steps we could take with the curtailment, we worked to limit the direct impacts on the people who need help the most – vulnerable populations, children and public safety," Governor Baldacci said. "After six years of constrained State spending, there are no easy choices."

Governor Baldacci will present a supplemental budget for fiscal year 2009 to the Legislature in December. The budget will contain many of the cuts implemented by the curtailment, along with additional changes in statute to further reduce State spending to meet the current revenue downturn. The Governor will present the FY 2010-2011 biennial budget in January.

"The current budget situation requires us to take action immediately. Every day we wait makes the budget cuts more severe and more difficult," Governor Baldacci said.

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.

"Maine faces significant challenges," Governor Baldacci said. "But I am confident that working together we can find the best path forward."

For more information on the curtailment with supporting documents, please visit

<http://www.maine.gov/budget/budgetinfo/fy09curtailment.htm>

Governor Arrives in Toronto for Trade Mission

November 20, 2008

TORONTO, CANADA – Governor John E. Baldacci arrived in Toronto today to join the 2008 Gubernatorial Trade Mission in progress. This is the fifth Gubernatorial Trade Mission under the Baldacci Administration.

“Expanding foreign investment in Maine and building international trade opportunities for Maine businesses are crucial aspects of economic development and job creation,” said Governor Baldacci.

“Canada is Maine’s largest trading partner. It’s vital that we continue efforts such as the trade mission to attract new business to Maine and increase the markets for Maine goods.”

Maine businesses are finding success in expanding opportunities abroad. The last four trade missions yielded more than \$16 million in projected international sales for Maine businesses.

According to the Maine International Trade Center, Canada imported approximately \$900 million in goods and services from Maine in 2007. August data from the Maine International Trade Center (MITC) shows year-to-date, trade with Canada is up more than 15 percent. Maine exports generally have increased nearly 12 percent during the same time period.

The Governor said that building on that momentum is important to keeping the State competitive in the global market and helping local businesses succeed. The Maine International Trade Center organizes Gubernatorial Trade Missions. MITC provides one-on-one business appointments, in-country market research, visit preparation, market briefings and networking events as part of the trade mission.

The 2008 Gubernatorial Trade Mission participants include officials from the Bangor Region Development Alliance, the Maine Lobster Promotion Council, the Maine Composites Alliance and WahlcoMetroflex.

In addition, the Governor will be meeting with the leadership of Canadian companies with significant numbers of employees in Maine, such as TD Banknorth, which employs about 2,500 people in Maine.

This is the second major initiative undertaken this year by the Baldacci Administration to build on the economic, educational and cultural ties with Canada. In September, the Governor hosted the 32nd Conference of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers in Bar Harbor, which strengthened cross-border cooperation on a number of issues including economic development.

Due to the current global financial crisis and its impact on the Maine economy, Governor Baldacci scaled back his own travel to Canada for the trade mission and is paying his own way. The Governor issued a curtailment order on Wednesday. He is preparing to submit to the Legislature a supplemental budget request in December, and is preparing his biennial budget proposal due in January.

The trade mission began on Sunday, Nov. 16, in Vancouver, and ends Friday, Nov. 21.

For more information on the Maine International Trade Center and the trade mission to Canada, please visit <http://www.mtc.com/>

Governor Directs Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff in Hartland and Palmyra

November 20, 2008

AUGUSTA – In remembrance and honor of firefighter Michael Snowman, 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, Nov. 22, 2008 in the towns of Hartland and Palmyra. Snowman had served as a member of the Hartland Fire Department for more than 25 years. The Hartland Fire Department provides first responder services for the Town of Palmyra, as well. The Town of Palmyra requested that their town be included in the flag lowering.

Mr. Snowman's funeral will be held on Saturday.

Governor and Insurance Superintendent Recognize The Concord Group Insurance Companies' Fuel Assistance Program for Policyholders

November 21, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci and Insurance Superintendent Mila Kofman recognized The Concord Group Insurance Companies on Friday for creating a fuel assistance program to benefit many of its policyholders in Maine and Vermont. This one-time program is expected to provide \$500,000 in assistance.

“We appreciate the significant effort being made by The Concord Group to assist policyholders in meeting their home heating expenses this winter,” Governor Baldacci stated. “This unique initiative will help many Mainers remain safe and warm as the weather grows colder.”

The Concord Group has approximately 35,000 homeowner and mobile homeowner policyholders in Maine. Those with a policy as of October 31st will be eligible to register for a \$100 fuel payment. A monthly drawing will be held each month—December through March—to determine those selected for the fuel payment. Upwards of \$200,000 of the program’s \$500,000 total funding is expected to benefit residents of Maine.

“It’s important to acknowledge the leadership of businesses in Maine that are seeking to address home heating concerns—especially during this time of national economic uncertainty,” said the Governor. “We are pleased to add The Concord Group to the list of companies responding to the needs of our neighbors.”

Concord Group policyholders can obtain more information or register for this \$100 fuel assistance opportunity online at www.concordgroupinsurance.com. They can also contact their Independent Agent or visit the Concord Group office in Auburn. The Concord Group is headquartered in Concord, New Hampshire. It has been in business since 1928.

The Governor and Superintendent Kofman have been working to encourage business leaders and Maine residents to identify ways to help one another during this heating season. Comprehensive information regarding Governor Baldacci’s energy initiative is available through the State’s website (www.maine.gov) under “Energy: Information and Assistance” on the homepage.

Governor's Statement on Death of Gus Barber

November 22, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement after learning of the death of Augustus “Gus” Barber, the founder of Barber Foods.

“Gus Barber is an example of the American story. He was an immigrant who built a successful business through his hard work and commitment,” Governor Baldacci said. “But he never forgot his roots and continued to offer a ladder up for others who came to this country looking for opportunity. The Barber family is in our thoughts during this difficult time.”

Barber died Friday at Maine Medical Center.

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Barber died Friday at Maine Medical Center.

Public transit buses to be free on Fridays through New Year's

November 25, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced a holiday season return for Free Fare Fridays. The promotion, which provides a free introduction to mass transit in Maine, is returning for a third time after experiencing success last summer and during the 2007 holiday season.

Free Fare Fridays is a month-long campaign that, beginning on Friday, November 28, allows Maine citizens to explore low-cost transit options available in communities throughout the state. The program has been immensely popular during the previous campaigns, with bus ridership increasing by up to 38 percent on the state's largest bus services.

"Public transit is helping people cope during these difficult economic times," said Governor Baldacci. "This promotion is making a big difference for home budgets that are stretched and for people who may be struggling to meet transportation needs."

Free Fare Fridays is a partnership between MainedOT, the GO MAINE commuter program and local bus providers. Local buses will be free on November 28, and December 5, 12, 19 and 26.

During previous Free Fare Friday campaigns, ridership on the South Portland Bus and Greater Portland METRO services were up significantly. In July, Citylink in Lewiston-Auburn saw a 38 percent increase. The Biddeford-Saco-OOB ShuttleBus and ZOOM had hundreds of new riders, while Bangor's BAT experienced an increase of more than 10 percent.

"People have tried public transit and continue to use it," said Governor Baldacci.

In addition to the upsurge in transit riders, commuters are also flocking to the GO MAINE commuter web site. Since the beginning of 2008 the site has received more than 1 million hits as Mainers try to find carpool partners and vanpool availability. The GO MAINE commuter database has grown by more than 100 percent since the beginning of the year.

For more information about Free Fare Fridays and the GO MAINE commuter assistance program, call 1-800-280-RIDE or visit www.gomaine.org.

FREE FARE FRIDAYS Participating transit services November 28 – December 26, 2008

Aroostook Regional Transportation Bangor BAT Bath Bus Biddeford-Saco-Old Orchard ShuttleBus Tri-Town Biddeford-Saco-Old Orchard ShuttleBus Intercity Coastal Trans Downeast Transportation KVTransit Lewiston/Auburn Citylink The Lynx Greater Portland METRO Sanford Transit "My Bus" South Portland Bus Service Waldo County CAP Western Maine Transportation Services ZOOM Turnpike Express

Governor Declares Emergency to Help Restore Power

November 25, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci has signed an Emergency Declaration that will allow power crews from other states to come to Maine and to help restore electricity.

The Emergency Declaration was ordered at 9:35 p.m. today to expedite power restoration for approximately 40,000 households in the State currently without electricity. High winds are expected to continue in much of the State through the night.

Governor Baldacci and the Maine Emergency Management Agency have been monitoring the severe weather throughout the day.

The Governor encourages people to use caution, report any outages and to not touch downed power lines.

"Common sense goes a long way during bad weather," Governor Baldacci said. "Folks should limit travel where possible, stay away from any downed power lines and check in on their neighbors. I know that crews are working hard to restore power as quickly as possible. We can all help them by staying out of their way."

The State of Emergency proclamation will facilitate a waiver from the Federal Department of Transportation to extend the hours of service for electrical workers and allow additional crews from other states to assist with repairs.

Governor Recognizes World AIDS Day

December 1, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci joined the HIV/AIDS community and spiritual leaders for one of the numerous World AIDS Day services held around Maine on Monday. The State House ceremony honored Maine people currently living with HIV/AIDS and those who have passed away from the disease, and included a display of two panels of the National AIDS Quilt. This year's theme is "Leadership," signifying the importance of vigilance in fighting HIV/AIDS across the state.

"While we have made some very important achievements fighting HIV/AIDS, we know we have a long way to go to eradicate this disease. That's why World AIDS Day is so important," said Governor Baldacci.

More than 1,200 people in Maine have received a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS. Another estimated 300 to 500 people do not know they have HIV/AIDS.

"I want to acknowledge the great work of all of our partners in this effort who are here today and at the many other events being held around the State," said Governor Baldacci. "Leadership must be practiced on a very personal level, whether it's taking the initiative to get tested so you and your loved ones know your HIV status, or whether it's encouraging your family and friends to think about HIV and its prevention."

The Governor said that in tough economic times, it's more important than ever that the HIV/AIDS network in Maine communities remains strong.

"I am committed to fighting HIV/AIDS and we will continue to work with our partners to make the best of a bad budget situation," said the Governor. "This is an important fight for the future of our state."

Governor Announces Economic Injury Disaster Declaration for Northeast Harbor Fire

December 1, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci this afternoon received word that the U.S. Small Business Administration has accepted Maine's request for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan Declaration as a result of a major fire in Northeast Harbor in July. The fire destroyed several businesses and the residences of 18 people who lived above them.

As a result of the fire, three businesses were closed for at least five days. Two other businesses remain closed.

The five affected businesses may borrow up to \$2 million with a maximum interest rate of 4 percent to help them cover normal operating expenses through the disaster recovery period. The Maine Emergency Management Agency and the Small Business Administration will reach out to affected businesses, and the SBA will work with them through the application process.

"Small businesses are critical to Maine," Governor Baldacci said. "The July Northeast Harbor fire was devastating to five such businesses. While the loss was great, the Economic Injury Disaster Loans will help those who were affected have the chance to reopen and get back to work as quickly as possible."

Maine Receives Grants for Brunswick Redevelopment

December 1, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci announced today that Maine has received two grants from the Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA). Funding will support consultant studies as the region prepares for the closure of Naval Air Station Brunswick (NASB) between 2009 and 2011. Specifically, a \$85,000 grant will support a regional economic development marketing plan. A \$1.025 million grant will be used for long range transportation planning in support of the reuse of the Air Station.

"While we have made significant progress in the planning for the redevelopment of Brunswick Naval Air Station, these grants will take us to the next stage to prepare the region for the significant changes to come with the base closure," said the Governor. "With these resources, the State and the region will be better prepared to successfully redevelop the mid-coast economy."

Maine is working aggressively with local and regional partners to prepare for the Air Station's eventual closure, which is scheduled for 2011.

The marketing grant will facilitate the development and implementation of a regional approach to economic development and a regional marketing plan to positively represent the region to prospective businesses to expand and locate.

The transportation planning grant will enable studies of transportation needs for the mid-coast region, including improved base access, redevelopment of freight rail access to the base, and capacity for current and future traffic along Route 196 from I-295 to Route 1 (the Topsham bypass). The studies are crucial for the planning process required of the Maine Department of Transportation.

The Governor's Office of Redevelopment, Re-employment and Economic Development will oversee the management of the consultant studies. The studies will be conducted by December 2009.

Governor's Statement on Meeting with President-elect Obama

December 2, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci released the following statement after meeting with President-elect Barack Obama and Vice President-elect Joe Biden in Philadelphia. The Governor participated in the meeting with other governors as part of the National Governors Association.

“President-elect Obama and Vice President-elect Biden gave us an enormous opportunity that hasn’t been offered for some time. They consulted with the nation’s governors – both Democrats and Republicans – at the beginning of their transition. They reached out to all of us in an effort to get this country going again. We’re going to be part of the discussion and the process as they develop their plans.”

“There’s broad agreement across political parties and ideologies that the country is in a perilous situation, which requires a substantial federal investment,” Governor Baldacci said. “President-elect Obama recognizes that we need to get people back to work, and one of the best ways to do that is to invest in our country’s infrastructure, which not only helps the economy today but also builds the foundation for long-term economic development, job growth and entrepreneurship.”

“In the short-term, we have to get things going,” Governor Baldacci said. “But in the long-term, we also have to be disciplined and balance the budget, which governors understand all too well.”

“I look forward to working with the new Obama Administration as we grapple with the significant economic problems facing Maine and the country. Already, the President-elect has demonstrated that he recognizes the important role states play in our country’s recovery.”

Governor Baldacci Swears in Members of the 124th Legislature

December 3, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci swore in members of the 124th Legislature Wednesday morning. The Governor welcomed Legislators saying that he is looking forward to working with members from both sides of the aisle to strengthen Maine for the future.

The Governor also swore in Senate President Elizabeth Mitchell in a separate ceremony in the Governor's Office.

"These are very difficult times facing our State and the nation," said the Governor. "In Maine, we put people above politics. We will need all our talents combined to ensure that Maine successfully weathers this economic storm and comes out stronger."

Governor Baldacci met with President-elect Barack Obama and most of the nation's governors Tuesday in Philadelphia, PA. The Governor told the new Maine Legislative body that change is coming across the country and to Maine.

"As President-elect Obama stated to the nation's governors yesterday, we will need to adopt the best ideas, regardless of what corner of the political spectrum they come from," said the Governor.

"We face great challenges ahead this session, including making some very hard decisions regarding the State budget. I realize that the numbers are daunting. That's why my Administration has been laying the groundwork for several months to make sure our State is prepared. You've heard about many of these actions, from the curtailment order to my call for each State agency and Department to develop plans to reduce spending by 10 percent."

"I am confident that together we will be up to the challenges," said the Governor.

Governor Directs Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff for National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

December 5, 2008

AUGUSTA – In accordance with United States Annotated Title 36 designating December 7 as National Pearl Harbor Day and in respect for the victims of Pearl Harbor, 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, December 7.

This year marks the sixty-seventh anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. More than 2,400 Americans died in the attack. National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day was established to honor those who died in the attack and those who fought in World War II to protect our freedom.

Governor Congratulates Newest Members of the Maine State Police

December 5, 2008

VASSALBORO - Governor John E. Baldacci today spoke at the graduation ceremony for the newest members of the Maine State Police. The five graduates were sworn in by State Police Colonel Patrick J. Fleming and received their badges. The Governor complimented the new Troopers as they enter service to Maine people, noting the high level of professionalism, compassion and dedication of the Maine State Police.

"Maine Troopers have an increasingly complicated job," said the Governor. "We appreciate and value all the hard work that you have already done to get to this point, and the work you will perform on behalf of the People of Maine once you leave here. Our law enforcement community is second-to-none."

The five new Troopers are:

Bethany Couturier, Montville, will patrol in Waldo County;

Christopher Foxworthy, Orono, will patrol in the Lincoln-Millinocket region;

Jedediah Malcore, East Wilton, will patrol in southern Aroostook County;

Elgin Physic, Lewiston, will patrol in Androscoggin County; and

Shane Ross, Pittsfield, will patrol in York County.

In a separate ceremony today, the Governor presented the Department of Public Safety Unsung Hero Award to Examiner Dawn Ego from the State Police Computer Crime Unit. Ego led an investigation by the unit that resulted in the rescue of a girl in Georgia earlier this year. The girl had been abused for four years, with the images of the abuse having been posted on the Internet.

"The Maine State Police Computer Crime Unit made the critical difference in cracking the case that literally saved a child's life," said the Governor. "While this is a remarkable story, what is not remarkable is the absolute dedication and commitment of the work of the employees of the Maine Computer Crime Unit, the State Police and the entire Maine Department of Public Safety as they ensure the health and welfare of our citizens."

Governor Celebrates Alternative Energy

December 8, 2008

BETHEL – Governor John E. Baldacci today celebrated the ribbon cutting of Maine Energy Systems in Bethel. Maine Energy Systems is a wood pellet facility that supports a transition to the use of renewable energy for homes and businesses.

“While heating oil costs have dipped greatly in the past three months, we cannot lose sight of the importance of achieving energy independence,” Governor Baldacci said. “We must move forward with decreasing our reliability on foreign, expensive, unstable and polluting energy. Kicking the oil habit will keep valuable financial resources of hard working Maine families and businesses here in the State.”

Governor Baldacci has been supportive of all renewable sources of energy in Maine, including wind, solar and tidal energy. The Governor says that there is no one solution to kicking the United States’ dependency on foreign oil, but encouraging the use of renewable energy in addition to conserving energy will make a substantial difference.

“We must be aggressive in building our energy future together,” the Governor said. “It is a future that will be built upon clean, renewable, home-grown energy sources. This is the beginning of an era of our country being more energy independent by changing our energy needs.”

Governor Baldacci was joined at the press conference today by Les Otten, who was the chair of the Governor’s Wood to Energy Task Force and a partner at Maine Energy Systems. Other partners of the company are “Dutch” Dresser and Bill Strauss.

For more information on the company, visit www.maineenergysystems.com

For a list of resources and information about energy costs and ways Mainers can better cope this winter, visit: http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/contact/citizen_services/safeandwarm.html

Governor Talks Trade at World Affairs Council Breakfast

December 9, 2008

PORTLAND – Governor John E. Baldacci gave an enthusiastic endorsement this morning to the role that trade missions play in boosting Maine business. The Governor spoke about the recent trade mission to Canada, as well as previous trade missions, while addressing the Governor's International Breakfast.

"The type of business model that includes international trade is usually a successful business model," Governor Baldacci said. "The Maine International Trade Center is a valuable resource for Maine business and Maine people. I am excited by the business opportunities that have been – and continue to be – generated by trade missions."

The Maine International Trade Center conducted a trade mission to Canada in November. Twelve Maine companies participated in the trade mission to Vancouver and Toronto. About \$6.5 million in sales have been generated so far. Governor Baldacci paid his own way to participate in meetings held in Toronto as a part of the trade mission. He said that the feedback from Maine businesses has been very positive, just as it has been for previous trade missions.

"This mission was an important step in strengthening existing linkages and creating trade opportunities between Maine, British Columbia and Ontario," the Governor said. "These were uncharted territories for many of our companies and the feedback we have been getting from their matchmaking meetings is impressive."

The Governor continued, "Whether it was US Windblade servicing alternative energy systems in wind and ocean energy, or more traditional products such as lobsters or LaBree's baked goods, each of our companies found opportunities in these markets for future collaborations and sales."

Carl Spang, President and CEO of Falcon Performance Footwear in Lewiston participated in the trade mission to Canada. Spang spoke about joining the trade mission to Canada at Tuesday morning's breakfast, saying it was a very successful experience and money well spent by his company.

The Canadian Consul General to New England Neil Le Blanc, and the President and CEO of TD Bank Bharat Masrani also spoke at the annual breakfast, which was presented by the World Affairs Council of Maine and the Maine International Trade Center.

The Maine International Trade Center is currently planning a trade mission to Dubai and the United Arab Emirates for February of 2009.

For more information on the Maine International Trade Center, visit www.mitc.com

For more information on the World Affairs Council of Maine, visit www.wacmaine.org

Governor and Maine's Health Leaders Issue Health Advisory on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

December 9, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci, Public Health Director Dr. Dora Anne Mills and Attorney General Steve Rowe were joined by leaders from Maine's medical community as they issued a health advisory on domestic violence and sexual assault. Such health advisories are issued by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) in the Department of Health and Human Services as an electronic tool for communicating urgent information to the professional health community and others.

"Domestic violence-related homicides in Maine have increased from 8 in 2007 to 17 so far this year," explained Governor Baldacci. "Domestic violence and sexual assault are serious issues impacting the health and welfare of Mainers. We must all work together to prevent and mitigate these important public health problems."

"Our main message to the professional health community today is that we are asking them to routinely screen for domestic violence and sexual assault," said Dr. Mills. "Many are already doing this, and we hope this health advisory expands their existing work and helps to standardize screening."

"Furthermore, we recommend that physicians and all health care providers be familiar with existing domestic violence and sexual assault resources and be trained on how to screen and make referrals for both victims and perpetrators," continued Dr. Mills. "National studies indicate that three-quarters of domestic violence-related homicide victims were seen in a health care setting for related injuries within a year of their homicide. Effective screening and referrals may have saved their lives."

Attorney General Rowe applauded Dr. Mills and Governor Baldacci for shining a light on this devastating public health problem and for enlisting the medical community to connect victims with the excellent resources available to them in their communities. Rowe said, "Domestic and sexual violence costs us all and it costs us in real ways. It costs our economy about \$1.5 billion and it rips the social fabric of our communities apart." He called on Mainers to change the culture that supports men's violence against women by providing young men with models of healthy relationships and teaching them to respect women.

"My Administration has supported efforts to comprehensively address domestic violence and sexual assault," said Governor Baldacci. "We've sought to make State Government a leader in this area, establishing domestic violence policies in the workplace. We have also given prosecutors better tools by which to handle violators. But there's more that we can do. We can all speak out against domestic violence and sexual assault; we can all become familiar with resources in our communities; and employers can implement domestic violence workplace policies that support victims."

For more information on Maine resources or if you have been abused and want help, call the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence 24 hour hotline at 1-866-834-4357 (TTY 1-800-787-3224) or visit

www.mcedv.org; or call the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault 24 hour hotline at 1-800-871-7741 (TTY 1-888-458-5599) or visit <http://www.mecasa.org/>

The health advisory that includes community, statewide, and online resources can be found at www.mainepublichealth.gov

Governor Baldacci, Dr. Mills, and Attorney General Rowe were joined by representatives of the Maine Medical Association, Maine Osteopathic Association, Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Maine Chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility, Maine Emergency Medical Services and others.

Governor Baldacci Presents Solar-Powered Prizes to Contest Winners

December 10, 2008

AUGUSTA — Governor John E. Baldacci today met the winners of Efficiency Maine's sixth Annual Energy Savings Tip Contest in his office at the State House. The contest was open to fourth-to-sixth grade students in Maine.

The winners, who came from around the State, gave the Governor their tips for saving energy in schools and homes. In return, the Governor and Maine Public Utilities Commission Chair Sharon Reishus presented the students with iPod Shuffle music players and solar-powered chargers as prizes.

Governor Baldacci said the winning tips highlighted the fact that energy conservation need not be expensive or elaborate.

"The winning tips are simple yet very effective things we can all do in our homes and schools to save energy," he said. "The earlier we get our students focused on the issues and what they can do, the better the outcome will be for Maine and the world."

The contest is a joint venture between Efficiency Maine, a program of the Maine Public Utilities Commission, and the Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security.

This year's prize-winning tips ranged from planting trees outside school windows to asking the school janitor to install thermostats in classrooms.

The Governor commended Efficiency Maine for its continued efforts to educate Maine students on the importance of energy conservation.

Commissioner Reishus noted that last fiscal year, more than 10,000 4th – 12th graders participated in energy education presentations and workshops provided by Efficiency Maine's School Energy Education Program, which provides support for energy education programs in Maine schools.

"The Energy Savings Tips Contest is a part of a broad effort to get Maine's school children to focus on energy issues and what they can do to promote energy efficiency both at their schools and in their homes," she said. "These students get it: saving energy and preserving the planet go hand in hand."

The winners of the sixth annual Energy Savings Tip Contest were:

4th Grade. School tip: Olivia Verrill, Manchester School, Windham. "Plant trees outside hot windows. In a few years there will be shade and nice breezes instead of the sun's hot, baking heat."

4th Grade Home tip: Alexander Raest, Madawaska Elementary School, Madawaska. "Use a low flow showerhead."

5th Grade. School Tip: Samantha Richard, George E. Jack Elementary, Standish. "Ask if the janitors could install thermostats that you can program so that the temperature can be turned down at night and on weekends when nobody is in the building."

5th Grade. Home Tip: Jake Redgate, Paris Elementary School, South Paris. "You could use a toaster over instead of a normal oven to save energy."

6th Grade. School Tip: Megan Seward, Presque Isle Middle School, Presque Isle. "Be a fan of windmills."

6th Grade. Home Tip: Matt Buck, Clinton Elementary School, Clinton. "Don't use an AC. Use a fan."

Governor Announces Assistance for Fort Kent

December 11, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci announced today that the Town of Fort Kent will be receiving \$120,000 from the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Urgent Need Program. The funding will help the town recover from flooding that occurred from April 28 to May 2, 2008. The Governor requested a federal major disaster declaration, which was granted by President Bush a week after the disaster.

"The funding will enable the hardy people of Fort Kent to continue the path of rebuilding and renewal after the devastating flooding that occurred earlier this year," said Governor Baldacci. "In my visits to Fort Kent after the disaster, I was deeply impressed with the spirit of the residents and their determination to recover quickly. I am pleased that State funds are dedicated to help this process."

During the flooding event, melting snow combined with rains caused the Fish River and Saint John River to flood a large area of Fort Kent. Thirty dwelling units were damaged to the point of no longer being habitable. Of these, 23 qualified for acquisition and demolition through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). Under the HMGP program, FEMA pays 75 percent of the total cost for appraisal, legal fees, property acquisition, demolition, and creation of open space.

The HMGP program costs for assistance in Fort Kent are estimated at \$1.11 million. The FEMA program would provide about \$830,000 of the total costs. The Town of Fort Kent's match requirement will be approximately \$280,000.

"It takes time for communities to recover from a natural disaster," Governor Baldacci said. "We haven't forgotten the struggles facing residents of Fort Kent. They are resilient, and I am confident that they will emerge stronger than ever when these mitigation steps are completed."

Harold Alfond College Challenge Expands Statewide

December 11, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined in the announcement that every baby born in Maine will be eligible for a \$500 grant to start a NextGen College Investing Plan account starting Jan. 1, 2009. The Harold Alfond College Challenge began as a pilot program for babies born in MaineGeneral facilities in 2008, with 320 babies opening NextGen College Investing accounts and receiving \$500 grants in the first year alone. About 150 of those babies were at Thursday's announcement.

"Harold Alfond wanted all Maine children to have the opportunity to pursue higher education and to enjoy the benefits such education would bring to them and our State," Governor Baldacci said. "He wanted Maine to lead the nation in making higher education a right and responsibility for all."

The Harold Alfond College Challenge provides every baby born in Maine with a \$500 grant to start a NextGen account for education beyond high school. It is expected that more than 14,000 babies will be born in Maine in 2009.

"Harold would be very pleased with our progress, but he would not want us to rest on our laurels," the Governor said. "He would be the first to say that our work is not done and 'enough with the pats on the back, get back to work tomorrow.' Harold would challenge us to enroll as many Maine newborns as possible in the program this coming year, and to continue to spread the message of the importance of saving early for college and obtaining a college education."

For more information about the Harold Alfond College Challenge, please visit www.500forbaby.org or call 1-800-228-3734.

For more information about the NextGen College Investing Plan, please visit www.famemaine.com/nextgen/home.asp

Governor Declares Emergency to Ensure Power is Maintained

December 11, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has signed an Emergency Declaration allowing power crews from other states to help restore electricity in the event the current winter storm leads to outages.

The Emergency Declaration was signed at 2 p.m. today to ensure that should the predicted icy mix of precipitation lead to power outages, crews would be able to stay on the road to restore power. The order also gives power companies more flexibility in pre-positioning repair crews.

Governor Baldacci has participated in calls regarding the winter storm that is hitting the State today. He remains in close contact with officials at 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. "Conditions tonight are likely to get worse as the temperature drops and predicted icing occurs. If possible, people should stay off the roads," the Governor said. "If you have neighbors who are vulnerable or who could be at risk, check on them."

The State of Emergency proclamation will facilitate a waiver from the Federal Department of Transportation to extend the hours of service for electrical workers and allow additional crews from other states to assist with repairs.

The text of the Emergency Declaration follows:

WHEREAS, the State of Maine is experiencing a winter storm that has the potential to leave thousands of Maine homes and businesses without power; and

WHEREAS, power restoration crews may 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 may 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 49 CFR part 390.23 to allow relief from 49 CFR parts 390 through 399 subject to the limitations described below, and therefore allow these power crews 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 pursuant to 49 CFR part 390.23 of facilitating a waiver to Federal Department of Transportation Rules, specifically 49 CFR part 395 Hours of Service of Drivers, do hereby declare that a State of Emergency exists as of December 11, 2008.

John E. Baldacci

Governor

Date: December 11, 2008

State Government Closed on Friday, Dec. 12

December 12, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has announced that state government will remain closed for the rest of the day due to weather and power outages across the state.

It was announced earlier that state government would be closed until noon, but due to the continued inclement conditions and wide spread outages, the decision was made for state government to remain closed for the rest of the day.

Governor Amends Emergency Declaration to Ensure Heating Oil Deliveries

December 12, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has amended an Emergency Declaration issued Thursday to include fuel deliver vehicles, ensuring that people will have heating fuel over the cold weekend.

The original declaration was issued proactively to allow power crews from other states to help restore electricity if outages occurred due to the winter storm.

The Emergency Declaration was signed at 3:30 p.m. today to ensure that fuel delivery drivers would be able to stay on the road to allow for heating oil deliveries. The inclement weather and power outages have slowed fuel delivery throughout the State.

Governor Baldacci has been in close contact with officials at the Maine Emergency Management Agency and has participated in calls with local EMA personnel and State agencies.

The Governor encourages people to use caution, continue to report any outages, not to touch any downed power lines, and to look out for one another.

“While we have weathered the brunt of the storm, forecasts are still calling for a cold weekend,” Governor Baldacci said. “Everyone has been working as hard as they can, looking out for each other. Crews are doing all they can. I would ask folks to be patient as power crews work to restore power.”

The text of the Emergency Declaration follows:

WHEREAS, the State of Maine has experienced a severe winter storm that has left more than 200,000 Maine homes and businesses without power; and

WHEREAS, it will be several days before power is fully restored; and

WHEREAS, the resources of a number of State agencies have been and will be committed to assist in the power restoration process; and

WHEREAS, shelters have been opened throughout the State to assist those whose homes are out of power; and

WHEREAS, the health and safety of the residents of the affected area are imperiled; and

WHEREAS, the resources of many counties and towns across the State are, or will soon be exhausted; and

WHEREAS, on December 11, 2008, I issued a State of Emergency Proclamation in order to 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 specifically 49 CFR part 395 Hours of Service of Drivers, and

therefore allow power crews to operate additional hours and otherwise operate effectively in this situation;

WHEREAS, the weather conditions and power interruptions have slowed fuel transportation and delivery;

WHEREAS, many drivers in the State will 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 waiver from the Federal Department of Transportation, pursuant to 49 CFR part 390.23 to allow relief from 49 CFR parts 390 through specifically 49 CFR part 395 Hours of Service of Drivers, may need to be extended to allow fuel transportation and delivery;

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 do hereby declare that a State of Emergency exists as of December 12, 2008.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have caused the Great Seal of the State to be hereunto affixed GIVEN under my hand at Augusta this 12th day of December in the Year of our Lord Two Thousand and Eight.

JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI Governor

Governor Seeks Federal Assistance for Storm Recovery

December 15, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has requested that President Bush make an Emergency Declaration for York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox and Waldo counties for the ice storm that struck the State beginning Dec. 11.

This request is a first step in the recovery process. It would ensure that federal resources are available for any final response needs. The State is collecting information in support of a likely request for additional recovery funds.

“Maine was well-prepared for the storm, and I’m proud of the response from State and local governments and from the private sector,” Governor Baldacci said. “As we move forward, we will need the full support of the Federal government for our State to fully recover.”

Governor Baldacci declared a State of Emergency on Dec. 11 that allowed power crews and other resources to pre-deploy for the storm.

The Governor signed the Federal disaster request Sunday after visiting York and Lincoln counties. The Governor visited Portland and South Portland on Saturday.

At the height of the power outages, roughly 70 percent of York County and 50 percent of Cumberland County had lost electricity service. Central Maine Power reported that almost 40 percent of its customers, about 220,000 meters, were without power.

The Governor is also requesting a response from the Federal Small Business Administration to assist affected businesses in the State.

“This storm has had a significant impact on our State,” Governor Baldacci said. “Families and businesses have been struggling to cope with cold temperatures and lost business. The State, working with our Federal partners, will do everything possible to help our communities recover.”

The text of the request for the Federal Emergency Declaration follows:

December 14, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush

President of the United States

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue

Washington, D.C. 20500

Through: Art Cleaves, Regional Director

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Region 1

99 High Street

Boston, MA 01210

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 501 (a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.35, I request that you declare an Emergency Declaration for the State of Maine, the Counties of York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox and Waldo, for the incident period of December 11, 2008 and continuing.

A "continuing" incident period is required since additional power outages are expected as ice melts and tree "snap back" brings down more lines. Also, as citizens exhaust fuel for generators and/or wood for stoves, increased sheltering demand is expected.

In response to the situation, I have taken appropriate action under State law and directed the execution of the State Emergency Plan on December 11, 2008 in accordance with Section 501 (a) of the Stafford Act. On December 11, 2008 I declared a State of Emergency for the entire state, which remains in effect.

Pursuant to 44 CFR § 206.35, I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments, and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary to save lives, protect property, public health, and safety, or to lessen, or avert the threat of a disaster. I am specifically requesting assistance under Categories A and B (debris removal and emergency protective measures) and direct federal assistance of the FEMA Public Assistance Program.

Preliminary estimates of the types and amount of emergency assistance needed under the Stafford Act, and emergency assistance from certain Federal agencies under other statutory authorities are tabulated in Enclosure A.

The following information is furnished on the nature and amount of State and local resources that have been or will be used to alleviate the conditions of this emergency:

Beginning on December 11, 2008, the State Emergency Operations Center was activated, including the State Emergency Response Team. The EOC remains activated at this time. The following state, private and volunteer resources are or will be committed to alleviate this emergency: Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), Maine Department of Transportation, Maine Turnpike Authority, Maine State Police, Maine Forest Service, Maine Warden Service, Maine Department of Agriculture, Maine Public Utilities Commission, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Maine Department of Health and Human Services, American Red Cross, Maine211, Maine National Guard (EOC support), Radio

Amateur Civil Emergency Services, County Emergency Management Agencies in the affected counties and mutual aid areas, County law enforcement, local road and public works departments, and other state and local agencies as needed to protect state property, to assist those affected local governments and individuals in responding to and recovering from this event, and to provide other assistance to protect the public health and safety. The following information is furnished on efforts and resources of other Federal agencies, which have been or will be used in responding to this incident:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has deployed a liaison element to the State Emergency Operations Center to assist in coordinating the response. The US Army Corps of Engineers through FEMA is providing technical assistance on debris removal. The US Department of Health and Human Services has provided consultative and technical assistance with response to special needs populations.

I certify that for this emergency, the State and local governments will assume all applicable non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act.

I request direct Federal assistance for work and services to save lives and protect property. The anticipated needs of the communities will far exceed the resources available to the state and local government as:

- Large amounts of debris impact the availability for emergency vehicles to get through to assist Maine residents.
- Maine is currently experiencing widespread power and communications outages. At the height of the event more than a 223,000 customers, equivalent to 40% of the State's population, were without power. Power restoration efforts have been underway since December 12 and present estimates indicate that it may be several more days before power is fully restored because of the extent of damage to power infrastructure. At the same time, temperatures have been dropping, putting elderly and special needs residents at risk.
- Power restoration has been hampered by the great amount of debris, mixed with fallen power lines. Local public works and Maine DOT have been assisting with clearing debris, and salting and sanding roadways so that power crews could have access to damaged lines.
- The power restoration process has further been hampered by the unavailability of crews from neighboring states, which are likewise responding to this catastrophic event. Power utilities have been forced to call in mutual aid resources from as far away as North Carolina.

(a) Type of assistance requested.

Maine is still actively responding to this disaster and has been unable to fully quantify the amount of assistance that will be needed from Federal resources. A declaration at this time is critical to getting anticipated resources in place to ensure life safety. The State is specifically requesting Direct Federal Assistance, to include technical assistance, in anticipation of debris removal, sheltering and communication issues. Anticipated resource needs include emergency generation when such requirements are beyond the type and number available within the State, and shelter supplies.

In accordance with 44 CFR § 206.208, the State of Maine agrees that it will, with respect to direct Federal assistance:

Provide without cost to the United States all lands, easement, and rights-of-ways necessary to accomplish the approved work.

Hold and save the United States free from damages due to the requested work, and shall indemnify the Federal Government against any claims arising from such work;

Provide reimbursement to FEMA for the non-Federal share of the cost of such work in accordance with the provisions of the FEMA-State Agreement; and

Assist the performing Federal agency in all support and local jurisdictional matters.

In addition, I anticipate the need for debris removal, which poses an immediate threat to lives, public health, and safety.

Pursuant to Sections 502 and 407 of the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5192 & 5173, the State agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the United States of America for any claims arising from the removal of debris or wreckage for this disaster. The State agrees that debris removal from public and private property will not occur until the landowner signs an unconditional authorization for the removal of debris.

I have designated Robert McAleer as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. He will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in damage assessments and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,

John Elias Baldacci

Governor

Maine Receives Federal Emergency Declaration

December 15, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci has learned that President Bush has issued an Emergency Declaration for York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox and Waldo counties for the ice storm that began Dec. 11.

This initial declaration by the federal government enables the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide emergency response assistance for the affected counties. Direct Federal Assistance would bring federal resources such as generators and shelter supplies, as well as federal personnel, to Maine should they be needed in the final stage of the emergency response. The federal government will pay 75 percent of the costs associated with such assistance.

“The granting of this federal assistance is a critical step in delivering key response and recovery services throughout the counties heavily impacted by the storm,” said Governor Baldacci. “State officials continue to compile information in support of a likely request for additional recovery funds. This was a severe storm and recover will take time.”

Governor Baldacci declared a State of Emergency on Dec. 11 that allowed power crews and other resources to pre-deploy for the storm.

The Governor signed the Federal disaster request Sunday after visiting York and Lincoln counties. The Governor visited Portland and South Portland on Saturday.

“I appreciate the dedication exhibited by our local, county, state and federal partners to quickly restore power to families and businesses, as well as to provide other crucial services to protect the health and safety of Maine people,” said Governor Baldacci. “Additionally, individuals and private sector organizations and businesses have been doing a tremendous job helping their neighbors.”

Special Election Set for House District 89

December 15, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today set the date for a special election to replace former-Rep. Janet Mills, D-Farmington, who resigned her seat after being elected as Maine's Attorney General.

The election will be held on February 3, 2009, for Legislative District 89, which includes Farmington and Industry.

The proclamation, signed by the Governor and the Secretary of State, is addressed to members of the Democratic, Green Independent and Republican Committees of District 89 towns. The committees are directed to nominate their candidates for the seat on or before 5 p.m. on Jan. 5, 2009.

Mills was elected Attorney General by the Legislature on Dec. 3.

Governor Appoints Former-Rep. Makas to Vacant Androscoggin County Commission Seat

December 16, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today appointed former-Rep. Elaine Makas, D-Lewiston, to the vacant District 3 seat on the Androscoggin County Commission.

The vacancy was created when Democrat Helen Poulin moved out of the district. The appointment is made in accordance with Title 30-A MRSA, subsection 63.

On Dec. 8, the Androscoggin Democratic Committee forwarded three nominations to fill the seat. The nominees were chosen during a Lewiston City Democratic Committee caucus, which was held on Dec. 7.

The nominees were Elaine Makas, who received 66.2 percent of votes cast during the caucus; Richard Grandmaison, who received 28.4 percent of votes cast; and Kaileigh Tara, who received 2.7 percent of votes cast.

“All three nominees have demonstrated a commitment to public service and the people of Lewiston. All three are qualified to serve,” Governor Baldacci said. “But the strong support earned by Elaine Makas during the nominating caucus tipped the scale in her favor.”

“Elaine will make a strong addition to the Androscoggin County Commission, and I’m sure she will do well representing the people of Lewiston,” Governor Baldacci said. “This has been a difficult time for the Commission, and it is my hope that this appointment will help the County move forward. All three nominees deserve credit for stepping forward with a willingness to serve.”

The appointment becomes effective once Makas is administered the oath of office by a Dedimus Justice and the paperwork is received by the Secretary of State.

Governor Recognizes EMMC for Davies Award

December 16, 2008

BANGOR – Governor John E. Baldacci today recognized Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor for receiving the 2008 Nicholas E. Davies Organizational Award of Excellence. The award is given to hospitals that are effectively using information technology to improve the safety and quality of patient care.

“Today reaffirms something those of us in northern, eastern and central Maine have known for quite some time: that EMMC is committed to providing high quality care,” Governor Baldacci said. “With the 2008 Davies Award, Eastern Maine Medical Center has been singled out as a national leader in using available information technology to improve care for patients in Maine.”

EMMC is the only hospital to receive the 2008 Davies Award and joins only 25 other hospitals in the United States to receive the award since 1994.

Governor Baldacci joined EMMC president and CEO Deborah Carey Johnson, RN, and other members of the hospital staff for the recognition ceremony this morning. The awards ceremony for the 2008 Nicholas E. Davies Award will take place in Chicago in April of next year.

Governor Presents Supplemental Budget

December 16, 2008

Proposal Offsets \$140 million in Declining Revenue with No New Taxes, Fees or Fines; Utilizes \$45 million in State Reserves for FY 2009

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today released the details of his Supplemental Budget bill for Fiscal Year 2009. The bill addresses a \$140 million revenue downturn for the remainder of the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2009.

“The U.S. economy is in recession. People are losing their jobs. They’re watching as their retirement accounts dry up. And there’s fear that things could still get worse,” Governor Baldacci said. “We have great hope that with a new partner soon to be in the White House, our country will be able to quickly recover its economic strength. But for now, we must deal with declining revenues and an increased demand for government services.”

The supplemental budget continues the November 19 curtailment, which immediately cut spending by \$80 million.

The plan also:

- Eliminates 94 positions, including 40 layoffs. Since 2002, 729 positions have been cut from State government;
- State spending will be 2.1 percent, or \$66 million, less in 2009 than in 2008;
- Closes one of the two housing units at the Charleston Correctional Facility, transfers 22 State prisoners to county facilities and eliminates the Department of Correction’s Office of Advocacy;
- Makes no further reductions in K-12 or higher education;
- Includes \$1.6 million in spending reductions put forward by the Legislature; and
- Utilizes \$45 million from the State’s reserve accounts. Since 2003, reserves have been rebuilt from zero to \$169 million. Reserves represent 28 percent of the proposal.

“Everyone is being asked to get along with less money, even in places where there is significant need,” Governor Baldacci said. “As I considered the options for balancing the 2009 budget, my goal was to protect public health, public safety and our economy.”

In addition to the revenue downturn, the supplemental budget also accounts for required spending, including a \$1.5 million transfer to county jails as part of the unified corrections system, \$1.2 million for disaster assistance and \$5.1 million for teacher retirement. The budget also accounts for \$4.8 million in increased fuel, gasoline and utilities costs.

The supplemental budget includes no increases in fees or fines.

It does include two technical tax changes. Individuals who experience "unusual events," such as a capital gain of \$500,000 or more, will be required to make an estimated tax payment in the quarter after the event. The change moves forward an estimated \$5.1 million in tax collections, but does not increase rates or liability.

The planned lowering of the Telecommunications Personal Property tax, which applies to utility companies, will be slowed. The tax was scheduled to go down from 22 mills in 2008 to 21 mills in 2009. The rate will remain unchanged and raises an estimated \$800,000.

The bill also changes the reimbursement rate for Critical Access Hospitals and for hospital-based physicians.

Other savings initiatives include \$1.8 million from the hard hiring freeze implemented by the Governor, \$6.4 million excess reserves from retiree health, \$2 million in reduced capital expenditures, \$1 million in reduced debt service, and \$500,000 in reduced contracts in the Department of Corrections.

In addition to cuts, the budget does not fund significant requests from State Departments and Agencies, which sought emergency appropriations for spending not included in the original 2008-2009 biennial budget.

"Every day that goes without action puts more pressure on State resources and makes it harder to balance our budget," Governor Baldacci said. "The plan I am presenting is responsible, balanced and tough. I urge the Legislature to do its work quickly. We have more difficult challenges ahead."

The Governor will present the 2010-2011 biennial budget to the Legislature on January 9. The budget must account for a projected revenue decline of \$330 million and an additional \$508 million in requests to keep State government operating at its current level.

The complete Supplemental Budget is available online at:

www.maine.gov/budget

Governor Baldacci Thanks State Employees for Generosity

December 16, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci thanked and congratulated volunteers of the 2008 Maine State Employees Combined Charitable Appeal (MSECCA) Tuesday afternoon. State agencies combined to donate a total of nearly \$365,000 through this year's appeal, which will benefit more than 500 charitable organizations in the State of Maine. The Governor joined the 2008 MSECCA Chairperson, Department of Conservation Commissioner Patrick McGowan, at a luncheon Tuesday afternoon to thank the volunteers.

"As dedicated public servants, you work for the improvement of the welfare of Maine citizens on a daily basis," Governor Baldacci said. "And as volunteers of MSECCA, you go above and beyond. Thank you for your commitment to making this 29th anniversary of the appeal a great success."

The state agencies that participate in the appeal each designate a volunteer to spearhead the agency's efforts. Each department sets a goal for contributions to the charities of their choice. Employees have the option to donate a lump sum, or they can choose to donate a certain amount from each paycheck throughout the year. More than \$16,600 is being given to the Keep ME Warm Fund through the 2008 appeal.

"Our State employees are truly a credit to their communities," the Governor said. "They work hard every day to bring the best quality services to the people of Maine. Helping our neighbors is what living in Maine is all about. We take care of our people and our communities."

Governor Baldacci Celebrates Two Southern Maine Eateries

December 17, 2008

PORTLAND AND WELLS – Governor John E. Baldacci visited two restaurants in Southern Maine Wednesday morning to congratulate them on reaching important milestones. Borealis Breads opened a new location in Portland on the same day that the Maine Diner in Wells celebrated its 5,000,000th customer.

Borealis Breads opened its new retail location on Ocean Avenue in Portland. In addition to selling breads and baked goods, the new location also features a 35-seat bistro. The company says that it has created 18 new full and part time positions with the opening of the Ocean Avenue shop and will continue to feature Maine grown ingredients and products for its customers.

Governor Baldacci congratulated Borealis Breads owner Jim Amaral on the expansion, saying that his story is a model of success for other Maine small businesses.

“Jim started with a simple principle. Provide top-quality, healthy rustic breads, made with Maine whole wheat flour. Jim’s flour comes from Aroostook County, and his breads are now sold across Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts,” Governor Baldacci said. “It’s businesses like Borealis Breads that are helping us to spread the word about the high quality of Maine produce and the importance of buying local.”

Governor Baldacci also visited the Maine Diner in Wells this morning, arriving just in time to greet the 25-year-old restaurant’s 5,000,000th customer.

Dick and Dede Dionne of South Berwick walked in to the diner around noon to be greeted by the Governor, Maine Diner owners Dick and Myles Henry, staff and several other customers dining at the restaurant.

“The Henry family and their staff are quality people, running a long-standing, beloved family business,” the Governor said. “It doesn’t take long once you enter this establishment to see why for 25 years they have grown a large base of loyal customers and employees. It comes down to good people and good food, and that’s what the Maine Diner serves up in abundance.”

The diner celebrated Mr. and Mrs. Dionne’s status as the 5,000,000th customer by awarding them with gifts, flowers, lunch and cake. The couple, married for 49 years, had just had their power restored yesterday as a result of damage from the ice storm.

“Today is a great day highlighting wonderful Maine businesses,” Governor Baldacci said. “Not only is Maine a great place to do business, but it’s a great place to eat.”

Governor Baldacci Awards Nearly \$5 Million in Riverfront Community Development Bonds

December 18, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today awarded \$4.9 million to 14 communities in Riverfront Community Development Bonds. The Governor says the funding, provided to communities, will be used for will leverage more than \$41.7 million in private and public investments.

“The grant awards promote and continue the ecological recovery of Maine rivers while revitalizing riverfront communities,” Governor Baldacci said. “The projects will help to improve the quality of place along the more than 30,000 miles of rivers in Maine where more than half of our population lives in riverfront communities.”

The Legislature passed the \$5 million Riverfront Community Development Bond and Maine voters approved it in November 2007. The Riverfront Bonds can be used for a wide variety of projects, including rehabilitation of run-down or abandoned buildings; restoration and improvement of habitat for fish and wildlife; or creation of parks, trails or other recreational amenities.

Governor Baldacci said it is import to rejuvenating the areas around Maine rivers as they are the lifeblood of the State.

“Our rivers were Maine’s first transportation system and served as the primary way to transport logs to serve our forest products industry,” the Governor said. “Yet today we know they are more. We are turning back to our rivers as we build a new and shared vision for our communities. We build our business around them because they are vital to our natural heritage.”

The list of Riverfront Community Development Bond Program funded projects follows:

Bangor, City owned riverfront park, \$675,000 toward total project cost of \$2,329,968

Biddeford, Riverwalk/No. Dam Mill Redevelopment, \$500,000 toward total project cost of \$5,810,106

E. Machias, Redevelop old mill/hatchery, \$215,500 toward total project cost of \$649,234

Gardiner/Augusta, Trails, public acc., habitat improvement, \$495,000 toward total project cost of \$1,576,700

Grand Isle, Trails, public acc., arts & agriculture, \$652,000 toward total project cost of \$2,528,435

Houlton, Trails, public acc., habitat improvement, \$22,600 toward total project cost of \$68,100

Milo, Rehab bldg., riverpark, trails, tourism, \$197,300 toward total project cost of \$706,537

Orono, Public access/riverpark, trails, \$96,400 toward total project cost of \$289,608

Pittsfield, Trails, public acc., habitat improvement, \$32,200 toward total project cost of \$96,603

Richmond, Riverfront park/public access, \$333,000 toward total project cost of \$1,313,100

Saco, Redevelop mill/pub. acc./riverfront park, \$675,000 toward total project cost of \$12,637,637

Sanford, Redevelop mill/pub. acc./riverfront park, \$675,000 toward total project cost of \$12,656,714

Skowhegan, Public access/riverpark, trails, \$110,000 toward total project cost of \$416,678

Thomaston, Redevelop prison/riverpark, trails, \$221,000 toward total project cost of \$777,519

Governor Applauds Nomination of Karen Mills as SBA Administrator

December 19, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John Elias Baldacci issued the following statement on President-elect Barack Obama's selection of Karen Gordon Mills to become the new administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

"Karen Mills is a close adviser and friend," Governor Baldacci said. "As the chairwoman of my Council on Competitiveness and the Economy, she has played an integral role in supporting economic development, investments in innovation and small business growth."

"Karen was crucial to the State's efforts two years ago to pass a major investment package to support research and development. She was also heavily involved in a landmark study of Maine's economy produced by the Brookings Institution. Karen recognizes that many factors contribute to a strong economy, including quality of place, a strong workforce and an asset-based focus on development."

"As a venture capitalist and entrepreneur, Karen combines real world experience with a dedication to public service. She is a national voice in the discussion of U.S. competitiveness, entrepreneurship and innovation."

"Karen will be a strong voice for small businesses in Maine and around the country. I know that she will do a great job."

Governor Awards Community Development Block Grant to Sanford Business

December 19, 2008

SANFORD – Governor John E. Baldacci today joined Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner John Richardson to present U.S. Felt Company Inc. with a \$200,000 Community Development Block Grant.

“This grant will help U.S. Felt purchase much needed equipment, materials and inventory,” Governor Baldacci said. “This investment will help the company grow and compete, protecting jobs here in Maine.”

The U.S. Felt Company, purchased in late 2007 by Cheryl Boragine, has developed a plan for growth and product development. The business has also initiated internal improvements that they say will save between \$300,000 and \$500,000 in one year alone.

Governor Baldacci commended the new owners for turning the company around and not only retaining its 25 workers, but adding more jobs to increase the work force to more than 30 employees.

“To succeed in business today, you need to have a vision for growth and improvement,” the Governor said. “This company’s potential for growth is amazing and new product development will give them a clear advantage. I am pleased to see the Community Development Block Grant Program help put U.S. Felt on a path to achieve its vision.”

Governor Baldacci Announces Loan Assistance for Ice Storm Recovery

December 19, 2008

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today announced loan assistance programs available to businesses affected by the ice storm that struck Maine earlier this month. The Governor also announced the first in a series of sessions to be held to provide an overview of assistance available to impacted businesses.

“Many homes and businesses were in the dark for several days,” Governor Baldacci said. “Through this experience, Mainers demonstrated their resilience and patience during the recovery. However, many businesses in the southern and coastal parts of our State were significantly impacted by being without power.”

The Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) has made special modifications to its Economic Recovery Loan Program for impacted businesses located in the disaster area. FAME has set aside \$500,000 for these loans, with a maximum loan of \$75,000 available to affected businesses.

The Maine Rural Development Authority (MRDA) has approved a resolution providing \$500,000 in business assistance loans to support businesses that have experienced damage from the ice storm. The loans will be available for repairs and renovations to business structures for which other funds are not available. Funds will be set aside for 90 days from the date of the Governor’s emergency declaration.

Additionally, the Office of Community Development has set aside \$100,000 under the Urgent Need Program to assist locations affected by the ice storm. The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) will work with MEMA and towns to identify eligible projects.

At 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 23 at York County Community College, providers from DECD, FAME, the Small Business Administration, Small Business Development Centers, USDA and others will gather to provide an overview of assistance available to affected businesses. The group will also be available with agency personnel to begin guidance through the application process. The session will be broadcast to satellite locations at Southern Maine Community College and the Kittery Fire Department. This will be the first of a series of sessions to be held in York County and the other affected counties.

“I appreciate the quick response of agencies at all levels of government, both during the initial disaster response and now as we enter the recovery phase of the event,” the Governor said. “I encourage all affected businesses to attend the informational session being held on Tuesday, here at York County Community College, to learn more about these programs of assistance and others that are available through our federal partners.”

For more information about the Finance Authority of Maine, visit www.famemaine.com

For more information about the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, visit www.mainebiz.com

State Government to Open at Noon on Dec. 22

December 21, 2008

AUGUSTA – Maine State Government will open at noon on Monday, Dec. 22, 2008, due to the winter storm that is impacting most of the State. A decision on a possible full-day closure will be made by 10 a.m. Monday morning.

Strong winds and drifting snow will make travel dangerous and hamper snow removal efforts today and tonight.

Governor John E. Baldacci urges people to avoid unnecessary travel today and tonight. For those who must travel due to an emergency, they should pack a winter survival kit that includes warm clothing, food, water and a flashlight.

State Government to Open at Noon Today, Dec. 22, Except in Aroostook

December 22, 2008

Dec. 22, 2008 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUGUSTA – Maine State Government will open at noon today, Dec. 22, 2008, with the exception of Aroostook County, which is still being affected by a winter storm that hit the State on Sunday.

State government facilities in Aroostook will remain closed for the entire day.

Governor Baldacci Stresses Safety on Snowmobiles

December 30, 2008

AUGUSTA - Governor John E. Baldacci today encouraged Maine snowmobile riders to ride with safety as a top priority this winter. The Governor joined Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife Commissioner Roland "Danny" Martin, Maine Warden Service Col. Joel Wilkinson, and Bob Meyers, Executive Director of the Maine Snowmobile Association, to remind riders that snowmobiling is a fun outdoor activity, but it must be performed with caution in mind.

"Mainers know the State's 13,000 miles of trails are the best in the northeast, and people from out of State travel here to enjoy them as well," Governor Baldacci said. "While the majority of snowmobilers practice safety, unfortunately accidents – and deaths – occur. Safety must be priority number one for all of us."

Last season, 12 people died while snowmobiling on Maine's trails or roadways. So far this season, two teenagers have already lost their lives using snowmobiles in Maine.

Some safety tips offered by the officials at the press conference included:

Wear a helmet while snowmobiling

Ride the snowmobile at a reasonable rate of speed

Don't drink and drive

Bring a survival kit when riding

Know the fuel limitations of your snowmobile

Ride in groups

Let people know where you are going

If you are traveling by snowmobile to meet someone, call ahead if you are running late

Leave a trip itinerary on the dash of your vehicle

Snowmobile riders in Maine can expect to see Maine Wardens conducting safety checks along Maine's 13,000 miles of trails throughout the season.

Governor Baldacci added that snowmobiling is not only a fun winter activity for Maine residents, but it is an important activity for Maine's economy.

"Many snowmobilers ride on trails near their own home," the Governor said. "Others travel throughout the State when they hear reports of good snow and ideal trail conditions. Snowmobilers visit restaurants, stay at hotels, purchase gas, and impact Maine's economy to the tune of \$300 million

annually. It is a great way for residents and tourists alike to see the natural beauty this State has to offer.”

For more information about snowmobile safety, laws and registration in the State of Maine, visit <http://www.maine.gov/ifw/atvsnowmobilewatercraft/snowmobile.htm>