

COUNTY NEWS

Maine County Commissioners Association Newsletter

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Maine Participates in NACo's Legislative Conference

MCCA representatives Commissioner Peter Baldacci, Commissioner Gary McGrane and Executive Director Rosemary Kulow joined more than 1,600 county leaders in Washington, D.C. for the National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference Feb. 20-24. Attendees met with members of the Obama Administration and

Congress on key issues like criminal justice and mental health reform, public lands and surface transportation. "Counties and residents feel the effects of countless decisions made in Washington," said NACo President Sallie Clark. "We are here to work with our federal partners because federal decisions profoundly impact Americans on the ground, where we live and work." Maine's county leaders emphasized to Congress and the White House that federal policies matter to county government and county government matters to America. In meetings with lawmakers and Administration officials, county leaders outlined several key federal policy priorities including protecting municipal bonds, supporting marketplace fairness, protecting Medicaid, supporting the Payments in Lieu of Taxes and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) programs, achieving mental health and criminal justice reform, preserving county interests in the "Waters of the U.S." rule and more.

~ [Click here to read about NACo's legislative priorities for 2016.](#)



Bill Whitten in the Spotlight

Born in Lincoln Maine, Bill moved to Brewer at ten years old where he became an Eagle Scout and graduated from Brewer High School in 1967. He sought higher education at UMO where he played football before joining the Marines. The next career stop was flight school where in his words he became "damaged" and was discharged. Armed with his degree in marketing and management, he landed a sales job at Channel 5 in Bangor. Two short years later he was promoted to sales manager holding that position for approximately ten years before moving to the "big city", Portland to work in management at WGME channel 13. During his employment there he was also a Civic Center Trustee which spanned 12 of the 18 years, also running a couple of radio station groups and doing private consulting.

When searching for an assistant, County Manager Peter Crichton determined that Bill's Civic Center record and management/marketing background in the business world made him an excellent fit for the job. He was hired in June of 2005 as Cumberland County's "Deputy County Manager." Folks often requested to see his badge and weapon until the job title was subsequently changed to "Assistant County Manager". Bill's skills and education were also well in line with the goal of running the county government as much like a business as possible without losing sight of the fact that it is a government entity. Peter Crichton continues to strive to achieve the main objective of regionalizing and consolidating public services to make them efficient for tax payers. Cumberland County has a successful record doing this with dispatch, tax assessing, and jails among others. Officials work with GPCOG regularly to identify common interests and discover how Cumberland County can collaborate with COG and their municipalities.

Bill states that in his "spare time" he lobbies. When asked for a word or two about the current jail funding legislation he said, "My most printable jail quote would have to be: Not again!" Most importantly though, Bill spends as much of his spare time as possible with his wife and his two-year-old granddaughter. He and his wife Barbara (Mullins) are looking forward to their 47th wedding anniversary this summer! They have two grown daughters and one granddaughter. Bill also builds and repairs furniture, reads at least a book a week, and enjoys practicing and teaching martial arts. In fact, he has spent more than ten hours a week doing martial arts (MA) for the last 22 years. His granddaughter is quickly becoming his best student ever as she already kicks and punches. One of Bill's favorite quotes comes from his MA training: "It is good to have an end to a journey, but it is the journey that matters, in the end." In other words, all the training in the world is not about getting the "Black Belt", but what is learned while getting it. This philosophy may not hold true to jail bills in the Legislature.



Jennifer Ackerman Appointed Deputy District Attorney

DA Stephanie Anderson appointed Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Ackerman as Deputy District Attorney. Anderson stated, "Jen has the breadth and depth of experience in this office which is unparalleled. Her tenures in the Juvenile Division, the District Court Division and two out of three felony trial teams have laid the groundwork for her ability to understand the overall mission and operation of this office." Congratulations!

Ride to School with a Deputy

The Cumberland County Sheriff's Office supports many non-profit organizations that help the community by offering services that keep people safe and help kids in many different ways. The Sheriff's Office supports these organizations by donating certificates for the organization's fund raising events. The certificates can be for dinner in the Gray Bar Hotel, or a Ride to School with a Deputy. A local student's mom supported the community by being the highest bidder on one of the Ride to School with a Deputy certificates. Last week her son, Jace, and Deputy Joe Schnupp hopped in the cruiser, backpack in tow and headed off in style to his elementary school. He made quite an impression when the cruiser pulled up and out came Jace!



The Volunteers In Police Service (VIPS) are a group of citizens dedicated to exemplary community service and public awareness through the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office. They are a highly trained and motivated force in the community. They assist the department in the support services, patrol and detective divisions. Their countless donated hours make Cumberland County a better place to work, live, and play. Volunteers are not utilized to replace sworn officers or other paid positions, but rather to enhance the overall efficiency of the agency. Their efforts help reduce crime and increase the services that the Sheriff's Office can provide to the community. The VIPS are a tremendous asset to the Sheriff's Office, and each volunteer brings a broad range of skills and experience to the program. Sheriff Kevin Joyce states, "As a result, volunteers are rewarded with the special pride and personal growth that comes from serving their community." VIPS lend support by performing property checks, parking and traffic control, welfare checks and other activities that help expand the presence of the Sheriff's Office.



A Word from the County Manager

~Peter Crichton

We have been working for nearly two decades to add more value as a county government to our communities and citizens. There are many examples I could give of the great work that is being done throughout the organization of Cumberland County Government. Two of the best examples of new regional services are our Cumberland County Community Development Program and our Cumberland County Regional Communications Center.

In each case it has taken time and perseverance to accomplish what we have done. We have 15 communities that exceed a population of 5,000 - including seven communities that have a population of 15,000 or greater. This presents a different kind of challenge than many of the counties in our state are required to face. We have worked closely with our communities and consider them to be partners.

As a result of our Community Development Block Grant Program's creation, over \$12 million in federal dollars has been distributed to our communities in the last nine years with 25 municipalities participating in the program. It took six years to establish the program, but we did not give up.

With our Regional Communications Center we are serving well over 100,000 citizens and saving the participating communities collectively about \$1 million annually with quality emergency communications services.

I consider myself very fortunate to have had over the years a very forward looking and positive thinking group of Commissioners who have supported our initiatives. This support together with a great team of people who are doing the right things, not giving up too soon, and building trust with the communities throughout the region is what has made all the difference.

~Peter Crichton

