



COUNTY NEWS

Maine County Commissioners Association Newsletter

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Counties Go After Pharma Companies

The human and financial tolls of the national opioid drug epidemic are prompting counties to sue pharmaceutical companies for supplying large quantities of the drugs and selling them through deceptive marketing campaigns.

On Feb. 2, Erie County, N.Y. filed suit against 11 pharmaceutical companies and four individuals for what it said were their roles in contributing to the crisis. Broome County has since joined in that suit. Suffolk County sued in August. "We need to hold the drug companies accountable for their role in this wholly preventable crisis," said County Executive Mark Poloncarz. "It doesn't matter if it's drug dealers or pharmaceutical companies, because they're both part of this. People are dying without even switching to heroin, which means these medications can be fatal. They misled doctors to think these drugs were not as addictive as they are — you can get hooked in two weeks."

Erie County is suing to recoup various costs incurred while responding to the addiction epidemic, including hospital admissions for overdoses, the cost of supplying the overdose-reversing drug naloxone and training 500 first responders and 1,000 civilians how to use it.



[~Click here to read the full article by NACo staff writer Charlie Ban](#)



Aroostook County Tidbits

- The County of Aroostook has the distinction of being the first county in the State of Maine to adopt a charter. The Charter was adopted by the voters of Aroostook County on November 7, 1989. The Charter fulfills the dual role of recognizing the County of Aroostook as an agency of the State and as a local unit of government. Additionally, the Charter provides for self-determination in county affairs to the full extent permissible under the Constitution and the laws of the State. In short, the Charter professionalized Aroostook's form of government and has been the single best thing for the organization since incorporation in 1839. Aroostook is very proud of its governmental structure.
- Aroostook County has a tenured Board of Commissioners, perhaps the most tenured Board in the State with nearly 75 years of combined experience. Commissioner Paul J. Adams is the Chair and dean of the Board. He started his stint with the Commission January 1, 1987. Commissioner Norman L. Fournier has served as Chair in the past and is active in many civic and state and regional boards and commissions. He started his tour of duty January 1, 1989. Last, but not least, Commissioner Paul J. Underwood has served on the Commission since January 1, 2001. He has served as past President of MCCA and currently serves as a commissioner on the Land Use Planning Commission. The dynamics and chemistry of the Board of Commissioners is professional, collegial and pleasant.
- Aroostook County has two Superior Courts, one in the County seat in Houlton and one in Caribou where the Office of the County Commissioners is co-located. The County of Aroostook owns both court houses, which also provides space for the District Court.
- The County of Aroostook maintains two Registries of Deeds, one in Houlton and one in Fort Kent. This was established in the day of "horse and buggy" to meet the needs of the large geographical expanse of The County.
- [Click here for more fascinating Aroostook facts!](#)

Introducing ~ Sherrill Campbell ~ a new face in the County

Sherrill is a true "County Girl", born and raised in Caribou having lived there all her life. She and her husband Dave have been married 34 years this July. Dave is a County Boy having lived all his life in Fort Fairfield and Caribou. They are the proud parents of two sons. Daniel is the Athletic Director and the K-12 Physical Education teacher at Jonesport Beals Schools, and Bradley has a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice working as a Professor at the University of Louisville. Sherrill worked many places before coming to work for Aroostook County including a bank, several doctors' offices and the Northern Maine Development Commission. She spent 17 years at Caribou High School as a jack-of-all-trades in the guidance office where her title was Secretary. That was a great ride but after 17 years she was ready for a change. When an acquaintance, Diane Gove, mentioned she planned to retire, Sherrill scooped up the best job she's ever had! Sherrill is looking forward serving Aroostook County for many years to come.



Profile in Courage and Resilience

On April 20, 2016, Deputy Sheriff Vance Palmer unexpectedly lost part of his leg due to complications from an underlying illness. At the time, Vance was one of our Resident Deputy Sheriffs patrolling the southernmost portion of The County. Many believed this was the end of Vance's law enforcement career. Those people just did not know Vance. Within just a few weeks, Vance had returned to light duty and was aggressively pursuing his return to full duty as a Deputy Sheriff. Vance's positive attitude and hard work paid off faster than many could have imagined, and on September 12 he returned to full duty as a Resident Deputy Sheriff. This profile in courage and perseverance is an example for others who find themselves in a situation that seems impossible. We are all very proud of Deputy Palmer.



Deputy Sheriff Vance Palmer with Sheriff Darrell Crandall



Emergency Services North Lakes Fire Department History by Chief Darren Woods

Aroostook County has a rather unique item to share within their Unorganized Territory. They operate a fire department that has an interesting story leading up to the success that it is today. This story began with a handful of local citizens in the township of Sinclair (T17 R4) recognizing the need for fire protection and creating an agreement with the local church for a piece of land which then turned into an old-fashioned barn raising. This was in the early 1940s. They soon realized they needed financial support which is where county government came into play.

In 1980, the neighboring community known as Guerrette (T17 R5) had a fire in which three people died. This was very hard on the community, and residents decided they needed a fire station closer than Sinclair. So once again residents took it upon themselves to build a garage right across the street from that fatal fire. This second station became part of the Sinclair Volunteer Fire Department. But there was a problem. Back in the 1940s there was also a church built in the village of Sinclair. However, this was very controversial because there was heavy competition for it to be built in Guerrette. When the final decision was made, a heavy and very personal feud began between the two unorganized communities. In the 1990s, the members of Sinclair Fire Dept. "station 2" decided on their own to separate, and against the wishes of the Aroostook County Commissioners, they broke the department into two, the second department being called the Guerrette Volunteer Fire Department.

In the 1990s both departments suffered from a lack of strong leadership and the stations spent more time fighting than training. This included some instances of law enforcement having to respond and break up the "meetings."



In the late 1990s, the County Commissioners could no longer overlook this issue. Citing liability concerns and public safety issues they asked the Aroostook County Fire Marshal to do a quick audit on departments' capability. Based on lack of training and adequate equipment, his recommendation came back to either shut them down or come up with a drastic plan for change.

[~Click here to read the article in its entirety!](#)

Aroostook Inmate Work Programs

The Sheriff's Office works closely with two local charities to address food insecurity in Northern Maine. These charities, with the assistance of inmate workers, raise fresh vegetables that are donated to food pantries, low income working families and the elderly in Aroostook County and parts of Washington and Penobscot Counties. This is their third year of partnering with Friends of Aroostook in Houlton providing inmate workers to plant, weed and harvest over 20 acres of crops. In the summer of 2016 they partnered with *Farm for Me*, a program of Catholic Charities in Caribou doing the same work with them. Inmate workers have been integral in the donation of hundreds of thousands of pounds of fresh vegetables to families in need. During harvest, fresh produce also finds its way to the jail kitchen, helping reduce the food budget. As of September, inmate workers had logged nearly 4,000 hours on these projects.

[~Click here to read more!](#)

