

COUNTY NEWS

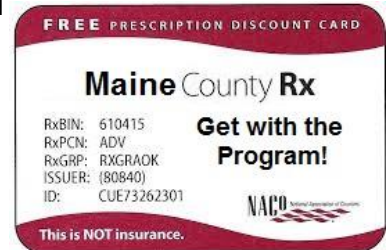
Maine County Commissioners Association Newsletter

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NACo Prescription Drug Card Program Offers Huge Savings to County Residents

Cumberland County is one of many counties nationwide that are teaming up with NACo to provide discount prescription drug cards. The program is free for all county residents and has no limits. The card can be used anytime insurance doesn't cover a prescription. There is no enrollment form or membership fees. Cumberland County residents can pick up a card at their local municipality office. Using the card is as simple as presenting it to your local pharmacist and instantly saving. NACo reports an average of 22% savings off retail costs nationally, but in Maine that average is much higher. In the last year Maine county residents who utilized the program saved on average 31% in any month, a big savings on what are often very expensive prescription drugs. Currently, very few Cumberland County residents are taking advantage of the program. Cumberland County Manager Peter Crichton supports the program and urges residents to use it. "These numbers show that cutting prescription drug costs nearly in half is a needed reality for many Maine residents," Crichton said. "The NACo prescription card program is easy to use and can save people a lot of money and we're proud to be a part of such a program."



1st Anniversary of Knox County's Public Safety Building Facility

On November 8, 2011, Knox County's voters passed a bond not to exceed \$2,500,000 to finance the acquisition, renovation and expansion of land and a building located at 301 Park Street in Rockland, minor renovations to the existing County building (the Jail) located at 327 Park Street, and upgrades and improvements to the County's communication infrastructure, system and equipment throughout the County. This included the acquisition of base radio locations, IP communication consoles and microwave equipment, in order to provide much needed office space and improved communication capability for the Knox County Sheriff's Patrol Department, Knox Regional Communications Center, and the Knox County Emergency Management Agency. In early 2013, all three departments moved into the new facility, now called the Knox County Public Safety Building, with the KRCC housed in the addition built on to the back of the existing building. An open house for the public to view the facility was held on March 5, 2013 and the reception of the facility was overwhelmingly positive. All three departments are enjoying their new work spaces and are proud to be able to welcome the public into the building.

The Communications part of the project, the simulcast infrastructure upgrade, was an ongoing process during 2013. Radio communications within the County was sporadic due to terrain. In order to provide improved communications, the County upgraded three existing tower sites and added two additional site locations. New radio activity base repeaters were installed as well as new 950 MHz microwave equipment, generators and improved grounding. The new repeaters allow each tower site to communicate between each other in digital format with an analog output to field units. The audio is voted, thus allowing the strongest audio to be delivered to the RCC regardless of the unit location. This eliminates the need for officers to change frequencies, or towers, as they move throughout the County. The system also utilizes a KiWi monitoring system that runs on the microwave. This system monitors various components including electrical power, temperatures, generators, etc., and reports the data through e-mail notification when specified reporting parameters are detected. The upgrade also increased the dispatch stations from four to six, all equipped with state of the art touch screens and full digital capability.



Transfer Tax Discussions with the Registers of Deeds Association

On January 16th, the Maine Registers of Deeds Association met with Director David LeDew, Laurie Thomas and Deb Maringola, Property Tax Division of the Maine Revenue Services in Augusta. The discussion centered around the requirements of the Maine Transfer Tax Declaration form, municipal quit claim deeds, foreclosures, and quasi-governmental agencies. This informational meeting was very beneficial for clarification of various aspects of transfer tax collection. In the interest of keeping the lines of communication open, periodical subsequent meetings will be scheduled.

On a different note, two registrars, Pamela Lovley of Cumberland, and Patricia Shearman of Oxford East, will represent the Maine Registers of Deeds Association at the 2014 Winter Symposium scheduled for February 26-28 in Arlington, Virginia. The conference will offer sessions on timely topics of interest to recorders. Sessions include Ken Gronbach, demographer and futurist, dealing with the real estate industry; storage requirements for archival media; e-recording best practices; and indexing requirements.

Checking in on the Hancock Community Benefit Program

The County of Hancock is pleased to announce that the 2014 Community Benefit Application process is in full swing!

In 2011, 19 wind turbines were erected in Township 16, the Hancock County Commissioners negotiated a Community Benefit and TIF (Tax Increment Financing) agreement with Blue Sky East in the amount of approximately \$435,000 per year, for the next 20 years. Of that amount, \$200,001 per year was designated for Community Benefits. The purpose of these funds are intended for property tax reduction, economic development, land and natural resource conservation, tourism promotion, the reduction of energy costs and to help the disadvantaged. In addition to these benefits the commissioners negotiated with Blue Sky to provide and erect a 150 foot emergency communication tower, provide a building for the communication equipment and provide and install an emergency generator.



On August 6, 2013 the Hancock County Commissioners had the pleasure of distributing \$100,000 in grants to seven local organizations who serve the citizens of Hancock County in unique ways. This was made possible through the receipt of Community Benefit funds.

Additionally, the commissioners voted to use the remaining \$97,969.70 for property tax relief in the form of Veterans and Veteran's Widows Exemptions. Each veteran or veteran's widow who, as of April 1, 2013, qualified for a veteran's exemption within the towns of Hancock County received a property tax credit of approximately \$45.59. Although it was a small token of our appreciation, compared to the sacrifices veterans and their families have made for this county, our gratitude is endless and their sacrifices have not been forgotten.

The 2014 NACo Legislative Conference



The annual NACo Legislative Conference in Washington, DC brought over 2,000 elected and appointed county officials from across the country to focus on legislative issues facing county government. Attendees heard from key Administration officials and members of Congress and were offered a myriad of additional educational opportunities addressing current and hot topic issues. MCCA Vice President, Peter Baldacci, Executive Director, Rosemary Kulow, and County Manager, Peter Crichton met with our legislative delegation as part of their busy schedule. Rosemary Kulow also took the opportunity to attend a Women of NACo event featuring Women's History Month speaker, Elspeth Kursh from the Belmont Sewell House Museum. And as a member of the NACo Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee, Peter Baldacci heard speaker, Karol Mason, Asst. U.S. Attorney General who emphasized that the Department of Justice wants to focus on treatment, supervision, and housing for inmates instead of building more prisons. [Click here to read Peter Baldacci's full report on the Conference.](#)

