



COUNTY NEWS

Maine County Commissioners Association Newsletter

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The NACo Legislative Conference, held annually in Washington, D.C., brings together over 2,000 elected and appointed county officials to focus on federal policy issues that impact counties and our residents. MCCA President Peter Baldacci and Waldo County Commissioner Amy Fowler were there to represent Maine counties. Following is Comm. Fowler's account of her experience.

"This year I journeyed the pilgrimage to Washington D.C. for the NACo Legislative Conference. Being the new kid on the block, I was completely unsure of what I was walking into. Therefore, with stars in my eyes and a hotel map in my hands, I set off. Now, mind you I have not always been the most rabid supporter of NACo. My feeling was the organization was another layer of red tape, a government entity slowing down the progress of the people. Well, I was wrong. From the moment of my arrival I was warmly greeted and introduced to many groups representing all facets of county government. We strategized, debated, drafted legislation and prepared to march on Capitol Hill with evidence to prove our reasoning. I had the privilege to work with others from around the country, sharing like issues and offering solutions to bring home and implement. I had the opportunity to look beyond Maine and see that there's a swift and strong movement called, "Counties," and see that there is progress! Things are being done collectively. Counties are making a difference and setting the tone. I've made valuable connections and plan to continue to learn. Thank you for the privilege of being one of your NACo representatives. I look forward to bringing back more information to share and working with others to continue to strengthen counties."

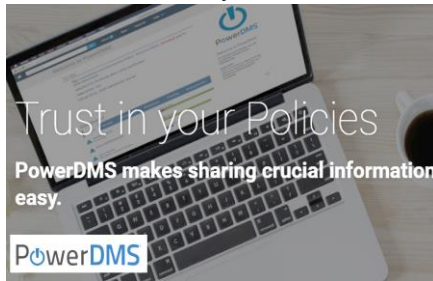


What's New in Somerset County?

It's hard to believe Somerset was the first county to be featured in an MCCA newsletter in November of 2015! The achievements and accomplishments made since then are too many to include here, but here are a few.

Somerset Utilizes PowerDMS

PowerDMS is a new document management system. Somerset is the first Maine county to integrate this system into their jail. Captain Sean P. Maguire, the Assistant Jail Administrator has indicated several benefits to the new system.



- The PowerDMS System documents when staff have read and acknowledged new and revised documents via electronic signatures.
- It has a robust search function allowing staff to search by word or phrase for applicable policies, procedures, post orders and practices.
- The system has a very granular security allowing specific rights to each document if desired.
- It assists with ACA (American Correctional Association) and PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) compliance.
- The system allows electronic documentation of compliance i.e. electronic folders.
- It has a robust tasking and task completion monitoring system.
- There's a survey function which allows for internal surveys of groups of users or all users
- It is used for testing, training, and educational courses allowing for tracking of training and test results whether completed electronically or in person.
- There is off-site storage in a CEGIS approved environment.
- A complete download of site contents is available at any time.
- The company keeps the site contents available for 30 days if for any reason the contract is dropped.
- PowerDMS has been offline for less than four hours in a year.

~For more information please click here.



Full Body Scanners

"Somerset County is a pioneer in the State of Maine," said Dan Gelston, President of SDI. "They were the first to install a B-SCAN body scanner to help enhance the safety of their staff and inmate population and serve as a role model to other counties in the state." The Somerset County jail has conducted more than 1,000 scans to date, significantly reducing the amount of contraband being brought into the facility, while greatly improving efficiency and reducing costs. Somerset County Jail is also the first agency internationally to receive Smiths' Enhanced Image Evaluation training and has opted to implement a "Train the Trainer" program, allowing selected staff to train other staff thus saving time and money in the future. Smiths Detection provided the expertise and oversight necessary to ensure their success with the project. *~ Click here to read the full article by writer Tammy Waitt in American Security Today.*

A Little History

Somerset county was incorporated in 1809, while still a part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It is the 3rd largest county in the State of Maine in geographic land area and contains the 9th largest in population. Its boundaries stretch 154 miles from Fairfield to Aroostook County, averaging 50 miles in width with Piscataquis County on the East and Franklin County and the Providence of Quebec, Canada on the west. The county encompasses 3,984 square miles of which 96% is covered by forest.

The county's population is 50,888 and has a strong ethnic background in French Canadian, Irish and English. There are 33 Townships in Somerset county and 83 Unorganized Townships. There are no cities.

The Kennebec River, one of the largest Maine river tributaries flows from north to south through the county and is used for commercial as well as recreational purposes. Somerset county also contains major ground transportation routes that support heavy commercial, tourist, and residential use.



State Grant Enables Bold Steps Toward Reducing Recidivism

Somerset County recently won a grant in the amount of \$169,000 for substance abuse assistance programming enabling them to add a caseworker and resources for substance abuse treatment, and to facilitate resources outside the jail with the goal of reducing recidivism. In testimony given to the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee Sheriff Dale Lancaster said, "If you provide the right programming, individuals receiving the proper treatment for their emotional, substance abuse, and educational deficiencies are better positioned to be successful after release." Somerset jail officials had identified a trend. Sixty percent of the jail population was comprised of short term inmates released within 72 hours. These individuals posed a high risk for re-offending as nothing was being done to correct the issues that led to their arrest. In the Sheriff's words, "The perpetual cycle was never broken." Matching resources with inmates and following through with weekly contact after release is the approach that will bring about healing. Sheriff Lancaster said, "We are engaging with community agencies and resources early in the incarceration process, encouraging their staff to participate with our staff, developing re-entry strategies, and building relationships while the individual is in our facility." Now they are indeed part of the solution.

Somerset County Takes Care of Their Own

Braden Wheeler looks like a typical, happy ten-year-old boy. He's the grandson of a Somerset County maintenance man. What's not so typical is he needs a kidney transplant. The medications for this procedure are expensive. Luckily, the community was ready to pass the hat. Friend of the family Tammy Dunphy sent letters for support resulting in an auction and benefit dinner at the Carrabec High School in North Anson on March 11th. Somerset Administrator Dawn DiBlasi estimated they helped the family raise \$9,000 to lift the weight of this burden. Good job Somerset! And best wishes to Braden.

