



COUNTY NEWS

Maine County Commissioners Association Newsletter

In this issue:

- Congress 2018: What's Ahead for Counties?
- Featuring Kennebec County
- Watching the Kennebec
- Kennebec County Correctional Programs
- Human Resource Buzz
- An Intern Program Success Story
- More Than Transport Services



Congress 2018: What's Ahead for Counties?

When Congress began its legislative agenda last year, it was presented with an environment Washington had not seen since 2009, one-party control in the legislative and executive branches. With a majority in both houses and President Donald Trump in the White House, the Republican Party set in motion an ambitious plan to fulfill promises made during a tough 2016 campaign. Congress laid out priorities dealing with health care, tax reform and infrastructure, to name a few. Political battles saw some issues delayed, others abandoned, but some accomplished as well. Comprehensive tax reform was signed into law in December and the Trump Administration, through both legislation and executive orders, scaled back a host of regulations with the goal of spurring economic growth and job creation. As we look ahead to 2018 and the final year of the 114th Congress, America's counties will face a legislative calendar that will affect local governments for years to come. Although the results in Washington are unpredictable at best, one thing is for certain, if 2017 was any indication, 2018 will certainly have its share of surprises. President Trump has made no secret of his intent to shake up the way Washington works. This has not only included what he refers to as "draining the swamp," but also through his budget and blueprint documents. In addition to appropriations, issues such as health reform, infrastructure development, Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT), Secure Rural Schools (SRS), and major reauthorization bills such as the Farm Bill, all figure to attract attention this year. With ten months before the midterm elections and a jam-packed legislative calendar, 2018 promises a whirlwind of legislative activity.

[~Click here to read the full article by Associate Legislative Director Kevan Stone.](#)



Watching the Kennebec

Waterfront Park

Bob Devlin, Administrator

In what has become an annual spring ritual was unexpectedly ramped up as warm weather and rain in January broke up the river ice resulting in an ice jam that flooded areas of Augusta and Hallowell. When an ice jam occurs, the river can rise 20 feet in a matter of minutes. I have personally witnessed this happen in Hallowell a few years ago. Often, there can be little warning.

This year the river broke up and jammed at mid-night inundating more than a dozen cars and flooding several businesses. The county Emergency Management Agency devotes a great deal of time during this period to monitoring and if need be alerting the vulnerable towns along the Kennebec River. This includes site visits to the several Smelt Camps on the river to alert them to pull their shacks off the ice. This year the United States Coast Guard sent three ice breakers up river in January ahead of the planned annual March event. One 140-foot cutter, interestingly named the USCGC Penobscot Bay, was dispatched from as far away as the Hudson River in New York.

Human Resources Managers face many challenges in today's work environment. It seems that getting people to engage in their job and take pride in their work and accomplishments is a never-ending project. I recently heard a speech, "When you get up in the morning make your bed". I thought this to be humorous; however, the speaker went on to say this is your first accomplishment of the day. It may not seem like much, but it may be your *only* positive accomplishment of the day. The jail is short staffed, the flu rampant, Johnny just made the gossip circles for sexual harassment, Susie and Jane just had a fight and the office staff and public witnessed the whole ugly affair. Sitrep (situation report): situation normal - all "messed" up!! Why do we do HR? We are problem solvers and like challenges. We may not be able to fix everything, and some challenges may best us, but at the end of the day when we go home our bed is made and tomorrow is a new day. So, I will leave you with these parting words: Cheer up things could be worse. So, I cheered up and sure enough things got worse.



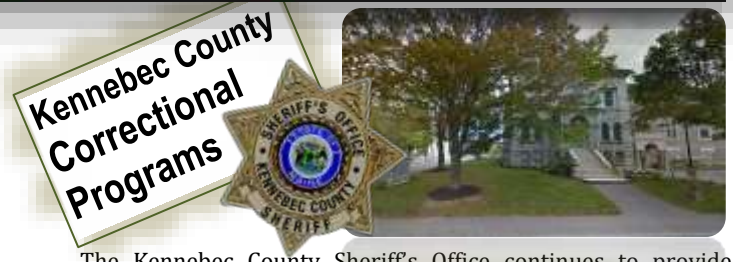
The Kennebec County Correctional Facility has participated in a summer internship program with local colleges for the past three years. The agency has had students participate

Kennebec County Intern Program Success

from Husson, Eastern Maine Community College, Southern Maine Community College and Thomas College. This program is helpful for both the agency and the participating students. The number of students accepted into the program is limited to five interns per year.

This program has assisted the agency by providing summer help and allowing full time staff members to enjoy time away from the facility for vacations or extra training, such as Crisis Intervention Training. It has also provided a good working relationship with local colleges which has assisted students in becoming full time staff members upon graduation, alleviating the growing staffing shortage most correctional facilities have experienced in recent years.

Most of the students accepted into the program are working towards a degree in criminal justice. Some students have worked towards degrees in areas such as mental health or business administration. During this program interns are paid an hourly rate and provided training they will need to work in a correctional facility. It has been beneficial to students in the program by allowing them to gain firsthand experience in a field of work that they will potentially be part of some day. Students receive credits through their school for the program based on the evaluation that is filled out by the on-site supervisor. Each school has its own set of requirements for the student to receive college credits for the intern program.



Kennebec County Correctional Programs

The Kennebec County Sheriff's Office continues to provide opportunities for growth and skill-building while giving support to the surrounding community. Several inmate programs have been initiated and have evolved over time to bring forth the best results and lasting contribution.

While the CARA (Criminogenic Addiction Recovery Academy) Program has worked to impart valuable knowledge and treatment toward long-term recovery in the over 400 participants it has served, the program continues to transition with each group to improve the recovery process, recognize individual needs and provide structure after participants are released from the facility. A once short-term program, CARA has extended community supervision and treatment requirements up to one year, supplying a wide range of resources and pro-social learning. Feedback from participants has become fundamental in the process and has enabled CARA to equip future participants with the most relevant recovery tools.

The Kennebec County Sheriff's Office also serves the community through the Kennebec Restorative Community Harvest Program, Fines Payment Program and Public Works Projects. These programs contribute to the needs of those facing food and financial insecurities as well as giving back to community partners by reducing labor costs and project fulfillment. Inmates involved in these programs not only learn skills which will benefit them upon release, but find rewards in the sense of community inclusion and confidence in themselves.

In other endeavors, the Kennebec County Correctional Facility Programs Department currently provides inmates with activities such as blanket-making, crochet class and book club to ensure that options are available for hands-on learning. SMART Recovery meetings will also soon be held within the facility in hopes of nurturing stable first steps in the recovery process which can extend into community meetings and peer support.



Transport

The Kennebec County Transport Division is comprised of three full-time law-enforcement personnel, with assistance from up to four part-time Deputies. KSO's Transport Division conducts a wide variety of services for the Correctional Facility, the Sheriff's Office, as well as the greater community beyond the typical rigueur of transporting inmates to court and doctors' appointments. The department also assists with addiction rehabilitation by facilitating off-site rehab screenings and placement. Reintegration is accomplished through community service work crews, bail compliance and facilitation in conjunction with several of the other divisions and community stakeholders such as the Co-Occurring Disorders Court, ME-Pretrial and KCCF's own Programs and Administration.

Last year, The Kennebec County Transport Division was responsible for scheduling and conducting the safe movement and security of 5,493 inmates to and from locations within and outside of the State of Maine. This is up slightly from 5,451 in 2015, but down from 5,646 in 2014.

Additionally, KSO's Transport Division assists with the pursuit of justice by extraditing fugitives from justice throughout the United States in partnership with the Kennebec County District Attorney's Office. The diverse capabilities of the Transport Division often lead them to be requested outside of what one would normally consider a transport function, from school visits to support during high-profile protests at the States Capital Building with multi-agency cooperation. The Kennebec County Transport Division stands ready to assist with anything needed at any hour of the day or night.

