



COUNTY NEWS

Maine County Commissioners Association Newsletter

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In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court ruled Thursday that states and local governments can require internet retailers to collect sales taxes, even if the online company has no physical presence like a factory or store, in the state. Removing the “physical presence” standard is a significant change in the sales tax collection landscape. Sales taxes are the second greatest portion of revenue for counties nationwide, and uniform enforcement and collection is a top priority for county governments. The South Dakota vs. Wayfair decision ending the physical presence standard is a significant win for local governments, though it does not provide a national, standardized solution. State and local governments are losing between \$8 billion to \$13.4 billion a year in uncollected taxes for online sales, the Government Accounting Office estimated last year. Local sales taxes are collected in 38 states. In its decision in the case, South Dakota vs. Wayfair, the high court overturned a 1992 ruling that had let taxes go unpaid for many online purchases. It upheld a South Dakota law that required retailers in the state to collect a 4.5% tax on purchases. In the Supreme Court’s decision, Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote the majority opinion, stating that brick-and-mortar stores were being put at a disadvantage by having to charge a sales tax while online retailers did not. That rule “prevented market participants from competing on an even playing field,” he wrote.



~Click here for the full article by NACo Writers Mary Ann Barton, Jack Peterson & Lisa Soronen.

Aroostook County Government



A twenty-year veteran of local and regional government was selected as the County Administrator last year, replacing Doug Beaulieu who retired after 14 years in the position. Ryan D. Pelletier of St. Agatha was confirmed by the County Commissioners in May of 2017. He came to the County after serving the previous two years as Madawaska’s town manager. Pelletier is also a former town manager of St. Agatha and Wallagrass. Prior to his appointment in Madawaska, Pelletier had worked as the Director of Economic & Workforce Development at Northern Maine Development Commission and served concurrently as the Executive Director of the Local Workforce Investment Board covering Aroostook & Washington Counties as well as the Executive Director of Leaders Encouraging Aroostook Development Inc. (LEAD). Pelletier holds a Master of Public Administration from Norwich University and undergraduate degrees in political science and business management from the University of Maine at Fort Kent. In 2006, Pelletier was elected President of the Maine Municipal Association, the statewide organization representing Maine’s towns and cities. He currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the Maine Town, City & County Management Association and is an MTCMA Ambassador and Certified Public Manager.

POSITIVELY AROOSTOOK



A new Facebook page is shining a light on all things positive about Aroostook County.

Aroostook County Administrator Ryan Pelletier instituted the page, **Positively Aroostook!**, which offers members an opportunity to share positive news about local businesses, community events and individuals from The County who achieve success. “I started the page because I see a lot of negative on Facebook all the time. Groups are actually popping up to criticize everything all the time and being in the position I am, I get to travel a lot throughout The County and know there is a lot of great stuff happening all over the place, but because of our geography and size, often times people don’t know about what might be happening just down the road from them or vice versa,” Pelletier said. “Obviously as the County Administrator, I have a vested interest in seeing Aroostook grow and prosper and my past work in economic development lets me know that a lot of stuff happens in The County that the general public sometimes just doesn’t see,” Pelletier said. “I hope that as time goes on, this site will be able to bring some of that good stuff to light. The County can be home to great companies and great jobs; we already are, so why not get more.”

~Click here to read more from the article by Jessica Potila.



Darren Woods Recognized by Maine Legislature for Director of the Year Award!

Aroostook County Emergency Management Director Darren Woods was presented with an official **Legislative Sentiment** for his recent accomplishment being named as the Maine Emergency Manager of the Year by the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). The sentiment was enacted by the 128th Legislature in May of this year and signed by both the President of the Maine Senate as well as the Speaker of the House of Representatives. It was introduced by Representative Martin and co-sponsored by every member of the Aroostook County Legislative Delegation. EMA Director Bruce Fitzgerald wrote, “as a result of his hard work and dedication, Darren has become a statewide leader on EMA issues as the current President of the County EMA Directors Council, and a trusted voice for EMA issues with County Commissioners, members of the Maine Legislature and the Maine Congressional Delegation.” His steady demeanor, thoughtfulness, and willingness to see both sides of an issue have tremendous value to our profession both inside and beyond the borders of the State of Maine.

The clock tower on the Superior Court Building in Houlton is receiving a much-needed facelift and makeover thanks to a construction project that kicked off in mid-June. The work consists of replacing approximately 190 linear feet of detailed molding, trim and structural wood that has dry rot; scraping and sanding the entire exterior and a complete repainting of the exterior of the structure. In addition to the tower renovations, the rubberized roof that is located between the top of the clock tower and exposed bell house is being replaced.

In addition to the public funding that was approved during the last budget cycle for the work, a separate private fundraising effort spearheaded by Houlton attorney Richard Rhoda, raised funding to gild and gold leaf the dome and vane to restore it to its original grandeur. According to Aroostook County Facilities Manager Bryan V. Jandreau the work is moving along nicely and may even conclude before the anticipated end date of August 30th. The Houlton Superior Court building, owned by the County of Aroostook, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Scott Smith Receives the 2017 Spirit of America Award



The Aroostook County Board of County Commissioners recently recognized Scott Smith of Mapleton with a Proclamation recognizing Smith’s achievement as a 2017 Spirit of America Award recipient. Smith received the award from the Town of Mapleton last year, selected for his many years of public service, volunteerism and community involvement. According to former Mapleton Town Manager Jon Frederick, Smith served as a Mapleton Selectman, Assessor, and Mapleton Sewer District Trustee. He served on the Maine Farm Bureau, and other farm organizations. He currently serves as the treasurer for the GIFT Food Pantry, treasurer for the 2016 World Cup Biathlon Competition at the Nordic Center, and the Executive Committee for Aroostook Aspirations Initiative. He served as a Marine Corps fighter pilot from 1971-1977. At the Commissioners meeting, Commissioner Paul Underwood read the Proclamation into the public record of the meeting and Smith was presented a Certificate for his achievement by the Board of Commissioners. “Scott is a perfect example of someone giving back to his community and Country. We are very proud of his accomplishments and am pleased to offer our sentiments to him,” Underwood stated. The Spirit of America Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity established in Maine to encourage volunteerism. Since the first Spirit of America Foundation award was presented in 1991 to Alma Jones by Augusta’s mayor, over 500 Spirit of America ceremonies have taken place.

Welcome

Introducing Sandra L. Fournier



County Administrator Ryan D. Pelletier is pleased to announce the selection and appointment of Sandra Fournier as the Deputy County Administrator of Finance for the County of Aroostook. Her appointment was confirmed by the Board of County Commissioners at a special meeting held Tuesday, June 5. Fournier, who is the current town manager of Eagle Lake, will be stepping down from her current post and assume the new position with The County on July 1. Ms. Fournier was selected from a field of 16 applicants for the position after a two-monthlong search process that involved initial phone interviews with candidates, an in-person meeting with county personnel and a final interview with County leadership including appointed and elected department heads. “Sandra really stood out to us throughout the process. She comes to the County with a solid background in government finance and management and she possesses the skill set that we were looking for,” Pelletier said.

~Click here to read the full article.

