



COUNTY NEWS

Maine County Commissioners Association Newsletter



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Congress Begins Work on Next Farm Bill

By Arthur Scott

This year, Congress began laying the foundation for the reauthorization of a new farm bill. Current legislation, the Agriculture Act of 2014

expires at the end of FY 2018. NACo has already testified before the U.S. House Agriculture Committee in preparatory hearings and continues to work with members of the committee on preserving county priorities in draft language. Urge your members of congress to support county priorities throughout the development of the next farm bill. Programs throughout the U.S. Department of Agriculture help counties make critical investments in infrastructure, workforce and economic development, nutrition and conservation for some of our nation's most underserved communities. Preserving these programs is vital to the strength and stability of our local and national economy. The 2014 Farm Bill was a major piece of legislation that authorized a broad range of programs that are critical to counties. The legislation contains programs that assist counties in rural development efforts, nutrition assistance programs, conservation initiatives, renewable energy deployment, support for new farmers, and business development initiatives. All titles of the farm bill are important to the vitality of our nation. In 2013, the U.S. Senate passed the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2013 with broad bipartisan support by a vote of 66-27. The U.S. House of Representatives, however, failed to pass their long-term farm bill - The Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013 due to disagreements over funding levels for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps. [~Click here to read more.](#)



Androscoggin County Clock Tower Restoration Completed

After nearly 30 years of silence, the bell will sound every hour! The restoration of clock tower took approximately 6 months and included a new copper roof, paint, and

much needed carpentry work on the outside of the tower. Keeping with tradition, the County facility department will be winding the clock every week for the public to enjoy.



Communications Department

The Androscoggin County Regional Communications Center is pleased to announce the relocation and unveiling of their new center. With the old center being only three hundred square feet with three working 9-1-1 stations, the new center has been vastly improved in ergonomics and efficiency. Androscoggin RCC now encompasses eighteen hundred square feet and has four 9-1-1 stations with additional workstations for overflow. Six new radio repeater sites have also been added this year to improve radio communications with first responders throughout the county. Staffed by nine full time and three reserve dispatchers, the Androscoggin RCC handles approximately thirteen thousand 9-1-1 calls per year, dispatches for four law enforcement agencies and nine fire/rescue departments."

Unified Emergency Management Agency

Randall Berry, Assistant Plans / Training and Ops Officer on the left in this picture, points out the location of emergency response resources to the Deputy Director on the right, Timothy Bubier, during an emergency planning workshop.



Androscoggin County's Unified Emergency Management Agency is comprised of four employees - the Department Director Joanne Potvin, Deputy Director Timothy Bubier, Assistant Plans/Training and Operations Officer Randall Berry and Clerk/Typist Joan Bouchard. Together, the staff provides 92.5 years of experience to the citizens of Androscoggin County. The Department Director Joanne Potvin, having worked her way up from volunteer, to Assistant Plans/Training and Operations Officer, to Plans/Training and Operations Officer, to Deputy Director and finally Director in 2003 will be retiring at the end of this year with nearly 46 years with Androscoggin County.

The County Department is a unified agency in that it also serves as the Emergency Management Agency for the Cities of Lewiston and Auburn through a County/Inter-Local agreement with both cities. One of two County Departments that is not located in the County Building, the staff operates out of the County's federally-specked and fully equipped emergency operations center (EOC) located beneath Lewiston's Central Fire Station with its own entrance on the Oak Street side of the building.

Staff is responsible for assisting the County's fourteen municipalities in developing and maintaining all-hazards emergency operations plans and procedures, hazard mitigation planning and mitigation activities. Staff provides over two dozen different training programs ranging from personal preparedness for the senior and general populations, hazardous materials handling and response for public safety agencies, damage assessment for municipal officials and local emergency management officials, school planning and safety, incident command for municipal officials - public safety agencies - business and industry - schools - health care facilities. The staff also manages the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's grant program for the County's 60 plus eligible applicants.

Annually, staff monitors spring river ice-out and flooding potential conditions and reports to nearly 70 at-risk businesses and agencies along the banks of the mighty Androscoggin River. For more about Androscoggin County's Emergency Management Agency, interested individuals are urged to call the office at 784-0147, visit the website at www.androscogginema.org or stop by the Emergency Operations Center at 45 Oak Street in Lewiston.



NEW DETECTIVE / DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INVESTIGATOR

In June 2017, Captain Raymond Lafrance retired after forty years of service to the citizens of Androscoggin County. Due to Captain Lafrance's retirement it was decided to restructure the agency and not fill the captain position, but instead a new Detective and Domestic Violence

Investigator (DVI) position was created within the Criminal Investigation Division. Detective Timothy Gamache was selected as the new DVI. Detective Gamache was also Sworn in as a DVI with the Attorney General's Office being one of approximately twenty throughout the State of Maine that hold that distinction.



In the picture above, in the back row from left to right: Andrew Robinson, Dick Monroe, **Kathy Monroe**, Sandy Urquhart, Jamie Hastings, Courtney Alofs. In the bottom row left to right: Muriel Gosselin, and Jeannine Silberman. The MCCA and all the county employees throughout the State of Maine want to thank **Kathy Monroe** for her hard work and dedication for the past seventeen years! Kathy has been a great asset to the District Attorney's Office and the County of Androscoggin. Congratulations, Kathy on your retirement!



Androscoggin County Programs

There are many programs which have been developed and implemented at the facility in 2017. In partnership with the Auburn Public Library, jail staff started a program called, "Reading Connects". This program allows inmates to have their children come into the facility for some one on one quality time based around literacy. The inmates and their children are given a selection of reading material, puppets, puzzles, and arts and craft projects. This time has enabled inmates to continue their roles as mothers and fathers, and to help bridge the gap of reunification. The jail's Programs Department has been working hand in hand with the Greater Androscoggin Humane Society. The offenders selected for this program have completed several tasks to include painting, cutting down trees, general maintenance, cleaning dog kennels, and baths before and after surgery. The work done at the Humane society helps staff on site complete the necessary tasks to keep the animals safe and ready for adoption. This time that offenders spend helping others in the community has proven to be more emotionally and mentally rewarding than anyone expected, they have taken great pride in the work and have found caring for the animals a moving experience.

