

## **Congress Street Hill Property, LLC in Waldo County Receives 2014 Brownfields EPA Cleanup Grant Funds**

The Waldo County Commissioners are very pleased to report that 2014 Brownfields EPA Cleanup Grant funds in the amount of \$200,000.00 have been awarded to Congress Street Hill Property, LLC for the purpose of remediating and repurposing the Old Waldo County Jail, Jailer Keeper's House and barn.

Congress Street Hill Property, LLC originally applied for 2013 Brownfields EPA Cleanup Grant funds but was unsuccessful at that time. City of Belfast Economic Director Thomas Kittredge volunteered to lead the LLC in resubmitting an application for 2014 funds. Under the excellent direction of Mr. Kittredge, along with the expertise of Peter Sherr of Ransom Consulting, Inc., the second application went through successfully.

The Old Waldo County Jail site was previously assessed under the EPA-funded, City of Belfast's Brownfields Assessment Program, also obtained with the assistance of Mr. Kittredge. The assessment process revealed that building materials used during the construction of and/or historic renovations of the Old Jail, Jailer Keeper's House and barn pose exposure risks to the health of the public, county employees, and also to the environment in the buildings' present deteriorating conditions.

Located at 45 Congress Street, the buildings are situated in the Belfast Historic District and are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Old Jail, built in 1851, is the fourth oldest existing building of its kind in the State of Maine. The Old Jailer Keeper's House and barn, constructed in 1887, were designed with era-popular Italianate characteristics. Jailers and later, Sheriffs, lived in the house until it was slightly remodeled to serve as the Waldo County Sheriff's Office from 1990 until early 2012.

The Board of Waldo County Commissioners has expressed their appreciation for the commitment of time and energy put into the 2014 Brownfields EPA Cleanup Grant application, noting that this is a great example of municipal government and county government working as partners to achieve success in obtaining funding for remediation work that will ultimately benefit both City and County residents. Preserving and redeveloping these blighted but historic treasures will protect and enhance the value of the Belfast Historic District in an otherwise pristine historic neighborhood.

While the exact future of the buildings remains to be seen, the County Commissioners believe that the Old Jail Keeper's House and barn would be best suited for affordable housing that meets the needs of the community's senior citizens. With provisions for public water and sewer, these buildings are also ideally located within walking distance of the public library, several banks, restaurants and many retail businesses.

The County Commissioners are considering the Old Jail for much-needed storage of County records. Presently both permanent and non-permanent long-term records are stored in several locations, most of which do not meet the standards for proper records storage. It would be a tremendous advantage to have these records all under one roof in a secure and climate-controlled environment.

It is estimated that remediation and redevelopment of the Old Waldo County Jail, Jail Keeper's House and barn will run between one and two years.