

April 7, 2016

Appropriations committee votes out divided report on supplemental budget bill

Senate Republicans join committee Democrats on approving small spending package, which includes money for educational opportunity tax credit

On Monday night, April 5, the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs divided 8-4 on **LD 1606, An Act to Provide Funding to the Maine Budget Stabilization Fund**, with the two Senate Republicans joining the committee Democrats on the majority report. As originally drafted, the bill would transfer \$67,292,995 in fiscal year 2015-2016 and \$5,389,377 in fiscal year 2016-2017 from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to the Maine Budget Stabilization Fund. The committee voted out two different “ought to pass” reports.

During the past several weeks, there has been much discussion about whether there would be any kind of supplemental budget bill. Because Governor Paul LePage decided not to put one in this session, it was up to legislators to decide whether one was necessary. House Republicans on the Appropriations committee wanted to tie any competing measure on the minimum wage referendum to whatever spending package might be approved. Committee Democrats refused to consider it.

Sen. Jim Hamper and Sen. Roger Katz joined House and Senate Democrats – Sen. Linda Valentino, Rep. Peggy Rotundo, Rep. John Martin, Rep. Linda Sanborn, Rep. Aaron Frey, Rep. Gay Grant, and Rep. Eric Jorgenson – on the majority report. The majority report would provide approximately \$11 million in funding for raises at the state’s psychiatric hospitals, increases to state trooper

pay and reimbursements for home-based health services. It also makes a correction in the services provider tax in last year’s budget, as well as provides some additional funding for county jails and funds the educational opportunity tax credit.

House Republicans – Rep. Tom Windsor, Rep. Heather Sirocki, Rep. Bob Nutting and Rep. Jeff Timberlake – signed the minority report, which seeks to transfer \$55,500,000 to the Maine Budget Stabilization Fund in fiscal year 2015-2016, without any further expanded spending. The amendment also establishes a priority list for the transfer of all uncommitted balances remaining after the current budget commitments are satisfied. Under that proposal, 90% of the unappropriated surplus will be transferred to the Maine Budget Stabilization Fund; the remaining 10% will be distributed according to the cascade.

The bill’s majority report passed in both the Senate and the House; however, it failed to garner the required two-thirds necessary for emergency enactment or to overcome the expected gubernatorial veto. Currently, LD 1601 remains tabled on the unfinished business calendar in the Senate. The Maine State Chamber will continue to follow the supplemental package’s progress in the coming weeks. For questions or additional information, please contact Linda Caprara by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 106, or by emailing lcaprara@mainechamber.org. □

Maine clean elections bill defeated in non-concurrence

On Wednesday, April 6, the Maine Senate voted 20-15 to fund **LD 1634, An Act to Provide Tax Revenue to Offset Transfers to the Maine Clean Election Fund**, by using General Fund revenue. This action puts the bill in non-concurrence with the Maine House of Representative which voted 77-67 to engross LD 1634 on Tuesday, March 8. The version which emerged from the House on a majority report would propose to transfer \$3 million from the General Fund to the Maine Clean Election Fund by requiring corporations that file unitary income tax returns in Maine to include income from certain jurisdictions outside the United States in net income when apportioning income among tax jurisdictions.

As you may recall, Maine voters passed the Maine Clean Election referendum question (55% to 45%) last November, which requires the Taxation committee to report out a bill within 45 days of the effective date of the law, to permanently eliminate \$6 million of “corporate tax expenditures” over the biennium (\$3 million per year) to fund clean elections campaigns. The measure also requires that the \$6 million in business tax expenditures *must* come from “low performing” incentives identified by the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA).

Continued on Page 4...

Inside Impact...

Autism Awareness Month . . . p. 7
Clean Elections/Tax Havens p. 1
Construction Showcase . . . p. 11
E2 Tech News p. 11
Jobs for Maine's Graduates . p. 2
Local Chamber Executives . p. 5
Regional Breakfasts p. 12
Supplemental Budget p. 1
Workforce Summit p. 8
Workplace Wellness p. 9

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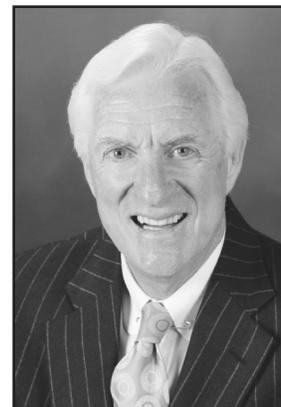
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About the Maine State Chamber of Commerce: Since 1889, the Maine State Chamber has been fighting to lower your cost of doing business. Through our Grassroots Action Network and OneVoice program, we work with a network of approximately 5,000 companies statewide who see the value in such a service and provide the financial support that keeps our access, advocacy, and assistance efforts going strong. As Maine's Chamber, we make sure that the business environment of the state continues to thrive. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce advocates on behalf of their interests before the legislature and regulatory agencies and through conferences, seminars, and affiliated programs.

A message from the president...

**“Heading down
the home stretch...”**

by Dana Connors



The short session might be only a few months in duration, but with statutory adjournment slated for April 20, the weight of the issues heat up quickly. In the next three weeks, legislators will debate and determine the fate of additional spending requests through the supplemental budget, bond issues, college affordability, and the competing measure to increase Maine's minimum wage. As you can see, achieving successful outcomes will require leadership and courage.

In the heat of the midnight sessions, however, let us not forget the positive outcomes we've seen so far this session. From education reforms to tax conformity, and broadband access and further telecommunications deregulation to defeating CEO sales tax liability, legislators have demonstrated an ability to make bipartisan strides in the best interests of Maine's economy.

The 127th Legislature will likely conclude its work this month and return to address any vetoes before it officially adjourns. After that, our staff will begin to analyze and assess the outcomes in preparation for our Annual Legislative Summary, tentatively slated for publication in May.

There is still time for you to contact legislators on these issues and make your voice heard. When employers are engaged in the public policy process, good outcomes rise above partisan politics and ultimately create a better economy for all Mainer. □

Jobs for Maine's Graduates brings students closer to the college experience

Thomas College opens its campus to 500 JMG high school students

What better place to celebrate a student's high school career and inspire them to continue their education than on a college campus? More than 500 juniors and seniors from across the state poured onto the Thomas College campus in Waterville on Tuesday for JMG's annual Career Development Conference (CDC). Students spent the day battling it out in a variety of college and career skills competitions, proving they are ready for life after graduation.

"I thought it was great," said Casiana Collette, a senior at Mt. Blue High School. "It gives us a chance to show all of the skills we've been learning in class and through community service learning, like leadership and critical thinking skills. It's what the whole school year has been building up to."

For the first time in the event's 24-year history, the conference was held on a college campus. This offered new opportunities for students to explore the college experience, while having fun. They were sent across campus on a scavenger hunt based on skills needed to succeed in college. They submitted college applications and did their best to impress the Thomas Admissions' staff in mock interviews.

Sherrye Haney, JMG's Regional Manager in charge of the event, said, "High school students who are familiar with college, and see it as worthwhile and valuable, are more likely to go to college and persist to graduation. Hosting CDC on a college campus is part of a larger JMG effort to raise aspirations and help these students prepare for life after high school."

Students also squared off in public-speaking competitions; showed off their STEM skills by building mobile mini-robots; and, got a great chance to network with employers and college reps at the event's Career Expo. More than 100 people, including business executives, community leaders, and Thomas College

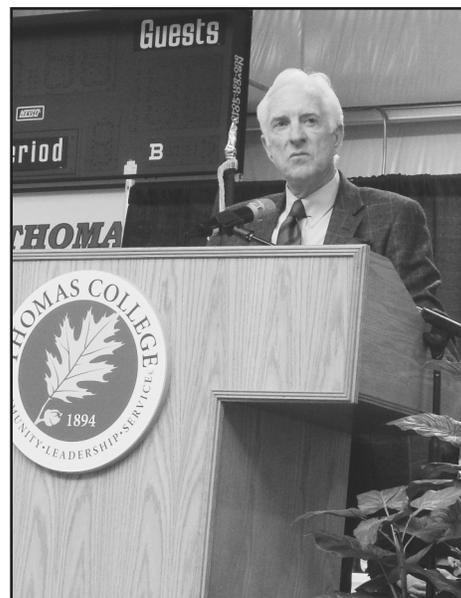
staff generously volunteered their time and energy to facilitate workshops and judge competitions.

"We are very excited to be a part of this big day for JMG and to have so many high school students attend this event on our campus," said Thomas College President Laurie Lachance. "Thomas College was the first college in the United States to have a JMG specialist on campus, and we are the first to now have two specialists. JMG is a great service to our high school students and our students at Thomas, and we are happy to be partnered with them."

Thomas is one of seven colleges in Maine with a JMG Specialist working to connect high school students to college, and to improve retention on campus. Several JMG seniors are now a little closer to being able to afford college after being awarded scholarships today. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce and Procter & Gamble awarded a total of four scholarships. Two Cony High School students – Elizabeth Lucas and Connor Osborne – were among the recipients.

Elizabeth Lucas said, "I'm pretty wowed. I was shaking with excitement when I picked up the scholarship award. In the application, I wrote about how important JMG has been in my life, and I'm so happy this has happened. The whole experience here at Thomas today has been amazing. Just being here on this beautiful campus makes me want to head home, pack my bags, and start college right now."

JMG is a statewide, private nonprofit working with students who face barriers to education. JMG provides 5,500 students a year with the skills and experience they will need to succeed in high school, post-secondary education, and careers. JMG graduates become engaging members of their communities, productive adults in the workforce, and contributors to Maine's economy. □



Maine Clean Elections... (Continued from Page 1...)

The Taxation committee worked on this bill for several weeks, struggling to decide where to get the resources to increase the Maine Clean Elections fund. Because the referendum did not define “corporate tax expenditures,” it was unclear what constituted that definition. As a result, the term “corporate tax expenditures” could have included any one of the 400-plus tax expenditures that are currently on the State’s books. In addition, OPEGA has not even begun to conduct its performance review of tax expenditures, so it would be premature for OPEGA to recommend the elimination of any tax expenditure prior to conducting the review.

Ultimately, Republicans proposed to require the measure be funded from the general fund rather than from eliminating corporate tax expenditures. Whereas, the Democrats on the committee voted to

fund the measure through adopting language similar to what was found in **LD 341, An Act to Prevent Tax Haven Abuse.**

The Maine State Chamber strongly opposed that bill during the first regular session in 2015. The bill eventually died in non-concurrence. Like LD 341 (as drafted), LD 1634 would have established a “black list” of countries, labeling them as “tax havens,” where there was a premise that companies located there to avoid paying taxes on income generated. The “blacklisting” of countries was arbitrary and discriminatory. It targeted some countries, but not others.

Maine companies would have been subjected to tax on income generated in those countries and Maine income tax as well, essentially double taxation. Even though the bill tries to avoid it, it would be literally impossible to do. The U.S. has always adopted what is called the “arm’s-length” or “water’s-edge” approach to taxing income. In that situation, the tax is imposed in the country where the income is generated. This legislation would have interfered with feder-

al tax treaties already in place and would have threatened U.S. trade relations. Last year, in response to a similar proposal, the embassies of Liechtenstein and Luxemborg both wrote letters to Taxation committee members and to the Legislature urging them to vote against this legislation.

While Maine voters did approve the statewide clean elections referendum question (Question 1) on the ballot in November 2015, the vote was a lot closer than early polls showed. The gap was narrowed substantially due to the work by the “No on Question 1” coalition formed by the Maine State Chamber and 14 other business associations statewide, representing thousands of Maine employers across the state. Coalition members were not opposed to clean elections – they were all opposed to the funding mechanism contained in Question 1.

If you have any questions about these or other tax policy proposals, please contact Linda Caprara by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 106, or by emailing lcaprara@mainechamber.org. □



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MEMIC President and
CEO John Leonard with
Katie Smith, 2014
scholarship recipient.

Local/Regional Chamber Executive Spotlight...

Several local / regional chambers welcome new executive directors

In the past year, several local/regional chamber executives have moved on or retired. They include the Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Chamber (formerly the Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce), the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Penobscot Bay Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce, the Boothbay Harbor Chamber of Commerce, the Old Orchard Beach Chamber of Commerce, the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, the Yarmouth Chamber of Commerce, and the Greater Freeport Chamber of Commerce. To provide our members an opportunity to get to know these new local/regional executive directors, we will be featuring a few of them each month in our Impact newsletter.

An affiliate of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, the Maine Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives provides a forum where chamber executives meet to share ideas, network with peers, and build partnerships with other chambers of commerce across Maine. For more information, please contact Amy Downing by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 104, or by emailing adowning@mainechamber.org, or visit <http://www.macce.biz/>.



Deb Neuman,
Bangor Region Chamber
of Commerce...

Prior to her appointment as president and chief executive officer of the Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce, Deborah Neuman served as deputy commissioner for the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, as the director of the Target Technology Incubator at the University of Maine, as a small business lender and coach with Eastern Maine Development Corporation, and the Washington Hancock Community Agency.



She has advocated on behalf of small businesses through her work in the media as a radio talk show host with Blueberry Broadcasting, a business tips feature on WABI-TV, and a writer for the Bangor Daily News and Bangor Metro. She has owned a number of small businesses in Maine and resides in Bangor.

Matt Leonard,
Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan
Chamber of Commerce...

A leader in the United States Navy for

Continued on Page 10...

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Maine BLN celebrates National Autism Awareness month

April is National Autism Awareness month, and it's the perfect time to share with you some of the Maine State Chamber important work in promoting and encouraging the employment of people with disabilities. The Maine Business Leadership Network (BLN) is an employer-led affiliate of the U.S. Business Leadership Network, a national organization that serves as the collective voice of more than 60 Business Leadership Network affiliates across North America, representing more than 5,000 employers. The Maine affiliate program is managed by the Maine State Chamber of Commerce.

The Maine BLN focuses on assisting businesses in attracting and retaining new employees and customers with disabilities, developing business leaders who value diversity and actively work to promote strong communities that include individuals with disabilities, and increasing opportunities for businesses to expand their diversity recruiting efforts, not as a social model, but as a business case to recruit talent and better serve their customers. The MEBLN is sponsored in part by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. For more information on the Maine Business Leadership Network, including how you can get involved, please visit www.mainebln.org.

Below, we share a letter from Scott Badesch, president of the Autism Society of America. For more information, please visit <http://www.autism-society.org/>.

Renewing our commitment to inclusive employment

Across the country, the Autism Society and our nationwide network of affiliates share success stories of people with disabilities thriving in the workplace. From engineers to animal caretakers and all career paths in between, employees with autism are embedded into the fabric of small and large businesses across the country. Yet, for every worker with autism who obtained their first real career opportunity, there are two who face barriers toward getting a foot in the door and a slice of the American dream. The United Nations estimates nearly 80 percent of people with autism across the globe are unemployed. We know this to be a staggering statistic by any measure.

Throughout history, this nation has granted opportunities for so many, but somehow, the dream remains just out of reach for those with autism. While employers now are starting to recognize the importance and value of a worker with autism, too many still make inaccurate assumptions about the capacity of these individuals to contribute to an organization's bottom line. They are labeled as incapable, relegated to tasks not in alignment with professional goals and aspirations, and the gap between those living with a disability and those without continues to widen.

Today, the unemployment rate for the overall population is five percent – the lowest it's been in years. More Americans are employed than ever before. However, the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities is twice that of those without a disability. We know that those who have means and access to resources are so much better off than those with limited resources and access to services. And gainful employment is the key to long-term stability and independence.

Let us renew our commitment to our family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues impacted by autism. We all have a responsibility to ensure individuals on the spectrum can maximize their quality of life each and every day. It is our duty as a community, to help people with autism thrive and contribute to our nation. We must do our part to position these individuals so they can acquire new skills. As we look toward the future, the Autism Society remains deeply committed to improving the quality of life of people with autism and their families.

In closing the Maine BLN would like to recognize one of its advisory members who has been incredibly supportive of our efforts and who also "walks the walk." Derek Volk, president of Volk Packaging Corporation, employs people with disabilities at his Biddeford facility. He also knows first-hand the struggles that people with autism face when it comes to finding employment as his adult son is on the autism spectrum. Derek and his son Dylan co-wrote a book called *Chasing The Rabbit*. The book provides the unique perspective of a dad raising his son on the spectrum, but also gives Dylan's perspective on many of the experiences as well. For more information, please visit <http://chasingtherabbit.org/>. □

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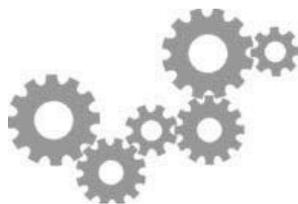
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Did you know workplace stress is responsible for up to \$190 billion in yearly health care costs in the U.S.? That's why stress is the number one workforce health risk. It actually beats out obesity and physical inactivity. Seventy percent of American employees consider the workplace a significant source of stress, and 51% reported job stress reduces productivity, according to a 2009 report. Too much stress reduces immunity to illness and increases the risk of weight gain and diabetes. The good news is there are things your employees can do to make a big difference in their well-being.

Show your employees how much you care by encouraging them to take care of their well-being. Help your employees learn how to deal with stress and what to do if they're depressed or have an addiction. Health and wellness experts believe in a mind-body connection — That there's a link between your mental health and your physical health, and vice versa.

Stress, depression and addiction can affect your health, and your health can affect other parts of your life. Use the following tips to help keep stress from getting the best of you:

1 Mind your health: No one can completely avoid stress, but physical activity, good nutrition and plenty of rest can help you keep your energy level

high and ready to face life's challenges.

- 2 Reduce stressors:** Make a list of the things in your life that cause you stress. Beside each one, write down one or two ways you can lessen the stress and then work toward those goals. If you have trouble finding solutions, talk with your doctor.
- 3 Plan ahead:** Stress can be caused by having too many things to do, in too short a period of time. Instead, break larger projects into smaller, more manageable tasks; delegate at work and at home when you can. Set priorities. Spend the most time on those things you feel are important and less time on things that are lower priorities.
- 4 Be positive:** If you demand too much of yourself or let negative thoughts run through your mind, you're setting yourself up for added stress. Each time this happens, take a minute to redirect your thoughts to something more positive.
- 5 Get away:** When stress seems to be getting the better of you, take a break. Even a quick five-minute walk away from your office or home can help you relax.
- 6 Relax:** Relaxation exercises, which combine deep breathing with releasing muscle tension, are simple to do anywhere and can help lessen the negative effects of a stressful situation. Talk with your doctor about stress reducing exercises and breathing techniques you can practice. □

Take time to check out *Time Well Spent* today for all your workplace wellness needs. When employees feel good, they tend to perform better. That's why most Chamber BlueOptions® plans come with employee discounts on health products and services, as well as an online health and fitness program. Just contact your Anthem-appointed insurance producer for more information, or go to the Chamber's BlueOptions web page (www.mainechamber.org/blueoptions) to find a producer.

For more information on the Chamber BlueOptions health plan, please contact Joyce LaRoche, executive director of the Maine State Chamber Purchasing Alliance, by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 113, or by emailing jlaroche@mainechamber.org, or Amy Downing, program coordinator, by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 104 or by emailing adowning@mainechamber.org.

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Local/Regional Chambers... (Continued from Page 5...)

21 years, Matthew Leonard brings commitment, a strong sense of service, and a future-focused vision to his role as president and CEO of the Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce.

He has an extensive record of achievements in policy formulation and implementation, strategic planning, organizational development, administration, and operations. His deep experience has positioned him well to lead the largest business membership organization in the state. A strong advocate for business and a dedicated advocate for community betterment, Matt is particularly adept at bridging the gap between planning and implementation.

As chief executive officer, Matt develops and administers objectives and policies to achieve strategic goals and standards. He is responsible for the organization's program planning and staff, and manages the organization's strategic plan. A passionate advocate for business, Matt believes in developing strong relationships with LA Metro Chamber members, going business to business to discuss their needs and the issues they confront.

A true Renaissance man and life-long learner, he has a master's degree in political management from George Washington University, a bachelor's degree in business studies from Southern New Hampshire University, two associate degrees in political science and psychology, and a third associate's degree (in progress) in web development and design – all from San Diego Mesa College.

Matt has lived and travelled all over the world, but he is most proud to call himself a Mainer. Passionate about Maine's unique spirit and all it has to offer, Matt has chosen to come home. He can't think of a better place than Lewiston Auburn to live, work, and raise a family. An avid sports fan, reader, and learner of new things, Matt lives in Auburn with his wife Rebekah, cat, Hugo Stiglitz, and dog, Aria. □



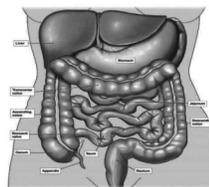
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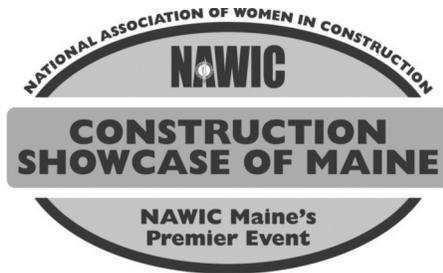
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Did you know that National Association of Women in Construction uses proceeds from the Construction Showcase of Maine to provide scholarships to Maine students pursuing a career in the construction industry?

Showcase Highlights:

- Special presentation of the first Joyce Newman Scholarship on Wednesday, April 13 at 4:00 p.m. in the main auditorium;
- More than 100 exhibitors are already registered for our indoor/outdoor exhibit area. Additional exhibitors can register today by emailing nawicmaine@nawicmaine.org;
- Bob Marley will entertain the crowd following the scholarship presentation on Wed., April 13;
- Robust panel discussions will focus on developing Maine's construction workforce;
- Our super-sized lineup of training and educational opportunities can be found online at <https://www.nawicmaine.org/construction-showcase/>;
- Prizes, giveaways and fun can be found throughout the two-day event; and,
- Exhibitor highlights will occur throughout the show. Ask how your company can be recognized during the show.

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Application period
open until
May 1, 2016**

Are you an entrepreneur accelerating a big idea? An executive looking for a way to mentor Maine's energy and environmental startups? Perhaps a lawyer, investor, or consultant curious about emerging companies in Maine? Or looking to expand your Cleantech network?

The Cleantech Open is the oldest and largest Cleantech startup accelerator program, with the mission to find, fund, and foster entrepreneurs with ideas to solve our greatest environmental and energy challenges. Through its annual business competition and accelerator program, it connects Cleantech startups with the people and resources that will accelerate their success, and provide a national platform for public visibility.

Last year, – Rapport and Beltane Solar – not only competed in the Cleantech Open NE, but were chosen to participate in an accelerator program and compete in the regional competition, the NYC Cleantech Summit. From there, Rapport was one of four Northeast regional winners and continued on to compete in the national competition in California for big prize money.

Learn more about the application process by visiting <https://northeast.cleantechopen.org/en/challenge/2016-cleantech-open-accelerator-2>. The final application deadline is Sunday, May 1. For more information or to learn more about how the program can help you grow your Cleantech venture, expand your businesses' services to young companies, or mentor entrepreneurs looking to solve our biggest environmental and energy challenges, please contact Jeff Marks, E2Tech's Executive Director, by calling (207) 956-1970 or emailing jeffmarks@e2tech.org. □

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Lisbon, ME

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**2016 REGIONAL
BUSINESS BREAKFAST
MEETINGS**

from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Lewiston/Auburn:

Tuesday, April 26 ♦ Hilton Garden Inn

Greater Bangor:

Tuesday, May 3 ♦ Husson University

Northern Maine:

Wednesday, May 4 ♦ University of Maine Presque Isle

Greater Portland:

Tuesday, May 10 ♦ Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield

Maine State Chamber's annual **Regional Business Breakfasts** bring "the Chamber to your region," enabling us to hear first-hand about the concerns of each region's local businesses, as well as providing an opportunity to present the latest public policy information that employers there need to know. *Space is limited and "first come, first served."*

Please **RSVP** to Rita Stoddard by emailing rstoddard@mainechamber.org.