



PRESS ADVISORY & INVITATION

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*If you are able to join us or would like to arrange for interviews with business leaders or Maine State Chamber staff, please contact **Melanie Baillargeon**, director of communications [(207) 623-4568, ext. 110; (207) 215-8430 cell; melanieb@mainechamber.org]*

Employers gather to acknowledge positive momentum of Maine's business climate

Maine State Chamber's Business Day at the Statehouse cultivates dialogue between businesses and legislators in an effort to foster job growth and economic stability

AUGUSTA, ME – On **Wednesday** morning, **March 28**, 2012, employers from around the state will gather for the Maine State Chamber of Commerce's annual **Business Day at the Statehouse** (www.mainechamber.org/bizday) in the **Hall of Flags** from **8:00 a.m. to Noon**. Growing each year, this successful event hosts an anticipated 250 employers as well as legislators and administrators. The casual and informative forum provides a prime opportunity to discuss business issues and priorities, with the ultimate goal of better working together to strengthen the state's economy and keep Maine competitive.

Business Day at the Statehouse 2012 will acknowledge the work of the 125th Maine Legislature and the progress it is making toward a more stable and prosperous business climate. This opportunity for businesses to connect face-to-face with their locally-elected legislators emphasizes the importance of preserving and retaining existing jobs, strengthening Maine's economy through the creation of new opportunities, and keeping Maine businesses competitive in this very fragile economy.

"In our visits with Maine businesses around the state, we are finally hearing a different tone," states **Dana Connors**, Maine State Chamber president. "Employers are expressing optimism and hope for the future for the first time in several years. The fear of burdensome regulation and the hesitancy to invest in the face of uncertain times is starting to lift. The Legislature deserves significant credit for that change, and we are grateful to them for having the dedication to reverse the trend."

At **9:30 a.m.**, legislative leadership will address those gathered in the Hall of Flags. **Sen. Kevin Raye, Rep. Robert Nutting, Sen. Barry Hobbins, and Rep. Emily Cain** are slated to share their perspective on recent legislative activities to advance the Maine economy.

In addition, members of the Governor's Cabinet will discuss their departments' business-focused initiatives at **10:00 a.m.** Guest speakers include **Pattie Aho**, commissioner of Department of Environmental Protection; **David Bernhardt**, commissioner of Department of Transportation; **John Butera**, senior economic advisor to Governor LePage; **Ken Fletcher**, director of Office of Energy Independence & Security; **George Gervais**, commissioner of Department of Economic & Community Development; and, **Robert Winglass**, Commissioner of Labor.

Legislative leaders from both the House and Senate will also be available to interact with employers and their employees prior to the start of the legislative session (currently scheduled at 10:00 a.m.). This event also provides employers and their employees with an opportunity to both observe and participate in the legislative process firsthand.

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About the Maine State Chamber of Commerce...

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce represents a diverse network of 5,000 businesses statewide and advocates on behalf of their interests before the Legislature and regulatory agencies and through conferences, seminars, and affiliated programs. Through its OneVoice program, the Maine State Chamber represents thousands of businesses with fewer than 10 employees. Its Grassroots Action Network works to involve members and their employees in the legislative process through outreach campaigns.