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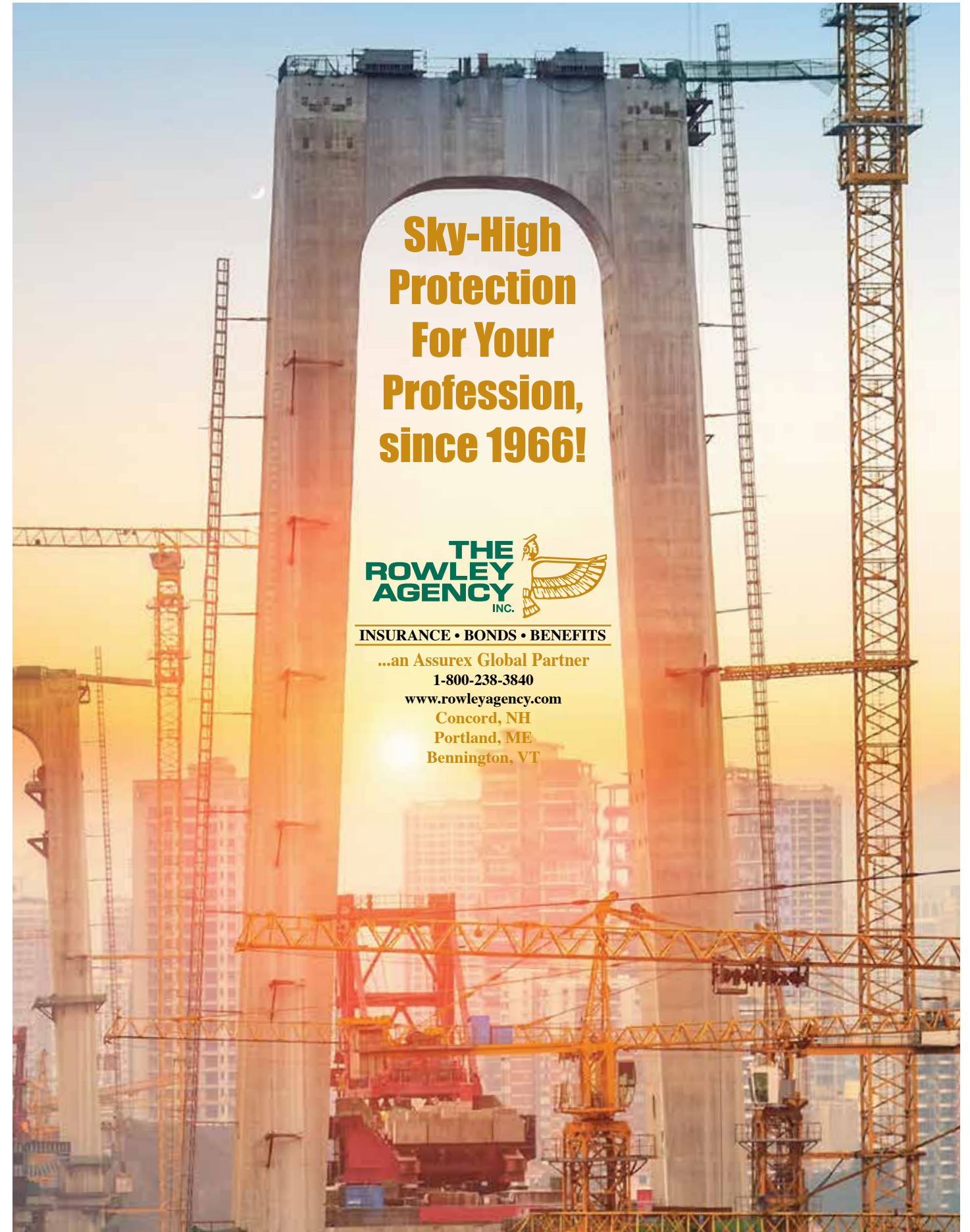
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Paul Bradbury, MBTA President



Change is coming, let's get ready – and have fun

Adapted from incoming President Paul Bradbury's remarks at the MBTA 80th Annual Meeting, which began by recognizing the history and transportation infrastructure completed since MBTA's first annual meeting in 1939. Bradbury went on to spotlight some of the significant, safe and efficient transportation infrastructure and milestones completed, then spoke on how we must endeavor to lead the way.

WE ARE all aware that our systems are changing rapidly. Our newly connected society with 77 percent of the U.S. adult population now carrying smart phones is moving quickly, introducing technologies we couldn't have imagined just a decade ago.

The rise of one technology like smart phones leads to others. Peer-to-peer ridesharing pioneer Uber was founded just 10 years ago in March of 2009. Now Uber and Lyft provide over 4.5 billion rides a year. Can you imagine companies that did not exist ten years ago are now providing rides to more than half the world's population annually? Speaking at the MBTA Annual Meeting last year, Maine Turnpike Authority Executive Director Peter Mills spoke about the many benefits of electric vehicles (EVs). We can expect their use to grow rapidly from the roughly 2 percent of the U.S. vehicle fleet today. In fact, the number of plug-in electric vehicles sold in the U.S. doubled in 2018. By the end of 2020 nearly all major auto makers will be selling electric vehicles.

Intelligent transportation systems (ITS) were the focus of last year's 68th Maine Transportation Conference. I will not attempt to cover the many ITS initiatives that were mentioned and will shape a safer and more efficient transportation system for us. I do want us to recognize many changes are coming beyond rideshare and electric vehicles. Smart signals, connected/autonomous vehicles and the much mentioned 5G networks are all on the way.

I mention these rapid changes because we need to consider their impact now. We will not

“Everyone in this room understands the need to maintain and grow this infrastructure, but unfortunately, we have struggled to find a sustainable method to fund infrastructure. The fuel tax remains the current solution, but it is not the future solution.”

all have autonomous electric vehicles next year or even ten years from now, but I think we will look back 10 years from now and be amazed at how quickly electric vehicles took over the market. The future will not happen overnight, but I assure you it will happen faster than we expect or plan for.

Most of us can't imagine Maine without its transportation infrastructure. This infrastructure has taken decades to construct, and it is critical for our economy. This system moves



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\$89 billion of goods annually into and out of Maine according to a 2016 TRIP research report. Maine's total GDP was just under \$62 billion in 2017, so the impact of our transportation infrastructure is critical. Yet, we struggle to maintain infrastructure investment as indicated by our ASCE Infrastructure overall grade of C-. We can do better; we have done better.

Everyone in this room understands the need to maintain and grow this infrastructure, but unfortunately, we have struggled to find a sustainable method to fund infrastructure. The fuel tax remains the current solution, but it is not the future solution. The revenue generated from the fuel tax peaked in 2010 and was last increased in 2011, the last year of indexing. Moving forward, the rise of EVs and fuel-efficient vehicles will continue this downward trend of fuel consumption and tax revenue. It will take all of us working together to educate our neighbors and legislators on the necessity for sustainable transportation infrastructure funding. We figured this out in 1947, and we can do it again!

This time last year MBTA updated its Strategic Plan and Goals. I wanted to take a moment to spotlight the primary components of this plan:

Mission: To improve the quality of life for Maine citizens by advocating for a safe, efficient transportation infrastructure network.

Goals:

- Advocate – Be the recognized leader in supporting infrastructure through government relations.

- Inform – Enhance the public's understanding of the importance of transportation infrastructure for quality of life and the economy.

- Collaborate – Connect and collaborate with public and private organizations to advance a better transportation network.

- Lead – Lead the charge to support a better transportation infrastructure network through MBTA efforts and resources.

Please help MBTA with these goals in the upcoming year! What do we need for success?

Please stay involved or get involved.

Become a member or recruit a member.

Join an MBTA committee.

Attend MBTA events.

Have fun!

Talking about fun, it was great seeing many of you at our Washington County Meeting, and I hope to see you at the other events we have coming up, including the Aroostook County Meeting, Transportation on Tap, the Fall Convention and 2019 PDH Tour.

In closing, I want to thank Pat Sughrue. As president of MBTA last year, he did a great job keeping us on track to accomplish these goals. We still have much work to do, and now, as I take up the gavel, I promise to continue that good work. I know with your help we will achieve our goals. Thank you. I am honored and looking forward to serving as MBTA president this year. ■

2019 MBTA CALENDAR

Be sure to mark your calendars. You don't want to miss these MBTA events! Watch for meeting details at mbtaonline.org.

Thursday, August 1

AROOSTOOK COUNTY MEETING
Northeastland Hotel, Presque Isle

Thursday, August 8

TRANSPORTATION ON TAP
Three Dollar Dewey's, Portland

Thursday, September 12

TRANSPORTATION ON TAP
Orono Brewing Company, Orono

Friday, September 13

FALL CONVENTION/OUTING
Samoset Resort, Rockport

Saturday, September 14

FALL GOLF TOURNAMENT
Samoset Resort, Rockport

Friday, September 27

PDH TOUR

September 28 - 29

DEMPSEY CHALLENGE
Lewiston

Friday, October 4

MAINE TRANSPORTATION AWARDS
Augusta Civic Center

Thursday, October 10

TRANSPORTATION ON TAP
The Liberal Cup, Hallowell

Thursday, December 5

MAINE TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE
Augusta Civic Center

Thursday, December 12

HOLIDAY/SCHOLARSHIP MEETING
Black Bear Inn, Orono

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ONRAMP

Unpaving paradise

SYRACUSE, New York, may tear down an elevated section of I-81 with the goal of revitalizing low-income communities that were displaced by its construction in the 1950s, according to *Route Fifty*. The original construction designated most of the land around the elevated viaduct for parking. That forced residents whose homes were demolished into neighborhoods that now contain some of the most concentrated poverty in the country.

The plan is to tear down the highway and replace it with a “community grid,” possibly transforming the 18 acres of land into community space, walking paths, bike lanes, and a tree-lined boulevard.

Leaving the highway alone is not an option as it no longer conforms to federal highway standards and is plagued by a high accident rate. NYDOT considered three options, two of which call

for maintaining the highway by reconstructing the elevated viaduct or replacing it with a tunnel. The third option, the community grid, would reroute traffic to I-481 around the eastern edge of the city. The grid option was the cheapest at \$1.9 billion. The tunnel would be most costly – \$4.9 billion.



A rendering of the grid proposed to replace I-81 where the highway currently passes through downtown Syracuse.

Whether or not the community grid will be the option chosen is yet to be seen, but one advocate said that Syracuse can look to places like Madrid, Boston, Seoul, and Milwaukee for inspiration. Those cities replaced their urban highways with green spaces. Syracuse has already been linked to them

by a common theme: the final decision on how to use these spaces often took years, or sometimes decades, to arrive. Syracuse leaders and community members have been discussing proposals for I-81 since 2006. ■

Traffic gardens and pedal power

CHILD-SCALED FAUX villages that dot America have helped teach children pedestrian and bike safety since the 1930s.

“Kids learn best by doing,” said Jessica Dayton, executive director of one of those villages, the Chautauqua Children’s Safety Education Village in New York. “So, if we make it a very realistic environment, it’s going to give them the best opportunity to retain that information.”

For third- through fifth-graders who come to the Chautauqua village to learn about biking, the lesson begins inside, with

students reviewing the rules of the road – what you do at railroad tracks, say, or at a stop sign. Every student gets a bike helmet and is taught how to properly put it on.

The students are then split into two groups: The first stays inside to review the ABCs of biking, checking the air in the tires, the brakes, and the chain. Staff members who have been trained in the village’s curriculum also show students how to adjust the height of the seat, and proper riding posture. (All educators are also trained in CPR and first aid.)

Outside, the second group of students

puts education into practice, weaving around small (fake) potholes and stopping at red lights. Staff members are also stationed at different turns to ensure students are using the proper hand signals, and applying what they’ve learned in the classroom on the street.

In recent years, smaller “traffic gardens,” usually without mini-buildings, have been popping up in American cities reflecting a stronger interest in biking and bike safety and the recognition that the country has an abundance of unused pavement that can be easily transformed with color and paint. ■

The Maine Trails Interview

We are very good problem solvers

MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note discusses the recent CAP changes, adding capacity on the Piscataqua River Bridge and the MaineDOT work ethic

Commissioner Van Note speaking before the Maine Chapter of the American Public Works Association in April.



must be done, determine what that work will cost, and then raise the funds necessary to do it – all under the watchful eye of an engaged board of directors. In simplest terms, the work defines the resources. At MaineDOT, policymakers determine how much money we should have, based upon policy considerations about what they feel the taxpayers can and should pay, and we do the best we can to get the most work done we can. That is, the resources define the work. So, the biggest lesson I learned at the MTA is to educate the public and policymakers about the benefits to them of a longer-term view, in hopes that a sustainable, longer-term funding model might emerge.

MT: What are the parts of Maine’s transportation system you feel are underserved whether by geography, labor or funding constraints?

VAN NOTE: Due to funding constraints, I think the most underserved part of transportation is reconstruction and rehabilitation of our highway system, especially mid-priority roads.

We have a solid plan for the two ends of the priority spectrum. On the high-priority roads that carry the most traffic, we’ve tried to finish reconstructing this part of the system. That’s expensive (\$2 million to \$3 million per mile), but necessary, and we’ve had to defer some of the few

VAN NOTE: At MaineDOT, we are very good problem solvers. When the mission is clear, and the funding is secure, we can get just about anything done. That often arises in times of crisis – whether it be a heavy snowstorm, a spring flood, or a washed-out bridge. In those situations, we have public support, it is clear what we need to do, we organize to do it, and we get it done. It would be great if funding allowed us to apply those same skills in a more broad-based and proactive way by reaching long-term capital improvement goals.

MT: What are the things the department is working on improving?

VAN NOTE: I think we need to improve on communicating the benefits of transportation. This is on me. Historically, when we talk transportation, we often talk about crumbling infrastructure and the need for funding. I have done it in this interview. It is all true and important, but by focusing on the negative (broken stuff and taxes), we fail to highlight the benefits of transportation to everyone’s day-to-day life. We need to say why it is important – not just what, where, and how much.

Investing in transportation means your child getting to school safely each school day. It means a safe, reliable, and convenient daily trip to work. Transportation in Maine means an excellent quality of life; we can easily get

Commissioner Van Note (second from left) at the Waldo-Hancock Bridge in 2008.



Maine Trails: You have worked for most of your career in transportation – what have you learned from your experience prior to working for MaineDOT?

COMMISSIONER BRUCE VAN NOTE: Before MaineDOT, I worked in a law firm and owned my own surveying and land use consulting business. It taught me that running a small business and caring for your employees is a big responsibility. You care for them like family and want to make sure your decisions are solid - not just for you, but for them. I also learned that small business is not an easy endeavor and that government should do everything it can to keep things simple and straightforward. It also taught me to be cautious with money. You can’t be afraid to invest, but you want to make sure you’re not wasting any money.

MT: What have you learned from your long career at MaineDOT?

VAN NOTE: My various roles at MaineDOT – including working as a

construction lawyer, legislative liaison, director of policy, and deputy commissioner for 12 years – allowed me to get to know all aspects of the department and to transition from projects, to management, to leadership. The most important lesson may be how much we can do together when we have a common purpose and vision – and how little you can get done alone. I also learned that our people are our most important asset. I am humbled to work with them. Everyone at MaineDOT is doing important work. Our work makes a difference in every Maine citizen’s day-to-day life. It’s so fundamental, sometimes I think people take it for granted, and they do not think about what it takes to keep our vast system together.

MT: What kind of perspective did leaving MaineDOT and working at the Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) provide as you transitioned back to MaineDOT?

VAN NOTE: The MTA works under a more rational asset management model. Much like a public utility, they take a long-term view of what work

miles we had programmed. Even on those high-priority roads, we have been forced to largely abandon the idea of adding capacity in the few areas that need it because of a lack of funding. That’s shortsighted. That can hold back some of our most economically important areas, which are areas that are most likely to attract new people to Maine.

On the lower end of our priority system, we manage the roads with light capital paving (LCP). That’s about half of our state mileage – more than 4,000 miles. That is not ideal, but it is what we can reasonably afford.

But there is a large number of mid-priority highways – largely Priority 3 roads – that have never had and will never have substantial reconstruction or rehabilitation given current funding levels. These roads are often in rural areas or on coastal peninsulas and are very important to these areas. Given that the cost per mile is usually at least \$1 million, we simply have not been able to get to them. That is an underserved system I wish we could address.

MT: What is something that you think MaineDOT does particularly well?

from the ocean to the mountains, to Downeast and the County, and all places in between. It means preserving the viability of island communities through a ferry service. It means vibrant downtowns and villages, which are some of the best places to live in on earth. Transportation means allowing our products to get to other states and the world in a cost-effective way, which means better jobs throughout the state. It means easy travel compared to the more congested cities in the Northeast, which is a competitive advantage for attracting new workers. It is part of our brand, part of what makes us Maine.

Simply put, Maine cannot move forward without transportation, yet it is rarely identified as one of the top five things people think of as important policy areas. I’ve got to work harder to change that.

MT: Is there a road or a part of the transportation system that drives you nuts (in a good or a bad way)?

VAN NOTE: We have a great team that can take care of almost all normal

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The Piscataqua River Bridge is one of the most challenging projects MaineDOT currently has underway.

challenges within funding constraints. Thus, the things that really vex me are challenges that are extraordinary, seemingly impossible, but in my view still necessary. Here are two examples.

The first example is the gateway to Maine – the I-95 crossing between Portsmouth, New Hampshire and Kittery. We're doing a relatively straightforward wearing service project on the Piscataqua River bridge, and just doing that is requiring Herculean traffic management. It is expensive (\$53 million) and disruptive. Yet it is a must-have, must-do crossing. It is our economic lifeline to the rest of the nation. Most of our interstate goods and our visitors pass over this bridge, and keeping it open and well-functioning is critical to all of Maine. There will be a time - in the not-too-distant future - when we may need to consider adding capacity - likely in the form of a new or additional bridge. It will be extremely expensive and disruptive, so much so that I think we do not even think about it. But I think we are going to have to at least start the conversation, even though it will be perhaps one or two decades before we need to act.

The second example is one MaineDOT cannot solve alone and relates to the aging of Maine. How do we address the transportation needs of the elderly, especially in rural areas? There is no easy answer. Generally, people want to age in place - stay in their homes. But they also need access to services like medical care, and it is important to allow socialization to prevent isolation. How we serve those needs in an era when family and friends are not always around as they were before is a big challenge.

MT: Do you think we need to raise the number of miles of light capital paving (LCP)?

VAN NOTE: If the recent cost increases that we experienced this spring continue into future years, and if no additional funding solutions are found, I do think we may need to increase the number of miles we manage with Light Capital Paving. There simply may be no other alternative. I hope that does not occur, because that means the two negative premises in the previous sentence come to pass, but we have to do the best we can with the funding provided, and more LCP may be the only way we can do it.

MT: After this spring's changes to the construction advertising plan (CAP), do you really think this is a "new

normal"? Does MaineDOT think there will continue to be upward market pressures impacting the budget and work plan? Or do you think we've seen the top of that curve?

VAN NOTE: This past spring, bid prices received exceeded our estimates by 30 percent on a program-wide level. Bids for individual projects were 40, 50, even 100 percent over estimates. We are investigating causes and whether there are things we can do about this. We will do everything we can, but it appears that the price spike is being driven largely by construction demand and workforce issues, all of which are largely dependent on general economic activity. My point is just when you think you know what will happen, the environment changes, so you must constantly evaluate and respond. We will do so.

But to answer your question directly, I do think that prices will moderate some, but we do need to plan for a new higher plateau of cost. That could change, but as I answer this question in late June, I believe somewhat higher prices are a new normal, which means we will need more funding to keep our production level.

MT: By the way, how much do you estimate that funding gap is after the CAP changes this spring?

VAN NOTE: Before the price spike this spring, we estimated the unmet need for basic highway and bridge needs alone was \$108 million. With the price spike, and if we had a policy goal to reduce our dependence on bonding slightly, the new unmet need, and the new target for additional revenue, is probably about \$150 million per year. That is significant but is clearly supportable given the size of our transportation infrastructure and the importance our safety, economy, and quality of life.

MT: You had some strong realities that you presented to the Maine Legislature's Transportation Committee this session. Do you think they truly heard what you said? Do you think there is or soon will be discussion outside of the Transportation Committee of how to adequately fund Maine's transportation system? Or is that message not yet getting through?



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Inspecting a bridge in Gardiner. The commissioner praised MaineDOT personnel for their problem-solving abilities.

VAN NOTE: I've always had a good relationship with the Transportation Committee. I think that they know I try not to oversell or undersell, but instead just tell them like it is based upon the latest conditions. I do think they heard me.

But the reality is that the message about transportation needs to be heard by a broader audience, because the Transportation Committee alone cannot increase funding or decide that doing so is appropriate. I believe that LD 945, a bill that will create a blue-ribbon commission to study transportation needs and funding solutions, is a vehicle to allow this broader conversation. This commission will work over the second half of 2019 to see if we can get a broader bipartisan consensus on what we need to do, why it's so important to Maine, and how we can fund those needs.

MT: If the legislature were open to increasing the gas tax, how much do you think they should increase it by to fill the gap?

VAN NOTE: If we could achieve bipartisan consensus on an increase to fuel taxes as a partial solution to our transportation funding problem – and I think we should – it cannot be the only answer, and there is obviously still a limit. Each penny on the gas and diesel tax rates raises approximately \$7.5 million per year. As indicated previously, the unmet need is in the range of \$150 million per year. Do the math. Trying to solve the entire challenge with taxes is not politically possible. However, with good public education and graduated rates near the NH border, bipartisan consensus may be possible for a modest increase – perhaps nine cents or less. People are accustomed to pump price swings of several cents a day or easily a dime in a week or two. I think having some of that money go to improve roads they drive on will make sense to most people – IF we educate them and make the case.

MT: Are there any funding options beyond the gas tax that it would be wise for Maine to consider?

VAN NOTE: Yes, although fuel taxes may be a big part of the solution in the near term, we also have to look forward to other solutions. Tolling in higher-traffic areas that need improvement, dedicating a portion of the sales tax on automobiles, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) fees starting with electric and other vehicles that do not burn fossil fuels (in a way that

encourages use of such vehicles), and other options need to be considered. We may not be ready for all of them, but I think all cards need to be laid on the table before we discard them.

MT: Everyone talks about autonomous vehicles – self driving cars and trucks. Do you think Maine will see them in regular use on our roads anytime soon?

VAN NOTE: There is a lot of excitement about self-driving cars, and I have no doubt that they will be implemented in the future. However, I think that deployment will first occur in larger cities where people own fewer cars, and that it will be many years, perhaps 10, 15 or more – before we see widespread use in Maine. High cost, skepticism about the technology, and a relatively slow rate of turnover of the fleet of cars in Maine will likely be contributing factors to a slower rollout.

When we do see them, there is no consensus about what that will mean for traffic on the roads. If a car could drive itself, perhaps you'd have it drop the kids off at school, come back to get you to drive you to work, and send it to the grocery store where groceries could be delivered in the back by store employees for a trip back to home. That means more car use and less time in parking lots (which itself is an intriguing and positive development for land-use planning). But that likely also means more cars on the road. Just as "just in time delivery" of freight meant more rolling stock on highways and fewer warehouses, I expect the autonomous vehicles to mean more traffic at least in the beginning of their deployment.

MT: When you put your futurist hat on, what role do you think transportation can play for Maine in the coming decades? In the next century?

VAN NOTE: I tend to think five-to-ten years out, because that is the time period in which I can help achieve solutions, so futuristic prognostications are not my strong suit. But they are fun to think about.

With that said, I am quite sure that we will embrace vehicles that have no carbon emissions. Whether they are powered by electricity or fuel cells, I think we will like them not just because of their environmental benefits, but because they will be easier and simpler to maintain. Not having a series of controlled explosions under your hood, with the heat, need for cooling,

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A MaineDOT crew installs a culvert.

sound muffling, and lubrication related thereto, will be something people like. Imagine that the only maintenance of your car will be lubrication of wheels and a periodic replacement of a battery. Imagine less road noise and a truck that essentially runs silent for bird hunting. We will like those things eventually, after we've had a chance to investigate them with our trademark Yankee skepticism.

I also think that highly-personalized travel will continue to be the future. Much like cell phones replaced rows of pay phones, I think people want to retain maximum personal flexibility in travel as well. That means traveling in a vehicle on demand taking me from where I am to where I want to go, when I want to go. Some are predicting that car ownership will be a thing of the past. I'm not so sure about that in more rural areas. Just like we've had trouble enticing the deployment of broadband to less populated areas, I think that mobility as a service (cars owned by others coming to you on

demand) will focus first on urban areas due to the economics involved.

Of course, if personalized air travel becomes possible, or my personal dream – a *Star Trek*-like teleportation device that can take you anywhere instantly - then we will have lots of fun deciding what to do with all the roads and bridges we no longer need. On the other hand, we will have to worry about drunk flyers running into our bedroom in the middle of the night, about air space congestion, or about hacking of the remote computer systems that control all the iPlanes.

As to when we can fly or beam over, I think gravity will remain a substantial challenge (it's a law, not just a good idea), and I've seen the movie *The Fly*, so I am not holding my breath.

In any event, future transportation professionals will competently define the problems, identify options, and implement cost-effective and prudent solutions – just like today. ■



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Maine Legislature

Bond? No bond?

Legislators left Augusta in June before agreeing on a bond that advocates had hoped would go to voters in November. Still, legislators were able to pass L.D. 945, that will enable state leaders to study and recommend long-term funding solutions for Maine's transportation systems

FROM A transportation funding point of view, the first session of the 129th Maine Legislature had more lows than highs. By the time legislators wrapped up in mid-June, there was at least one big piece of unfinished business – the \$239 million bond package proposed by Governor Janet Mills was not passed. That put \$105 million of the proposed bonds that were slated for transportation at risk.

The issue was a disagreement on the overall size of the bond package. Some legislators were reluctant to put that much borrowing out to voters this fall, even though the individual bond items – \$105 million for transportation; \$50 million for research and development, expanding broadband and fishing/farming infrastructure; \$65 million for wastewater treatment projects, renewable energy and the Land for Maine's Future program; and \$19 million for career and technical education or child care – would appear on the ballot separately.

The lack of a transportation bond would put MaineDOT in a precarious position. It would mean the department would have to cut \$100 million from its work plan that already was trimmed by \$59 million this spring when bids came in high for several major projects. MaineDOT has increasingly come to rely on annual General Fund bonding in recent years, a practice started during the King administration, to meet its annual maintenance and repair budget needs. Even with annual \$100 million bonds issued in recent years, the department estimates there is a \$100 million to \$160 million funding shortfall.

There has been talk of Governor Mills calling for a special summer session of the legislature to address the issue of bonds, but no date for that session has been set as of *Maine Trails* press time.

BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION

One of the final acts of the legislative session was emergency passage of L.D. 945: *An Act to Establish A Blue Ribbon Commission to Study and Recommend Funding Solutions for the State's Transportation Systems*. The bill was signed by Governor Mills on June 26, and the commission is expected to begin meeting in July.

The bill was sponsored by Representative Tom Martin (R-Greene), a member of the legislature's Transportation Committee and a former MBTA president. The commission will have 15 members: four appointed by Senate President Troy Jackson (D-Aroostook); five members appointed by Speaker of the House Sarah Gideon (D-Freeport); four members appointed by the governor; the MaineDOT commissioner or the commissioner's designee; and the Maine Turnpike Authority's executive director or his designee.

The commission is charged with studying "how to reform and



adequately supplement funding to the state's transportation infrastructure to promote equity, sustainability and predictability so that the state can responsibly provide safe, reliable state transportation systems."

Among issues the blue ribbon commission is expected to examine:

- 1) Funding levels necessary over the next 10 years to achieve capital improvement plan goals established by the Maine Legislature.
- 2) General obligation bonding and the role it should play in the MaineDOT budget over the next decade.
- 3) What L.D. 945 describes as "mechanisms to address the erosion of Highway Fund receipts and the rising inequities between drivers caused by higher automobile fuel efficiency and alternative fuel vehicles..."
- 4) A voluntary vehicle miles traveled pilot program for passenger vehicles.
- 5) Methods to share highway maintenance costs between residents and non-residents.
- 6) New tolling opportunities.
- 7) Dedication of a portion of sales tax receipts from transportation-related sales.
- 8) Increase of state funding for multimodal transportation, including increasing or augmenting the existing automobile rental sales tax.

The commission is expected to meet six times through the end of 2019 and report its findings to the Maine Legislature's Transportation Committee by January 3, 2020. ■



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Looking to make Route 1 safer

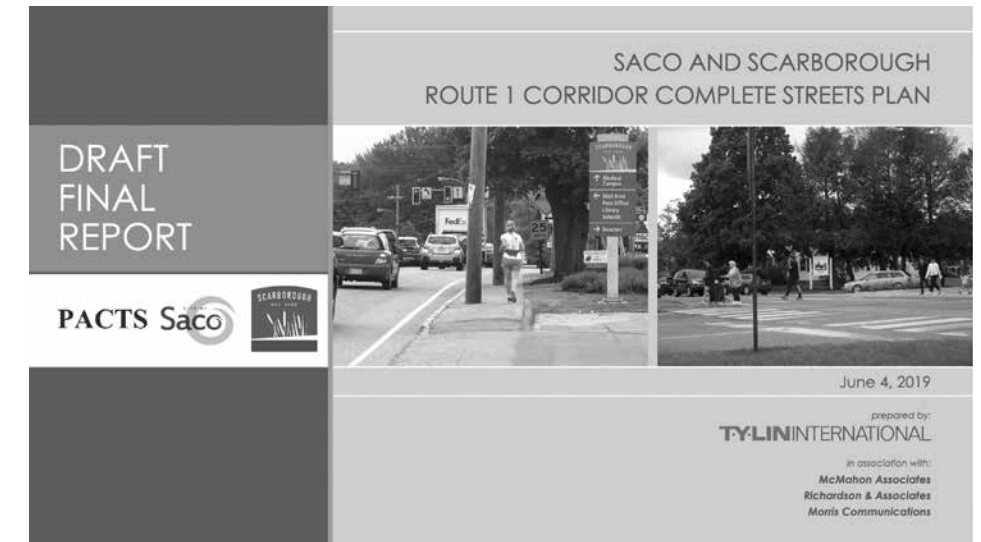
Saco, Scarborough and PACTS team up on recommendations to improve a congested section of highway

THE SACO and Scarborough communities are partnering with the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) and the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) to make Route 1 safer and more accessible for all modes of travel, including motor vehicles, public transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. The study would create a plan for a business-friendly road that encourages people to walk, bike and use transit. The focus will be on improving pedestrian facilities, including signal design, crosswalk locations, crossing distances, pedestrian refuges, and related safety, comfort and convenience measures.

TY Lin prepared a report for the communities that outlines the challenges ahead. Vehicle traffic on Route 1 is increasing, as is the use of the road by bicyclists and pedestrians. The plan intends to address the conflicts caused by these increases and create a business-friendly roadway that also encourages people to walk, bike and use transit. The road is also under significant development pressure in both communities.

The study will result in a comprehensive plan for Route 1 that unifies the road character in both communities, and will be implemented over time, as funding is available. PACTS is contributing to the financing of the study.

The plan includes more than 100 recommendations. These include identifying specific locations where traffic signal or



The study covers a critical section of Route 1 that connects the two communities.

intersection layout changes would improve safety and traffic flow, adding bicycle lanes and paths, creating sidewalk expansions and upgrades such as better crossings and pedestrian refuges, enhancing streetscape aesthetics, improving bus stop safety and visibility, and streamlining the number of driveways along Route 1.

In Saco, the plan recommends installing a hybrid traffic signal at the Route 1 crosswalk by Thornton Academy. And where Route 1 carries less traffic at the section north of Ross Road, the plan recommends the roadway be converted to three lanes, which

would provide space to add sidewalks and shoulders for bicyclists. In Scarborough, the plan recommends creating a "Gateway" intersection at Hillcrest Avenue to improve safety and help slow vehicles entering town from the Turnpike connector. Through the Oak Hill area, the plan provides guidance for connecting area businesses to surrounding neighborhoods as well as making the corridor a more inviting place unique to the Scarborough community. ■

FMI: To learn more about the study, visit bit.ly/saco-scarborough-rte1.

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‘Living bridge’

The Living Bridge Project is turning the Memorial Bridge into an engineering and environmental research lab



Researchers are monitoring a variety of variables on the Memorial Bridge, including structural performance, weather and tidal currents.

THE MEMORIAL Bridge doesn't just allow people to drive over the Piscataqua River from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to Kittery, Maine; it also serves as a living laboratory, according to a story in *New Atlas*. The bridge is outfitted with sensors that provide researchers, engineers and the general public with information about the day-to-day life and health of the bridge itself, as well as monitoring the surrounding environment.

Researchers from the University of New Hampshire have installed 40 data sensors on the heavily traveled Memorial Bridge and moored a floating platform to the pier that's home to a weather station and its own bank of sensors.

These data gatherers provide researchers, engineers and the public with updates on such things as the structural performance and traffic patterns. "It also provides valuable information about its health – the stress it deals with, the ease at which it moves, what's happening around it and even under it in the Piscataqua River," explained Erin

Bell, principal investigator of the Living Bridge Project.

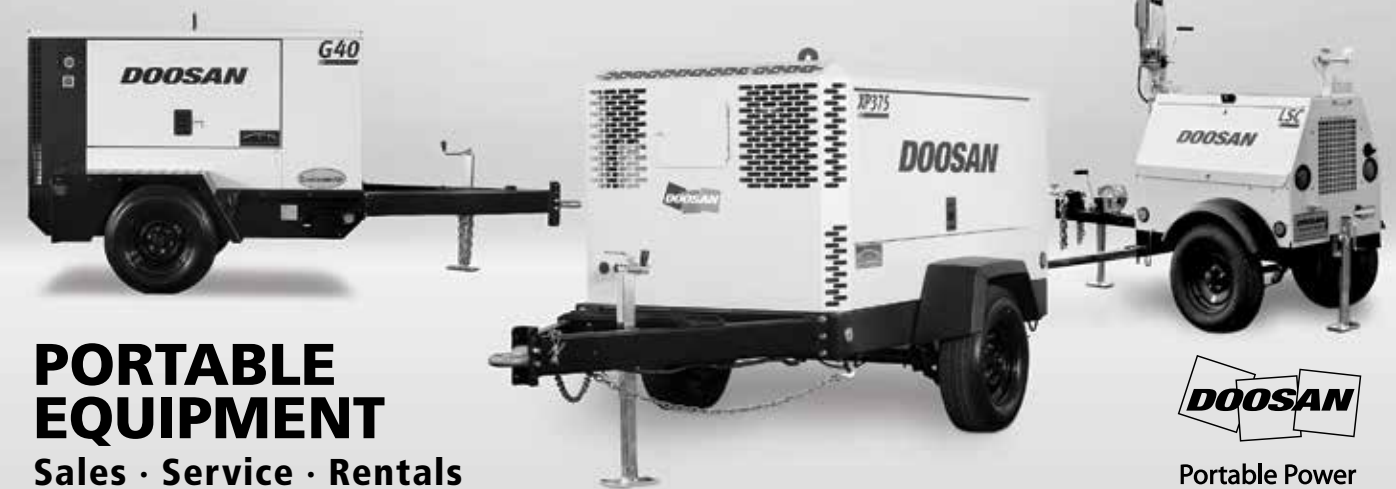
Researchers and engineers will be able to use the data gathered to inform the designs of future bridges and, noting that the Piscataqua River is one of the eastern seaboard's fastest navigable waterways, the researchers installed a tidal turbine on the floating platform that could offer insights into the viability of renewable energy projects.

"What is exciting about this is that tidal energy can be very predictable," said Martin Wosnik, one of the project's principal investigators. "Unlike solar panels, which can be unreliable due to cloudy days or bad weather, tidal energy is more stable because we can predict the tides well into the future." ■



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MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note, left, and Maine Turnpike Authority Peter Mills, right, brought MBTA members and friends up-to-date on developments at their agencies.

80 years in the lead

MBTA celebrates eight decades connecting Maine at annual meeting

THERE'S A lot of business to attend to at an MBTA annual meeting. There is the induction of new board members and new officers, and the annual look back at the accomplishments of the previous year. There also is the "passing of the gavel" and welcoming of the new president. This year, MBTA also celebrated its eighth decade on May 14 and took time to look back, not only at the past year, but the organization's long history advocating for better transportation in Maine.

The event began with a panel discussion with Maine Turnpike Authority Executive Director Peter Mills and MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note.

'STAYING IN THE GAME'

Mills brought the group of nearly 220 MBTA members up to date on work the Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) has underway to modernize its electronic toll collection system. That included the soon-to-be launched open road toll facility at Exit 44 (the new plaza officially opened to traffic on June 4). Mills spoke about the challenges the MTA faces to "just stay in the game" when managing the technology needed for electronic toll collection. One example is the new generation of MTA cameras that capture and read tens of thousands of license plates a day in order to monitor toll evaders.

In addition to completing the new facility in Scarborough, the MTA



Board member Irvin Smith stepped in as the evening's emcee. Newly elected MBTA President Paul Bradbury encouraged members to get involved.

MBTA 80TH ANNUAL MEETING

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Left: John Wardwell, Rick Chagnon, Larry Hutchins and former MBTA President Rodney Lane. Right: Representative (and former MBTA President) Tom Martin and Transportation Committee Co-Chair Representative Andrew McLean.

is updating its plaza in York and sharing the cost of reconstructing High Level Bridge on I-295 with MaineDOT and NHDOT. The MTA is also working on a wide range of projects to accommodate traffic that is increasing at an annual rate of two to three percent because, Mills said, “as traffic increases, it hits the interstate more intensely than other roads.”

Mills told his audience that has meant the MTA has worked with communities in its corridor to address local traffic and access issues and, as a result, the agency has “increasingly been drawn into discussions of land planning, housing and buses.” He talked about growth in areas of Biddeford, Saco, Wells and Westbrook, the latter where a village-like development called Rock Row promises to have a significant impact on turnpike traffic.

Mills also took up one of his favorite topics – the advent of the autonomous vehicle – noting that “change is happening faster than many of us think.” And finally he talked about the persistent underfunding of transportation in the state and across the country and noted that many states, including Rhode Island, Connecticut and Pennsylvania, are starting to look to tolls to help raise revenues to fund their transportation systems. He noted that in Pennsylvania, half of the tolls collected are being spent on parts of the state’s highway system that are not tolled.

‘NEW NORMAL?’

Van Note, who referred to Mills and the MTA as his “rich uncle,” updated

the group on MaineDOT’s announcement that it was rejecting bids on several projects and removing nine highway projects and six bridge projects totaling \$62.6 million from its current capital advertising plan (CAP). The cause for the CAP revision was a spike in bids that was on average 30 percent higher than 2018.

“We hate doing this [cutting the CAP],” said Van Note. “We know that it’s important to put out a plan and adhere to it, but another part of being reliable is making sure you can pay your bills.”

Van Note walked the audience through MaineDOT’s decision-making process in trimming an already slim work plan. He said that the department looked at projects that “can wait a year” and tried to be “modally agnostic” as it cut 16 percent from the schedule. He also talked about his discussions with industry leaders about the cause of the price spikes, that for the moment looks as if it is primarily due to increased demand from commercial construction markets and labor shortages. He also asked the question of the hour: “Is this the new normal?”

Van Note said that his discussions with legislators have stressed the critical situation and that after years of cutting costs, Maine’s roads and bridges are at a critical juncture. He noted that MaineDOT currently spends \$169 million on paving every year. “Fully half of our system is being held together by light capital paving. That’s what’s holding it together,” said Van Note.

He said that in January the department estimated that it had \$108



Left: Peggy Duval and Matt Steele. Right: Melanie Bonnevie, former MBTA President Deborah Dunlap Avasthi and Kimberly Tibbetts.



Top left: Sharon Perry, Sage Carpenter and Danielle Therrien. Top right: Mitch Elliott, Bruce Munger and Parker Brown. Lower left: Jim Hanley and Mike O'Brien. Lower right: Conrad Welzel and George Campbell, Jr.

MBTA 80TH ANNUAL MEETING

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million in unmet annual needs. That number has risen in recent months to between \$130 million and \$140 million annually.

'ADD MORE FUEL'

Van Note said the most immediate solution would be for a bipartisan move to raise the gas tax, because other revenue proposals such as vehicle mileage fees are still years away from becoming a reality. In the meanwhile, the state's Highway Fund is running on empty.

"The only way to do it is to add more fuel and that's not going to happen unless it's bipartisan," said Van Note. "It's like *Thelma and Louise*. Everyone's got to do it together and everyone take the vote together."

In the end, Van Note called on those in the audience to talk to their legislators and noted that the current leadership in Augusta is certainly more open to addressing the problem. Nevertheless, it will take some effort to convince legislators who may not be aware of the critical nature of the funding problem.

"We can't do this alone," said Van Note. We need some help and some of that help is in this room."

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

After the panel discussion, MBTA members got down to business. There was the Young Professionals Mixer and a membership-wide reception that followed. Then Irvin Smith, who was filling in for outgoing MBTA President Pat Sughrue, took the podium and presided over the election of officers and induction of new and renewing board members. Smith, who will serve as MBTA's second vice president in the coming year, announced the new slate of officers: Paul Bradbury, president; Dana Knapp, first vice president; and Tony Grande, secretary-treasurer. The new board members are: George Campbell, Jr., Sewall Infrastructure; Eric Ritchie, Sargent Corp.; and Erik Wiberg, R.W. Gillespie & Associates, Inc. Renewing board members are: Tony Caruso, Bangor International

Airport; Greg Dore, Maine Chapter, APWA; Deborah Dunlap Avasthi, Androscoggin Bank; Tim Folster, Sargent Corp.; Alan Gould, HD Supply-White Cap-A.H. Harris; Rodney Lane, Northeast Paving Company; Bruce Manzer, Anson; Tom Martin, Greene; and Ian Messier, Crooker Construction.

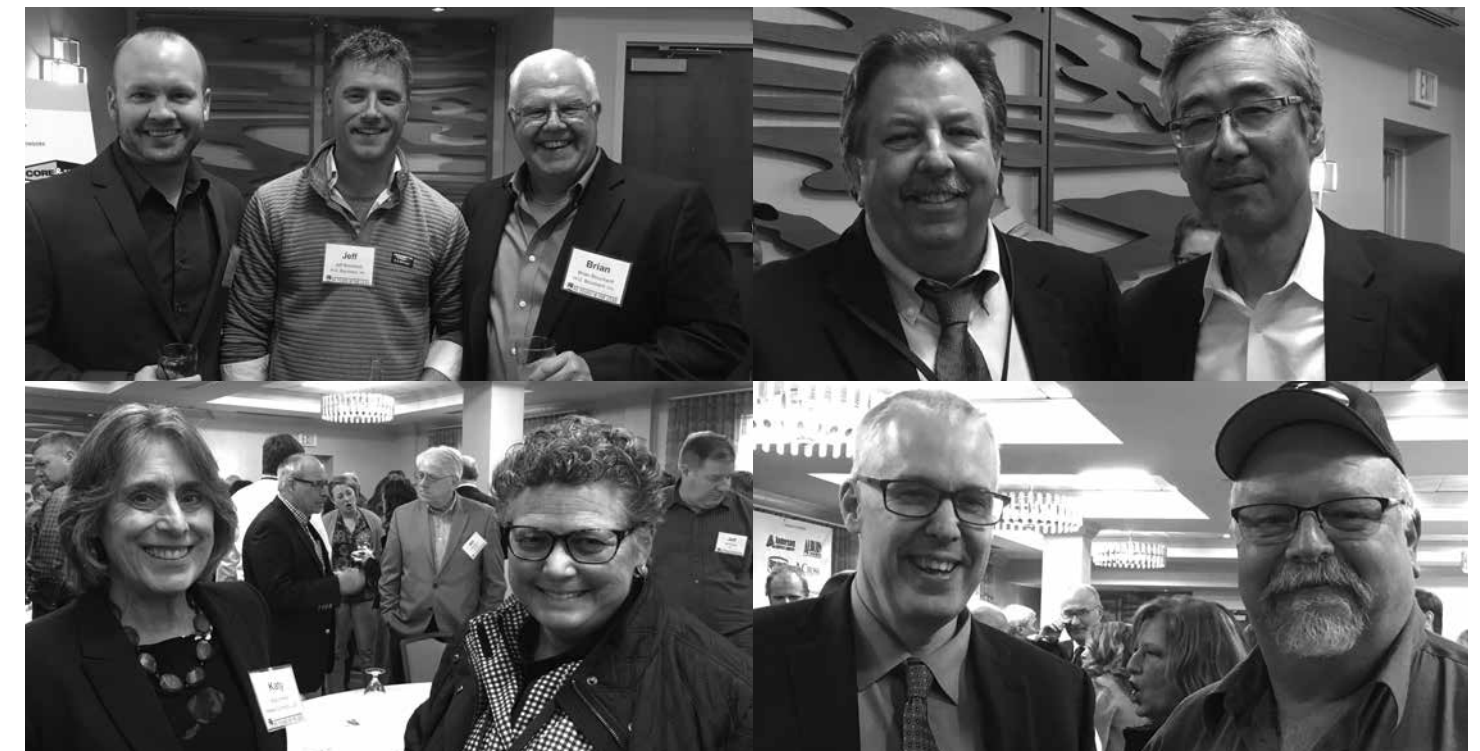
Smith also introduced the group to its new president, Paul Bradbury, director of the Portland Jetport and a 2014 recipient of the Maine Transportation Achievement Award. Bradbury struck an upbeat note in his acceptance speech. He thanked Pat Sughrue for his work to move the organization forward over the past year.

The new MBTA president also recognized the achievements in Maine transportation over the past 80 years, from the opening of the first passenger terminal at the Portland Municipal Airport in 1940 and establishment of the Maine Turnpike Authority one year later to completion of the I-95 from Kittery to Houlton in 1981 and re-introduction of passenger rail in 2001.

Bradbury issued a call to action for MBTA members and Maine's community leaders: "We must lead the way again in finding innovative ways to provide safe and efficient transportation infrastructure now and for the future. . . Most of us can't imagine Maine without its transportation infrastructure. It has taken us decades to construct, and it is critical for our economy."

Bradbury closed out the meeting with the drawing for the 50-50 Raffle. He noted that the funds raised go to the MBTA Educational Foundation, that last year awarded \$44,000 in scholarships to 43 students pursuing transportation studies. Debra Dunlap Avasthi's name was drawn, and she took home \$237 with the other half of the raffle proceeds going to support scholarships. ■

FMI: MBTA holds regional meetings in South Portland, Freeport, Eastport, Presque Isle and Bangor. For more information, visit www.mbtaonline.org.



Top left: Amos McCannell, Jeff Bouchard and Brian Bouchard. Top right: Jim Anderson and Ko Ishikura. Bottom left: Katy Hews and Be Schonewald. Bottom right: Peter Merfeld and Bruce Manzer.



Pike crew on Main Street in Rutland, Vermont in 1885.

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MBTA President Paul Bradbury (left), Eastport Port Authority Executive Director Chris Gardner (middle), MaineDOT Freight and Business Services Director Nate Moulton (right).

Moving freight in Maine

MaineDOT's Nate Moulton talks about state freight advances at MBTA's Washington County Meeting

IT WAS a rainy Thursday in Eastport, but the mood was upbeat when 60 Maine Better Transportation Association members and friends gathered June 13 at the Eastport Chowder House for the 2019 Washington County Meeting.

MBTA President Paul Bradbury welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced several members of the crowd: new board members George Campbell, Jr., president of Sewall Infrastructure; Erik Wiberg, president of R.W. Gillespie & Associates; Eric Ritchie, vice president of operations of Sargent Corp.; Don Raye, a former MBTA president and Maine Transportation Achievement Award recipient and Verna Raye; Amy Powers of MaineCruisePro; Haley Black, one of the 2018 MBTA scholarship recipients who is currently attending Washington County Community College; and Eastport Port Authority Executive Director Chris Gardner and his wife Amanda Gardner, who is business development manager for First National Bank. He also thanked the evening's sponsors: Innovators Hews Company and Northeast Paving Company; and Pathfinders H.O. Bouchard, E.J. Prescott and The Rowley Agency.

"Don't you all love a sunny day," said Gardner ruefully, as he welcomed MBTA members to Eastport and introduced members of the Port Authority who were his guests for the evening: Gilbert Murphy, Bob Peacock and Dean Pike.

The evening's speaker was Nathan Moulton, director of MaineDOT's Office of Freight and

Business Services, and he spoke about the state's freight network, the strategic focus of the MaineDOT's freight office and the MaineDOT staff that keep it all running.

Moulton was appointed director of Freight and Business Services just over a year ago after serving 14 years as director of the rail program and four years as deputy director of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority. Moulton noted that Freight and Business Services is MaineDOT's smallest office: just four people manage the rail network that stretches from Kittery to the border with Canada. He described his new position as "the most interesting job . . .there's something different every day."

A day can mean responding to inquiries from a sawmill in Masardis or a farmer in The County to coordinating with Maine's secretary of state and the state police on commercial vehicle enforcement and truck weights.

Moulton and his staff are guided by the state's Integrated Freight Strategy, a plan first drawn up in 1996 which is updated every four years. That plan brings together data on marine, rail and trucking operations throughout the state.

On the highway side, Maine's officially designated freight network includes the Maine Turnpike, the interstate system and Route 201. Route 9 from Bangor to Calais and Route 2 from Hermon to Gilead recently have been designated as part of the network. Moulton talked of MaineDOT's plans to next year kick off a four-year project to create a connector

between Route 9 with I-95 in Bangor, a much anticipated development that will help create efficiencies for road freight in eastern Maine.

The state owns 600 miles of rail, 300 miles of which are part of the active freight network and under lease to private rail freight companies. The largest of those is Maine Northern Railway operating on 200 miles of line that was almost abandoned in 2010 until the state purchased the line. Freight traffic on that line has almost quadrupled – from 5,800 carloads in the years preceding the state purchase to more than 20,000 carloads today, with Maine businesses moving a variety of goods, including clay and propane.

The state has bolstered rail access for businesses through its IRAP matching grants (Industrial Rail Access Program) that total approximately \$1.2 million per year. The federal government has supported Maine's efforts to modernize its freight rail network with a 2017 FASTLANE grant of \$7.89 million to help fund repairs to 22 rail bridges in the state. MaineDOT is partnering with Maine Northern Railway on the project.

MBTA President Bradbury returned to the podium for closing remarks and the 50/50 Raffle drawing. Bradbury reminded members of upcoming events on the MBTA calendar – the 2019 Aroostook County Meeting on August 1, the Fall Outing on September 13 and 14 at the Samoset Resort and the Maine Transportation Achievement Awards on October 4. He noted that MBTA would be sponsoring its fourth

team in the Dempsey Challenge, September 28 and 29.

The evening wrapped up with the 50/50 Raffle drawing, a fundraiser for the MBTA Educational Foundation that awards scholarships to Maine students pursuing careers in transportation. Don Raye won the \$120, that he generously donated to the MBTA Educational Foundation. Thank you, Don! ■

FMI: MBTA holds regional meetings in South Portland, Freeport, Eastport, Presque Isle and Bangor. For more information about these and other MBTA events, visit www.mbtaonline.org.



Pete Parizo, Ian McCarthy, Brent Williams and Jason Griffiths, left. Brian Raymond and Debbie Murphy, right.



George Campbell, jr., Irvin Smith, Steve Whitcomb and Brian Bouchard, left. Herb Sargent, Nate Moulton and Erik Wiberg, right.

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Appreciation

John Bridge: 'A gentleman in the industry'

By Glenn Adams

THE ONE quality about Bridgecorp that stood out the most was that it was like a big family, and the main reason was the man who led the company.

John Cameron Bridge, longtime president of Bridgecorp, previously known as Bridge Construction Corporation, died April 30. He was 86. Besides his leadership in the construction industry, Bridge was a philanthropist, community leader who served a term as Augusta mayor, and educator.

"He was a gentleman in the industry," said Daniel A. Cote of the Auburn-based crane and rigging company that bears the Cote family name. "He had a fantastic personality and people respected him for that."

Bridge's daughter, Allison Pederson, spent much of her life in and around the company, starting when she was a child. She recalled riding all over northern New England with her father as he inspected job sites.

"He basically knew every corner of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont," said Pederson, who now lives in Charlotte, North Carolina. "He had a story around every bend. 'Oh, we built this section of I-95 in 1958' and so on. He knew every gravel pit, including the type of material it offered."

In her teenage years, Pederson delivered job bids for the company around the region, and a decade



John Bridge, top, was known for his leadership in the community and in the construction industry. Middle, Ken Burrill presented the MBTA Transportation Lifetime Achievement Award to Bridge in 1997. John and Charlene, below, were honored by the Kennebec Historical Society in 2018.



later went on to become human resources and safety director. Looking back at those years, the thing that stands out most is the number of employees who said Bridgecorp felt like a big family, Pederson said.

"He knew everybody's name and something about them," said Pederson. Bridge might show up at a construction site in a suit and tie, then kneel down to help explain a procedure to a worker. If a worker had a personal problem or injury, Bridge would take an interest. "He was a down-to-earth, compassionate person," she said.

"That's what helped make Bridgecorp a family and not just a place to go to work every day," said Pederson. It's also why a number of John's former employees attended his funeral, some traveling long distances to do so. Written tributes backed this up, with entries such as "JCB, absolutely a class act."

Daniel Alvarez, P.E., who now works for the Kiewit construction company in Kansas, remembers Bridge teaching him the fundamentals of the industry years back when Alvarez was an engineering student in Maine. Alvarez, a native of Colombia who finished his master's work at the University of Maine, worked for Bridgecorp between semesters.

"He showed a personal interest, and spent time figuring out what I should be doing with his company," said Alvarez. Bridge taught Alvarez

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lessons on estimating strategy and contract negotiations that stick with him today. Another valuable lesson was emphasis on efficient use of time on the job.

"He was adamant that you can always be doing something. It kind of stuck in my head: There's really no down time," said Alvarez.

Earlier, Bridge and his wife Charlene sponsored Alvarez and a student from Germany in an exchange program sponsored by AFS Intercultural Programs. During that time, Bridge got to test his tennis mastery over the young Alvarez, who played on the Cony High School tennis team.

"He loved to play against me, and I didn't take it easy on him," said Alvarez.

Bridge's love of tennis and teaching both have ties to the University of Maine. Bridge graduated from the university in 1957 and received his master's degree in 1960. Between 1957 and 1960, he taught engineering at UMaine. Later, he established the John C. Bridge engineering professorship and contributed to the university's honors college. John and brother Dave, who was longtime Bridgecorp treasurer, honored their father with a gift that led to the Chester G. Bridge Tennis Complex at UMaine.

John Bridge's generosity was recognized in 2005 when he was named Philanthropist of the Year by the Association of Fundraising Professionals. He was honored the same year with the Kennebec County Chamber of Commerce's Lifetime Achievement Award (he was also the chamber's businessperson of the year in 1992). In 2010, Bridge was honored by the Boy Scouts as citizen of the year.

One of Bridge's biggest charitable efforts was his chairmanship of the \$10 million capital campaign to build a new YMCA for Augusta, to which he contributed more than \$1 million to build it in 2006. The gift, \$167,000 for each of six years, came after the sale of Bridgecorp to Pike Industries in 2004. Bridge also assisted the fundraising group leading the effort to build a new Cony High School. He served as a board member, fundraiser and major donor for United Way, the Kent's Hill School and the Kennebec Historical Society.

Patsy Crockett, president of the historical society, knew Bridge for



Bridge and his wife Charlene (top) supported many community fundraising efforts and they were named Philanthropists of the Year by the New England Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals in 2005. Bridge loved tennis (middle) and frequently competed in the tennis tournament at the MBTA Fall Convention. Here he is with Charlene, Nikki White and Carol Boston. Bridge and Charlene (bottom) with their grandson.

many years, going back to when her husband Bob served on the Augusta City Council and Bridge served as councilor and later mayor. More recently, she met weekly with Bridge to discuss development ideas for the society.

"John was always very methodical and thought things through to a reasonable solution, and his quiet manner was admired by all," said Crockett. "I was pleased to have the opportunity to learn how John truly cared for everyone and wanted to see everyone better themselves, and he would work to see that all had equal opportunities."

"On any project that I worked on with John, it was like working with a family member," the KHS president added. "I know he felt as I do that it's so important to work hard for projects that make the community we live in a little better. John certainly made our community better and I'm pleased to have shared a little time each week with him."

Basketball courts and soccer fields in Augusta received Bridge's support as well. John volunteered Bridgecorp's resources in 2000 to build Bicentennial Nature Park in Augusta.

Bridge's list of civic contributions is long. He served on the Augusta School Board and City Council before serving as mayor 1997-98. His fun-loving side blended with his sense of duty while campaigning for office, when Bridge pedaled door-to-door to ask voters for support. His unconventional mode of transportation caught some voters off balance, but in an interview years later he said the two-wheel approach helped get him elected. "That was a good strategy," he said.

While he was mayor, Bridge led the city through one of its most trying times in decades. The ice storm of January 1998 wrecked much of the state's power transmission system, littered roads with felled trees and limbs and left tens of thousands of residents without electric service. Years later, Bridge recalled visiting people who had been forced from their homes and were taking up shelter in the Augusta Civic Center.

Professionally, Bridge was awarded the Maine Transportation Lifetime Achievement Award from Maine Better Transportation Association

TOP AND BOTTOM: BRIDGE FAMILY

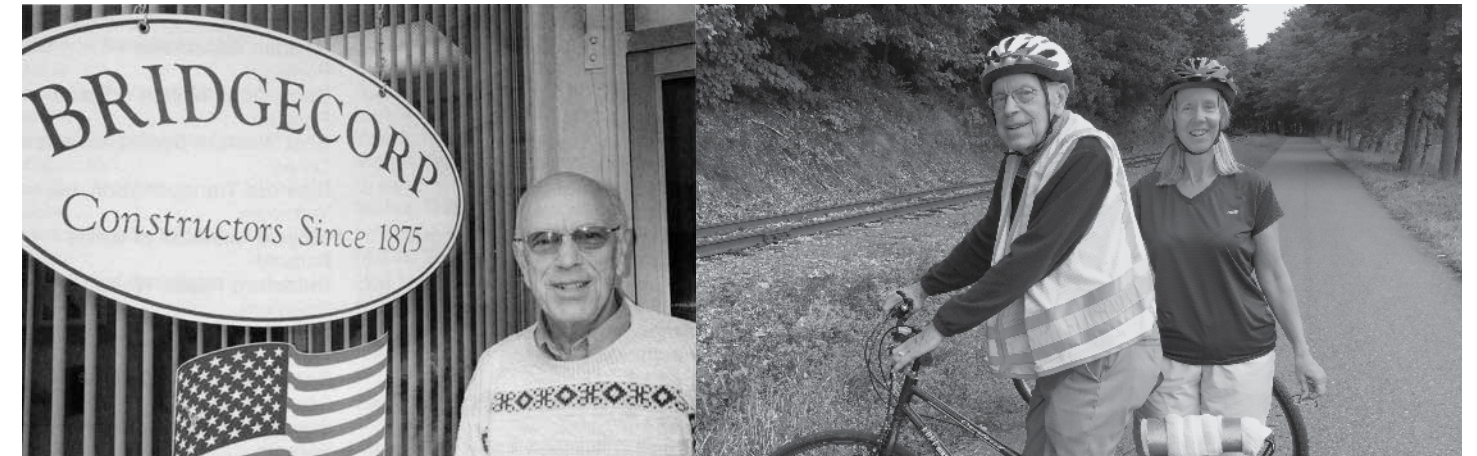
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Bridge, left, in front of Bridgecorp headquarters in 2003. With his daughter Allison Pedersen.

(MBTA) in 1997. Chester, his father, had been a charter member of the organization in the 1930s when it was called Maine Good Roads Association. The Francis Crowe engineering honor society inducted Bridge as a Distinguished Engineer in 2003.

Bridge once said that his civic and philanthropic commitments were "in the blood." The same might be said of his decades-long connection to the construction industry.

The road to the founding of the Bridge Construction business leads to Hazardville, a part of Enfield in northern Connecticut, where John's great-grandfather Amos Bridge began building roads in the last decade of the 1800s. His new business reflected the public's exasperation with slogging through muddy and rutted roads. It also foreshadowed the dawn of the automobile age as the demand for good roads increased.

By 1914, the company had branched out all through New England and grew rapidly during the 1920s. In the 1930s the Great Depression took its toll and the company was forced to go into government-appointed receivership. But the company persevered and repaid all its creditors in full, Bridge once recalled.

The company took on projects outside of its old base in Connecticut before transitioning to Augusta in the 1930s and continued to take work in New Hampshire and Vermont as well as Maine as America's dependence on automobiles and need for good highways grew.

During World War II the company refocused its attention from roads to military air bases, including facilities in Trenton, Houlton, Presque Isle and Caribou. After the war, the emphasis returned to roadways,

especially during the 1950s as the newly funded Interstate Highway System branched out across the country.

Born in 1932 in Springfield, Massachusetts, Bridge attended public schools in Connecticut before moving with his family to Maine when he was a teenager. In 1955, Bridge began his two years of service in the Army as a radioman. By the time he went to work for Bridge Construction after college, the company was well-established. Bridge worked in the field as a supervisor for the company in the 1960s.

Through the years, John Bridge worked himself up the ranks in the company, eventually becoming president and CEO. In his later years, Bridge devoted his time to civic and philanthropic activities and divided his time between Maine and Florida.

John Bridge credited Bridgecorp's success during its time as a family-run business before its sale in 2004 to its employees, praising their dedication, skill and professionalism.

"Yes, there is lots of luck involved with success in construction, whether it is weather or bidding. Taking the long view, I would say that the good and the bad balanced out, pretty much," Bridge said in a 2010 book *The Bridge Family in New England Road Construction: 1869-2009* by Rebecca S. Griffin. "The good news is that in the final years, the good luck outweighed the bad." ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Glenn Adams is a freelance writer based in Augusta. He is the former Maine State House correspondent for the Associated Press.

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R.W. Gillespie hires 5

RW. GILLESPIE & Associates has announced the addition of five to the firm's team.

Ben Rautenberg has joined as a staff construction technologist. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Lehigh University.

Serena Farrell has joined as marketing administrative coordinator. She holds a bachelor of arts in communications from the University of Southern Maine.

Mateus Medeiros has joined as a staff construction technologist. He has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the Federal University of Rio De Janeiro.

Mohamed Mohamud has joined as a staff construction technologist. He studies civil engineering at the University of Maine.

Ryan Daley has joined as a staff construction technologist. He studies civil and environmental engineering at the University of New Hampshire.

In the announcement, the firm said: "RWGA is excited for this season of growth. We are confident that the talent and skills of these individuals will further demonstrate our passion for developing sensible solutions with a goal of exceeding expectations."



Top row: Tony Stohlberg, Ryan Daley, Josh Fancy, Erik Wiberg. Middle row: Jean Graunke, Jim Benenate, Mo Mohamed, Serena Farrell, Sari Murray, Matt Grady, Ben Rautenberg, Serena Pape. Bottom Row: Jade Thibodeau, Mary Sanders, Melinda Derrow, Dan Burgess. Missing from Photo: Mateus Medeiros, Patrick Hattenback, Dan Loughlin, Marc Grenier.

R.W. Gillespie & Associates provides geotechnical engineering, construction materials testing and inspection services from offices in Biddeford, Maine; Newington, New Hampshire; and Mansfield, Massachusetts. ■

FMI: To learn more, visit www.rwgillespie.com.

Rand joins Sewall

KAY RAND has joined Sewall Infrastructure, an engineering, survey and natural resource consulting company, as an outside member of their board of directors.

Rand comes to Sewall after managing Angus King's successful campaign for the U.S. Senate in 2012 and later serving as Senator King's chief of staff in Washington, D.C. In 1993, Rand had managed Senator King's Maine gubernatorial campaign and served as policy director and then chief of staff until the end of his second term in January 2003.

Since then, Rand served as managing director of Government Solutions, the consulting arm of the law firm, Bernstein Shur.

Rand said: "Sewall and its new owners, Treadwell Franklin Infrastructure Capital, have formed a new company structure to address the real world issues of today and tomorrow: the effects of climate change and aging infrastructure on communities and businesses in our state and beyond."

"To assist the company's efforts in developing and sponsoring U.S. commercial infrastructure for the transportation, municipal, state,



Rand

university, and health care sectors, Sewall needs guidance from a known leader who deeply understands government and infrastructure," said Sewall President George Campbell.

Rand will work out of her home in Bar Harbor, Sewall headquarters in Old Town and the TFIC/Sewall office in Yarmouth. ■

FMI: To learn more, visit www.sewall.com.

BNN rising in the ranks

AN ANNUAL survey by the *Boston Business Journal* has ranked Baker Newman Noyes as the 31st largest accounting firm in Massachusetts, continuing the firm's rise among the ranks of the top 50 accounting and advisory firms in New England. Last year, the publication ranked BNN 36th-largest in Massachusetts.

Said Bob Croak, principal-in-charge of the firm's Boston office: "Our main goal is providing our clients with high-quality client service from a specialized and knowledgeable team. With this in mind, BNN is focused on continuing to attract and retain talented team members who fit our dynamic and entrepreneurial culture."

Headquartered in Portland, Maine, BNN expanded to Massachusetts in 2011 with the opening of its downtown Boston office. One of the nation's top 100 accounting and advisory firms, BNN is the fifth-largest regional accounting firm in New England by total revenue, according to *Accounting Today*. BNN also has offices in Manchester and Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The BNN Boston office specializes in assurance, tax and business advisory services for clients in the banking, health care, commercial, life sciences, and technology industries. ■

FMI: To learn more, visit www.bnnbpa.com.

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Six join Sebago



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Orr

SEBAGO TECHNICS, a Maine-based, employee-owned, engineering consulting firm, recently announced the hiring of six professionals.

Donna Larson joins as a community planner. Prior to joining Sebago Technics, she served as town planner in Freeport, town planner in Cumberland and executive director of the Cumberland Housing Authority. Larson has served as chair of the municipal oversight committee of the State Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, president of the Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association and chair of the executive committee of the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS). She has led the creation of municipal and residential energy conservation programs/projects, developed municipal zoning and development ordinances, reviewed hundreds of development projects, led

numerous community engagement processes, written grant applications, developed and implemented tax increment financing (TIF) districts, and worked with Portland Metro to bring bus service to Freeport. Larson holds a bachelor of science in soil science from the University of Maine and a master's degree in Public Policy and Planning from the University of Southern Maine.

Sophia Cooper will serve as a CAD technician. Cooper holds a degree in architecture and engineering from Southern Maine Community College. She is a former intern with Sebago Technics.

Cory Cormier joins as senior project engineer. Cormier earned his bachelor and master of science degrees in civil engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Previously, Cormier worked for consulting firms in Massachusetts on a variety of commercial, municipal, private and international projects.

Jodaliza Feliz joins as a civil engineer. Feliz

holds a degree in civil and environmental engineering from the University of Maine. While at UMaine she interned with the UMaine Facilities Management Department, volunteered with Volunteers of America and served as president of the UMaine chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers.

Alex Jakubowski joins as a survey technician. Jakubowski graduated from the University of Maine with a degree in surveying engineering technology and has worked for survey companies in Maine and Vermont.

Matthew Orr also joins as a civil engineer. Orr received a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and his master's in business administration from the University of Maine. Orr also earned an intern engineer certificate in New York and materials testing certifications in concrete and nuclear density. ■

FMI: To learn more, visit www.sebagotechnics.com.

Welzel Rotarian of the Year

THE BIDDEFORD-SACO Rotary Club honored Conrad Welzel as Rotarian of the Year at its meeting on June 19. Welzel was lauded by Rotary President Joseph Moreshead.

Moreshead praised Welzel for his service to the club and community, including his work as chair of the club's program committee over the past year. In that role, he had the daunting task of securing speakers for 40 Rotary meetings over the past year. Welzel's list of speakers was an impressive and varied one culled from his wide personal acquaintances, ranging from the governor, representatives from social service agencies and university presidents to authors and sports figures.

"Conrad is the consummate hardworking, can-do volunteer who makes our club what it is. Program Chair is probably one of the hardest jobs in the club," said Moreshead. "The interesting thing is that Conrad knew or had a relationship with most of the presenters," said Moreshead.

This isn't the first time Welzel's efforts have been recognized. Welzel, who is an MBTA board member and project manager for public works and transportation in the city of Portland, is a past recipient of the Rotary Volunteer of the Year Award and is well known for his selfless dedication to the club's community projects. He also was named a Rotary Paul Harris Fellow, an honor that goes



Conrad Welzel, left, receives award from Rotary President Joseph Moreshead.

to members who raise or contribute \$1,000 or more for the Rotary Foundation's scholarship program.

Moreshead noted that during the past year, Welzel was chair of the club's wine tasting event and volunteered "countless" hours on service projects from the Salvation Army Christmas Drive, shopping for kids, packaging food for local food banks, and working the front desk at meetings greeting members as they arrive. He participates in a number of other Rotary committees, as well. Welzel was named to the club's board of directors this year.

Said Moreshead: "Every president gets to select a member as Rotarian of the Year. Conrad was such an easy pick for me. He was my right hand. Rotary's motto is 'Service above self,' and Conrad lives that every day." ■

FMI: The Biddeford Saco Rotary Club is a community service organization founded in 1920. To learn more, go to www.biddeford-sacorotary.org.

Gower in top 1,200

THOMAS W. GOWER, III, senior vice president of wealth management at UBS's Bangor branch, has been named to this year's Barron's Top 1,200 Financial Advisors by state list. This is Gower's second year in a row on this list. This year marks Gower's 23rd year in the financial services industry. He credits his success to his outstanding investment team in Bangor and a sincere focus on putting clients first.



Gower

Gower earned his bachelor of science and master's of business administration from Babson College and then pursued a 13-year career in financial management and strategic planning with W.R. Grace & Co., Mobil Oil and British Petroleum. He joined UBS in 2002 as a financial advisor. He currently serves on the board and finance committees of the Bangor Symphony Orchestra and The Good Samaritan Agency. He lives in Hampden with his wife, Hope, and their three daughters. ■

FMI: To learn more, visit financialservicesinc.ubs.com/team/argosy.



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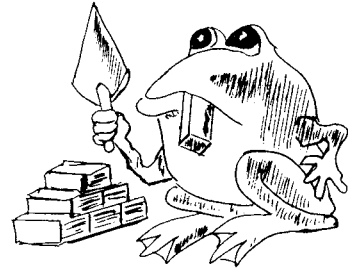
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Remembering Robert P. BaRoss, 1928-2019

ROBERT P. BaRoss of Cape Elizabeth and one of the founders of heavy equipment dealership Chadwick-BaRoss, passed away peacefully in April surrounded by his family. He was 90.

Born in 1928 in Greenlawn, New York, BaRoss was one of three sons of Lucille and Louis BaRoss. He attended Purdue University and trained with the ROTC. He graduated in 1949 with a degree in forestry. At Purdue, Bob met Beverly Doering, who became his wife. They were married for more than 69 years.

After college, BaRoss chose a career with Caterpillar Tractor. Soon after, he was called and served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War where he was assigned to the *USS Bellatrix*. During his service, he trained sailors to run the landing crafts. Later he transferred to the construction battalion division (the CB's).



many things for other people. I can't say enough about him."

"He was always there to help and would give quiet advice," said Corey. "If you asked his opinion, he would make a few comments that you really paid attention to."

When Corey joined Chadwick-BaRoss in 1998 as the company's CEO, Corey said, "Bob had already retired at that point and Dieter Strobl was the majority shareholder, but Bob was one of the first people to visit me and introduce me to the business. And he was there, behind the scenes and ready to help."

The friendship grew, and when Corey went into semi-retirement, the two began a tradition of going out for oysters, frequently at Eventide and the Falmouth Sea Grill

MEMORIES OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE INN

BaRoss and his wife Beverly raised three children, Daniel (who passed away in 1993), Kathleen and Paul. Together with Beverly's brother, Donald, and Barbara Doering (also Purdue graduates) and their seven children, the adventurous foursome purchased the Christmas Tree Inn in Bridgton in 1968. The family celebrated birthdays and holidays there over the next 50 years. The inn remains a family gathering place to this day and is attended and managed by some 29 family members in four generations. At his memorial service, BaRoss's family reminisced about the many happy occasions the clan and their close friends had at the inn.

Under BaRoss and his partner Dick Chadwick, Chadwick-BaRoss took a leadership role in the transportation and construction industries and was a frequent sponsor of Maine Better Transportation Association and Maine AGC causes and events. BaRoss was a lifetime member of Ducks Unlimited and a very excellent duck hunter. He was a forester and outdoorsman and, although he loved boats, it was always an adventure if you went out on the water with him. In retirement Bob remained active, volunteering at the Greater Portland Visitors Center, serving as treasurer for the Maine Historical Society, docent for the Longfellow House, and working with the American Chestnut Society.

BaRoss is survived by his wife Beverly; daughter Kathleen and her husband Steve; son Paul; two granddaughters - Stephanie and Jennifer; and five great-grandchildren - Antonella, Lillian, Isabelle, Lee and Madeline.

Memorial contributions may be made to: Cape Elizabeth Land Trust, 330 Ocean House Road, Cape Elizabeth, Maine 04107; or Maine Historical Society, 489 Congress Street, Portland, Maine 04101. ■

CONSUMMATE ENTREPRENEUR

Bob BaRoss

After his service in the Navy, Bob and Beverly settled in Cape Elizabeth in 1956, and he picked up his career at Caterpillar, working as a district representative for the Canadian Maritimes. A few years later, BaRoss purchased the Portland Tractor Company with his business partner, Dick Chadwick. Under their leadership, Portland Tractor became Chadwick-BaRoss and grew to become one of the largest and most successful heavy equipment dealerships in the northeast. In the mid 1980s, BaRoss brought in Dieter Strobl, an Austrian equipment dealer as partner. Strobl's group eventually bought the balance of Chadwick-BaRoss.

BaRoss was the consummate entrepreneur and he partnered in several businesses and helped others get their starts. In 1987, following the death of long-time peer Lloyd Hawkensen, BaRoss arranged for and managed an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) to purchase Connecticut Valley Chipping Company (CVCC) from Lloyd's estate. CVCC was a major supplier of wood chips to the S.D. Warren mill in Westbrook. BaRoss also assisted several young entrepreneurs in developing their businesses including: Charlie Haywood at Yankee Industrial Truck, Art Hicks at C-B Kenworth, Peter Taylor at HMC Corporation and Steve Huss at Hawkensen Equipment Company and Batteries Plus Bulbs.

Even before founding the company that bore his name, BaRoss had earned a reputation in the community as a good and fair businessman who was generous with his time and advice for others in the business.

'YOU REALLY PAID ATTENTION'

"Bob and I had a long history," said George Corey, whose friendship began when Corey was working for a competing equipment seller. "He had a wonderful reputation, and I had great respect for him. He did so

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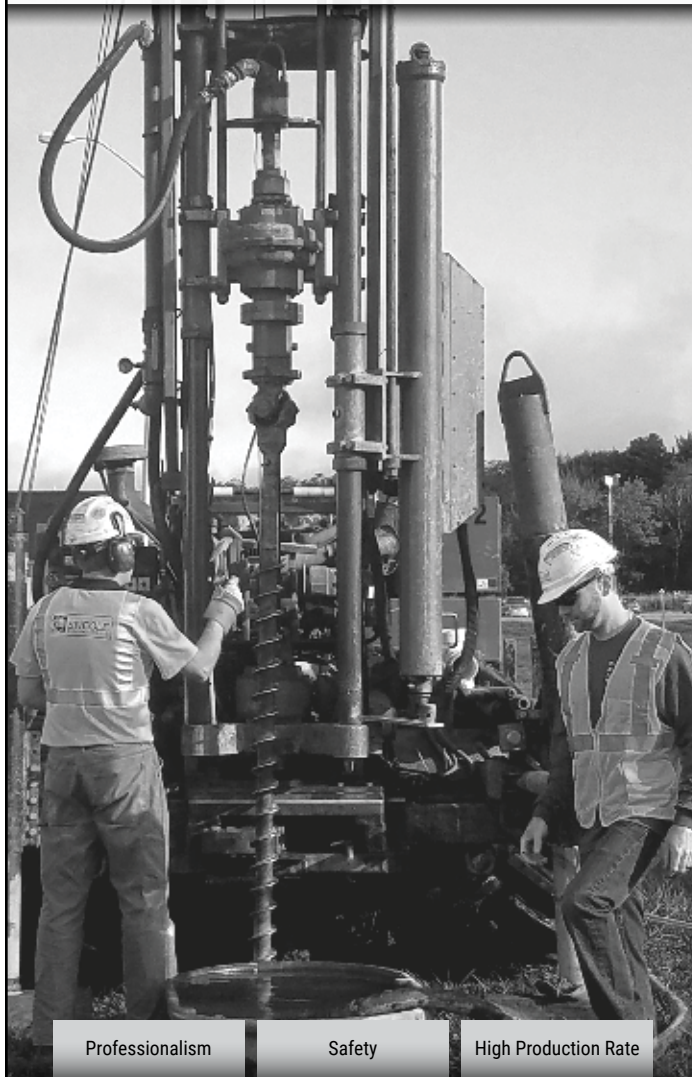
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John Paradis 1950-2019

'When John laughed, you had to laugh, too'

JOHN HAROLD Paradis, who had a big heart and a big laugh, died of a heart attack on May 19 at his home. He was 68 years old.

Paradis was born in Farmington, Maine, on December 3, 1950 to Joseph, Sr. (Joe) and Eleanor (Ellie) Paradis, and graduated from Mount Blue High School in 1969. He landed a job with White Brothers Construction in Westbrook during the mid-1970s and worked there through the mid-1990s, and it was there that he discovered he had a passion for heavy equipment.

"When John laughed, you had to laugh, too," said Mike Sullivan, general manager at Nortrax in Westbrook where Paradis worked for two decades. "He was such a big personality and people just loved talking to the guy. He'd do impersonations and tell stories about growing up in Farmington. He was quite a hell-raiser when he was a kid."

When Sullivan first met Paradis, they were working for competing heavy equipment dealers. He praised Paradis' natural ability as a salesman and said that he "lived and breathed heavy duty construction machinery." Sullivan said that Paradis enjoyed meeting people and his down-home upbringing really came out when he would meet with customers and learn about their businesses and their families.

Sullivan said that Paradis was all about "getting the next deal," but there was a lot more to him than that.

"Customers liked John because it didn't feel like they were dealing with a salesman, they were talking to a friend," said Sullivan, who credited Paradis' deep roots in Maine.

"John grew up in 1960s down-home Maine, and even though he dressed better, that was who he was," said Sullivan. He said that Paradis had the unique ability to fit in wherever he went.

"He could talk to a small business owner on a job site or a CEO in a three-piece suit," said Sullivan. "He had the ability to strike up a conversation and be relatable with anyone."

Paradis' interests were wide and he had



John Paradis, top, at the 2018 MBTA Infrastructure Golf Classic. Paradis, bottom, with Travis Mills. Paradis helped secure support for Mills' foundation among the construction and transportation industries, including his employer Nortrax.

a great zest for life. He enjoyed golfing at Toddy Brook Golf Club, motorcycling, fly fishing and reading. He was a proud member of the Masons (Acacia Lodge) in Durham and a longtime member of the Maine Better Transportation Association, as well as other industry groups. At MBTA, he served on the Membership Committee, as well as the Golf Planning Committee.

Paradis also had a big heart. He urged the company to put its influence to good work, and was instrumental in founding the annual Nortrax Golf, Grub & Gravel Golf Tournament that for the past 10 years has raised funds for various charities. Paradis also urged Nortrax to throw its weight and heavy equipment behind the Travis Mills Foundation retreat at the site of the old Elizabeth Arden estate in Rome, Maine.

Sullivan described how Paradis passed by the work site one day and got out of the car

to see if he could maybe sell or rent a piece of equipment or two. He met retired U.S. Staff Sergeant Travis Mills and heard his incredible story. Paradis came back to the Nortrax office and said to Sullivan, "Mike, we've gotta help this guy."

As with so much of what Paradis undertook, the effort grew from Nortrax's donation of equipment to something much larger. Paradis introduced Mills to customers and friends who, in turn introduced Mills to more people in the construction community, many of whom stepped up to volunteer labor, equipment and money to the project. In recent years, Nortrax also has donated proceeds from the Golf, Grub & Gravel Tournament to the Travis Mills Foundation, and last year's tournament raised \$55,000 for the foundation.

Paradis was just gearing up for this year's tournament – the 11th – before he died. The tournament had been rechristened as the Nortrax Golf Tournament & Live Auction, and a date and location had been set (August 16 at Toddy Brook Golf Course in Yarmouth). The goal for the tournament, according to Sullivan, is to beat last year's contributions. After Paradis' death, Nortrax announced in May that the tournament will be

dedicated to Paradis' memory. Sullivan said that friends and family will see a familiar face at the helm of the event: John's wife Kathy has taken on the role of organizing the tournament.

"We are so lucky to have Kathy stepping in for John," said Sullivan, who added that it means a lot to have the Paradis family continue to support the event and see it as such a big part of his legacy.

Paradis is survived by wife Kathy (Taber) Paradis, sisters Lynne Pieren and her husband, Danny, of Phillips, Maine; Dottie Paradis of Discovery Bay, California; Beth Collins of Cincinnati, Ohio; Elane Cremo and her wife, Tami Wilborn, of Reno, Nevada; Ellen Paradis of Raymond, Maine and brother Joe Paradis and his wife, Beth, of Industry, Maine, as well as several nieces, nephews and great nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his parents.

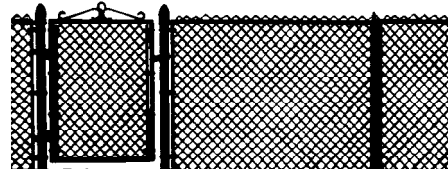
The family requests donations to The Travis Mills Foundation at travismillsfoundation.org.

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Still time to sign up for Nortrax Golf Tournament

NORTRAX IS HOLDING ITS ANNUAL and newly named Nortrax Golf Tournament & Live Auction event Friday, August 16 to benefit the Travis Mills Foundation. One hundred percent of the profits from the event go to the Travis Mills Foundation. This year's tournament is being dedicated in honor of John Paradis, who died unexpectedly in May and had been instrumental in organizing the fundraiser, as well as Nortrax's support for the Travis Mills Foundation.

The auction will feature many items including: a chainsaw carved bald eagle approximately four feet high, carved at the Nortrax booth at the NE Loggers' show in Bangor in May; four tickets to the Red Sox vs. Yankees game on Friday, September 6th at Fenway Park; a Rick Porcello (Red Sox #22 pitcher) autographed baseball; a hand-made electric guitar; two hand-made Adirondack chairs; a 30-year-old

**The tournament
will honor the
late John
Paradis, and
proceeds will go
to the Travis
Mills Foundation**

Red, White & Blue bottle of Wollersheim Distillery Whiskey; and a hand-made wooden canoe.

Nortrax has announced that a private donor has pledged to match funds up to

\$55,000 raised at the golf tournament and auction. The funds raised will be used to build a multi-purpose center and a fitness center. Also new for this year's tournament, the event organizers are inviting non-golfers to attend the luncheon (\$50 to attend the lunch and auction). For golfers, the \$100 registration includes 18 holes of golf with cart, continental breakfast and a buffet lunch. There will be casino holes, mulligans and a hole-in-one prize.

Golfers and others interested in the event should contact kelly.labbe@nortrax.com for information. RSVPs are due by August 1. ■

FMI: To download tournament registration and sponsorship forms, go to bit.ly/NortraxGolfTournament.



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THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Good start, more needed, opportunity knocks

THE FIRST regular session of the 129th Maine Legislature adjourned on June 20. For transportation in Maine, it was a good session – as far as it went – and even our setbacks may create an opportunity to do more.

The Highway Budget (L.D. 1002) was passed unanimously by both the House and Senate. Not a single member voted against the budget – a two-year spending plan with a bottom line of \$688 million. This budget includes \$43 million for the Local Road Assistance Program (LRAP) to help municipalities pay their local capital highway needs. Our spending plan also allocates funding for approximately 600 miles of light capital paving (LCP) – a low-cost treatment applied on a seven-year cycle to keep some of the state's lower-priority roadways in serviceable condition.

Lawmakers approved the Highway Fund budget unanimously, but there is also bipartisan agreement about something else: this money is not enough.

The unmet need for the state highway and bridge system alone equals at least \$108 million annually, and that figure doesn't account for the higher-than-expected construction prices that prompted us to cut \$60 million in projects out of our capital improvement plan. A more realistic shortfall figure is likely in the \$130-\$140 million range. These figures are based upon the assumption that state bonding, in the amount of \$100 million per year, will continue. Is this a good assumption?

The Maine Legislature adjourned without authorizing any bonds.

“Everything is up for discussion regarding ways to try to increase what we can spend on infrastructure: increasing Maine’s gas tax (which has remained frozen for eight years); adding tolling on certain roads that will capture more out-of-state dollars; and instituting mileage-based user fees to account for increases in fuel efficiency and the popularity of electric vehicles as we shift toward a lower carbon future.”

Authorizing bonds for voter approval requires support from two-thirds of legislators, not just a majority like most things. Although support for the \$100-million transportation bond appeared to be universal, disagreements regarding other bond requests, coupled with fatigue and lack of time, led to a failure to vote out any bonds. We expect that to be remedied in the coming weeks, when less weary minds will come together. If it doesn't, we will need to dramatically cut our already too small capital program.

Maine can't keep operating this way.

Members of the *Maine Sunday Telegram* editorial board wrote: “Imagine if the voters were asked to approve borrowing to pay the salaries of teachers or game wardens – not once, after a catastrophic event, but every two years.”

The *Bangor Daily News* editorial board went further: “Using bond money to pay for repairs and maintenance is not sustainable. Lawmakers must get serious about raising the state's gas tax and considering other fees to raise revenue for needed transportation work.”

Whatever solutions we find to MaineDOT's chronic underfunding problem need to be fair and sustainable; they also need to have bipartisan support.

So how do we get there? Representative Tom Martin – a Republican member of the legislature's Transportation Committee – sponsored a bill: L.D. 945: *An Act to Establish a Blue Ribbon Commission To Study and Recommend Funding Solutions for the State's*



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Transportation Systems. It passed unanimously in both the Maine Senate and House of Representatives, and Governor Mills has signed it into law. Maine cannot afford to have this commission merely create a report that sits on a shelf; our needs are too urgent. MaineDOT is ready to work with the commission and hit the ground running as soon as possible.

Everything is up for discussion regarding ways to try to increase what we can spend on infrastructure: increasing Maine's gas tax (which has remained frozen for eight years); adding tolling on certain roads that will capture more out-of-state dollars; and instituting mileage-based user fees to account for increases in fuel efficiency and the popularity of electric vehicles as we shift toward a lower carbon future. Many of these ideas are not popular, but it is the job of the commission to weigh the pros and cons of all possible solutions against the problem of our

unmet need which is especially acute here in Maine.

Maine has a population that's roughly equal to that of New Hampshire, yet we have about three-and-a-half times more land area, double the state road miles, and about 40 percent more bridges than our neighbors to the west. MaineDOT manages about 36 feet of two-lane highway for every citizen in our state. We have a big job to do, and we need the resources to do this work and support the safety, economic opportunity, and quality of life of all Maine people.

We are in hopes that the first meeting of the Blue Ribbon Commission can be scheduled this summer in conjunction with the legislature returning to address bonding. One of the lessons I have learned over the years is "never let a crisis go to waste." Applying this lesson, we can use this bonding setback to highlight the need for sustainable funding and move forward to a better place. ■



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The “sizeable project” was awarded by the State Highway Commission to Sargent, Inc., the lowest of five bids at \$1,196,848. Superintendent for the contractor was Ralph Dutton. The resident engineer for the Highway Commission was John Richardson.

The magazine described the project as having the latest design features that would contribute to the safety and convenience of the motorist – controlled access, traffic islands to guide and control turning movements

at intersecting roads, an additional traffic lane for slow-moving vehicles on a steep grade midway on the project, flared approaches of side roads, wide grassed slopes and rounded ditches.

More than 2,000 feet of channelization at the beginning of the project was added to control traffic movements between former U.S. Route 1, the existing highway, and the section of new U.S. 1 to be constructed. Short spurs linked the new road with the bypassed loop of old highway.

The new stretch of highway included a 24-foot-wide heavy-duty bituminous concrete pavement flanked by 10-foot shoulders. The shoulders were paved to protect them from erosion and also to help protect crumbling of the edges of the travel lanes caused by the “pounding of heavy traffic.” ■



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