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Economics 101. There’s a lot to worry about in the new MaineDOT work plan.
By Rodney Lane

Upcoming MBTA events.

A digest of recent transportation news.

Building for the future. UMaine’s College of Engineering plans expansion.
By Clinton Colmenares

Legislative update. Electric vehicle fees, a bond and funding bill. By Rick McCarthy

Maine’s Volkswagen settlement. Maine to receive $21 million for air pollution mitigation.

ARTBA ranks Maine’s bridges. State is 10th worst for high traffic, deficient bridges.

Appreciation: Remembering Gerard P. Conley. By Glenn Adams

Mixing it up. Auburn Concrete finds a ready-mix niche. By Kathryn Buxton

Lane promoted. Rodney Lane is Lane’s new Sr. VP-Plants and Paving.

Maximize your enterprise value. Advice for planning transition of ownership. By Peter Buzzini

The evolving role of roadside vegetation management in Maine. By Bob Moosmann

When and where Maine roads began. Early roads in Maine were really rivers.

On the cover: Cloke Plaza, named for longtime UMaine College of Engineering Dean Paul Cloke. UMaine photo
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Economics 101: Deficient funding = deficient infrastructure

There is no way around it, increased funding is the answer to fixing our crumbling infrastructure, investing in safety improvements, investing in alternative modes of transportation, and preparing for an ever-changing world where combustible engines will be replaced by electric motors.

Are we in trouble? We have not been able to address our most imminent funding needs through a very simple gas tax increase (26 other states have done it recently). Yeah, I think we are in for long-term trouble. Short term, no problem, most companies are optimistic about 2018. Long term, we need the basics to be able to adapt to changes . . . a PLAN!

MBTA is poised to offer options for a plan through the Fix It Now Maine! campaign and strategic planning updates. The question is this: Do we, as a state, have the courage to match a budget for our infrastructure to the vision for increased safety, the vision for economic opportunity, and the vision to unleash the potential of our great state?

The good news–bad news follows. Unfortunately, we are not even status quo. We are falling behind.

- Highway construction is disappearing.
  According to the MaineDOT work plan’s detailed bar charts outlining capital production, over the last five years (2013-2017), MaineDOT invested an average of $80 million per year to rehabilitate or reconstruct an average of 66 miles per year (out of 8,800 miles statewide). Focusing on thinner rehabilitation treatments with minimal earthwork over full depth reconstruction that gets to the root of the problem, the new work plan calls for spreading an average of only $62 million per year over an average of 62 miles per year. Even more concerning are the trends looking forward. After a forecast spike in 2019 for work already in the pipeline, MaineDOT is planning to invest only $23 million to improve 38 miles in 2020. And of those 38 miles, only one mile – 1 mile out of 8,800 miles statewide – is planned to be reconstructed. The rest is some form of rehabilitation. This essentially means that MaineDOT is being forced to abandon road construction. We should not be surprised. This is exactly what the MaineDOT has said it would have to do given funding levels in its 2016 Roads Report.

- We are seeing a shift to paving, with a continued reliance on light capital paving (skinny mix paving).
  In contrast, investment in paving – much of it light capital paving (LCP) will continue to remain the core of the program. Over the last five years, MaineDOT paved an average of 881 miles per year at an average annual cost of $111 million – with the lion’s share of the miles – about 600 per year – being LCP. For the next three years, MaineDOT forecasts that it will pave an average of 976 miles per year at an average annual cost of $119 million. Given inflation, this again represents taking the same dollars and spreading it thinner across the state. Again, given constrained resources, this is the responsible thing to do.

- Our bridge funding is insufficient.
  MaineDOT’s 2014 Keeping Our Bridges Safe report calls for a minimum of $140 million per year to keep from falling further behind on bridges. To actually do everything that should be done for bridges, this report called for more than $200 million per year. Over the last five years, capital bridge investments averaged about $103 million per year, and the new work plan calls for about $115 million per year over the next three years – a shortfall of about 18 percent from the minimum baseline MaineDOT said it needed. Again, the department is doing the best it can with what it has. But Maine is ranked ninth highest in the nation in terms of deficient bridges, so we need to give MaineDOT the resources to do more.

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our roads and bridges are falling into disrepair, they likely wouldn’t be able to explain it. Voters strongly support investment in our roads and bridges, and for the past two years, they even have voted overwhelmingly for $200 million in transportation bonds. A third $100 million transportation bond is likely to go to voters this fall. What voters don’t realize is this: those bonds have been like fingers in the dike. The bond funding largely makes up the state capital program, or state dollars going into capital improvement projects. It is plugging holes in a program that is underfunded and growing more so every day.

When you look at the whole picture, we are diverting funds from long-term capital investments in the system, such as replacing aging bridges and rebuilding a growing backlog of deficient rural roads, to rehab or paving work. In fact, we should be spending two or three times $100 million to keep our roads and bridges safe and efficient. And we should be realistic about funding it. We should be finding sustainable funding for Maine’s Highway Fund. Because the truth is we just can’t bond our way out of this, and the current funding scenario is hurting our rural state.

Underfunding will continue to be the problem as long as national and state lawmakers continue to put off new funding. The federal gas tax hasn’t been raised in over 20 years, and in Maine, we have not found a solution. There have been solutions brought to the table in recent years: raise the state gas tax, index the state gas tax, create fees for electric and hybrid vehicles, divert more money from the General Fund. Our own Transportation Committee in the legislature has discussed and submitted bills to increase funding. House Chairman Representative Andrew McLean has been a fierce champion and has introduced various bills; Minority lead Representative Wayne Parry has submitted several bills, as well. Still, none of these proposals has succeeded.

We have an important election coming up, and we should all be asking our candidates this, whether they are running for the state house or for the governor’s office: What are you going to do to reverse this trend? Do you have the courage to look into the future and make positive decisions about the infrastructure that holds our communities together? If we are serious about the state of our infrastructure, our economy and the overall safety of Mainers in every sense of the word, it’s that simple. And they should have an answer and be ready to walk the walk. But it is up to us to make sure they hear that message because if not, we are part of the problem.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cumberland County Meeting</th>
<th>Infrastructure Golf Tournament</th>
<th>Fall Golf Tournament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, March 29</td>
<td>Thursday, July 12</td>
<td>Saturday, September 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland Marriott, South Portland</td>
<td>Augusta Country Club, Manchester</td>
<td>Samoset Resort, Rockport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 p.m. Dinner Meeting</td>
<td>8 a.m. Registration</td>
<td>PDH Tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aroostook County Meeting</td>
<td>Friday, October 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thursday, August 2</td>
<td>Location TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northeastland Hotel, Presque Isle</td>
<td>Maine Transportation Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington County Meeting</td>
<td>5 p.m. Dinner Meeting</td>
<td>Thursday, December 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, June 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Augusta Civic Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastport Chowder House, Eastport</td>
<td></td>
<td>Holiday Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 p.m. Dinner Meeting</td>
<td>MBTA Convention</td>
<td>Thursday, December 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friday, September. 14</td>
<td>Black Bear Inn, Orono</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samoset Resort, Rockport</td>
<td>5 p.m. Dinner Meeting</td>
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Goodbye, love

The blue “I Love NY” road signs that dot New York’s highways will soon come down, New York transportation officials recently announced. The state will be removing the iconic, but controversial highway signs that have been at the center of a bitter, years-long feud between the federal government and the state over their safety and legality.

The announcement came a day after the Federal Highway Administration (FWHA) withheld $14 million in highway funds for installing the signs and ignoring various warnings to remove them. FWHA has given the state until September 30 to remove the signs. In a joint statement, acting New York State Department of Transportation Commissioner Paul Karas and Matthew Driscoll, acting executive director of the New York State Thruway Authority, said the signs will be removed and replaced well before the deadline.

The signs, part of a tourism advertising campaign included 514 signs across the state. The campaign was in homage of the original “I Love NY” campaign launched in 1977, complete with the iconic type and heart logo created by legendary graphic designer Milton Glaser and the I Love New York song which became the state song. The state has spent $8.1 million installing I Love NY signs throughout the state since 2014, despite a 2013 FHWA order prohibiting the signs.

Sixty-one years ago, the United States embarked on an ambitious project to build an interstate highway system. By September of this year, those ambitions – at least for the original network of highways outlined in the Federal-Aid Highway Act championed by President Dwight Eisenhower in the 1950s — will be realized, more or less, in full.

Originally planned to be completed in the 1980s, construction of the original stretch of interstate met opposition from residents near Princeton, New Jersey, who feared it would bring property values down. The project finally was doomed by the energy crisis of the late 1970s. A March 30, 1976 New York Times headline proclaimed that the two highways closing the gap “may go unfinished” – and they did, until eight years ago when Pennsylvania and New Jersey began this last push to complete the network.

The final stretch of road will be different than what was originally envisioned by Eisenhower-era engineers: it includes a new interchange near the Delaware River where I-95 crosses the Pennsylvania Turnpike and new signage in New Jersey redesignating a section of highway and redirecting traffic on the route. When it is complete, I-95 will stretch 1,925 miles from Florida to Maine. The highway crosses 15 states and serves an area inhabited by 37 percent of the United States population, according to the I-95 Corridor Coalition, a group that includes state and local transportation departments, transportation authorities, transit, rail and port authorities, public safety officials and others. This final phase of the network has cost $2 billion to complete, compared to an estimated $500 million originally estimated in the mid-1970s.
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Building for the future

Design underway for Engineering Education and Design Center that will move UMaine Engineering into modernity – and Maine into a new economy

By Clinton Colmenares

If you build it... well, you know the rest. Everyone knows the rest. An all-world team wants to play, but they need someone, anyone, to carve out a cornfield. But what if there aren’t enough people to build it, whatever it is – buildings, roads, bridges, airplanes, technology? How will they come? Or, rather, where will they go? In Maine, engineers – the people who design and oversee the building of nearly everything, whether it’s made of steel or silicon, are increasingly scarce, and the space to educate new engineers at UMaine is maxed out.

Dr. Dana Humphrey, dean of the College of Engineering at the University of Maine, rattles off engineering education and workforce statistics like some people report their favorite team’s batting averages or pitcher production.

• Half of Maine’s high school students who want to become engineers go out of state for college.
LOOKING DOWN THE ROAD

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• 27 percent of engineers in Maine are 55 and older. (When they retire, “that’s a quarter of the engineering workforce; poof, it’s gone!” he says.)

• Three of the college’s 11 programs are enrollment capped. (“There are more students than we have room for.”)

• Including the District of Columbia, Maine ranks 51st in per capita production of engineers with master’s degrees.

• If the youngest engineering education building in Orono were a person, it would be just three years away from getting its AARP membership card.

Humphrey has spent his entire career at UMaine. Like any great leader, he loves the team, he’s invested in its success, and he has a three-step plan to right the ship. The first step, addressing critical safety and maintenance issues, is complete. The last step is to overhaul the existing buildings that have been around for half a century or more.

The second step is the crown jewel: the Engineering Education and Design Center, an $80 million, 100,000 square-foot facility necessary to attract the builders and designers of the future—not only for the university, but also for the state of Maine.

UMaine President Susan J. Hunter says the construction of such a facility is essential to the university’s ability to fulfill its mission. University of Maine System Chancellor James Page shares that sentiment. In a January 12 meeting with the UMaine Alumni Association Board of Directors, Page said the Engineering Education and Design Center is the System’s number one capital construction priority.

To understand the need and the benefits of the project, one needs to understand engineering education in a 21st century context.

ENGINEERING A NEW LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The days of sitting in class, listening to lectures, and doing homework alone late at night in a library carrel have gone the way of blackboards and spiral notebooks. Education, from K-12 through doctoral levels, now often takes place in a “flipped-classroom” environment: students “pre-learn” course material on their own time. When they come to class, they plug in and work together on projects in small groups under the watchful eye of the professor.

Engineering schools at other universities tout their “integrative” and “experiential” learning environments on their websites. Students gather in spaces that look more like engineering workshops than bland study halls. They certainly look different from UMaine’s Crosby Lab (circa 1928) and the Machine Tool Lab (circa 1936), and even the “modern” Jenness Hall (circa 1971).

The Engineering Education and Design Center will meet the demands of modern learning, Humphrey says, with cutting-edge teaching labs, collaborative classrooms, and inviting spaces where student teams can brainstorm the next great idea.

Electrical engineering students will be able to work hand-in-hand with chemical, mechanical, and construction engineers, “like they do in the real world,” Humphrey says. “Right now, students do this in cubby holes squirreled away in various buildings,” like students have been doing for generations.

Humphrey, who expertly balances the practicality of an engineer and the vision of a dean, remembers his first office as a new faculty member at UMaine
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in 1986. It was in Boardman Hall (circa 1955). His office, along with another faculty office and a classroom for 48 students, ran on one 20-amp circuit. “We were able to squeeze in two more circuits to serve the third floor,” he says, but construction experts have told him that they could do no more; rewiring the 62-year-old structure—running electrical conduit through its walls and floors, like inserting a new nervous system in a Baby Boomer—would not be practical or cost effective.

Today, “plug-in” is part of the American, if not global, lexicon, and devices that need to be electrically charged by plugging in are ubiquitous. The Engineering Education and Design Center, Humphrey says, will be a place the students want to go, where they can plug in, get a snack, and work together. “This is going to be their space. When we give tours to prospective students, this will be our centerpiece.”

Maeve Carlson, a sophomore civil engineering major from Wiscasset, is one of the students who has to find a place in the library or in a dorm’s common area for her and her friends to study. Having a facility like the Engineering Education and Design Center would be “an amazing environment.” It would also be a point of pride.

“This investment will only strengthen the strong reputation of UMaine’s dedication to its students,” she says. “This makes graduates look good, too, because we [attended] a school known for investing in their strong engineering program!”

After the Engineering Education and Design Center is complete, the university will undertake the third step in Humphrey’s three-step plan: the five existing buildings will be rehabilitated, making them more energy efficient, replacing mechanical systems, and modernizing classrooms and labs. The design center will be used as flex space while the other buildings are renovated.

Humphrey’s vision for the new building is a versatile facility, one with open spaces that let students work together on capstone projects and laboratories that can accommodate different disciplines depending on demand, from mechanical to biomedical to electrical. And, the building will be “durable.” “If you come back to UMaine in 100 years, the Engineering Education and Design Center will still be a critical facility,” Humphrey says.

**ECONOMIC IMPACT**

More importantly, the new facility will pay for itself through the taxes paid by engineers attracted to UMaine and who stay and help Maine companies grow, Humphrey says.

The long-term payoff of a new engineering facility “is that we create more high-paying jobs in Maine,” Humphrey says. “If we count additional jobs that will be created by the work of engineers, the payback on the new facility will be even greater.”

His last point underlines the return on a statewide investment: It’s not just for engineers, but also for people whose jobs rely on the skills engineers bring to the table. Engineering has a direct economic impact on Maine’s GDP of $2.2 billion, a number that grows to $3.7 billion when indirect impact is factored in.

From Pratt and Whitney in North Berwick to Proctor and Gamble in Auburn to Old Town Canoe in Old Town, companies that produce products need engineers. “If we're going to have companies like that in Maine, we have to have engineers,” Humphrey says.

Despite a 74 percent growth in undergraduate engineering students from 2001 to 2015, the demand for engineers in the workforce far exceeds the number of engineers graduating in a given year.

Finding young engineers to fill open positions is “pretty challenging,”
says Jim Wilson ’92, a senior principal and senior project manager for Woodard and Curran, a company founded in Maine by UMaine alumni that is growing nationally.

The state of Maine’s sluggish investment in infrastructure has limited the need for engineers to work on the types of projects in Maine that Wilson works on, but, he says, there’s still a great need for engineers to work in Maine. Eighty percent of his workload is outside the state, “But the revenue is generated in Maine, and the tax base it supports is here.” Other Maine-based engineering firms have also expanded geographically.

Woodard and Curran relies on UMaine for engineering recruits, so it is critical the university maintains its competitive edge with top-notch, modern facilities.

“While on one hand we’ve focused on more opportunities for STEM education and intriguing kids to wanting to have STEM professions, right now the UMaine facilities haven’t delivered on that goal,” Wilson says.

Meanwhile, other New England states have invested nearly a half-billion dollars in new engineering space at their public universities, Humphrey says.

Falling behind educationally leads to falling behind economically. “To not allow (UMaine) to be competitive with other schools in our region affects the ability of the University to deliver on what the local economy needs to be successful,” Wilson says.

On the flip side, investing in a competitive engineering program “is one way to attract and keep young people who will make good wages and care about the environment,” Wilson says. And it will attract “the kinds of businesses we want to support for the demographic we want to keep.”

The Engineering Education and Design Center is the cornerstone of a new economy for the state, but unlike in Hollywood, making this dream come true requires more than movie magic. It will be the largest construction project ever undertaken at UMaine, but the cost, Humphrey says, is in the range of a new high school. The difference is impact: this UMaine building will serve the entire state, and, most importantly the companies and communities that rely on engineers.

DREAM TO REALITY

The Maine Legislature and Governor Paul LePage recognized the critical need for the Engineering Education and Design Center. In July 2017, they approved $50-million of debt service for the building. This will be used by the University of Maine System to issue a bond which will yield between $43 and $45 million. In addition, UMaine is putting $5 million of its own money into the project. Efforts are underway from multiple sources to raise the remaining funds needed for the building.

In the meantime, design of the Engineering Education and Design Center is underway. In December 2017 the team of WBRC Architect/Engineers, headquartered in Bangor, and Boston-based Ellenzweig was selected to design the building. There are five additional Maine-based firms that are part of the design team along with an international team of five specialty consultants. Schematic design is expected to be completed by August 2018 with final design and construction documents completed by late 2019. Plans are to break ground in spring 2020 with the building opening in 2022.

Humphrey says. “This dream is becoming a reality, and it will be a great benefit for the entire state of Maine.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Clinton Colmenares frequently writes about higher education.

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Maine universities launch ‘Engineering Pathways’

The University of Maine System will launch the Maine Engineering Pathways Program in the fall of 2018 to help more students prepare for a Maine-based career in engineering and to build workforce development capacity in response to a critical state shortage. The program is designed to prepare students to graduate in four years from an accredited engineering program ready to join the Maine workforce in a field with starting annual salaries in excess of $60,000.

Engineering employment has grown 25 percent over the last decade, and Maine firms annually seek to fill more than 1,400 engineering vacancies. These positions are critical to maintaining the safety of Maine's roads and bridges, sustaining the state's utility infrastructure and leading Maine's manufacturing sectors.

Maine's public universities are the state's only pathway to an engineering degree and are working to double engineering education capacity to help meet a statewide workforce need of more than 3,000 new engineers over the next decade. The projected workforce shortage is driven by growing industry demand and an anticipated wave of retirements among existing engineers.

“Demand for engineers at Pratt and Whitney will continue to be strong for the foreseeable future,” said Kevin McDonnell, director of engineering at Pratt and Whitney’s North Berwick Aero Systems. “We have our biggest backlog of new engine deliveries since World War II, and many new engine programs under development. Pratt and Whitney will continue to look to the Maine University System to provide us with the best and brightest engineers as we develop and build the next generation of gas turbine engines.”

The 1 + 3 Maine Engineering Pathways Program creates an opportunity for students to begin the first year of their engineering education at the Bangor and Augusta campuses of the University of Maine at Augusta, the University of Maine at Farmington, the University of Maine at Machias, or the University of Maine at Presque Isle and then complete their engineering degree at the University of Maine or the University of Southern Maine.

Students will also be able to access the program at University College locations in Bath/Brunswick, East Millinocket, Ellsworth, Houlton, Norway/South Paris, Rockland, Rumford, and Saco with a potential requirement for limited travel to a campus for lab work.

The program is intended to serve students who want to begin their academic careers at an institution closer to home or may need access to extra preparation to be ready for the academic rigors of engineering education. It also provides students at participating institutions with a chance to explore engineering as a possible career.

Students entering the Maine Engineering Pathways Program will immediately begin their engineering education at participating institutions taking an introductory course to explore engineering as a career and foundational courses in mathematics and science. Following the successful completion of about 35 credits students will be able to transfer to either the University of Maine or the University of Southern Maine on track to earning a work-ready degree in engineering in just three additional years.

“There is great demand from industry for more engineers in Maine,” said Dean of the UMaine College of Engineering Dana Humphrey. “The Maine Engineering Pathways Program will help to address that need by providing a new way for Maine students to start their engineering studies.”

Planning for the Engineering Pathway program has been a collaborative effort between USM, UMaine and Maine businesses. It is a model for how campuses can work together and with the private sector to meaningfully address state workforce development needs.

FMI: To learn more, visit bit.ly/EngPathMaine.
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MBTA LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

Electric vehicles, a bond and a funding bill

By Rick McCarthy

The Second Regular Session of the 128th Legislature convened on January 3. It started fairly slowly with respect to transportation issues, but the pace has picked up in the past few weeks.

There have been several significant transportation bills which are in various stages of consideration by the Legislature. All relate, at least to some extent, to proper funding for transportation infrastructure. This review starts with bills that have already been addressed and moves to those that will be the subject of continued discussion between now and when the Legislature is scheduled to adjourn in mid-April. The most important issues for MBTA members will be the $100 million transportation bond (LD 1815) and the proposal by Representative Andrew McLean, the House Chair of Transportation (D-Gorham), to increase ongoing transportation funding (LD 1149).

LD 1754: Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation to Prioritize and Increase the Funding for Rural Roads, was sponsored by Senator Troy Jackson (D-Aroostook). This proposal would have directed MaineDOT to dedicate additional resources to rural roads, but did not provide an increase in overall MaineDOT funding. The Transportation Committee was sympathetic to the concerns raised by Senator Jackson, but unanimously opposed this change. The bill is now dead.

LD 1779: An Act to Increase Safety, Ensure Efficient Operation and Improve Traffic Flow on the Maine Turnpike by Requiring All-electronic Toll Collection at New and Reconstructed Toll Facilities, was sponsored by Representative Lydia Blum (D-York). This grew out of concerns about the impact of the planned new toll facility in York. It would have required the Turnpike to move to all electric tolling for any new or reconstructed toll facility. The Turnpike currently collects $15 million in cash tolls at York and explained its concerns about potential lost revenue. MBTA testified in opposition. On February 6, the Transportation Committee voted unanimously that the bill ought-not-to-pass. The bill is now dead.

LD 1765: An Act to Provide a Source of Revenue to Preserve the Integrity of Maine’s Transportation Infrastructure, is a Lepage administration proposal sponsored by Representative Wayne Parry (R-Arundel). It would annually transfer $30 million in transportation related sales tax proceeds to MaineDOT. MBTA provided testimony in support of the bill. It went before the Taxation Committee and received a mostly negative vote of 2 for and 11 against. Further votes will be taken in the House and Senate, but it is unlikely to succeed.

LD 1777: An Act to Make Allocations from Maine Turnpike Authority Funds for the Maine Turnpike Authority for the Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2019, was introduced by the Turnpike Authority and sponsored by Senator Ron Collins (R-York). This is the Turnpike Authority budget. It was approved unanimously by the Transportation Committee, has been enacted by the House and Senate, and went to Governor LePage’s desk on February 27.

LD 1806: An Act to Ensure Equity in the Funding of Maine’s Transportation Infrastructure by Imposing an Annual Fee on Hybrid and Electric Vehicles, is a LePage administration bill sponsored by Representative Parry (R-Arundel). This proposal increases the registration fee for hybrid and electric vehicles in order to offset the Highway Fund revenues lost by those vehicles paying less or no motor fuel excise tax. The fee would be $150 for a hybrid vehicle and $250 for an all-electric vehicle. It is similar to two proposals from last year. The administration suggested fees of $250/hybrid and $350/all-electric in LD 1226 and it was rejected. LD 1149, a carryover bill from Representative McLean, proposes several highway fund revenue increases, including a $200 registration surcharge for both hybrid
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Maine’s Volkswagen settlement

MaineDOT will distribute $21 million in settlement funds

As part of a 2016 federal court settlement with Volkswagen for cheating on diesel emissions tests, the automaker has agreed to pay $2.8 billion to states to be used to reduce diesel pollution. Maine’s share of that settlement is $21 million. In late January, the trust overseeing the funds issued a list of beneficiaries including all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico as beneficiaries. MaineDOT was approved as the beneficiary trustee for Maine’s share of the funds in March 2017.

The settlement is the result of admission by Volkswagen of installing defeat devices on its 2.0- and 3.0-liter diesel vehicles in the United States to misrepresent the fuel efficiency and environmental impact of its diesel vehicles. The devices switched off emission control equipment under normal driving conditions, and resulting nitrous oxide escaping into the air exceeded up to 40 times the established vehicle emission standards. Nitrous oxide adversely affects heart and lung health.

According to Stateline.org, the infusion of money comes as states struggle to meet air quality standards and believe they won’t be able to do it without widespread adoption of low- and no-emission vehicles like electric cars, propane-fueled city buses and electric freight locomotives in public and corporate fleets. The Volkswagen money – ranging from $8 million to $423 million per state, depending on the number of diesel VWs sold in each state – could jump-start a market for alternate-fuel and electric vehicles, clean energy experts and state officials say.

“The hidden value of the VW settlement is creating an interest and appetite (among) agencies that might not otherwise have been participating in clean-vehicle technologies,” said Dan Welch of the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, a nonprofit that advocates for clean energy.

Under the settlement, negotiated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California Air Resources Board, states can spend the VW money on grants to public agencies or private businesses. Each state has named a lead agency — whether environmental, energy or transportation — to oversee the projects, and 11 states (Arkansas, Connecticut, Colorado, Delaware, Nevada, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Vermont and Washington and Maine) have released draft plans outlining their proposed grants to replace engines that spew nitrogen oxide.

The Maine Department of Transportation’s draft plan calls for projects that will meet the following goals to achieve NOx reductions:

- Achieve significant and sustained cost-effective reductions in NOx emissions from vehicles, engines and equipment in terms of annual tons of reductions; and
- Expedite deployment of electric vehicle infrastructure to support adoption of zero emission and near-zero emission vehicles and engines.

Both public and private projects are eligible for the funds. Among eligible actions/projects are: Class 8 local freight trucks and port drayage trucks (Eligible Large Trucks); Class 4-7 local freight trucks (Medium Trucks); Class 4-8 school bus, shuttle bus or transit bus (Eligible Buses); freight switchers; ferries and tugs; shorepower for oceangoing vessels; airport ground support equipment; forklifts and port cargo handling equipment; and light duty zero-emission vehicle supply equipment. Beneficiaries also may apply for projects to meet Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) requirements. Eligible projects include: verified exhaust control technologies; verified engine upgrades and certified remanufacture systems; verified/certified cleaner fuel use; verified idle reduction technologies; certified engine repower; and certified vehicle/equipment replacement.

According to MaineDOT’s draft plan, the agency will begin soliciting eligible projects by June 2018.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Rick McCarthy is the managing director of the Eaton Peabody Consulting Group. He provides government relations and association management services to a variety of clients, including MBTA.

FMI: Maine’s draft plan may be found at bit.ly/Maine-VW.
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A new report from the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) finds there are about 185 million daily vehicle crossings on 55,710 structurally deficient U.S. roadway bridges. About 1,900 are on the interstate highway system.

Bridges that are rated as structurally deficient are open to traffic if authorities consider them safe for travel, but need repair or replacement of at least some component such as the bridge deck surface. ARTBA’s report also noted that state DOTs have identified 13,000 interstate bridges that need replacement, widening or major reconstruction.

“America’s highway network is woefully underperforming,” said the association’s chief economist, Alison Premo Black, who conducted the analysis. “It is outdated, overused, underfunded and in desperate need of modernization. State and local transportation departments haven’t been provided the resources to keep pace with the nation’s bridge needs.”

ARTBA said the average age of a structurally deficient bridge is 67 years old, compared with 39 years for non-deficient bridges. But the data indicated the list of deficient structures could soon lengthen, as ARTBA also said 41 percent of all U.S. bridges are over 40 years old “and have not had major reconstruction work.” The ARTBA study breaks the information down into lists of the “top 250” deficient bridges in terms of daily traffic volume, the top 10 by state and state-by-state rankings. It also provided interactive maps through which viewers can download bridge reports for specific states or for individual congressional districts.

ARTBA ranked Maine 10th worst based on percentage of structurally deficient bridge and 37th based on the number of structurally deficient bridges. According to the report’s national bridge inventory, of the 2,458 bridges in the state, 326, or 13.2 percent, are classified as structurally deficient. This means one of the key elements is in poor or worse condition.

The report also notes that 10 structurally deficient bridges in the state are on the interstate, and 127 bridges are posted for load, which may restrict the size and weight of vehicles crossing the structure.

Over the last five years, bridge investment has accounted for 30.6 percent of highway and bridge contract awards in Maine compared to an average of 28.9 percent nationwide. Over the last 10 years, 215 new bridges have been constructed in the state; 94 have undergone major reconstruction. The state has identified needed repairs on 19 bridges, estimated to cost $372.4 million.

FMI: To download the report, visit bit.ly/ARTBA-Bridge-18.

Ferry contract goes to local shipbuilder

Washburn & Doughty, a shipyard in East Boothbay, was selected by Maine DOT to build a 250-passenger ship for the Maine State Ferry Service. The contract is worth $8.8 million. The company was one of five bidders – and the only Maine shipbuilder - who submitted a proposal.

“We are thrilled to have a Maine shipyard with an impeccable history of quality as the successful bidder for the new ferry boat,” said David Bernhardt, MaineDOT commissioner.

The new 154-foot vehicular and passenger ferry was designed by Gilbert Associates, Inc., a naval architecture and marine engineering firm in Braintree, Massachusetts. Designed to be able to serve any of the MSFS island communities other than Matinicus, it will have three main deck lanes, for a capacity of 23 cars or a mix of cars and trucks, as well as 250 passengers.

“We are thrilled to have a Maine boatyard with an impeccable history of quality as the successful bidder for the new ferry boat,” said David Bernhardt, MaineDOT commissioner.

Washburn & Doughty Associates, Inc., was founded in East Boothbay in 1977 and specializes in the construction of steel and aluminum commercial vessels, including tugboats, commercial passenger vessels, fishing boats, barges, ferries and research vessels.

In 1992-1993, Washburn & Doughty built three vessels – known as the “sister ships” – that are still in service for the Maine State Ferry Service today.

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NNEPRA board moves ahead on 3-weekend Rockland pilot

The Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) board has approved a pilot program that would extend Amtrak rail service to stops in Bath, Wiscasset, Newcastle and Rockland for three weekends this summer.

The pilot had originally been scheduled to run for 10 weeks, however, the NNEPRA board voted to scale it back due to funding challenges. MaineDOT Commissioner David Bernhardt had sent the authority a letter saying the department would not approve the use of additional state or federal funds for NNEPRA to extend its rail service in the 2019 fiscal year.

NNEPRA Executive Director Patricia Quinn has said she believes ridership fees can sufficiently fund the upcoming pilot program. The pilot would run during the weekends of the Maine Lobster Festival and the Maine Home, Boats and Harbor Show – both held in Rockland.

The approval will have to come from the MaineDOT. The agency oversees NNEPRA’s budget and owns the rail line between Brunswick and Rockland. Quinn did not know exactly when the plan will go before MaineDOT for consideration.

NNEPRA has billed the pilot program as a way for the authority to build on existing infrastructure and bring tourists from Boston north to midcoast Maine during the summer. The extension would use existing rail infrastructure that used to host passenger rail service and now primarily caters to freight trains. State transportation officials are evaluating the condition of rail bridges across the state, and an evaluation of the bridges on the Rockland branch has not yet been completed, according to the letter from Bernhardt. MaineDOT expects evaluation of the Rockland branch will be completed this spring. The tentative schedule for the pilot program begins on Fridays, with a train departing Boston at 5 p.m., arriving in Rockland at 10:10 p.m., before departing Rockland at 10:20 p.m., and arriving back in Boston at 12:15 a.m.

On Saturdays and Sundays, two trains would make the trip to Rockland, with the first leaving Brunswick at 7:50 a.m. arriving in Rockland at 9:45 a.m., before departing for Boston with a 3:30 p.m. arrival time. The second train would leave Boston at 9:45 a.m., arriving in Rockland at 3:10 p.m., then departing for Boston with a 9:30 p.m. arrival. •
Getting to know you

10 Maine gubernatorial candidates debate about transportation funding, workforce development and other issues at January AGC forum in Portland

The big news in Maine's crowded race for governor is not who is running, but who's not. Still, businesses got a first look at 10 of nearly two dozen candidates at an AGC Maine forum held January 31 in Portland. Four Republicans, four Democrats and two independents participated in the forum, which the Bangor Daily News called an "infrastructure-heavy event," focused primarily on transportation, business and workforce development.

Republican candidates included: former Maine Health and Human Services Commissioner Mary Mayhew; businessman Shawn Moody; House Minority Leader Ken Fredette; and Senate President Mike Thibodeau. Democratic candidates included: Maine Attorney General Janet Mills; Former House Speaker Mark Eves; State Senator Mark Dion; and lawyer Adam Cote. State Treasurer Terry Hayes and consultant Alan Caron were the independent candidates participating.

Candidates spoke about the need to modernize Maine's funding of its highways and bridges. In comments provided to News Center Maine before the event, nine of the candidates proposed differing approaches. In alphabetical order, their comments are listed below:

Alan Caron: He urged the state to “think differently . . . Simply raising the gas tax is not the answer. We must develop a new mix of funding sources. I am open to a range of options that could be part of a package.”

Adam Cote: He noted that “bad roads and bridges cost every Mainer about $460 per year in car repair,” and the state needs “new leadership in Augusta that understands infrastructure today means more than roads and bridges like it did 20-30 years ago.”

Mark Dion: He said that bonding “is not an adequate funding source to address the scope of construction and maintenance needs” and urged that Maine “transition to a mileage tax that ties use to actual impact on the infrastructure.”

Mark Eves: He said, “Investing in infrastructure and training our workers are vital steps for growing our economy and building a better Maine” and he proposed a “regional jobs plan” that would “make growing our economy and creating more opportunities for Maine families.”

Ken Fredette: Ken Fredette said, “Transportation is a key component in building out economic activity to rural Maine.”

Terry Hayes: She said, “MaineDOT needs $160 million more each year just to keep up with basic maintenance” and that Maine is “spending just half of what is necessary to maintain the safety and integrity of state bridges.”

Mary Mayhew: She said she would “make sure that our infrastructure is a spending priority, not something we do with the leftovers after the welfare and special interests spend it all.”

Shawn Moody: He proposed merging MaineDOT and the Maine Turnpike Authority as a means for “reducing duplicate efforts and putting facilities back into the tax base for local communities.”

Mike Thibodeau: He said, “Maine has made important progress in recent years through a series of annual, $100 million-dollar transportation bonds. However, the studies show that Maine needs to spend an additional $60 million per year on transportation to keep up with the need.”

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The University of Maine Career Center, the College of Engineering and School of Engineering Technology are inviting companies to attend a Construction Summer Job Fair on Wednesday, April 3 from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the Memorial Union.

This event is part of a larger Construction Industry Day, including student presentations for two divisions of a multi-week construction management competition, sponsored by Cianbro and PC Construction. More than 90 Construction Engineering Technology (CET) students from the second and third year classes are participating. While on campus you are welcome to attend the presentations and awards, as well.

The primary goal of the Construction Industry Day is to foster and facilitate interactions between the construction industry and students. This event also provides an important opportunity for students and employers to meet face-to-face and informally interview for summer jobs and internships, as well as eventual full-time employment.

Industry representatives will be provided with a table to display any equipment or software demonstrations, that illustrate some aspect of what they do. Interviews may take place at this event, or interview rooms may be scheduled for a later date, as convenient for your representatives.

The event is free.

Please register your organization by e-mailing kate.axelsenfoster@maine.edu by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, March 20. Please include the names and emails of those attending, if possible.

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4:30 P.M.
Competition debriefings and awards
Arthur St. John Hill Auditorium, Room 165, Bennett Hall
Gerard P. Conley, 1930-2018

By Glenn Adams

Stopping at a toll booth while riding along the Maine Turnpike, Jerry Conley would sometimes stick his arm out the window and shake hands with the toll collector. Conley was a natural politician, but he wasn’t looking for votes on these stops. By this time, Conley was chairman of the Maine Turnpike Authority, and his handshakes were his way of saying “Good job!”

Conley’s turnpike greetings help to paint a picture of the kind of man Conley was: affable, good-natured and on-the-go. A consummate Irish American. No wonder the former railroad clerk who rose to the state’s second-highest elective office left such a big mark on Maine’s transportation scene.

“I can’t remember anyone on the board taking that much interest in (turnpike employees) at the level Jerry did,” said Conrad Welzel, former government relations manager for the MTA, recalling Conley’s toll-house handshakes. “Jerry was a person of the people.”

Anyone who has driven on the widened southern leg of the turnpike or used the highway’s E-Z Pass system has been touched by work of the former MTA chairman. A fitting memorial was the naming of the Maine Turnpike Authority headquarters after Gerard P. Conley Sr., who died on January 4, 2018, one day after his 88th birthday. Conley’s wife, Ann Duff Conley, died in 1992. He was also predeceased by a son and daughter.

Conley was born in the same Portland hospital where 12 of his 13 children were born, says the obituary penned by his son, Jerry Jr.

He attended Cheverus High School "until being asked to depart" and later Deering High School, also in Portland, “until he departed on his own through a classroom window. As Mark Twain said, he never let schooling interfere with his education," says the obituary.

Conley enlisted in the Army and was honorably discharged in 1950. He came to grips with alcoholism at age 25, and when he was 30 he first became involved in politics.

Throughout his lengthy political career at the local and state levels, Conley worked for 27 years as a clerk for Portland Terminal Co. at Rigby Yard, a train switching center in South Portland. Working the graveyard shift there, Conley became a member of Lodge 152 of the International Brotherhood of Railroad, Airline and Steamship Clerks.

His Irish roots ran deep and green. Conley made a number of trips to Ireland, where hosts recalled his cheerful presence and funny stories.

It was during a trip in 1989 that he got into a conversation with the owner of O'Neill’s Pub in Newmarket-on-Fergus, County Clare. Even though Conley didn’t drink, it was the first of many visits to the pub, where his photo with Joseph E. Brennan and Ted Kennedy resides. Since then, a procession of Maine politicos have followed Conley’s trail to O’Neill’s Pub, leaving photos and campaign stickers behind.

“He opened the door to hundreds of Mainers who’ve been there,” said Jerry Jr.

Back home, Conley treasured his association with the Maine Irish Heritage Center in Portland, which presented him with its 2nd annual Claddagh Award in 2009. The award is given to those of Irish descent who dedicate their lives to community service.

“He grew up in Portland in a very Irish family, was head of the church council, his kids went to school there. He was proud of that...
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and proud of his Irish heritage,” said Mary McAleney, board chair of the Irish Heritage Center. McAleney said she first met Conley in 1963 when she worked as a waitress in a Portland diner and Conley and his friends would come in for coffee and pie.

Conley’s earliest tries at politics were not successful, as he lost two elections for Cumberland County sheriff. But he won a seat to the Maine House of Representatives in 1964, along with two other Democrats who would rise to prominence: Joseph E. Brennan, who served as governor and later congressmen, and John L. Martin, the longtime House speaker. Elected to the state Senate in 1968, Conley would go on to serve two decades in the Maine Legislature. McAleney by then was working in the Maine House Majority Office. In 1977, she recalled, Conley became floor leader of a tiny Democratic caucus in the state Senate.

“He had more children than members in the minority caucus,” said McAleney, who had a long career herself in government.

Conley won successive floor leadership roles in the Senate before taking the gavel as Senate president, second in the line to governor, in 1983. His contributions to municipal government included serving on Portland City Council from 1968 to 1977, and mayor in 1971-72. All of this, while working the night shift.

“I don’t know when he slept,” said Jerry Jr.

In his elective roles, Conley showcased his persuasive skills and sense of humor, his friends recalled.

“He had that ability to think on his feet, change course and keep the greater good in mind,” said McAleney, recalling “his wit, his charm and wink in his eye.”

Later came Conley’s service on statewide boards, including the Unemployment Insurance Commission, to which he was appointed chairman in 1985. He retired from the commission in 1992, but the same year was elected Cumberland County Register of Probate. In 2004, Gov. John E. Baldacci appointed Conley chairman of the Maine Turnpike Authority. As Welzel recalls, Baldacci had some reservations about the turnpike authority and appointed Conley, his friend and political mentor, to keep an eye on the MTA.

“Jerry became a very strong advocate for the MTA,” said Welzel, a Maine Better Transportation Association board member who now works for the City of Portland’s Department of Public Works. In time, Conley’s ardent support for the MTA rubbed off on the governor.

During his time on the board Conley oversaw completion of the widening and modernization of the Maine Turnpike over 30 miles. The public works project, that added two travel lanes and improved capacity and safety on the highway, cost $135 million and took five years to complete. “He came in the middle of the project and was a powerful influence in seeing it through successfully,” said Welzel, who retired last year after 27 years with the MTA. Conley also presided over the implementation of the turnpike’s E-Z Pass electronic tolling system, which many motorists take for granted now. Conley made many contributions in addition to his work in transportation. On city council, he took a stand for poor constituents of Portland’s West End, Jerry Jr. said. In Augusta, Conley was the first senator to sign on to legislation to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation.

“In those days, that was getting 15 votes in the House and one or two in the Senate. His support gave gay rights some credibility,” said Jerry Jr. It is now state law.

He was also a big defender of Maine moose and opposed the bill allowing them to be hunted. Conley once gave a speech in the Senate in which he declared, “The Maine moose is the only big game animal in the world with which you can have your picture taken before you shoot it!”

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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Jerry at the dedication of the new Kennebunk rest area with Robert Pacios.
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H ouse Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-Pennsylvania), told executives of state departments of transportation he hopes Congress can pass major new infrastructure investment legislation before its long August recess, or perhaps in a lame-duck session after the November elections.

Shuster made the remarks on February 28 at the annual Washington Briefing of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

A day earlier, Senator John Cornyn (R-Texas), the assistant majority leader, told Bloomberg News that with a busy Senate legislative calendar he didn’t “know if we will have time” to push through an infrastructure package this year.

But Shuster, in remarks to the AASHTO conference and to reporters afterward, emphasized that Congress needs to put together legislation that invests in projects and raises new revenue to bolster the Highway Trust Fund for the long term.

If it does not do so, he warned, state DOTs by early 2020 would be cutting some planned projects for lack of federal dollars.

Shuster made clear that he would work with Transportation and Infrastructure Committee ranking member Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon), on a bipartisan plan that would be paid for with new funds and would take care of the trust fund’s future needs. Shuster also laid out the case for increasing the federal motor fuel "user fee" or excise tax, as an easily understood way to efficiently raise more road and transit funds. "It's the easiest thing to understand," he noted.

He also urged the state officials in their visits to congressional offices to help build support for revenue increases that can sustain the trust fund.

Noting that some advocate for implementing taxes on vehicle miles traveled instead of hiking fuel user charges, Shuster said "I don’t believe that’s ready for prime time," although the next generation of leaders would probably move to implement one.

In separate remarks to the AASHTO conference, DeFazio said that without a strong presidential effort on increasing revenue there would be no infrastructure investment plan to pass Congress this year. He said House leadership currently opposes hiking taxes for infrastructure, so no bill could move forward without President Trump pushing for more revenue.

DeFazio also dismissed the president's investment proposal as a "devolution" plan to put more of the federal role back to state and local governments along with private investors.

The leaders of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee also told state officials they want to see project investment legislation but indicated they are not yet working together.

EPW Ranking Member Tom Carper D-Del., said he and Chairman John Barrasso, R-Wyo., are working on their own proposals. Barrasso told state officials he knew of their concerns about the trust fund, but told reporters that increasing motor fuel taxes would be a "nonstarter" for him.
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Mixing it up
Auburn Concrete finds a niche in the ready-mix market – and makes it grow

It's a soggy late February morning in Auburn, and two concrete mixers are lined up at the Auburn Concrete plant, ready to take on a load. It's the slow season for construction. Still, despite the winter weather, Auburn's plant is fired up and its crew of mixer drivers is standing ready to deliver concrete to several large-scale commercial job sites in southern Maine.

On one of the six computer monitors hanging on the wall in Remi Delcourt's office, you can follow the progress of the company's fleet of 40 mixers, each armed with a GPS tracker, as the trucks make their way across a broad swath of the state of Maine. Delcourt is Auburn Concrete's sales and quality control manager, and he keeps his eye on the other monitors that give him the ability to oversee the mixes currently in production at each of the company's six plants – Auburn, Westbrook (two plants), Augusta, West Bath and Topsham. There is a lot to keep track of: the company maintains more than a thousand different mixes for everything from weather defying concrete bridge abutments and bridge decks to structural concrete for office buildings and house foundations.

A couple of miles down the road at the company's recently acquired Christian Hill Quarry to its collection of properties in 2016 and has reconfigured production at the site.
Quarry, a loader moves raw aggregate to be crushed to three-quarter stone, then washed and stored in piles, ready for the spring construction season to begin. The company quarries and sells MaineDOT spec gravels, sand and recycled materials (crushed concrete, reclaimed asphalt and crushed brick) at the site. The quarry, formerly owned by K & K Excavation, has supplied the majority of material for Auburn’s plants for years. In July 2016, Auburn Concrete purchased the quarry that covers 188 acres of land. Since that time, the company has reconfigured the quarry and the reworking of the site is extensive: cutting a new road leading into the quarry; installing a new Telsmith crusher operation and a 140-foot telestacker, as well as building a new weigh shack and a pond to drain and filter water at the site. In all, the company has invested considerable capital in the quarry – to purchase the land, modernize equipment, and automate and streamline operations.

“It used to be a linear setup,” said Lori Gile, daughter of Auburn Concrete founder Rod Cummings and the company’s controller. “If one piece of equipment broke down, the whole system went down.” The new set-up can produce up to 300 tons of aggregate an hour, is automated and far more flexible. While the quarry provides almost 100 percent of the aggregate for Auburn Concrete’s operations, more than half of its sales are outside of the company – customers including Pike Industries, Sargent Corp., Risbara Brothers Construction and R.J. Grondin & Sons.

The company also recently expanded the footprint of its Auburn headquarters, adding a new, centralized quality control lab on the ground floor and more offices on the second floor and installed new software that automates everything from production to billing.

AN EYE FOR OPPORTUNITY

Rod Cummings founded R.A. Cummings, Inc. in 1972 as a foundation contractor and quickly established a reputation for service and quality. The company was based in Old Town, Maine and in the 1980s, Cummings added a crushing operation and his first ready-mixed concrete plant. Joel Cummings, Rod’s son, has worked for the company since he was 15, driving mixer trucks and helping out wherever there was a need. By the time he graduated high school, he was working for the company full time.

Working for the family business was like having the “biggest sandbox and the best toys,” remembered Joel. “It was the 1990s and at 18 and 19, I was driving a big truck and making good money. I built my first house when I was 22.” In 1997, he took on management of the Old Town plant while his dad launched a new business – Auburn Concrete – in southern Maine. The northeast region was in the midst of a housing boom – annual new
home starts had nearly doubled in the years from 1981 to 2000 – and southern Maine was seeing strong growth. After 25 years in the business, Rod Cummings not only knew how to pour a good foundation, he knew when he saw a good opportunity.

Gile remembered: “Dad thought there was room for the residential market to be serviced better.”

Originally, Lori admitted, she had no intention of joining the family business. Like her brother, she worked for the company growing up in Old Town. But when she graduated high school, she decided to strike out on her own, getting a bachelor of science degree in business administration from the University of Maine and eventually landing a job with Coopers & Lybrand. By 1997, she realized she still had concrete in her veins and came back to work for the company, taking on responsibility for back office operations and automation.

Working with family works for the Cummings because they each have their different talents and strength they bring to the office every day.

“Dad and Joel and I each do something different,” said Lori. With Joel overseeing production and Lori taking on technology, Rod continues to lead the company while keeping his eye on the horizon.

“Dad is always looking at the future, what comes next,” said Lori.

LIKE ‘DELIVERING PIZZA’

By any definition, Auburn Concrete’s growth has been impressive. Four years after launching the Auburn plant, the company opened its first Westbrook plant. In 2004, the Cummings family added a plant in West Bath, and then added a second plant in Westbrook in 2005. Plants in Augusta (2010) and Topsham (2013) followed.

The company closed down its Old Town operations in 2000 and sold the land and buildings soon after.

The location of the plants has been integral to the company’s growth. Wet concrete has a short useful life – just 90 minutes from the time it is loaded into a mixer until it has to be unloaded, or the batch is lost. Each of Auburn Concrete’s six ready-mix plants enables the company to reach deep into the southern Maine market. With two plants on line in Westbrook, the company can handle volumes large enough for the state’s largest and most densely populated urban area and commercial construction market. The other plants give the company the ability to service other key growth centers including Augusta, Lewiston-Auburn and midcoast Maine. With three dispatchers coordinating deliveries across the region, it means when they get a call from a contractor, they can be on the site quickly, often in 30 minutes.

It’s a business challenge that Joel takes in stride, and even finds humor in. “Delivering concrete is time sensitive,” he noted. “The only other business like it is delivering pizza.”

This winter, the company has been busy providing concrete for a large construction project at Colby College in Waterville, as well as continuing to refine production processes at the new quarry. Joel, who is putting together bids for the upcoming construction season, is optimistic that the economy and the family’s business will continue to be strong.

He said that, although Auburn Concrete has seen phenomenal growth since 1997 – an average of 20 percent each year in recent years – the family knows that growth will slow now that they have such a broad presence in the market. The quarry operations are expected to not only provide the company with an ample supply of aggregate in the years to come, the outside sales will continue to boost company revenues.
‘IT’S ABOUT OUR PEOPLE’

The Cummings family is quick to recognize that a critical element in their success has been their employees. As Joel and Lori lead a tour of the Auburn headquarters, plant and quarry, they stop to introduce every employee along the way, praising individual contributions to the company and offering a funny anecdote or personal insight, and they speak proudly of the experience and contributions of employees working at the company’s other locations.

There’s Delcourt, who joined the company in 2005, just as the company was looking to expand into the transportation and infrastructure market. His deep experience in sales, quality control and the technical performance of different types of concrete has helped establish Auburn as the go-to source for a wide range of buyers and helped the company gain a name in the road and bridge building market. Sam Roy and Justin Rouillard joined the company in 2009 and 2016 after working for two leading engineering firms and manage the testing labs in Auburn and...
Westbrook respectively. We meet Rick Pelletier, who has worked in the industry for nearly three decades, dispatches for the Auburn, West Bath and Topsham plants. There’s also Dana Ellis (Augusta), Waring Cutler (Westbrook), and Carl Wight (West Bath & Topsham), who handle customer service onsite at the satellite plants. Randy Black (Westbrook dispatch) and Randy Leigh (Augusta dispatch) round out the management team. Each one of these key personnel has between 20 to 30 years of experience in the industry. Shop foreman Mike Mayo, who joined the company in 2002 as a concrete mixer driver, has worked his way up through the company and now leads a team of more than a half dozen mechanics.

The tour includes the office staff, which has grown in recent years to help handle the increasing volume of sales at the company: Jammie Twitchell joined the company in 2013 and is the voice customers connect with when they call. Michelle Cummings, Joel’s wife, came on board in 2014 to help with payroll and, most recently, Remi’s daughter, Maria Delcourt, was hired in 2017 to handle administrative aspects at the quarry as well as take over the daily billing for both companies.

The Cummings are demonstrably grateful and appreciative of every employee’s contribution “Our people are the business, and we try to give them the tools they need to get the job done,” said Lori.

The Cummings are also grateful to and supportive of the communities where their employees live. They have supported Habitat for Humanity and the Boy Scouts, including work for the new dining hall at Camp Hines in Casco. “We typically donate to things our employees and their kids are involved with,” said Lori. The company is also active in the transportation and construction communities as members of ABC Maine and MBTA, and they have generously sponsored many MBTA events and initiatives.

‘NEVER SAY NO’

If there is a company mantra, it would be a phrase frequently spoken by the company founder and repeated often by the staff – from Lori, Joel and Remi to dispatchers, drivers and quarry operators alike. During the interview from this story, we heard it no less than a half a dozen times and always spoken with a big smile and visible pride.

“As my dad likes to say, ‘Never say no. Hang up the phone, and we’ll figure it out,’” says Lori. That can-do spirit has been at the heart of the company work ethic and philosophy of business.

Never saying no can lead to long hours and weekend work. At Auburn Concrete, it also has built a close-knit, we’re-in-this-together corporate culture. Perhaps that is because the people at the top – everyone in the Cummings family – are there pitching in alongside the staff to make sure the job gets done.

Lori has done almost every job around headquarters, including cleaning the hopper. Rod and Joel frequently jump behind the wheel of one of the company’s 40 mixer trucks to help out on a delivery. Joel, who admits to still enjoying driving and meeting with customers, hauled 150 loads last year.

If they have one fault, both Joel and Lori agree, it is the tendency to want to have a hand in everything. In recent years, they have worked hard to delegate more, relying on the experience of their staff and hiring new talent when they find a need. Most recently, they added a full-time safety coordinator and a full-time human resource manager.

Still, they show no sign of taking a back seat. “Dad and I would drive all the trucks if we could,” said Joel.
MAPA to hold 15th annual seminar April 3-4

This year, the Maine Asphalt Pavement Association will hold its 15th annual Spring Paving Seminar at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor April 3-4.

Central Equipment Company is the platinum sponsor for the event, which will include workshops, training, networking opportunities and the largest industry equipment show in Maine.

Industry leaders will speak at the event, including Shane Buchanan of the Old Castle Materials Group and Eric Giguere, who will speak on The Buried Truth Uncovered – how he was buried alive while working in a trench and the value of safety on the job. The event will also feature the Pave Maine Awards, and the equipment trade show will be open to the public.

Exhibitors are invited to set up for the show from noon to 3 p.m. on April 2. There also will be an invitation-only reception at 5 p.m. on April 2 for platinum, gold and silver sponsors.

Since it was first established by the Maine Asphalt Pavement Association in 2003, the Spring Paving Seminar has become an important event on the contractor’s calendar. It offers the chance for industry professionals to network and learn about the latest innovations. It also is an opportunity for paving firms to access important safety training for their personnel.

FMI: To learn more, visit www.maine-apa.org/paving-seminar or call 207-838-1379.
Rodney Lane was recently named Senior Vice President, Plants and Paving for The Lane Construction Corporation, one of America’s leading construction companies specializing in heavy civil construction services and products in the transportation, infrastructure, and energy industries.

Lane began his career with the company on the Pennsylvania Southern Expressway project working as a rod man, instrument man and crew chief on the survey crew. From there, Lane transferred to Lane’s Bangor, Maine, operation. There he served as a superintendent on numerous MaineDOT projects.

Lane said: “I was blessed to grow up in New York around hard working honest people. My parents, family, and friends provided crucial support along the way. That didn’t stop when I moved to Maine. I have been blessed and honored to work with all of my co-workers in the past and present. Truly remarkable people. I am looking forward to opportunities for our entire industry.”

Lane is a graduate of the University of Maine and holds a bachelor of science degree in surveying engineering. At Lane, he has served as project manager, assistant district manager, district manager and senior district manager. He has been with the company for 27 years. During his early years at Lane, his experience included site acquisition, development, and permitting for agencies including the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and municipalities, bids on MaineDOT projects, including the I-295 Commercial Street Connector design-build and managing Calais Plant operations and all aspects of cost control. He later oversaw safety, quality, production and cost control for Lane’s Maine operations, specifically the Calais, Hancock and Belfast operations and was responsible for long-term planning. He also assisted the district manager with all operations in the district, eventually taking on that job. As district manager, he was responsible for safety, quality, production, profitability, resource management and strategic planning for the Maine district.

Lane is also active in the community and has been a long-time committee and board member of MBTA. Currently he is serving as MBTAs president.

Founded in 1890, Lane offers full-service construction management services and sells materials directly to its customers in Maine. Lane’s diverse client base consists of federal and state agencies (Federal Aviation Administration, MaineDOT, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Maine Turnpike Authority), municipalities, commercial clients and private entities.

Throughout the state, Lane operates six stationary and two portable asphalt production facilities, as well as 15 pits and quarries supplying quality materials and construction services to the public. Additionally, Lane offers earthwork and bridge building/reconstruction services throughout the state.

Lane Worldwide Infrastructure, Inc., an affiliate of The Lane Construction Corporation, manages Lane’s International Operations, which develops transportation and infrastructure projects in the Middle East.

Lane’s 5,600 employees team with customers and partners on diverse projects including highways, bridges, racetracks, mass transit, and airport systems, and the development of energy resources. With expertise in the fields of engineering, procurement, and construction project management, headquartered in Cheshire, Connecticut, Lane has annual revenues of more than $1.7 billion. Lane is owned by global construction leader, Salini Impreglio.

FMI: To learn more, visit www.laneconstruct.com.
ARGENT CORP, CES, Inc. and Berry Dunn were among the 10 employers who received gold awards at the United Way of Eastern Maine 80th Birthday and Annual Campaign Celebration in early February. Every year, United Way of Eastern Maine presents awards to the top-performing fundraisers in the area. To earn gold, a company must meet several criteria including employee participation equal to or greater than 40 percent.

This year, companies raised a total of $1.87 million that will go to provide services and support for more than 60,000 people in the eastern Maine region. “That helps us impact the lives of one in five people throughout our five-county area,” said United Way Eastern Maine President and CEO Shirar Patterson.

For 80 years, United Way of Eastern Maine has worked in Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Waldo and Washington counties to improve the lives of people in Eastern Maine. Today, United Way of Eastern Maine is the largest private funder of education, income and health services in the five-county area.

FMI: To learn more, visit www.unitedwayem.org.
NAWIC Maine announces annual trade show

The National Association of Women in Construction, Maine Chapter (NAWIC – Maine) has announced it is once again holding Construction Showcase, its construction trade show, on April 11, 2018, at the Augusta Civic Center. The event is expected to draw hundreds of businesses and individuals to the one-day event and is formerly known as Construction Expo.

The showcase will feature numerous industry displays, a career opportunities fair and educational and training opportunities for business owners. As in years’ past, the event will also be the platform to raise awareness and funds for workforce development. Each year, NAWIC Maine has awarded scholarships to deserving Maine students entering a construction related field. NAWIC Maine incorporated a new scholarship in honor of Joyce Newman in 2016, and it will be awarded at this year’s event.

This year, the event will include workforce training and will be held alongside the Associated General Contractors of Maine’s Build Maine Awards. The entire event will be held in the main auditorium this year for the first time ever.

“We are extremely proud of our strong partnership with AGC,” said Robin Wood, NAWIC Maine’s immediate past president. “We respect that the two organizations have a mutually beneficial relationship, and we believe that AGC’s Build Maine Awards banquet is a wonderful recognition of industry efforts. NAWIC is very pleased that AGC continues its tradition of holding that special banquet during our Construction Showcase Event.”

FMI: To learn more, visit www.NAWICMaine.org.

Portland Jetport first in nation to capture, mix and spray recycled de-icing fluid

The Portland International Jetport is the first airport in the United States to use 100 percent recycled aircraft de-icing fluid.

“We are excited to report the jetport is now using 100 percent recycled de-icing fluid for aircraft de-icing. This is the culmination of three years of preparation by Inland Technologies and Northeast Air,” said Jetport Director Paul Bradbury. “For the past six years we have captured the aircraft de-icing fluid sprayed at the Jetport to ensure it doesn’t mix with storm water. Our partners at Inland Technologies have taken that process and worked with the FAA to be able to process the collected fluid, remanufacture it and turn it into usable aircraft de-icing fluid.”

Northeast Air applies all the fluid at the Jetport.

Roger Langille, Inland’s president and CEO, commented: “This is the first facility of its kind in the United States, and we are proud to say that with this expansion, we’re setting a new benchmark for winter operations sustainability.”

Since Inland’s original facility opened in Portland six years ago, the company has collected nearly six million gallons of used aircraft de-icing fluid and processed it to remove the glycol and other contaminants. Nearly one million gallons of pure glycol have been recovered in this time.

Henry Laughlin, president of Northeast Air, said his company is proud to have taken part in the evolution of de-icing technology, specifically introducing AirFirst technology trucks to reduce the volume of glycol used in the overall process and the company’s glycol blending system to ensure minimal wastage.

FMI: To learn more, visit www.portlandjetport.org.
PACTS, GPCOG to merge

The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) and the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) have combined their staffs into a single team with the goal of better serving their region.

The new agreement, approved by the governing boards of both organizations, sets up a process for a complete merger of GPCOG and PACTS over the next three years. PACTS will continue to administer federal highway and transit funds as the region’s federal transportation planning agency. Merger discussions are expected to begin next year.

Jerre Bryant, president of GPCOG said: “This ushers in a new chapter for our member communities from Casco Bay to the Sebago Lake region. As one combined organization, we can now fully realize our strategic vision of a more prosperous, stronger and more secure region, as we integrate economic and public health programs with the region’s current and new transportation initiatives.”

Bob Burns, chair of PACTS, said: “With our staff experts working side-by-side, there will be more opportunities to implement and refine PACTS’ long-range transportation plans, and integrate federal investments with local and regional growth strategies.”

GPCOG provides services, such as economic development and land use planning, to 26 cities and towns. Since 1969, the agency purpose has been to grow jobs and the economy, plan healthy and complete neighborhoods, advance clean transportation, and protect the region’s natural resources.

PACTS was established in 1975 to lead transportation priorities for 18 communities in the Portland region. PACTS is a federal metropolitan planning organization and coordinates many transportation planning and investment decisions with the state, municipalities and public transportation partners.
Maximize your enterprise value

As the owner of a busy enterprise you likely spend much of your time considering ways in which your employees and customers can be best served. The day-to-day operations of a business may have a natural sense of urgency and often can leave little time left in the day to consider more complex, longer term plans, de-risking your business, and accelerating your enterprise value. It’s never too early, or too late, to uncover your options and formulate a plan.

In the United States, approximately 54 percent of baby boomer business owners will exit or transition their business within the next 10 years, and while most business owners agree to the benefits of a thorough exit strategy, 72 percent do not have a plan and aren’t taking action.1 The decision to transition a business is often a very personal and complex decision for the owner. A major issue in forming a transition plan is identifying to whom the owner will pass the business.2 About 25 percent of these business owners expect to sell their business to a third party, while another 25 percent expect to sell to employees.3

However, many business owners have neglected the key steps for a sale.4 Fifty-eight percent of business owners have never had a formal appraisal, and 37 percent have no structures in place to shield sales proceeds.5 Only 20 percent plan to leave or sell their business to family members.6 The majority of family members may not be interested and would rather benefit financially from the sale.6 Financial advisors and exit planning advisors can be an essential resource to help business owners and their families prior to, during, and after a major liquidity event. Below, we outline some of the key areas and steps that our experience reveals and emphasizes about the business transition planning process.

After years of helping our business owner clients with both business and personal planning we have found that a business owner's vision of a successful transition or exit may be at odds with common reality.

Vision and discovery: In discovery there may be gaps between the vision of the business owner's transition and the infrastructure in place needed to execute the owner's vision of a successful transition.7

Fail to plan: Many owners do not plan in advance of a transition even though most trusted advisors suggest putting together a transition plan two to three years in advance. As a result, there may be no comprehensive advanced plan in place which outlines the transition and illustrates the outcomes as they impact the owner's family and lifestyle.7

Inertia and action: Planning early and forming a team of trusted advisors can be invaluable towards seeking to create a more natural transition devoid of stress on the business owner, the family and the employees.7

The business owner and communication: In many cases we have found that the business owner often directs each trusted advisor individually relative to their role in the transition. Most often, no single advisor sees the entire plan causing gaps in communication. An exit planning advisor team can help bridge those gaps in communication to ensure the execution of your transition plan is completed successfully.7

Collaboration and trusted advisor: Collaboration among all trusted advisors on planning a transition is, from our experience, by far the exception but is in fact preferred by most trusted advisors. Coordination and collaboration can improve the probability of a positive outcome and eliminate gaps in the infrastructure of the business owner's transition plan.7

Idea flow and illustration: With an advanced planning process at the center of your transition, you are able to incorporate idea flow from all trusted advisors into the plan potentially raising the probability of a successful transition of business wealth.7

Regardless of the timing, business owners should plan well in advance of the eventual transition. Our team works everyday with our client's life planning. The business owner's situation is similar and we have found that the business owner requires much of the same attention, as the individual or the family, to prepare. Here's an overview of some of the pre-sale tasks our team will recommend prior to a major transition.8

GET YOUR FINANCIAL HOUSE IN ORDER

Review financial books and records, including budgets and forecasts. Prepare audited financials, ideally three years from at least a strong regional accounting firm or a qualified local accounting firm. Create pro-forma, or normalized, financials where you begin to track one-time and personal or "lifestyle" expenses. Consider hiring an accounting firm to perform a quality of earnings analysis. Work with a financial advisor and/or an exit planning advisor, together with your tax advisor, to create a plan to maximize after-tax proceeds and protect and invest wealth to maximize tax efficiency.8

1 UBS, Financial planning for business owners contemplating a liquidity event, 2 (2018).
2 Ibid., 2.
3 Ibid., 2.
5 Ibid., 6.
6 Ibid., 8.
7 UBS, Our Role in BTP (2014)
8 UBS, Launch Preparation (2014)
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- Respirator fit testing
- On-site medical/nursing services
- Consultations and second opinions
- Return to work evaluations
- Fitness for duty evaluations
GET YOUR LEGAL HOUSE IN ORDER

Create a central source for all contracts, permits and other material documents. Establish a documented chain of ownership for your company's stock and other equity. Ensure your regulatory filings in all jurisdictions are up to date. Understand change of control considerations in all your contracts. Make sure to document intellectual property rights. Ensure key employees are under proper employment and non-disclosure agreements. Re-evaluate your corporate structure, considering the benefits of LLC or S-Corp structures.

DETERMINE YOUR TRANSACTION GOALS

What is your desired financial outcome? Do you need 100 percent cash-out at closing? What about diversification of your wealth? Many business owners have the majority of their net worth tied up in their business. Do you wish to keep working? Some business owner's may experience seller's remorse because they are unhappy after the sale due to lack of life planning. How long would you work? What role and level of commitment would be optimal? Perhaps you would like to retain a majority stake? There are many viable options to consider and explore.

SUCCESSOR MANAGEMENT

If you wish to retire or walk away, who will run the company? Consider identifying and grooming a successor. Understand the potential need for a transition period for your management. Begin to transition key business and customer relationships.

At UBS, the business transition planning equation is the sum of four major core competencies: advanced planning; investment banking; relationship management; and investment management.

Advanced planning: Our team takes a family focused approach to many planning tasks: modeling the sale of the business; wealth transfer; tax mitigation; cash flow planning; risk assessment and wealth protection; estate liquidity; and charitable giving.

Investment banking: Our role here is to help you maximize the enterprise and market value of your business. UBS can introduce a boutique investment bank into the relationship to help you drill down on the industry specific intellectual capital and maximize its intangible capital value and provide a global reach toward merger and acquisition financing and real estate financing. Through our transaction review and analysis we can help you realize the maximum value.

Relationship management: Through collaboration with all trusted advisors we develop a communication pattern to optimize the execution of your personalized advanced plan. We provide minimum monthly follow-ups on all key planning steps to ensure in-depth discovery of all the issues. Where necessary we can also develop a family forum, and even a concierge style of service.

Investment management: Focusing on the business owner and family we construct a replacement asset strategy for the transfer of the business wealth. Our core principles of: wealth preservation; asset allocation and risk analysis; cash flow analysis; investment cost analysis; and tax mitigation analysis, can create a comprehensive and holistic family investment strategy.

Ultimately, you need to consider your needs, your objectives, your comfort with risk and changing market conditions and how all the pieces of your complex life can affect your pursuit of important financial goals.

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The evolving role of roadside vegetation management in Maine

Trees can be a threat to safe travel in Maine. For years, trees were the primary focus of efforts to keep roadides as safe as possible. It was not just the potential for trees to fall into the travel way, but also the possibility of bodily injury or death in run-off-the-road incidents. Trees also shade. Removing trees allows more sunlight to the road surface, reducing icing and possibly the need for repeat salt-sand applications.

We all experience frost heaves, an annual rite of passage in Maine. Removing brush and trees along roadsides helps maintain proper drainage and may help reduce those surprises that send us to the repair shop. Cleared roadsides also provide space for snow storage and allow us to push back snow away from the roads during the winter.

We also need to provide adequate visibility at curves, hills, intersections, and driveway entrances to keep roadways safe. Trees may be trimmed or removed to improve sight distance; however, it is quite common now for weeds growing next to the road or behind guardrail to reduce visibility to unacceptable levels.

The department met a challenge in the midcoast area in 2017 by removing sweet clover, a pernicious plant invader. Introduced in the 1930s as a forage crop, sweet clover is a legume that withstands heavy feeding by cattle. It is a long-lived perennial, that persists for years. When left alone it can grow 6 to 7 feet tall, and it is quite comfortable growing in dry gravelly shoulders next to pavement. The department began by contacting the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association to identify all the organic operations on the 280 miles of state roads scheduled for sweet clover control in 2017. All organic operations were contacted within six weeks. As a result, the spray project to control sweet clover within five feet of the road edge took less than two weeks to complete.

Controlling weeds along our highways has become an integral part of our vegetation program. Guardrail and shoulders on the interstate system and some of our routed roads have been treated to control weeds. Improved sight distance and benefits such as improved visual awareness of large animals and reduced need for roadside mowing have been realized. Guardrail areas free of weeds improve worker safety by reducing tripping hazards and habitat for ticks and mosquitoes, for example. Reducing weed pressure also cuts down on the spread of weeds along our roadways. Invasive plants and plants that may present health risks to our workers are also controlled with these applications.

The department has responded to vehicle interactions with large animals by removing trees along the interstate system in Maine. Starting in 2008, from Howland to Benedicta, projects designed to push back the
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“As someone who has worked with plants for most of his career, this is an exciting and rewarding time to enhance roadside habitats for the benefits of pollinators, reduce overall maintenance costs and, most importantly, improve roadside safety for our customers.”

tree line along the interstate began in earnest. Projects from Yarmouth to Brunswick and Sidney to Fairfield coupled with tree removal during interstate mill and fill projects are in the final stages of habitat restoration.

Tree clearing presents a unique opportunity to establish native plant communities across the state. Many native flowering plants and shrubs have disappeared from the roadside landscape, unable to withstand even mowing just once a year. Today, non-native and invasive plants such as sweet clover replace the space once occupied by native species.

In recent years, the plight of pollinators such as monarch butterflies, European honeybees, and native bumblebees has gained international attention. Studies estimate that 70% of the food we consume relies on pollinators. There is an estimated 17 million acres of roadside under management by state DOTs across the United States that could be used to support pollinators.

In the past six years, the department has chaired a study on establishing native warm season grasses in roadside environments in New England; worked with the Maine Natural Areas Program on a two-year habitat study to identify habitat types and predominant plants; funded a pollinator study conducted by University of Maine entomologists; and contracted Wild Seed Project, a Maine nonprofit, to produce Maine Native Plants for Roadside Restoration, a design and propagation manual for use by anyone interested in collecting, storing and propagating native pollinator friendly wildflowers and shrubs. The document is posted in the publications section of our website, in Design Guides and Technical Manuals at www.maine.gov/mdot/publications/.

For me personally, as someone who has worked with plants for most of his career, this is an exciting and rewarding time to enhance roadside habitats for the benefits of pollinators, reduce overall maintenance costs, and, most importantly, improve roadside safety for our customers.}

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Maine’s rivers that carried timber for ship masts from virgin forests to shipyards along the coast, according to A History of Maine Roads—1600-1970, written for the Maine State Highway Commission 48 years ago.

Originally these waterways, together with portages between bodies of water, were traveled by native American inhabitants of the territory that would become Maine.

Later, the routes were used by pioneers and settlers to carry people and goods across the region. A History of Maine Roads describes one type of early road, the “mastway” which delivered much-prized tall firs and spruce to the coast for the Royal Navy.

In the Portland area, modern streets follow early mastways to Fore River. And the village square at Freeport is so shaped because of the room needed to swing the big sticks as they were dragged to Mast Landing at the Harraseeket River. The names remain on local roads and even on a local brewery today, remnants of the region’s early history.
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