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AVCOG Staff Updates

Wishing Wayne Well



For nearly twenty years in his position as Senior Project Manager Maine MEP/AVCOG, Wayne Messer has been helping Maine's manufacturers get lean by working closely with them to become more efficient, productive, profitable and globally competitive. As of May, Wayne began working directly for Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership. Fortunately, he will continue to serve the region and work closely with AVCOG staff to provide these services to manufacturers in the tri-county area and elsewhere in Maine.

"Wayne has been a valuable asset to AVCOG and the region and is highly regarded for the work he does for manufacturers. We look forward to our continued partnership with MaineMEP and Wayne!" noted Amy Landry, AVCOG Executive Director.

Welcome Alex!

Alex Aponte, Accountant

Alex comes to AVCOG with over 20 years of accounting and finance experience, 10 years of non-profit management experience, and 12 years of self-employment experience. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Studies with a concentration in Accounting. Alex is from Boston and moved to Maine in 1997. He lives in Topsham with his husband, Kevin, and two sons, Dalton and Brayden. He looks forward to supporting AVCOG's mission and the communities the organization serves.

EDA Invests in CARES Act Funding

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) awarded a \$400,000 CARES Act Recovery Assistance grant to AVCOG to update economic development plans and fortify programs to assist communities in responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

"This investment comes at a crucial time to help Maine's and our nation's economy come roaring back and provide hard-working Americans with new opportunities," said Dana Gartzke, Performing the Delegated Duties of the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development. "We are pleased to make this investment in the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments to develop resiliency strategies to support the region's critical tourism, manufacturing and transport and warehousing sectors, and develop community recovery strategies to grow the region's workforce and expand critical infrastructure as they work to recover from the coronavirus pandemic."

AVCOG, an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD), is one of the more than 850 existing, high-performing EDA EDD, University Center, Tribal, and Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) grant recipients invited to apply for supplemental funding under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security CARES Act.

SBA Disaster Relief Updates

The application period for the **Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)** has been **extended to August 8th**. Click [here](#) for more details.

Maine SBDC has created helpful videos to walk you through each of the PPP applications. Click [here](#) to access the videos.

The SBA reopened the **Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL)** to all eligible small businesses. The EIDL advance (\$1,000 per employee, up to \$10,000 that does not need to be paid back) is no longer available. The loan portion of the EIDL is still available. Click [here](#) for more details.

ReUp ME Restaurant Relief Fund

This relief fund was created to directly support restaurants in the midst of reopening, rehiring, and restocking. The ReUp Maine Restaurant Relief Fund hopes to provide direct and in-kind financial support on a sliding scale from \$500 to \$15,000 to each restaurant award recipient.

Click [here](#) to learn more and apply.

SBDC - Small Business Webinar Series

- **Turning Likes and Shares into Results: Creating Content that Works**
Tuesday, July 28, 2020
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Click [here](#) to learn more and register.

- **Becoming a Social Media Expert: Pro Tips to Master Each Channel**
Thursday, August 6, 2020
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Click [here](#) to learn more and register.

- **Deep Dive: Developing a Financial Plan & Goals (Series) with Raynor Large**
Tuesdays, August 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th
2:00 PM to 3:00 PM

This four-part series will highlight the basics of financial reporting, map an appropriate and reasonable path forward, and more. The series will be recorded and available on the [Maine SBDC website](#).

HHW Satellite and Depot Collections

AVCOG is sponsoring one-day collections of household hazardous waste at various sites throughout the region (Androscoggin, Franklin and Oxford Counties).

The next satellite collection of the season will be **Saturday, August 1** at the **Eustis Transfer Station** from **9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**.



Please check our [website](#) for the complete list of participating municipalities and future satellite dates.

The Western Maine Environmental Depot, co-located with the Lewiston Solid Waste Facility on 424 River Road in Lewiston, will be open on the third Saturday of every month from now until October 17. The hours of operation are from 8:00 - 11:45 AM.

Please check our [website](#) frequently for current information.

Keep ME Healthy Grant Program

The funding period for Round 2 of the Keep ME Healthy grant program will be August 1 – October 31, 2020. This program provides financial assistance for municipalities and tribes to conduct public health activities aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19 during the summer and fall tourist season.

Applications must be submitted to Maine CDC by **Friday July 31, 2020**. Municipalities and tribes must submit a completed application along with a one-page narrative and proposed budget to be considered for funding.

Click [here](#) for more information and application materials.



Small Town America Civic Volunteer Award

The Small Town America Civic Volunteer Award is a new program co-sponsored by CivicPlus, Points of Light, Main Street America, NACo, and others to recognize local volunteers who have made a difference, and to support local efforts to retain and recruit volunteers.

Who's Eligible to be Nominated?

Public and civic service volunteers and volunteer organizations that are making a difference in their municipality. The award program is open to all localities of 5,000 people or less.

What Will the Winners Receive?

Local governments represented by the top three winning honorees will receive cash awards of \$10,000, \$7,500, and \$5,000 respectively. Local governments represented by the top 100 nominees will win a free local government

website, and these nominees will be honored at the national level in several ways.

How to Nominate?

Local government representatives may nominate citizens (or citizen organizations) for the Small Town America Civic Volunteer Award using the online application located at www.civic-volunteer.com. Nominators are asked to describe their candidate's compelling story of local volunteerism and its positive impact on their community.

When is the Deadline to Submit an Application?

Entries must be submitted by August 15, 2020.

Maine Climate Council Seeks Final Input

The Maine Climate Council is an assembly of scientists, industry leaders, bipartisan local and state officials, and engaged citizens working to address the effects of climate change on our state. The council was created by Governor Janet Mills and supported with bipartisan support of the Legislature. The council is tasked with creating concrete recommendations so Maine can achieve its ambitious goals to reduce emissions and become more resilient to a changing climate.

The Council is currently reviewing a series of **draft climate change strategies** developed by expert working groups of the Council. Click [here](#) to offer feedback and engage with the Council.

Provide feedback by August 22, 2020, in advance of the Council's meeting in September. In partnership with MMA, there will be information sessions for municipal leaders and staff on **August 13** and **August 18**. Both meetings will be from 6:30 -7:30 PM and have identical agendas. The Climate Action Plan is due to be delivered on December 1, 2020.

Brownfields Cleanup Award

AVCOG was awarded \$200,000 from the Environmental Protection Agency for assistance with cleanup and reuse of Brownfields sites.

The low-interest loan and grant program is administered regionally by AVCOG to support the redevelopment of blighted properties. The award will help us continue to clean up contaminated land in our region and enable private developers and municipalities to reinvest in these properties and take development pressures off green spaces. AVCOG has been implementing a successful Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) since 2018. The award will help recapitalize the RLF, which will provide loans and subgrants to support cleanup activities.

Click [here](#) for more information on AVCOG's Brownfields program.

Launch of Regional Tourism Videos



While it's been nearly a year since Maine's Lakes & Mountains worked on the multi-regional film project with GLP Films, we are excited to share the new landing pages to support the relaunch of the regional Maine campaign (relaunch because it was waylaid by the pandemic). Dubbed "Explore Your Maine", these pages focus on local insider recommendations from our characters and a sense of community and place for each region, along with an interactive map to aid in local exploration.

- **Explore Your Maine** (links to all three regions)
- **Lakes & Mountains**
- **Portland**
- **MidCoast**

During the first week of July, GLP Films and the regions collectively shared the destination trailer via their social media platforms and e-newsletters. Over the next month, videos from the three regions will be launched on social media and cross-promoted by the regions. Following are the dates for MLM's videos.

- 7/1 - **Official Trailer launch (all three regions)**
- 7/7 - **#TourismStrong: Maine Huts and Trails (Lakes & Mountains)**
- 7/20 - **#TourismStrong: Mountain Biking (Lakes & Mountains)**
- 8/6 - **Lakes & Mountains official video (Lakes & Mountains)**
- 8/18 - Mountain Biking in L&M (Lakes & Mountains) - in production

Court Street Improvement Study and MaineDOT ADA Curb Ramp Inventories

ATRC (Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center) and the City of Auburn conducted a transportation study of Court Street from Lewiston to Goff Street and Turner Street from Court Street to Hampshire Street.

Click [here](#) to view the final report.

The study consultant, Tom Errico with TYLin, presented his findings to the Auburn City Council on July 20. The council video is available [here](#).

AVCOG and ATRC in collaboration with MaineDOT have conducted ADA curb ramp inventories on all MaineDOT roadways across the AVCOG region. Click [here](#) to see the results of the inventories.

2019 Regional Tourism Numbers Were Up

The Maine Office of Tourism recently released regional tourism research data for 2019 and Maine's Lakes &

Mountains region had a stellar year!

- An estimated 5.6 million travelers visited the Maine Lakes & Mountains region in 2019 - a 13.6% increase over 2018.
- In 2019, Maine Lakes & Mountains visitors spent \$804.5 million - a 20% increase from 2018.

Click [here](#) for the full economic impact recap and for a more complete overview read **Regional Insights 2019: Maine Lakes & Mountains report.**



AVCOG Business Loans

AVCOG is now offering the following loan programs:

COVID Loan Program

- Borrow up to \$10,000
- 3 years at 3% interest
- SBA may make first 6 months of payments for eligible borrowers
- Click [here](#) for more details

Micro Loan Program

- Up to \$50,000
- Quick loans available for qualified borrowers
- Click [here](#) for more details

Business Loan Program

- Up to \$150,000
- Click [here](#) for more details

For assistance contact **Jane Mickeriz**, (207) 783-9186 x220.



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