

Maine Community Development Association

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Ron Harriman, Treasurer
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*Mary Walton, City of Caribou
Rodney Lynch, City of Rockland
Don Keiser, Town of Houlton*

2007 CDBG Proposed Program

The Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of Community Development posted the 2007 Community Development Block Grant Proposed Statement on their website on July 18th. The proposed CDBG appropriation for the State of Maine is \$10,475,706, down by approximately 28% over the 2006 CDBG budget. The budget in 2003 was \$16,968,000 and has since decreased each year to its current budget amount.

On April 27 and 28, the Office of Community Development (OCD) and the Maine Community Development Association (MCDA) held a program development and training conference to discuss proposed changes to the 2007 CDBG program. Allocating budget amounts for any of the community development, economic development, planning, and special projects programs is a necessary process that must be undertaken each year. The FY 2007 CDBG Budget Allocation is proposed as follows:

<i>Program</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Application Deadline</i>
Housing Assistance	\$1,000,000	Letter on Intent: January 12, 2007 Application: March 2, 2007
Home Repair Network Program	\$1,050,000	
Public Infrastructure Grant	\$2,500,000	Letter of Intent: December 1, 2006 Application: January 12, 2007
Public Facilities Grant	\$1,200,000	Letter of Intent: December 1, 2006 Application: January 12, 2007
Public Service Grant	\$200,000	Letter of Intent: January 26, 2007 Application: March 9, 2007
Downtown Revitalization Grant	\$500,000	Application: February 9, 2007
Community Enterprise Grant	\$750,000	Application: February 9, 2007
Urgent Need Grant	\$80,000	1 st come basis beginning March 2, 2007
Economic Development Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Assistance • Non-Profit Development • Development Fund Loan • Interim Financing Program • Section 108 Loan Program 	\$2,500,000	Pre-Application: February 2, 2007 and May 4, 2007 Application: April 6, 2007 and July 6, 2007
Community Planning	\$50,000 \$50,000	Round 1: April 6, 2007 Round 2: August 3, 2007

NOTE: All applications must be received at the physical location of the Office of Community Development by 4:00 p.m. EST on the dates listed above.

**COSCD
Federal
Advocacy
Priorities
For
Fiscal
Year
2007**

Mr. Tony Levesque, Community Development Director for the Town of Fort Fairfield was appointed the DECD liaison for 2007 and will represent MCDA at the annual meeting of COSCDA to be held September 16-19, 2007 in Seattle, Washington. Mr. Levesque will serve for a period of one year beginning December 1, 2006.

The Council of State Community Development Agencies (COSCDA) represents state community development and housing agencies responsible for administering a number of U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) programs, including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. In 2005, COSCDA and its community development partners were successful in saving the CDBG Program from elimination. In March, 2005 MCDA advocated to save the CDBG Program and restore its funding. Although, successful in saving the program, funding was sharply reduced.

MCDA is in agreement with COSCDA's advocacy priorities, which are -

- (1) to restore funding levels; The Administration's FY07 budget proposes to slash funding by over \$1 billion and reduce the level of funding for the CDBG formula allocations. This would greatly affect Maine.
- (2) Complete CDBG Program improvements; Implementing a new performance measurement system that demonstrates the impact of the CDBG program is already underway.
- (3) Enhance the economic development provisions of CDBG; COSCDA calls on Congress to revise the CDBG eligible economic development activities to allow states and localities to address current economic development challenges.

For more information on COSCDA, visit their website at www.COSCDA.org.

**CAN-AM CROWN
INTERNATIONAL SLED DOG RACE
FORT KENT, MAINE**



Welcome to our 15th year of Can-Am Crown sled dog races. The races will be held March 3 - 6, 2007. We will be hosting three races with a total purse of \$40,000: a 30-mile race, a 60-mile race, and the well-known 250-mile race. The 250-mile race is a qualifier for the Iditarod and the Yukon Quest.

In order to preserve the high quality of the racing experience at Can-Am Crown, ***each race will be limited to 30 participants.***

At 250 miles, Maine's Can-Am Crown International Sled Dog Race is the longest and highest caliber race in the eastern

United States. For the men and women who challenge themselves and their teams of dogs, it represents great adventure, accomplishments and reward. It is a course for experts and those moving up in the exciting sport of sled dog racing, with winners claiming their share of a \$29,000 purse!

The Upper St. John Valley is a classic setting for the CAN-AM CROWN 250. The race course runs deep into the famous Allagash Wilderness region, a setting which embodies much of Maine's heritage and natural splendor.



Town of Houlton “Planning for the Future, Valuing the Past”

As we enter 2007, Houlton is alive with activity (yes, beneath the snow there IS action!) Valuing its past, Houlton is celebrating its Bicentennial in 2007 with an almost year-long parade of events that will climax the weekend of August 17-19, 2007. Along with the usual Houlton goings-on; such as, Moosestompers Weekend in early February, the annual canoe race on the Meduxnekeag in April, Midnight Madness kicking off the annual July Fourth/Agricultural Fair celebration and other regular events, additional special activities are planned, including plays, concerts, fairs and such. There is even a limited edition Houlton Bicentennial Coin!

But, almost in the middle of all this celebrating will be the State-wide **2007 Annual Downtown Conference on Friday, June 1st** with its theme, “**Small Town Success**”. The Maine Downtown Center chose Houlton for several reasons, not the least of which are the Historic Downtown Square location and the obvious energy that Houlton has begun to exhibit. Last year, Houlton received approval from DECD for three economic Tax Incentive Finance Districts. One of these TIF's is designed to funnel monies into

the Downtown to assist in its renewal activity. The Town also submitted, and is awaiting approval of (as of this writing), a Downtown TIF application, and Houlton is also exploring a Housing TIF. Finally, Houlton is in the midst of updating its Comprehensive Plan to better reflect current thinking and prospective development activity. In short, Houlton is gaining traction in its effort to jumpstart economic and community development, and the future looks bright.

The Maine Community Development Association traditionally meets in Aroostook County once each year. **This year, MCDA will meet in Houlton the evening of Thursday, May 31st in conjunction with the aforementioned Downtown Conference the following day.** So, SAVE THE DATES, and plan on attending the MCDA meeting and the Downtown Conference as part of a two- or three-day visit to “The County”. Details will be provided at MCDA's February meeting and on the website. More information on the Maine Downtown Center and its Annual Conference is available at: www.mdf.org/downtown. See you in Houlton!

*Article Provided by:
Don Keiser, Planner and Grant Writer
Town of Houlton*



In March, 2006, the City of Rockland was awarded a \$150,000 grant from the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development to complete a Downtown Façade Project, which is working to enhance the integrity and look of Main Street's historic buildings. A total of \$124,000 of this award was distributed to 20 property owners for improvements. Main Street is a historic district and, in order for the city to be able to award grant money for completed projects, the plans must first be approved through the Maine Historic Preservation Office. The Downtown Façade Project is slated to be completed by October, 2007 according to Rodney Lynch, the City's Community Development Director.



Once the Façade Project is closed, Mr. Lynch proposes to look at how and what work can be done to the upper levels of the downtown buildings. There currently is a lot of floor space that is either under utilized or not used to its fullest potential.

To submit a Community Enterprise Program application, which funds downtown façade projects, send an application to the State of Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, 59 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0059 on or before February 9, 2007. Applications may be downloaded at www.maineocd.org.



*Article Provided by:
Rodney Lynch, Community Development
Director
City of Rockland*



Genesis lends \$700,000 to preserve Cundy's Harbor waterfront
Holbrook Community Foundation purchases vital property

Genesis Fund works with the Town of Fort Kent to convert manufactured home park
Efforts to form a Resident-Owned Community a first in Maine

Find out more about Genesis by visiting their website at www.genesisfund.org.

Message from the President

Dear community developer:

In a former life, I worked for the Maine State Legislature as a policy analyst. I co-staffed a couple of committees as non-partisan staff and learned how public policy is really created in Maine. I also learned how many “needs” legislators and agency heads must contend with and how many financial constraints are placed on their collective ability to adequately meet all those needs.

Our federal legislators and executives face similar challenges and so it is that we in the community development field in Maine and elsewhere annually experience angst over the size of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program appropriation. As recently as 2005, we had to lobby hard to prevent the complete elimination in Fiscal Year 2006 of the CDBG program as we have known it. That is not the case at the moment because we are in the middle of a string of Continuing Budget Resolutions that have kept the CDBG program going but at the prior fiscal year’s budget levels. At this writing, we await word from the new Congress about a final FY 2007 budget.

I write about policy making and budgeting at the State and Federal levels for two reasons that have a lot to do with why the Maine Community Development Association exists. First, the Maine Office of Community Development within the Department of Economic and Community Development has been a great partner for not only our member communities, but also for all of the communities in Maine that are not served by so-called “Entitlement” communities that receive CDBG funds directly from the Washington. The millions

of dollars administered by OCD have been critical to the success of many municipal projects, including those related to affordable housing, building community centers and fire departments, expanding libraries and revitalizing downtowns, among others. Since the State of Maine began administering the CDBG program in 1982, more than \$340 million has been invested in Maine communities. That’s a big number. It’s even bigger when you calculate the investment dollars leveraged for these projects. In recognition of the importance of the CDBG program to our members, MCDA joined OCD staff last spring at a joint meeting/training session to discuss possible changes for the current year CDBG program. The discussion was both frank and informative. So much so that we are planning to hold this joint meeting/training session again this spring. (Tentative dates: May 10 and 11 at the Lucerne Inn in Dedham.) We invite all of our members (and those who would like to become members) to join us for this event.

The second reason for writing about policymaking is to urge all of you to pay attention to the bills proposed and debated in the First Session of the 123rd Legislature. Some of this legislation could be important to your community and to the community development projects you would like to make happen. For example, there is legislation proposed to recapitalize and to fund the Maine Downtown Center. There are proposals to authorize bond issues in support of affordable housing among several bills that address affordable housing issues. There are proposals to re-establish the Municipal Investment Trust Fund. There are several bills related to Pine Tree Zones. The list of bill titles filed totals more than 2,400. Many will not be enacted; fewer will be funded. But it is important that you support those bills that may make a positive

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difference in your community and oppose that will not. If you would like to learn more about legislation proposed for the First Session, go to www.maine.gov, click on the Legislature icon and go to the link for the Legislative Information Office. A complete listing of bill titles can be found there.

In addition to the OCD/MCDA event planned for this spring, MCDA has several other meetings and events planned for this year. Please consult articles elsewhere in this and future newsletters for information about those meetings and events. And please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions about MCDA or need information related to community and economic development.

My best to all of you in 2007!

Christopher Spruce (288-4496 or
islandhousingtrust@adelphia.net)
President

Upcoming Events

MCDA EVENTS

- May 10 and 11, 2007**
April Training Workshop at
Lucerne Inn in Holden
- May 31 and June 1, 2007**
Meeting in Houlton
In Conjunction with 2007 Annual
Downtown Conference
- August 16, 2007 (Tentative)**
General Membership Meeting
In Conjunction with CD
Appreciation Day in Augusta
- October 3 and 4, 2007**
MMA Convention

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Maine Downtown Center
2007 Annual Downtown Conference
Friday, June 1, 2007
Houlton

Maine Community Development
Association
Local Government Center
60 Community Drive
Augusta, Maine 04330-9486
(207) 623-8428 or 1-800-452-8786