



Maine Community Development Association

March, 2005

Volume 2, Issue 1

Special Interest Articles:

*	Save the CDBG Program	1
*	From the Desk of Mary Walton	2
*	Town of Houlton	3
*	CDBG Public Facility and Infrastructure Grant Awards	4
*	Calendar of Events	4

Save the CDBG Program!

Since 1982, the Maine Office of Community Development has provided \$314 million dollars to Maine Communities through the CDBG program. That is 3,800 jobs and 132,000 Mainers benefiting. CDBG is critical to a rural community like Maine and is a proven and successful program in meeting the needs of low and moderate income citizens. Who are the people served by this program? Without CDBG funds, what might have happened? Here are some examples of what might not have happened if there were no CDBG program:

- \$5.7 million would not be available to Rockland for infrastructure, single and multi- family housing rehab, economic development, elderly transportation
- 3 programs in Caribou today that will provide for housing rehabilitation, downtown revitalization and the replacement of a critical water main would not be happening
- In St. Agatha, they could not have completed a needed water and sewer project
- Frenchville could not have rehabilitated the homes of low income families in its community
- Mars Hill would not have received grants to improve their water and sewer lines, lines that were in poor condition for a rural community that had no other means for their repair
- Dover Foxcroft could not have spent over \$1.9 million for low income housing rehab or construct a new business park that created over 50 new jobs, many for low income families
- In Washington County, one of our poorest counties, over 114 families applied for and received assistance to repair failing wells and septic systems—Almost 70% were very low income families
- Brunswick could not have assisted those who are or are at risk of being homeless with a public services grant
- In Brunswick, a \$400,000 grant that lead to an investment of \$1.5 million dollars and the construction of a building to house a composite company that will create 40 new jobs, over half of them low income would not have occurred.

Save the CDBG Program!

- In Topsham, without CDBG funds, they could not embark on the redevelopment of the village Main Street that has resulted in millions of dollars in new investment and the creation of jobs
- In Bath, a lack of funds would not have allowed the rehabilitation of over 100 units of housing for low and moderate income, provided for infrastructure improvements or created additional matching dollars that were necessary to assist a low income neighborhood of over 200 housing units

These are just a few of the communities that have received and used CDBG assistance to help the citizens of Maine. Why fix something that is not broken and provides such incredible, tangible benefits to the poorest of our communities? For this and many more reasons, the CDBG program is critical to the future of Maine Communities.

The Maine Community Development Association fully supports the reinstatement of CDBG funding. Because we, as an organization, are so confident in the Maine Office of Community Development, we also recommend that the program and its management remain as is. In fact, we believe that OCD's program should be held as a model for how to deliver effective community development programs in both urban and rural settings.

From the Desk of Mary Walton:

Since 1982, the City of Caribou has received 34 grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) totaling over \$8.3 million in funding. Over the years, Caribou has utilized this funding for housing rehabilitation, acquisition and relocation; public infrastructure (including street reconstruction and water and sewer upgrades); downtown revitalization, numerous economic development activities (including business assistance, development fund and economic development infrastructure loans and grants to private business, resulting in the creation and retention of scores of jobs); public facility upgrades; and various planning activities (including housing assessment and downtown revitalization). These grants and loans have created hundreds of jobs, leveraged millions of dollars in matching funds and provided important infrastructure upgrades that the City could not have afforded unless it had implemented a significant mil rate increase upon its taxpayers.

This year the City is very fortunate to have been awarded three CDBG grants: \$500,000 Public Infrastructure to replace a water main in a low income neighborhood; \$500,000 Downtown Revitalization to replace and upgrade infrastructure in the downtown; and \$300,000 Housing Assistance to rehabilitate and address health and safety issues in homes belonging to low income persons. The benefits of the CDBG program are immeasurable. In addition to leveraging nearly \$2.3 million in private and other public funding, this year's programs will assist an estimated 40 homeowners and many downtown businesses. More importantly, the funding provides a conduit to help others help themselves and instills a sense of pride in the community.

The proposed elimination of the CDBG Program, along with seventeen other economic and community development programs and consolidating them under a new program at the Department of Commerce known as "Strengthening America's Communities," would be devastating! Although few details have been released as to how this funding would be distributed, we do know that there will be less to distribute and there is much uncertainty as to how a community would qualify. It is hard to imagine how communities will fund these important initiatives and continue to assist the homeowners and businesses who depend upon that support if the CDBG Program is eliminated or significantly cut.

The City of Caribou Supports the CDBG Program

CELEBRATE HOULTON

1807 -2007

Don Keiser, Houlton Planner

Houlton, the Aroostook County Shiretown, is stirring. As we approach our Bicentennial year, the Town is undergoing the early stages of a renaissance. Houlton, as the major Southern Aroostook service enter town, has a unique role to play in the area. Like other communities in the County, many younger people have chosen to go to school and find work in other areas of the state or beyond. Still, Houlton's population has held steady in recent years or even slightly increased. Now, Houlton is poised for change.

In the last two years, CDBG Grants have assisted with two significant steps in Houlton's revival. First, Houlton has completed a Regional Economic Development and Strategic Marketing Plan (ED&SM Plan) study that was funded primarily by EDA. The resulting Plan was adopted by the Town Council last spring. Second, a Community Planning Grant is assisting with the development of a Plan for renewal of Houlton's beautiful and historic Downtown area.

Houlton has already begun the implementation process in several ways. The current Downtown Planning process is itself an outgrowth of the earlier and broader ED&SM Plan. Additionally, the Town has begun a community-wide dialogue designed to educate the public, enlist additional volunteer support, and aid in setting priorities for the various strategies contained in the ED&SM Plan.

In terms of Economic Development, the Downtown itself is seen as a potential "economic engine." A viable and vibrant Downtown attracts people, and people create the need for more services, housing and shops in the area. The increased activity eventually translates into an area of economic and community activity that impacts the entire community.

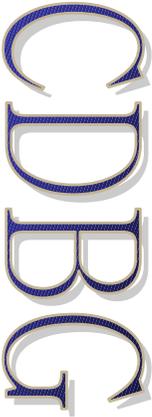
In addition to Downtown revitalization, infrastructure upgrades and expansion along two major arteries of the town are two more areas on which the spotlight is being focused in terms of major projects. Finally, the Houlton border crossing, targeted to be the first Free and Secure Trade (FAST) program Port of Entry in Maine and adjacent to Houlton's Industrial Park, presents another challenging opportunity.

But, talking about Economic and Community Development doesn't get it done. It will take effort, time and (you knew this was coming) money to accomplish meaningful and sustainable economic and community development. That is where the various state and federal programs come into play, complimenting private and local public funding sources.

In the coming months and years Houlton plans to incrementally fund Downtown improvements, infrastructure expansion and various non-bricks & mortar projects designed to enhance the livability, workability and business viability of the entire community. CDBG, MITF and other sources are being counted on to join with Houlton in the effort to improve the lives of everyone in the community and the surrounding area.

Excitement is in the air, and not just because spring is just around the corner. In late January, despite the weather, we had a great turnout for a public workshop on our Downtown. Later this year, Houlton will be hosting its Annual Fair and the 2005 Maine State Firefighters Convention, and planning has begun for the 2007 Bicentennial Celebration. Momentum for change is building. As we move into the second half of the decade, we invite everyone to join with us in [Celebrating Houlton](#).





2005 CDBG Public Infrastructure

<i>Community</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Grant Award</i>	<i>Leveraged Funds</i>
Caribou	Aroostook	Water system improvements	\$500,000	\$ 182,000
Eagle Lake	Aroostook	Supplemental water supply	500,000	219,400
Ellsworth	Hancock	Sewer system improvements	500,000	142,000
Farmington	Franklin	Water system improvements	374,000	93,000
Harrington	Washington	Parking area improvements	60,000	19,405
Van Buren	Aroostook	Water/Sewer system improvements	500,000	393,000
Washington Cty.	Washington	Sewer system improvements	500,000	2,858,000
Wilton	Franklin	Water system improvements	<u>60,000</u>	<u>20,000</u>
TOTAL			\$2,994,000	\$ 3,926,805

2005 CDBG Public Facility Program

<i>Community</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Grant Award</i>	<i>Leveraged Funds</i>
Bath	Sagadahoc	Facility for developmentally challenged persons	\$300,000	\$ 650,000
Boothbay Harbor	Lincoln	Community health facility	300,000	309,017
Bradford	Penobscot	Community center	300,000	582,000
Brighton Plantation	Somerset	Community center renovation	40,000	11,000
Dover-Foxcroft	Piscataquis	Removal of architectural barriers	77,300	25,000
Jonesport	Washington	Town library	300,000	100,000
Unity	Waldo	Headstart facility	300,000	130,000
Washington County	Washington	Community learning center	<u>300,000</u>	<u>100,000</u>
Total			\$1,917,300	\$1,907,017

2005 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

January 14	(EC)	Orono/Bangor Area
February 11	(GM)	Guest Speaker - Augusta Area
April 1	(EC)	In Conjunction with Community Development Day at the Legislature in Augusta
May 13	(GM)	Ellsworth/Belfast Area
June 10	(GM)	Fort Fairfield
August 19	(EC)	In Conjunction with Community Development Block Grant Appreciation Day in Augusta
September 16	(EC)	Organizational Meeting in Brunswick
October 6-8	(AM)	MMA Convention in Augusta
November	(GM)	Meeting to Establish 2006 Goals.

(EC - Executive Committee Meeting)
 (GM - General Membership Meeting)
 (AM - Annual Meeting)

