

OCTOBER 2023

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Official Newsletter of the Maine Forest Products Council



## Annual Meeting Edition

### Message from the Executive Director

PAT STRAUCH

Each fall, our membership congregates for one of my favorite events – our annual membership meeting. The event presents a great opportunity for members to come together to catch up with old friends, reminisce about the year that’s gone by and, importantly, look to the year ahead. This year, more than 90 members congregated at the Cross Center in Bangor for an action-packed two days.

On Monday, attendees elected a new slate of officers, re-elected board members who had reached the end of their three-year terms, received a briefing from our lobby team on the seemingly never-ending session that adjourned in late July, enjoyed presentations from guest speakers including Governor Mills, attended two manufacturing tours, bid generously at our annual banquet auction and finally, celebrated this year’s well-deserving annual award recipients.

As those who attended can attest, the event was a great success. Our Executive Committee and staff are thankful to this year’s presenters, tour hosts and sponsors for their hospitality and generosity. We also extend our congratulations to our newly elected leadership, Ben Carlisle of Prentis and Carlisle, Board President; Chris Fife of Weyerhaeuser, 1st Vice President; and Alex Ingraham of Pingree Associates, Secretary.

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## Executive Director message (cont.)

The information presented at this year's annual meeting is included within this newsletter, and [on our website](#).

While the period between the annual meeting and the new year is typically a slower time, this year is proving to be an exception with a number of legislative and regulatory processes playing out. A few include:

- The Board of Environmental Protection considered a petition submitted by NRCM to implement the California Advanced Clean Truck Rule in Maine. ([Our public comment can be found here on our regulatory calendar.](#))
- The Board of Pesticides Control met to discuss potential changes from the EPA to the Vulnerable Species Pilot and the Herbicide Strategy.
- The Environment and Natural Resources Committee met for a discussion with the Department and others on the PFAS in products law. ([The Portland Press Herald provided good coverage of this meeting](#))
- [The DEP released a three-part draft of the rules](#) to establish the EPR (extended producer responsibility) program. The public comment period runs through October 31 with a December 31 deadline for the department to initiate rules with the Board of Environmental Protection.
- The Legislature released the [preliminary list of working bill titles](#) for the Second Regular Session.

Additionally, a number of committees have been meeting in the interim to begin addressing the backlog of bills ahead of the Second Regular Session. Our team will continue to monitor the process on behalf of our membership.

On an administrative front, as many of you have seen, we have been in the process of reviewing applicants for our vacant Office Manager position. We are hoping to have the position filled soon so we can introduce our new staff member at the upcoming November board meeting at our headquarters on the 9th.

As always, if you have any questions about the contents of this newsletter, please feel free to reach out to me at [pstrauch@maineforest.org](mailto:pstrauch@maineforest.org), or to Krysta West at [kwest@maineforest.org](mailto:kwest@maineforest.org).

Pat



# Executive Committee and Officers (one-year term)

**BEN CARLISLE**  
PRESIDENT  
Prentiss & Carlisle

**CHRIS FIFE**  
1ST VICE PRESIDENT  
Weyerhaeuser

**PETER TRIANDAFILLOU**  
TREASURER  
Huber Resources

**ALEX INGRAHAM**  
SECRETARY  
Pingree Associates

**JIM ROBBINS**  
Robbins Lumber

**ERIC KINGSLEY**  
INRS

**ALLAN RYDER**  
Timber Resource Group

**RYAN MCAVOY**  
Sappi

## Delegation Addresses



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## Presentations



### Commissioner Heather Johnson

MARKET DEVELOPMENT IN THE FOREST INDUSTRY – As Commissioner of the Maine Department of Economic Community Development, Heather Johnson has done a tremendous amount of work to help develop markets for Maine’s forest industry. During this segment, Commissioner Johnson will speak to MFPC membership about her work in this area and her perspectives.

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## Presentations (cont.)




### Mark Savage, Brewer High School

BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAREERS IN THE FORESTS OF MAINE – Under Mark’s leadership, Brewer High School’s Forestry and Outdoor Education program entered phase three, a six-week intensive summer education program, this summer. The program was made available to high school students from schools across the state. Through the program, students learned quality skills like operating equipment while gaining an understanding of the forest and outdoor recreation industries and the opportunities they present. Located at a facility near Gulf Hags and Katahdin Iron Works, the program featured an integrated, hands-on curriculum taught by certified outdoor education, forestry, science and social science teachers.

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## Presentations (cont.)



# PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE PRESENTATION

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## **Krysta West, Maine Forest Products Council**

NEW PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LAW PROGRAM OVERVIEW – In July, the Legislature included a new PFML program in the supplemental budget (LD 258). This new law, which took effect this month, creates the most generous benefits program in New England. According to the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, this represents the “Most impactful and significant workplace legislation enacted in the last four decades”, and it passed along party lines with minimal input from the business community. The Department of Labor will begin rulemaking in January.

Click on the button below for a program overview. Questions can be directed to Krysta at [kwest@maineforest.org](mailto:kwest@maineforest.org).

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# Award Recipients



**Abby Holman Public Service Award**  
DON KLEINER

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**Albert D. Nutting Award**  
SCOTT BEAL

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**President's Award**

John Bryant

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**Doug Denico Forester Award**

Mark Vannah

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**Outstanding Manufacturing Award**

Woodland Pulp

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# Annual Meeting Photos







## Dirigo Business Incentive Tax Program

While many important issues considered this year by the legislature have been highly partisan, members of the Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business Committee unanimously supported Governor Mills' initiative to modernize Maine's existing business tax incentive program (LD 1918). This bill was included in the supplemental budget, LD 258, and became law this month.

Beginning January 2025, this new program will gradually replace the Pine Tree Development Zone program, shifting focus away from job creation and towards incentivizing capital investments and workforce training. Businesses operating in the following industries will qualify for the program: manufacturing, agriculture, fishing and forestry, long distance freight transportation, software publishing, data processing and computer design, engineering, architecture, and scientific research and development.

Under the new Dirigo Business Incentive Program, eligible businesses can qualify for an income tax credit of 10% of capital investments that exceed \$50,000 in the 13 counties outside of southern Maine, and 5% for companies operating in Cumberland, Sagadahoc and York counties. The credit will be limited to \$2 million per tax year with \$500,000 of the credit refundable (with some exceptions). Unused portions of the tax credit can be carried over for four years.

Businesses that will be excluded from the Dirigo Business Incentive Program include those that have undergone a layoff of at least 20% of its workforce within two consecutive months during the tax year and those participating in the PTDZ program.

Under the law, new certifications for the Pine Tree Development Zone program will end in December of 2024, with the program being repealed in its entirety in 2034. During that period of transition, businesses currently enrolled in the PTDZ program can opt to use either program, but they cannot qualify for both.

The new Dirigo Business Incentive Program will encourage businesses to invest in the infrastructure and job training necessary to remain competitive on a global scale. The Maine Forest Products Council thanks Governor Mills and the legislature for supporting this important new program.

The Department of Economic and Community Development has begun rulemaking to develop the application process.

## Articles of interest



MAINE IS NAMED A  
FOREST BIOPRODUCTS  
TECH HUB, OPENING  
DOOR TO INVESTMENT



A SACO COMPANY HAS  
BEGUN PRODUCTION  
OF FIBER-BASED,  
SINGLE-USE  
CONTAINERS



MAINE FOREST  
PRODUCTS WEEK  
CELEBRATES THE VITAL  
CONTRIBUTIONS OF  
MAINE'S FOREST  
SECTOR

## USDA Announces Availability of Nearly \$50 Million to Strengthen Forest Products Economy, Forest Sector Jobs as Part of Investing in America Agenda

October 18, 2023 - Today, the Biden-Harris Administration announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service is making nearly \$50 million in grant funding available for proposals that support crucial links between resilient, healthy forests, strong rural economies and jobs in the forestry sector. Made possible by President Biden's Investing in America agenda, a key pillar of Bidenomics, this funding will spark innovation, create new markets for wood products and renewable wood energy, expand processing capacity, and help tackle the climate crisis.

The open funding opportunity comes through the Forest Service's three key grant programs to support the forest products economy: Wood Innovations Grant, Community Wood Grant, and Wood Products Infrastructure Assistance Grant Programs. The agency is seeking proposals that support innovative uses of wood in the construction of low carbon buildings, as a renewable energy source, and in manufacturing and processing products. These programs also provide direct support to expand and retrofit wood energy systems and wood products manufacturing facilities nationwide.

The Forest Service is requesting proposals from eligible entities in the private, non-profit, and government sectors including Tribes, local and state governments, businesses and for-profit entities, institutions of higher education, as well as public utility, fire, conservation, and school districts, among others.

These investments will support forest management projects to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk across all land ownerships. Byproducts of these activities, like small diameter timber and woody biomass, have historically been of little market value. Thanks in part to these Forest Service grant programs, funding is available to support the use of this often-unused material in many types of wood products.

Businesses that are engaged in or support the forest products economy are eligible to apply for funding to expand manufacturing capacity. These businesses are vital employers in local communities, especially in tribal or rural communities.

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# MFPC Regulatory Calendar

maineforest.org/regulatory-calendar/

Issue/project	Agency	Website	Comment period deadline
Extended Producer Responsibility Program for Packaging	Maine DEP	<a href="#">Link</a>	Tuesday, October 31
Paid Family Medical Leave	Maine DOL	<a href="#">Link</a>	TBD

## Newsletter Sponsors

