Somerset County Charter Commission

At their first meeting in January of 2008, the County Commissioners established a fund for the creation of a Charter Commission. The purpose of a Charter, pursuant to Title 30, §1301, is to provide a method for each County, by vote of its voters, to determine the structure of County Government in that County. The County Charter adopted in each County may determine the officers of the County, their relationship, the administrative structure necessary to perform county functions and the organization of county government, subject to the limits of the Constitution of Maine.

In the months to come, the County worked very closely with the State Bureau of Elections and Commissions to get the proper paperwork filed and ballots ready for the November election; whereby six Charter Commission Members would be elected by the voters of Somerset County. Petitions were filed by interested candidates and names were printed on ballots by district. There were two write-in candidates for District #3; however, the County was just excited that the Charter Commission process had started. After the November election, six Charter Commission members were elected by the voters and in December, the Commissioners appointed the other three members as required by law. The Charter Commission gave its initial notice of its first meeting, which was held on December 29th at the Somerset County Courthouse. For further information on the activities of the Charter Commission you may visit our website: http://www.somersetcountycommissioners.com

Back Row: Left to Right, M. Pembroke of Jackman, Commissioner Robert Dunphy of Embden, Elaine Aloes of Solon, Carl Mc Kenney of Skowhegan, Kay Laney of Norridgewock
Front Row: Davida Barter of Skowhegan, Senator Peter Mills of Cornville and Harry Ralph Withee of Anson, Duane Bickford of Fairfield (absent)
DA FIGHTS HARD AND LONG TO COLLECT RESTITUTION FOR ITS CITIZENS

The District Attorney’s Office aggressively seeks restitution for victims of crime. During the past six years, the District Attorney’s Office collected $1,070,082 for victims of crime in Somerset County alone. In 2008, $216,237 was collected. Over time, the collection rate is over 75%. The accountability rate (defendants who don’t pay restitution) are brought back in before the court to receive further punishment. The District Attorney’s Office doesn’t give up attempting to collect restitution even after the defendant is no longer on probation. The District Attorney’s Office is currently pursuing some restitution cases which are over a decade old; while it is unfortunate that these cases sometimes take that long, it would be even worse to give up completely and allow the convicted criminal to avoid their full responsibility.

If you have any questions about court ordered restitution or if you feel you should have received restitution, please feel free to call our office in Skowhegan at 474-2423. Evert Fowle, District Attorney

SOMERSET COUNTY CELEBRATES BICENTENNIAL

The year 2009 marks an historic occasion - the Bicentennial of Somerset County!

Somerset County Government is in the beginning stages of establishing a Bicentennial Advisory Committee to help celebrate the County’s 200th Birthday! We invite all of you to participate in the preparations and planning of this once in a lifetime event.

The Bicentennial Advisory Committee will raise awareness of the County’s 200 years of history and adventures and will be coordinating bicentennial celebrations to promote the county’s growth while simultaneously attracting further tourism and business.

Community involvement is encouraged among citizens, governments, civic organizations, corporations and public agencies. This will provide an opportunity for all to play a key role in this once-in-a-lifetime historic celebration.

The Bicentennial Birthday Celebration will begin at 11:00 a.m. with a “Kick Off” Opening Ceremony on Saturday, February 28th at the Opera House in Skowhegan, the county seat; with speakers and quests ranging from historians, musicians, State, County and Municipal Officials as well as businesses.

Celebrations will continue throughout the year as the Committee continues its planning and communities get involved.

An itinerary of the Opening Ceremony will be posted on our website as well as historic information and pictures about our wonderful County and its communities.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Robin Weeks, County Administrator at 474-9861 or Diane Godin, Registrar of Deeds at 474-3421. Or visit our website at: www.somersetcountycommissioners.com
The Maine Emergency Management County Director's Council seeks nominations for the "County Director's Council Outstanding Candidate of the Year Award" annually each year. The County Director's Council of the Year Award Program honors one individual who has made outstanding contributions in the field of management during calendar year 2007.

The Outstanding Candidate of the Year Award Program is committed to recognizing an individual who has exhibited the highest standard of excellence, dedication, and accomplishment in the field of emergency management. The Council is especially interested in those whose efforts have been in disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, or recovery and have resulted in or will result in savings of life, injury or property in time of disaster or emergency.

The award is presented to an individual who has:

1. Made an outstanding contribution to emergency management in 2007 and;

2. Has managed, created or facilitated significant programs or projects within their area of responsibility that has resulted in, or has the potential to result in savings of life, injury or property from the impact of disasters or emergencies.

It is with great pleasure that Somerset County recognizes Robert Higgins, Somerset County's EMA Director, as the recipient of the "2007 County Director's Council Outstanding Candidate of the Year Award".

Mr. Higgins has done an outstanding job for Somerset County and has contributed so much in making Somerset County's Emergency Management Agency what it is today. Mr. Higgins has initiated, facilitated, and managed numerous programs and projects within Somerset County that have not only resulted in strong partnerships with other counties, communities, and Emergency Service agencies but have also resulted in, or has the potential to result in savings of life, injury or property from the impact of disasters or emergencies.

Congratulations to Robert Higgins for his outstanding dedication and service to Somerset County.

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**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT — Public Health**

Bob Higgins, Emergency Management Representative, Maine Public Health — Central District Coordinating Council

Maine Public Health Initiative —

As part of Maine's effort to promote and develop a public health infrastructure and system, the Maine Legislature through Maine Statute Title 22 has divided the State into 8 Public Health Districts, through a District Coordinating Council (DCC), is charged with developing a district-wide plan. The DCC is also responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of the public within the District. Somerset and Kennebec Counties are identified as the Central District as one of the

There will be select members from each of the DCC's that will serve as the core membership of a State Council (SWCC). This SWCC will serve as an advisory board to the Maine Center of Disease Control Prevention within the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. The Maine CDC is directing the National Association of County and City Health Officers "10 elements of Essential Public Health Services at Wide Coordinating (Maine CDC) and DDC's to follow the Local Level".

The Public Health Coordinating Councils have representation and partnership from Emergency Management Agencies, Community Services, Community Health Centers, State wide Organizations, County and State Government, Municipalities, Education and Healthy Maine Partners.

To facilitate the state wide development of the public health services, the Maine Legislature enacted into public law this initiative, to include the appointment, education and training requirements onto the local municipal local health officer (LHO) in the communities.

More information can be found at the Maine CDC Maine.Gov website or Title 22, Section 451.

To ease the burden on the LHO requirement there is a manual on Maine CDC web site, as well as a simple approach web based training program which is to be announced and fielded within the next 2 weeks. More information may be obtained by contacting Sue Dowdy, the Maine CDC LFO Coordinator at s.dowdy@maine.gov or by calling 207-287-6372.
Somerset County Courthouse
41 Court Street
Skowhegan, ME 04976
Phone: 474-9861—Fax: 474-7405
Email: somerset@somersetcounty-me.org

About our Website:
At www.somersetcountycommissioners.com you will find links to all County Departments and their websites; Commissioner meeting schedule, agendas, and minutes; Budget Committee information; Charter Commission Committee information; Request for proposals; and Employment opportunities; and other upcoming events.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:

Departmental Address & Phone Directory

Located at 41 Court St. Skowhegan
County Administrator - 474-9861
County Treasurer - 474-5776
Registry of Deeds - 474-3421
Registry of Probate - 474-9861
Economic Development - 474-0166
District Attorney’s Office - 474-2423
Somerset Technical Services - 858-4261

Located at 8 County Drive Skowhegan
Emergency Management - 474-6788
Telecommunications - 474-6386

Located at 131 East Madison RD Madison
Somerset County Jail - 474-9591
Sheriff’s Department - 474-9591

Check Somerset County’s website for more detailed information—www.somersetcountycommissioners.com