



Quiet tranquility is easily found in the aftermath of a storm ...if one is not shoveling.

Jay Hinson photo

Biggest Loser Weigh Stations, Benefits, Goals Promise New Beginnings in 2011

by Ruth Leubecker

While weight loss resolutions head every new year's list, 2011 around here is offering something new in the traditional declaration.

The Biggest Loser Wellness Competition is one more example of partnerships making greater things happen than if separate entities worked on their own. "We're rolling this out countywide," says Marianne Moore, owner/manager of Curves in Calais. "Wellness is very important to me. We had to come up with four different events - and you're actually doing this as a team."

Hosted by the Washington County One Community Wellness Committee, the 2011 campaign will run for 12 weeks, beginning January 7 and ending on April 1. The purpose is to support personal efforts to maintain a safe weight, focusing on nutrition education and healthy living patterns. The motivation for beginning the Biggest Loser program right now is to address Maine's growing prevalence of obesity-related

illnesses.

The competition package for those entering the program is detailed and results-oriented, with all information remaining confidential. "We hope many join up because they'll feel so much better in the new year," says Grace Falzarano from Curves Downeast in Columbia Falls. "At Curves, we're going to offer anyone who joins Biggest Loser a \$99 three-month membership, and we're also offering the Curves circuit with Zumba (cardio) and strength training."

Zumba, the dance-fitness craze sweeping the nation, offers an invigorating workout all by itself. A unique fusion of Latin and international music joins a myriad of fast-step moves - now at Curves in Columbia Falls.

Honor-system accountability, consistent teamwork, and a wealth of information and weigh stations make this Biggest Loser program different from most of its peers. The blockbuster countywide *We Can Program* keyed in on those four events (mentioned above by Moore), the first being this

Biggest Loser competition. Others are marathons and walks set for spring and summer.

For further information about the 2011 Biggest Loser Wellness Competition, call Angela Pochesato, DECH, 255-0225; Sara McConnell, WC:OC, 255-3741; Marianne Moore, Curves Calais, 454-0501; Ron Hutton, Venus & Apollo Fitness Center, 454-7348; Grace Falzarano, Curves Downeast, 483-2008; Terri Woodruff, Lubec Regional Medical Center, 733-2504.

The last day to register is January 11. For those who don't have a ready-made team, just make the contact, and a team can be found. Described as a fun competition with results, being happier and healthier in 2011 is promised to those who accept the challenge. •

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LePage Team Tackles Job Roadblocks

by Ruth Leubecker

Pledging people before politics, Gov.-elect Paul LePage is shifting into high gear in his mission to reform state government and build partnerships with the private sector.

His transition team, working diligently to forge new beginnings and reverse the direction of state government, will soon graduate to another role following inauguration. The 125th Legislature took office on Wednesday, selecting a new attorney general, secretary of state and treasurer for Maine. They then adjourned until January 5 when Gov.-elect LePage was seated.

For LePage, his mantra of people before politics translates into making government affordable, creating jobs, and eliminating regulatory roadblocks to business. Working with local chambers of commerce and listening to business owners throughout Maine motivated him to start his "Red-Tape Removal" project.

These local meetings taking place across Maine have provided LePage with insightful information for tackling stumbling blocks to commerce. With varied backgrounds and experience, his 35-member transition team is tuned into improving the state's business climate.

Deb Neuman, director of the University of Maine's Target Technology Center and a business talk-radio host, is a key team member. She's a Democrat, a TABOR proponent, an energy broker and a community activist. She's also helped develop a short survey for small business owners to complete. Based on survey results and submitted

recommendations for improving Maine's business climate, Neuman will ultimately make her proposals to LePage.

Tarren Bragdon, a co-chair of the transition team and also CEO of the Maine Heritage Policy Center, brings much experience and knowledge to the table as a team member. But in no way is this a run-of-the-mill team. Strictly bipartisan, 16 of the 35 did not even contribute to the LePage campaign. There are Democrats, Republicans and tea partiers.

Three co-chairs and a small staff mostly head-up sifting through hundreds of job applications. With \$5,000 set-up money from the general fund, the transition office will not be disbanding after the inauguration. Instead, it's been announced that the transition team will expand by 40. Another 10 advisors are shaping a two-year budget.

As the *MYNO* goes to press, former Republican gubernatorial candidate and Husson president, William Beardsley, has been appointed Maine's Commissioner of Conservation. Former 2010 gubernatorial candidate Bruce Poliquin is Maine's new treasurer. Charles Summers Jr., former state senator, is Maine's new secretary of state.

William Schneider, former two-term legislator from Durham and U.S. assistant attorney general, is Maine's new attorney general. Schneider, a West Point graduate and Green Beret, has called federal health care reform unconstitutional. Many expect him to advocate adding Maine to a pending Florida lawsuit challenging these constitutional grounds. •

Chamber to Host Brownfields Presentation

by Ruth Leubecker

All are invited to a special Business After Hours program on January 20, detailing four property assessments, the latest update in the Brownfields project in Washington County.

"This will be our presentation of completed assessments," explains Judy East, executive director of the Washington County Council of Governments. "We have four of them done, and this just takes away some of the uncertainty."

In May 2009 the WCCOG was awarded a \$400,000 Brownfields Assessment Grant by the US Environmental Protection Agency. After choosing GEI Consultants as the engineering firm to examine and determine potentially adverse effects impeding redevelopment of specific properties, the project moved forward.

The four identified area sites were the Machias Drycleaners adjacent to the Burnham Tavern in Machias; the abandoned American Can building at 15 Sea Street in Eastport; Antone's Triangle, former gas station and convenience store in Pembroke; and the Bridge property in Calais. All four sites, once thriving businesses, were considered prime sites for redevelopment, but only after study to determine perceived or actual contamination.

"Our investigation centered on two basic phases," explains Todd Coffin, geologist and GEI project manager. "The first was researching the specifics of each site. And second, we had to finally go in, do test borings, take samples, look at the groundwater."

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Governor Requests FEMA Disaster Assessment for December Storms

Governor John E. Baldacci recently sent a request to the Federal Emergency Management Agency requesting a Preliminary Damage Assessment for the severe storm that hit the state beginning on Dec. 12. The initial assessment will focus on Washington, Aroostook, Penobscot and Piscataquis counties.

"This request sets into motion the next step toward assis-

tance for those areas hit hardest by this storm," Governor Baldacci said. "Washington County, by far, suffered the worst of the storm, and we are working to get assistance. We couldn't have gotten this far without the hard work of Calais City Manager Diane Barnes, County

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tion.” To qualify for a Presidential Disaster Declaration, the state must be able to document statewide damage of at least \$1.65 million. In addition, each individual county must meet its own threshold for damage to receive aid.

Since the storm, the Maine Emergency Management Agency has been working with local and state partners to gather damage estimates. As of today, reported damage for the state was \$1.76 million. Washington County suffered the greatest re-

ported damage that contributed for the statewide total but do not appear to make the county-level threshold.

If the reported damage is verified by the FEMA PDA teams, the Governor will request a Presidential Disaster Declaration. If granted, the federal government will contribute 75 percent of the cost of necessary repairs, with the state contributing 15 percent and local governments 10 percent.

Assessments began on Monday, Jan. 3, in Washington County. ■

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“At the drycleaners, there were some residuals, either through vapors, or perhaps some spillage over time, even through the floorboards,” explained Coffin. “We tested for gas under the building. There will be additional work to look beyond the immediate building as a precaution. But vapors are easy to mitigate.”

At 15 Sea Street, Coffin predicts some use restrictions. “This (property) is right on the shoreline, with not much to work with,” he says. “We found some ash and cinder there. I’d advise some capping and asphalt. You wouldn’t necessarily want to plant a garden there, but there could be plenty of options for use.”

An underground storage tank was removed from the Antone’s Triangle property. “The underground well there was okay,” said Coffin, “and there was only a slight residual in the soil.”

Old ash and timbers from wharves were found underground at the Bridges site. “This was an old service station, so this needs to be characterized and considered,” says Coffin. “But none of this would prevent the site from being used productively.”

East estimates over 120 potential Brownfields sites in Washington County, many located in or near downtowns. Many factors can combine to inhibit sites from potential redevelopment. Brownfields grants have spurred much interest in New England because the region has a comparative surplus of abandoned or otherwise neglected property.

Such grants help assess, clean up and redevelop contaminated properties, whether the contamination is real or perceived. Since 2009 the EPA has awarded \$6 million in grants for contaminated land cleanup in Maine alone. The Eastern Fine property which Cimbrot later developed into its Brewer plant site is often recognized as the poster child for transitional cleanup in Maine.

The Machias Bay Area Chamber of Commerce invites all businesses and other interested parties to its Brownfields assessments program on January 20, 5 p.m., at the Blue Bird Restaurant. Coffin predicts the GEI report findings will be available online in about two weeks. ■



The pristine beauty of a snow covered lakeside is seen.

Joy Hinson photo

Share the Warmth..... from page 3

Music (Portland) — \$500 Salvation Army (Houlton) — \$500 Save Our Strays (Fairfield) — \$1,000 (two different individuals selected the same organization) The Positive Radio Network (Freeport) — \$500 Toys for Tots — \$750 (two different individuals selected the same organization and one divided a contribution between two organizations)

Additionally, Dead River Company donated \$100 to charities selected by the businesses that helped in the Share the Warmth effort by hiding the certificates/Arthur at their locations.

“We were one of the busi-

nesses that hid Arthur, and it was fun having him in my office and exciting when he was found,” said Gail Clukey of Clukey’s Auto Supply in Presque Isle. “We were also delighted to learn that Dead River Company was willing to donate \$100 to a charity of our choice. My husband Tom and I selected The Sunshine Club for Children because I’m an active volunteer with that organization. Its primary mission is to provide transportation to the Shriners Springfield Orthopedic Hospital and the Shriners Boston Burn Center for the patient and one adult parent or guardian. In this economic

environment, every little bit helps and we thank the Dead River Company.”

Below please find a list of organizations chosen by the participating businesses that hid the Arthur cut-outs. Each non-profit received a \$100 donation:

Alfond Youth Center (Waterville); Bangor Humane Society; Down East Family YMCA (Ellsworth); Friends of Community Action (Saco); Full Tide (Kittery); Irene Chadbourne Ecumenical Food Pantry (Calais); Maine Community Foundation; Sunday River Charitable Fund; Mid Coast Chapter of the American Red Cross; Notre Dame du Mont Carmel Food Pantry (Madawaska); Responsible Pet Care (Norway); St. Mary’s Food Pantry (Houlton) The Center for Grieving Children (Portland); The Sunshine Club for Children (Presque Isle); Toys for Tots.

“We’re a company that always keeps our customers, neighbors and communities in mind,” said Robert Moore, president, Dead River Company. “Giving back is integral to what we do, and that is why we created Share the Warmth. We couldn’t be happier with the support we got from participants, and the significant impact we were able to make. Thanks to the many people who helped make this possible.”

For more information, visit www.deadriv.com. ■

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