



SERVING THE WESTERN MOUNTAINS OF MAINE WHERE THE KIDS GROW STRAIGHT AND TALL AND THE WOMEN ARE ALL GOOD LOOKING.

## At glance, local economy appears healthy

By David Hart  
Irregular Staff

FRANKLIN COUNTY — The nightly news including local Maine broadcasts continue to announce and rehash the economic challenges we face and fill the nation with a gloomy forecast. The media reports a widespread dwindling economy that is pinching every one of us due to a now admitted time of recession.

The unsettling forecast poises the question of how our local northern Franklin County is handling this crunch as the media blasts reports of mass unemployment, foreclosure, and business closure which is creating an industry meltdown.

The Maine Department of Labor is not reporting good news. Unemployment is also hitting record high numbers in our state.

According to a DOL release, the not-seasonally-adjusted Maine unemployment rate for February increased to 9.1 percent up from 8.7 percent in January and up from 5.5 percent a year ago.

Other New England states reporting seasonally-adjusted rates for this February include New Hampshire at 5.3 percent, Massachusetts at 7.8 percent and Rhode Island at 10.5 percent.

“Labor market conditions continue to weaken nationally

and in Maine between January and February, the number of nonfarm jobs declined and the unemployment rate rose,” said State Labor Commissioner Laura Fortman. The national rate increased 3.3 percentage points over the month and in Maine it rose 3.1 percentage points, she explained.

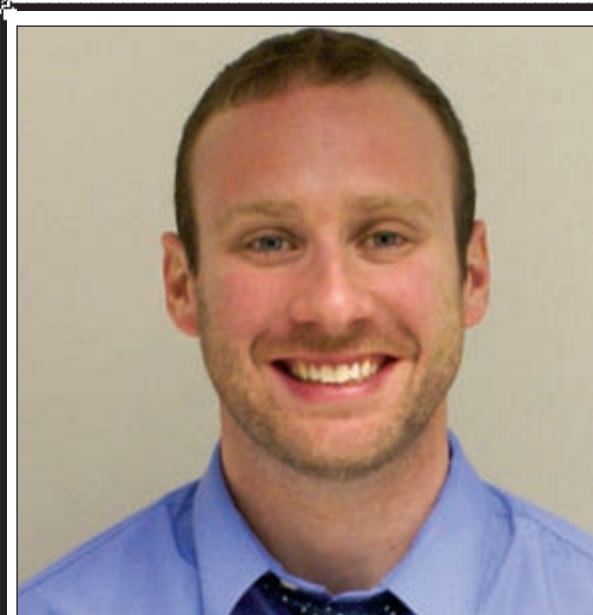
Job loss included 2,600 seasonally-adjusted jobs statewide over the month and 15,500 job losses over the year. Job loses were recorded in a wide spectrum of industries from construction to manufacturing to government.

These losses have affected Franklin County as the not-seasonally-adjusted rate hit its highest rate in many years at 10 percent. Average individual income stood at \$15.50 per hour for Franklin County residents or an average of \$35,000 yearly as reported for that month.

However, the overall spirit and economically vital signs of the northern Franklin County business communities show strong indications of not only surviving a recession, but in many cases, there are elements of economic stability and even growth.

Naturally, all industry sectors can not be identified, but some local sources were identified and overall the reports are favorable in this unique section of the western mountains. In perhaps a unique relationship to tourism, recre-

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Marco Aliberti stands outside the teacher lunch room during a typical day as a middle school English teacher at the Kingfield Elementary School. He will take over the reins as the school's principal next year. (David Hart photo)

## Central School status unclear

By Laura Dunham  
Special to the Irregular

NORTH NEW PORTLAND — The fate of the Central Elementary School at the North Village in New Portland was discussed by some 60 residents Monday night, April 13, with the meeting called by the Superintendent of the MSAD #74 School District Dr. Ken Smith and board members Solon chairman Andy Davis, Mitchell Quint and Wayne Rugh of North Anson, Sylvia Taylor of Embden and Gene Hutchins and Rosemary Underwood Nadeau of New Portland.

As the meeting progressed, it seemed uncertain just who owns the land and the school, which is due to be closed in June. Dr. Smith told those present that MSAD #74 had a deed

stating that it owned the land and the school, but on Thursday he said that no such deed could be found.

The town has three deeds dating back to the 1940s indicating that the land was donated by the Omer and Etta Chase family and if the school was ever closed it would revert to the heirs. The Chases great-grandchildren (one of them, Pete Bearor, was at the meeting) will have to decide if they want the land back.

In the meantime, a vote has been scheduled for April 28 to decide if the town wants to continue to operate the school for its some 17 children with a staff of six.

The sole cost to the taxpayers if they decide to keep the school open would be about \$295,000. Janet White, chairman of the board of selectmen,

told those present that if the town decided to continue to operate the school, the mil rate would go from \$15 to \$20.

Dr. Smith said he was hopeful that he could get the April 28 scheduled vote changed to the end of May to give the town time to get all its facts and deeds ironed out, but this would mean calling a special MSAD #74 board meeting to get the date changed.

The problem is if the town votes not to operate the school and the heirs don't want it, what happens next?

Dr. Smith said if MSAD #74 gets stuck with the school, the district could possibly sell it or lease it out to someone.

But that's unclear that the district

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## Getting to know Mr. A

By David Hart  
Irregular Staff

KINGFIELD — Through recent budget negotiations, the MSAD #58 school board saw great value in keeping an administrator in each of its four elementary buildings.

With the retirements of Mt. Abram principal Jeanne Tucker, Pathway Partner's Gary Perlson and the resignation of Phillips Elementary principal David Crandall, the board found its solution without hiring new staff members.

This came with a slight shift in administration moving Kingfield principal Brenda Stevens to Mt. Abram.

The other move came in the form of the promotion of Kingfield English teacher Marco Aliberti who has had elementary administration as a goal on his career path since he graduated college.

Aliberti is a 2000 graduate of University of Maine Farmington with a degree in Elementary Education. He also graduated from the University of Southern Maine with a Masters Degree in Educational Leader-

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## Troop-greeter film, 'The Way We Get By' comes to Farmington

BANGOR — A documentary film whose executive producer is Warren Cook of Kingfield is making audiences laugh, cry, and renew their faith in the human spirit.

The Way We Get By continues to receive critical acclaim and honors at screenings across the country. It will be shown at the Narrow Gauge Theater in Farmington at 7 p.m. on April 22 and 23. Tickets are \$5.

“This film touches on the themes that I think are most important in life: service to community, service to country, and honoring our elders,” Cook said.

The documentary, directed by Old Town native and award-winning filmmaker Aron Gaudet and produced by award-winning television journalist and film producer Gita Pullapilly, showcases three senior citizens who belong to the Maine Troop Greeters. These dedicated volunteers welcome every returning soldier from his or her duty in Iraq and Afghanistan as they come through the Bangor International Airport.

“The Way We Get By” had its Maine debut on April 9 in Orono, at The Collins Center for the Arts with Governor John E. Baldacci, Congressman Michael Michaud and Congresswoman Chellie Pingree in attendance.

The film has been honored with the Special Jury Award at the South by Southwest Film Festival and the Audience Award at Full Frame Documentary Film Festival in Durham, North Carolina. At the Cleveland Film Festival, it beat out 28 films to win the Greg Gund Memorial Film Competition, which recognizes films for their social conscience.

In Boston, critic Kerry Skemp's review of the film calls it “a remarkable reminder of just how much we have to learn from our elders.”

“The Troop Greeters are quiet, homespun heroes in their own right. Their commitment has been ongoing for more

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