



# ADVOCATE

...helping to shape western Maine's future

[www.westernmountainsalliance.org](http://www.westernmountainsalliance.org)

December 2006

## Maine Town Considers Renewable Energy

As one of New England's top architectural photographers, Eliot resident Dan Gair's fine architecture and gourmet food photography has appeared in publications such as Architectural Digest, The New York Times, Wine Spectator, Gourmet, and Vanity Fair. Lately Dan's been looking at a different type of architecture - windmills.

Chairman of the newly formed Eliot Energy Commission, Dan and Eliot selectperson Betsy O'Donoghue traveled to Hull, Massachusetts in October to see two wind turbines erected by the city of Hull to offset the cost of energy for this coastal community. Hull built its first wind turbine in 2001 at a cost of \$700,000. Within three and a half years, the turbine had generated enough money to pay for itself.

"It's phenomenal how profitable it's been for them, Gair said, but noted that Maine's regulatory environment is different than that of Massachusetts. "Hull has its own energy district (and can sell energy back to the grid). " In Maine, there's a 100 kilowatt cap on what a facility can sell back to the power companies. For municipalities in Maine, site-specific projects that supply energy to a particular facility or group of facilities may be the most economical investment, Gair said.

Located next to Kittery on the Piscataqua River, Eliot has about 6,000

residents. Selectmen formed the Energy Commission earlier this year, after Gair wrote a letter to the board requesting that a commission be formed to look at energy consumption and renewable energy options mflr the town.

The commission can have up to seven members, appointed by selectmen, and is charged with making recommendations to the Board on renewable energy options.

Gair recommends a first smart step for energy commissions: assess your current energy usage and where conservation measures can have an impact. In nearby Saco, for example, an energy audit and investments in new lighting and refrigeration are expected to pay for themselves within five years.

Saco's energy commission has been operating for less than two years. Commission member and city councilor Eric Cote said that he believes every town and city should have a focus on energy conservation and renewable energy.

The commission's first project was a \$75,000 investment to upgrade lighting systems in city and school buildings. The commission was able to get approximately \$10,000 of this investment back from the Efficiency Maine program and save 110,000 KWh per year in electricity- or about \$11,000 per year. The city's return

on investment will be less than 5 years.

The commission's next two projects were upgrading refrigerators and computer screens with more energy efficient models and an additional savings of 26,000 KWh per year. The investment in 16 energy star

refrigerators will pay back in 3 years, Cote said.

Saco is also installing a heat pump in the effluent of the treatment plan, saving about 7,000 gallons of oil per year, and in November, the city will install a Southwest Wind Power Skystream wind turbine.

With wind measuring equipment on it, the windmill will be used to produce 4,000-6,000 KWh per year of electricity, measure the wind, and educate the public about wind power. The city opted to purchase the small wind turbine at a cost of about \$8,000, instead of the standard practice of investing \$30,000 in a tower with wind measuring equipment.

Once a community decides to look into renewable energy, Sue Jones of Community Energy Partners in Freeport recommends the following steps:

1. Identify local renewable energy resources that are most suitable to the

*Any town can form an energy commission.*

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# WESTERN MOUNTAINS ALLIANCE

## Mission Statement

The Western Mountains Alliance strives to improve the quality of life and to strengthen the regional identity of Maine, while honoring rural values and the environment, and supporting sustainable community development. We provide a forum to bring together many voices and many communities to find common ground through regional dialogue, bold thinking, and capacity building. We serve as an energetic advocate for the western mountains region.

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## Here at the Alliance

### We Have Moved!

Our new office location is 109 Church Street, Farmington in the Church Street Commons building. WMA's email and postal mailing addresses remain the same, but our phones have changed. New phone: (207) 778-3885. Please watch for our new email addresses coming in 2007!

Our heartfelt thanks go to Jason, Roland and the folks from H.H. Brown in Dexter, Maine who generously donated office equipment, transforming our new office space into a comfortable, work-friendly environment. We also want to thank Eric Gilbert and the members of the Mt. Blue High School Football team who unloaded in under 15 minutes what would have taken our staff half the day to accomplish.

Take Route 4 and 27 N into Farmington; the first right after the downtown light is Church Street. Church Street Commons is on the right.

### Two New Members Join WMA Board of Directors

The WMA Board of Directors is pleased to welcome new members, Roger J. Poulin and Barry Martin, two community leaders whose expertise and commitment to western Maine's future is respected throughout the region. Barry Martin is Vice President and Director of Human Resources at Skowhegan Savings Bank. He has previously served as Executive Director for the Tri-County Workforce Investment Board at the Eastern Maine Development Corporation. Roger J. Poulin owns the Towne Motel in Skowhegan and is an international economic consultant, working mainly in Africa and Asia. Roger is active in economic development activities that build upon the rural culture and heritage of western Maine. Their bios can be found in the press release on WMA's website.

### Board Updates

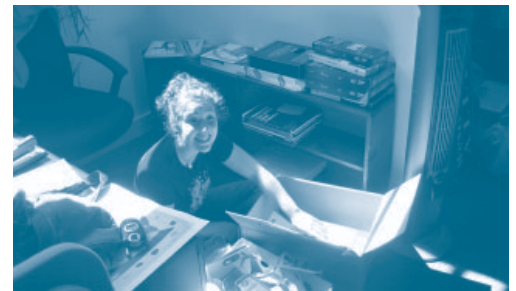
A world of appreciation goes to former members of the WMA Board of Directors: Gordie Flint, Paul Frederic, Hannah Warren and Ken Coville. Paul was a founding

member of the organization and Gordie led WMA's finance committee. At the June Annual Meeting the WMA Board of Directors elected Rebecca Welsh as it's new chairperson.

### Life at WMA

Casey Brackett is the University of Maine at Farmington intern who worked with us this summer and fall on projects and communications. Casey brought to WMA her confidence, intelligence, good humor and an array of skills, which proved indispensable during the implementation stage of the Eat Smart-Eat Local conference. Many thanks Casey, and fare thee well!

*"I was hired at the Western Mountains Alliance in May as the Farm to School conference intern. My first assignment was to do research on subjects that would further my understanding of the project. I found myself diving into information about organic farming, community gardens, other Farm to School projects, the benefits of eating and buying local. All of these topics were of interest to me as a first time gardener as well as a vegetarian and supporter of local business. Mostly I worked on various projects ranging from booking flights (for conference presenters) to writing radio promotions for the conference to designing posters*



*and sending out bulk mail. I have had the opportunity to learn and exercise many skills in my work here. Working for the Alliance has been a more than positive experience that I would definitely recommend to anyone with budding interest in agriculture, sustainability or the better good of the community in general."*

– Casey Brackett

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*...helping to shape western Maine's future*

## WMA Supports Innovative Practices To Promote Sustainable Community Development, Protect Rural Values and Natural Resources, and Build a Regional Identity for Western Maine.

WMA is providing assistance to the following networks and community groups:

- **Affordable Housing Group**, facilitated by the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments – is discussing solutions to the growing affordable housing issue in western Maine.
- **Fairbanks Neighborhood School Association** – is working towards completing its building on Rte 27 in Fairbanks and developing a shared use kitchen to support local agriculture and microenterprise in Franklin County.
- **Maine Community Foundation Network Program** – is supporting the development of two community networks. The Franklin County Community College Network is offering community college courses off-site in Franklin County. The Somerset County Area Resource Providers network is addressing substance abuse through an expanding partnership of social service agencies and community groups.
- **Washburn-Norlands Living History Center** – is using living history to relate 1870's farm life to modern-day visitors.
- **Western Maine Sustainable Development Collaborative** – is partnering with Lead Western Maine and the Penquis Leadership Institute to host a May '07 "Pitch Your Project" event for social entrepreneurs.
- **Woods and Waters Group of the Maine Mountain Heritage Network** – is supporting the sustainable multiple use of natural resources in western Maine. The group is designing a resource-mapping project in the greater Rangeley area that involves gathering data on local land use priorities.

## Here at the Alliance

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### Marketing Our Message

Thanks to an honorarium received from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for WMA's participation in the "Financial and Organizational Sustainability Workshop" held in North Carolina and the talents of our website coordinator, Tricia Cook, WMA will be improving our website design. Watch for a new look this winter, as we launch our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *helping to shape western Maine's future*.

### Western Maine's Leaders To Pitch Their Projects

Lead Western Maine (LWM) is beginning its fifth year supporting community leaders to develop their local or regional project and transform their ideas into action. Participants learn how to inspire others, raise funds, facilitate planning meetings and build the region's future. Workshops will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday each month. The program will begin in January 2007. Applications are still being accepted.

Western Maine Sustainable Development Collaborative will co-sponsor a May 2007 "Pitch Your Project" event, where Lead Western Maine participants and alumni will have an opportunity to present their project concept to a group of potential funders and investors. This exciting opportunity to sell your vision to funders will be the culminating workshop, so register today for Lead Western Maine.

### Booklets List 115 Places to Find 'Local Food'

Working with energetic local partners and farmers, WMA coordinated the publications of the Farmington Area Local Foods and the Somerset County Farms and Farmstands booklets. Many thanks go to UMF practicum student Vicki Lowe, who contacted farms and businesses to find sources where consumers can buy locally grown, raised or produced food. Area partners helped with outreach, design and distribution of the finished products. To list

your farm or local foods market in the 2007 edition, call WMA.

### Reconnecting Farms With Communities

On October 6 & 7, approximately 100 people from throughout the state and New England attended WMA's Eat Smart Eat Local conference at the University of Maine at Farmington. The conference focused on ways to connect produce from local farms with area schools and featured presentations by Tony Geraci of Petersborough, New Hampshire, a former food service director who designed a successful local foods project in his school district. Other presenters included Dr. Arden Andersen, author of "Real Medicine Real Health" and Mark Muller of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy in Minnesota along with more than ten practitioners speaking on farm to school issues from the public policy, community development, child health and food service perspectives. Visit WMA's web site for information on how to access videotapes and presentation information.

The conference has resulted in a new farm-to-school list serve moderated by the Maine Department of Education:  
<http://mailman.informe.org/mailman/listinfo/farm.school>.

November 18, WMA presented "Pasture Raised Livestock" with co-sponsors MA3, MOFGA, Maine Pasture Fed Livestock Assoc., and USDA featuring keynote speaker Jerry Brunetti. Watch for information on upcoming farmer workshops on marketing and cooperatives.

### Greenhouse Gears Up for Local Consumers

As part of WMA's local food systems project, John Pino of Mooarhill Farm, Mt. Vernon is providing technical assistance to Farmington farmers Weslene and Richard Marble, who built a greenhouse designed to raise crops year-

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## Thank You UMF!

The University of Maine at Farmington (UMF) has been a strong supporter of Western Mountains Alliance (WMA) since 1987, when the Alliance was founded. Several university faculty and leaders have served on our Board of Directors. We have held countless workshops, public forums and debates in the comfort of the UMF facilities. Students have helped WMA as volunteers and staff. We have worked together with University staff on projects, programs, conferences and a publication. But without question, UMF's generosity in opening available space for the office of WMA on campus for almost twenty years is immeasurable. Our gratitude for these years of residence in the rustic farmhouse tucked in the center of the campus is immense.

In twenty years, WMA has become a nationally recognized model for sustainable development, with programs and initiatives benefiting local communities and stimulating regional discussion. UMF has grown to be a premier liberal arts college, dedicated to Maine's youth and community partnerships. As we make way for UMF's newest expansion, we are saying good-bye to the Thomas House and our wonderful housemates, knowing that the future holds the potential for many new creative ventures with our friends at the University of Maine at Farmington.

*When organizations collaborate, they share more than a belief system or ideas for a better future. They are willing to share resources to achieve that common vision.*

***Thank you, UMF, for helping to shape western Maine's future!***

## Here at the Alliance

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round and sell to local buyers. Salad greens and spinach will be harvested into December! The greenhouse construction is uniquely designed for Maine winters, with a frost-free hydrant to supply three types of irrigation systems, specifically chosen for the crops being grown. The building will not be heated and needs only minimal electricity. You can learn how the greenhouse shape, access doors, ventilation system, and drainage were designed and built. In spring '07 documentation of site preparation, construction, planting and maintenance at the greenhouse will be compiled for the public on a DVD.

### **Eat Smart Eat Local goes to Bridgton's First Farmers Market Festival**

On July 22 the Bridgton Farmers Market held the first Farmers Market Festival at the Bridgton Community Center. Brainchild of Donna Fournier of Meadowsweet Lamb & Herb Farm in Denmark, the festival promoted the market and included an exhibit of "The Art of Eating Well" posters designed by Maine artists in conjunction with the Eat



Smart Eat Local initiative. The exhibit has traveled throughout the state this year and is available for display through March. For more information, contact WMA.

### **Renewable Energy in Western Maine - January**

The Western Maine Legislative Caucus will host a forum on renewable energy projects in western Maine on January 26, 7-9:30 a.m. at the University of Maine at Farmington. Watch for further information this December.



*(Left to right)  
Jim Harrington,  
Checkmate Acres, Denmark;  
Julee Applegarth, Rippling  
Waters Farm, Sebago; Donna  
Fournier, Meadowsweet Lamb  
& Herb Farm, Denmark;  
Carmen Lone, Executive  
Director of the Bridgton  
Community Center.*

## Grants to Farmers and Small Businesses Available

The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency program provides grants and loan guarantees to eligible farmers and rural small businesses to assist in developing renewable energy systems and making energy improvements. Eligible businesses include sole proprietorships, partnership, corporations and cooperatives.

## Maine Town Considers Renewable Energy

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town's energy needs and budget, and whether a suitable site exists that the public is likely to support. Then, conduct feasibility studies to determine whether the preferred resources are adequate to generate the amount of energy needed.

2. Design your project with consideration of all available financial incentives and opportunities, and giving preference for off-the-shelf technologies. "Unless the project is something very unique, try to keep your costs down by using commercially-available equipment that does not involve a lot of design work," Jones said. "A project will likely need some design work, of course, but focusing on simple projects first, will enable larger, more complex projects later."

3. Look for investors or funders. Federal incentives for renewable energy projects are currently available for projects installed by the end of 2007, but it's unclear whether they will be extended beyond 2007. Depending on the technology, state incentives may also be available.

As part of its work, Gair said the commission will look at the full range of renewable energy options for Eliot but he, like Selectperson O'Donoghue, notes that the town doesn't have any money. Borrowing a new acronym from a friend, Gair hopes that when it comes to renewable energy projects such as wind, "PIIMBY" or "Put It In My Backyard" will take hold.

On Friday, December 1, from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m., Community Energy Partners and Western Mountains Alliance are co-hosting a workshop at Franklin Memorial Hospital in Farmington. The workshop will include an introduction and overview of both the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Grant and Guaranteed Loan Program, and the Value-Added Producer Grant Program. Speakers will be Sue Jones of Community Energy Partners, and Mike Grondin and John Sheehan of USDA Rural Development. Recent award recipient Herbert "Bussey" York of Sandy River Farm in Farmington will also speak about his experience with the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Grant Program.

Recent recipients of grants and loans were awarded major funding for:

- Wind turbines,
- Ethanol and biodiesel refining facilities,
- Biomass,
- Geothermal energy systems,
- Manure processing facilities and anaerobic digesters,
- Solar PV and solar thermal,
- Energy efficient equipment and improvements, and
- Feasibility studies, business plans, marketing plans for renewable energy projects.

## Collaboration

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one reason people choose to do business in western Maine but for the women in this publication, starting and running a business seemed more a way to create quality of life than to sustain it. This quality of life extends to their families and employees. In 2004, the U.S. Small Business Administration reported that women-owned businesses in Maine generated \$3.2 billion in revenues in 2003 and employed over 28,000 people."

The 64-page *Telling Their Stories* addresses new ways of looking at success and of measuring growth beyond the bottom line.

The book includes excerpts from the students' journals and photographs of the region by Farmington photographer Scott Perry.

Jessica Dafni, a former UMF student in the Women's Studies program also spoke at the press conference. "My work with Nina Gianquinto [of Upfront and Pleasant Gourmet] and on this project has been invaluable. From Nina I learned that success is whatever I want it to be and my definition of success is unlikely to mirror exactly that of another person. "I have grown more and more to appreciate the small business owners that make up such a large part of Maine's economy. They seem to thrive in a collaborative rather than competitive environment and tend to focus more on being a part of the community."

The book is available to libraries, educational institutions, groups working with entrepreneurs and youth, and policymakers. A PDF version of the complete book is on our website, [www.westernmountainsalliance.org](http://www.westernmountainsalliance.org).

*For information on this and upcoming workshops, visit [www.communityenergypartners.com](http://www.communityenergypartners.com) or learn about the application process contact John Sheehan of USDA Rural Development at 207-990-9168. Information on how to obtain an energy audit is available at [www.maine.gov/msep/](http://www.maine.gov/msep/) or contact the PUC's State Energy Program at 207-287-3318.*



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## In Collaboration: Women Business Owners in Western Maine

Small businesses are a driving engine behind Maine's economy and women business owners are a major factor in rural Maine's successful enterprises. The newly released publication *Telling Their Stories: Women Business Owners in Western Maine* makes visible the women and the stories behind the statistics. The stories of fourteen businesswomen, as recorded by students at the University of Maine at Farmington (UMF), are featured in *Telling Their Stories*, a collaborative venture of the Western Mountains Alliance (WMA), Coastal Enterprises Inc. (CEI), and the University of Maine at Farmington's Women's Studies Program.

*Telling Their Stories* received the support of Senator Olympia Snowe, a champion for Maine's small businesses and endorsement from the Center for Rural Affairs, a national research and policy group. It explores women's diverse motivations to start

a business, the ingenuity, risk-taking and perseverance required to make it work, and how the rural character and lifestyles of the region inspired their successes.

Journalist Jo Josephson, who conceived the project in 2002 for the Western Mountains Alliance, saw the book as a way of "putting a regional face" on a statistical report entitled *Making a Difference: Women Business Owners in Maine* written in 2001 by CEI's Ellen Golden. Lee Sharkey, Assistant Professor of English and Women's Studies at UMF designed the course for the students who conducted the research and documented the stories of the women business owners.

WMA's Executive Director Tanya Swain spoke at the press conference where the book was unveiled. "The stories of the women in this publication bear out what I have seen over the nearly 15 years I've lived and worked in western Maine - that is that for creative,



*Jo Josephson (left front) and the University of Maine at Farmington students who completed the oral history research.*

energetic women living here, it is sometimes a challenge to find interesting work... Sometimes you have to create it yourself."

"Women owned businesses in Maine are sometimes described as survival or quality of life businesses. This publication shows that to be only part of the story. Quality of life is

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