

Maine Technology

A publication featuring the Information Services technology of Maine State Government

Maine Executive Leadership Forum

AUGUST 14, 2003 • AUGUSTA CIVIC CENTER

<http://www.govtech.net/events/conference.phtml?confid=125>

“Government at all levels faces enormous pressure to provide high levels of service within limited resources. The use of technology is the platform to make this happen and we must work together at all levels. This event is a giant step in this direction, providing personal networking opportunities, a source of state of the art information and a view towards the future!” Richard Thompson, Chief Information Officer, Department of Administrative and Financial Services



OPENING KEYNOTE

HONORABLE JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI
GOVERNOR
STATE OF MAINE

Maine - Government Services, Citizen Focus

Government is at a crossroads and technology is the foundation of that road. Opportunities abound for streamlining and partnering. As we move further into the 21st Century, technology will bridge cities, counties and nations. Our investments today and tomorrow must be well planned and executed to give the citizens of Maine the best possible service from the government organizations they do business with. In this presentation, the Honorable John Baldacci, Governor of Maine, will share a vision that will set the stage for Maine to be a leader in seamless and streamlined government.

Afternoon Keynote: Trends and Issues in the Digital Culture, Phil Burgess, President and Senior Fellow, Annapolis Institute

Highlights:

- Where Are We, Where Should We Be?
- Future of the Internet
- Leading, Managing and Motivating in Challenging Times
- Cyber Security
- Web Content and Accessibility
- Business Continuity
- Network Convergence
- Project Management
- A Brave New World
- Wireless Technology
- Project Showcase

Contact Liese Brunner at lbrunner@govtech.net or call 800-917-7732 ext 355 for more information. 

Technology Brings Maine Tourism to the World

By SHARON THOMAS

According to the Travel Industry Association of America, 59 million travelers used the Internet to make travel plans in 2000. This growing trend in on-line vacation planning prompted the Maine Office of Tourism to recently revamp its Website, www.visitmaine.com, to better assist the growing number of tourists planning their vacations on the Internet. The site was designed to be a vacation planner's conduit to accommodations, tourist attractions, outdoor recreation, arts and heritage, and tourist services in Maine. It makes the best possible use of cutting-edge technology to attract new visitors to the state.

Tourists often plan to visit Maine to see its natural beauty, thus the enhanced multimedia of the site showcases the state using crisp, digital imagery. Rotating photos on the home page feature images from all corners of the state, and if that isn't enough to entice visitors, they can watch a short Maine video thanks to streaming video technology. In addition, there are several other features that enhance the site, including new links, trip planning, mapping software, and personalization capabilities.

- continued on page 2 -

IN THIS ISSUE:

Maine Executive Leadership Forum	1
Technology Brings Maine Tourism to the World	1
Those Classy Maine Waters	2
MaineDOT Large Animal Warning System	4
MFASIS Training Management System	5
Challenge	6
Maine.gov Citizen Alert System	7
MyMaine.gov and You	7
Forester Merle Ring	8

Technology Brings Maine Tourism, cont.

Trip planning is essentially a “shopping cart” feature that enables the user to select accommodations, restaurants, attractions and tourist services to be added to a personalized itinerary. After the components have been selected, users can simply print their itinerary and bring it with them as a guide for their vacation. To make vacation planning even easier for the visitors to the site, the office showcases the best the state has to offer in outdoor adventure, cultural heritage, and must-see destinations through six planned driving loop tours covering each unique region of the state. Quick access to detailed itineraries, maps and sightseeing suggestions for each driving tour is available at a click of a mouse.

The Website also has dynamically generated mapping capability allowing users to see where small townships, large cities, and all Maine tourism sites and businesses in between are located. Another high-tech feature on www.visitmaine.com is personalization. Visitors are given the option to subscribe to the Office of Tourism’s e-mail list so they may receive more information about packages or special offers. They can also pass on the office’s marketing message to their friends by sending an “e-postcard.” This feature increases our marketing capacity because we are, in essence, recruiting our visitors to market our site to their friends.

In addition, www.visitmaine.com is helping to boost the visibility and profitability of Maine businesses. Members

of the state’s tourism industry can directly add their business or special event listings to the site at no charge, edit that information, and map the location of their business. The Office of Tourism usually reviews the listings within two business days of their submission and approves the ones that fall within designated tourism categories.

Since the site went live last March, it has had nearly one million unique visitors. And we now have nearly 3,500 business listings, and that number continues to grow every day. In fact, the site has proved so successful that the editors of Interface Tech News of Portland named the Maine Office of Tourism’s Website the best non-profit site in northern New England during the magazine’s fifth annual competition, and Portland Magazine rated it as one of the top 25 websites in the state.

The Internet has become a powerful travel-planning tool and as its popularity continues to grow, the Office of Tourism will strive to incorporate the latest technologies that will make planning a Maine vacation as easy as possible. If you haven’t already, I encourage you to visit www.visitmaine.com and share your thoughts with us. 

As secretary to the Office of Tourism and Film Office, Sharon provides administrative support and maintains the schedules of eight busy staff. Sharon resides in Richmond and enjoys spending time with her family, gardening and reading. She can be reached at 624-7483.



Planning to vacation in Maine this year?

In May, Maine became the first state to utilize Mobular¹ Engines technology to replicate the Maine Tourism Association’s print brochure in an easy to navigate, completely searchable format that can be sent directly to your e-mail in seconds. Visit <http://www.visitmaine.com/guidebook/request.php> to request your copy.

¹ Mobular takes an entire online database (or subset thereof), converts it into its special format, adds a built-in search engine and navigation, and puts it into a compressed and self-expanding package that travels very easily via e-mail. Since the database and search engines are running locally on the recipient’s computer, performance is lightning fast. Searches run anywhere from ten to hundreds of times faster than what’s possible even via a broadband Internet connection. For a demonstration see <http://www.mobular.com/demo/llbean/>.

Those Classy Maine Waters

By Vicki L. Schmidt

Like many states, Maine faces tough issues with regards to maintaining a vibrant economy without negatively impacting its waters. Our key businesses, wood products, agriculture, aquaculture, fishing, tourism, as well as our way of life, are intertwined with water resources. Maine’s surface waters have seen substantial improvements over the last two decades and work continues to make further improvements. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff of the Land and Water Bureau of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection recently completed a two-year project to enhance the spatial databases of Maine’s 24K surface hydrography. The GIS hydrography layers for streams, rivers, estuarine, and marine waters are now fully coded for their legal water quality classification.

Maine’s water classification laws govern how waters are managed, and as part of Maine’s management strategy for 15+ years, annual bio-criteria stream and river monitoring has been compiled into databases. The first maps to show the classification of Maine’s waters were made with colored highlighters and 15 minute USGS topo sheets! Though this sufficed in some ways, large watersheds that continued onto multiple topos made the data difficult, if not impossible, to display. In addition, there was no database for Maine’s assigned water quality information. We could only guess how many miles of rivers or streams were in a given classification, or what percentage of a watershed was comprised of which classification.

Today, using GIS, bio-criteria sampling data from over 645 locations is easily linked with Maine’s spatial water quality data. Current maps illustrate quality improvements, and document where more work is needed, while clarifying the relationships between watershed characteristics and water quality attainment. The State’s objective is “to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of Maine waters and to preserve certain pristine state waters”. Three goals to achieve this objective were determined by the Maine State Legislature¹ as follows:

- continued on page 3 -

Classy Maine Waters, cont.

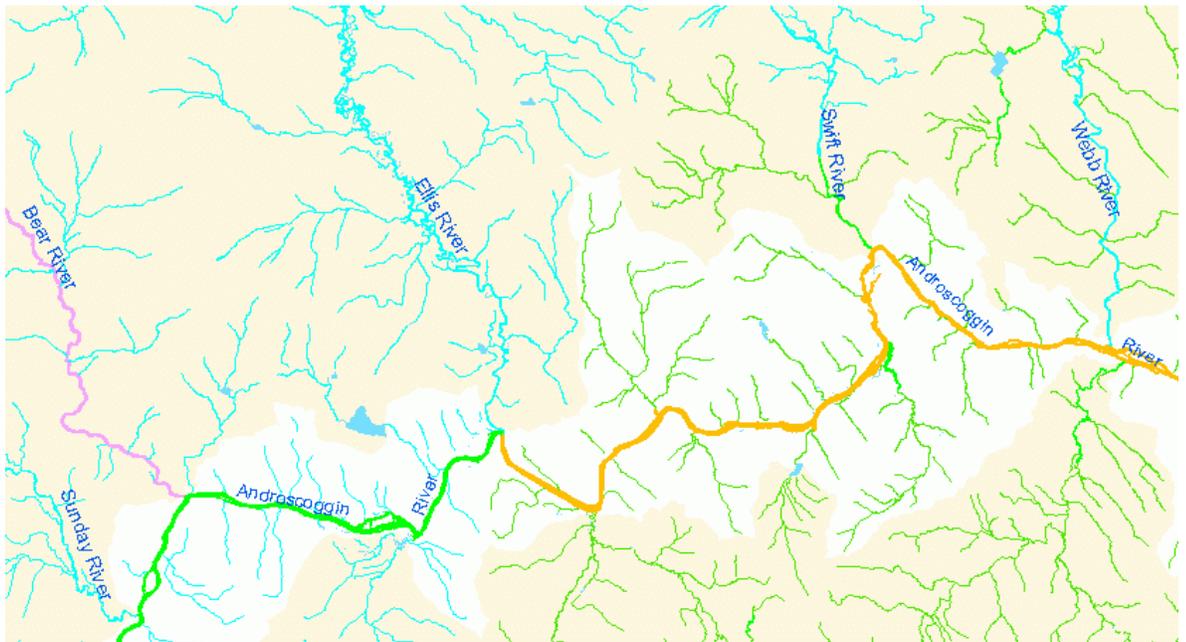
1. The discharge of pollutants into the waters of the State be eliminated where appropriate,
2. No pollutants be discharged into any waters of the State without first being given the degree of treatment necessary to allow those waters to attain their classification; and
3. Water quality be sufficient to provide for the protection and propagation of fish, shellfish and wildlife and provide for recreation in and on the water.

Further, the State is required to maintain the quality of water that attains its assigned classification, or that of a higher class.

Maine has four standards for the classification of rivers and streams (AA, A, B, C), three classes for estuarine and marine waters (SA, SB, SC), and one class for lakes or ponds (GPA). This classification system is based on water quality standards, which designate the uses and related characteristics for each class of water. The classification system further defines the water quality criteria necessary to protect those uses and related characteristics. As a water body attains a class, it is protected under the antidegradation provisions in the law.

The assigned letter quality designates the minimum level of quality intended for that body of water. This designation further directs the State's management program to achieve and protect that level of water quality. For the areas where water quality standards are not being met, goals allow for the ability to implement management programs to enhance their water quality.

The Bio-Monitoring Unit of the Bureau of Land and Water Quality has used the spatial classification data for



This area of the Androscoggin River shows the variety of stream and river classifications within Maine. Data displayed in this fashion is proving valuable for everyone.

displaying water quality improvements. The publication *Biomonitoring Retrospective: Fifteen Year Summary for Maine Rivers and Streams* features maps that depict historical aquatic life criteria model results, with their corresponding water quality. The data is very complex, but everyone can understand it more easily when the data is presented in cartographic form. The spatial water quality data has also been especially useful for displaying proposed reclassifications to Maine waters. Although the Legislature has sole authority to change water classifications, citizens, and others may propose waters or segments for upgrade. Having maps that show these areas, and any nearby watershed impacts to the waters, have proven helpful to the reclassification process.

What's next? The Bureau of Land and Water Quality will provide watershed and water quality data maps as part of the Comprehensive Plan Data Packages provided to towns by the Maine State Planning Office. Towns will incorporate the data and maps into their comprehensive planning processes. In addition, Water Classification data will be coded to display areas of non-attainment, which will be published with the DEP's biannual listing of impaired waters. Coding the data for specific management programs, (e.g. the Maine Construction General Permit), and publishing elec-

tronic maps, will also help citizens, and other state agencies, better manage water resources.

For additional information on Maine's water classification law call the Bureau at 207-287-3901, or visit the Water Classification Program website <http://www.state.me.us/dep/blwq/docmonitoring/classification/index.htm> and the Maine River Modeling and Data Reports <http://www.state.me.us/dep/blwq/docmonitoring/modelinganddatareports/index.htm> site.

A University of Maine at Farmington graduate, Vicki Schmidt is a GIS Environmental Specialist III with the Bureau of Land and Water Quality at DEP. When not making maps she is busy with her horse farm and volunteering with local fire departments. She may be reached by calling 287-7812, or e-mailing Vicki.l.schmidt@maine.gov.

¹ Maine Statute Title 38, Chapter 4-A: Classification of Maine Waters <http://janus.state.me.us/legis/statutes/38/title38sec464.html>



See <http://www.state.me.us/dep/air/ozone/currentdata/index.html> for Air Quality information, updated hourly.

MaineDOT Considers Large Animal Warning System to Improve Driver Safety

By COLLEEN GESUALDO

One of the most wonderful aspects of living in Maine is the opportunity to enjoy the abundant wildlife that roams here. I remember so clearly the day that I saw my first moose as a little girl, and marveled at his massive antlers. He faced our vehicle with a total lack of fear. As my parents and siblings watched with me, he eventually wandered into the forest near the road to be free of the disruption of gawking humans and noisy vehicles. At the time, I was too young to understand the danger of vehicle collisions with moose.

From 1999–2001, Maine vehicle crashes involving animals totaled 14,940 with 14% of them involving moose. Annually, there will be an average of about 700 moose-vehicle collisions in Maine and they may happen in any setting, on any type of road, or in any county. About 150 of these moose related crashes will result in human injury and 2 or 3 of them will result in fatalities – although 2003 has seen four fatalities already. While moose crashes were only 14% of the total number of crashes from 1999-2001, their economic impact was nearly 50% of the total economic impact (\$101,042,000) experienced from animal related crashes in Maine for the same period.

The Maine Department of Transportation (DOT) has investigated several different methods of preventing large animal crashes such as: lighted signs, olefactory repellents, reflectors that increase light from vehicle highlights and improve sight distance, and fences to limit animal access to high speed highways. Driver awareness has been raised through press releases, public education announcements, and driver education courses, including a component on the avoidance of large animal collisions.

A new technology is now being considered that attacks the problem of collisions with large animals from a different direction. The Large Animal Warning System (LAWS) uses photoelectric beams to detect the presence of a large animal on the side of the roadway and activates a flashing beacon atop a sign to warn drivers of their presence.

- continued on page 5 -

Maine CRASH FACTS Moose-Vehicle Crashes



from the
Maine Department of Transportation

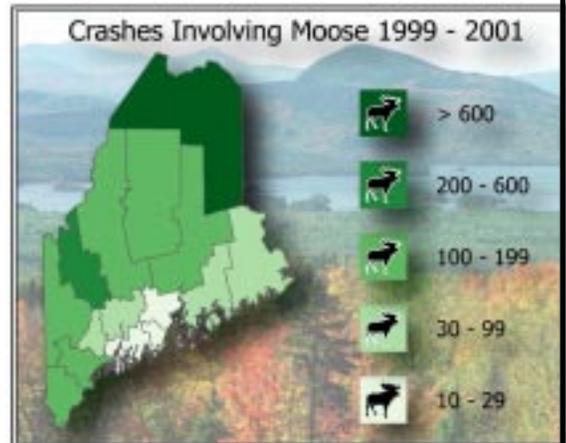
Moose-vehicle crashes occur every year in every Maine county – in any setting, on any type of road. Here are some facts about this serious type of collision:

Crash Activity:

- About 700 crashes annually.
- 150 of these crashes result in human injury.
- Average of 2 to 3 fatalities a year.
- 90% of the crashes occur between dusk and dawn.
- Moose crashes represent 14% of Maine's large animal crashes, but lead to 80% of the resulting fatalities.
- Peak crash season May through July, but can happen anytime of the year.

Why are Moose-Vehicle Crashes a concern?

- An adult moose can weigh up to 1,500 pounds.
- Moose can stand nine feet tall.
- The bulk of a moose's weight is above the hood level of most cars. When struck, the legs of the animal are knocked from under it and the heavy body comes toward the passenger compartment.
- They are fast and unpredictable.
- They are fearless – presence of traffic does not disturb them.
- Their dark color makes them difficult to see at night.
- Their eyes do not reflect light as well as those of other animals.



Safe Driving Tips:

- ✓ Inattention and speed are leading contributing factors in moose crashes.
- ✓ Scan the road ahead and on the sides.
- ✓ At night, slow down, use your high beams.
- ✓ Avoid distractions.
- ✓ If one animal crosses the road, be on the lookout for others.
- ✓ If you do spot a moose, keep your distance, stay in the car and give the moose plenty of room.

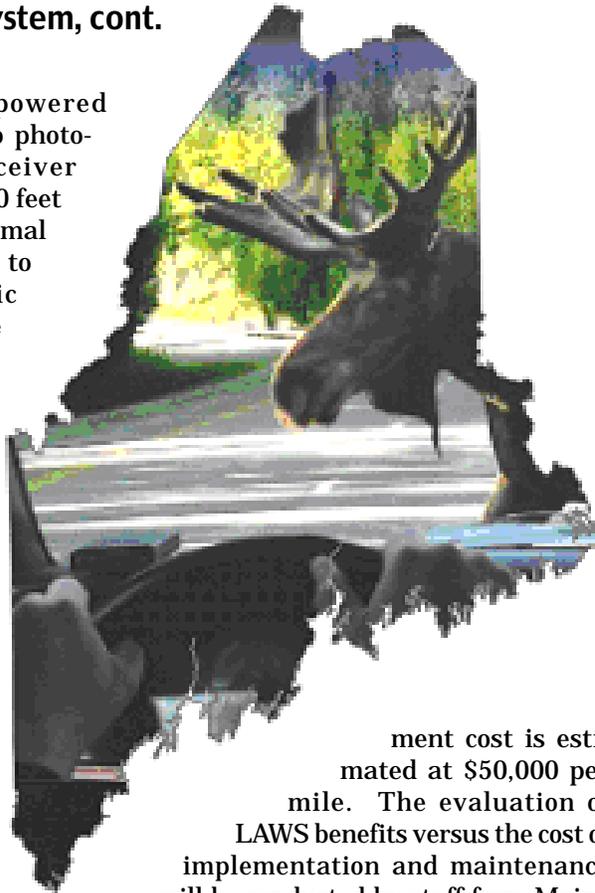
Additional Resources:

- Hidden Hazards Video - available to Driver Ed instructors and can be purchased by others.
- Hidden Hazards Brochure online at <http://www.state.me.us/mdot/moosebrochure.pdf>
- Moose Crash Map online at: http://www.state.me.us/mdot/planning/safety/maine_moose_crashes_99-01.pdf
- Large Animal Crash Study online at: <http://www.state.me.us/mdot/planning/safety/moosereport.pdf>

DOT Animal Warning System, cont.

LAWS uses a solar powered transmitter to project two photoelectric beams to a receiver mounted on a pole about 50 feet from the roadway. An animal must be at least 3 feet tall to break both photoelectric beams and activate a device that turns on a flashing beacon for a full minute after the beam is broken. The beacon would warn approaching drivers of a large animal near the roadway. It is possible to criss-cross transmitters and receivers so that animals grazing along the roadway (such as moose looking for salt) will activate the LAWS device multiple times. The state of Minnesota has been using LAWS technology for the past two years with promising results. Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri are also considering implementation of LAWS.

One of the primary drawbacks to the LAWS is cost. An unlimited license for LAWS would cost the state of Maine about \$4.2M and the equip-



ment cost is estimated at \$50,000 per mile. The evaluation of LAWS benefits versus the cost of implementation and maintenance will be conducted by staff from Maine DOT's Office of Environmental Services and Safety Management Division, and the Departments of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and Public Safety.

Questions? Contact the author by e-mailing colleen.gesualdo@maine.gov.

MFASIS Training Management System

By EVA POLISNER

For many years the State Training & Development (ST&D) Office maintained its training records on index cards. Summarizing training data for reporting or planning purposes was a Herculean, sometimes impossible task. It was time-consuming to answer questions like;

- *How many training programs were delivered in the past year? or*
- *How many employees successfully completed these programs?*

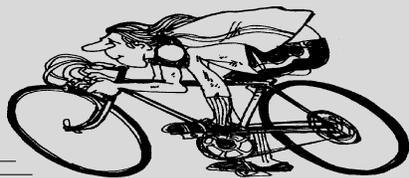
A few years ago, the MFASIS' Steering Committee agreed to fund a statewide training management system. The goal was to purchase an enterprise system that would be available to all state employees and training departments. ST&D and the Bureau of Information Services (BIS) formed a partnership to find a system to realize that goal.

WHAT DID WE DO? The State purchased a web-based system with an online training catalog that can be maintained by multiple training departments. Now called the MFASIS Training Management System or MTMS, this system facilitates the registration, class list production, attendance tracking and billing of these in-house courses. Summary reports are available in many formats.

Employee information is maintained by automated daily updates from the MFASIS Human Resources warehouse. MTMS will maintain a comprehensive history of planned and completed training regardless of how many times an employee changes jobs or organizations. Employees can sign up for courses and gain supervisory approval by way of a web interface. With an automated Outlook interface, employees receive confirmations, reminders, and recertification renewal notices. Supervisors can access the training records of employees in their area and collaborate with their employees to develop a training plan. Supervisors can also view impending recertification or license renewals for themselves and their employees.

If you want more security on your catalog, you can limit access to specific employees. As an example, most Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) courses are viewable by DEP employees only.

- continued on page 6 -



Ironically, as this issue was in production, I nearly ran into a cow moose while bicycling on a narrow dirt road which parallels the Sunday River. I don't remember the last time I was so scared. As she charged out of the forest I screamed, which caused her to momentarily stop. That gave me enough time to bike past her – at a distance of 5'-10'. (I was flabbergasted at how big, brown and soft-looking her nose was.) My companions said the moose pursued me for 4-5 strides, and we thought a baby might be nearby.

My Maine DOT contact did not know if there have been a significant number of moose-bicycle collisions, but I am certain the moose will triumph because of its size, and the biker immediately dying of fright!

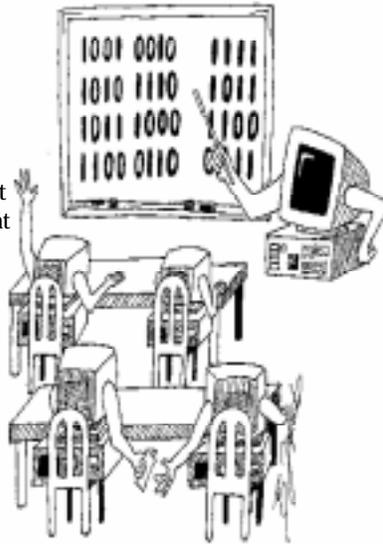
Mary N. Cloutier
Editor

MFASIS Training Management System, cont.

WHAT ARE TRAINING DEPARTMENTS SAYING ABOUT MTMS? Carol Cochran in State Training & Development feels the system is “user friendly” and it “makes my job a lot easier”. The DEP Services Safety Trainer, Jerry Willis, says “setting up classes and recording grades is extremely easy, saving tons of time and energy. Once you have your course catalog set up it’s just a matter of putting dates to classes that you want to provide”.

WHEN WILL YOUR AGENCY BE ONLINE? The Departments of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS), DEP, and Professional and Financial Regulation (PFR) are using the system now. The following is a preliminary schedule and is subject to change.

July/August	Public Safety ACE DOT
August	State Planning Office Conservation
September	Marine Resources Defense and Emergency Management Economic and Community Development
October	Labor Education Agriculture Secretary of State
November	DHS BDS
December	Corrections Inland Fisheries & Wildlife



TRY IT OUT! If you would like an overview of the system’s features, look at the How to Use MTMS instructions on the State Training Web site at <http://www.maine.gov/bhr/statetng/TMS/>.

You may want to save this as a desktop icon or in a “favorites” folder. You will learn how to:

- register for courses online
- approve training
- look at your transcript and
- use a completed training form to get non-catalog (or past) courses onto your transcript.

If you work in DAFS, DEP or PFR, you can log onto the system to search the course catalog and enroll online. Click on <http://aspen.state.me.us/aspen>

- Your username is “A” + your 6-digitTAMS id
- Your password is “password” (all lower case). You will be prompted to change your password after you log on for the first time.

QUESTIONS? E-mail Eva Polisner (Eva.Polisner@maine.gov) or Judith DeAngelis (Judith.A.Deanglis@maine.gov).

Working with the Office of State Training & Development, Eva Polisner is managing the statewide implementation of MTMS. She is a project management consultant with over twenty-five years of business and Information Technology project management experience. In 1999 Eva formed her own company, Project Solutions. Eva is an officer of the Maine Chapter of the Project Management Institute and is a PMI certified project manager.

¹ Maine Financial and Administrative Statewide Information Systems (MFASIS)



Challenge

By LESTER DICKEY

For a chance at the pizza, try this one. A brick balances with three quarters of a pound and three quarters of a brick.

How much does a brick weigh?

For an extra challenge, but no pizza, see how well you remember the rules of arithmetic. Divide 30 by one half and add 10.

Please e-mail **Lester Dickey** with your answer and your name, phone number, and the organization for which you work. Or call **Barbara Buck** at **624-9501**. The winner will be drawn from all the correct entries and will receive a donated **FREE** pizza, either from **CJ’s Pizza** or from the **EDOC Cafeteria**. All answers must be in no later than the **14th** of the month.

Last month’s challenge brought only 21 submissions, with 2 being correct answers. The winner, chosen by random drawing, is **Kathy Schulz** of **WCB**.

The answers to last month’s Challenge: Apparently this was much more difficult than I thought. The answer is 24 zeros. Many of you had a number between 140 and 160. What I described in the problem was the factorial function in mathematics, usually written as 100! For 100X99X98X...X2X1. Putting “100” into an internet or calculator factorial function yields the approximation 9.3326...e+157. This means that to get the answer in decimal notation, move the decimal point 157 places to the right. This is correct but it does not mean that all 157 places are zero. I’ll try to make this month’s problem more typical.

Most of you got the correct answer to the second, presumably more difficult problem, which was that the sum of the EVENS (2550) is 50 more than the sum of the ODDS (2500).



**NATIONAL
DO NOT CALL
REGISTRY**

Did you know ?

90,000 Mainers have added their name to the FCC’s Do Not Call Registry <http://ftp.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/donotcallalert.html> since it became available in July? Visit this web site for information, and <http://www.donotcall.gov/> to add your number!

An Internship Experience

BY ANNA FLEWELLING

I was in Scotland when my sister called saying I had been accepted as a summer Maine State Government intern in the Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO). I was to lead a web accessibility pilot! I asked her to e-mail my acceptance, and hung up the phone confused. I didn't know what a Chief Information Officer was, nor did I have any idea what it meant for a website to be in compliance with section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. I was almost certain there had made a mistake in the hiring process...

My first day of work, Mary Silva enlightened me as to CIO responsibilities, and described my summer challenge – to draft a plan to bring Maine State websites into compliance with State policy. Immediately, my research into accessibility began. I diligently searched websites for information on accessible web design, and printed materials were quickly piled high on my desk! I then understood how critical it is for the Internet to be accessible to all.

To gain additional information, I conducted a survey of State agency webmasters. When asked how much of a role web tasks play in their overall duties, 64% of webmasters replied that web design and maintenance encompasses only about 10% or less of their duties. (Full survey findings will be reported in late August.) A number of State webmasters are responsible for keeping hundreds of pages current — a considerable challenge, particularly since many agencies lack the financial resources to purchase appropriate software or provide needed training.

Another major task was to lead a pilot program with State webmasters utilizing UsableNet LIFT for Macromedia Dreamweaver. (LIFT was chosen under InforME's recommendation.) The software operates as an extension to the Web development software, and it monitors and repairs sites as webmasters work on their pages. The pilot was funded through the State Accessibility Committee so all software and training was free to participating agencies, provided they attended all training and met regularly with me to review progress. The fifteen participants were enthusiastic about using LIFT, and combating accessibility issues.

The objective was to determine the effectiveness of additional tools and identify training opportunities for webmasters who are currently working with limited resources. Findings will be reported in mid August, and thereafter the Accessibility Committee will determine how, or if, additional funds should be allocated in this area.

I wish to thank those who participated in the pilot. Their commitment and interest in accessible web design is impressive, and I look forward to reporting their progress.

A resident of Leeds, Anna Flewelling is a senior at Warren Wilson College in Asheville, North Carolina. She will graduate with a combined major in religion and politics, and plans to attend graduate school in public policy or law. For further information on her internship, contact her at anna.flewelling@maine.gov before August 15.



"The power of the Web is in its universality. Access by everyone regardless of disability is an essential aspect."

Tim Berners-Lee, W3C Director and inventor of the World Wide Web

MAINE.GOV

BY CARRIE GOTT, INFORME GENERAL MANAGER

Maine.gov Citizen Alert System

Maine.gov's new Citizen Alert System has been established as a way for Maine State government to keep the public informed about events that may impact public health or safety. Information issued through the Maine.gov Citizen Alert System is provided directly from authorized state government officials.

In the event of an alert, the Citizen Alert System icon would change to red and a special news link would appear beneath it. The alert icon would also appear on the standard sliver found on most Maine State government websites. The public has the option to request e-mail alert notifications in times of emergency. Multiple alerts can be posted at one time.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.maine.gov/portal/CAS/index.html>.

MyMaine.gov and You!

Did you know that as a Maine state employee, you are the most frequent user of Maine.gov? That's why recent updates to the MyMaine.gov feature may be of considerable interest to you.

We recognize that as an individual, your needs are unique. Over the years, Maine.gov has attempted to anticipate which services and information you may need through smart navigation, multiple and intuitive search options, task oriented links, and careful attention to user testing and feedback.

Now we are offering something even better. Today, using MyMaine.gov, you are able to fully customize the Maine.gov homepage to work for you!

MyMaine.gov allows you to create a secure and private login with which you customize your Maine.gov homepage to best serve you. In just a few easy steps, you may post your most frequently visited links, create government and personal reminders, get an up-to-date weather report, request e-mail notifications when specific web pages change or are updated, receive press releases from one or multiple state agencies or offices, receive reminders when new eGov services launch, and establish a home page with the layout, color and format that is most pleasing to you.

The bottom line is that government information and services should be readily accessible and easy to remember. Using Internet technology, these things are now possible.

To learn more or to set up your own MyMaine.gov account, please visit: <http://www.maine.gov/portal/customize/index.php?thedir=userguide.php>.

Technology Important for Forester Merle Ring

By JANEY BARTON

Technology has become an important tool of Merle Ring's profession, but he is philosophical about it, saying, "Technology is like closet space; the more you have the more you use up." Merle works for the Department of Conservation's (DOC) Maine Forest Service (MFS) as the District Forester for Oxford County, one of 10 District Foresters statewide.

As such, he has been working to improve the quality of Maine forests for 26 years, starting his State government career as a utilization forester. What is a District Forester? The job includes forest education and outreach, enforcement of forestry laws, resource assessment and monitoring (how much timber is there?), and working with mills on utilization and marketing. By contrast, forest rangers train local fire departments, enforce forestry laws, and prevent and suppress forest fires. As a District Forester, Merle's work is planned out several weeks in advance, and there is never a lack of things to do. His favorite element of the job is to go out in the woods with landowners and teach them how to manage their land with the goal of maintaining a healthy forest. This can be 50-75% of his job at certain times of the year.

What has changed for Merle's work in the last 26 years? As far as function, not much has changed. It is still a job involving education and enforcement. The enforcement element of the job has increased due to the Forest Practices Act in 1989, which gave both rangers and foresters more responsibility in this area. What really has changed is how the job is done. The electric typewriter was high tech,

when he began his career, but around 1990 he learned how to use his first computer.

There is a radio in Merle's truck and an IBM Thinkpad by his side, and he



Maine Forest Service — Did You Know?

Maine is the most heavily forested state in the nation with more than 17 million acres or nearly 90% of its land base covered with trees. The forest helps define Maine, shaping the state's economy and providing a backdrop for forest-related recreation and tourism.

Source: <http://www.state.me.us/doc/mfs/mfshome.htm>



said that sometimes he feels "married to the thing!" He uses the Thinkpad for PowerPoint demos, Approach databases (for listing of landowners, consulting foresters, and loggers), and Lotus and Excel spreadsheets (for calculating volume of wood). A Maine Forest Service statistician created some of the software, while Merle has created some, too. Digital cameras are also used for enforcement and education. Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS) are used for mapping purposes. Merle has a Garmin 12 GPS receiver and uses ArcView to create maps himself, and MapTech Terrain Navigator to put in acres and features. Some foresters "embrace technology more than others," but technology is all around the job now. Satellite photography, scanners (which helps move documents from paper to the Internet easily), and CDs are all used for educational purposes.

After the ice storm of 1998 the United States Forest Service and the MFS assessed the damage, using aerial photography and other means. There was mitigation available in the form of federal money for cleanup practices for individual landowners. Ice storm related work consumed 75% of Merle's work for four years.

Merle is from Bryant Pond and has always has enjoyed being in the woods. He changed college majors four or five times, before graduating with a Bachelor of Science in forestry from the University of Maine in Orono.

For more information, to download publications, or send for a Be Woods Wise Kit, please visit the MFS website <http://www.maine.gov/doc/mfs/>

TRANSITIONS

TECHNOLOGY PERSONNEL CHANGES IN YOUR AGENCY?

SEND NOTICES TO mary.cloutier@maine.gov TO HAVE THEM POSTED HERE.

Effective June 30, **Rachel Garippa**, a Development Services' Systems Analyst, has moved to the MFASIS group.

Mark Hulbert, a Production Services' Computer Operator, has been selected for the position of Information System Support Specialist I in the Development Services' Database group effective July 13, 2003.

Send your comments or suggestions to us at:

neb.newsletter@maine.gov or via our newsletter Web site on the Internet at: <http://www.maine.gov/newsletter/index.htm>

EDITORIAL BOARD

Mary N. Cloutier (BIS), Editor

Karen Knox (BIS), On-line Editor

Members:

Janey Barton (BIS)

M.D. Bowman (BIS)

David H. Ellis (BIS)

Melicent Versteeg (Maine Revenue Services)

Robert Witham (BIS)

Colleen Gesualdo (MDOT)

Jeffrey W. Cotnoir (BIS)

Susan Spinell (Maine Conservation Comm.)



Challenge:

Lester Dickey (Maine Revenue Services)

Proofreaders:

Ann Salverson-Seales (BIS)

Beverly Wrigley (BIS)

Anji Brockmann (MEGIS)

PRINTED BY IDEAL PRINTING SERVICE, AUGUSTA, MAINE
UNDER APPROPRIATION 038-18B-1000-012