

\$1.5M for forest products industry is just a start

BY **DARREN FISHELL**
BDN STAFF

PORTLAND — Maine’s forest products industry has had a tough couple of decades.

That’s why political officials gave such plaudits Friday to the U.S. Department of Commerce. The agency allocated \$1.5 million to help Maine find a way forward for the industry, which has been hit from multiple sides.

Numerous mill closures have highlighted headwinds for the industry, leaving mill workers to upend their lives either to stay in the industry or to find a way out.

That leaves the money announced Friday with some big shoes to fill, particularly as Maine’s paper industry supplies about \$226 million less in annual wages than it did fewer than 20 years ago.

Paper’s economic weight has

dwindled since 2000. Paper manufacturing payrolls made up about 4.5 percent of wages in the state in 2000, at about \$636 million that year.

Last year, paper manufacturing accounted for less than 2 percent of payrolls, which have been growing in other industries, including forestry and logging, according to figures from the U.S. Department of Labor.

While foresters and loggers are

earning more, there are fewer of them. From the federal data, which only covers companies that have employees, that could reflect smaller companies shedding their workers in order to continue operating under a sole proprietor.

Maine jobs in forestry and logging were 15 percent lower last year than in 2000, down 428 payroll positions. The paper industry shed almost 7,000 jobs during the same time, a 56 percent decrease.

Members of Maine’s congressional delegation called the situation an “economic crisis of unprecedented magnitude” in a letter to federal officials this spring, pleading successfully for them to also assign an economic development assessment team to study the state’s forest products industry.

The team’s visit in August will give the first inklings of where

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On the Job

Maine Community Foundation, with offices in Portland and Ellsworth, has appointed **Jennifer I. Richard** as director of gift planning. Richard will be based in MaineCF’s Portland office, which moves to 50 Monument Square in late August.

Richard has been a trusts and estates lawyer at Drummond and Drummond LLP in Portland for 20 years. She also was a portfolio accountant at State Street Bank in Quincy, Massachusetts. Richard is a member of the Maine, New Hampshire and Cumberland County bar associations and the Maine Estate Planning Council on whose board she served for 10 years (2001-2011). Originally from New Jersey and now living in Cumberland Foreside, Richard was graduated from the University of New Hampshire Whittemore School of Business and Economics (now the Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics) in 1989 and the Franklin Pierce Law Center (now the University of New Hampshire School of Law) in 1994. She is a member of the Kenneth J. Higgins Scholarship Committee and an active volunteer for Make-A-Wish Maine. She served on the board of directors of Make-a-Wish Maine (2010-2015) and the United Way of Greater Portland Foundation (2006-2010).

Two Bangor women with extensive backgrounds in civic and community service have been elected to the University of Maine Alumni Association board of directors. **Danielle Burke Ahern** of Bangor, a 2000 UMaine graduate, is vice president, treasury and payment services officer at Bangor Savings Bank. **Julia Munsey** of Bangor, who earned her degree in 2002, is a public relations specialist and partner at Dougherty Project Management of Bangor. As members of the 20-person board, Ahern and Munsey oversee policy and administrative compliance for the Orono-based not-for-profit organization.

Tom Federle has joined NewHeight Group in Portland as a development partner. Before joining NewHeight Group, Federle served as its legal counsel through the land acquisition, permitting, construction and sales phases of 118 on Munjoy Hill, a 12-unit condominium project. He has led the permitting effort applying a new Portland zoning ordinance to NewHeight Group’s newest development project, Lumina. Federle runs his law practice, specializing in real estate development and land use law, from his office at 254 Commercial St. in Portland.

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Jim Bahoosh of Morrill designs and builds small houses that usually range between 500 and 900 square feet.

Finding the size that fits

Maine designer specializes in small — but not tiny — houses

BY **ABIGAIL CURTIS**
BDN STAFF

Tiny houses may be trendy, but small houses are smart homes that are good solutions for many people.

That’s the feeling of a couple of Mainers who specialize in designing and building small — but certainly not tiny — houses. Their particular architectural niche hasn’t inspired as many how-to websites, admiring slideshows, explanatory articles, earnest documentaries and even sometimes-hilarious parodies as tiny houses, which generally are considered to be between 100 and 400 square feet. But small houses still have been gaining popularity in the last few years even as the burgeoning tiny house movement has grabbed what seems like all of the headlines in alternative design.

“There’s a ton of interest in small houses,” builder Jim Bahoosh of Morrill said this week. “From people all over the age spectrum and all



Jim Bahoosh at a house he built in Northport in 2015 and 2016. Bahoosh of Morrill designs and builds small houses that usually range between 500 and 900 square feet.

over the economic spectrum. I’m as busy as I want to be.”

Bahoosh, who works by himself to build houses that generally range from 500 to 900 square feet, was putting the finishing touches on a two-story cottage tucked into a postage stamp-sized piece of land in the crowded, quaint village of Bayside in the town of Northport. He and a business partner purchased the property to build a speculative small house on it with hopes of eventually finding a buyer. He started construction last October and the 1,000-square-foot house,

built with deep gables and lots of light, was under contract before they ever had to advertise it for sale.

In many ways, the house fits right into the neighborhood of wooden, Gothic Revival buildings, many of which were constructed between 1870 and 1920 as part of the Northport Wesleyan Grove Methodist camp village. Just like the other homes nearby, it is diminutive and has breezy, charming touches, such as the gingerbread trim carved into phases of the moon. In other ways,

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What happened to the Chinese miracle?

BY **SCOTT TAYLOR**
AND **LINDSAY TICE**
SUN JOURNAL

AUBURN — A year ago, a group of Chinese investors, in a standing-room-only signing ceremony at Auburn Hall, announced they had bought a dilapidated 100-year-old factory building in the heart of the city and planned to turn it into a \$40 million, five-star resort catering to rich Chinese patients seeking medical treatments in the U.S. at Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston.

They expected they’d be open for business and ready for patients in 2017.

Within weeks, workers put up chain link and wooden fences around the historic Lunn and Sweet Shoe Factory, each section of fence decorated with artistic renderings of what the finished Chinese medical tourism center would look like.

Crews converged on the building, boarding up broken windows, moving



ANDREE KEHN | SUN JOURNAL

Banners hang slack on the Minot Avenue home of a future Chinese medical tourism facility. No renovations appear to have been done since the building was purchased a year ago.

out boxes and old equipment and sealing it up.

Then, Miracle Enterprise — the Maine arm of Beijing-based Guo Tou Sheng Tong Investment Co. Ltd — bought the old Auburn Police Station next door, pasting the Miracle Enterprise emblem on it and raising a Chinese flag on the pole out front.

Then ... nothing.

Today, the fences, the logos and the flags are the only outward evidence

that anything is afoot near the intersection of Court Street and Minot Avenue. The grass at the old police station is overgrown and a plaque just inside the door still announces the building as “Auburn Police Headquarters.” There are newly broken windows on the factory building. The parking lot is crumbling. Neighbors say it’s been months since anyone’s visited the site.

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Where to check up on your dentist

BY **RUSS VAN ARSDALE**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NORTHEAST CONTACT

The state of Maine has a new website for consumers with concerns about dental health professionals, maine.gov/dental.

Users found that the old website was a little tricky to navigate. It also did not provide as many services as its designers believe the new one will.

The Maine Board of Dental Examiners launched the website in partnership with InforME, the portal provider for state government. The site is intended to inform consumers and practitioners about rules and laws, provide licensing information and make policies affecting the dental examiner profession in Maine easily accessible.

As in the rest of the virtual world, the site should help licensees keep abreast of new rules, handle forms and applications online and update contact information.

“This new website should substantially improve how we connect with our licensees and the public,” Penny Vallaincourt, executive director of the Maine Board of Dental Examiners, said.

There’s also a complaint form that consumers can use. While it may be easy to dash off a criticism, the American Dental Association or ADA suggests that consumers with concerns first discuss them with their dentists.

Sometimes people in a state dental association can help. The Maine Dental Association has a contact form at its website, medental.org.

When consumers want to find out if disciplinary action has been taken against someone the Board regulates, a simple search is all that will be needed. Current actions will appear on the new website soon; meanwhile, consumers can search [pfr. maine.gov/almsonline/almsquery/welcome.aspx?board=384](http://maine.gov/almsonline/almsquery/welcome.aspx?board=384) for that data.

The state’s new website is not intended to provide financial relief for consumers. A peer-review process offered by dental societies can resolve some disputes about what constitutes appropriate care and sometimes what fees are charged. Serious disputes may end up in civil court.

Consumer Forum is a collaboration of the Bangor Daily News and Northeast CONTACT, Maine’s all-volunteer, nonprofit consumer organization. For assistance with consumer-related issues, including consumer fraud and identity theft, or for information, write Consumer Forum, P.O. Box 486, Brewer, ME 04412, visit <http://necontact.word-press.com> or email contactdir@live.com.