

# Detour planned for upcoming I-395 shutdown for bridge replacement



NICK MCCREA|BDN

**Signs posted around Interstate 395 in Bangor announce the road will be closed May 6-10. Maine Department of Transportation officials plan to hold a news conference on April 26 to announce their plans for the project to replace an overpass on the busy road.**

BY NICK MCCREA  
BDN STAFF

BANGOR, Maine — The Maine Department of Transportation will shut down a busy section of Interstate 395 during an extended weekend in May to replace a heavily used 57-year-old bridge.

MDOT announced its official plans for the replacement of the I-395 bridge that passes over Webster Avenue near Bangor Municipal Golf Course during a news conference Tuesday at Bangor City Hall.

The stretch of I-395 between Exits 1 and 2, which sees an average 36,000 cars per day, will close for 83 hours starting either May 6, 13 or 20. The road will shut down at 8 p.m. on whichever Friday the work starts and reopen at 7 a.m. the following Tuesday, according to Wayne Frankhauser Jr., MDOT's manager for the Urban and Federal Bridge Program.

Exit 182, which links Interstate 95 with I-395 in both directions, also will be closed during construction. The I-395 ramps on Main Street in Bangor also will be closed for safety reasons.

The contractor, S.E. MacMillan Co., will notify DOT the Tuesday before construction will begin, looking at extended forecasts to determine whether crews

will have a dry enough stretch of weather to complete the fast-paced project.

MDOT's contract with MacMillan to complete the bridge work is worth \$2.6 million.

Between the time they close the bridge Friday night and the time they reopen it Tuesday, crews will have replaced the bridge in its entirety. They've already built an arch substructure underneath the existing bridge.

"It's really almost unheard of," MDOT spokesman Ted Talbot said of the strategy for this bridge replacement. In weighing its options of how to replace the bridge, MDOT also considered keeping the bridge open and replacing it in sections, but that project likely would have resulted in lane closures and traffic disruptions for more than a year.

"We feel this is a better option that will have far less impact on the traveling public," Frankhauser said Tuesday.

While I-395 is closed, MDOT has set up a detour. Drivers on I-95 who want to get to I-395 east should take I-95's Exit 180 to head east on Coldbrook Road, turn left onto Route 202 linking up with I-395 at Exit 2.

Those traveling on I-395 to I-95 should take I-395's Exit 2 to Route 202 southbound, turning right onto Coldbrook Road and continuing to the

I-95 interchange at Exit 180.

Temporary traffic signals will be installed on Coldbrook Road at the Interstate 95 ramps to accommodate the extra traffic.

The detour should add about 1.5 miles and 5 minutes to drivers' commutes, according to MDOT.

"We are asking travelers to give themselves some extra time, drive safely and help make this weekend challenge pass smoothly and easily for everyone," Frankhauser said.

The bridge replacement is unrelated to another MDOT I-395 project that will stretch throughout the summer. Crews will mill and repave the entire 5-mile length of I-395, including all its on- and off-ramps. That \$5.25 million effort will not result in road closures, and all work will be done overnight.

Crews may need to close some ramps overnight, but will keep a lane open on both sides of the interstate while they work between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.

MDOT will not start work until 10 p.m. while the American Folk Festival and Bangor State Fair are in town.

"While highway work is always weather dependent, MDOT estimates that all of the interchange improvements will be completed by November," Talbot said.

Follow Nick McCreia on Twitter at @nmccrea213.

nation during the month of January. We were so lucky to be selected again, this time by the 1133 Union Street Hannaford for March and April.

So far the results bring in almost \$700 in direct donations in support of the UCP of Maine's mission.

"Both Paul Messer, Store Manager of the Broadway, and Jon Ivey, Store Manager of Union St have been extremely supportive during this fundraising event. In April Hannaford is even matching the donation. So for each Blue Karma bag purchased we receive \$2," said Marc Inman, Business Development and Marketing Manager said.

UCP of Maine, founded

in 1954, provides services to children and adults with a wide range of intellectual disabilities as well as debilitating mental illnesses. Some were born with these disabilities, such as Cerebral Palsy, while others occurred as the result of accidents, abuse or other trauma. UCP of Maine is a proud beneficiary recipient of the Hannaford Helps Reusable Bag Program.

Learn more about UCP of Maine by calling (207) 941.2952 or visiting ucpofmaine.org.

For more information about the Hannaford Helps Reusable Bag Program, visit hannaford.bags4mycause.com or facebook.com/hhbagprogram.

## Hannaford Helps campaign raises funds for UCP of Maine

UCP of Maine, a nonprofit committed to advancing the independence, productivity and full citizenship of people with disabilities who have multiple needs, has raised its almost \$700 in direct donations through sales of the blue Hannaford Helps Reusable Bag.

The program was designed to create significant revenue streams for deserving local nonprofits like UCP of Maine and it's doing just that.

For every Hannaford Helps Reusable Bag purchased at the 653 Broadway, Hannaford, UCP of Maine is receiving a \$1 do-

# UMaine to tear down dilapidated frat house to make way for parking lot

BY NICK MCCREA  
BDN STAFF

ORONO, Maine — Maxwell McCormack remembers when new fraternity members dressed in white coats and served dinners to their brothers 60 years ago. He recalls parties with hundreds of college students dancing to live bands in the living room and chatting upstairs. He remembers hollering at brothers who had a call on the payphone and knocking them out of bed to make sure they got to class on time.

Soon, the 13,000-square-foot building that was the scene of those memorable moments in McCormack's life will become a parking lot.

The University of Maine plans to demolish the century-old Sigma Nu fraternity house this summer after the housing corporation that owns the run-down structure hands over ownership.

The house overlooking College Avenue and the Stillwater River was built in 1916 for the brothers of Sigma Nu, which chartered a chapter on campus three years earlier at Maine's land grant university.

Tuesday was the 103rd anniversary of the Sigma Nu chapter's charter, according to McCormack, a UMaine graduate who joined the fraternity when he came to UMaine in 1953 and now lives in Unity. Today, McCormack is a member of the property association, primarily made up of older Sigma Nu members, which owns the building.

This week he visited the house, which now bears the Greek letters Kappa Sigma, to update fraternity members living there on the plans for the building. They'll have to vacate in May, clearing the way for the transfer of ownership and demolition over the summer.

"This house was designed to be a fraternity house," McCormack said. The first floor was made for hosting parties. The central living room opens up into a large formal dining room on one side and a music room on the other, meaning it could host big crowds for live bands.

"I've seen 600 people in this house before," McCormack said, recalling the social life in the fraternity. The fraternity even had a chef and housekeeper.

Upstairs, brothers didn't sleep in bedrooms — they slept in long rows of beds, including some bunks, similar to a barracks. Some

stayed up on fire watch; others volunteered to serve as community alarm clocks, shaking brothers awake at designated times to make sure they got up and made it to exams on time.

"Sometimes I'd grab their mattress and roll them off," McCormack said.

A privileged brother or two got the honor of having a private room on the first floor, which used to be living quarters for the "house mother." The house mother role had been phased out by the time McCormack arrived. Freshmen members wearing white coats served their brothers sit-down dinners. In McCormack's time, the fraternity routinely had around 35 members living in the house. Formality was key and cleanliness demanded.

Fraternities served as a social bastion on the campus, which had fewer than 3,000 students at the time, McCormack said. They provided more freedom than dormitories, which had strict rules around signing in and out and segregated men and women to opposite ends of campus.

"Fraternities offered a way to live on the edge — a little outside the campus," McCormack said.

There are 18 active fraternities and eight sororities at the University of Maine, which is among the last remaining hubs for Greek life in the state. About a dozen fraternity houses remain. Most sororities have meeting rooms in campus dormitories.

The Sigma Nu house today is not as McCormack remembers it. Its best days are behind it. In 2012, the university suspended Sigma Nu for five years after repeated underage drinking violations during parties at the property. The suspension followed a party during which two teenagers were taken by ambulance to the hospital after consuming too much alcohol.

The bad news brought the property association and old membership together to try to determine the future. They took a fresh look at the wood-frame structure, which had fallen into disrepair over the years.

The association leased the building to another fraternity, Kappa Sigma, which has 16 members living in the building this year, and began weighing their old home's future.

"We're faced with a drastically modified, deteriorat-

ing structure placed on land that we don't own," McCormack said. The 99-year lease with the university for the plot of land the house stands on expires in July.

McCormack said the university offered to extend the lease by seven or eight years if the house were renovated or up to 15 years if it received a significant overhaul to bring it up to date. That cost has been estimated at \$1 million, according to McCormack.

To put the \$1 million renovation costs into perspective, Kappa Sigma said it could build a new fraternity house for about \$1.2 million. The fraternity is looking into its options for housing next year, which could range from moving into a portion of Aroostook Hall to finding housing arrangements off campus, according to Steve Doman, the chapter's housing manager.

There's been no indication to this point whether the UMaine Sigma Nu chapter will reemerge after its suspension passes, so the property association could have been faced with continuing to lease the property to another fraternity.

Instead, the association decided its best option was to give the building to the University of Maine. The university, which is trying to reduce its overall building footprint, will demolish the structure about a month after taking ownership, according to Dean of Students Robert Dana.

In a statement emailed to the BDN Thursday after this story was posted online, Dana noted that "losing a fraternity and its house is a sad moment for UMaine and at this point, since fraternities and sororities are not interested in UMaine managing their properties, we were unable to consider other options for the building."

The University of Maine System Board of Trustees approved the property acquisition and demolition project during a meeting last month. The university plans to convert the lot into sorely needed parking space but has the option of developing something else there in the future, Dana said.

McCormack said members of the property association were heartbroken over this decision but took the only path that seemed viable.

"We didn't really have much of a choice," he said.

## CORRECTIONS

A story about girl scouts in Hermon volunteering at a dinner for senior citizens in the April 28 Weekly contained an incorrect quote. Teachers do not have access to lists of students receiving free or reduced lunch.

A story about three area theater companies offering plays in the April 28 Weekly contained a wrong location. Ten Bucks Theatre Company is performing "Fawly Towers" at the Cyrus Pavilion Theatre on the University of Maine campus, not at Comins Hall in Eddington.

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