



## Business Connections

It's been a busy month on the international, national and local front.

### Canadian Partnership

In mid-March, representatives of the City of Biddeford and city of Saco, Sen. Angus King's office, the Economic Development Corporation and the Chamber met with David Alward, General Consul of Canada and Brenda Garrand, Honorary Consul at Portland.

This was a fantastic opportunity to highlight the economic growth we are experiencing as well as discuss our close connections with Canada on Trade and Tourism.

Canada is the United States' largest trading partner. In Maine, 38,500 jobs are created and \$1.3 billion in goods are traded. The two-hour meeting was very productive and informative.

One take away from the meeting was that while we need to ensure that our borders are safe, we also need to make it streamlined going both ways so we do not deter travel and tourism.

### Capitol Hill

I travelled to Washington, D.C. in early March and had the opportunity to have lunch with our Congressional delegation.

U.S. Rep. Chellie Pingree is very involved with agricultural issues and specifically wanted to know about my experience with Farm Credit.

In 1984, I borrowed money from Farm Credit to buy a 75 foot commercial fishing vessel and the experience was outstanding.

I also briefed her on a group called The Food Commons, where I serve on the National Board. The Food Commons is working to create a better, healthier and more sustainable food system. hope someday soon we launch Food Commons Maine and

grow our agricultural and fisheries sectors.

I also had an opportunity to speak to U.S. Sen. Angus King as we were leaving the luncheon. I have known Sen. King for many years and I always enjoy the light in his eye when you bring him good news.

I briefed him on the many great things happening in our Region and jokingly said to him I may be the first person to ever come to D.C. that brought good news and didn't ask for anything from him!

Later, I met with his staff to discuss workforce issues, economic growth and many of the positives that we are experiencing in our communities.

### Workforce Retention

The Chamber continues to move forward with its Workforce Development efforts connecting educators with the business and industry leaders.

We partnered with ShuttleBus-Zoom to provide area educators with a trolley tour of the Biddeford+Saco business and industrial parks.

The Chamber Workforce Development Committee also hosted a meeting of 30 people including the University of Maine System representatives, special guest UM Chancellor James Page, and area educators, business and civic leaders. The group discussed workforce needs and retention. It was a very productive meeting.

