

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**TO: Local Media Contacts**  
**FROM: Sunrise County Economic Council**  
**DATE: October 21, 2010**  
**RE: Economic Council Hosts Annual Meeting**  
**CONTACT: Harold Clossey, Executive Director, 207.255.0983 or 207.214.3600**

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SCEC held its 2010 Annual Meeting at The Pines in Milbridge on October 20<sup>th</sup>. The evening featured remarks from SCEC Executive Director Harold Clossey who highlighted positive economic activities underway in Washington County, John Ferland of Ocean Renewable Power Company (ORPC) which is exploring the potential of tidal power generation and commercialization along the Downeast coast, and a brief ceremony honoring departing Board members. SCEC also presented its 2010 Partner of the Year Award to Washington County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald for her role in bolstering the county's economy.

"For those of you who think there's not much going on in Washington County -- follow me around for a few days," Clossey said. "In the last four or five years, we've helped usher in approximately \$270 million to Washington County, and I'll tell you right now that's a low number. I'm proud of that fact, and I'm proud of the fact that not only are we helping to bring these investment dollars into our region, but we get to work with a lot of great people. It's not just about SCEC. It's about all of us working together to be the best that we can be in Washington County."

Clossey added that SCEC is currently involved in projects that could result in an additional \$70-80 million in economic investments.

"We do anything from microloans for small businesses right up through multi-million dollar financing packages," he said. "While SCEC may play a small role, it's all of us working together to bring together the necessary capital, as typically it takes more than one bank or organization."

Clossey added that since January, SCEC has helped leverage almost \$1 million in loan funds to area businesses.

"Since January, our loan programs have helped leverage \$917,767 in capital for investment. I'm not saying it wouldn't have happened without us, but I think sometimes we're the final piece in putting together these packages. If we're not willing in Washington County to come to the table with our money, why would we expect anyone else to invest in our region? That loan program was responsible for 32 full time and 8 part time jobs. That in and of itself is pretty cool."

Ferland, whose company came to Washington County in 2006 to investigate the region's tidal power potential, explained that ORPC has worked with SCEC, Washington County Government, the City of Eastport, the Eastport Port Authority, Federal Marine Terminals and other local businesses to develop the region as an alternative energy producer.

“We’ve been here 4 years, and we hope to be here 400,” Ferland said. “We’re going to take our time, do this methodically, and be sure that while we’re harnessing the predictable power of the tides, that we’re able to generate electricity predictably, reliably, and safely. The tide is very predictable. We’re very excited about what we’re doing, and we’re very excited to have the partnerships in the region that we have.”

Ferland also addressed the economic impact of tidal power in Washington County.

“It [tidal energy] is having an economic impact now. This project has put to work over 80 people in 16 counties. There’s a cluster of activity in Washington County, and this is going to grow as the company matures, as the project grows and as more service companies, supply firms, and so on, get involved in the industry. That base is being set,” he said. “Over \$5 million has been spent in this state over the last couple of years, most of that in the past 18 months. Spending in the Eastport area has been about \$2 million over that same time frame. There’s going to be more spending locally. How it shows up is in jobs, contractors, direct employees of ORPC. It’s spending in the communities, fuel, supplies. The bulk of this is going to happen in the Eastport area, but it’s also going to happen in the Lubec area.”

SCEC also recognized departing Board members Tony McKim (The First), Ed Plissey of Machiasport, and Skip Rogers (Federal Marine Terminals) for their service to the organization. New Board members Susan Corbett (Axiom Technologies), Dr. Phil Grant (ret. Husson University), Blaine Jones (Bangor Savings Bank) and Sheridan Smith (Border Electric) were introduced to the public, as was incoming Board chair Josh Bragg (CES, Inc.), vice chair Leola Carter (Bayside & 4 Corners Shop ‘n’ Save), treasurer Shirley Erickson (Maine Educational Loan Authority) and secretary Chris Lyford (Machias Savings Bank).

SCEC awarded its 2010 Partner of the Year to Washington County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald for her efforts on economic and community development issues. Fitzgerald joined County government in February, and has been involved in the county’s Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program for the Unorganized Territories, which SCEC administers, as well as efforts to encourage further business investment in the region.

“I’m shocked and awed – but not speechless,” quipped Fitzgerald. “Thank you very much. I don’t do this alone. I do it with a lot of people, and 90% of you are sitting in this room. Thank you all.”

While final figures were not compiled, SCEC estimated approximately 75 people were in attendance. For more information about SCEC, visit them at [www.sunrisecounty.org](http://www.sunrisecounty.org) or on Facebook. You may also contact SCEC by phone at 255-0983 or by email at [scec@sunrisecounty.org](mailto:scec@sunrisecounty.org) during regular business hours.

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