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Maine to Lead Ocean Cluster Commercialization in Northeast Through Iceland-Maine Partnership

The Iceland Ocean Cluster, founded and led by Thor Sigfusson has partnered with SoliDG, Inc. of Maine to establish the New England Ocean Cluster (NEOC), a private sector enterprise focused on commercialization of new products related to the ocean as a resource. Governor Paul LePage announced the establishment of the NEOC in Maine at a press conference on October 16th at the Portland office of Pierce Atwood, LLP.

The goal of the NEOC is to create, encourage, and spinoff new companies and products from cluster members with the further goal of utilizing 100% of materials harvested from the ocean, while focusing on higher and higher margins. Companies engaged in the cluster will be focused on a diverse array of industry opportunities such as food processing, boat building and design, energy production, fishing, aquaculture, biotech, biomedical, pharmaceuticals, advanced materials, retail product development, health and wellness, and marine technology.



Governor Paul LePage visited the Iceland Ocean Cluster and met with founder Thor Sigfusson during the State of Maine Trade Mission in 2014.

"We currently have commitments from 14 businesses to locate in the New England Ocean Cluster House, as well as interest from two Icelandic life sciences companies. The work doesn't have to wait until the building is ready. We're already connecting technology partners with resources to help them commercialize products and processes. For those businesses that are looking to locate in Maine to establish a footprint in the North American market, we're arranging temporary space so their work can begin now."

Patrick Arnold, President & CEO, SoliDG, Inc.

Sights are set for the NEOC to locate in a 30,000 square foot space in the Maine State Pier building on the Portland waterfront. Negotiations are currently underway with the City of Portland to make this a reality with the hope that groundbreaking will occur in 2015.

More than an incubator space, the layout, function and staff support of Iceland's Ocean Cluster House is a proven model and will be replicated in Maine. NEOC staff will support members with services ranging from research and analysis, licensing and due diligence, strategic planning and marketing to strategic networking towards commercialization.

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Sustaining Roundtable Members

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Dear MITC Members and Friends,

It was great to see so many of you at the Annual Holiday Member Reception in December! I want to thank Peoples United Bank, Allen Insurance and Financial, Hancock Lumber, and the Osher Map Library for their support, gift cards, and sponsorship. MITC activities will be in high gear in January when we are hosting Maine booths at the Arab Health Show in Dubai and the Winter Fancy Food Show in San Francisco. New trade education programs are scheduled for this winter including the Imperatives of Importing and an Environmental Technology Opportunities in Mexico webinar. We have also collected some recent fun facts and figures to share:

✓ As part of the new federal EDA grant, MITC is pleased to welcome its new Invest in Maine Managing Director Maria McIntyre who will be heading MITC's foreign direct investment efforts.

✓ In January MITC will open its Invest in Maine office in Shanghai through its contracted services with Foreign Direct Investment consulting company, Intralink. With Chinese investment in the U.S. and interest in Maine increasing over the past few years, MITC will now have a local office in China coordinating its Asian business attraction efforts.

✓ MITC has just submitted its last reimbursement request for the U.S. SBA Export Development grant. Overall return on investment was 31:1 for the MITC coordinated SBA export assistance grants with over \$5.4 million in reported export sales by Maine companies.

✓ The final 2014 numbers are coming in showing MITC provided trade assistance and market consulting to over 1,600 businesses and individuals and hosted 23 programs and events with 925 participants!

We look forward to working with you in 2015. Your input is always appreciated, so I hope that you will take a moment to respond to our online survey in January. Your feedback gives us necessary guidance for future activities.

Sincerely,

Janine Bisaillon-Cary,
President

In October, MITC President Janine Bisaillon-Cary was named to Mainebiz's Next 2014 list, recognizing her as one of the ten people shaping the future of Maine's economy.



Maine to Lead Ocean Cluster Commercialization...

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"Having the New England Ocean Cluster here will position Maine as a leader in Ocean Cluster enterprise and commercialization in the Northeast," said Maine North Atlantic Development Office (MENADO) Director Dana Eidsness. "It gives us a seat at the table with the North Atlantic Ocean Cluster Alliance, where we can innovate and share best practices with Ocean Clusters in Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and with our neighbors in Canada."

The network impact of the NEOC will extend from Maine, throughout New England and across the North Atlantic with partners and interested collaborators ranging from University of New England and the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory to the MIT Collaborative in Cambridge, Massachusetts to name a few. For more information, contact Dana Eidsness at eidsness@mitc.com.

CANADA DESK

Elections, Priorities, and Opportunities in Eastern Canada

The Atlantic Provinces and Quebec, Maine's closest Canadian neighbors, have seen some significant political changes in recent years. Since the previous gubernatorial election in Maine in 2010, there have been several striking political developments in the Canadian political scene, both federally and, more specifically, in the provinces around Maine. Changes in governments have taken place in Nova Scotia, Quebec, and most recently New Brunswick. New Brunswick in particular has seen their ruling party shift back and forth from the Liberal party and the Progressive Conservative Party. The remaining two Atlantic Canadian provinces, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador, are due to have elections in 2015. With political change often come new economic priorities and opportunities for Maine companies to collaborate with our largest trading partners in Canada.

Political Developments and Collaboration Opportunities in Eastern/Atlantic Canada 2010-2015, is a research report recently completed by Ben Kissin, one of our interns in MITC's Future Global Leaders program. As Research Assistants, MITC interns wear many hats. Fielding trade assistance queries

from businesses, determining product classifications, and researching best overseas markets for products are just a few of their responsibilities. Born and raised in Freeport, Maine, Ben studied international relations at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick. His final project for MITC, the report offers a good summary of the recent political changes in Canada, provincial economic profiles, and opportunities for trade development.

MITC has worked closely with many of the primary opportunity areas identified including: aerospace, bioscience, education, energy, and infrastructure. The recently created Maine North Atlantic Development Office (MENADO) led by Dana Eidsness is also working closely with our friends and neighbors in Atlantic Canada.



Trade Assistance Manager Hannab Webb (left) manages interns in the Future Global Leaders program. Here she meets with Ben Kissin and Maxine Secskas, two of our Fall 2014 interns.

A copy of the full report can be downloaded from the Canada Desk page on our website or contact Jeff Bennett (jbennett@mitc.com).

The Canada Desk is sponsored by



SAVE THE DATE

Annual Canada Day Conference
March 26, 2015

Husson University, Bangor, ME

MITC's annual Canada focused program will examine the regional energy and infrastructure needs for New England and Atlantic Canada. Be sure to join industry leaders from both sides of the border for a lively discussion of shared energy and infrastructure needs and new initiatives in our regions.

Expanded Invest in Maine Initiative Hits the Ground Running



The Lujiazui Financial Centre in Shanghai, China.

The recently expanded Invest in Maine initiative, with funding through a foreign investment attraction grant through the US Economic Development Administration that began on October 1 and will run through September 2017, is off to a fast start during the first quarter:



- **New Managing Director hired:** Maria McIntyre (*at left*), formerly of the Maine SBDC and the DC-based Home Builders Institute, was brought on in mid-November to serve as Managing Director of Invest in Maine. Maria will work with local and overseas partners to encourage foreign direct investment and job creation in key industries in Maine with a focus on European and Asian markets.
- **Shanghai office to open in January:** MITC has contracted with Shanghai-based Intralink to provide representation and lead development services in China and East Asia. Intralink has 35 employees in Asia (including 10 in China), and offices in Shanghai, Tokyo, Seoul, and Taipei. They will primarily work on investment lead development and raising Maine's profile as an investment destination; however, Intralink also has experience with export development that could be beneficial to Maine's exporting companies.
- **Regional Reimbursement Program launched:** MITC/Invest in Maine is currently accepting applications for funding under the Regional Reimbursement Program. Economic development agencies are eligible to apply for matching funds to pursue investment attraction projects of a regional nature under certain conditions with the guidance of the Invest in Maine program.

Visit www.investinmaine.net for more information on Invest in Maine and the Regional Reimbursement Program, as well as the "Investment Essentials Webinar: Relocating Key Employees to the U.S." which was recorded in cooperation with Drummond Woodsum.

**invest
in maine**
U.S.A.

Maine's Business Opportunities Across the North Atlantic



Maine Governor Paul LePage and other state officials met with Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, the President of Iceland, during the State of Maine Trade Mission in 2014.

When Icelandic shipping company Eimskip moved and consolidated its US port calls to Portland two years ago, one of its goals was to strengthen business connections and opportunities between Maine and other areas of Eimskip's operation in the North Atlantic: North Norway, Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and Newfoundland.

"Being a part of a community with such an appetite for rapidly developing new North Atlantic businesses is truly rewarding," said Larus Isfeld, Eimskip's Managing Director in the USA. "Moving our US operations to Portland has spurred growth, both for Eimskip and for Maine businesses."

"To encourage this growth, Eimskip has been excited to include Maine businesses in opportunities connected to our shipping routes," Isfeld continued. Since moving its operations to Portland, Eimskip has welcomed a Maine trade delegation to Iceland and Greenland, connected Maine businesses with its presence at the Atlantic Canada Petroleum Show (held in St. John, Newfoundland), and hosted a Maine delegation at the Arctic Circle Conference in Iceland.

"The fastest-growing opportunities in the North Atlantic are in the fishing industry, and the research, development, and exploration of natural resources," said Isfeld. "Mining in Greenland and Northern

Norway, and oil exploration in Newfoundland, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Norway, represents areas of precipitous growth in the near future. These are enormous undertakings that will attract investments of hundreds of billions of dollars in coming years. I see huge potential for companies in Maine to service these industries."

An unexpected bonus of moving to Maine, Isfeld noted, is the striking cultural similarities between Maine and Scandinavia. "The Maine culture is very similar to those of Northern Europe. A culture developed fundamentally from living by the ocean, surviving in cold environments, and being clustered into small societies. The view of life and ways of living are similar; people from different North Atlantic areas find it easy to understand each other's point of view, which is a huge advantage for business development of any kind."

During the 2014 State of Maine Trade Mission, Eimskip hosted a State of Maine networking reception, showcasing Maine as a tourism, trade, and foreign investment destination at their headquarters in Reykjavík, Iceland. Governor Paul LePage and Gylfi Sigfússon, CEO/President of Eimskip, spoke during the event.



WHAT'S AHEAD

Imperatives of Importing

January 21, 2015

Portland, ME

Opportunities in Mexico for Maine Environmental and Energy Companies (Webinar)

February 4, 2015

SAVE-THE-DATE

Maine International Trade Day

May 21, 2015

Samoset Resort • Rockport, ME

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