

Welcome from the Chamber

Comprised of the commercial districts of Norway, Oxford, and Paris (aka: South Paris), and complemented by the outlying villages of Buckfield, Harrison, Hartford, Hebron, Otisfield, Sumner, Waterford and West Paris, the Oxford Hills area's 11 towns stretch from Lewiston-Auburn's border to the Lakes Region, less than one hour north of Portland.

Oxford Hills businesses thrive, dishing out first-rate cuisine, healthcare, services, and products to the area's 25,000+ residents. Businesspeople not only find success in the Oxford Hills, they find an uncompromised quality of life.

The Oxford Hills has more than ten lakes and ponds, including Lake Penesseewassee of Norway, Crystal Lake and Long Lake of Harrison, and South Pond of Buckfield, which are havens for boating, swimming, fishing, ice skating, cross country skiing, snowmobiling and more. Streaked, Singepole, and Hawk mountains, among others, are hiking treks with vista views of Mount Washington and the Presidential Range. Additionally, Norway's Ordway Grove and Paris' Cornwall Nature Preserve provide over 150 acres of land for public use.

Life in the Oxford Hills is celebrated through a richness of community events and festivals, including the Oxford Fair, the Norway Summer Festival, the Sebago-Long Lake Music Festival and countless others. (Look for the Chamber's full calendar of events on pages 24-29.)

At the heart of the Oxford Hills community is the Oxford Hills Chamber of Commerce, offering members options to become more competitive and thus, allowing owners, managers, and employees to get out and enjoy all that the region has to offer.

The Oxford Hills Chamber of Commerce's goal is to help each of our members achieve the highest level of prosperity possible. To that end, the organization:

- is the marketing engine for the region;
- operates a visitors' information center with maps, brochures, and other insider's information;
- maintains www.oxfordhillsmaine.com, which has a continually-updated community calendar, links to recreational information, a full directory of local providers of goods and services, and more;
- provides business owners with representation in Augusta via the Maine Congressional delegation.
- helps you promote your causes and offerings through our wide marketing reach;
- offers a wide variety of promotional and networking programs, from "Business After Hours" events to the annual Business Showcase, all of which are designed to support local enterprise;
- hosts oh! events, where those ages 20 to 40 connect with their peers;
- offers training and other educational opportunities for community members and leaders;
- partners with existing enterprises to support organizations, sectors, and residents in a number of different ways;
- coordinates discounts on goods and services, from skiing lift tickets to insurance benefits, and anywhere in between!

Please call or stop by and take advantage of our offerings! We are here to help.



Photos (L-R): Norway Savings Bank in the Oxford Hills Chamber of Commerce's 21st Annual Golf Classic; Oxford Hills Business Showcase; Connie Shorey of Main Street Furniture & Appliances (left) with Suzanne Grover of Grover Gundrilling, Inc. look on as Grant Jones presents flowers to his wife, Lisa Jones, the Chamber's 2008 Citizen of the Year. Photos courtesy of Turner Publishing and OHCC.



The Chamber's Executive Committee: (L-R) Michael Newsom, Sue Goulet, Douglas P. Van Durme, Helga Thurston

FOR MORE INFO OR TO JOIN THE CHAMBER...

OXFORD HILLS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Chairperson: Michael Newsom
Chair Elect: Sue Goulet
Vice Chairperson: Helga Thurston
Treasurer: Diana McLaughlin
Past Chairperson: Dana Chandler
Member at Large: Douglas P. Van Durme

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Terry Hayes, H. Sawin Millett, Becky Mason, Mark Cyr, Glen Holmes, Amanda Huotari, Sharon Buffington

STAFF
Mindy Stewart, Office Assistant
Steven Wallace, Executive Director



Celebration Barn's Amanda Huotari accepts the Rising Star Award at the Chamber's 31st Annual Dinner.

oh!

A young professionals' social network

BY KELSEY JEWELL



Inaugural oh! event at Café Nomad
SCOTT BERK PHOTO

On June 19, 2004, Maine Governor John E. Baldacci hosted what was then called the "Governor's Summit on Youth Migration," an invitation-only event for 20-34 year-olds at the University of Maine in Orono. According to the Maine Service Commission, the participant-led summit was meant "to ensure Maine is a viable, preferred option for young adults." In the spirit of that summit, in August of 2007, the Oxford Hills Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors agreed to give the Chamber the authority to solicit contributions towards the launch of a local young person's network. Suzanne Grover of **Grover Gundrilling** immediately donated \$1,000. She lamented that her family's business, like others in the area, has a tough time recruiting qualified candidates, as many recent college graduates are drawn to areas with a more established social network of young adults.

On August 16, 2007, the Oxford Hills community celebrated two firsts: the opening of the highly anticipated **Café Nomad** on Main Street, Norway and the inaugural event of oh!, the Oxford Hills Chamber of Commerce's effort at cultivating a local community of young adults. The event attracted over 50 attendees, including teachers, bankers, non-profit administrators, insurers, actors, contractors, musicians, ecologists, authors, massage therapists, engineers, and more—surely a testament to the vibrant and exciting population of young adults in the area. With a large world map on the wall, participants marked areas where they had lived, worked, done business, and/or traveled. The multi-colored pins used to mark those places produced a kaleidoscope of colors that extended into all corners of the map.

Café chef Eric Person served up masterpieces from around the world too: lamb kebobs from India, baked brie and crusty bread from France, mini spanikopita with feta from Greece. Amanda Huotari of the **Celebration Barn Theater** and Michael Miclon of the **Oddfellow Theater** had the crowd laughing with a mock game show routine.

In the fall of 2007, Huotari, owner and director of the Celebration Barn Theater, welcomed the group to the theater's fields for a harvest-themed bonfire soiree. This time folks (some

new to the scene, some self-proclaimed veterans) gathered around a fire, listened to musician and hybrid-instrumentalist Dawson Hill, and enjoyed the opportunity to connect with one another.

Most recently, the Chamber received a REALIZE!Maine grant to continue the work of oh!. The \$1,000 grant will fund the organization's upcoming oh! activities. According to an email sent to grantees, the grants are designed to fund the projects of regional groups, such as oh!, with hopes of "empowering young people by connecting them with opportunities to realize their professional and personal aspirations in Maine."

The Chamber's belief in oh! supports the vision that if there were more social and professional opportunities within the Oxford Hills for those ages 20 to 40, not only would more young people be encouraged to move to or stay in the area, but also, a younger, more active population would lead to a more vital local economy. oh! events to be executed with grant funds include a reprisal of Dawson Hill's musical musings, a family-friendly theater outing at the Oddfellow Theater, and another visit to the Celebration Barn.

Young people living and/or working within the Oxford Hills community, who are interested in attending oh! events, should contact the Oxford Hills Chamber of Commerce at 743-2281 or email the group at info@oxfordhillsmaine.com. ■



Photos (L-R): Dawson Hill, musician and hybrid-instrumentalist; Map depicting oh! members' world travels; oh! Steering Committee (L-R) Becky Mason, Michael Newsom, Amanda Huotari