

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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REPORT OF THE MAINE BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION



December 3, 2020
Maine State Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs



Herein is a December 2019 report of the Maine Bicentennial Commission, outlining our findings and recommendations to date, as required in the enabling legislation that established the commission, [Resolve 25](#) of the 128th Legislature, originally sponsored by Rep. Jim Handy, D-Lewiston, as LD 1143, “Resolve, Providing for the Official Observance of the 200th Anniversary of the Formation of the State of Maine.”

Following membership appointments as outlined in the legislation, the commission convened for the first time on Jan. 29, 2018 and has met nine times since then.

Sen. Bill Diamond, D-Windham, continues to serve as the Chairman, David Cheever as Vice-Chairman, and Peter Merrill as Treasurer. Jamie Ritter rounds out the Executive Committee serving as a member at large. The commission maintains the four original subcommittees with the following Chairpersons:

- Events/Programs: Alison Sucey, Maine Tourism Association, Director of Government Affairs
- Education: Heather Perry, Gorham School Department, Superintendent
- Marketing: Rep. Jim Handy
- Finance: Dana Connors, Maine Chamber of Commerce, President

The commission’s accomplishments to date include, but are not limited to:

- Approval of mission and vision statements
- Non-profit corporation status for Maine200, which is incorporated as Maine200 with the Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions.
- 501 (c) (3) status obtained
- Approval of bylaws and fiscal controls for commission operations
- Approval of endorsement guidelines for programs and events seeking to identify with the bicentennial; as well as endorsement and usage guidelines for for-profit product use
- Educational guidelines and a curriculum sharing program for K-12 education
- Creation of the Community Grants program with an initial allocation of \$375,000. The first round of grants was announced this fall to 30 entities through 12 counties. More than \$145,000 was distributed. The next round will be awarded in February 2020.
- Financially supported projects from the Maine State Archives, Maine State Library, Maine State Museum, Maine Arts Commission, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Maine Historical Society, and the Maine Humanities Council that educate and inform Maine citizens about the bicentennial period and Maine history
- Secured \$700,000 in sponsorships and commitments with the intention of securing more than \$1,000,000 to match the State’s contribution
- Creation of Maine200 informational materials, both physical and digital, to interface with the public, municipalities, non-profit entities, and corporate partners.

- Launch of the Maine200.org website and social media feeds (@OfficialME200 on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook).
- Launched a webstore with branded merchandise and create a bicentennial marketplace for members of the MaineMade program that have created bicentennial products.
- Kicked off the bicentennial celebration with Governor Mills in Presque Isle, Bangor, Augusta, and Portland. All four communities dedicated a tri-centennial pine grove during the ceremonies
- Created and launched a commemorative bicentennial coin

The Maine Bicentennial Commission plans four signature events for 2020:

- Statehood Day Weekend, March 14-15, will feature two events in Augusta and community dinners around the state. On March 14, the United States Postal Service will debut the Maine Bicentennial commemorative stamp at the Augusta Armory. USPS expects 200-300 people to attend from the philatelic community. That evening, community organizations are encouraged to host Bicentennial Community Dinners throughout the state to bring people together. Collecting organizations are encouraged to bring forward an important piece of their holdings to share at the dinners, and organizers will gather non-perishable items for Maine's food pantries. The official bicentennial Statehood Day ceremony will take place on March 15 at the Augusta Armory, and will feature Governor Janet Mills, members of Maine's Congressional Delegation and State Legislature, and other dignitaries. The event will be recorded for the historical record and broadcast to the public.
- The State of Maine Bicentennial Parade will be in Auburn and Lewiston on Saturday, May 16, 2020, and will be presented by Poland Spring. The parade aims to be a statewide event with participation from Maine's 16 counties. The parade committee of Bicentennial Commission members and stakeholders in Auburn and Lewiston is finalizing details and continuing fundraising efforts. A press event is slated for later in December to publicize the event and encourage participation.
- The Tall Ships will return to the coast of Maine in 2020 with visits to include Portland, Rockland, Boothbay, Bucksport, Bangor, Searsport, Castine, and potentially Eastport, Bath, and Wiscasset. The month-long event culminates in Portland, July 16-20.
- The Maine Innovation Expo Committee is planning the Commission's final event on Indigenous Peoples' Weekend, 2020. The Maine Technology Institute is partnering with the Commission to host the exhibition. The Expo will feature companies and entrepreneurs from throughout Maine who will inform attendees of the innovative work being done here, with the message that young citizens can find engaging career opportunities in Maine.

We continue to encourage communities, however they define themselves, to plan bicentennial activities for their constituents. These may be new events or established traditions that are presented with a bicentennial flair for 2020.

We look forward to continue preparations for a fulfilling commemoration of Maine's 200 years of statehood.

Respectfully,



Sen. Bill Diamond,
Chairman, Maine Bicentennial Commission (Maine200)