MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Sustaining Maine's Global Connections

2020 Annual Report





President's Letter

Dear MITC Members and Friends:

"Needless to say, 2020 has not gone as planned."

No, it did not. And whenever I spoke those words in the past few months, everyone on the Zoom screen smiled. Why? Because we all knew the feeling. Plans made for the year were out the window by March, and revised plans were updated more than a few times after that.

This year, I've spent a lot of time reading and reflecting on leadership, managing in a crisis, and keeping one's own emotions in check. One insight I picked up along the way was about resilience: it isn't about bouncing back; it's about bouncing forward. It's not about how we return to the way things were in January 2020, but about using this time to propel us into the future. What will we bring with us? And what will we leave behind?

Rather than use all the 2020 cliches that we all know by heart, I prefer to frame the MITC story of this year as one of resilience and forward evolution. Evolution that, although prompted by tragedy, propelled changes that were long planned: using technology to engage more businesses in more areas of the state; exploring and creating virtual international trade events; and an emerging focus on e-commerce and digital exports.

In this report, we also highlight the incredible sense of community among MITC's staff, board, partners, and members in the face of unimaginable challenges. When we left our offices in March, my message to our team was simple, "We will do whatever we need to support our community."

And we did. MITC continued to assist Maine companies with traditional international trade services at about 88% of the volume we see in a typical year. We also helped more than 90 Maine businesses access economic relief programs through our parent DECD and other partners. We listened and we led, organizing training on e-commerce and supply chain issues and modifying our SBA STEP grant program to provide more funds to small businesses to improve their digital marketing and online sales infrastructure to better compete globally. In lieu of travel, we shifted to online trade development efforts in the seafood, education, and forest bioeconomy industries.

Looking forward, MITC will continue this evolution of our initiatives and services in 2021, always with an eye on what our international business community wants and what our state needs. Thank you for your ongoing support of MITC and our mission.

Wade Merritt,

President and State Director of International Trade

Our Role & 2020 Highlights

Maine International Trade Center (MITC) is Maine's leading source for international business assistance. MITC offers customized consulting, research, and an extensive network of connections across Maine and around the world to help businesses expand global markets for their products and services.

A public-private partnership, MITC activities are supported by nearly 300 businesses and organizations, corporate sponsors, and the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD). MITC members include manufacturers, service providers, and educational institutions located in all 16 Maine counties. While our members support the organization through annual membership dues, MITC provides assistance to any Maine business whether members or non-members. We work with both exporters and importers.

- In March, as the spread of COVID-19 resulted in travel bans and postponements or cancellations of several major international trade shows, the MITC team transitioned to working from home and activities moved to virtual formats.
- We watched with admiration and awe as several Maine companies, many of them MITC members, pivoted operations to manufacture muchneeded PPE.
- International business continued, and MITC never stopped receiving requests for assistance.
- A week-long visit by a Maine delegation planned for June was transformed into the Finland-Maine Virtual Trade and Study Mission 2020, which kicked off with two webinars in August followed

- by virtual B2B matchmaking and roundtable meetings in September and October for 53 businesses and organizations in Maine and Finland.
- In July, we launched Members Supporting Members (see next page) as a way to bring Maine's international business community together.
- We were humbled by the strong support received from Maine businesses. As of December, 214 of our members had paid their annual membership dues for FY2021.
- In August, our Annual Member Appreciation Event was held virtually for the first time.



Virtual Member Appreciation Event (August 2020)

Bringing Our International Business Community Together

Members Supporting Members is a way to bring Maine's international business community together. With support from our Members Supporting Members sponsors, MITC is here to help Maine companies during this challenging time.



Members Supporting Members



Offering a full range of services to assist businesses entering or expanding international markets, MITC remains a trusted resource with a vital network of connections across the state and around the world. Now more than ever, we believe those relationships matter.

COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS

"

Oh my goodness, THANK YOU! You guys are the coolest. I'm super grateful. I've really gotten so much out of the guidance the team has been able to give over the years, so I was sad to think of a year without MITC. Thank you thank you.

Thank you very much for this message, it made my day yesterday! I hated having to opt out of MITC membership, so I greatly appreciate the MSM effort allowing me to stay connected.

Many thanks to the MITC for this complimentary 2020 membership. We too value our relationship and hope for much more as we dig out.



Bringing Our International Business Community Together

During 2020, Members Supporting Members helped more than 30 member organizations.

Together, we'll find a new way forward. Maine will emerge stronger, strategically positioned to thrive in the global economy of the future.







Growing Maine's Economy

TRADE ASSISTANCE

Maine International Trade Center (MITC) helps Maine businesses grow through international sales. We offer one-on-one Trade Assistance, which covers a broad range of topics including logistics, tariffs, documentation, referrals, and research on best new markets.





TRADE SHOWS & MISSIONS

While MITC had planned to coordinate participation for Maine companies in several major trade shows in 2020, only Winter Fancy Food was held as scheduled with 5 Maine companies exhibiting in our shared booth in January, and the other shows were cancelled due to the global pandemic. Seafood Expo North America was postponed then eventually cancelled. MITC worked with Food Export USA to organize virtual meetings for 8 Maine seafood companies with international buyers representing Cambodia, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, U.A.E., and Vietnam.









EXPORT ASSISTANCE GRANTS

Through Export Assistance Grants, MITC provides financial assistance to eligible Maine companies to expand international sales. Generally, these funds may be used for business-to-business matchmaking, interpreters or translators, trade show space, or other on-the-ground overseas activities. The global pandemic required a shift in focus for how funds could be used in 2020 to virtual B2B matchmaking, online export skills training, and international e-commerce and digital marketing.

In October, MITC was awarded an additional \$461,000 for two years from the U.S. Small Business Administration under the State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) to increase the number of businesses that export. During 2020, 24 applications from Maine small businesses were approved for STEP Financial

Assistance Awards. Of the 16 completed activities, 13 companies reported \$136,000 in actual sales with an additional \$4.8 million projected sales in the next 12-18 months. These figures represent a 2.3:1 immediate return and a projected 81:1 future return on grant funds.

MITC is the state partner for Food Export USA, which promotes the export of food, seafood, and agricultural products through the Market Access Program (MAP). MAP provides cost-share assistance to eligible organizations for activities such as 66

I want to thank MITC for their support of companies like OSS, and specifically on behalf of OSS a big thank you for this international marketing support. This support is critical as we struggle with developing materials for international business development, which is a difficult task in normal times, but is even more challenging in the age of COVID-19. I can't help but believe that this support will be a key factor in helping OSS achieve success.

- Roland Sirois, CEO, Orono Spectral Solutions (OSS) Inc. (Hermon, ME)

"

consumer advertising, public relations, point-of-sale demonstrations, participation in trade shows, market research, and technical assistance. According to the most recent annual reporting available (2019), 26 Maine companies participated in 101 activities resulting in \$17 million in actual sales and \$29 million in projected sales.



The Maine North Atlantic Development Office (MENADO) was formed in 2013 as an initiative of MITC to increase trade, investment, and collaboration between the State of Maine and markets of the North Atlantic and to develop Maine's engagement in Arctic affairs. In 2020, MENADO coordinated and supported 16 virtual events, reaching over 1,500 participants in Maine and around the world.

"

We are in the heart of a large wood basket capable of supplying timber and fiber of all types. We see an amazing opportunity for Finnish technology to leverage our forest resource and existing manufacturing infrastructure to deliver products to North America that could possibly incorporate our insulation lines and offer more complete building solutions to the construction market.

 Scott Dionne, Chief Marketing Officer, GO Lab (Belfast and Madison, ME)

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Less than a year after Maine and Finland formally committed to building our respective forest bioeconomies and sharing best practices for climate resilience via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), MENADO organized MITC's first-ever virtual trade mission. The Finland-Maine Virtual Trade and Study Mission 2020 focused on building networks and collaboration between our forest industries. The virtual mission kicked off with two webinars in August, followed by virtual B2B matchmaking. Partnering with Business Finland, MENADO provided matchmaking and facilitation services between 73 participants from 53 companies and institutions in Maine and Finland for a total of 32 meetings and roundtable discussions in September and October.

StudyMaine

A statewide consortium of Maine high schools, colleges, and universities, MITC's StudyMaine initiative, in close partnership with the U.S. Commercial Service office in Portland, promotes Maine overseas as a top U.S. education destination. Typically, more than 2,500 international students contribute an estimated \$80 million annually to Maine's economy. The global pandemic, as well as uncertainties around travel and student visa applications, made last year exceptionally challenging for international student recruitment.

In early 2020, StudyMaine organized and led an Education Mission to Turkey and Azerbaijan with three Maine educational institutions and one immigration law firm. The delegation visited Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir in Turkey and Baku in Azerbaijan, U.S. Commercial Service organized matchmaking meetings with education agents in each location, and ISE World (an education agency in Turkey) organized seminars where delegation members presented to audiences of 300-500 students/parents and held one-on-one meetings with interested families. The Maine delegation's visit to Turkey received media coverage on TV and in multiple newspapers. Meetings with the Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir Chambers of Commerce were also held to promote Maine to their business members.

31 agreements expected with education agents or schools



8 students interviewed and accepted





"

I thought the mission was outstanding. I've traveled with numerous groups and this was among the very best admission trips I've gone on... What made it a best trip: extraordinarily well organized, lots of exposure and good media events, student fairs were well attended, and cultural experiences that are helpful to understanding the market and building student experience back on campus. I think having agents visit Maine and then our going over to Turkey was an excellent strategy.

- Beth Ross, Fryeburg Academy (Fryeburg, ME)





Invest in Maine is an initiative of MITC and Maine Department of Economic and Community Development established to promote job creation and growth through overseas business attraction. Last year, the primary focus remained on Italy.

Maine's food mystique brought executives from Italy's Gastronomia Toscana to the state to assess the potential for a manufacturing location and wine bar. The company has an established relationship with Costco and wants to begin production in the U.S. to lower logistics costs. The January visit, organized by MITC's Invest in Maine initiative with assistance from Maine Port Authority and MITC Member Modula USA, showcased all that Maine has to offer, including tours of potential sites in Biddeford, Lewiston, and Portland.



Developing Maine's Workforce

GLOBAL U

Maine's future success depends on a global workforce. When we talk with Maine businesses about barriers to growth and exporting, the inability to hire enough skilled workers to fill existing orders is frequently one of the top challenges for manufacturers across industry sectors.



While addressing the workforce shortage is beyond the scope of MITC, our efforts in this arena provided international business focused training for individual employees or entrepreneurs and internships for college students during the past year.

Global U is MITC's three-tiered trade education series to provide practical skills training to help Maine businesses succeed in international markets. During 2020, our ExporTech is a great opportunity to access knowledgeable experts, and especially for smaller companies it provides an excellent structure for developing a plan and staying on task during the process. It's easy to focus on the urgent rather than the important. The process, coaching, and cadence of the program really helped us get this done. This has been a great experience, and the process really helped with both our domestic and international marketing plans.

- Ed Gervais, President, Cascon Inc. (Yarmouth, ME)



training offerings featured ExporTech Maine 2020, a national export assistance program that applies a structured strategy development process to help companies enter or expand in global markets, as well as several webinars. Last year, 349 individuals attended Global U training sessions.

FUTURE GLOBAL LEADERS INTERNSHIPS

MITC has trained over 200 college students and recent graduates in our paid, part-time internship program Future Global Leaders. As a Research Assistant, MITC interns learn about international trade from Maine's point of view, hone internet and other secondary research skills, and gain valuable insight into what real Maine companies doing business internationally need to know.

Like the MITC staff, our interns worked remotely after mid-March. With the research work already being done online, we were able to continue providing a valuable experience for interns in 2020 through access to our Global U training webinars and inclusion in virtual meetings.



MITC Members & Partners

Our members are the lifeblood of what we do. Our success depends on their success in entering and doing business in markets around the globe, which in turn supports jobs in Maine and strengthens the state's economy. Working together helps all of us grow and prosper.









MITC members include manufacturers and service providers, educational institutions, industry associations, and economic development partners. We work with both exporters and importers.













Tex Tech Industries

Texas Instruments









Director's Circle

- Bangor Savings Bank
- Camden National Bank
- Diversified Communications
- Finance Authority of Maine
- FirstPark Commerce & Technology Center
- Geiger
- IDEXX
- KeyBank
- L.L.Bean, Inc.
- Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)
- NaviTrade Structured Finance
- Pierce Atwood, LLP
- Puritan Medical Products Company
- Reed Exhibitions
- Sprague Energy Corporation

Sustaining Circle

OUR KEY PARTNERS

With the support and collaboration of these key partner organizations, MITC can provide additional valuable assistance to Maine exporters with significant impact on the state's economy.













Maine International Trade Center Member List

A.N. Deringer, Inc.

Acadia Benefits, Inc.

Advanced Infrastructure

Technologies

Allen Insurance and Financial

Alternative Manufacturing, Inc.

American Rheinmetall Systems,

LLC

Amy Spear

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Apex Clean Energy

Artel, Inc.

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Commerce

Bangor Savings Bank

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Brooks Trap Mill, Inc.

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Cajo, Inc.

Camden Hills Regional High

School

Camden National Bank

Camoin Associates

Canadian Consulate General

Caron Engineering

Casco Bay Molding, Ltd.

Cascon Inc.

Central Maine Growth Council

CES, Inc.

C.H. Robinson

Christopher Paradis

CIEE: Council on International

Educational Exchange

City of Bangor

City of Portland

Civil Arms Inc.

Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI)

Coface

Colby Co. Engineering

Combined Management, Inc.

Compotech, Inc.

Conscious Revolution

Consigli Construction

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Corson GIS Solutions

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Cozy Harbor Seafood, Inc.

Dachser USA

DeepWater Buoyancy, Inc.

Dental Lace, Inc.

Dirigo Strategies

Diversified Communications

Down East Innovation, LLC

E2Tech - Environmental & Energy Technology Council of Maine East Colombia Trading Company

Eastern Maine Development

Corporation

Eaton Peabody

Elmet Technologies

Emo Trans, Inc.

EnviroLogix Inc.

Exhibit Source of Maine, Inc./

Nimlok Maine

Fiber Materials, Inc.

Finance Authority of Maine

(FAME)

Fintech Advocate

First National Bank

FirstPark Commerce &

Technology Center

Flowfold

Fluid Imaging Technologies

Foxcroft Academy

Front Street Shipyard

Fryeburg Academy

GAC Chemical Corporation

Garrand Moehlenkamp

Geiger

Gneiss Spice

Gorham Savings Bank

Gould Academy

Greater Portland Council of

Governments

Green Building Initiative

Greenhead Lobster

Grover Gundrilling, Inc.

Hancock Lumber Company

Harborside Logistics

Harvard Pilgrim Health Care

Hawkin Dynamics LLC

Maine International Trade Center Member List

Hebron Academy

HMH Vises

Howell Laboratories, Inc.

Hoyle, Tanner & Associates, Inc.

Husson University

IDEXX Laboratories, Inc.

IIS Financial Services

Initial This, INC.

Inland Lobster

Insulsafe Textiles

Interloqui

Island Institute

Jackson Laboratory

Jasper Wyman & Son / Wyman's

of Maine

JobsInME

John Bapst Memorial High School

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Jynx Productions, LLC

Katahdin Forest Products Co., Inc.

Kennebec River Biosciences Inc.

Kennebec Valley Council of

Governments (KVCOG)

Kents Hill School

Kepware Technologies

Kestrel Corporation

KeyBank

L.L. Bean, Inc.

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Ledgemere Group Consulting,

LLC

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Leiner Optics

Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce LGC Maine Standards Company

Lighthouse Imaging Corporation

Luke's Lobster

Lynch Logistics

Main(e) International Consulting,

LLC

Maine & Company

Maine Brewers' Guild

Maine Central Institute

Maine Coast

Maine Composites Alliance

Maine Department of Agriculture,

Conservation & Forestry

Maine Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD)

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Department of

Transportation

Maine Development Foundation

Maine Forest Products Council

Maine Lobster Dealers'

Association

Maine Lobster Marketing

Collaborative

Maine Manufacturing Extension

Partnership (MEP)

Maine Marine Composites

Maine Marine Trades Association

Maine Maritime Academy

Maine Maritime Museum

Maine Molecular Quality Controls,

Inc.

Maine Ocean & Wind Industry

Initiative

Maine Office of Tourism

Maine Port Authority

Maine Procurement Technical

Assistance Center (PTAC)

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Mathematics

Maine Small Business

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Maine State Chamber of

Commerce

Maine Technology Institute (MTI)

MaineStream Finance

Mano en Mano

Manufacturers Association of

Maine

Marine Parts Express

Mason's Brewing Company

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Millinocket Fabrication &

Machine, LLC

Modula Inc.

Mohawk Global Trade Advisors

Montalvo Corporation

Montserrat Group, LLC

Mt. Blue Campus

NaviTrade Structured Finance

New England Ocean Cluster

NibMor

Nittobo America Inc.

Nomad Pictures

Norman, Hanson & DeTroy, LLC

North American Kelp

North Atlantic Cargo Line LLC

Northcross Group

Northern Maine Development

Commission

Maine International Trade Center Member List

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Ocean Rescue Systems

International
Ocean's Balance

OCEANAIR, Inc.

Old Port Advisors

One Source Risk Management &

Funding

Orono High School

Orono Spectral Solutions, Inc.

P.A.T. Products

Panda Rocket Punch, LLC

Penobscot Bay Regional Chamber

of Commerce

People's United Bank

Perkins Thompson

Pierce Atwood, LLP

Piscataquis County Economic

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Planson International

Plantronics, Inc

Pole Star Maritime, LLC

Portland Pudgy, Inc.

Portland Regional Chamber

Power Gripps USA, Inc/Versa

Gripps USA

PowerWise Systems

Preti Flaherty Beliveau & Pachios,

LLP

Puritan Medical Products

Company

Quad Express

R.E.D.D.

Radius International Inc.

RainWise, Inc.

Rapid Assault Tools

Ready Seafood

Reed Exhibitions

Rubb Building Systems

Rudman & Winchell

Sanford Regional Economic

Growth Council

Sapphire Group LLC

Saunders Electronics

Savatteri Law Firm PC

Scarborough Economic

Development Corp (SEDCO)

Scythe Supply

Sea Bags

SEKO Worldwide Logistics, LLC

Ship-Right Solutions

Shucks Maine Lobster LLC

Solstice Corporation

Southern Maine Community

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Southworth International Group,

Inc.

Sprague Energy Corp.

SteriZign Precision Technologies,

LLC

Stone & Associates

Stonewall Kitchen

Strainrite Companies/Lapoint

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Talus Corporation

TD Bank

Tempshield, Inc.

Tex Tech Industries

Texas Instruments

The Dunham Group

The Rowley Agency, Inc.

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U.S. Small Business

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University of Southern Maine

Verrill

ViroStat, Inc.

Washington Academy

Washington County Community

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Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.

Western Maine Economic

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Whitney Campbell Advertising &

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