

FOCUSMAINE

A CATALYST TO GROW SELECT SIGNATURE INDUSTRIES.

Agriculture



Aquaculture



Biopharmaceuticals



Knowledge Workers



Message from the President



We are doing our part this summer to make Maine an exciting and rewarding place to work. As part of FocusMaine's overall strategy, we know that growing good jobs also means finding great talent. Maine is especially challenged in that regard.

Record low unemployment combined with a shrinking labor force might seem like insurmountable forces, but FocusMaine's Leadership thinks differently. We're betting big, along with many of Maine's most significant employers, on internships as a pathway to long-term careers in Maine.

With EducateMaine, we are launching our first formal year of the FocusMaine Internship Experience this month, building on a pilot program last year. With 25 employers and more than 350 interns, we hope to do more than attract and retain great talent in Maine. We want to help young people new to Maine and from within Maine envision a multifaceted future here, and to build the skills and networks they need to stay. The program is built on two premises: first, that a quality internship experience in Maine sets the stage for a positive long-term connection to our state, and second, that we need to work together to win both the hearts and the minds of future Mainers.

This summer, interns participating in the FocusMaine Internship Experience will have the opportunity to learn from [Startup Maine](#) to give back to the community, to connect with other young professionals in different fields, and to hear from inspiring CEOs. Along the way, we'll be working with Maine employers to augment their existing programs and to help introduce interns to the opportunities that exist across the state.

We'll be learning more this year about what matters to young people who have taken the first step to building a career in Maine. We want to better understand what the impediments to staying are, and identify what employers can do to turn a summer internship into the connection of a lifetime. I look forward to sharing more with you. In the meantime, you can read about the program [here](#).

Have a great summer and take some time to get to know the great people who want to call Maine home.

Kimberly Hamilton, FocusMaine President

IN MEMORY OF STERLING KOZLOWSKI

FocusMaine lost a leadership team member this week, and Maine lost a champion. We are deeply saddened by Sterling's passing. He has been one of FocusMaine's long-standing and ardent supporters from our earliest days. His actions demonstrated a deep commitment to our vision, his enthusiasm fueled our efforts, and his generosity of spirit lifted us. We will miss our dear friend, and we send our sincere condolences to his family and friends.



Highlights from FocusMaine Implementation

GROWING JOBS IN MAINE'S FOOD ECONOMY



Photo Credit: Barry Fitzsimmons

Where ideas and capital mingle.

CEI launched the Maine Tastemakers Capital Access Series to create fun and engaging opportunities for investors to meet entrepreneurs in emerging Maine food and beverage industries. The series will connect Maine food entrepreneurs with the capital needed for accelerated growth, and will educate investors about investment opportunities in Maine's food sector. Upcoming Tastemakers events will feature Maine's aquaculture innovators on June 15th during the Damariscotta Oyster Celebration. Maine's grain industry will be featured during a late summer Tastemakers tour.

Bragging rights in aquaculture.

The prototype Aquaculture Accelerator program, a collaborative effort among the Maine Center for Entrepreneurs, Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Maine Aquaculture Association, and FocusMaine, concluded with a pitch-off in Mid-May to a panel of business experts. Matthew Moretti of Bangs Island Mussels and Jonathan Turcotte of Glidden Point Oyster Farms won a \$5,000 cash prize to invest in their businesses. The pitch-off event was the culmination of an intensive 15-week aquaculture-focused [Top Gun program](#), which teaches business fundamentals and provides one-on-one mentoring to promising aquaculture companies.

“ Being part of the Top Gun program was a great experience.

Not only was it informative and educational, it was also inspiring. It was great to get to work among fellow industry peers that are all passionate about what they do and are so driven to grow. The value of the program far exceeded my expectations.

”

Jonathan Turcotte, Glidden Point Oyster Farms.

Testing the market for Maine grains.

FocusMaine and CEI are also working with the Maine Brewer's Guild, Maine Grain Alliance, and the Maine Potato Board to identify value chain gaps and market opportunities for potato rotational crops that are not currently being addressed by Maine entrepreneurs and businesses. [This article](#) showcases a pilot program to test the market responsiveness to Maine product branding in conjunction with the [Maine Grain Alliance](#) and the [Maine Malt House](#).

Growing great food companies.

Maine Center for Entrepreneurs (MCE) launched the first Cultivator Program, an intensive twelve-month course to support established food businesses with their growth plans. Eight companies are seeking expertise and tools in e-commerce sales, trade and consumer marketing, and distribution and logistics. They will also receive help launching products in new markets. The Cultivator was featured [here](#) last month, and was also featured on the cover of Maine Biz's June 11 edition [here](#).



THE INAUGURAL COHORT OF CULTIVATOR COMPANIES INCLUDES:

- Belle Cove LLC
- Black Dinah Chocolatiers
- Common Wealth Poultry
- Crown O'Maine Organic Cooperative
- Mousam Valley Mushrooms
- North Spore,
- Two Fat Cats Bakery
- Vena's Fizz House
- Wilbur's of Maine

GROWING MAINE'S WORKFORCE

Betting Big on Interns.

The [FocusMaine Internship Experience \(FMIE\)](#), a collaborative effort with private sector companies, provides networking, learning and opportunities for summer interns and intends to strengthen their connection to Maine and retain talent in the state. EducateMaine, our implementing partner, has 25 employers and more than 350 interns in Bangor and the greater Portland area participating in the program. Kickoff events will be held in Portland and Bangor in mid-June.



“ My participation in the FocusMaine Intern Program elevated the quality of my summer experience.

I got acquainted with smart, interesting, aspiring colleagues working in and around Portland. I developed professionally by learning about the top companies in the region and meeting their employees. I took a full-time job at MedRhythms after my internship ended because the work was fascinating and challenging. I'm excited to build an emerging company in Maine and continue my career in the state where I grew up.

Lauren S., 2017 FocusMaine Intern



WELCOME NEW FUNDING PARTNERS

FocusMaine deeply appreciates our new and renewed funding partners, the **Bank of America Foundation**, the **Elmina B. Sewall Foundation** and **Machias Savings Bank**. Your support builds on private sector, philanthropic and individual partners who have joined our effort to grow good jobs in Maine.

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