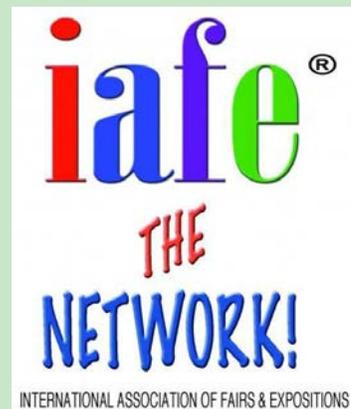




MAAF NEWSLETTER

JULY
2025
ISSUE #4



NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BARRY NORRIS

Fair season is underway! When you receive this newsletter three of our fairs will have welcomed the first fairgoers of the 2025 season. Hopefully you were able to attend one of our June fairs. I know that we're all busy, but there are some new and exciting programs and events this year. When you visit other fairs remember that we all need to support each other. When you visit, check out the youth activities and of course... say hi.

I am happy to announce that MAAF has its own YouTube channel. Some of you may have already seen it. For those that haven't, go to www.youtube.com/@MAAFVideos and check it out. We'll be posting more as the season progresses.

We're also happy to announce that MAAF is in the process of creating a Podcast series, which we hope to launch by the end of the summer. Please go to our website www.maineairs.net under Members' Section: Members' Resources and check it out. We will be posting other resources in the future to help you all as we learn about them.

Legislative update LD 1838, An Act to Provide Opportunities and Sustainable Revenue for Maine Farms, Agriculture Fairs, Wabanaki Tribes & Veteran's Homes, came out of committee with a divided report. We had asked all of the fair presidents to contact their respective senators to support the minority report, as the bill is really a farm bill.

The MAAF board is happy to report they have been busy at work getting the January conference topics aligned with the survey that was sent out. Your input was very helpful. Look for more exciting news in the coming weeks. Sorry we didn't make the July 1st announcement, however we want you all to have a wonderful experience in January. Keep watching the website for further updates.

Many of you may remember that in April the Association was awarded the "You Make the Difference" National Initiative Grant. Much more information to come in our newsletter. We are excited that Ian Hill, from the Changing Point of Life, will be our keynote speaker at the conference. Some of you may have heard his presentation at the Zone 1 conference in Concord. Look for a link on the MAAF website that will bring you directly to Ian.

REMEMBER 2025 IS THE YEAR OF "YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE." PLEASE THANK THEM WHEN YOU SEE THEM AT THE FAIRS. WE ALL APPRECIATE HOW MUCH THEY ARE CONTRIBUTING TO OUR FAIRS. YOUTH AND THEIR INVOLVEMENT ARE OUR FUTURE.



NEWS FROM THE EDITOR - JUNIA NORRIS

Sometimes connecting all the dots just happens, while you are focused in a different direction and on a different project, and WOW -

Last December while attending the 2024 IAFE Convention in Phoenix, I took a deep breath and walked into the workshop titled “ AI Beyond the Basics.” What was I thinking? Probably that I could learn how to incorporate more of this CHAPGPT stuff that people were talking about..



The panel was diverse - a few fairs having been using AI for quite sometime and others not sure where it would fit into their overall program. I was intrigued to learn that there was a slot for this new technology in most all fairs represented and that, after a few hiccups, this had become a new tool that was opening unexpected doors of communication with diverse groups of fairgoers. But I was reluctant to open the Pandora’s box labeled “CHATGPT”...not knowing that it would arrive being labeled Robotics ! Who knew ??

Fast forward to the Zone 1 meeting in May of 2025. Co-sponsored by Maine and New Hampshire, held in Concord, New Hampshire - which was quite convenient for attendees traveling from the east coast states and Canada - the program promised to be innovative, informative and, as always, lots of fair fun! On the list of Saturday events, between the safety and security drill and the fairgrounds tour via horse and wagon, was listed “Dunbarton and Bow Robotics 4-H Club Demonstration.” This club, formed in 2019 , lists their mission as to provide a place for students in the area to learn more about STEM, Business and Leadership in a fun hands on way. Competing at the FIRST International Robotics competition in Houston, Texas, "Overly Komplex" was awarded the Imagery Award that celebrates attractiveness in engineering and outstanding visual aesthetic integration. So FTC team 7080 and FRC Team 8708 were invited to share their Star Wars Magic inside a small building on the Hopkinton State Fairgrounds while it was pouring down rain outside. Seated on aluminum bleachers, with standing room only, attendees learned from this amazing team of 4-H'ers all about robotics - especially “2024 RobotTed Swervin,” who showed off his basketball skills and proved that most anyone in the audience could, with assistance, operate a bright orange robot! As folks left the building, amazed at what they had participated in, plans began to form to research where our Maine Robotics teams were located. (There are links under the words maine and robotics listing over 60 Maine teams entering the 2024-2025 season. The annual Maine STEM Film Challenge is held at USM in southern Maine. Also look under Lincoln Academy’s robotics team 8030A will represent and defend their state championship title on Saturday, March 1 at the VEX Robotics Maine State Championships in Portland. Robot 8030A will have a huge advantage in this competition as it can “CLIMB.” (* This robot has been to the VEX Robotics World Championships in Dallas, Texas) FIRST robotics programs have reached more then 3.2 million youth participants. This program is a proven game-changer for preparing kids to solve the world’s greatest problems. Maine fairs are on board with bringing local Robotics teams to their fair week events. Monmouth Fair FB page is highlighting a raffle that benefited the Monmouth Robotics Program. Ossipee Valley Fair invites all to attend their fair all three days especially on Sunday, July 13th for the LEGO challenge 11 am-3pm.

As Maine fairs send us the dates and times of their Robotics/Lego demonstrations, we will post the specifics on the MAAF Membership Resources Page.

Final comments: So I went on CHATGPT and asked it to explain why this robotics program is so special for agriculture and our fairs....I am attaching the AI answer... I think that AI just connected all the dots. Junia Norris, Editor

Bridging Innovation and Tradition:

Robotics at Agricultural Fairs

Agricultural fairs have long been a cornerstone of community, tradition and hands-on learning. Today, there's a growing opportunity to enrich these events by incorporating local robotics teams - bring STEM and agriculture together in exciting, educational ways!

Many fairs are already leading the way by partnering with local FIRST Robotics teams, 4-H robotic clubs and school programs to:

- *Showcase student-built rob kids*
- * Celebrate how technology is shaping modern farming*

To those fairs already championing this collaboration : THANK YOU for supporting the next generation of innovators while honoring the roots of agricultural heritage.

If you're organizing a fair or involved in local robotics, consider teaming up! It's a win-win:

- *Students gain real-world exposure and community pride*
- * Fairs attract new audiences and demonstrate future-ready thinking*
- * Visitors get inspired by the blend of tradition and tech*

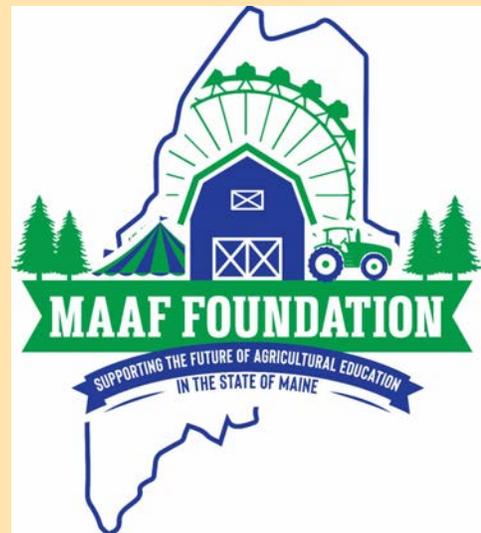
Let's work together to grow stronger connections between the agricultural and STEM communities - one robot (and one corn dog) at a time!

NEWS FROM THE MAAF FOUNDATION

The MAAF Foundation has had a busy spring! We just finished awarding our 2025 post secondary education scholarships and are thrilled to announce that we awarded six \$2,000 scholarships this year. These scholarships are made possible thanks to the generous support of our fair Community. Details on the recipients will be available in the next newsletter!

In addition, we're excited to share that the Foundation is actively working on developing a new scholarship opportunity for future IAFE participants. We look forward to sharing more information about this initiative very soon.

Thank you for being a vital part of our mission to support the next generation of agriculture and fair leaders! [Sadee Mehuren](#)



YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE - IAN HILL FROM THE ZONE 1 CONFERENCE

During the Zone 1 gathering in Concord, New Hampshire, fair folks listened as award winning humanitarian and social innovator Ian Hill invited them to join him (and fair members from other states across the country) on a transformative journey

that will help each one of us to recognize and embrace the reality that we indeed are the difference makers. Each one of us exists for every other member of our fair community. A special section of the MAAF newsletter has been set aside to set the stage for you to learn more about this initiative "You Make THE Difference" and to consider some of the strategies that can empower you to overcome challenges as you face the real challenges that fair boards face today.

Ian will be kicking off the You Make the Difference Tour for Maine at the annual conference in January as the Key Note speaker and returning back to Maine in March to meet with all of the fair boards and community members.

Maine Awarded Statewide Grant for Groundbreaking National Initiative:
"You Make THE Difference" Set to Launch at 2026 Annual Convention

The Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs is proud to announce that our state has officially been selected as one of only a handful across North America to receive the You Make THE Difference statewide grant—a fully funded, high-impact initiative that will roll out across Maine beginning in 2026.

This powerful program, developed to strengthen fair boards, boost volunteer engagement, and ignite leadership across rural communities, will officially kick off at the 2026 MAAF Convention.

Maine was chosen because of our commitment to community, our belief in the future of fairs, and the readiness of our leaders to step into the moment. And now, thanks to this award, every fair in the state will have access to world-class training, tools, and support—at no cost.

What Is You Make THE Difference ?

You Make THE Difference is a first-of-its-kind national initiative, created to equip local fair leaders, volunteers, and Ag Society members with the practical skills and inspiration to face today's challenges head-on. The effort is led by award winning ag society and fair advocate Ian Hill. Backed by partners like Fairs.com, the initiative is fully funded and already making an impact across the country.

Now, it's Maine's turn.

What Will Maine's Fairs Receive?

With this award, every fair in the state of Maine will receive: A statewide in-person training tour in 2026—dynamic, high-energy sessions delivered across the state to build skills, increase engagement and revenue, and foster unity. Unlimited access to online resources—a robust video library, downloadable templates, and proven strategies to support year-round learning. A \$1,000 grant to help the association coordinate logistics and promote participation. A dedicated 30-day follow-up system to ensure the training doesn't end when the event does. An invitation to join a national digital community, connecting Maine's fair leaders with peers across the U.S. and Canada for real-time collaboration.

Why This Matter?

Fairs have always been more than events. They're where tradition meets purpose, and where community gets rekindled. But let's be honest: today's fair boards are under pressure. Volunteers are stretched thin. Engagement is harder. And leadership is evolving. This initiative was created to meet those needs head-on—not with theory, but with real tools, real support, and real results.

What Happens Next?

The official kickoff will take place at the 2026 MAAF Convention, where the first preview of the You Make THE Difference tour will be unveiled. Following the convention, the statewide tour will begin, visiting multiple regions throughout the year. Every fair will have an opportunity to send representatives to these engaging, practical sessions.

More details, including dates and locations, will be announced at the 2026 Convention.



A Word from the National Director

“We chose Maine because of its grit, its tradition, and the leadership we’ve seen rising across your fairs. You’re not waiting to be saved—you’re stepping up to shape the future. We can’t wait to walk alongside you.”

—Ian Hill, Founder, You Make THE Difference

In Summary

This is a major opportunity. This is recognition of Maine’s leadership in the fair industry. And this is the beginning of a journey that will strengthen not just our boards—but our communities. Congratulations, Maine. You’ve been selected. And come 2026... You will show the nation what it truly means to Make THE Difference.

Ian Hill | Chief Executive Officer

The Changing Point

Thechangingpoint.life

Phone: 725.324.6877

[Click here to schedule a meeting w/ me](#)

YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE - FOR KIDS - ACTON FAIR

The Farmer’s Lil’ Helper at Acton Fair is a hands-on experience to educate children about agriculture in Maine. Children receive a basket (and an apron if they so choose) when they enter the first barn. They receive oats to feed the cow and corn to feed the chickens and plant in the farmer’s garden. They walk through the exhibit learning about fruits, vegetables, feeding and milking the cow, and feeding the chickens and gathering an egg for their basket. They also learn about making maple syrup, harvesting cranberries, blueberries and apples, and the different products that come from wool. They can plant corn seeds in and harvest

vegetables from the farmer’s garden. At every area they receive an item that represents that area, i.e. honey, maple syrup, milk, egg, vegetable, etc.

Then the children go to the farmer’s market where they “sell” their items. They sort all their items that they have collected into the baskets and receive a “Farmer’s Lil’ Helper dollar” that they can spend at the FLH grocery store to buy a snack or coloring book. The participants also receive a ribbon that says, “I was a Farmer’s Lil’ Helper at Acton Fair.” The area is open Thursday and Friday from 4 pm until 8 pm, on Saturday from noon until 8 pm, and on Sunday from noon until 5 pm. See you in the barns! [Donna Goodrich](#)





YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE - BY KIDS - LIL' LUMBERJACKS/LIL' FARMERS AT NORTHERN MAINE FAIR

Modeled after the fair's highly successful Lil' Farmers interactive exhibit which started in 2011, as a way for children to learn about the variety of different sectors in agriculture while providing a fun experience for children, the Lil' Lumberjacks was created in 2022 and focuses on Maine's forest industry and the various products that are utilized from trees. Highlights of the exhibit include: a treehouse library consisting of books for children about forests, nature, and wildlife; a maple sugar shack, learning how Advantech sheathing is made at Huber Engineered Woods; learning about tree growth rings, the trees of Maine, and hardwood lumber produced locally in the Seven Islands Land Company and Maine Woods Company building; fire safety from Maine Forest Rangers; forest operations, wildlife, and hunter safety in the Farm Credit East building; many games and fun activities, and a campground where children get to make a s'mores after their journey through the Lil Lumberjacks at the Fair. In 2024 a real hydraulic log loader was added to the exhibit in which the kids can test their skills at loading a trailer with logs. [Shawn Bugbee](#)





YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE - WITH KIDS

UNION FAIR & BLUE HILL FAIR

Youth In Agriculture: With Kids. So many well known childrens' books have an agricultural setting, and in Maine we are fortunate that two of our fairs provided the background for famous books . Charlotte's Web (E.B. White) takes place at the Blue Hill Fair and can be experienced by walking into the Zuckerman's Barn or by watching the story come to life through the live performance courtesy of The Grand. Wilbur will greet you in the barn and you can meet other special characters from the book as well.

Not far down the road, another favorite children's book, Blueberries for Sal (Robert McCloskey of Make Way For Ducklings fame) is also coming to life. The simple story of a young girl (Sal) and a bear cub (Little Bear) who both wander off from their mothers in search of a tasty lunch is told in the heart of Maine's blueberry barrens. Experience Sal's kitchen where her mother creates delicious blueberry pies and then hear the story read out loud by Sal herself. Sarah "Sal" McCloskey will be at the Union Fair/Maine's Wild Blueberry Festival, Sunday August 3. She will be reading the story at 11am, 1 pm and 3 pm in the Blueberry Acres Building. Also, meet Sarah, and listen to her talk about her career as an attorney, and the impact she has had on conservation in the State of Maine, and her role in the creation of the Maine Farmland Trust.

Both fairs share an interactive experience for children of all ages during their visit, and offer copies of the books and other merchandise from the story for sale.





CREATING AN EXPERIENCE 2025 YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE

The Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs invites all Maine agricultural fairs to participate in our 2025 ag challenge. Youth in Agriculture will showcase our ag leaders of the future. This is an opportunity to introduce your fairgoers to youth of all ages - involved in so many different aspects of our Maine agriculture . We have organizations for youth - such as 4-H and FFA . We have books - written by famous authors that are well known in schools across the country -that have introduced youth to Wilbur and Charlotte from Charlotte's Web and Sal from Blueberries for Sal. We have opportunities for young people to play an active role in our ag fairs as they experience the fun of being a Lil Farmer/Lil Helper/Wee Farmer...the list goes on.



Our Maine agricultural community is vibrant and involved in 21st century science as they study , and compete, in the science of robotics - with Maine teams being ranked nationally and internationally.

Our “Youth in Agriculture” have moved through their local support organizations to attend

colleges and universities where they learn the latest about genetics, crop management, animal husbandry and so much more. Then return home and raise prize winning barley, registered beef and design an organic fair that is recognized internationally. Maine's ag youth have a reputation nationwide for excellence. For hard work and honesty.

All beginning, for some, as Clover Buds ...

Create an experience at your fair that will be memorable..

FMI: junianorris@gmail.com

NEWS FROM KAYLA JONES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Kids are out of school, and the 2025 Fair season is well underway. Mother Nature is finally getting her act together, and maybe spring/early summer is ready to arrive here in western Maine.

2025 has undoubtedly been chock-full of some exciting things. Of course, the year's kick-off was Governor Mills announcing that 2025 would be "The Year of Youth in Agriculture." This has sparked a fire of recognition across the state, of our young people who are making a difference in the agriculture industry. Watch the Real Maine Facebook page as we spotlight those youth throughout the year.

In March, I kicked off the month in New Hampshire as Maine co-hosted the Zone 1 International Fair and Expos (IAFE) regional meeting. This was a fantastic experience, and if you are involved in a fair, I highly recommend planning a trip to Pennsylvania next spring. And because I am never short on time, I followed that weekend by hosting, in conjunction with the Maine State FFA team, the first annual Maine Youth General Livestock Judging Contest. Forty participants travelled to Bangor to judge sheep and beef cattle. While there is always room for growth, I was thrilled with how the event went, and could not thank the sponsors, volunteers, supporters, and participants enough for all their contributions. The Maine State FFA elected a new officer team of individuals ready to hit the ground running. Be sure to contact them to have them visit your school, fair, or event.

We are excited to announce that H.P. 597 – L.D. 932 passed and was approved into law on April 25th, allowing us to issue fair licenses every four years. Thank you to everyone involved in that process over the last year. The award of Fair Licensing Dates was released on May 15 th by Commissioner Beal and is on the DACF website, along with the 2025 fair schedule.

A lot has been happening, and by the time you read this, I will have passed the one-year mark of taking this position. The last year was quite a learning experience. I appreciate your patience, guidance, friendship, and hospitality as I have navigated. While I still have much to learn, I am excited about my accomplishments over the last year. Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you on the summer fair tour. Thank you, Kayla A. Jones, Agricultural Promotional Coordinator Agriculture Resource Development Department, Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, 90 Blossom Lane 28 SHS, Augusta, ME 04333-0028, Direct Line: 207-592-2126

2025 FAIR DATES

Ossipee Valley Fair: July 10 - July 13

Houlton Fair: July 11 - July 13
 Waterford Worlds Fair: July 18 - July 20
 Bangor State Fair: July 24 - August 2
 Northern Maine Fair: July 26 - August 3
 Union Fair: July 30 - August 3
 Topsham Fair: August 3 - August 10
 Skowhegan State Fair: August 7 - August 16
 Acton Fair: August 21 - August 24
 Piscataquis Valley Fair: August 21 - August 24
 Washington County Fair: August 23 - August 24
 Windsor Fair: August 24 - September 1
 Blue Hill Fair: August 29 - September 1
 Harmony Free Fair: August 29 - September 1
 Clinton Lions Fair: September 4 - September 7
 Litchfield Fair: September 5 - September 7
 Oxford Fair: September 10 - September 13
 New Portland Lions Fair: September 12 - September 14
 Farmington Fair: September 14 - September 20
 Common Ground Fair: September 19 - September 21
 Cumberland County Fair: September 21 - September 27
 Fryeburg Fair: September 28 - October 5

2025

OSSIPPEE VALLEY FAIR

"The Friendliest of Fairs!"

JULY 10-13, 2025

NEORVCA 4X4 & ATV Races

Daily Bicycle Give-away!

Barrell Racing

NAWA Wrestling Shows

Baked Bean Supper

Conjuring Carroll MAGICIAN Thursday-Saturday

Classic Car Show

4-H Events

Dairy Clipping Show • Beef Show
 Dairy Cattle Show • Dairy Goat Show
 Sheep Fitting & Showmanship
 Working Steer Show

Open Shows

Beef • Dairy Cattle • Show Steer
 Sheep • ADGA Open Dairy Goat
 - Jr., Sr. & Group Classes -

Friday Night Parade

Other Livestock Events

Draft Horse & Pony Show
 Sheep Challenge Obstacle Course
 Show Steer & Oxen • 4-Ox Working Steer
 Steer & Ox Log Scooting

LEGO Challenge

Sunday 11am-3pm
 Enter your name to participate between 9:30-10:30am on Sunday

Hosted by **C3Brix** of Ossipee NH
 Sponsored by **Carole Whitefield, BEANTON**

Midway
by



CUSHING
AMUSEMENTS

Sponsored by Carla Wakefield, REALTOR
carla@sellmainewithcarla.com

Due to an unfortunate accident - the Cirque Cyber Motorcycle Show has been cancelled.
Here's to a speedy recovery for those involved!

Enjoy Awesome Musical Entertainment!
**Pete Finkle, Henry Honkonen, Becky Krill, Karaoke,
Country Roads, Gabe Zacchai, Dan Morgan,
The Midnight Anthem, SV Community Band,
Blue Hill Brass Band, New Realm**



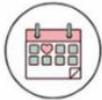
"BERT"

(Bonny Eagle Robotics Team)
will be demonstrating Saturday 9am-3pm!
They are nationally ranked and have
won awards for their ingenuity!



291 SOUTH HIRAM ROAD • HIRAM, ME

MAINE FFA AT THE NORTHERN MAINE FAIR



JULY 31, 2025

9AM-5PM



NORTHERN MAINE FAIR



CONTACT

mainedoe.maineffa@gmail.com



VOLUNTEER

Lil Farmer's At the Fair
(Saturday Shifts)



SUPERDRAW



EXHIBITS

Present your Chapter Exhibit
for Prizes before fair, see
information provided



SIGN UP

Sign up using this link
<https://forms.gle/mEepEpbWn1z8r9ns8>



9 AM - 11 AM

Safe Tractor Driving (Log Required)
Creed Speaking
Extemporaneous Speaking
Prepared Speaking
Employment Skills

11 AM-12 PM

Opening Ceremonies with 4-H
Lunch Break (Lunch on Own)

12 PM-1 PM

Livestock Evaluation Event (3 Classes)

1 PM - 3PM

Ag Skill-A-Thon: Compete in teams of
3-4 to test your knowledge of
Horticulture, Marketing, Ag
Mechanics, Forestry, and More

3 PM - 3:45 PM

Service Projects

- Assist with needs at fair
- Help fill a backpack

4 PM - 5 PM

FFA and 4-H Awards and Ice cream
Social

Exciting Changes for the Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs Annual Conference

Join Us at the Cross Center in Bangor, January 23-25, 2026

Announcement ;

We are thrilled to announce that the Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs Annual Conference will be held at the Cross Center in Bangor, Maine from January 23-25, 2026. This marks a significant change from our traditional location in Portland, and we understand that this transition may come with challenges. However, we believe that this new venue will allow us to bring you a more comprehensive and enriching program.

2020-July/August
2020-September/October
2020-November/December
2021-January/February
2021-March/April
2021-May/June

Expanded Program;

We are committed to working diligently to bring you an enhanced and diverse program. Our team is working tirelessly to curate workshops, classes, and sessions that will provide the education and resources you need. We believe that the Cross Center's extensive facilities will enable us to offer a broader range of topics and activities, fostering an environment of learning and collaboration.

Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs | PO Box 786 | Augusta, ME 04332 US

Why the Change?

For many years, Portland has been the beloved home of our conference, making it a familiar and comfortable setting for our attendees. Yet, as our conference has grown, so has the need for a larger and more accommodating facility. By moving to the Cross Center, we are ensuring that we can provide the best possible experience for everyone involved. This new location offers an expanded program, ensuring that we have room to be all together for our banquet and various sessions.

2022-January/February
2022-February
2022-March/April
2022-May/June
2022-July/August
2022-September/October
2022-November/December
2023-January
2023-March
2023-May
2023-July
2023-September
2023-November/December

2024-January/February
2024-March/April
2024-May/June
2024-July/August
2024-September/October
2024-November/December

Call for Ideas

To ensure that our conference meets your needs and interests, we invite you to share your ideas for workshops, classes, and other sessions. Whether you have suggestions for short or longer sessions, your input is invaluable to us. Please let us know how we can make this conference the best it can be.

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Stay Tuned,

More details will be coming so chapter in the Maine Association welcome



Try email & social marketing for free!

We are excited about this new conference and look forward to 2026.