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Community Connections

February 2026

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Your Voice, Your Schools
Help shape the RSU 34 budget!
Turn to page 2 to see how you can get involved.

RSU 34

Alton • Bradley • Old Town

Clockwise from top left; Cadet Ian Aldrich, who earned the Legion of Valor – Bronze Cross; Avery Dearborn warms up his horn for his first Pep Band experience; LMS outdoor classroom students learn to build a primitive shelter


Matt Cyr

On behalf of the RSU 34 School Board, I hope this edition of the Community Connections finds you safe and warm during what has been a cold winter with plenty of snow! While we all enjoy images of kids sliding down hills and building snow forts, it is about this time of year when we say "enough already" and begin dreaming of budding trees and warmer weather.

RSU 34 continues to use our strategic plan as a guide for growth and development. This plan focuses on four pillars: Raising Student Aspirations, Engagement, and Achievement; Excellent, Empowered, and Supported Staff; Community Collaborations; and Safe and Sustainable Facilities and Operations.

Elementary and middle-level curriculum teams have spent much of the past year and a half reviewing current math and ELA practices in our schools and considering research-based changes to advance our curricula and instruction in these two critical areas. This time-intensive work includes learning and piloting new programs with the ultimate goal of choosing teaching and learning tools and resources that match our students' needs. At the high school level, staff have created new courses and units, reintroduced mid-term and finals schedules, and are looking for creative ways to expand our current course offerings with a keen eye on the future.

Administration and the School Board continue to strengthen our partnership with the association through engaging staff leadership teams. As a district, we are working toward feasibly increasing professional development opportunities for all staff. Time (or rather, not enough time) has consistently been a barrier in this area, and we are looking to build early release days into the school calendar beginning in the fall. By combining these with existing professional development time, we would have a handful of very productive, focused blocks each year to make big steps forward with our staff.

We continue to look for creative ways to support current partnership models while seeking new opportunities for our staff and students. One particularly exciting initiative underway at LMS involves the development of a new GenUS micro-credentialing model that gives students a clear way to show what they know and can do, aligns with postsecondary and workforce expectations, and is adaptable to the culture and strengths of the school. Micro-credentials are digital badges that provide verified, competency-based recognition of a student's mastery of specific skills. Each one highlights a clear competency–such as teamwork, digital literacy, problem-solving, or financial literacy–and makes that learning visible beyond the classroom.

We continue a steady approach to maintaining and improving our facilities. We are exploring options for replacing the lower-age-group section of the playground at OTES. The new windows, roof, and fascia/soffits at LMS are water-tight, have improved safety and efficiency, and sure do look beautiful! We are currently costing out a similar project at OTHS with a focus on window replacement and repair of soffits and fascia (the OTHS roof was re-shingled recently and still has a number of years before replacement is recommended). Our athletic facility upgrades have been well-received by teams and spectators alike. Looking to the future, we are partnering with the city of Old Town to look at repairing and/or replacing the tennis courts, which are important to our schools and very popular recreational activities with members of our community (both tennis and pickleball). In general, state funding for school repair and renovations is hard to come by. We have been successful with available grants, and a newly created commission at the state level is working to find ways to help schools in Maine to maintain aging facilities. In anticipation of this, we have been working with engineering teams at numerous firms to consider improvements to school parking lots and entrances, as well as to secure vestibule entrances at both LMS and OTHS. We are also looking at our facilities with a long-term lens. If birth rates continue to decline, it will not be long before we must consider reducing our district facility footprint to three schools (OTES, LMS, OTHS). Alton Elementary currently remains open as we do not have sufficient space elsewhere in the district for our early childhood (Pre-K) programming.

Beginning July 1, 2026, RSU 34 will assume responsibility for FAPE (Free and Appropriate Public Education) for Child Development Services (CDS)- identified students residing in the communities of Alton, Bradley, and Old Town. This state-mandated transition means RSU 34 special education programming will be responsible for case management and providing services for 4-year-olds. Beginning July 1, 2027, we will also be responsible for 3-year-olds. While we see this as a challenge, the state has assured us that it will appropriately fund all programming related to this CDS transition.

We anticipate a challenging budget development process for the upcoming school year. Assistant Superintendent Doty and I made focused attempts to engage our communities in the budget development process. To seek input, we held public listening sessions, met with parent-teacher councils, shared a web-based survey, and attended city/town/select board meetings in Alton, Bradley, and Old Town to engage local officials and hear their thoughts and ideas. We also met with school and association leadership teams this fall and early winter. Information collected from the survey and during these meetings will be shared with the RSU 34 School Board and will be considered during our budget development process for FY27 (the 2026 - 2027 school year). Thank you to all who participated–we value your input! For more information on how to share your perspective, please email either Matthew.Cyr@rsu34.org or Jon.Doty@rsu34.org.

RSU 34

This year's theme is:

Respect. Responsibility. Results.

The theme we've chosen for our schools is key to reinforcing the identity of RSU 34. Let's work together to make it a reality—in our schools, in our families, and throughout our community.

RSU 34

Our Strategic Plan

The strategic plan is built on four pillars, each with its own vision, rationale, objectives, and action strategies.



RSU 34 Education Foundation: Creating Opportunities for Growing Our Communities

Since its creation in 2012, the **RSU 34 Education Foundation** has played an important role in strengthening educational opportunities for students, staff, and residents of **Alton, Bradley, and Old Town**. The Foundation was established with a clear purpose: to enhance the quality of education across RSU 34 while fostering innovation, creativity, and support where it is needed most.

The Education Foundation provides a **tax-deductible avenue** for individuals, families, and businesses to invest directly in the future of our communities by supporting our children and schools. Contributions may be designated for a specific initiative or given as unrestricted funds to meet emerging needs.

Through the generosity of donors, the RSU 34 Education Foundation supports several meaningful efforts:

- **The Children's Fund** assists students when other resources are limited. Support may include essentials such as sneakers, summer camp fees, or college application costs—small investments that make a significant difference in a student's life.
- **The Visual and Performing Arts Committee** is dedicated to promoting and sustaining the arts throughout RSU 34, enriching students' educational experiences, and fostering creativity and expression. Recently, the Visual and Performing Arts Committee has explored ways to expand the instrument inventory in our district. If interested in contributing to this fund, please contact Jon Doty at jon.doty@rsu34.org.
- **Coyote Pride** funds are used to enhance RSU 34 facilities, helping to create welcoming, safe, and positive learning environments for all students. Substantial changes to the high school athletic venue has been a focus for the Coyote Pride contributions.
- **The Achievement and Athletic Halls of Fame** honor Old Town graduates who have made significant contributions to their professions, communities, or fields of endeavor, celebrating excellence and inspiring future generations.
- **The Innovation Education Fund** provides start-up funding for teachers' creative and forward-thinking ideas, empowering educators to design new ways to engage and support their students.
- **The Remembrance Garden Fund** supports the restoration and revitalization of the Remembrance Garden at Old Town High School, preserving a meaningful space for reflection and remembrance.
- **Outdoor Inclusive Learning Space** efforts, led by the OTES Parent Teacher Committee, aim to develop an inclusive outdoor learning environment that supports all learners and encourages exploration and connection.



Together, these initiatives reflect the Foundation's commitment to nurturing students academically, creatively, and socially—while strengthening the broader community.

Interested in supporting the RSU 34 Education Foundation? Donations can be made by scanning the QR code for the Education Foundation's Venmo account or by sending a contribution to the **RSU 34 Superintendent's Office, 156 Oak Street.**

Every gift—large or small—helps create opportunities, inspire innovation, and support the success of our students and communities.

RSU 34 School Calendar 2025-2026

August

M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27-IS	28-IS	29

September

M	T	W	TH	F
1-H	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

October

M	T	W	TH	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10-IS
13-H	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

November

M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11-H	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26-IS	27-H	28-H

December

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24-V	25-H	26-V
29-V	30-V	31-V		

January

M	T	W	TH	F
			1-H	2-V
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19-H	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

February

M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16-H	17-V	18-V	19-V	20-V
23	24	25	26	27

March

M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13-IS
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

April

M	T	W	TH	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20-H	21-V	22-V	23-V	24-V
27	28	29	30	

May

M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25-H	26	27	28	29

June

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19-H
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

July

M	T	W	TH	F
		1	2	3-H
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

Important Upcoming Dates

Staff Dates

- Staff In-Service Days (No Students): August 27 & August 28, 2025

Student Dates

- Freshman-only half-day: Thursday, August 28, 8:30 - Noon
- First day of school for all students PreK - 12: Tuesday, September 2, 2025

School Hours

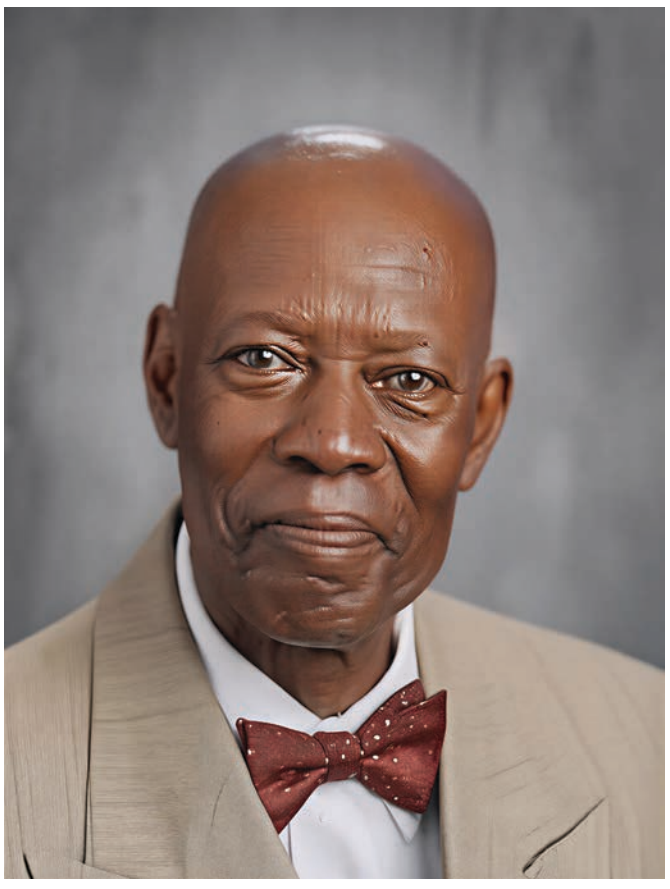
Please be on time, *every day*!

- AES . . . . . 7:40 - 2:10
- OTES. . . . . 7:45 - 2:15
- LMS . . . . . 8:35 - 3:05
- OTHS . . . . . 8:30 - 3:00

IS	In-Service Day--No Students
H	Holiday--No Students
V	School Vacation Day
	First/Last Day of School
	OTHS Graduation--June 5th

- *Additional days will be added at the end of the school year to adjust for snow days or unexpected school cancellations.*
- *Parent-Teacher Conferences are in the fall and scheduled on a building-by-building basis.*

William “Pops” Magnum



RSU 34 is celebrating 50 years of service by William “Pops” Magnum. Pops was born and raised in Philadelphia. He spent a lot of time with his grandparents. When he and his grandfather would come home, his grandmother would say, "Here comes Grandpop and Pop." The name obviously stuck.

When he was a teenager, he worked in the mailroom at Gulf Oil. When the Vice President, Mr. Phillips, would come by, Pops would say 'hi' to him. Everyone told him not to speak to the VP, but he did anyway. They became friendly, and Mr. Phillips would always say 'hi' when he was walking by the mailroom. No one ever went to the top floor of the building to chat with Mr. Phillips, and Pops' co-workers told him not to. He did it anyway. When he asked Mr. Phillips about how he became VP, he told him to have consistency in who he is. Be your true self every day. He also told him to "Listen, Look and Learn". Pops has taken that advice with him every day, and if you really want to know his secret to working with kids, that's what it is. He is consistent with them every time he sees them; he listens, looks, and learns. He says it's that simple, and it's worked for 50 years!

Pops started working with a student in the Old Town School Department in 1976. The student needed some mentoring, and they called on Pops. Whatever he did worked so well that they asked him to work with more students. Over the years, he's been asked to work with students in other districts, including Milford, Hampden, RSU 63, and even students at the University of Maine. Without advertising, these other schools heard about the impact that Pops was making, and they invited him into their schools to work with their students without really knowing what it was that he was doing that worked so well.

Some other interesting facts that I learned about Pops:

- He has a degree in Domestic International Marketing, which has taken him to parts of Africa, Cuba, and Canada, doing diplomatic work.
- He was drafted into the Army at the age of 19 to fight in the Vietnam War. He was a radio operator in the infantry. Since cutting radio communication was a top priority for the enemy, Pops was always a target. He traveled with a group of snipers to protect him and was even blown out of a helicopter!
- He is a member of the Maine Sports Legends Hall of Honors. While he does have a history of playing and coaching basketball, this honor was given to him because of the work that he has done with the students at the University of Maine. He was brought on over 25 years ago by their athletic department to work with players who had difficulties getting along with other athletes or coaching staff. He spent many years traveling with the UMaine teams and working with their students.
- He lives off-grid in Orrington, and he has for 40 years. He loves the peace and tranquility and wouldn't have it any other way. Many years ago, when he was in college, friends of his took him to their camp in Lucerne. He realized then that he wanted to live somewhere off-grid and on the water.
- He also has a home in Baileyville. It has electricity, but no running water. He bought this home when he was doing his diplomatic work with Cuba and Canada. Instead of staying in hotels, he could stay at the house in Baileyville and travel easily to Canada to go to meetings and do his research. He doesn't do diplomatic work anymore, but still likes to keep his place there.

Pops has no plans on retiring. He may cut back on the number of schools that he works with as the years go on, but no plans to fully retire. Great news for the students that he works with! By the way, he is currently 77 years young:)

RSU34

All students attending RSU 34 schools have access to our **School-Based Health Center** at Old Town Elementary School

Medical and Mental Health Services At School

Even if your child has a primary care provider elsewhere, he/she can receive immediate and on-site medical, and mental health care, ***right in school,*** at RSU 34's School-Based Health Center (SBHC). On-site mental health services are also available J.A. Leonard Middle School and Old Town High School. This is possible through a program with Penobscot Community Health Care (PCHC).

Common Illnesses
- ☑ Asthma
- ☑ Strep Throat
- ☑ Cough, Fever, or Cold
- ☑ Acne or Rashes
- ☑ Vomiting & Diarrhea

Routine Exams
- ☑ Well-Child/Annual Exams
- ☑ Immunizations

Sports Related Concerns
- ☑ Sprains and Strains
- ☑ Stitches
- ☑ Sports Injuries
- ☑ Sports Physical Exams
- ☑ Concussion Management

Mental Health Services
- ☑ Treatment For:
  - *Anxiety*
  - *Depression*
  - *Stress Management*
  - *Changes at School or Home*

At our School-Based Health Center, We Care For ALL of You...

From routine medical exams and common illness treatments, and mental health, our PCHC health professionals are there for your care!

When your child is enrolled at the SBHC, he/she is able to get the care they need *right down the hall.* This saves you time driving to or from appointments, and your child is able to return quickly to class. *This service is even available to students who don't feel well enough to attend school and are absent!*

NOTE: Your child does not need to be a PCHC patient to enroll in this program.

Sign up today! Call (207) 404-8004 with any questions.

More info about PCHC and our School-Based Health Centers is available online at **www.PCHC.com**

PCHC

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RSU 34

Pre-K and Kindergarten Registration For Fall 2026 Now Open!





Your student is:
Ready for Pre-K if they turn 4
or
Ready for Kindergarten if they turn 5
on or before October 15, 2026.

*Pre-K students who reside in Alton, Bradley and Old Town attend Alton Elementary School for a full-day Pre-K program.
(1/2 day Pre-K is optional upon request--contact us for more details)

*Kindergarten students who reside in Alton, Bradley and Old Town attend Old Town Elementary School for a full-day Kindergarten program.

Ways to Register

- STOP BY OLD TOWN ELEMENTARY OR ALTON ELEMENTARY TO REGISTER YOUR STUDENT
- Visit the RSU 34 Enrollment Site: https://www.rsu34.org/page/rsu-34-enrollment
- SCAN THE CODE TO START THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS ONLINE!

Contact Us With Any Questions
OTES: 827-1544





Maggie Mitchell, Elementary Principal

Michelle Reesman, Elementary Assistant Principal
Allison Woodard, Elementary Assistant Principal

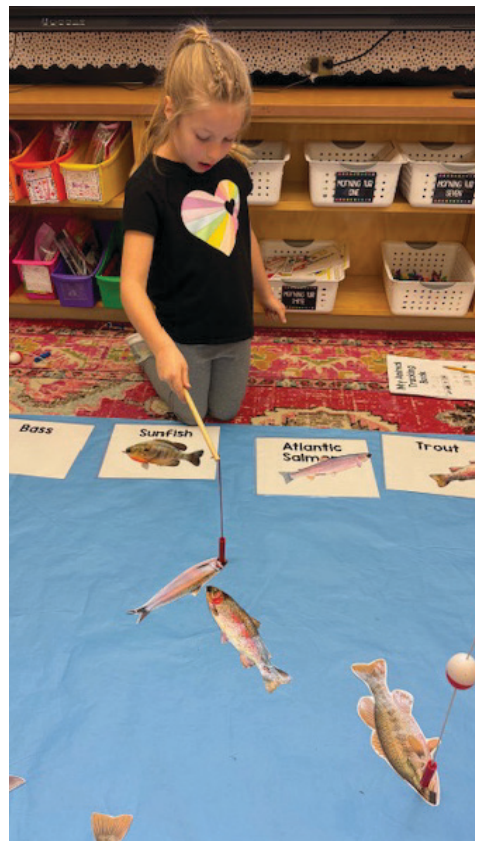
Second Grade Celebrates Cultures

with Wabanaki Studies and Holidays Around the World!

November and December have been busy months for 2nd-grade students! Our cultural studies kicked off with classrooms rotating to participate in a Native American activity. Students played traditional games and created artifacts as they learned about Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) in the Wabanaki culture. In December, students gathered with their community classrooms to learn about different holiday celebrations around the world. This event is always kicked off with our own Mrs. Clark, an experienced Flight Attendant!







Grinch Day Fun in Kindergarten!

Our kindergarteners at OTES had a Grinch-tastic day filled with smiles and holiday cheer! Students rotated through all five kindergarten classrooms, taking part in a variety of Grinch-themed activities. They enjoyed a special snack, used playdough to act out and retell the Grinch story, and participated in other festive surprises along the way. It was a wonderful day of creativity, collaboration, and fun—our hearts definitely grew three sizes!



Emma McAuley



Nena Fournier



Grayson Ploch

Annual Pumpkin Book Character Contest at OTES

Our annual Pumpkin Book Character contest was a huge success! We had over 100 entrees this year.



Best Look-Alike- Frog and Toad, *Luka Antoms*



Cutest- Pig the Pug- 4th Grade Student



Most Creative Nightmare Before Christmas, *Alyssa Jackson*



Pumpkins- Silliest- How to Hug a Pufferfish, *Athena Kelly*



Most Creative Wings of Fire, *Olivia McCauley*

Hurray for Three Kings Day!

OTES students in kindergarten through fifth grade recently celebrated Three Kings Day (Día de los Reyes) during their Spanish classes. Three Kings Day is a traditional holiday celebrated on January 6 in many Spanish-speaking countries.

As part of the celebration, kindergarten and first-grade students placed their shoes in the hallway, following a popular tradition in which children leave out shoes for the Three Kings to fill with small gifts. When students went to the hallway to check their shoes, they were excited to find that the Three Kings had visited and left each child a lollipop and stickers.

Kindergarten and first-grade students also practiced polite language in Spanish by performing a short skit in which they asked the Three Kings for gifts and learned how to say thank you when receiving them.

Students across all grade levels learned about the holiday's history and traditions and enjoyed participating in this fun cultural experience. The celebration helped bring language learning to life and created a memorable moment for everyone involved.



Mrs. McCrea's first grade class is ready to go check their shoes for treats from the Three Kings



Mrs. Milan's first grade class practices polite language asking the Three Kings for gifts



Kindergarten student, Rita shows the treats that the Three Kings brought her

Pre-K Cooking Class

Pre-K loves cooking class! Once a month, Pre-K cooks with Mrs. Gifford, combining joyful creativity with hands-on learning through measuring, mixing, cutting, and cooking.















Fire Safety Assembly

Pre-K had a fire drill and a Fire Safety Assembly. The Alton firefighters brought three fire trucks to see and learn about. The firefighters dressed in their gear and talked about stop, drop, and roll; testing fire alarms; staying low if there is a fire in the house; hollering for help; and having a safe place outside.





Pre-K Holiday Concert

The Pre-K gingerbread kids shone at their concert, then enjoyed hands-on fun creating sensory bottles and gingerbread houses with their families. The Pre-K students also enjoyed treat bags and headbands that were donated by the Alton community.







The Pre-K Mileage Club

The Pre-K Mileage Club is an incentive-based program designed to promote healthy eating and regular physical exercise. Students will walk/run around the mileage track with Mrs. Gifford for "themed" monthly walking events. They will earn special tokens throughout the year.







Teddy Bear Clinic

Husson University nursing students visited Pre-K to set up the sweetest Teddy Bear Clinic! Each student brought their favorite stuffed friend and rotated through hands-on stations—including nutrition, germs, stethoscopes, vital signs, applying a band-aid to their stuffy, exercise, and more. It was a fun and friendly way to learn about staying healthy!



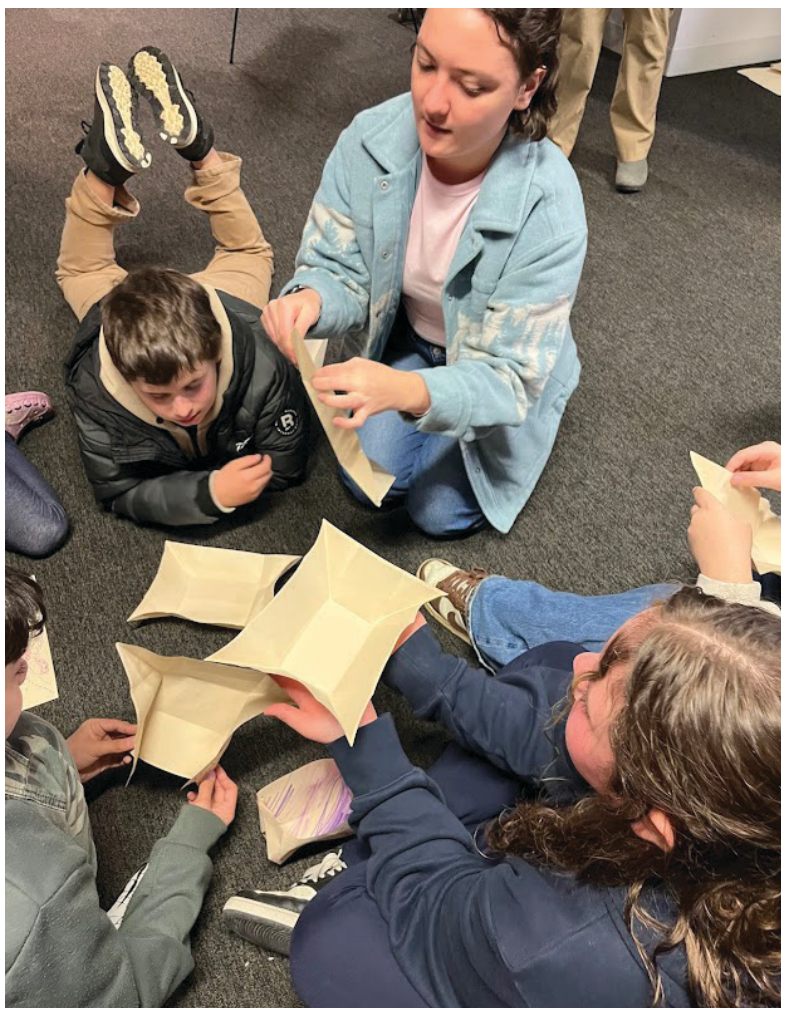




LEONARD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Dr. Jeanna Tuell, Principal
827-3900





LMS 6th Grade Field Trips

In October, the 6th-grade team went biking at the Maine Outdoor Education Program (MOEP). In November, after completing their Wabanaki Unit in Social Studies, students visited the Hudson Museum at the University of Maine. At the museum, students learned more about the Wabanaki Tribe, their traditional dwellings, and the art of crafting birch bark baskets. Students also made their own birch bark paper baskets.









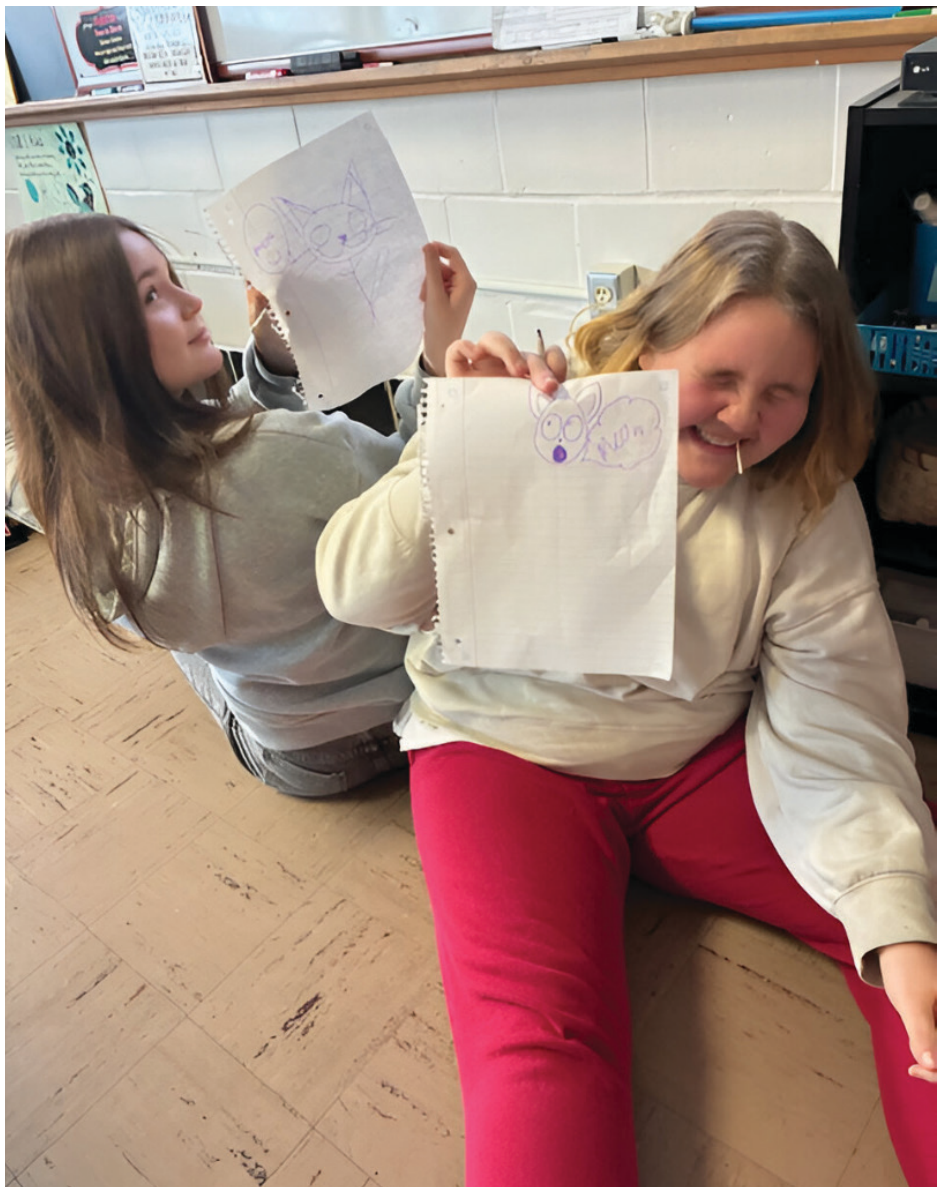
LMS 7th Grade

Team 7 has enjoyed a successful first quarter. We have adjusted to new schedules, grading policies, and each other!

Our advisory mornings have helped us get to know one another through structured activities and themes, as well as engaging games. Additionally, our focused Coyote Times in the mornings have enabled students to tackle independent out-of-class work and receive support with difficult assignments or needed skills. All students have developed the independent habit of checking their own scores on Infinite Campus and contacting teachers with questions or for help on specific assignments. Students have also benefited from the required independent reading time and 30 minutes of Aleks math during Coyote periods.

In October, the Puffins experienced the privilege of a Maine Outdoor Education Program adventure. They had fun riding bikes and exploring the trails at the Penobscot River Trails in Medway.

Overall, it's been a fun year so far, and everyone is looking forward to more engaging opportunities this winter.



Nia and Evie practice communication skills in advisory and crack each other up in the process!



Melvin and Sam enjoy the beauty of the Penobscot River Trails.



Harper, Civanna, and Chase prepare for the bike ride.

Leonard Middle School Unveils New Student Art Gallery

Celebrating Creativity, Strengths, and Student Voice

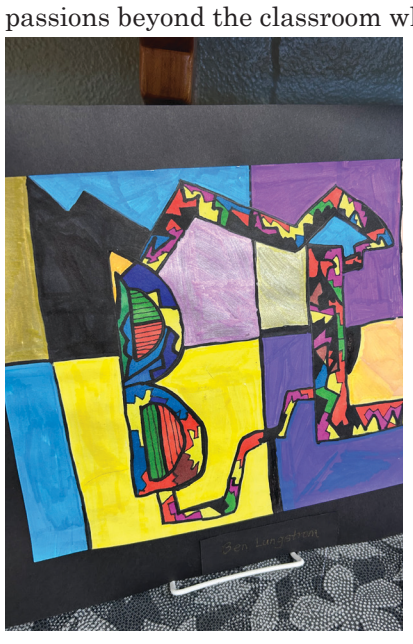
Leonard Middle School is proud to unveil its new Student Art Gallery, a vibrant showcase of creativity and expression located in a prominent hallway of the school. The gallery offers students a meaningful opportunity to share their talents and passions beyond the classroom while enriching the school environment for visitors, students, and staff.

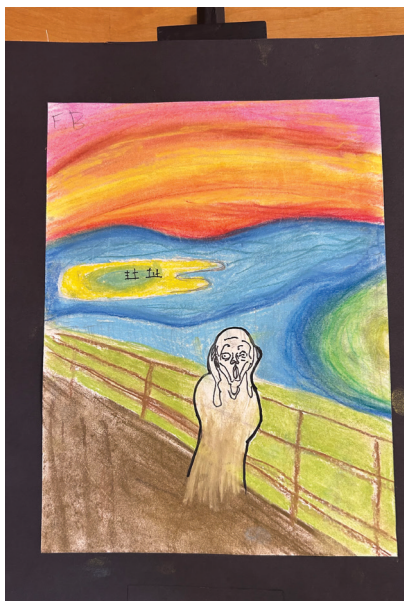
The gallery highlights a variety of artwork created by LMS students—each piece representing an individual's unique perspective, interests, and developing artistic skills. The display serves not only as a visual celebration of creativity but also as a reminder that students demonstrate their strengths in many different ways.

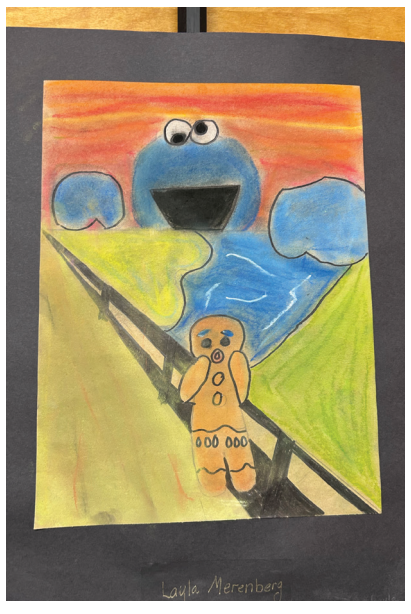
"Our students have been so excited to see their work displayed," said the LMS art teacher, Lynn Nickerson. "It's amazing to watch how proud they are—not only of their own art but also of their classmates' accomplishments."

The enthusiasm for the gallery has inspired many students to create with a new purpose, knowing their work could be selected for public display or featured in future publications. The project encourages artistic growth, builds confidence, and fosters a greater sense of community among learners.

As students, staff, and visitors pass through the halls, they are greeted by a colorful and ever-changing display of student creativity—a reminder that learning takes many forms and that artistic expression is a vital part of the middle school experience at LMS.









Our 8th Grade Trip to UTC

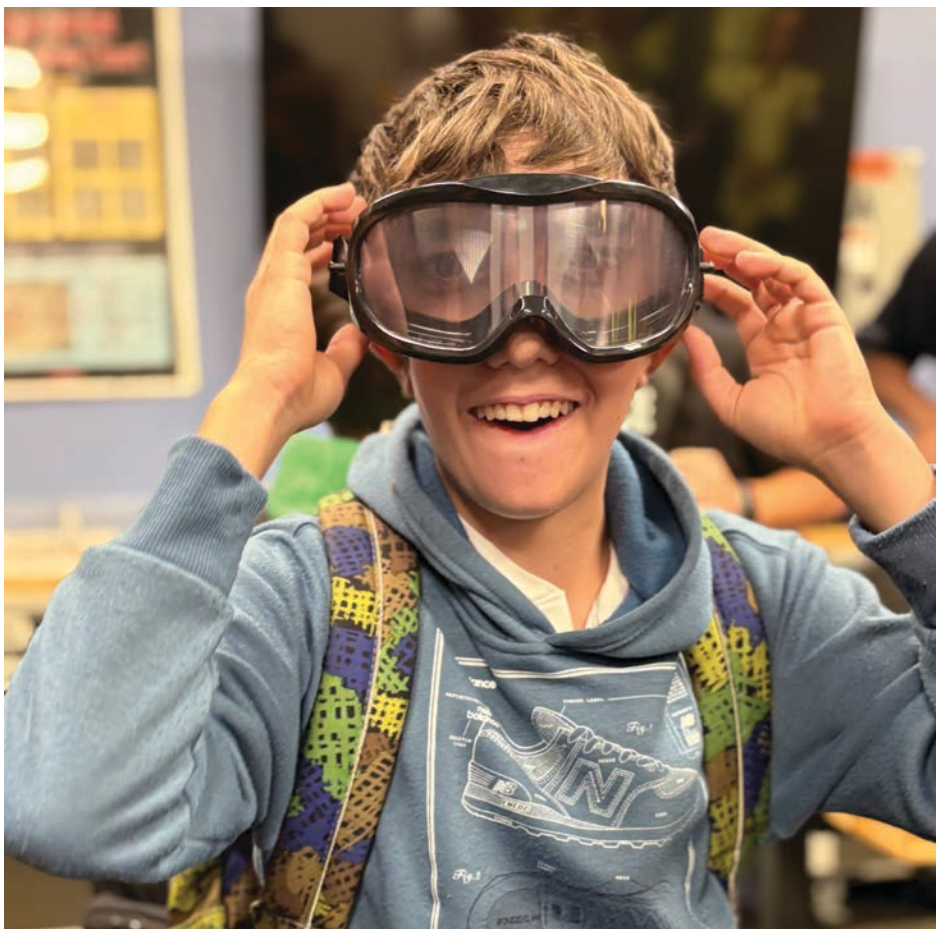
As soon as I walked through the doors, I just knew I wanted to go there. There are so many different classes that UTC offers, and it felt like everywhere I looked there was something new happening.

One of the coolest stops for me was the EMT room. They had different situations of real problems you might see on the job, but the one that stood out the most was when they showed us how to stop a trauma wound from bleeding using gauze. The simulation used a pool noodle with a small hole, and you had to pack it fast with gauze. It was interesting to see how they practice for the real world.

But it wasn't just EMT that impressed me. We also saw where students were working on actual cars, the electrical and plumbing rooms full of student plumbers and electricians working, and even a coding lab where people were learning to build programs. There were medical rooms, law enforcement classes, teacher spaces that looked like real classrooms, and so much more. It felt like every program had something interesting happening.

All of the guides were high schoolers who were taking the programs while still figuring out what they wanted to do for jobs. I thought it was really cool that they had already found things they were excited about, and they seemed proud to show us around.

I also liked seeing all the practical options, like the cooking class. Even if you don't want to become a chef, you can take it just to learn skills you'll use every day. It seemed like a place where all learning is hands on and helps prepare you for many things in life.









LMS Band Brings Holiday Cheer to St. Joseph Hospital













Generous Gift of Music



One of the many things that makes Old Town so special is its strong sense of community—and this fall, that spirit shone brightly at Leonard Middle School.

Earlier in the season, Shianne Priest, our LMS music teacher, was contacted by Bob Boutin, a local community member and musician. In his retirement, Bob has taken up guitar-building as a passion project, crafting beautiful instruments with care, skill, and artistry. His craftsmanship and dedication to the music community are evident in every detail of his work.

To our great surprise and gratitude, Bob recently visited LMS to present our school with three handmade guitars—two basses and one electric. These instruments are not only visually stunning but also high-quality, elevating the musical experience for our students.

This generous gift comes at a perfect time. Several LMS students have needed new equipment, and Bob's donation will open new doors for them—enhancing their musicianship, deepening their passion for music, and supporting their growth in ways that will last for years to come.



We cannot thank Bob enough for his kindness, his talent, and his belief in the power of music education. His contribution will have a lasting impact on our students and our program, and it is a wonderful reminder of what makes Old Town such a caring, connected community.

LMS Winter Concerts

The Leonard Middle School 6th Grade Band, Concert Band, and Symphonic Band performed their winter concert on December 11th. Congratulations to the musicians for a wonderful evening of music!











Middle School Pep Band Night

The Old Town High School Pep Band hosted the second annual "Middle School Pep Band Night" on January 9th. Leonard Middle School band members joined the OTHS musicians and rocked Mackenzie Gym.





Learning Beyond the Classroom

8th Graders Build Leadership and Connection Through Outdoor Learning

At Leonard Middle School, we believe some of the most meaningful learning experiences happen beyond the walls of the classroom. This fall, our 8th graders participated in an outdoor learning experience designed to strengthen leadership, collaboration, and community, and to help students discover the power of learning through nature and shared challenges.

The day's activities encouraged students to work together to solve problems, communicate effectively, and support one another as they tackled new and sometimes unfamiliar experiences. From team-building challenges to reflective discussions in the open air, students practiced essential life skills—resilience, empathy, and adaptability—that will serve them well in high school and beyond.

Outdoor learning provides a unique environment where students can engage their minds and bodies while developing a deeper sense of connectedness—to each other, to their teachers, and to the world around them. By stepping outside their usual routines, students often find new confidence and appreciation for the strengths they bring to a team. Here at LMS, we are proud of the surrounding venues that provide our students with great experiences in the woods, using the University of Maine bike trails, the walking path beyond the school, and the vast fields to extend learning. Mr. Euclide, our new guidance teacher, has been spearheading these experiences for students at LMS.

These experiences are more than just fun field days; they are opportunities to nurture leadership and responsibility, to celebrate curiosity, and to build a school culture where every student feels seen and valued.

At LMS, we're proud to continue traditions that connect learning with life—and to see our 8th graders growing into thoughtful, collaborative, and capable young leaders.











The Puffin Project

LMS Science Teacher Kelly Cyr presented at the annual statewide Educate Maine conference about her efforts and research with The Puffin Project. Among other things, through this project, Kelly's students learned about puffin research, digging into real datasets using CODAP (Common Online Data Analysis Platform). CODAP is free, web-based, open-source software designed for students in grades 5-14 to analyze, visualize, and interpret data. The students used it to identify factors that influence whether hatched puffins successfully return to their hatch location as adults. Students also learned about puffin habitats and built their own habitats from recycled materials. Further, students used images of puffins and non-puffin seabirds to train and test an AI model, learning how AI models are developed.









LMS Robotics

Members of the LMS Robotics team have been working hard this school year and are gearing up for the upcoming State Competition at Spruce Mountain High School in Jay.







Thomas College Student Chelsey Cote (OTHS '22) Recognized with Maine Education Award

By MacKenzie Riley Young
Reprinted with Permission

WATERVILLE, MAINE, October 2025 — Thomas College student Chelsey Cote was recently recognized as a Promising Middle Level Educator presented by the Maine Association for Middle Level Education (MAMLE). The award was presented earlier this month at MAMLE's annual conference held at Thomas College.

Cote, of Old Town, Maine, will graduate this spring with a degree in Middle School Education.

"It feels incredibly rewarding to be recognized as a Promising Middle Level Educator. I have always been deeply passionate about teaching, so receiving this award solidifies that I am on the right path. I'm super grateful for my mentors, including Dr. Rybakova who has helped shape me into the educator I am becoming, and this recognition motivates me to continue growing and learning to better help my future students," said Cote.

"Chesley is one of those special preservice teachers who just has the x factor– the ability to truly 'get' what it means to be a compassionate, thoughtful, and reflective teacher. She is well deserving of this award. Everyone who she has worked with her in the field notices her exceptional presence around students and in the classroom, and I know she's going to make a huge difference at the middle level as an educator," said Lunder School of Education Chair Dr. Katie Rybakova.

"Cote said she was inspired to become an educator because of her love of teaching others and her incredible experience growing up with educators in the RSU34 school district

Cote said she was inspired to become an educator because of her love of teaching others and her incredible experience growing up with educators in the RSU34 school district, including Michael May, Christina Turner, Shianne Priest, and Jay-Meigs McDonald.

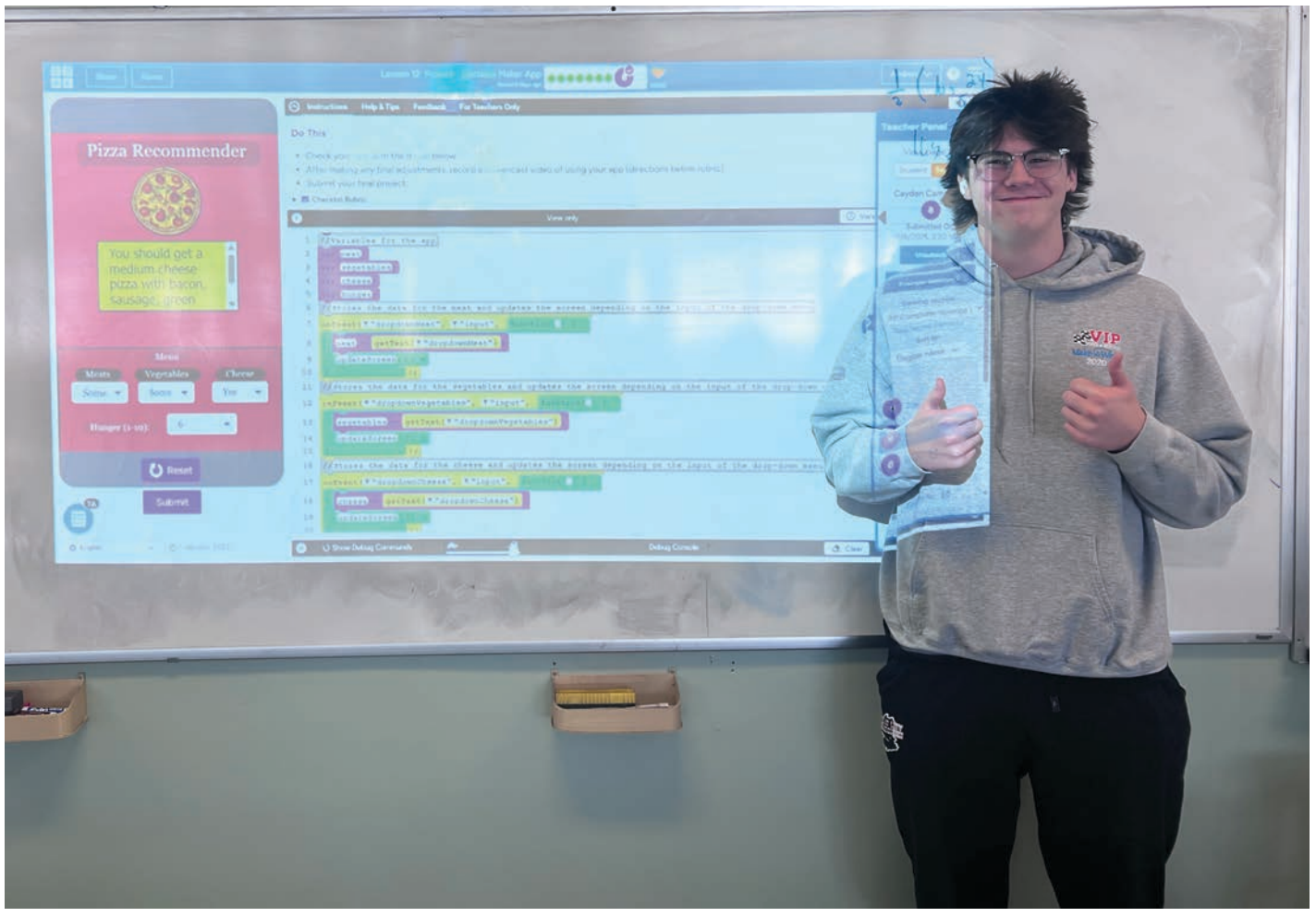
"Something I am proud of is how I've come out of my shell in my four years at Thomas College. If you had told me my freshman year that I was going to have gone to a national level conference, been participating in the MAMLE conference all four years, as well as receiving this award, I would have laughed. My ability to feel so comfortable so fast, while also being able to prioritize my future career has allowed me to feel proud beyond words," said Cote. "I've always been a firm believer in middle level being the hardest time for students throughout their K-12 education. They are going through the most social, emotional, physical, and developmental changes that they are going to have to endure in their lives. So being able to be recognized for showing how passionate I am for supporting students through this is amazing to me."



Thomas College's Lunder School of Education offers teacher preparation programs ranging from early childhood to secondary education and recently launched a new residency model program called the Thomas Teaching Cooperative to help make college more affordable and help Maine's teaching shortage.

AP Computer Science

The computer science class is building their programming skills using JavaScript. The latest project was to build a decision-making application that uses variables, conditional statements to make decisions, and a function to replace repeated code. The apps that were created varied from what to wear to what video game you should play. The decision maker app featured in this picture was made by Cayden Campagna, and it will help choose a pizza for you from the information you put into the app. This month, the class will be building programming skills using lists, loops, and traversals.



WE ARE OTHS

Legion of Valor – Bronze Cross

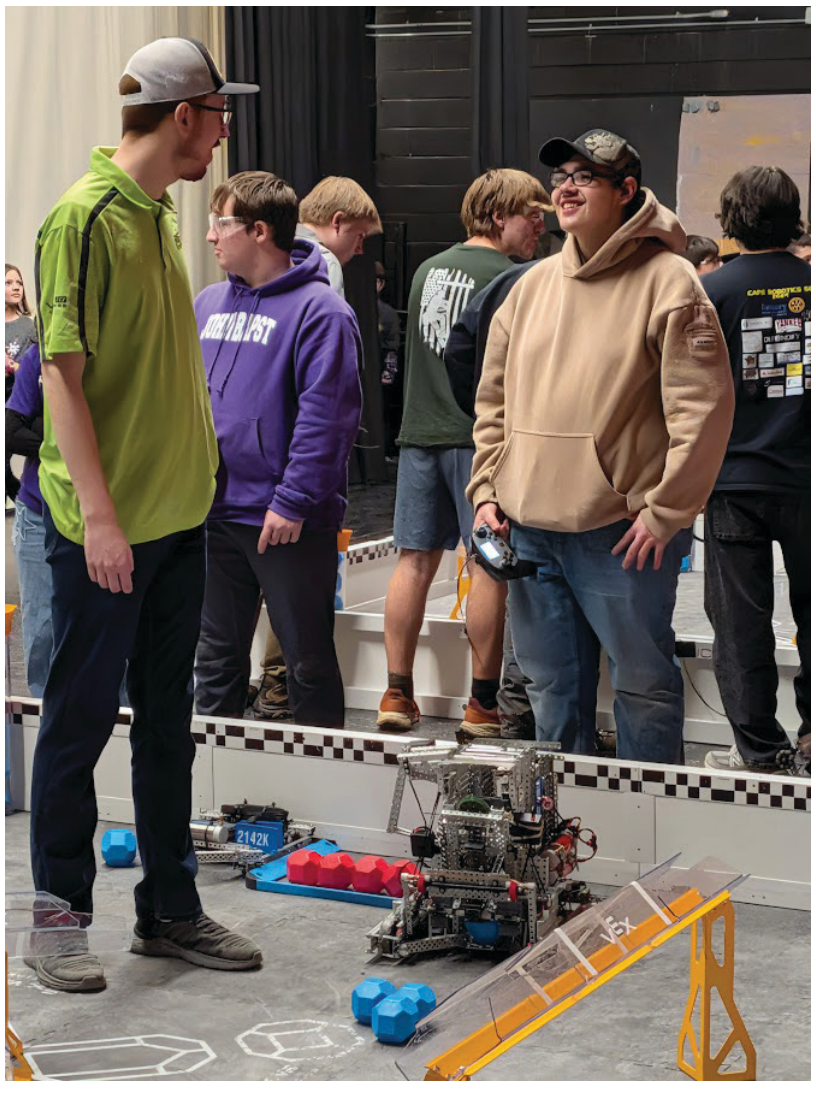
Cadet Ian Aldrich earned the Legion of Valor – Bronze Cross. The award recognizes Cadets for excellence in military and academic subjects. This is a national award with one in 4,000 sophomore and junior Cadets receiving the honor. This year, there were 27 recipients nationally. Mr. Hunter Umphrey, RSU 34 School Board Chair, and Captain (Retired) Alan Johnston, Legion of Valor, presented the award to Cadet Aldrich at the December RSU 34 School Board meeting. Cadet Aldrich is the current Coyote Battalion Commander. He is a Scout, a lifeguard, and a former mentor in River Runners. Academically, he is in the top 10% of his class and plans to attend Husson University to study Criminal Justice. Cadet Aldrich is a member of both the swimming and tennis teams, qualifying for four events at the State Swim Meet. He also earned the JROTC Athletics award for his efforts on this fall's Cadet Challenge fitness assessment. Cadet Aldrich is the fifth Coyote in six years to earn the Legion of Valor – Bronze Cross.

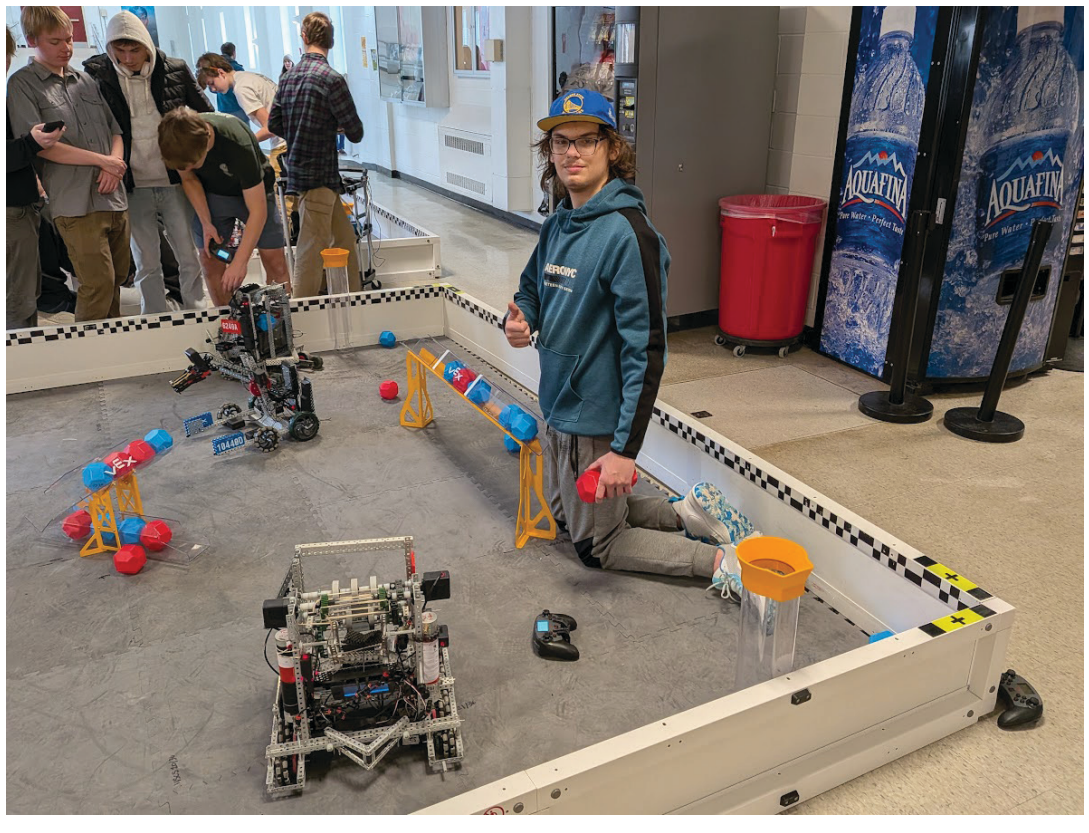






OTHS Robotics





Left: 12th grader Kaegan York, the primary driver, builder, and programmer for team 20734A, is talking to a referee before the match begins. Students position their robots before each match in a location and orientation of their choice, usually to maximize their chances of scoring points during the 15-second autonomous period.

Above: 12th grader Paul Godfrey Dillen, the primary driver, builder, and programmer for team 20734Z, is on a practice field testing his robot mechanisms and program so that his robot can score points more consistently.

Great things are happening at OTHS Library!



OTHS Library was very excited to host author Morgan Talty, Panawahpskek (Penobscot) citizen, on Wednesday, November 5th. He is the author of the national best-selling and critically acclaimed story collection Night Of The Living Rez, as well as Fire Exit. Students from Mrs. Stitham's Concurrent Enrollment (CE)0 College Language class spoke with Mr. Talty about the writing process, the challenges and joys of being an author, and his journey to becoming a writer. Mr. Talty later met with students enrolled in the diploma of distinction program, where he had great conversations with them about all aspects of writing. OTHS is very thankful to our library for arranging this author visit.

On December 10th and 11th, our library arranged to take Mrs. Walsh's English class to OTES to help purchase books for our library during their Scholastic Book Fair. It's so much fun picking out books with students that they want to read! This has become an annual event between Mrs. Walsh's class and the library.

The OTHS librarian also teaches a research class each semester. The current class is 'The Stories of Us,' where students apply critical research and thinking skills. Students use primary and secondary sources and a research log to organize their findings. They are discovering that genealogy is a valuable discipline that benefits individuals, families, and society as a whole. Genealogy is an exciting and dynamic way to connect with history, and it is much more than simply filling out a family tree. It encompasses a wide range of historical inquiry, including personal family history and case studies. Students will share their results in a final project at the end of the semester. There have definitely been some humorous anecdotes as students uncover their own story!

The OTHS library is home to a physical collection of approximately 18,000 books, complemented by an extensive digital catalog. Students can instantly access ebooks, comic books, graphic novels, and manga at the click of a button. Students are encouraged to assist in the book selection process, and because of this, our book diversity has grown. Another plus to this collaboration is our circulation numbers, which have never been higher. OTHS is very thankful for the support of our library by our community and administrators, as that is what keeps things happening! Let's keep reading, Coyotes!

OTHS inducts National Honor Society members in December



Back row: *Jackson Graham, Cooper Neely, Ian Aldrich, Colby Durost, Cassandra Sherwood, Rachel Street, Serenity Doty (Parliamentarian), Sophie Morgan (Historian), Phoebe Yerxa, Karina Dumond*
Middle row: *Samuel Gogan, Willian Chapman, Austin Beal, Noh Habtetsion, Lydia Callela, Ava Harvey, Athina Rondo, Olivia Lizzotte, Reilly Ell (President), Natalie Fournier*
Front row: *Romlah Ojugbele, Jordan Murray, Margaret Godin-Shaw, Lilyana Quigley, Molly Albert, Lindsey Bousquet (Advisor), Chloe Henry (Vice President), Taylor Madden, Olivia Barthelomy, Ruby Whitmore, Meredith Cyr*
Not pictured: *Olivia Paradis (Treasurer)*

It takes a community... to make a wreath

OTHS Alternative Education students are seen here making wreaths with OTHS Librarian Doretta Callahan and community volunteer Allison Kanoti. Prior to wreath-making, UMaine Forest Manager Keith Kanoti took the students out to learn about tipping and assisted them in harvesting tips. In addition to students making a wreath to take home, they also made two 6' wreaths for the Caring Community Cupboard. Wreath rings were donated by Bernie and John Milligan. Alternative Education would like to thank the community members and organizations that assisted with the project.





OTHS Music Magic

From elementary through high school, RSU 34 has a strong tradition of music. At right, the OTHS Jazz Band is pictured during a recent concert. Below, the Old Town Elementary School Chorus combined with that of Old Town High School for a concert that was enjoyed by the audience and participants alike. Amanda Marquis and Jessup Henderson are the elementary music teachers, and Mrs. Marquis also directs the high school Chorus.



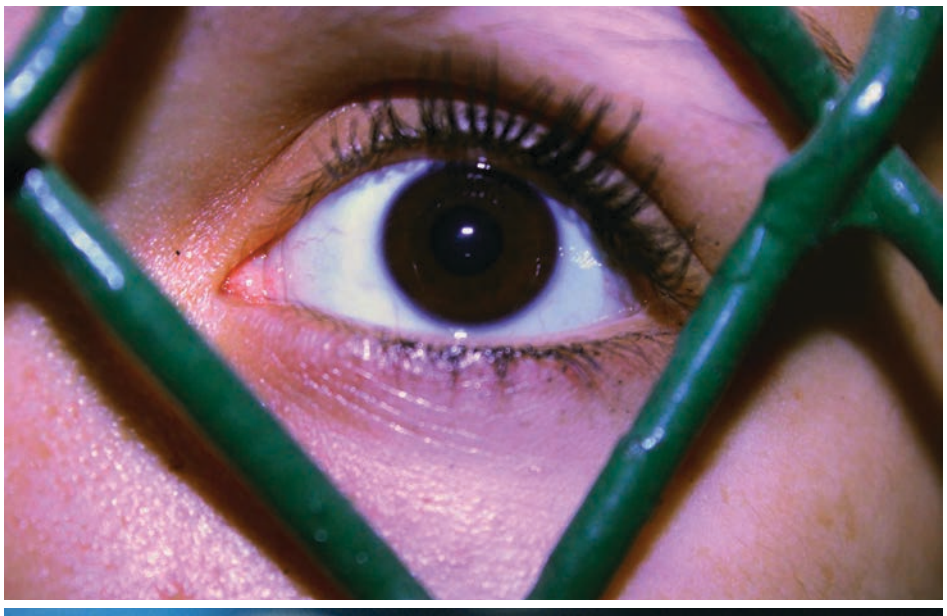


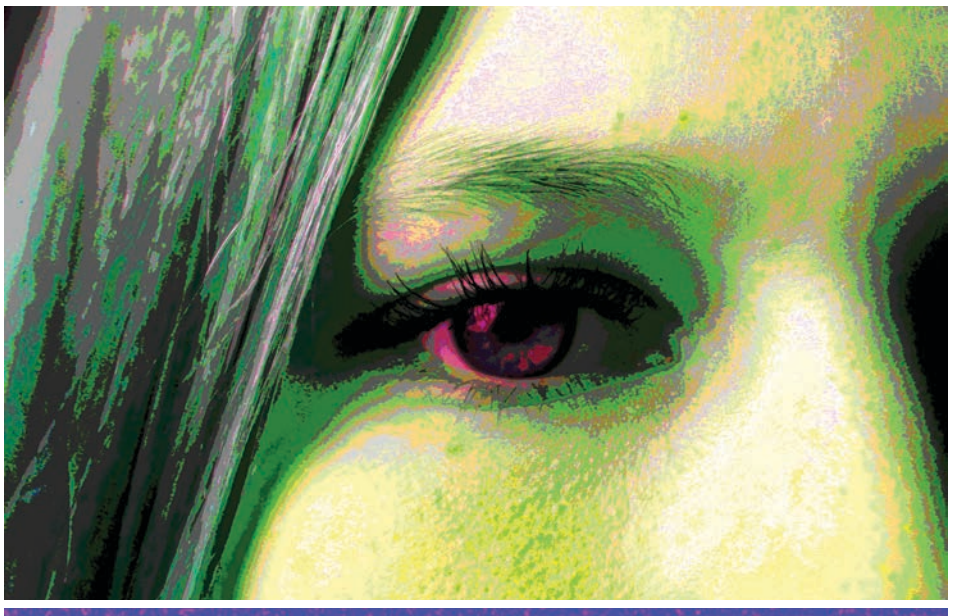
OTHS Digital Art

Ms.Markides' Digital Photography students explored abstract photography in a recent assignment. They searched for patterns, shapes, colors, textures, contrast, and emotion throughout the classrooms and hallways of Old Town High School.















Old Town City Manager

Updates to major City projects.

By Bill Mayo, City Manager

The City is continuing to work on some major projects, and updates are as follows;

Llewellyn Estes Bridge (Stillwater Bridge) / Center Street

The Llewellyn Estes Bridge project continues to progress. The latest bridge activity is removing the last of the former bridge, followed by new construction in the spring/summer of 2026. The temporary bridge was opened for traffic on May 14, 2024. The new bridge construction pilings are in place, and water/sewer force mains are repositioned to the temporary bridge. As the project has been extended, costs continue to increase. Latest estimates on final water and sewer main projects are approximately $500,000 higher for the water main and $350,000 higher on the sewer main than originally estimated for the bridge project. The temporary bridge is 575 feet long, with two lanes and a sidewalk separated by a curb with no weight restrictions. There will be an approximate 12' x 70' bump out on the upstream side of the new bridge for viewing and displaying information panels on Llewellyn Estes, Old Town, Penobscot Nation, and the University of Maine. The guardrail system must meet federal crash standards, and the selected option will be solid concrete with a top rail for pedestrian safety. The highway portion of the project has been completed. The highway portion was the reconstruction of the Bennoch Road / College Avenue and Stillwater Avenue intersections and approaches to the bridge. The project included new traffic lights and controls, sidewalk replacement, and ADA-compliant crossings at both intersections. Please stay aware of the message boards by the bridge, as they will provide updates on delays and traffic flow changes over the next several years.

Juniper Ridge Landfill Expansion (JRL)

There was a public benefit determination considered by Maine DEP for an 11.9 million cubic yard expansion of JRL in the fall of 2024. The process had been approved by Maine DEP and was moving toward the permit stage of the project. Due to appeals/court filings, this process is currently under court review over the next several months to determine if all relevant factors have been considered by Maine DEP in moving forward with an expansion of JRL. This will be an approximate 3-year process (beginning in 2024) to consider the public benefit determination, potential license expansion, and review of the Old Town Planning Board's request. The Council has contracted with Haley Ward (Engineering Services) to review all applications/plans submitted on the expansion to check on compliance and health-safety issues related to the proposed expansion.

City Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Planning Committee began discussing updating the City's comprehensive plan in January 2025. This is a legal requirement that maintains the City's ability to receive State and Federal grants, and the Council will receive public input by holding meetings and reaching out to citizens in the community. This will be a 2-year process and reviews current ordinances and zoning to be sure the City is in compliance and is adjusting to ever-changing legislative acts in Augusta and Washington. Public engagement from citizens has started with public meetings and will run through August of 2025. Also, the City direct mailed surveys to every address in the City. The information/input the City is trying to get from citizens is available through online surveys, mailings of surveys to all addresses in the City, and public meetings to gather input. Dates, times, and associated information on the Comprehensive Plan Update are posted on the City's website. (https://old-town.org)

Herb Sargent Community Center

This building on Bennoch Road has been vacant for 6 months. The City sent out a request for proposals on possible uses of the facility. There were 2 responses, one from Courageous Steps and the other from Old Town/Orono YMCA. Courageous Steps has decided to pause this project, so the YMCA will move forward and occupy the facility. They will begin renovating the building, baseball/softball field, and tennis courts in the spring/summer of 2026. The intent of the YMCA is to start renovations of the building as soon as possible.

4Th Street Project

The City continues working with the Old Town Rotary in making trail improvements and enhancing the trailhead at the end of 4th Street. This will be a 2-year process and will also involve improved signage and integration of the trail system with the University of Maine trail system. Concurrently, the City is working on grant applications and planning additional improvements to the boat launch at the end of 4th Street to complement improvements to the trail system.

Expanded Archery Season

Old Town has an expanded archery hunting zone that encompasses all of Marsh Island. The consideration of this expanded archery zone began in 2008 and continued through 2010, with hunting conducted under permit through the BLIP (Bowhunters/Landowners Information Program), offered through the Maine Bowhunters Association. After the 2011 hunt, Marsh Island became part of the Bangor Area Expanded Archery Zone. Please go to Maine Inland Fishery and Wildlife's website for all applicable laws relating to expanded archery (https://www.maine.gov/ifw/hunting-trapping/hunting/species/deer/expanded-archery/index.html). The 2025 season begins on September 6 and ends on December 13. Marsh Island is unique in the expanded archery zone,


Bill Mayo

as only bow and arrow can be used; no crossbows can be used to hunt on Marsh Island during the expanded archery season. As with any hunting or fishing trips that are planned, please go to the Maine Inland Fishery and Wildlife's website to be sure all applicable laws are being followed. Also, please go to the City website to review the ordinance dealing with archery hunting on Marsh Island. This can be found in Chapter 12, Section 12-32.1 Archery Hunting-Marsh Island.

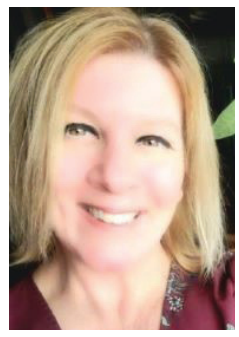
Upcoming decisions

Budget – This is an ongoing process and a difficult year for RSU 34 and the City. To mitigate a large tax increase in 2025, the City Council approved a plan to eliminate 12 full-time and 5 part-time positions through a combination of layoffs and early retirements, resulting in a 20% reduction in City staff and impacting operations across all departments.



Old Town City Clerk's Office

Laura Engstrom, City Clerk/Registrar of Voters



Laura Engstrom

2026 Elections

Tuesday, June 09, 2026 - State Primary and RSU 34 School Budget Validation

Primary Elections determine each qualified party's nomination of candidates for federal offices and State and County offices. Party candidates who are elected at the Primary qualify to appear on the November General Election ballot.

NOTE: This year marks the beginning of Maine's shift to Semi-Open Primaries. If someone is enrolled in a specific party, they may only vote in that party's primary. If someone is unenrolled (has no party affiliation), they can vote in any ONE party's primary. This applies to the Presidential and State Primaries.

All State and Local Elections are conducted at the Elks Lodge, 37 Fourth Street, on Election Day. 7:00 am – 8:00 pm

It's wedding time! If you would like to get married at one of our beautiful parks in the City, contact me to reserve a spot.

City Hall now provides walk-in civil marriage services during business hours in the City Clerk's office for $25.00 to residents and non-residents. If you are a non-resident, please remember to obtain your marriage intentions in the town/city where you live first.

All information regarding elections, marriages, vital records, and business licensing is available on the City of Old Town's Website at www.old-town.org, under Departments/City Clerk.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Bests, Laura Engstrom, City Clerk/Registrar of Voters

Lengstrom@old-town.org

207-827-3965, ext. 122

Old Town Public Works



Steve Rideout

Greetings, I hope this article finds you all warm and well. Winter is here in full force, with below-average temperatures and above-average precipitation. Public works crews have been giving their all to provide the best possible service with minimal disruption. As of this writing, we have had seventeen treatable events, half of all last year's storms, and we have a way to go yet.

Our cemetery operations concluded on Nov. 13, and the cemetery was closed to vehicle traffic the same day. This season saw forty-eight souls laid to rest. The Forest Hill Cemetery saw the completion of drainage improvements as well. Eagle Scout Lily Raleigh has finished her Scout fence project at Maple Grove Cemetery and done a fantastic job, THANK YOU LILY!

November also saw the demolition of the Old Town city pool. This work was performed by Thornton Construction and completed in a week. All that remains is loam and seed in the spring.

If I may, I would like to share something that will help us–and you–this winter. As you clear your driveways, avoid pushing snow onto the sidewalk, as it makes it difficult for our machines to open. Doing so will spill less snow back in your driveway when we plow through. We have twenty-two miles of sidewalk to open as soon as possible at the storm's end. This operation can take days to complete. Factors include precipitation type and amount, staffing, breakdowns, and rest. Street plow drivers are also sidewalk plow drivers, with streets as the priority.

I would also like to talk about mailboxes. We receive complaints that we intentionally hit mailboxes; nothing could be further from the truth. Although we do our best to avoid them, sometimes mailboxes are damaged. This could be due to several factors: a line-of-sight issue, the truck being crowded by oncoming traffic, or the truck not hitting it at all, with the heavy, wet snow from the plow knocking it over. Thank you all for your patience and understanding.

Also, I know it is early, but mark your calendar for the annual spring Leaf and Brush Clean Up, from May 4th to 14th, followed by our Spring Clean-Up Day on Saturday, May 16th. It will be the same as last year; one day at the transfer station from 7 AM to 3 PM. Details will be published on the city's website as we get closer to the event.

Thank you for reading, and I hope you all have a warm, safe, and enjoyable winter! As always, contact the Public Works Department at 207-827-3974 if you have questions or concerns about the City's infrastructure.

Comfortably Home

making home a safer place to stay

Comfortably Home helps seniors live independently—and safely—in their own homes. Our professionals make minor repairs and basic accessibility and safety improvements at no cost for qualified homeowners.

Our team works with each homeowner to create a customized work plan to meet their needs and preferences. Our services can have a positive impact on health, safety, and peace of mind. The homeowner makes all the decisions and Comfortably Home takes care of the rest—planning, design, materials, and installation.

Our professional team will check, repair, install or replace the following items to improve safety and accessibility.

Safety Checks
Refrigerator coils
Light bulbs
Furnace filter(s)
Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Detector Replacement

Minor Repairs
Winterizing
Flooring repairs
Storm door installation
Gutter repair
Steps/existing ramp
Minor plumbing & electrical
Custom Work Examples:
- Build Shelf
- Modify cabinet height

Accessibility Modifications
Grab bars and handrails
Shower wand
Shower seat
Raised toilet seat
Drawer pulls
Doorbell
Lighting
Faucets

To participate in Comfortably Home:
- Be age 55+ or have a disability
- Own the home or live in a home owned by a family member
- Have an annual household income under:
- $60,290 for one, $75,760 for two, $85,230 for three, and $94,700 for four.
- Live in Alton, Bangor, Bradley, Brewer, Carmel, Dedham, Eddington, Glenburn, Greenbush, Greenfield, Hampden, Hermon, Holden, Hudson, Milford, Old Town, Orrington, Orono, Stillwater and Veazie.

To learn more about Comfortably Home call The Housing Authority of the City of Old Town at **207-827-6151**

Old Town Pollution Control

Winter is a good time to perform maintenance at the Wastewater Treatment Facility and our seven Pump Stations. We have scheduled some preventive maintenance on various pieces of equipment. Staff also plans to perform extensive cleaning, painting, and other general maintenance throughout the facility. Pollution Control Staff will also be focusing on our Sewer Collection System. Old Town is a Combined Sewer Overflow Community (CSO). This means that wastewater combined with stormwater may bypass the Treatment Facility during high flows. High flows happen when there is a large amount of rain or rain combined with a lot of melting snow. Old Town's goal is to eliminate all CSO events. Old Town has completed several sewer rehabilitation projects over the past fifteen years to reduce overflow events. These projects have improved our Collection System and reduced the number and volume of stormwater bypasses. We are always looking for areas where stormwater enters the sewer collection system. Many problem areas have been identified and addressed. We are now focused on finding other problem areas.

Like every CSO community, Old Town needs a CSO Master Plan approved by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Every five years, the plan needs to be reapproved. Old Town is working on the reapproval of its CSO Master Plan. To succeed, we must comply with the DEP's requests. The latest request is to eliminate our CSO bypass structures. Old Town started with four of these. One was eliminated in the early 1990's. The other three are being addressed now. Two of the remaining three have been recently sealed, so water will not pass through them. These two structures have not been activated in years. A baffle has been installed in the last one. The baffle raised the bypass elevation by nine inches.

Only toilet paper, human waste, and water should be flushed down a toilet. Ever.

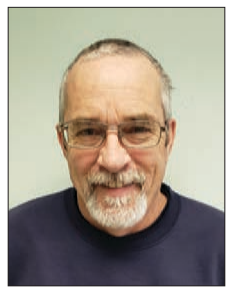
Flushable baby wipes are causing problems for wastewater treatment plants nationwide. Old Town is not an exception. This is a problem that the Pollution Control Staff has been encountering more frequently.

What are so-called flushable wipes, and why are they causing problems? Flushable wipes include baby wipes; all flushable or biodegradable personal wipes; Clorox or similar cleaning wipes; paper towels; and similar items that should not be flushed. Even paper napkins and tissues don't break down quickly enough to mitigate risks. These items cause sewer lines to back up, sewer pumps to plug, and cause damage to treatment plant equipment. This results in costly repairs, reduced pump and equipment lifetimes, and potential fines from the Department of Environmental Protection. They also require additional overtime for staff, who are called in after hours to unplug pumps or perform repairs.

Flushable wipes do not break down and do not flow through the sewer collection system pipes. They collect and cause sewer pipes to plug. This results in sewer back-ups and illegal sewer overflows. Sometimes it's the homeowner's private sewer line that plugs up. When this happens, it is the homeowner's responsibility to pay to have it unplugged. Usually, the plugs happen in the City's main sewer lines. When a main sewer line plugs, it backs up the system. Sometimes sewage backs up into homeowners' basements, and sometimes it discharges through manhole covers. Not only are they messy, but they are also illegal sewer overflows and subject to fines.

Old Town has several pump stations throughout town. Flushable wipes plug the pumps. When pumps frequently plug, it leads to excessive wear and tear. The pump life is shortened. This results in expensive repairs. If you are talking about a few, it might not be that bad, but Old Town has 18 pumps throughout town. Rebuilds cost anywhere from $3,500 to $15,000 each. This is a financial burden for the Pollution Control Facility.

The Pollution Control facility has numerous pieces of equipment throughout the facility to treat wastewater. This equipment is not designed to treat flushable wipes that reach the plant. These flushable wipes cause problems and damage equipment. This also results in shorter equipment life and expensive repairs.



David Smith

Many municipalities are dealing with this problem. Some have had major breakdowns or pump station failures. Some have experienced illegal sewer overflow discharges of millions of gallons of raw sewage. These discharges have resulted in thousands of dollars in fines. Old Town is trying to avoid becoming one of these communities.

We are asking the citizens of Old Town and Milford to stop flushing so-called flushable wipes. If in doubt, remember: only toilet paper, human waste, and water should be flushed down a toilet. Flushable wipes include baby wipes; all flushable or biodegradable personal wipes, Clorox or similar cleaning wipes; paper towels; and anything that should not be flushed. Even paper napkins and tissues don't break down quickly enough to mitigate risks.

Sincerely,

David Smith, Superintendent
Old Town Pollution Control
(207) 827-3970

Old Town Fire Department

Old Town Fire Department Reflects on a Year of Service and Overcoming Challenges

As the year comes to a close, the Old Town Fire Department takes a moment to reflect on a year filled with challenges, accomplishments, and meaningful community engagement. In 2025, the dedicated men and women of the department responded to a staggering 2,324 emergency incidents, serving our community around the clock with professionalism and care. This represents growth from last year, despite a reduction in staffing.

Throughout the year, we had multiple visits to schools within the RSU to support Fire Prevention Week, and we were also grateful for the opportunity to help deliver requested gifts through our community giving tree. In another joint effort, we partnered with the Old Town Police Department for the annual Public Safety Turkey Drive, collecting turkeys and side dishes to help support local food pantries and families in need.

Community involvement remained a cornerstone of our mission. The Old Town Fire Department proudly participated in many local events, including parades, Riverfest, the Festival of Lights, and the first annual Fire vs. Police softball game in support of the Old Town Animal Orphanage. Through this event, we raised $1,533 for the orphanage — a great example of what our community can accomplish together.

As warmer weather approaches, we look forward to spending even more time out in the community and our schools. Serving lunch at the elementary and middle schools and helping with the middle school field day are always highlights for our members. The annual senior breakfast at the high school continues to draw a strong turnout of firefighters — many of whom once walked the same hallways and now enjoy reconnecting with familiar faces and traditions.

As we close out 2025, the Old Town Fire Department looks ahead with optimism and a continued commitment to excellence in service, training, and community partnership. We remain proud to serve Old Town and grateful for the continued support of the citizens we protect.



Chief Kyle Milan

Old Town Police Department

Winter weather creates challenging conditions for everyone on our roads and sidewalks. Please slow down, increase your following distance, and make sure your vehicle is winter-ready with proper tires and clear windows and lights.

Pedestrians are encouraged to wear bright or reflective clothing, especially during low-light hours. Property owners are reminded to clear sidewalks to help prevent injuries.

Taking a few extra precautions helps keep our officers, first responders, and neighbors safe. If you need assistance, don't hesitate to contact the Police Department.

Stay safe this winter and look out for one another.

Chief
David White



Chief David White

Looking for updates, safety tips and more, scan this QR code to follow us on Facebook!



Downtown Old Town

Old Town Public Library


Cassandra Pool

Cassandra Pool, Director
Old Town Public Library

Spring is just around the corner, and with it, more opportunities for outdoor activities! We will have Maine State Park and Botanical Garden Passes available to check out with your library card. We also have tickets available for the Maine Discovery Museum, Penobscot Theatre, and the Farnsworth Art Museum. The Story Walk in the garden around the library is updated monthly during Spring, Summer, and Fall, so be sure to stop by and see the new story. Our Library of Things collection is growing! We have adventure bags, ukuleles, Giant Jenga, a handheld Garmin GPS, an acoustic guitar kit, a 26ft pole saw, a DVD player, a palm sander, and many other "things" all available to check out with your library card. We also have 2 Old Town Canoe kayaks available to borrow starting late May through early October. Visit the library for more details.



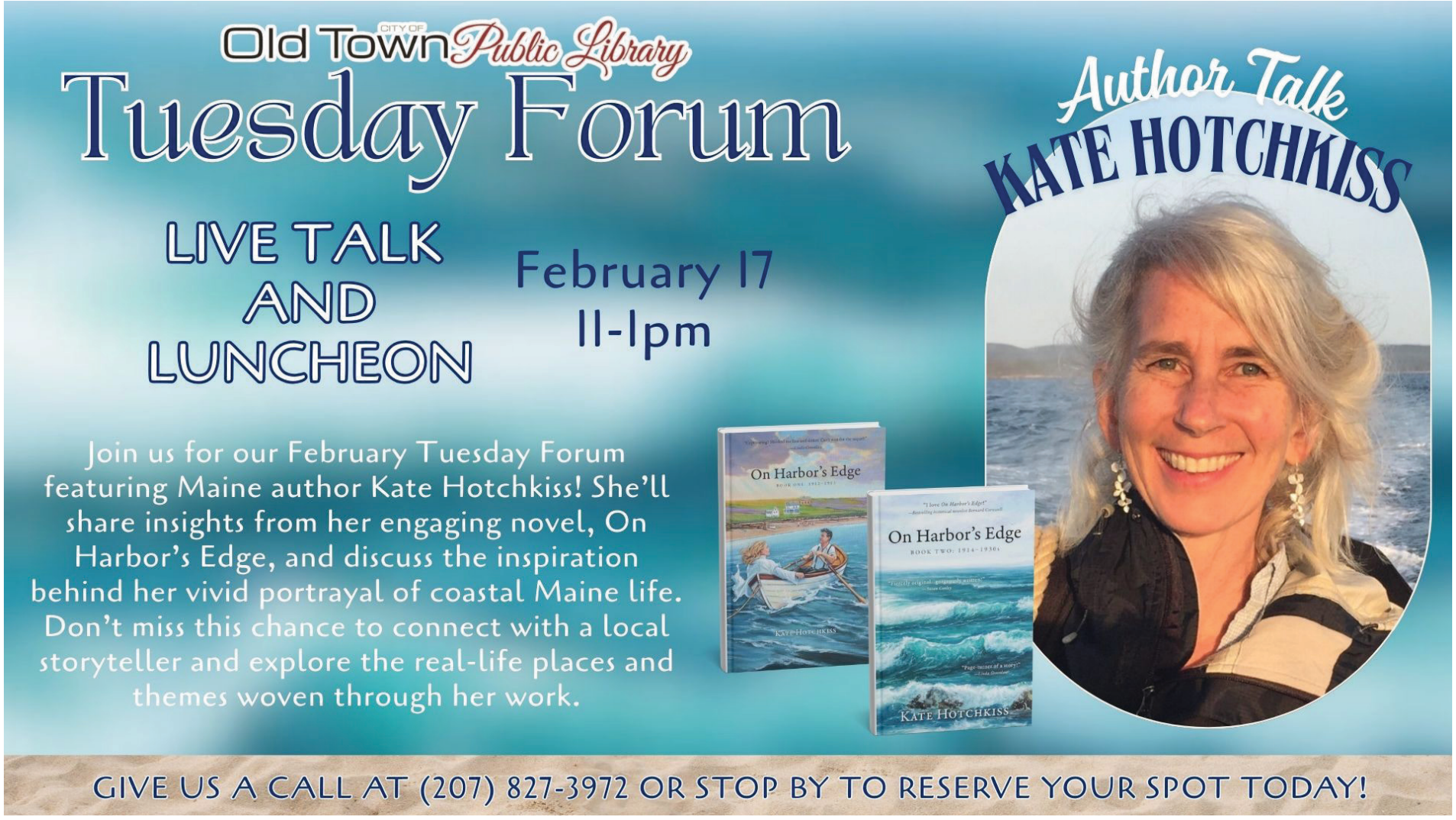
Our hours of operation are Monday, 10:00 am-7:00 pm, Tuesday-Friday, 10:00 am-5:00 pm, and Saturday, 10:00 am-1:00 pm. Feel free to come in and browse the collection or use our public internet access computers. We are still offering curbside pickup service for those who would prefer it. Utilize our catalog to request items, or give us a call, and we would be happy to help with your selections.

Our Children's programming has been very busy in the downstairs meeting rooms. Toddler Time, intended for children ages 1-3, is on Mondays and Thursdays at 10:30 am. The after-school Club Library is continuing through the end of the school year and is held from 2:30 pm-4:30 pm on Wednesdays (3rd–5th grade) and Thursdays (PreK–2nd grade). Also, back by popular demand, Lego Club (for children K-5th grade) is held from 3:00 pm–4:00 pm on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month during the school year. Contact Ms. Cindy at the library for more details on children's events.

Adult programming at the Old Town Public Library continues throughout the spring and early summer. Our Tuesday Forum informative luncheon series features expert speakers, including local author Kate Hotchkiss in February, Laurie Bowen from the Cooperative Extension discussing food preservation in March, Orono native Amber Hathaway speaking on her book Little White Flowers in April, author Ron Currie (The Savage, Noble Death of Babs Dionne) in May, and Peter Cowin, known on YouTube as The Bee Whisperer, presenting on beekeeping in June. We also host a weekly Sit 'n Stitch group on Thursdays from 1–3 PM for knitting, sewing, and other handicrafts. Our adult book clubs, Who Dunnit, Fluffy Fiction, and Fright Club, will continue meeting through early summer.

Creative and community-focused programs are available for all ages. Monthly Crafternoons are designed for adults, with younger participants welcome when accompanied by an adult, and feature Thumbprint Heart Magnets in February, a Beaded Plant tutorial in March, and Marigold seed sowing with pot decorating in April. Patrons can also enjoy a monthly Take & Make Kit at home, including Hot Cocoa Kits in February, DIY Mini Kites in March, Magnetic Poetry in April, and a Seed Sowing Kit in May. Additional offerings include a March Plant Swap, where participants may trade one plant for another, and ongoing teen programming such as the Anime/Manga Club, Teen Drop-In Crafts, and a Mario Kart Tournament on March 10 for MAR10 Day. For full details, visit old-town.lib.me.us and follow us on Facebook and Instagram for updates and announcements.

207-827-3972
otpl@old-town.org
http://old-town.lib.me.us



Old Town Code Enforcement

Meet your code enforcement officer

The City of Old Town is pleased to introduce our Code Enforcement Officer, Travis Roy—a familiar face with deep roots in our community.

With more than 30 years of service to Old Town in a variety of roles, Travis brings extensive experience, strong local knowledge, and a genuine commitment to the well-being of our city. Throughout his career, he has worked closely with residents and city departments alike, earning a reputation for being approachable, fair, and community-focused.

"I'm excited to be serving the community in this role," Travis shares. "Having lived and worked in Old Town for so many years, I understand how important it is for our neighborhoods to remain safe, livable, and affordable. My goal as Code Enforcement Officer is not just enforcement, but education and cooperation—helping residents understand and navigate city codes and ordinances."

Travis has completed the State of Maine certification process to serve as Code Enforcement Officer, Local Plumbing Inspector, and Health Officer for the City of Old Town. These expanded credentials allow him to provide comprehensive support and help coordinate city efforts related to public safety, health, and housing standards.

Whether you have questions about building codes, plumbing, signage, or health ordinances, Travis is here to help. He can be reached by email at troy@old-town.org or by phone at 207-827-3965 ext. 206. Because much of his work takes place in the field, conducting inspections and investigating complaints, email is often the fastest and most efficient way to reach him.

Current Projects and Focus Areas

- Conducting building and plumbing inspections for ongoing projects throughout Old Town
- Addressing and resolving code compliance concerns within the city
- Working with the City Attorney on proposed ordinance changes related to the keeping of chickens in residential areas
- Managing the bidding, resale, and demolition process for city properties acquired through foreclosure


Travis Roy

Together, we can continue building a vibrant, safe, and welcoming community that we are all proud to call home.

Chickens are not allowed on Marsh Island



A major cause of the city's rodent problem is due to the illegal keeping of chickens, as the feed is also a source of food for the rats. **The only zoning districts chickens are allowed is in the R-3, R-3A, Rural Residence Zoning District.** The feeding of feral animals is another reason for the increase in the rat population. Rats are not picky eaters. They search out any food source available. DO NOT LEAVE OUT ANY FOOD FOR FERAL ANIMALS. Open compost piles are another source of food and shelter for rodents. All composting must utilize an enclosed composting bin. Placing your trash curb-side early and not in required trash cans is yet another reason we are facing this challenge. Please place trash curbside the morning of your collection date and in a trash receptacle.



Old Town Assessing

April J. Buchanan - Assessor

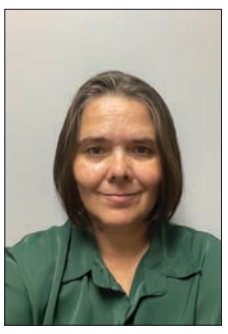
The assessing office is located on the first floor of City Hall, 265 Main St. We welcome visitors with questions/concerns. If you're unable to stop by, please feel free to email me at abuchanan@old-town.org or call at 207-827-3965 ext. 118.

Well, winter is upon us! Here in Maine, that can mean just about anything—snow, sleet, freezing rain, or even a bit of sunshine. Whatever the weather brings, we hope you're staying warm, dry, and safe during these colder months.

As your city assessor, I'd like to take a moment to share what our office does and highlight some areas of focus for the Assessing office.

What does the assessor's office do?

The assessor's office is responsible for valuing all properties in our community fairly and accurately. This ensures that property taxes are distributed equitably among all property owners. To accomplish this, we collect and analyze information on property size, condition, and features, and compare those characteristics with recent sales in Old Town to estimate fair market value.


April Buchanan

Our office continues to evaluate methods for systematically and efficiently reviewing and verifying property data. These reviews may include a combination of record research, questionnaires sent to property owners, and, when appropriate, limited field review.

If a property owner is contacted as part of a data review process, the purpose is always to verify existing information and ensure our records reflect current conditions.

Why this matters

Accurate property records help support a fair and equitable tax system for everyone in our community. Whether through participation in exemptions or maintaining up-to-date documentation, these efforts contribute to consistent, well-supported assessments.

In addition to property visits, we will also send real estate data verification questionnaires to property owners. These questionnaires allow you to confirm or correct property details and help us maintain accurate assessments.


Snowy sunrise on Brunswick St.

Are you and your property eligible for any exemptions?

The State of Maine offers several property tax relief programs for qualifying residents. The most common residential programs include the Homestead Exemption, Veterans Exemption, Blind Exemption, and the Property Tax Deferral Program.

During the winter months, our office reviews assessment records to help identify residents who may be eligible for exemptions but are not currently receiving them. While not everyone will qualify, these programs can provide meaningful tax relief for those who do.

More information about each program, including eligibility requirements and application deadlines, is available on the City's website at www.old-town.org or by contacting the Assessing Office directly.

Property data review and record accuracy

Maintaining accurate property records is an ongoing responsibility of the Assessing Office. Over time, changes such as renovations, additions, or other improvements can affect property characteristics and value.

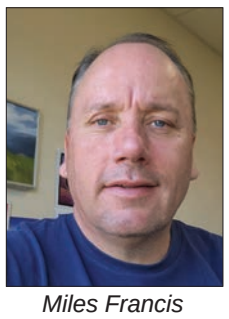
Have Questions?

If you have questions about your property record, available exemptions, or the role of the Assessing Office, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're always happy to help.

Thank you for your cooperation and continued support. It is a pleasure to serve the citizens of Old Town, and I look forward to a productive year ahead.

Warm regards,
April Buchanan
Assessor

Old Town Municipal Airport: Dewitt Field


Miles Francis

Winter is fully underway at Old Town Municipal Airport, and keeping the airfield safe and open takes a tremendous amount of behind-the-scenes work. Our crews are out clearing snow and treating ice on the runways and taxiways whenever storms hit, often during early mornings and weekends. Their hard work helps ensure that pilots can safely get in and out and that the airport remains a reliable resource for the community year-round.

Even during the quieter winter months, the airport remains active and prepared. Staff continue equipment maintenance, safety checks, inspections, and planning for the seasons ahead, all while responding to the demands of Maine's winter weather. We're grateful for the support and understanding of our neighbors, tenants, and visitors, and we look forward to welcoming everyone back for a busy spring and summer ahead.

City Finance

Danielle Berube, Finance Director

The City website offers citizens the ability to re-register vehicles, pay taxes and sewer fees, purchase hunting and fishing licenses, and re-register ATV, snowmobile, and boat registrations with the online portals.

Upcoming due dates

2026 Tax bills will be mailed in August. The due dates are September 17, 2025, and March 11, 2026

December 3, 2025 is the last day to make payments on 2024 tax liens filed on June 3, 2024, automatic foreclosure notices will be sent in October/November.

September 4, 2025 is the last day to make payments on 2024 sewer liens filed on March 4, 2024, automatic foreclosure notices were sent in July.

2025 Waste Water Pollution Billing schedule

Service dates	Due dates
January-March	April 28
April-June	July 28
July-September	October 28
October-December	January 28

General Assistance Office

General Assistance is a service administered by the municipality for the immediate aid of persons who are unable to provide the basic essential necessities to maintain themselves or their families. The General Assistance office operates by appointment only on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.


Danielle Berube

General Assistance can be reached by telephone at 827-3991, ext. 107, or by email at otwelfare@old-town.org.

Ensure your trash is picked up

Use Green OT bags and close the lids!

The city consistently receives calls from residents regarding their trash or recycling not being collected. When this occurs, the city contacts Casella and gives them the address. Within five minutes the city receives a video of that location, on that day, so that we may inform the resident as to why their cans did not get picked up. On very few occasions, it was simply missed. **98% of the time the video reveals that the lids were open.**

There is also a misconception that the city is not enforcing the pay per bag collection service. The city is working diligently to bring every property into conformity. We receive calls from citizens complaining that they are seeing carts with white, orange, and black trash bags. This can be confusing as **apartment buildings with over four units cannot utilize the city service** and must contract with a trash hauler to remove their trash. Some utilize typical dumpsters while others that also contract through Casella have the carts just like the city's service and utilize the side load truck just as the city does. The difference is in the detail. All carts that the city's contract covers have a serial number that begins with OT. All other carts are being paid for through the property owners and do not have to adhere to the pay per bag collection structure.

To ensure your trash is picked up every time, there are a few things you must know:

- **Use pay-per-throw green bags** available at city hall, Walgreens, and Hannaford.
- **Close lids securely**. Don't overload the can so that the lid cannot close
- **Keep space between the cans.** There must be a foot or two between them so that the mechanical arm can grasp the can.
- **Place them in the correct direction** with the handle and wheels toward your yard/home or against the curb (off of the sidewalk if any) in the street.



Trash and recycling collection occurs every week on your service day, either Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday.

Holiday Collection Schedule

Visit casella.com/old-town-me for upcoming holiday pick up schedules.

Questions? Please call Casella at 1-800-CASELLA.


Sun shining through frozen mist on the trees in Great Works.

OLD TOWN ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

On Saturday, January 24, Old Town High School inducted its 12th class into the Athletic Hall of Fame with six former athletes and coaches. The Class of 2025 included Paul Bouchard ’71, Eric Hoogterp ’15, Jenn Plourde – Coach, Andrew Sibley ’96, Brooke Sulinski ’17, and Cory Thibodeau ’93. This year’s inductees played a part in winning 26 regional and state championships.

Bouchard ’71 – Competed in basketball and led the team in scoring and was named MVP, and cross country, helping Old Town win the PVC championship. Played basketball at UMaine Presque Isle, was a 1,000-point scorer, and finished as the program's 2nd all-time leading scorer. Paul also worked 15 years as a high school and college basketball referee, and served 29 years as a guidance counselor at Old Town High.

Hoogterp ’15 – Helped Old Town win the 2014 Class B basketball state championship. In baseball, he won the John Winkin award as the state’s best player, along with being named PVC Player of the Year and PVC Pitcher of the Year.

Plourde, coach – Led Old Town softball to 3 Eastern Maine championships and 3 state championships. In 8 seasons, her teams posted a 131-20 record, and she was named PVC Coach of the Year 6 times.

Sibley ’96 – Helped lead Old Town to the 1993 Class A boys outdoor track state championship and the 1994 Class A boys indoor state championship. Additionally, he won several individual conference and state championships and still holds 2 school records.

Sulinski ’17 – Competed in field hockey, indoor track, outdoor track, and softball at OTHS. In field hockey, she scored 51 goals and 35 assists. Following high school, she played 4 years of field hockey at UMaine, where she scored 22 goals and helped the Black Bears win their first-ever America East Championship.

Thibodeau ’93 – In hockey, he won 3 Eastern Maine championships and back-to-back state championships in 1992 and 93. He scored 100 career goals, and in a 4-year career, his teams posted a 90-5 record and were 4-time all-state selections. He helped the baseball team win 2 Eastern Maine championships, led the football team in tackles, and was a 2-time all-conference selection. He also served as an assistant hockey coach, where his teams won 3 Northern Maine championships and 1 state championship.

Congratulations to this year’s hall of fame class. Thank you for being great representatives of RSU 34 and inspiring future athletes and coaches.





