

News Release

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Call for Nominations Aroostook's Entrepreneur of the Year Award

Aroostook County - February 23, 2010 – Leaders Encouraging Aroostook Development (LEAD) and Momentum Aroostook are pleased to announce that nominations are being accepted across the County for *Aroostook's Entrepreneur - 2010 Award*, giving recognition to progressive business founders / owners / operators in northern Maine.

In conjunction with National Entrepreneurship Week, the second annual search is being launched for Aroostook's outstanding entrepreneur, for individuals who own, operate, or are involved in a partnership within northern Maine and who inspire others with their vision, leadership, and achievement.

“This program is a powerful tool to increase awareness among the northern Maine business community and is a wonderful opportunity to promote creativity, innovation, and business excellence in our region. Last year, we received 17 exceptional applications from throughout Aroostook County. We look forward to receiving applications and business success stories of individuals who are excellent role models for others who might be looking to start or enhance their own businesses,” said Virginia Joles, president of LEAD.

The *Aroostook's Entrepreneur – 2010 Award* will be given to a business leader who demonstrates excellence and extraordinary success in such areas as innovation, financial performance, and personal commitment to their business and community. Last year, the award was designated for Young Entrepreneurs and there was a specified age range for nominees. This year the award is open to all ages. The nominees will be recognized and the winner will receive a plaque and a check for \$500 at a special event on May 27th co-hosted by LEAD and Momentum Aroostook.

“Momentum Aroostook is so pleased to be partnering again with LEAD and collaborating with the area’s higher education institutions on this effort to recognize local businessmen and women and showcase the exciting ventures they have undertaken in our region. Recognition like this helps to further encourage the growth and success area companies have achieved, keep talent in our region, and provide business owners with a sense of personal satisfaction, and Momentum Aroostook is proud to be a part of this,” said Rachel Rice, president of Momentum Aroostook.

Community nominations must be received by April 1, 2010. There is no fee for nominations and self-nominations are encouraged. Previous nominees are eligible to be nominated again. LEAD and Momentum Aroostook members and their relatives are eligible to participate; teachers are urged to nominate students who have developed a successful business. Program details and a nomination form are available for download at <http://www.leadaroostook.com> and <http://www.momentumaroostook.com>. To be eligible for consideration, nominees must be the founder, owner, or manager of a private or public company; be primarily responsible for the recent performance of the company or organization; and be an active member of top management. The company or organization must have been in operation at least one year.

A panel of six judges, one representing each of the sponsors, LEAD and Momentum Aroostook, and the supporting organizations, Husson University, Northern Maine Community College, the University of Maine at Fort Kent, and the University of Maine at Presque Isle, will select the 2010 honoree. The names of the three finalists will be released to the media prior to May 27th, and the recipient of *Aroostook’s Entrepreneur of the Year Award* will be announced at the LEAD / Momentum Aroostook event. The other honorees will also be recognized that evening.

Entrepreneurship is still the driving force of the U.S. economy. During the past 15 years, businesses less than five years old have accounted for about 70 percent of the net job creation in the United States. However, while America presently maintains the edge as an entrepreneurial society, there are clear signs of massive economic competition, challenge, and change.

Leaders Encouraging Aroostook Development (LEAD), a non-profit corporation of community volunteers, was established in 1986 for the purpose of fostering and encouraging the balanced development of Aroostook County, which includes focus on the economy, jobs, image, partnerships, promoting new and existing businesses, natural resources, and legislation. Today, LEAD is proud to celebrate over two decades of achievement with the continued support of individuals and businesses committing their valuable time to improve the future of Aroostook County.

Momentum Aroostook, is part of a state-wide initiative managed by the Maine Development Foundation focused on providing opportunities for young and middle-age adults to network, socialize, and otherwise become active in the future development of Aroostook County. Sponsored by University of Maine at Presque Isle, MMG Insurance, Northern Maine Development Commission, and Katahdin Trust Company, Momentum Aroostook reflects the region’s can-do spirit and drive to make things happen.