



REPORT OF THE MAINE BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION



November 3, 2020
Maine State Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs



Herein is the Fall 2020 report of the Maine Bicentennial Commission, outlining our findings and recommendations to date, as required in the enabling legislation that established the commission, [Resolve 25](#) of the 128th Legislature, originally sponsored by Rep. Jim Handy, D- Lewiston, as LD 1143, “Resolve, Providing for the Official Observance of the 200th Anniversary of the Formation of the State of Maine.”

The COVID-19 pandemic response began only days before our planned Statehood Day commemoration and has resulted in the postponement of all Maine bicentennial events and programs into next year.

While we are disappointed that we are unable to commemorate Maine’s bicentennial this year as planned, we are also excited about coming together in 2021 to celebrate not only 201 years of statehood, but our renewed sense of community and perseverance as we emerge from this trial. We remain very grateful for the continued support of our sponsors and partners as we all navigate the uncertainties of this time, and we are continuing our planning efforts to properly acknowledge this historic moment in Maine history.

Following membership appointments as outlined in the legislation, the commission convened for the first time on Jan. 29, 2018 and has met 11 times since then.

Sen. Bill Diamond, D-Cumberland, continues to serve as the Chairman, David Cheever as Vice-Chairman, and Peter Merrill as Treasurer. Jamie Ritter rounds out the Executive Committee serving as a member at large from the Library community. The commission maintains the four original subcommittees with the following Chairpersons:

- Events/Programs: Alison Sucky, Maine Tourism Association, Director of Government Affairs
- Education: Heather Perry, Gorham School Department, Superintendent
- Marketing: Rep. Jim Handy
- Finance: Dana Connors, Maine Chamber of Commerce, President

The commission’s accomplishments to date include, but are not limited to:

- Approved [mission and vision statements](#)
- Attained non-profit corporation status for Maine200, which is incorporated as Maine200 with the Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions.
- Obtained 501 (c) (3) status from the Internal Revenue Service
- Approved bylaws and fiscal controls for commission operations
- Agreed to endorsement guidelines for programs and events seeking to identify with the bicentennial; as well as endorsement and usage guidelines for for-profit product use
- Identified educational guidelines and a [curriculum sharing program](#) for K-12 education

- Created a Community Grants program with an initial allocation of \$375,000. The first round of grants was announced in 2019. More than \$145,000 was distributed. The second round was awarded in March 2020, and the third round of awardees was announced in July 2020. Proposals for funding far exceeded the Commission's ability to satisfy demand. Through adjustments in funding priorities, the Commission was able to award more than \$650,000 in project funding, reaching every Maine county. See a full list of all grant recipients here: <https://www.maine200.org/community-grants>
- Supported projects from the Maine State Archives, Maine State Library, Maine State Museum, Maine Arts Commission, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Maine Historical Society, and the Maine Humanities Council to educate and enrich Maine citizens about the bicentennial period and Maine history
- Secured \$750,000 in sponsorships and commitments with the intention of securing additional financial and in-kind support to match the State's contribution
- Created Maine200 physical and digital informational materials to interface with the public, municipalities, non-profit entities, and corporate partners
- Launched and maintained the Maine200.org website and social media feeds (@OfficialME200 on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook)
- Began a [webstore](#) with branded merchandise and created a bicentennial marketplace for those members of the DECD's MaineMade program that created bicentennial products
- Kicked off the bicentennial commemoration in July 2019 with Governor Mills in Presque Isle, Bangor, Augusta, and Portland. All four communities dedicated tri-centennial pine groves during the ceremonies.
- Designed and minted commemorative bicentennial coins (sales ongoing)
- Designed a Time Capsule with the support of the University of Maine at Orono for dedication at the conclusion of the Bicentennial activities and events.

The Maine Bicentennial Commission planned four [signature events](#) for 2020, all of which have been postponed to 2021:

- Statehood Day Weekend is now rescheduled to Sunday, March 21, 2021 in Augusta. The event will feature the United States Postal Service unveiling of the Maine Bicentennial commemorative stamp and speakers including Governor Janet Mills, members of Maine's Congressional Delegation and State Legislature, and other dignitaries. The event will be recorded for the historical record and broadcast to the public, and plans will be adjusted as necessary for public health considerations in 2021.
- The State of Maine Bicentennial Parade presented by Poland Spring is now scheduled in Auburn and Lewiston on Saturday, May 15, 2021, as a statewide event with participation from Maine's 16 counties and an intergenerational marching band. The parade committee will meet early in 2021 to determine if the further postponement is necessary.

- Maritime events to include Portland, Rockland, Boothbay, Bucksport, Bangor, Searsport, Castine, and potentially Eastport, Bath, and Wiscasset are all postponed to summer of 2021 and planning is underway.
- The Maine Innovation Expo is intended to be the Commission's final event, now scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 20, 2021. The Maine Technology Institute and Central Maine Power Company are partnering with the Commission to host the exhibition. The Expo will feature companies and entrepreneurs from throughout Maine who will provide attendees with a hands-on experience of the innovative work being done here, with the message that young citizens can find engaging career opportunities in Maine.

We are continuing to encourage communities, however they define themselves, to plan bicentennial activities for their constituents. These may be new events or established traditions that are presented with a bicentennial flair for 2020-Plus One. We are regularly updating our www.Maine200.org website with information about the events and programs, and connecting visitors with [resources about Maine history](#).

We look forward to continuing preparations for a fulfilling commemoration of Maine's 200 years of statehood.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Diamond". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sen. Bill Diamond,
Chairman, Maine Bicentennial Commission (Maine200)