



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC  
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



JANET T. MILLS  
GOVERNOR

HEATHER JOHNSON  
COMMISSIONER

February 1, 2023

The Honorable Chip Curry, Senate Chair  
The Honorable Tiffany Roberts, House Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business  
131st Maine Legislature  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Administration of Programs on behalf of Loring Development Authority

Dear Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and members of the IDEAB Committee:

I am pleased to provide the first quarterly report relating to the marketing and business attraction efforts administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) on behalf of Loring Development Authority. Public Law 2022, Chapter 635, Part A, provided \$200,000 in fiscal year 2022 and \$200,000 in fiscal year 2023 to fund this effort and Part V-3, required the submission of quarterly reports beginning February 1, 2023.

In April 2022, DECD issued an RFP entitled "Business Development and Marketing Services for Loring Development Authority". We received four responses to the RFP and after reviewing and scoring the proposals, SHL Enterprise Solutions (SHL), a Greenville-based economic development consulting firm, was identified as the winning bidder. SHL Enterprise Solutions' principal is Steve Levesque, who most recently led the successful redevelopment of the former Brunswick Naval Air Station.

For this project, the SHL team is accompanied by two excellent partners: Designlab, a full-service graphic design and marketing agency based in Millinocket (owned and operated by two Aroostook County natives); and Bull Rock Consulting, a strategic development firm based in Portland.

A two-year contract was awarded on June 1, 2022, with the primary objective of attracting new business investment to Loring Commerce Centre and bringing new quality jobs and improved economic vitality to central Aroostook County. Through increased brand awareness and implementation of a robust and focused national and international business marketing strategy, this work will focus on attracting the following primary business sectors to Loring Commerce

Center: transportation equipment, agricultural products, wood products, aerospace industries and energy operations.

In July 2022, SHL released its first quarterly newsletter with a distribution to over 400 local, regional, statewide, and national partners. It highlighted the marketing and business attraction efforts; the water, sewer, and roadway infrastructure plans; and information on the Air Force PFAS study, which will be completed in June 2023.

SHL has attended several trade shows and developed focused “Pitch Sheets” to attract aviation and aerospace businesses, agricultural products, forest products, manufacturing, and renewal energy businesses.

Upcoming trade shows include:

- SpaceCom 23 in Orlando, FL – February 2023
- International Mass Timber Conference in Portland, OR - March 2023
- Aviation Week MRO America’s in Atlanta, GA – April 2023
- AUVSI Xponential 2023 (UAS) in Denver, CO – May 2023

SHL has also re-designed and launched a new interactive website:

[www.loringcommercecentre.com](http://www.loringcommercecentre.com), which includes mapping and aerial videos of key assets. There is now a social media presence on Facebook reaching 45,000, and on LinkedIn reaching 16,000, both with hundreds of followers.

Success stories to date include:

- Site location of the DG fuels project. (Recognized as the most significant economic development project of 2022 by the Bangor Daily News.)
- Assisted with the Green4Maine property acquisition.
- Initiated actions to apply for Foreign Trade Zone status.
- Completed a grant funding application for an airport master plan, energy assessment and DFAS workforce assessment.
- Working with several active business prospects in aviation, energy, bio-wood products, and agricultural sectors.

We look forward to discussing this work with the Committee on February 7, 2023.

Sincerely,



Heather Johnson  
Commissioner