

BREAKING NEWS

At our meeting on March 31st attendees reviewed information concerning the **Tax Reform Referendum that will be voted on this June**. Handouts were provided listing the 102 new taxable items that will go into effect if the new taxes are not rejected in the referendum. After some discussion, there was a decision that the Chamber should take a position on this issue. The members at the meeting voted that we support voting YES to reject the new taxes. A vote was also taken and approved to donate \$200 to the Vote YES to Reject New Taxes Political Action Committee. While some members are opposed to introducing new taxes in general, others believe that there will be great difficulty in being compliant because the proposed changes are extensive, at times complex, and frequently contradictory due to the way the law has been worded to make exceptions. At our recent Winter Conference, Peter B. Beaulieu, Director of Sales, Fuel & Special Tax Division of Maine Revenue Services urged people to go to the State's website for complete information. (For more details, see article on next page).

To review the list of 102 new taxes to determine how they apply to you and your business, go to our chamber website.

DON'T MISS IT

Union Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner & Awards
Wednesday, April 7th The Masonic Hall, Union, Maine
Social hour: 5:30 - 6:30 pm Dinner & Entertainment: 6:30 pm

Our Annual Union Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner & Awards

ceremony will be held on Wednesday, April 7th at the Masonic Hall in Union and is sponsored by Tidewater Telecom. It will be an evening of fun to celebrate the Chamber's accomplishments, take pride in our community and enjoy the fellowship of our members and guests.

This year's menu features baked ham, macaroni & cheese, salad, cornbread and dessert. Entertainment will be provided by well-known political humorist,

Al Diamon. There will also be silent auction*. The cost is \$25 per person and chamber members, guests and all members of the general public are welcome to attend. For more information or to make your reservation, please call 785-3300 or email cte@midcoast.com by April 2nd.

* Silent auction donations are welcome and are being managed by Lyle Cramer. Please call him at 785-2030 to let him know if you can donate an item or if you need to arrange for pick up of your items prior to the date of the dinner.



Al Diamon, political humorist will provide entertainment on Wed, April 7th at our annual dinner & awards ceremony.

INTERESTED IN EXHIBITING AT UNION FAIR?

The Chamber is trying to determine whether there is any interest among our members to share booth space cooperatively at Union Fair. At a nominal cost of \$100 per business, it could be a great opportunity to expand visibility for your business, your products or services. The cost includes the Chamber hiring staff for the cooperative booth for the entire week of the fair. Please let Martha know right away if you are interested by calling 785-3300 or email cte@midcoast.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Maine Home + Design Midcoast Show is scheduled for June 5th & 6th at Point Lookout in Lincolnville. Volunteers are needed to be present at our booth to greet attendees and hand out our chamber information. Please be certain we have a supply of your company's brochures for our rack.

Show hours are: Saturday, June 5th, 10 am - 6 pm

Sunday, June 6th, 10 am - 4 pm

Please contact Martha at 785-3300 or email her at cte@midcoast.com to let her know if you're available for a morning or afternoon shift. Remember, admission to the show is free for volunteers!

RECENT EVENTS

Union Area Chamber of Commerce Winter Conference
"Regulations: How do they affect you and your business?"

More than 40 people attended the Union Area Chamber of Commerce Winter Conference on February 24 to learn about new and proposed rules and regulations for businesses. Guest speaker, Peter B. Beaulieu, director of the Sales, Fuel & Special Tax Division of Maine Revenue Services, discussed proposed changes to the sales, use and service provider tax code that will take place if the law is not repealed in the referendum in June.

The proposed changes are extensive, at times complex, and frequently contradictory, Mr. Beaulieu said. Mr. Beaulieu provided detailed handouts for those in attendance to take with them. He explained how the intent of the bill of lowering of the income tax for Maine residents balances the lost revenue by increasing taxes on some items (candy and carbonated beverages, for example) and making previously untaxed service businesses taxable (recreational guiding and house cleaning services, to name a few) and taxing other items such as residential long distance services, movies and amusement parks, concert entry fees, and some installation, repair and maintenance fees.

Mr. Beaulieu encouraged attendees to become more informed by going to maine.gov/revenue and reviewing the proposed changes to the law.

Jill Goodwin of the Maine Builders and Contractors Alliance spoke about progress in the Legislature regarding a statewide unified code for electrical, fire and renovation building codes, which could be ready as soon as June, and the discussions under way regarding regulations to license

COMMITTEES

The publications committee has completed its review of Chamber publications and submitted its recommendations regarding publishing guidelines. The suggestions included bid protocols (due dates, project specifications, and notification that artwork will be owned by the chamber) and suggested timetables. In addition the committee suggested keeping archives of past printing jobs, photos, etc. for the Chamber to repurpose / reuse as needed. The committee members were:

Paul Gaudreau, Chairman, Kristy Flynn, John Jenson, Cheryl McKeary, and Marcia Drenzyk.



Peter B. Beaulieu, *Director of the Sales, Fuel & Special Tax Division of Maine Revenue Services*

contractors. She introduced Brent Pratt, a member of the Maine Builders and Contractors Alliance, who talked about the move to license contractors, and the complexities of determining who is a subcontractor versus who is a workers' compensation employee. This was of special interest to the many contractors that attended the meeting. Having all contractors follow the same rules will provide a level playing field, and the fines and enforcement for contractors that are not abiding by the law can result in significant penalties.

State legislators Rep. Wes Richardson and Sen. Chris Rector offered attendees a book with the entire roster of legislators for the current session as well as the committees that they serve on. They explained the path of bills as they move through the legislative process. The legislators strongly encourage citizen participation and want to hear from their constituents on issues of either concern or of interest to them. They said a phone call or e-mail written from the heart from citizens that they were elected to serve has a far greater impact on their decision making than duplicate mass e-mails on a single issue.