

## **Greenville: A Great Place To Live, Work, Raise a Family in 2018**

*A Vision for What Greenville Could Look Like in 10 Years from Now*

*[Disclaimer: this is not Town policy, just a series of observations and possibilities]*

The year is 2018, and the Greenville community has grown to become the home to even more innovative small businesses, creative thinkers, active outdoors people, retirees and young families alike who enjoy this geographically isolated and ever-more-livable and sustainable small community.

Public infrastructure has been improved greatly in the past ten years. The Junction Wharf was completely rebuilt using a combination of materials designed to last 50-100 years before next being replaced. The wharf itself was transformed with additional walking paths, a purposeful seasonal trail to the lake for snowmobiles and ice racers, and significant landscaping to make this not only a functional boat launch, but also a true “park by the lake” for day users. Outdoor performers no longer wait for the Fourth of July to sing and to perform, making regular use of the outdoor stage established at the wharf. New playground equipment was added to the beach area, and the bathhouse refurbished and winterized for use in the winter months as well. A Farmer’s market is held there every Sunday, adding more activity to a very popular family destination.

The reconstruction of the Wharf began a mini-renaissance in the Junction, resulting in the award of a second Downtown Revitalization grant to the Town of Greenville and Piscataquis County jointly. The façade improvement program provided by this large grant has helped most of the businesses there improve their appearance. The two buildings adjacent to the Wharf and Wiggins Stream have been renovated, the larger of the two developed a mixed-use commercial property, combining office space, retail space and apartment space, all highly-sought after. The Depot Building houses a popular coffeehouse and meeting space for small groups. Trails for snowmobiles, ATVs and Mountain Bikes all begin at the Wharf and have defined and authorized trails leading to well-signed, permanent, maintained, and mostly separate trail systems throughout the State of Maine Public Reserve Land (Little Moose Unit), as well as the old Shirley Railroad bed and Brochu Road, both of which have become recreational corridors funded by the Land for Maine’s Future Fund. Trailer parking and gathering for trips of all kinds is also available from the new County-owned parking area off Depot Street. The intersection of Depot Street and Route 15 has been re-engineered with both pavement and landscaping to slow down truck traffic: pedestrians and bicyclists also have their own walkways separate from Depot Street, with distinctive crossing areas, to improve safety.

The high-price of fuel has resulted in a resurgence of the rail system. A non-profit organization has taken over ownership of the old railroad station, and have re-built it using many of the old materials to make a modern, functional replica of what was there. The re-built station houses a small railroad museum, a seasonal railroad café, and there are plans to develop seasonal rail service between Greenville and Brownville, as well as Greenville and Jackman and Lac Megantic, Quebec. The passenger service between Greenville and Canada was in part spurred forward by a sister-city relationship between Greenville and St. Come, Quebec, begun truly by the good-will of engaged school-children and their parents. The tourist trade between the two communities is being developed more each year.

Recognizing the importance and value to both the community and the economy of international tourism, Greenville has been a leader in developing packages of interest to tourists from other nations and cultures for rural Maine. Through a combined effort with the Piscataquis Tourism Task Force and the Maine Office of Tourism, a study is underway to understand what amenities of interest are sought by visitors from Europe and Asia.

Also in the interest of tourism closer to home, the Town of Greenville, in conjunction with the Moosehead Lake Region Chamber of Commerce, has developed an exhibition hall at the Piscataquis Valley Fairgrounds for use by all Greenville businesses. The nominal fee helps to pay for the lease fee for the building and maintenance of

the same. As a result, the southern-half of Piscataquis County becomes that much more familiar with the businesses in Greenville at the County's annual fair.

Businesses from Greenville also have an opportunity to be show-cased on the Town of Greenville's website ([www.GreenvilleME.com](http://www.GreenvilleME.com)). Annually, there is a chance for businesses to purchase their place on the site's "business of the month" in a prominent location on the site. The businesses get even greater coverage, and the Town off-sets the cost of hosting the site. These savings have allowed for the expansion of on-line services to include payment for all recreation and some solid waste fees, building permits, motor vehicle registration, and tax bills over a secure Internet connection. These changes have forestalled the need to expand the amount of clerical staff in the Town Office despite increases in residential population. Moreover, the public comments that these services are appreciated by them and uncommon in other parts of rural Maine.

Broadband Internet service is available for free to visitors who travel to either the Boardwalk area or the Junction Wharf, thanks to WiFi capacity generated by the Town of Greenville allowing for free use of tower space. Additionally, different technology applied to the various telephone "hubs" surrounding Greenville has allied for the proliferation of DSL broadband Internet throughout greater-Greenville. As a result, there has been a noticeable conversion of seasonal residents to year-round residents who can now work from their camps and "tele-commute" to work.

Seasonal bus service is provided by an open-air "trolley" which runs on natural gas and provides low-cost day service from Memorial Day to Columbus Day and again during the Christmas and New Year's holiday season. Funded initially by a U.S. Department of Energy grant to explore ways to encourage growth of environmentally-friendly public transportation in rural areas, the State of Maine eventually provided a transit subsidy to match private-sector contributions to make this bus system work.

Further transportation growth, spurred again by the high cost of fuel, resulted in the re-use of the old McDonald's Restaurant as a bus stop for one of the region's coach and luxury bus lines. This new stop brings passengers twice per day, 4 days per week in the summer months to Greenville from Bangor and points further south. The carrier also runs many special trips for passengers to points of interest from Quebec City to Boston, and the publicly-owned station allows for bus parking at the facility. An improved walking path from the Indian Hill Plaza to downtown now exists, crossing the railroad tracks and connecting via walking paths along Cemetery Lane and into the downtown area.

A group of concerned citizens worked with Town officials to develop a cultural / heritage committee which has in turn developed a meaningful series of outdoor displays and self-guided walking tours around Greenville. The result is over two dozen permanent, outdoor displays with graphic art and history told under glass to visitors, outlining the history of East and West Coves of Moosehead Lake, the former Odd Fellow's Hall, the Ready Worker's Community House, the Greenville Schools, Charles A. Dean Memorial Hospital, the Masonic Lodge, the Junction Wharf, and many more. The committee has developed a number of funding sources and a committed group of volunteers who regularly seek to enhance the ability of the public to learn about what Greenville has been in the past. Walking tours with guides knowledgeable in this history are quite popular in the summer months: many downtown and Junction businesses collaborate with the authority to stay open late in the evening when the tours are planned.

The popularity of racing on ice and on a dirt track has grown to the point that Greenville is a statewide destination for car-racing enthusiasts. The Town and the County collaborate with the Racing associations who provide these venues by promoting the events on websites, adding additional traffic enforcement during big events, and integrating the racing schedule into Greenville's special events schedule. Certain Town and county roads get shut down once per year for the "Junction Grand Prix", allowing racers to not only parade through Town for the start of the race, but also to hold the race on some Town and County roadways. Additionally, non-automobile racers have the opportunity through the efforts of these racing associations to learn how to drive

on the dirt or on the ice (for a fee) and an automotive program at the Greenville Schools was established as a career track for graduating seniors, in part inspired by this racing phenomenon.

Snowmobiling is a large part of the Greenville economy still, and thanks to a Piscataquis-County lead effort, the State of Maine passed a multi-million bond question to pay for the purchase of easements and construction of trails in permanent locations across the State. In the Moosehead Lake Region, this resulted in a much improved trail system which is shared in many sections with ATV clubs in the summer months. As a result, dedicated funds for construction and maintenance are utilized in both the summer and the winter for both sets of trails. Dedication of a portion of Tree Growth Program penalties helps to defray the cost of trail construction and also capital equipment for grooming activities.

Energy costs further resulted in the conversion of most Town facilities to a combination of traditional and alternative energy sources. A small micro-turbine for wind power conversion to electricity sits on the radio towers at the airport, Fire Station and Police Station, collecting sufficient power to run the emergency two-way radio systems for Police, Fire and EMS without needing electricity from the “grid”. Both the Fire Station and the Town Office utilize small wood-pellet and wood chip burners in addition to regular #2 heating oil boilers to heat their facilities. While the wood pellets are bought commercially, the wood chips come from wood ground in a tub-grinder at the new transfer station. Traditionally wood-fired outdoor boilers with new emissions controls which re-burn their vapors before being released to the atmosphere are in place at the Public Works Garage, Transfer Station, and Airport Garage. Wood for these boilers is bought locally and augmented with waste wood recovered from road right-of-way clearing and periodic harvesting of the Town’s woodlot.

The Town’s Transfer Station, which combines both the functions of the Recycling Center and the former Landfill, is heated through a used-motor-oil hot-air furnace and outdoor wood boiler, and is powered by a large, co-located wind turbine with 20’ blades. The electricity from the turbines also powers other public facilities. The return on these investments will allow the Transfer Station to be energy-sustainable in about ten years, meaning it will no longer need fuel or electricity from sources other than waste products it collects and the wind, and that the cost savings finally equal or exceed the cost of installation.

The Transfer Station itself has become a very user friendly facility which is regularly accessed by the public. The recycling portion of the facility has a 24-hour access for the deposit of certain recyclable materials. Wood waste of all types is accepted and ground and either re-used or sold to companies who can re-use the materials. Other materials are collected on-site for a fee. Curbside pickup of recycling is provided by the Town, but not rubbish collection. The transfer station accepts materials 6 days per week (3 full days, 3 partial days). Recyclable materials are collected by the Town through containers placed at parks, parking lots, and even to every fuel station in Town. The Town’s recycling rate has grown from an estimated 18% in 2008 to 48% in 2018. As a result, the expected tripling of solid waste costs through the closure of the landfill were reduced to only a 50% increase. This was also made possible through State bond proceeds to pay for the closure of remaining unlined landfills such as Greenville’s.

Greenville’s airport is about to expand its main runway to accommodate forty-passenger commuter jets and caravans bringing people to the new resorts developed on either side of Moosehead Lake. The resort owners agreed to pay for the Town’s upgrade to the airport. Related improvements to the terminal area and also to East Road leading to the airport were paid for through the proceeds of a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District in the nearby unorganized territory where the resorts are being built. Other pieces of public infrastructure, including permanent motorized and non-motorized trails leading to and through Greenville were also fully funded through this TIF.

Greenville Schools now run as a public-private collaboration. The Town of Greenville owns and ultimately is responsible for the operation of the schools ever since the discontinuation of Union #60. The building and grounds remain the property of the Inhabitants of Greenville, but the entire operation of the school is

accomplished through a new private school. The new Greenville Schools allows for all Greenville students to attend free of charge and to receive a quality K-12 education just as always. Students who reside in any of the other former Union #60 schools are allowed to come as tuition students. The curriculum not only meets at state and federal public school educational requirements, but also has multiple outdoor education and recreational opportunities. The Moosehead Outdoor Leadership School is a “school within a school”, offering every grade level exposure to and experiential learning within the woods and waters of the Moosehead Lake Region. Nationally recognized, the new Greenville Schools and its Moosehead Outdoor Leadership School within it draws boarding students from around the country and internationally. Private funding has paid for the development of a dormitory for visiting students, and a capital campaign is being considered for a new community-owned, school-used indoor athletic facility to replace the well-aged gymnasium.

Legislative changes have occurred or are being considered which would benefit homeowners in Greenville to continue to be able to afford to live here. The passage of a 1-cent local-option sales tax is uniformly available to every municipality by affirmative vote of its Town Meeting or council. The proceeds must be used to off-set the cost of property taxes (just as state revenue sharing does now). Additionally, each municipality has the option to fund locally its own Homestead Exemption, essentially doubling the amount offered by the State by raising the same amount locally. These two changes have significantly lowered the cost of property taxes for homeowners in Greenville.

Successful capital campaigns for expansion and improvement projects at the Shaw Public Library and Charles A. Dean Memorial Hospital have each improved operations at those facilities. The Shaw Public Library is now 100% handicapped accessible and has extremely user-friendly book shelves, bathrooms, and computer work stations. The acquisition of additional property has allowed for the creation of a large reading room and an adjacent work area for visiting agencies who wish to engage the public (e.g., State of Maine Department of Labor’s Career Center and the Eastern Agency of Aging’s field representative). C.A. Dean Hospital now has a state-of-the art radiology department with X-ray, ultrasound, digital mammography and CAT-Scan capacities all under one roof. These improvements also make the facility friendlier to those with mobility issues. Specialists in many disciplines not currently practiced at C.A. Dean, including women’s health services and laparoscopic procedures, are now possible at our rural hospital.

Police, Fire, and EMS services continue to be offered in a joint-fashion by the Town of Greenville and C.A. Dean Hospital with the assistance of several county, state and federal agencies. The collaborative work of these agencies, breaking down jurisdictional barriers, becomes a model for emergency services in rural areas elsewhere in Maine. At any time in Greenville, officers from county, state, or federal jurisdictions can be seen working out of the Town of Greenville Police or Fire Stations, augmenting the manpower and resources available for any call at any time. Funding for emergency services in the area has been augmented through innovative funding sources which include all member municipalities and unorganized territories paying reciprocal shares of the costs for these services based on the relative building value of their jurisdiction. In short, the more developed parcels you have, the more likely you are to require emergency services, and therefore the larger the percentage of the given budget your jurisdiction is responsible for. This system for police, fire, and EMS services ensures that all jurisdictions served pay their fair share despite residential growth.

A final piece of the funding puzzle is solved through the creation of the Moosehead Lake Emergency Services Fund, a trust fund which is held by the Maine Community Foundation to pay for equipment and training for emergency service personnel in the Moosehead Lake Region. Contributions to this fund come from member municipalities, donations from individuals and businesses, and mitigation assessments to developers. This fund enhances the ability of all agencies working in the area to have the proper equipment and training necessary to meet the needs of the public.

These are some thoughts by one resident for what Greenville could look like in the future. If you would like to see some or all of these visions become a reality, or if you would rather they not and you have a different vision,

please get involved in your community! The strength of our community rests in its diversity of ideas. Cooperation and commitment among community members working together will harness that strength to move us to where we want to go. Where do you want to go?

Respectfully Offered;

John Simko  
Town Manager  
May 19, 2008