

Member Communities Make it Happen!

Member municipalities, like yours, are the backbone of KVCOG. Membership dues provide matching funds for over \$200,000 in government grants; make our vital services, such as data collection, analysis, and communication, possible; and allow us the flexibility to create new programs in response to our regions needs. Thank you!

Our Members:

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 Forks | Windsor | Winslow | [Winthrop \(new\)](#)

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Working with communities along the Kennebec River since 1967.

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Photo Credits: Front Cover Top: Mescalonskee Lake; Bottom: Winthrop Logo. Courtesy of Sarah Fuller. Back Cover: Kennebec River. Courtesy of The Forks Chamber of Commerce. Inside Bottom Left: Old Canada Road. Courtesy of The Forks Chamber of Commerce.



Gearing Up!

The KVCOG Newsletter

February 2020



Member Feature, Winthrop

Interview with Sarah Fuller, Chair, Winthrop Town Council
 By Kate Raymond, Membership Coordinator



From the Executive Director

Greetings! I hope this newsletter finds you well and looking forward to Spring. While this time of year is typically less busy for KVCOG, it gives us a chance to come together as an organization and fine-tune our services for our communities. I am constantly reminded how grateful I am for our staff and the dedication they have to our towns and our organization on a daily basis. I'm proud of the work we get to do together.

This year, we have had many opportunities to share in the chances to build our communities. Collaborations with CEI and the Maine Development Foundation (MDF) brought new opportunities, while our relationships with the Central Maine Growth Council, Maine Broadband Coalition, and the Maine Department of Community and Economic Development (DECD) helped us to deliver cost savings, efficiency, and innovation to our member towns. Our traditional services, like comprehensive planning, have been enhanced with tax map digitization and our partnerships with stakeholders in the field of Solar Energy have led us to marking our January 2020 Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) meeting as one of our most sought after events, ever!

This year, we hope you will lean into the opportunities we have for your town. Help us step outside of convention and suggest something new. Is there a project your town has wanted to start? KVCOG may be able to help in a variety of ways. Take a look at our updated list of services on our website (www.kvcoq.org) and give us a call. We're here to help! ✨

Laura

Laura Cyr
 Executive Director

"There are some great things happening for Winthrop right now," said Sarah as we sat down after a long day of activities at KVCOG's headquarters in Fairfield recently. "We have so many projects coming to the fore- front, including downtown beautification efforts, new business attraction efforts, a new town logo and website launch to better communicate and market the community, and in preparation for our 250th anniversary in 2021!"

I was fortunate to have an opportunity to chat with Sarah Fuller, chair of Winthrop Town Council and new KVCOG Board Member, about the changing dynamics of Winthrop and their return to membership with KVCOG. We also talked about our new associations with KVCOG; hers as a new Board Member, and mine as new Membership Coordinator. As we talk it is obvious the dedication Sarah has for her town and the region. From her discussion of Winthrop's downtown development work, to her thoughts on the challenges Winthrop currently faces, it is clear she is proud to call Winthrop home.

"Winthrop is on the other side of some economic struggles and we are investing in downtown beautification efforts, revamping community spaces, and filling the empty storefronts downtown with business and housing," Sarah added, "*The Barn at Silver Oaks*, an event venue, is bringing people from across the country to Winthrop and helping to grow associated and partner businesses. *Van der Brew* (which she helps manage) is also a family-friendly community gathering space, bringing people together downtown. Many who visit for events fall in love with Maine and re-turn year after year." Sarah continued to illustrate how recent business growth, including a new pottery shop, *Almquist Pottery*, *Freckle Salvage*, *Maine Street Mercantile*, *Maine Dental Boutique*, *WaggingTails*, and the *National Filter Belt Media* expansion, along with increased investment by *MaineGeneral* and *Hannaford* have enhanced the town's economy.

"KVCOG has played an important role in our ability to focus on growth this year." Sarah revealed. "KVCOG is an invaluable resource, providing experience on so many levels that the town simply does not have the capacity to do on our own," said Sarah, "from GIS mapping to update our tax and zoning maps, to a new Comprehensive Plan, and navigating the realities of new technologies, such as LED lighting and Solar Energy. KVCOG also advocates for us with the DOT and other state agencies; their ability to collectively leverage the region's needs for cost saving contracts is a no-brainer. Rejoining simply made strategic and economic sense."

I ended by asking if Sarah would like to add any final thoughts. She said, "I hope that if towns aren't taking advantage of all that KVCOG has to offer they take the opportunity to talk with the staff here and maximize the benefits of their membership. Winthrop has, and it's paying off." ✨



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KVCOG
 17 Main Street
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Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

By Cary Tyson, Director of Economic and Community Development

Census Count: The U.S. Constitution empowers Congress to carry out a census "in such manner as they shall by Law direct." That manner began in 1790 and has taken place every 10 years since. The census requires that all residents, including non-citizens and undocumented immigrants, be counted. This is important for many reasons, but of key importance is congressional representation and proper allocation of federal funding for Maine. Historically, Maine's been under-counted, particularly in rural communities. The 2020 census is historic in that it will be the first time that a digital option is the *first* option for response, adding new challenges for counting those who lack digital literacy and/or internet access. Collecting accurate census information is critical to ensure Maine is allocated the proper share of federal funds. As we see our population migrate away from smaller towns and into urban areas, an accurate census count could be 'make-or-break' for critical infrastructure funding. More census information will be shared at our March 10, 2020 CEDS meeting to be held at KVCOG's office in Fairfield. Please join us!

Solar Energy: Did you miss our Solar Energy session in January? You can check out a recording of the full session on our website. In the recording you will hear KVCOG and our partners answer questions on municipal and residential solar, discuss siting issues, and much more. We are currently looking to offer a future Solar session to continue the discussion.

Brownfields: Does your community have an potentially contaminated site that needs before development can happen? We may be KVCOG offers Brownfields Assessment to sites. For more information, visit our website. www.kvcoq.org ⚙️

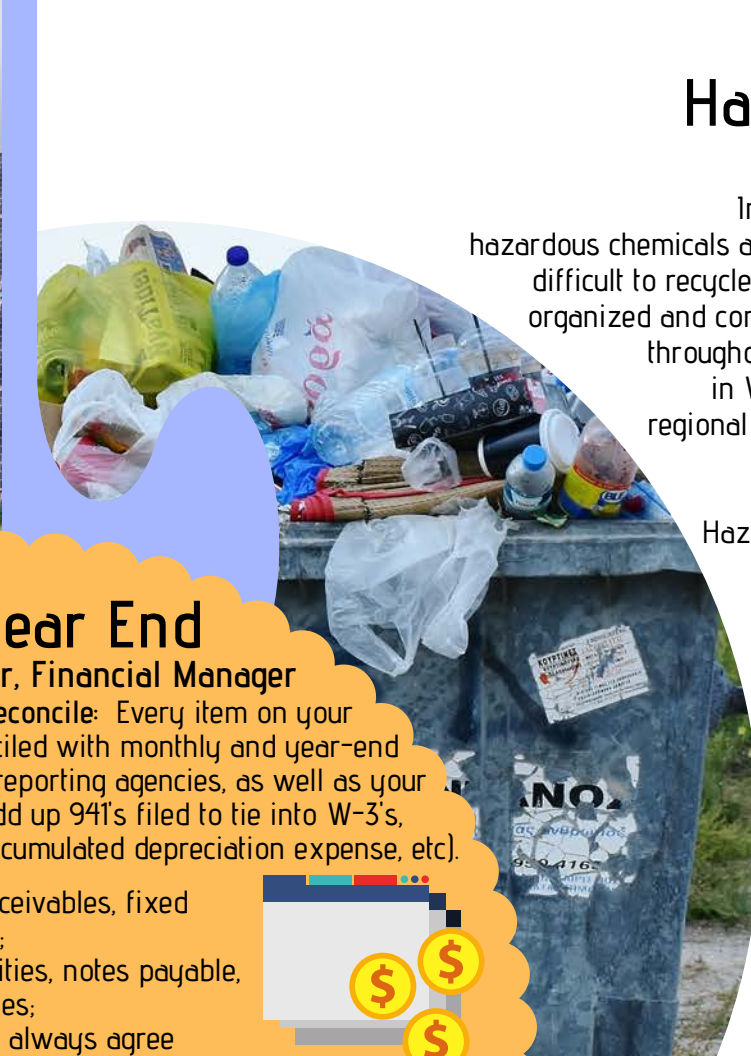
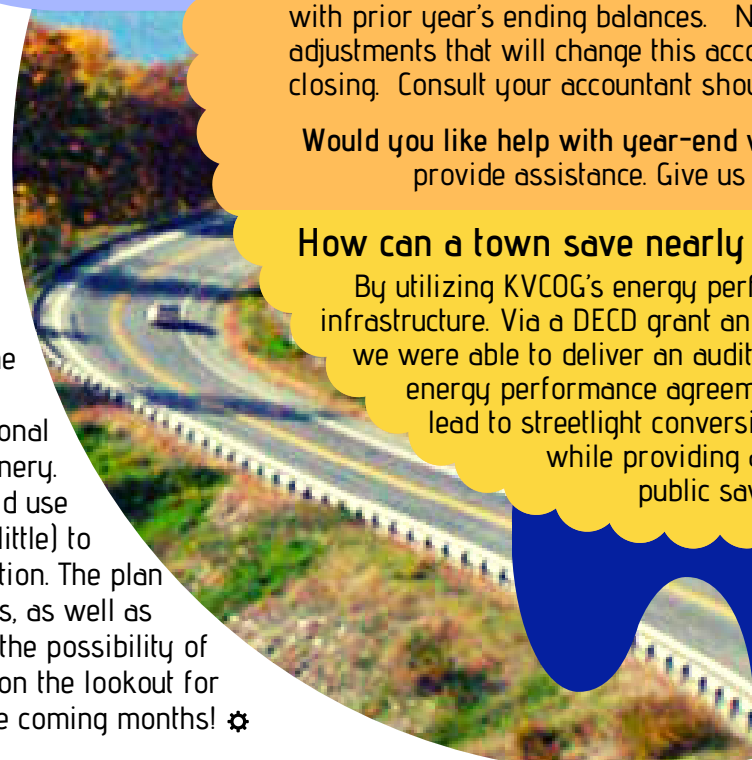
unused or addressing able to help! qualifying

Old Canada Road Project

By Joel Greenwood, Community Planner

KVCOG has recently contracted with the Maine DOT to update the Old Canada Road (OCR) Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan. The original plan is from 1999 and KVCOG will work with the official OCR Scenic Byway organization to consult with all the stakeholders to create a simplified document for guiding the future of Route 201 between Solon and the Canadian Border (78 miles)! The Old Canada Road Scenic Byway is recognized as a destination of intriguing cultural and historical interpretation, invigorating recreational opportunities, and generous hospitality amid spectacular Maine scenery.

The new plan will shift somewhat from its original focus on land use and controlling development along the corridor (as there has been little) to maximizing the tourism and economic opportunities of the designation. The plan will recommend physical improvements and organizational changes, as well as communication strategies for the future. The plan will also address the possibility of trying to expand the byway's designation south to Skowhegan. Be on the lookout for upcoming public meetings and outreach activities for the OCR in the coming months! ⚙️

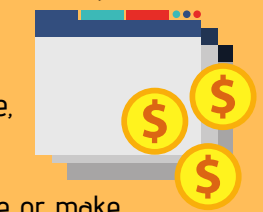


Fiscal Year End

By Lorra-Lee Snyder, Financial Manager

Reconcile, Reconcile and Reconcile: Every item on your balance sheet should be reconciled with monthly and year-end statements from banks, lenders, reporting agencies, as well as your own internal documents (i.e. add up 941's filed to tie into W-3's, depreciation schedule = current & accumulated depreciation expense, etc).

- **Assets:** Cash, receivables, notes receivables, fixed assets, pre-paids and other assets;
- **Liabilities:** Payables, payroll liabilities, notes payable, deferred revenue and other liabilities;
- **Equity:** Beginning balances should always agree with prior year's ending balances. Never void, delete or make adjustments that will change this account after the fiscal year-end closing. Consult your accountant should you need to make any changes.



Would you like help with year-end wrap up? KVCOG may be able to provide assistance. Give us a call - (207) 453-4258!

How can a town save nearly \$1 million over 18 years?

By utilizing KVCOG's energy performance analysis of public infrastructure. Via a DECD grant and a partnership with Siemens, we were able to deliver an audit report that is leading to an energy performance agreement. This is expected to lead to streetlight conversions to LED and more while providing a significant public savings. ⚙️



Hazardous Waste Collection Days

By Gabe Gauvin, Environmental Planner

In 2019 KVCOG was able to continue our ongoing efforts to remove hazardous chemicals and materials, electronic wastes, oils, gas and generally harmful or difficult to recycle items from the homes of residents in our region. We successfully organized and completed four hazardous waste and electronics collection programs throughout the KVCOG region. These widespread collection days took place in Winslow, Pittsfield, Skowhegan and Jackman. These collections are regional efforts and, although we had only four collection events, we were able to reach 24 separate communities with this service last year.

Looking towards 2020, KVCOG will be expanding our Household Hazardous Waste Collection program to help reach more communities in our region, all the way from Litchfield to Jackman! With the incorporation of one or two additional collection events we are confident we can continue to support a safer and healthier environment for the people who live, work, and play here.

In the New Year KVCOG will be announcing a Textile Recycling Program. In partnership with *Apparel Impact* we will be strategically placing collection bins throughout Kennebec and southern Somerset counties. We are proud to be working with an organization that employs veterans throughout New England and ensures that all materials recovered from the drop-off sites are donated to those in need and/or recycled.

In 2020 KVCOG will also be investigating whether drop-off sites for pharmaceuticals as well as plastic four-pack beer holders would match the recycling needs of members of our region. ⚙️

Staff Spotlights

In my first few KVCOG I already

welcomed into the region with open arms. Originally being from the Bangor area I didn't spend a lot of time in the Kennebec Valley, but having in-laws in the area and taking part in the great outdoor opportunities we have here, like white water rafting, skiing and fishing, have drawn me to the area in new ways. As the Environmental Planner at KVCOG getting more familiar with the amazing resources available here and the warm people who live here

months with feel I have been

motivates me to make sure we do everything we can to keep our communities and environment safe and healthy for everyone. I'm looking forward to developing a more robust set of programs for our residents. If there is anything about waste diversion or recycling that you have questions on or feel passionate about, please shoot me an email or give me a call, I'd love to chat with you. ~ Gabe Gauvin, Environmental Planner ⚙️



KVCOG Staff:

Cary Tyson, Director of Community & Economic Development
Gabriel Gauvin, Environmental Planner
Kate Raymond, Membership Coordinator

Laura M. Cyr, Executive Director
Joel Greenwood, Community Planner
Nick Aschauer, Community Planner
Lorra-Lee Snyder, Financial Manager

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Director Ben Twitchell, Winslow
Director Dana Wrigley, Oakland

As my first month with KVCOG comes to a close, I am excited to have this opportunity to introduce myself to the KVCOG community! Coming from the Kennebec Valley originally, it has been a dream to return and take on this new role with KVCOG. One of the aspects of this region that I have missed the most is the true community we have here. With KVCOG, I am looking forward to supporting each and every community in our region through the many diverse programs KVCOG has to offer. In the past few weeks, I have had the opportunity to visit a few of the towns within our region, with many more to come. It has been, and will continue to be, an absolute pleasure to visit with each of you, learn the successes and struggles each town faces, and help you find solutions with the support of KVCOG. Give me a call, I'd love to visit your town! ~ Kate Raymond, Membership Coordinator ⚙️