

## Profile

**Applicant:** Regional Application  
**Grant Manager:** Bob Hastings  
**Name of Organization:** Midcoast Maine Chamber Council  
**Mailing Address:** Cerina Leeman - Grant Manager  
PO Box 13  
Damariscotta, Maine 04543  
**Physical Address:** 15 Courtyard Street, Suite 2  
Damariscotta, Maine 04543  
**Office Hours:** Monday - Friday 9:00-5:00pm  
**Telephone Number:** 207.563.8340  
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**Date of Incorporation:** September 7th, 1988  
**EIN:** 22-2982547

## **What were the top three highlights from the previous fiscal year?**

1) **BRANDING:** We partnered with Briggs Advertising in a brand discovery process and the creation of a dynamic new visual ID that will more effectively represent and market our region.

2) **WEBSITE INTERNET:** A redesign of our website, [www.MainesMidcoast.com](http://www.MainesMidcoast.com), features our new brand identity, is organized by regional activities and attractions rather than individual chambers, and includes a comprehensive, integrated database that will raise our visibility on search engines.

3) **PUBLIC RELATIONS:** We worked with SK Public Relations to develop story ideas that would increase awareness of our region on a national level. Media placements include:

Traditional Home (Circulation 852,121)  
Multi-page feature in May, /June 2007 issue on Midcoast Maine  
\*Story written, photographed, and approved by editor.

Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel On-line ([www.budgetonline.com](http://www.budgetonline.com)) – ran items in their fall foliage coverage September 7th – 13th on Maine Eastern Railroad, Trade Winds Motor Inn, Fall Foliage Festival and Craft Fair in Boothbay, Boothbay Railway Village, the Camden Windward House, and Sewall Organic Orchard as a result of my pitches "Leaf Peeping in Coastal Maine" and "Riding the Rails"

Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel On-line ([www.budgetonline.com](http://www.budgetonline.com)) – led their Thanksgiving package coverage on Monday, November 13th with an item on The Welch House Inn in Boothbay Harbor, 93 Townsend and Ports of Italy as a result of my pitch "Winter Carnivals" which included coverage of Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens winter activities including a tour of The Welch House Inn.

Travel & Leisure (Circulation 962,770)  
Multi-page feature in August 2006 issue on Midcoast Maine

Bark Magazine (Circulation 75,000)  
Item with photo in July/August 2006 issue on Maine, Boats, Homes & Harbors Show

Daily Candy ([www.dailycandy.com](http://www.dailycandy.com))  
Feature on July 26th on Hancock Gourmet Lobster

Town & Country Travel (Circulation 431,122)  
Multi-page feature in Summer 2006 issue on Midcoast Maine

**Please state your three primary goals for the next year and how you expect them to increase tourism revenue for the region with cooperative funds.**

- 1) Strengthening our presence on the internet will attract a greater number of potential visitors in the critical planning stages, and increase the likelihood that they will opt to spend their vacation time in Maine and visit our region.
- 2) Continuing to promote our region as a year-round destination through on-going press releases to targeted national media will help build tourism in the shoulder and winter seasons, as well as draw visitors from a broader geographic area.
- 3) Encouraging vacationers to visit our entire region through marketing materials that are activity focused will encourage longer stays and a more diverse and satisfying experience.

## **Please describe the overall strategy you will implement to achieve these goals.**

- 1) Implementation of an automated update feature for our website database will ensure this critical resource remains current and preserve our visibility on internet search engines.
- 2) We will continued in our relationship with SK Public Relations and partner with them to provide information for storyline development throughout the year.
- 3) Visitors to our website will have access to a wealth of information on the attractions and amenities our region can offer. For those who are still uncertain of their travel plans and request more information, we propose to create a video tour of our region that focuses on the scenic beauty, historic downtowns, outdoor and water activities, and festivals that are the primary attractions of our region.

## **How do these goals and strategies fit with the Office of Tourism's?**

It facilitates and promotes Maine Tourism through increased visibility and improved communication, encouraging more and longer visits that encompass the entire region. It creates synergy and efficiency by active participation and teamwork throughout the region and state.

It provides us ability to optimize our efforts allowing us to reach a wider national audience that would be prohibitive using our limited advertising dollars, while reinforcing the Maine message as a premium tourism destination. It also stimulates and expands the Maine travel industry by reaching a well targeted, audience.

## **Please describe how the financial resources will be monitored by your organization.**

The Treasurer maintains records of all income and expenditures. The accounts are reconciled and a detailed financial statement is prepared for board review and approval on a monthly basis.

At the close of each fiscal year, the accounts will be reviewed and all appropriate filings prepared by a certified public accountant.

## **Primary Analysis**

### **Research**

#### **Is your region or event conducting any research initiatives this year?**

Yes

#### **If you have Research Initiatives, please state the purpose and give a brief description of each.**

For the 2008 Grant year, we have partnered with the remaining tourism regions in contracting with CenTRO to create and maintain research statistics, Return on Investment methods and data collection methods.

**Public Relations**

**Who is the person/company that is responsible for your PR program?**

**Company:** SK Public Relations, LLC

**Address:** Sharon Kitchens  
4 Loveitt Street  
South Portland, ME 04106

**Phone:** 207.799.0281

**Email Address:** skpr@skpublicrelations.com

**Would you be interested in participating in a two-hour public relations workshop?**

Yes

**Would you like to be contacted regarding PR efforts?**

No

**Please provide a list of editorial contacts:**

Please call Sharon Kitchens 207.799.0281 for this information.

**Please provide a list of publications and/or broadcast outlets you would most like to target:**

The Atlanta Journal Constitution  
The Boston Globe  
The Charlotte Observer  
The Cincinnati Enquirer  
The Hartford Courant  
The New Haven Register  
The New York Times  
The Philadelphia Inquirer  
The Plain Dealer (Cleveland, OH)  
The Union Leader (Manchester, NH)  
Times Union (Albany, NY)  
The Washington Post  
Better Homes & Gardens  
Bon Appetit  
Budget Living  
Diversions  
Conde Nast Traveler  
Country Living  
Lucky Magazine  
Meeting News  
National Geographic Traveler  
Reunions Magazine  
Yankee Magazine  
The Fine Living Network - "The Great Adventure"  
The Food Network - various shows  
The Today Show

## Co-Op Efforts

### In what type(s) of co-op effort, if any, is your group participating?

External, e.g. Partnerships with other groups., State-wide, e.g. Coordinated intra-state vacation effort in partnership with the MOT, participate in MOT/PSA

### Please describe in further detail your co-op efforts:

External Partnerships: We financially support the efforts of CruiseMaine.

Statewide Partnerships: In agreement with the remaining Tourism regions, we are contributing grant funds towards a Co-Op Public Service Announcement program, the re-development of the mtmpp.com website in order to facilitate the grant reporting procedures, and we have also committed to contribute grant funds to CenTRO in order to create standards of practice for all regions to collect and measure data and return on investment.

## Website Development & Maintenance

### If you currently have a website, please provide us with your URL:

URL: [www.mainesmidcoast.com](http://www.mainesmidcoast.com)

### Please provide a brief description of the overall goal of your site and the functionality that the site offers to its visitors:

The website acts as the Midcoast regions vacation planning resource, a portal to individual chamber sites, visitor information collection, branding vehicle and contact resource. It also facilitates orientation and way finding, fulfillment of maps and guides, event planner, link to state partners (MOT, CruiseMaine, MaineDOT, Explore Maine, 511...etc) and individual chamber businesses, promotions and packages, PR and information gathering resource for travel agents and media. It includes a comprehensive, integrated database of all chamber members.

### Please provide a brief description of the intended strategy for improvement over the next one to two years:

In 2007, our website [www.MainesMidcoast.com](http://www.MainesMidcoast.com) was redesigned to include a database that integrated all listings from our individual chambers. The comprehensive nature of this database is such that it will enhance the position of our website on search engines. It is essential that this database remain current to be successful. We plan to invest in an automated update feature that will result in on-going updates to our database.

In addition we will pursue consultation regarding on-line and offline-advertising techniques for web site promotion.

## Visitor Database

### Do you collect and compile information on your visitors (names, addresses, areas of interest, etc.)?

Yes

### If so, please describe how the database is currently structured and how it is used for marketing and communication initiatives:

At this time, our data is collected by a contracted call center. Our recent redesign was prompted by a fall-off in response to our website. Through our web redesign, we anticipate a dramatic increase in traffic and will collect contact information for direct response and targeted marketing efforts once a valuable sample has been established.

**Budget Summary**

**Current Projects**

**Project 1: PSA Project**

**Description:** Regional Representatives chose to support Public Service Announcements to inform Maine residents about the role tourism plays in the Maine economy and to promote vacationing in Maine.

**MTMPP Award:** \$10,000.00

**Project 2: Web Application Streamlining**

**Description:** Regional Representatives chose to support the streamlining of the MTMPP Grant online application and to simplify the grant reporting process.

**MTMPP Award:** \$2,050.00

**Project 3: CENTRO Tracking / Measurement**

**Description:** Regional Representatives chose to support the development of measurement systems by the University of Maine's CentRO and to provide a clearing house for regions data collection.

**MTMPP Award:** \$4,875.00

**Project 4: Administrative Costs**

**Description:** The Administrative fee is 20% of the regional grant allocation and does not require a match.

**MTMPP Award:** \$17,400.00

**Project 5: Visitor Center Kiosks**

**Project Type:** Advertising

**Description:** Free Standing Kiosks at the Kittery and Yarmouth Visitors Information Centers with POP racks for maps.

**Element 1: Free-Standing Kiosks**

**Project:** Visitor Center Kiosks

**Element Description:** Yearly Space Rental Fee

**Timeline:** Yearly Renewal Agreement

**Tracking:** The number of maps and guides distributed from each center.

**Target Market:** Maine visitors stopping at the Maine Tourism Visitor's Centers in Kittery and Yarmouth.

**Rationale:** Over 850,000 visitors pass through the Kittery and Yarmouth Visitor's Centers annually. While the internet has become the primary planning venue for travelers, evidence from both the state's own data and interviews conducted with Visitor Center staff tell us that a very large number of people still come to Maine with no particular destination in mind. Our kiosks in these centers provide us with a graphic vehicle and point of fulfillment opportunities to help make a strong case for a MidCoast vacation. For those who have already planned their trip, it offers information for possible future vacations in our region, encouraging more visits to our state.

**Media Type:** POP Free-Standing Display Kiosks

**Co-op Opportunity:** None

**Budget Description:** *(No Response)*

**MTMPP Award:** \$1,800.00

**Cash Match:** \$0.00

**In-Kind Match:** \$0.00

## Element 2: Redesign of Kiosks

**Project:** Visitor Center Kiosks

**Element Description:** Update all kiosks with new brand images & logo. The redesign of the kiosks will encourage those who have already chosen to visit Maine to explore the midcoast region, and will reinforce our brand and drive viewers to our website.

**Timeline:** July 2007

**Tracking:** The amount of brochures taken from the rack.

**Target Market:** Visitors to Maine as they approach our region.

**Rationale:** It creates a presence for the Midcoast at high traffic State Visitor Centers that feed into the Midcoast Maine corridor. It offers us a marketing opportunity to reach visitors to Maine who may not have made firm plans or who may visit our region at a later date.

**Media Type:** *(No Response)*

**Co-op Opportunity:** *(No Response)*

**Budget Description:** *(No Response)*

**MTMPP Award:** \$1,300.00

**Cash Match:** \$0.00

**In-Kind Match:** \$0.00

## Project 6: Website

**Project Type:** Website Development

**Description:** Enhance the region's website and increase traffic

## Element 3: Website Database Optimization

**Project:** Website

**Element Description:** In 2007, our website [www.MainesMidcoast.com](http://www.MainesMidcoast.com) was redesigned to include a database that integrated all listings from our individual chambers. The comprehensive nature of this database is such that it will enhance the position of our website on search engines. It is essential that this database remain current to be successful. We plan to invest in an automated update feature that will result in on-going updates to our database.

**Timeline:** We expect all new functions to be operational by July 2007.

**Tracking:** We will use overall traffic count of unique visits, length of visit, document the trackable responses to our e-mail campaigns, we will track individual pages to measure the effectiveness of our new sections for

Travel Agents and Media. Our rankings on all major search engines will track the effectiveness of our site optimization efforts.

**Target Market:** The target audience is both domestic and international, primarily addressing the demographic and regional markets that the state has identified as most valuable .

**Rationale:** The web is the major vacation planning resource and deserves a large commitment as our most cost effective and wide reaching marketing vehicle. It allows us to brand and reach beyond our traditional regional base and sell to a national and international audience. It is trackable, updateable, reliable, and a powerful tourism marketing resource. It provides us the ability to gather information, and customer profiles for more targeted, effective marketing

**Budget Description:** Automated update feature for comprehensive database.

**MTMPP Award:** \$10,000.00

**Cash Match:** \$0.00

**In-Kind Match:** \$5,000.00

## Project 7: Maine Invites You

**Project Type:** Advertising

**Description:** Magazine Advertisement

### Element 4: Full Page Color Ad

**Project:** Maine Invites You

**Element Description:** Create a strong, branded positioning statement of the Mid-Coast region within the publication's pages to a targeted audience. We will cross-promote our web site, [www.mainesmidcoast.com](http://www.mainesmidcoast.com), and DVD fulfillment piece.

**Timeline:** September 2007

**Tracking:** We will measure success chiefly by the number e-mails generated through the advertisement, inquiries over the phone to our new 800# as to where and what promoted potential visitors to call, and a broader inference of effectiveness through spikes in web hits during the period.

**Target Market:** Potential visitors who have specifically requested information from the MOT.

**Rationale:** As the primary print fulfillment piece distributed by the Office of Tourism, Maine Invites You is far and away the leading method for reaching a very qualified audience interested in visiting our state. This allows MC3 to make a sufficiently strong, branded positioning statement within the publication's pages. This proposal recommends that the MCCC place a 1- page, 4-color spread within Maine Invites You, highlighting the best that the region has to offer. The advertisement will promote our new 800#, cross-promote our website ([www.mainesmidcoast.com](http://www.mainesmidcoast.com)) and DVD fulfillment piece.

**Media Type:** Magazine

**Co-op Opportunity:** None planned.

**Budget Description:** (No Response)

**MTMPP Award:** \$5,500.00

**Cash Match:** \$0.00

**In-Kind Match:** \$700.00

## Project 8: CruiseMaine

**Project Type:** Travel Trade & Consumer Shows

**Description:** Financial support for CruiseMaine to attend the annual SeaTrade Convention

## Element 5: Financial Support

**Project:** CruiseMaine

**Element Description:** To help further the development of Maine as a major cruise destination for both large and small ships.

**Timeline:** SeaTrade Convention in March, 2008

**Tracking:** We will measure success by the number of cruises, a broad inference of effectiveness through spikes in unique visits at CruiseMaine's website [www.cruisemaineuse.com](http://www.cruisemaineuse.com) over the year, as well as an educated estimate to the amount of new dollars brought to the region through these efforts.

**Target Market:** National and international cruise lines

**Rationale:** With a majority of our members being served by the efforts of the Cruise Maine Coalition, it is our intention to provide a portion of our regional grant to help further the shared cause of this multi-regional entity. The cruise industry is a growing source of valuable tourism dollars that we feel benefits our region and the state of Maine as a whole. Given the growing connection between tourism and security, our region, and the State as a whole stands to benefit greatly from its position as a safe, secure destination. By its nature, the cruise industry provides a great source of revenue to the region and state, with minimal amount of long term impact, or stress upon resources. The money will go towards funding of CruiseMaine marketing materials, website updates and maintenance, direct mail, e-mail campaigns, and trade show costs for the annual Seatrade convention in Miami. The success of the Cruise Maine coalition is dependent on the time, energy and money from each member and we are committed to our support.

**Partners:** Other coastal tourism regions, MaineDot and MOT

**Budget Description:** *(No Response)*

**MTMPP Award:** \$4,000.00

**Cash Match:** \$0.00

**In-Kind Match:** \$0.00

## Project 9: Public Relations Program

**Project Type:** Public Relations

**Description:** 2007-2008 Public Relations

### Element 6: Public Relations

**Project:** Public Relations Program

**Element Description:** To reinforce the awareness and branding of Maine's Midcoast as a wonderful vacation destination, which will create a powerful residual effect when systematically implemented over time. It allows us to potentially reach a wider national audience that would be prohibitive using our limited advertising dollars.

**Timeline:** Ongoing throughout the year

**Tracking:** We measure success by the quality and quantity of articles secured from year to year. We will also be tracking "Where did you hear about us" with our online survey and 800# call-ins.

**Target Market:** Local, regional, national and international media outlets in print, broadcast, trade show and media events.

**Rationale:** Rationale: We realize that creating a public relations strategy is one that requires realistic expectations and long term commitment. But we feel that we have laid an important foundation with our on-going efforts and created good momentum with a program that is a valuable vehicle to augment our other marketing initiatives. Independent articles and editorial have a much longer lasting effect than a few expensive ads, and we are committed to a long term strategy as well as more immediate lead generating short term marketing vehicles. It reinforces the awareness of Maine as a vacation destination, with great residual effect when systematically implemented over time. Allows us to potentially reach a wider national audience that would be prohibitive using our limited advertising dollars.

**Budget Description:** *(No Response)*

**MTMPP Award:** \$21,000.00  
**Cash Match:** \$5,100.00  
**In-Kind Match:** \$5,000.00

## Project 10: Travel Trade & Consumer Shows

**Project Type:** Travel Trade & Consumer Shows  
**Description:** Trade show fees, travel and attendance costs

### Element 7: Trade show travel and fees

**Project:** Travel Trade & Consumer Shows

**Element Description:** Trade shows facilitate and promote MidCoast Maine Tourism through increased visibility and improved communication and qualified one on one contact. They stimulate and expand the Maine's MidCoast travel industry by reaching a well targeted, audience. Increased popularity and public awareness increases understanding of Maine's MidCoast as one of New England's premier tourism destinations.

**Timeline:** Dates TBD. Anticipated shows include the AAA Travel Marketplace Show, Discover New England and Taste of Maine Media Marketplace.

**Tracking:** We will be able to track new PR opportunities gained and leads from the shows as we have done in the past with great success.

**Target Market:** AAA Travel Marketplace – AAA's largest travel show, focusing on the Boston, North of Boston and Providence drive markets.

Discover New England – New England's foremost travel show with a focus on international tour operators and travel writers.

Taste of Maine Media Marketplace-New York based media trade show offers contacts with well-known publications and media outlets to further develop our PR opportunities.

**Rationale:** A strategic component of our tourism marketing efforts has been in trade shows. Realizing that trade shows need to be extremely targeted and well researched to be a viable return on investment, we are proposing to attend three shows in the 2008 grant year. Trade shows facilitate and promote Maine Tourism through increased visibility and improved communication. They stimulate and expand the Maine's MidCoast travel industry by reaching a well targeted audience. Increased popularity and public exposure increases the awareness of Maine's Mid-Coast as one of New England's premier tourism destinations, and provides targeted, cost efficient tourism promotion.

**Partners:** None

**Budget Description:** *(No Response)*

**MTMPP Award:** \$2,500.00  
**Cash Match:** \$0.00  
**In-Kind Match:** \$3,300.00

### Element 8: Free Standing Banners

**Project:** Travel Trade & Consumer Shows

**Element Description:** The MC3 group lacks a compelling visual component in their trade show booth materials. We propose to purchase two stand up banners integrating our brand identity and visually mirroring our website and other collateral marketing materials.

**Timeline:** January 2008

**Tracking:** Volume of web traffic during and immediately following trade shows. Request for DVD fulfillment piece.

**Target Market:** Potential vacationers to Maine, media outlets

**Rationale:** Enhance and promote our image and the beauty of the region through visual stimulation. Increase visibility at the shows and draw attendees to our booth.

**Partners:** *(No Response)*

**Budget Description:** *(No Response)*

**MTMPP Award:** \$600.00

**Cash Match:** \$0.00

**In-Kind Match:** \$0.00

## Project 11: DVD

**Project Type:** Fulfillment

**Description:** We propose to create a video tour of our region that focuses on the scenic beauty, historic downtowns, outdoor and water activities, and festivals that are the primary attractions of our region.

### Element 9: DVD Production

**Project:** DVD

**Element Description:** Visitors to our website will have access to a wealth of information on the attractions and amenities our region can offer. For those who are still uncertain of their travel plans and request more information, a DVD is an effective fulfillment piece that can convey a small sampling of the wonderful experience we provide to visitors.

**Timeline:** August 2007

**Tracking:** Based on requests from website.

**Target Market:** Potential visitors interested in the virtual exploration of what our region offers.

**Rationale:** A video DVD is a powerful marketing tool that goes beyond simple information to appeal to the emotions, and is portable, user friendly, easily reproduced. Posted online it can provide immediate gratification and a virtual experience for potential visitors.

**Partners:** *(No Response)*

**Budget Description:** *(No Response)*

**MTMPP Award:** \$6,000.00

**Cash Match:** \$3,800.00

**In-Kind Match:** \$4,000.00

**Project Quick Reference**

	<u>MTMPP Award</u>	<u>Cash Match</u>	<u>In-Kind Match</u>
<b>PSA Project</b>			
PSA Project	\$10,000.00		
<b>Web Application Streamlining</b>			
Web Application Streamlining	\$2,050.00		
<b>CENTRO Tracking / Measurement</b>			
CENTRO Tracking / Measurement	\$4,875.00		
<b>Administrative Costs</b>			
Administrative Costs	\$17,400.00		
<b>Visitor Center Kiosks</b>			
Free-Standing Kiosks	\$1,800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Redesign of Kiosks	\$1,300.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Website</b>			
Website Database Optimization	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
<b>Maine Invites You</b>			
Full Page Color Ad	\$5,500.00	\$0.00	\$700.00
<b>CruiseMaine</b>			
Financial Support	\$4,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Public Relations Program</b>			
Public Relations	\$21,000.00	\$5,100.00	\$5,000.00
<b>Travel Trade &amp; Consumer Shows</b>			
Trade show travel and fees	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	\$3,300.00
Free Standing Banners	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>DVD</b>			
DVD Production	\$6,000.00	\$3,800.00	\$4,000.00

**Budget Summary**

<b>Proposed MTMPP Award:</b>	\$69,625.00
<b>Administrative Costs:</b>	\$17,400.00
<b>Cash Match:</b>	\$8,900.00
<b>In-Kind Match:</b>	\$18,000.00
<b>Total Match:</b>	\$26,900.00
<b>Total Proposed Budget:</b>	\$96,525.00