The Surry Scoop

Brought to you by The Surry Town Office. 741 North Bend Road, Surry Maine 04684

FALL EDITION

The Town Office will close at 3pm on Thursday, October 31st for our annual Trunk or Treat Community Event.



The Town Office will be closed on November 5, 2024 for the Election.



Department of Environmental Protection and Maine Geological Survey Site Visit 8/20 at Carrying Place Beach

Absentee Ballots should be available by October 4, 2024. Absentee ballots can be requested in person, by the voter themselves calling the town office or online through the State of Maine absentee ballot request portal. The deadline to request an absentee ballot without special circumstances is October 31, 2024. The deadline to change your enrollment is October 21, 2024.

2025 Dog licenses will be available on October 15, 2024. Please remember to register your dog before January 31st to avoid the $25 late fee. All dogs 6 months or older need to be registered. To register your dog, you will need to provide proof of rabies vaccination and proof of spay/neuter if the dog is fixed.

TextMyGov: Receive town text message notifications! Visit our website townofsurrymaine.com to sign up or Text "SURRY" to 91896. (After the initial keyword of SURRY is sent, you will receive a confirmation message asking you to reply YES to opt-in. Please remember to reply YES or you will not be subscribed.)

W A N T E D: Are you…creative or like working with creative thinkers and doers? Willing to roll up your sleeves and work as part of a project team to get results? Interested in helping Surry grow while retaining the special qualities that make it great? If so, please consider volunteering a few hours a month to join or lead a project team or to serve on our Committee. **The Economic and Community Development** team is working to expand Surry's tax base and help implement selective future development for the Town. If you might be interested, send an email with your contact info to clerk@townofsurrymaine.com with the subject line: SURRY TOMORROW. We'll get in touch to discuss the possibilities and answer your questions.

The Shoreline Stabilization Workshop sponsored by the Surry Conservation Commission on August 7 at the Old Surry Village School drew close to 80 attendees from Surry and other coastal towns. Links to the very informative presentation and the subsequent Q&A have been posted on the Town website under Latest News. If you have additional questions, contact info for the three speakers is here:
Nicholas Whiteman, Marine Geologist Maine Geological Survey Nicholas.R.Whiteman@maine.gov (207) 816-2931
Andrew McCullough, Civil Engineer 93 Bucksport Road, Ellsworth 04605 mccengr@gmail.com (207) 667-6551
John Maclaine-Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) john.maclaine@maine.gov (207) 615-3279

The DownEast Wood Bank is an all-volunteer group that seeks to provide firewood for families in Surry who are currently experiencing some type of heating crisis. It is not the intent of the Wood-Bank to provide firewood for the entire season unless the family continues to be in crisis. Families can make appointments to pick up wood at our Wood Yard which is located on Blue Hill Heritage Trust property in Surry. Up to 1/2 cord can be picked up. Financial donations are always appreciated and volunteers are welcome. Contact DownEast Wood Bank at: downeastwoodbank@yahoo.com
207-812-4472 or on Facebook- DownEast Wood Bank.

From the Conservation Commission

We had an overflow audience at the recent Shoreline Stabilization Presentation. If you were unable to attend, the video filmed by John Curtis is posted on the Town website under latest news.

We also have a series of links related to our Open Space and Tree Growth presentation by Mike Jensen. This is an opportunity to conserve some of those special views from your land or preserve some undeveloped areas to allow our native wildlife to remain undisturbed. Links can be found on the Town website.

We are looking for additional Surry citizens to join the Conservation Commission.

Dark Skies over Surry

Do you enjoy viewing the Milky Way from your home? 80% of the world's population cannot see the Milky Way. Here are some ways to "Save Surry's Starry Skies": Put a fixture over outdoor lights, with the bulb above the plane of the fixture and use an LED bulb that is soft white (not daylight) 2700 k (Kelvins). Another is to support an amended Surry lighting ordinance which is currently being reviewed by the Surry Planning Board.

Did you know that you may be unintentionally encouraging the Brown Tailed Moth to visit your property and lay masses of the itchy caterpillar producing eggs in your trees by having too many outdoor lights on at night? To get some additional information about this, use your browser to search for: "Outdoor lights and the Brown Tailed Moth".

Pollinators, turtles, frogs and fireflies are happier with dark skies as well. Check to make sure your lights are not a 'nuisance' to your neighbors and not going upwards lighting up the night sky. Maine has the largest area of dark skies east of the Mississippi River.

Please check the calendar for the Blue Hill Peninsula Night Sky Festival October 3-5, which will include a wonderful Surry event: Linda Greenlaw and Astronomer Charlie Sawyer of Downeast Astronomers will have a dark sky tour over the water. For more information: darkskymaine.com

Surry Short-Term Rental Working Group (STRWG)

Does the Town of Surry need an ordinance to address the permitting and use of short-term housing rentals? Is the conversion of existing housing units to short-term rentals affecting the ability of the town to retain its rural and non-commercial character? Should the town oversee and regulate short-term rentals? These are some of the questions the STRWG is trying to answer as it works to create an ordinance (for consideration by voters) that reflects the needs and flavor of the Town of Surry.

The Surry Comprehensive Plan (SCP) was developed to express the vision of residents over the next decade and to propose strategies to achieve that vision. Affordable housing is a pressing and, in some cases, controversial issue in Surry and throughout Maine. At listening and visioning sessions and in responses to surveys available on the town website and delivered to all mailboxes during development of the SCP, some residents expressed concern about Surry's ability to retain its small-town rural character, and that the short-term, seasonal rental trend may affect the community and they want Surry to manage the growth of these rentals. (If you want to know more, the complete SCP is available on the town website.)

This is why the town established a Short-Term Rental Working Group (STRWG). The group – Phil Roberts (Chair), Maureen Giffin, Chris Uphouse, and Tom Welgoss, Select Board representative – has met weekly since early July. The objective of this group is to craft an ordinance to address the permitting and operation of short-term rentals in the Town of Surry. The meetings are open to the public (in person or via Zoom); see the town website calendar for meeting times. STRWG has gathered input from other coastal towns and continues to receive input from Surry residents. Questions and comments may be submitted to STRworkgroup@gmail.com. A tentative timeline is to present a draft ordinance to the Selectmen by early October. When the Select Board has approved the document, there will be listening sessions for residents to voice their comments and suggest changes to the ordinance, before a town referendum vote in April 2025.

Food and Other Resources: For Surry residents in need of food and or other support include Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry, Ellsworth; Tree of Life Food Pantry, Blue Hill; Families First Community Center in Ellsworth, Senior Food Program through Eastern Area Aging on Aging, community meals in the area, the Surry Backpack Program, and the Magic School Bus (summer) in Surry. For a list of all known food resources in the area, contact the Town Office for a list.

General Assistance

Everyone deserves to have their basic needs met, including food, shelter, rent, electricity, heating fuel, medical costs, utilities, burial costs, and other critical things. If you are in urgent need of help, please don't hesitate to reach out. The Town General Assistance Administrator, Chris Stark, and our Office Staff will keep requests completely confidential. If you have an emergency such as the threat of eviction, having your electricity cut off, or need immediate heating assistance, General Assistance or other town support may be available to you. General Assistance requires that people seek other types of assistance first through either the **Department of Health and Human Services in Ellsworth (855-797-4357) or Downeast Community Partners (207-664-2424).**

The General Assistance application is available at the Town Office and on the Town website. You will need to set up a meeting with the GA Administrator. In an emergency you can apply by phone. You can call the Town office or 211 to reach General Assistance (GA) for Surry. In the GA application you will be asked to list your income and expenses over the past month. Please be sure to apply for everything you need and complete the application to the best of your ability. Bring the application to the GA Administrator, who will review it with you to be sure that it is complete. You should bring whatever is necessary to prove you are eligible such as a bank statement of your last 30 days with current balance and your most recent bills and receipts for your rent or mortgage, heating fuel, electricity, food, medical expenses.

Surry Children's Backpack Food Program Sign-Up

This innovative Surry program is entering its eighth year. The goal is to provide a helping hand to families of Surry Elementary School students and their younger siblings, by providing food during non-school periods such as weekends and school vacations. The program is funded 100% by the generosity of private individuals and local businesses. All students, who qualify for free or reduced price lunch under Federal guidelines, are eligible.

Forms to sign up for participation in the backpack program will be sent home on the first day of school (August 28). If you are eligible, please return the signed form to the school promptly. Once the form has been received, the bags of food will be sent home with the child every Friday. If you have any questions about the program, please feel free to call the school at 207-667-9358, or the town office at
207-667-5941.

Update on Surry's 2024 Comprehensive Plan

Status: After more than two years of doing research, listening to residents, drafting chapters, writing recommendations, and presenting drafts of a new Comprehensive Plan to residents, Surry has received approval from the State. All sections of the Plan have been found to be consistent with the Growth Management Act. A few minor edits to the Future Land Use Chapter were requested for the sake of consistency. Generally, the State reviewer's comments were very favorable. ***"We congratulate the Comprehensive Plan Committee and the citizens of Surry for a valuable plan."***

Going Forward: The entire draft Plan is posted on the Town Website for review by residents. A paper copy is also available in the Town Office. The Plan contains 17 chapters, each describing the current status of an aspect of the Town and making recommendations for future improvements. Stay tuned!!

Surry Historical Society--Mon., Sept 16 at 7 pm- -Public meeting featuring Lynn Bonsey, a much-loved, longtime Surry Elementary School teacher. Lynn will share stories of her family, her life and her career. Free admission and refreshments. More info: 207-667-4877; JC.Surry.1@gmail.com.

Stay tuned for Comprehensive Plan information and hearing dates!!

Calendar of Events

September 9, at 7 pm at **Old School**: More Fun with Opera, Episode7...free
September 16, at 7 pm- **Surry Historical Society**--Mon., -Public meeting featuring Lynn Bonsey
September 21, at 7 pm at **The Gatherings**-Bob Dylan Cover Band Concert

October 5, 10 am-1 pm at the **Old School**: 6th Annual Apple Pressing and Pie Sale
October 6, 11am-2 pm Sunday: Car Wash to benefit Rosanna's Readers at **Surry School**
October 25, at 5:30 pm **Surry School** SCIA Harvest Dinner
October 31, 4-6 pm at the **Old School**: 6th Annual Trunk or Treat
October 31, 4-6 pm: Truck or Treat at the **Surry Town Office (Reminder Town Office closes at 3 pm today)**

November 5: General Election (Polls open 8am-8pm) **Surry Town Office (Reminder Town Office is CLOSED today)**
November 16, 9-noon: Christmas Wreath Sale and Centerpiece Workshop at the **Old School**
November 28, 2024: **Town Office closed** – Happy Thanksgiving!
November 29, 2024: **Town Office closed**

December 2, at 5 pm Tree Lighting and Carols at the **Memorial Park**



Happenings at The Gatherings:
*Alchemy: New Moon Circle, **every new moon** (check our calendar for exact dates), 6 pm
*Spanish Conversation, **every Wednesday** at 5:30 pm
*Food with Friends Potluck, **every first Friday** of the month 5:30 pm
*Board Game Night, **every Sunday** at 6:30 pm
*Community Yoga, **every Monday** at 5:30 pm and Saturday at 9 am
*Ukulele Jam, **first and third Thursdays** of the month, 5:30 pm
*Open Kirtan, **second and fourth Thursdays**, 6:30 pm. Kirtan, every fourth Saturday at 1 pm
*Open Mic, every **second Saturday** of the month, 1 pm
*Poetry Open Mic, **every first Saturday** of the month, 1 pm
*Band & Contra Dance Practice is **1st & 3rd Tuesdays** at 7:15pm. A fun and low-key venue to practice dancing or playing tunes together. At The Gatherings, $2/person. 385-7694
*Monthly Dances on **2nd Saturdays**: Sept 14, Oct 12, Nov 9, Dec 14 at the Elementary School. No experience or partner is needed for these fun & easy dances! 6 pm-7 pm Community Dance, suitable for all ages. Open Band. No charge, donations welcome. 7pm-10pm Contra Dance, all dances taught, beginner lesson at 7 pm! Fantastic live music. $10-$20 suggested.

US Postage Paid EDDM 7913060