

Gardiner Receives “Business Friendly Community” Designation

GARDINER – Since 2011, the City of Gardiner and Gardiner Main Street have received in excess of \$3.6 million in grants for community and economic development. The bulk of these monies have come through the Community Development Block Grant Program to provide jobs in the small city that has seen a steady post-recession economic resurgence.

In its application designation as a “Certified Business Friendly Community”, the City cited these successful grant applications, but also cited several efforts to streamline permitting and other regulatory land use challenges, creative programs to support the business community, and a culture of “customer service”. The City has invested heavily in its Libby Hill Business Park, Gardiner Main Street, Johnson Hall, and The Gardiner Boys and Girls Club, all of which play an important role in the City’s holistic approach to Economic Development.

The “Certified Business Friendly Designation” is a program that was created by Maine Department of Economic and Community Development to set an accreditation process for Maine Cities and Towns. By achieving the designation, Gardiner can boast to prospective businesses that a third party has certified that we value economic growth.

“The term ‘business friendly’ gets thrown around a lot.” Says Patrick Wright, Economic Development Coordinator for the City. “It’s often done so in the context of concerns of a particular business, or upset citizen complaining that any particular city is *not* business friendly. This designation doesn’t mean that the City will never hear this complaint again, but it does mean that an independent body has reviewed our process and approach and believes we go above and beyond to help businesses. Gardiner will continue to do everything we can to support individual businesses while respecting the public process.”

This designation also offers Gardiner additional points in the scoring of grant applications, like Community Development Block Grants. “This is just another boost in Gardiner’s efforts to make us the best small city in the state,” said Mayor Thom Harnett – “I’m very proud of Gardiner’s accomplishments.”

Gardiner is enjoying the addition of new businesses to its community. Most recently the community has welcomed openings or expansions from Lost Orchard Brewing, Craft Beer Cellar, Emery’s Meat and Produce, Central Maine Meats, Barn Boards and More, Maine Recycling, Maine Cap n’ Stem, and several others.

A brief reception and the installation of a “Business Friendly Community” sign will occur on Thursday, October 27th at 10:00 AM at the Gardiner Commons. Local businesses and members of the community are invited to participate in this event.

For more information, contact Patrick Wright at 582-3100 or econdev@gardinermaine.com.