

Conference Summary Report



▶ Maine's Action Summit

November 16-17, 2007
Rockland / Camden, Maine



www.juiceconference.org

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

On November 16 and 17, 2007, over 400 people gathered in Rockland and Camden at “Juice: Powering the Creative Economy—Maine’s Action Summit.”

Participants came from 87 communities across Maine and beyond, as distant as Biddeford and Eastport, Belfast and Fort Kent, representing over 290 businesses and organizations. This wide cross-section of motivated people got connected, got inspired, and got to work setting goals and next steps to make sure creativity and innovation are at the forefront of Maine’s economic future.

A rousing keynote address by Andrew Zolli, curator of Pop!Tech, reminded Juice participants that they have to “cut through the noise” of countless products and brands by simplifying, by innovating, and by developing human networks.

Other speakers, on Friday at Rockland’s Strand Theatre and Saturday at the Camden Opera House, included Commissioner John Richardson of Maine’s Department of Economic and Community Development; John Rohman, chair of Maine’s Cultural Affairs Council; Yellow Light Breen and Skip Bates of Bangor Savings Bank; and Dorian LeBlanc, Juice conference chair. All of them underscored the potential of Maine’s creative economy and the opportunity offered by Juice to help realize that potential to the fullest.

On Saturday, participants rolled up their sleeves and dove into 36 different 90-minute workshop sessions. All of the sessions helped connect people with shared interests; most also aimed at coalescing those people around priority goals and actions. Contact people for each topic identified themselves, and the Juice conference organizers will follow up with them to encourage them to follow through and to report on their results.

Donna McNeil, Director of the Maine Arts Commission, wrapped up the conference with a reminder of the central role of the arts in the creative economy, and a sampling of the goals that had come out of Saturday’s sessions. Common productive themes that arose included the importance of collaborating, information-sharing, advocating for resources, marketing Maine’s creative assets, and taking both personal and joint action to nurture the creative economy.

Conference evaluations made clear that Juice participants emerged feeling energized, connected, and determined to carry through the intentions that had arisen in the course of the conference. Through their ongoing commitment, Juice will become more than an event: it will be a spark and a continuing current of ideas and action that help make Maine as creative, and successful, as we intend it to be.

The following is a sampling of the goals and next steps that emerged in six major areas of interest.

Oliver Wilder,
Juice Program Chair

Creative Workers

Regional creative economy groups

- 1) Realize!Maine will convene and enable regional creative economy groups, using meetings and virtual networks, and also reaching out beyond the state.

Attracting and retaining creative workers

- 1) Learn why people from out of state choose to move here, and why people who have moved away choose to return.
- 2) Provide an interesting and supportive community.
- 3) Commit to expanding educational opportunities.

Leadership development

- 1) Extend leadership programs to youth.
- 2) Expand into high schools, middle schools, and adult education programs.

Entrepreneurship

Nonprofit support

- "Top 10 List" for expanding nonprofit funding:
- 1) Promote collaboration grants and capacity-building grants for sustainability.
 - 2) Create an incubator/holding company for nonprofits.
 - 3) Create joint membership for Maine Association of Nonprofits, Maine Philanthropy Center, and Foundation Center.
 - 4) Provide creative funds for spontaneous needs.
 - 5) Use common grant applications.
 - 6) Realize that small amounts can make a difference.
 - 7) Enable more multi-year funding and an accessible list of corporate contacts.
 - 8) Support workforce development.
 - 9) Promote business planning workshops.
 - 10) Share success stories between funding organizations.

Economic development strategies

- 1) Create an integrated message about the whole creative economy.
- 2) Create and/or improve social networking portals for creative economy community.
- 3) Train students in entrepreneurship and the creative economy.
- 4) Give support to the office of tourism to look at how regions are defined.
- 5) Link the creative economy to infrastructure needs and create 25-year written plan for transportation, green architecture, broadband, etc.
- 6) Share information about what resources are currently available by developing a website bringing everything together.

Communications infrastructure

- 1) Establish a state communications policy.
- 2) Identify data fiber availability in state.
- 3) Work with Maine D.O.T. in placing of communications conduit in their construction projects.

Arts and Culture

Marketing the state as an arts destination

- 1) Influence the Office of Tourism's ad campaigns.
- 2) Define the brand in terms that communicate externally as well as internally.
- 3) Link Environment and Arts.

Marketing regions

- 1) Influence regional tourism boards.
- 2) Consider a statewide art walk on one designated night.

Marketing craft art

- 1) Make Maine recognized for individual, unusual but quality crafts.
- 2) Piggy-back with successful "Made in Maine" artists and companies.
- 3) Support Maine Crafts Association efforts with membership, events/shows, Center for Maine Craft.

Strengthen arts and cultural institutions

- 1) Match-make between artists and community businesses & organizations & rural communities.
- 2) Develop electronic directory of arts schools, businesses.
- 3) Find funding - website development, case studies.
- 4) Ask "How can we serve you?"

Libraries as creative centers

- 1) *Advocate*: serve on boards, civic & community organizations, market ME library resources.
- 2) *Collaborate*: Identify community, local, regional, state leaders; work towards a universal library card.
- 3) *Educate*: MARVEL DVD, revitalize Maine Libraries Trustee Association, market Maine library resources.

Advocate for arts and culture support

- 1) Form a statewide cultural coalition akin to Maine League of Conservation Voters, eg., CreativeMaine.
- 2) Create a "scorecard" for arts & cultural voting. Gather data through NE cultural database.
- 3) Identify 3-5 priorities for legislative action.

Education

Strengthen arts education for youth.

- 1) Find more ways for those interested in re-envisioning education to network.
- 2) Communicate with entities beyond those already involved, local and statewide, on the importance of arts education.

Continuing and adult education

- 1) Build strategic alliances.
- 2) Do shared marketing.
- 3) Serve as incubator.

Community and Environment

Vibrant downtowns, preserving historic assets

- 1) Pass LD 262, historic preservation tax credits.
- 2) Fund Maine Downtown Center.
- 3) Provide resources to planning boards.
- 4) Create and support a building codes implementation plan.
- 5) Identify historic places in our communities.
- 6) Provide skills training for preservation craftsmen.
- 7) Develop more creative collaborations such as history projects.

Green building and community design

- 1) Nurture the Build Green Maine initiative.
- 2) Get involved with the Maine chapter of LEED, a program of the US Green Building Council.
- 3) Educate people on the value of smart growth.
- 4) Preserve agricultural land.
- 5) Organize a conference on sustainable businesses.

Maine's multicultural reality

- 1) Expand awareness of Maine's multicultural reality now and in the future.
- 2) Encourage Maine citizens to be comfortable with and celebrate cultural diversity.
- 3) Commit to personal action.

Smart growth in Maine

- 1) Educate citizens and communities in how Maine can grow smart.
- 2) Market and advertise the "Maine" brand and how we fit in the global community.
- 3) Support the GrowSmart Maine initiatives.

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Juice Resources

This document as well as others related to the Juice Conference are available from the Juice website - www.juiceconference.org. We encourage you to check there to learn about ongoing activities and updated information on workshop action items.

Also, check the Midcoast Magnet site for information about other activities focused on the Creative Economy amongst artists, entrepreneurs, businesses and interested citizens of Maine - www.midcoastmagnet.com

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