

Memo

To: Berlin City Council
From: Jim Wheeler, City Manager
Date: 10-17-2016
Re: City Manager's Report

1. Please help us recognize a deserving Berlin resident who has given their time and talent for the benefit of youth in the community by nominating that person for the Gus Rooney Award. Applications are due to the Recreation Department by November 9th.
2. The White Mountains Community College is celebrating their 50th anniversary! They are holding a Gala at the Omni Mount Washington on Saturday October 29, 2016 from 6 to 11 p.m. The \$100 per person contribution benefits student scholarships and enrollment and retention efforts.
3. The Stand Up Androscoggin Valley Coalition and NH National Guard Counterdrug Task Force are hosting an event on November 2nd titled "Root Cause: Getting to the Bottom of it". Please see the attached flyer.
4. The City's winter parking ban goes into effect on November 1st.
5. Bids were opened on Tuesday, October 4 for the replacement of the Library boiler. There were three bids with Irving Energy of Berlin providing the lowest price. The work is expected to be completed by October 28, 2016. This project was funded in this year's capital improvement budget. A copy of the bid tabulation is attached.
6. There was a court proceeding on Tuesday, October 4th regarding an "eviction" from a tax deeded property. On October 5th the judge issued a decision in favor of the City. The occupant has the right to appeal the judge's decision.
7. The Public Works Activity Report is attached.
8. On Thursday, November 10, 2016 a Fair Housing Training will be held at City Hall from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. All City Councilors are welcome to attend. The training is being organized by the Berlin Housing Authority.
9. The State of NH issued a letter dated October 4, 2016 to AJ Coleman Son saying that the Route 110 Phase 2 contract was completed and accepted on September 7, 2016. A copy of the letter is attached.

10. City Council phone numbers have been added to the web site as requested.
11. On October 8th an editorial appeared in the Union Leader which was critical of the City's efforts to investigate the viability of installing a downtown snowmelt system. In particular, the article targeted the City's intent to apply for federal grants for the feasibility study and assumedly for any grants we would apply to for constructions costs. The City's intent is to apply for a \$12,000 CDBG planning grant to investigate the feasibility. We based this in large part on our conversations with Holland, MI who says their system has resulted in significant economic benefits. Such an application falls in line with the economic development mission of the CDBG program. And yes, if we decide to go forward, we would apply to TIGER which stands for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery. This federal grant program is designed specifically for transportation projects that are innovative and are expected to generate economic activity. It's too early to say if we will move forward with this project but it is too bad that the editorial wasn't able to recognize innovation and forward thinking. The recently completed Rte. 110 project was completed with 80% federal funds. You can be certain that communities to the south also benefit from federal transportation dollars.
12. Finally, attached is an article from yesterday's Portland Press Herald's Sunday edition. The story compares Millinocket, Maine's current economic conditions to that of Berlin's 10 years ago. The primary focus of the article is to question if an ATV industry is right for Millinocket. In doing so it highlights the great success the industry has been for our area.



**White Mountains Community College
would be honored by your presence at our
50th Anniversary Gala
to benefit our Presidential Fund, which supports
student scholarships and enrollment and retention efforts**

Join us for social hour, dinner, a silent auction,
and the humor of comedian Juston McKinney

Saturday, October 29, 2016

6 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Omni Mount Washington Resort, Bretton Woods, N.H.

\$100 per person

The courtesy of a reply is requested by October 14, 2016

To purchase seats or donate online please visit:
[50th Anniversary Gala](#)

Stand Up Androscoggin Valley Root Cause: Getting to the Bottom of it!

November 2, 2016

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM | Gorham Town Hall/Medallion Opera House

- 5:30 PM** **Doors Open** – introduce yourself to someone new
- 6:00 PM** **Welcome**
Kevin Carpenter, Chair, Stand Up Androscoggin Valley Coalition and Principal Berlin High School
David Backler, Principal Gorham Middle High School
- 6:05 PM** **Youth Risk Behavior Survey – Setting the Stage**
Drew Brown, North Country Health Consortium
- 6:15 PM** **Recovery Story**
Hear recovery stories from members of our own community.
- 6:40 PM** **Root Cause Analysis Workshop – Let’s get to the bottom of it!**
Sgt. Rick Frost, *NH National Guard Counterdrug Task Force, Civil Operations Division*
Goal: As a community, come to a consensus as to what the root causes of our priority problems are, and further, what local conditions are aggravating those root causes.
- 6:45 PM** **In your breakout group**
“We can’t address everything that aggravates the root causes of our priority substances, so we have to choose a few that we can focus on and be able to measure our progress. We have to keep drilling down from the root cause until we find a specific condition that we can physically apply an activity and strategy to.”

Facilitators will use available information to help lead us through a conversation in order to identify the main substances of concern, and just as importantly, the local factors that are contributing to those substances.
- 7:45 PM** **Report out**
Come back together as a group to discuss what was identified as substances of concern and the local activities that lead to the root cause to help us get to the bottom of it!
- 8:00 PM** **Goodnight**

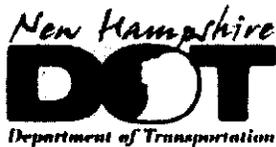
Thank You!

*Stand Up Androscoggin Valley Coalition
and NH National Guard Counterdrug Task Force*

**City of Berlin Public Works Department
2016 Activity Report**

	Dec 2016	Nov 2016	Oct 2016	Sept 2016	Aug 2016	July 2016	June 2016	May 2016	April 2016	Mar 2016	Feb 2016	Jan 2016	Year to Date 2016	Year 2015
Total Service Requests				88	88	77	81	82	69	80	61	53	679	762
Administrative Service Requests				1	7	6	8	9	5	6	7	9	58	15
Cemetery burials				0	3	1	3	0	1	2	3	0	13	24
Maintenance: Bldg/Furniture repair, Fences/Railings/Walls, Lawns/Trees, Signs				24	32	30	13	13	6	13	13	8	152	153
Parks and Grounds				14	9	4	4	11	13	4	7		66	48
Refuse/Recycle/Yard Waste				4	6	5	6	8	5	3	5	10	52	58
Sanitary Sewer				26	5	9	16	7	8	9	6	3	89	76
Storm Drainage System				7	9	8	6	10	8	28	5	2	83	75
Streets and Highways: Repairs of curbs/sidewalks/streets, line painting, sweeping, sanding, sand barrels, paving and potholes				12	17	14	25	24	23	15	15	21	166	313

City Owned Property Service Requests														
	Dec 2016	Nov 2016	Oct 2016	Sept 2016	Aug 2016	July 2016	June 2016	May 2016	April 2016	Mar 2016	Feb 2016	Jan 2016	Year to Date 2016	Year 2015
City Hall				9	5	10	3	5	3	6	6	4	51	41
Recreation Dept.				1	4	0	0	2	4	4	0	0	15	4
Library				1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	10
Fire Dept.				1	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	5	5
Schools				0	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	5	7
Bridges				1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Parks/Fields/Other City owned				13	5	1	6	11	12	4	3	1	56	23



THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Victoria F. Sheehan
Commissioner

William Cass, P.E.
Assistant Commissioner

October 4, 2016

A.J. Coleman & Son, Inc.
9 NH Route 113
Conway, NH 03818

Re: **Berlin X-A000(052), 12958B**
Reconstruction & Realignment of NH Route 110, Phase 2

You are hereby advised that construction of referenced contract was completed and accepted on September 7, 2016.

By copy of this letter the project work is now turned over to the appropriate agency for maintenance. It is the responsibility of the Contractor to file the required Notice of Termination forms when applicable with the EPA and with the Department.

Seeded areas that do not establish acceptable growth will be reseeded at the Contractor's expense per 107.14. This will not affect the completion and acceptance date and no money will be retained for this work.

A final estimate will be forwarded for review following project audit.

To ensure processing of all payments it is imperative that applicable Certificates of Compliance be on file with the Department.

The attached CONTRACTOR EVALUATION OF NHDOT PROJECT PERFORMANCE form is voluntary and is to be directed to the Bureau of Construction office in Concord, N.H. if utilized.

Very truly yours,


Steven K. Glines, P.E.
District Construction Engineer

SKG/le via Construction Administrator
cc:

Bureau of Environment
Bureau of Finance & Contracts
Bureau of Highway Design
Bureau of Highway Maintenance
Utility Section, L. Suther, S. Swana, J. Prescott
Bureau of Right-of-Way
Bureau of Traffic
Contract Section, Deb Weil, Michelle Drouin
Bureau of Turnpikes
Contract Administrator, Dan Caouette
Director of Project Development

District 1 Maintenance
TMC, S. Soucie, D. Lacasse
Federal Highway Administration
Labor Compliance Section
Bureau of Environment, R. Crickard, R. Talon
Project Lead Person, D. Lyford
Surety, Berkley Regional Ins. Co.
The Town of Berlin
Gino Infascelli, Wetlands Bureau, DES
Wetlands Permit #201300545

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New Hampshire town's embrace of ATV tourism gets Millinocket's attention

www.pressherald.com/2016/10/16/berlins-embrace-of-atv-tourism-holds-potential-lessons-for-millinocket/

By Tux Turkel Staff Writer | @TuxTurkel | 207-791-6462

BERLIN, N.H. — This is “The City That Trees Built.”

A gateway to the North Country. Flanked by the White Mountain National Forest. More than a century ago, the Brown Paper Co. used water power from the Androscoggin River to provide steady work for thousands of men and women.

Sounds a lot like Millinocket, Maine.

Millinocket was nicknamed “the Magic City.” The gateway to Thoreau’s Maine Woods and Mount Katahdin. In 1898, the Great Northern Paper Co. built what would become the world’s largest paper mill on the banks of the Penobscot River.

But the world changed. In Berlin, the paper industry’s decline hit bottom in 2006, when the mill shut for good and was torn down.

Sounds a lot like Millinocket.

More than 4,000 people once worked there and at a sister mill in neighboring East Millinocket. The Millinocket mill closed in 2008, and was demolished in 2014. East Millinocket filed for bankruptcy that year, shut down and is likely to be scrapped.

But this is where the story lines diverge.

Berlin and surrounding towns now brand themselves with: “Your Adventure Starts Here.”

The area has evolved into the largest destination in the Northeast for all-terrain vehicle riders. It’s called Ride The Wilds, a 1,000-mile network of off-road trails that includes nearby Jericho Mountain State Park.

In late September, 7,100 visitors descended when motorsports maker Polaris held the inaugural Camp RZR event at the park. It was icing on the cake after the annual Jericho ATV Festival, which drew 6,000 people in August.

Most recently: The Zombie ATV Poker Run, a pre-Halloween dress-up and ride this weekend, part of Berlin’s RiverFire festival on the Androscoggin.

In this corner of Coos County, an economic recovery is arriving on four knobby tires, as a former papermaking community reinvents itself by embracing recreational tourism.

What’s happening here is being watched with interest by some in Millinocket.

Hobbled by joblessness that’s typically double the state average, conflicted over whether a manufacturing resurgence is possible, divided over whether the newly-created 87,500-acre Kathadin Woods and Waters National Monument is an asset or a threat, Millinocket is casting about for a path forward.

That process sent John Raymond to Berlin last year to check out the Jericho ATV Festival. He was struck by the similarities and the potential.

"After seeing what I saw in Berlin, I thought we'd be a perfect area for something like that," said Raymond, president of the Northern Timber Cruisers ATV and Snowmobile Club.



An ATVer rides across over the Androscoggin River in downtown Berlin, N.H., in front of a \$275 million wood-to-energy plant. *Ben McCanna/Staff Photographer*

Raymond's plan is in its early stages, but he envisions a multi-use network that connects major trail corridors on 6,000 acres of private and state-owned land in the Katahdin region.

"Millinocket is like Berlin was 10 years ago," said Pam Laflamme, Berlin's community development director.

Laflamme, who heard that analogy last year at a symposium on the northern forest, was asked by a citizen-led redevelopment group in Millinocket to make a presentation next month at a speaker series on revitalizing the Katahdin region. It made her think back a decade, to the sense of despair in her city.

"All people could talk about was finding another buyer for the mill," she said. "Reopening the mill. That was the theme. But at the same time, a group formed to look at the future and say, 'we've got to do other things.'"

That effort led to rezoning city-owned land around Jericho Lake. It abutted a large parcel that was being logged and had changed hands. By chance, the state was looking for a place for ATV riders and wound up buying 7,200 acres in 2007 to create New Hampshire's newest state park.

WOODS AND WIDE OPEN SPACES

Earlier this month, Ray Bergeron was showing off the 80-mile trail system inside the park. Owner of White Mountain ATV Rental in Gorham, New Hampshire, Bergeron is one of the area's leading advocates for off-road tourism. He steered his machine over the hilly terrain, stopping to take in expansive views of the Mahoosuc Range, cloaked this day in low clouds. From the Jericho Power wind farm, Bergeron stood beneath the 278-foot towers and pointed out highlights of Berlin and the river valley below, set in a forest landscape flecked with the red, orange and yellow of autumn.

At one vista, Anthony Lagrasse and his wife, Kylee, pulled over. The couple from Winchendon, Massachusetts, has



Ray Bergeron, owner of White Mountain ATV Rental, accelerates up an off-road trail between Berlin and Gorham, N.H. *Ben McCanna/Staff Photographer*

been to the park a dozen times. They said they love the vast trails and mountain scenery, something they can't find closer to home. They had hoped to book a motel room in Gorham, but there were no vacancies. They ended up staying in Lancaster, New Hampshire, 20 miles away.

The couple was driving a Polaris RZR side-by-side, a two-seat machine that sells for \$10,000 or more. But they have a young son and want to buy a four-seater, something like the three-seat Yamaha Viking that Bergeron was driving. Selling for more than \$12,000, it has a windshield, covered roll-cage roof and padded seat with seat belts. It resembles a narrow, stripped-down SUV rather than a straddle-like-a-motorcycle ATV, and speaks to the investment that some riders make in their pastime.

At the park's welcome center, John and Dawn Carlos were unloading their machines. They had driven five hours from Coventry, Rhode Island, and were staying two nights at a motel in Gorham. They estimated they would spend \$300 to \$400 on food, lodging and fuel.

"We love it up here," Dawn Carlos said, motioning to her husband. "I tell him, we should move up here."

If they did, they'd find a bargain. The median home price in Berlin is \$95,000, compared to \$223,000 in Coventry.

SIGNS OF SPATTERING PROGRESS

Low values reflect Berlin's uneven and ongoing recovery. The downtown, the face of the city, is a work in progress. Handsome brick structures from glory days are in various stages of use, although some are abandoned. A vacant block for sale across from City Hall, the legacy of a fire, begs for redevelopment.

"Talk to any business, and you're going to find out they are much busier than five years ago," said Karl Stone, the outgoing marketing manager at Northern Community Investment Corp. in Lancaster.

Stone gives credit to the Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce, which came up with the "Your Adventure Starts Here" motto and promotes the ATV events.

"They've welcomed these events with open arms and have grown them," he said. "The only comparable area (on the East Coast) is the Hatfield-McCoy Trails System in West Virginia."

SNOW NOT NECESSARY

Like the Katahdin region, Coos County is a magnet for snowmobiles. But sleds stayed in the yard during last year's warm, brown winter. All-terrain vehicles, however, don't need snow. They can get on the trails as soon as mud season ends and keep coming until winter.

That traffic has been transformational at Mt. Madison Inn & Suites in neighboring Gorham, which unlike Berlin has a dozen or so motels and restaurants.

"Since the ATVs came to town, we have no vacancies starting Memorial Day to the end of October," said Ron Dagesse, the inn's owner. "Seven days a week. Every single night. The ATV business has catapulted us into a whole new realm that I never thought I'd be in."

In June, Dagesse said, an ATV club from Pennsylvania rented all his 32 rooms for five days. A group from New York City came and rented some machines and loved it so much, he said, that they bought a couple of ATVs and keep them in a local storage unit, so they can come up and ride.

Dagesse, who has 10 employees, said his revenue is up 20 percent this year over last year and he's considering building a new hotel in town.

"That's the only way I'd get my numbers up, because I'm maxed out," he said.

Nearby at the Town and Country Motor Inn, owner Scott Labnon said that every weekend he sees between 10 and 20 vehicles hauling trailers with ATVs, arriving from Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

"A few weekends are solely dedicated to ATVs," he said. "A significant number of room nights are added due to these visitors."

One perception of ATV riders is that they are wild young men tearing up the woods. But Labnon and Stone say a more-typical profile of riders coming to Coos County are baby boomers, retirees and families. They come to enjoy the mountain scenery, not to drive fast. And it's common, they say, to see a \$40,000 pickup truck towing a pair of side-by-side ATVs in an enclosed trailer.

"They are willing to spend," Labnon said.

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Send questions/comments to the editors.



And while the former paper mill is gone, the downtown's industrial heart is beating again with a \$275 million wood-to-energy plant. The towering stack, the hum of machinery and the stream of trucks creates some semblance of paper making days, although with far fewer employers.



Berlin, N.H., has evolved into the largest destination in the Northeast for ATV riders, with 7,100 visitors descending on the area in late September for an event put on by Polaris. The area is also home to a 1,000-mile network of off-road trails, and brands itself with "Your Adventure Starts Here." *Ben McCanna/Staff Photographer*

Beyond biomass, the forest products industry remains active. Downriver, the last surviving paper mill in the North Country, now called Gorham Paper & Tissue, is running again with roughly 100 workers making tissues and paper towels.

Berlin also has had success diversifying its economy. Federal and state prisons were built on its outskirts, together employing 450 workers. The federal facility has an annual payroll of \$20 million. The city's largest employer, Androscoggin Valley Hospital, has 400 employees.

Back downtown, a sidewalk sign by the 151 Main Street Grill welcomes ATV visitors, and banners on lamp posts depict helmet-clad riders. Berlin and surrounding communities have passed ordinances allowing ATVs on city streets, and it's not unusual to see machines at gas stations, restaurants and motel parking lots.

Related

Katahdin region envisioned as ATV destination

Officials haven't conducted a dedicated study of the impact of ATV tourism, but the boost is reflected in the state's meals and lodging tax. Year-over-year tallies in Coos County for October, for instance, show a steady rise, from \$691,429 in 2012 to \$880,134 last year.