

# Loring Commerce Centre HAPPENINGS

*A newsletter about the Loring Commerce Centre showcasing the facility's assets, news and on-going activities.*

## **BUSINESS NEWS**

There are a number of exciting business projects underway at Loring. The LDA has previously announced two major business deals that are projected to have a profound impact on the northern Maine regional economy; DG Fuels and Green 4 Maine. Here are some updates on these two major projects as well as one exciting new venture for the utilization of Loring's assets.

### **DG Fuels:**

DG Fuels LLC (DGF) , which is based in Washington, D.C., signed an agreement last winter with the Loring Development Authority for a long-term lease of 1,240 acres at the Loring Commerce Centre.

DGF is working collaboratively with the Loring Development Authority of Maine (LDA) and Green 4 Maine, LLC, towards developing the 175 million gallon per year sustainable jet fuel project at Loring; first announced in November 2022. DGF will be building a low-CO2 life cycle emissions synthetic fuel system based on high carbon conversion technology that is targeting a 97% efficiency. The DGF's technology does not require the development of new engines or types of distribution infrastructure. DGF's innovative technology produces hydrogen via water electrolysis and biomass derived carbon replacement fuel for aircraft, and potentially for locomotives, vessels and trucks as well.

Michael Darcy, the chief executive officer of DGF, reports that considerable progress has been made in various aspects of the project including identifying sources of large quantities of clean electricity needed to power the refining process, and engaging the

## **ABOUT THE LORING COMMERCE CENTRE**

The Loring Commerce Centre, the former Loring Air Force Base, has evolved into a busy commercial, industrial and aviation park that is currently home to over thirty-five business entities, collectively employing over 750 highly-qualified personnel. The Loring Commerce Center is managed by the Loring Development Authority of Maine (LDA), a quasi-state agency.

Loring possesses some of the most significant "open the door ready" economic development assets in northern Maine. With over 3,800 acres of developed area and over 900,000 square feet of existing unoccupied or underutilized modern and practical buildings and developable sites, all supported by high-capacity municipal utility infrastructure and a newly constructed dark fiber network, Loring has the capacity to support substantial new business development activity. Furthermore, in addition to supporting local and national markets, Loring's facilities also can support international markets, due to its proximity to Canada and northern Europe. Please refer to [loringcommercecentre.com](http://loringcommercecentre.com) for a comprehensive listing and descriptions of these superb assets.



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engineering firms of Black and Veatch and Haley Ward to design the site layout and handle environmental issues and permitting. Efforts are also underway to secure wood waste and biomass needed for the plant's feedstock. The Maine Department of Transportation has been involved in identifying the means by which rail lines in northern Maine can be returned to service and used to transport the raw biomass product to the plant site. Discussions are also underway with Loring Holdings to utilize a pipeline corridor to bring the finished Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) to Searsport where it would be loaded onto tankers for distribution at airports on the east coast of the United States.

The project is estimated to create about 650 permanent full-time jobs and will run on a 24/7 schedule. The project will also create as many as 2,300 construction jobs. DGF is also working with Green 4 Maine to renovate housing at Loring which will help to support the project workforce during both the construction and operational phases.

For additional information: Call Media Contact Dan Brown 202.649.0145, email us at [dbrown@dgfuels.com](mailto:dbrown@dgfuels.com), or via the website [DGFuels.com](http://DGFuels.com)

#### **Green 4 Maine:**

Green 4 Maine acquired nearly 400 acres of land and buildings at Loring in late January, 2023. On July 1, G4M hosted an open house and fly-

in to showcase Loring's facilities and to celebrate on-going progress. The open house featured a ribbon cutting by Bob Cleaves, President of BD Solar which has commenced construction of Loring's third solar project. Multiple aircraft landed and people in attendance enjoyed a pancake breakfast at the Arch Hangar followed by facility tours. At the LDA Board's June meeting, G4M outlined progress it has made in achieving its vision for a Green 4 Maine campus at the Loring Commerce Centre. In addition to the BD Solar project, they include a lease to "Fork in the Road, LLC", a new food truck service to be operated and stored at a Loring facility; a new lease with Eternal Mind, Inc., for data center operations; a lease of the former Gas Station to Chris King and group which will open a snowmobile, ATV and auto repair shop and will serve local snowmobile and ATV clubs in the area; and a lease extension with Novel Energy, which is constructing and operating numerous solar sites throughout Maine. G4M also outlined plans for residential development and updated the board on discussions that are underway with other prospects.

The Green 4 Maine mission will be interwoven into the Loring Commerce Centre strategic plan and fabric of the Communities of Aroostook County to provide future jobs and economic stimulus for the entire region. G4M has also begun to hold meetings with officials from the Town of Limestone and is building relationships throughout

Aroostook County.

Green 4 Maine, Loring Commerce Centre and Keller Williams Realty held their first Fly-In/Drive-In Open House Event on Saturday July 1st, to engage with the area. The community came together to join in on the event and to hear about what is in store for the property. Community members, aviation enthusiasts, Veterans who had once served and were stationed at Loring, as well as pilots in from all over and as far as New Hampshire and Canada.

The event ran all day which included free breakfast and lunch, live music, static displays both inside and outside the world-famous Arch Hangar, a ribbon cutting and both history tours and tenant/broker tours. The former Air Force Base has a rich aviation heritage in Aroostook County and of course the property was the crown jewel of that. The event gave the community an opportunity to meet the team and to hear and see firsthand the plans to revitalize the property to make it a pillar of the community once again!

Please go to [Green4Maine.com](http://Green4Maine.com) for more details and for future announcements.

#### **SPX Aids to Navigation Tilton:**

This summer, SPX Aids to Navigation Tilton has leased space in two buildings at Loring's airport. Aligning with their commitment to cutting-edge technologies and dedication to safety and quality assurance, the spaces have been acquired to support a testing program to evaluate the performance of airfield lighting

systems the company is developing. Avlite Systems, part of SPX Aids to Navigation family and based in Tilton, New Hampshire, is a technology leader in the design and production of innovative airfield lighting equipment.

Their popular products include but are not limited to Runway Lights, Airfield Lighting/Airport Lighting, Approach Lights, Helipad Lighting, Monitoring and Control Systems for Airfields and Helipads, PAPI Lights, REIL Lights, Solar Power Systems tailored for Aviation, and a comprehensive selection of Aviation Lighting accessories. The company is a manufacturer with a proven reputation for aviation lighting systems specifically designed for defense, government, civil, and humanitarian aid operations in the most remote, toughest environments. Among the lighting equipment tested at Loring this year include runway and taxiway edge lights, end lights, and approach lights specifically designed for an expeditionary airfield lighting solution.

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS UNDERWAY**

Upgrades to infrastructure including water, sewer, and roadways are necessary to support new and existing economic activity at the Commerce Centre. Roadway improvements will assist the movement of employees, goods, services and facilitate commercial activity. Loring has several pending wastewater collection system and road improvements in the works.

The LDA has been awarded over \$ 4 million in Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) grants for this work, which will commence this fall.

**Wastewater System Improvements:** Over a decade ago, the Greater Limestone Wastewater Treatment Facility was completed and began for the first time to treat the combined wastewater of Limestone and Loring. Prior to that time, Limestone had completed, and LDA had started, projects to replace sewer lines to address “Infiltration and Inflow” (I & I) issues, which refers to water entering the sewer collection system either through roof or floor drains or from cracks in old sewer pipes that admit groundwater. I & I is not wastewater to begin with and would not have to be treated if it can be kept out of the system. To that end, sewer lines must be replaced, or sleeved, and drains must be disconnected from the system. Unused portions of the system can also be disconnected.

In 2006, LDA completed a flow monitoring study that recommended a ten-phase plan to replace sections of the sewer collection system to reduce I & I into the collection system and at the wastewater treatment plant. Over the past 15 years, LDA has completed the first four phases of work totaling over \$2.9 million. Now, Loring is preparing to complete the work. The new project is expected to be supported by various funding sources including a CDBG public infrastructure grant, a Maine DEP wastewater infrastructure grant together with

funding from the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund - with principal forgiveness; a grant through the Northern Border Regional Commission and a Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) request. These funding sources will allow for the completion of the remaining six phases of work consisting of replacing nearly 20,000 feet of gravity sewer and manholes with PVC sewer and precast concrete manholes.

Reducing flows to the treatment plant will reduce our costs for wastewater treatment services provided by the Limestone Water & Sewer District (LWSD). It will also help LWSD with achieving 85% removal of biological contaminants (“BOD”) during wet weather events as required by regulation and will minimize the chance of discharging untreated wastewater to the environment. As in the past, the CDBG portion of the funding has been granted to the Town of Limestone; Limestone is a conduit to the CDBG funding for LDA. The CDS funds will be used to continue this work.

#### **Roads and Demolition:**

LDA's plan is to use the CDS funds for repairing and reconfiguring roads from 4 lanes to 2 lanes, and to complete demolition of several unusable structures. The justification we offered in support of the request was that Loring represents an existing taxpayer investment of hundreds of millions since it was first constructed in the 1950's. It represents an opportunity



to retain upwards of 700 existing jobs, and attract new jobs to replace former Air Force jobs from the 1990's, and former Maine Military Authority jobs lost over the past 8 years. Finally, existing facilities can support many additional jobs in new industries and businesses. Reduction of roadway width from 4 to 2 lanes in many places will reduce the cost of plowing and maintenance. Removal of substandard structures will address blighted conditions and make the park more attractive to new businesses. Again, thanks to the efforts of our Congressional delegation, this funding will help make Loring an attractive and functional business park for years to come.

#### **PLANNING PROJECTS UNDERWAY - REGIONAL ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION**

The LDA has been awarded a \$740,664.00 grant from the Department of Defense to secure funding to develop a Regional Economic Diversification Strategy, aimed at reducing the Region's reliance on defense jobs by expanding the Region's employment base. This strategy includes broad-based regional workforce, aviation, and energy assessments. As part of this overall strategic planning effort, the LDA plans to conduct two planning efforts aimed at growing aerospace opportunities and securing energy resiliency at the Loring Commerce Centre, as well as gain a better understanding of the workforce skills at the DFAS facility.

#### **Airport Master Plan:**

The Loring Development Authority (LDA) is pleased to announce that it has engaged the firm of DuBois & King to assist with the preparation of Airport Master Plan for the Loring Airport for operation as a public airport facility. With the initiation of the new airport master plan, the former Loring Air Force Base is preparing for an exciting future as a major element of Maine's forward-looking aviation infrastructure.

The original Reuse Plan from 1995 evaluated Loring's aviation assets and subsequent Strategic Planning efforts in 2019 and 2021 identified aviation as a promising long-term development opportunity. In particular, Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) of large aircraft, air cargo, testing and development of new aircraft and aircraft systems including unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) Urban Air Mobility and other autonomous aerial vehicles, and various roles in the emerging space industry including a Spaceport, are all promising growth sectors for Loring and Maine.

In addition to large aircraft maintenance and air cargo operations, Loring is particularly suited to support the next generation of autonomous system and new space industries for:

- Testing and development of Unmanned Aircraft Systems and Urban Air Mobility vehicles;
- Testing and development of autonomous land vehicles;
- Testing and development of Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) technologies in non-

- urban environments, remote identification, drone detection, collision avoidance and the Unmanned Traffic Management (UTM) system; and
- Testing, development and operation of horizontal launch and recovery, and management of low orbit space systems.

Located in northern Maine, Loring's proximity to northeastern United States and eastern Canadian markets, as well as the European markets, presents a strategic advantageous location and unique launching point for globally based new-aged aerospace businesses, as well as defense-oriented operations. With its significant assets, this vast aviation complex is ideally suited to support the next generation of aviation activities. Loring's major assets to support these industries include:

- a 12,100 x 300-foot main runway with additional 1,000-foot overruns on each end;
- a 12,100 x 200-foot parallel secondary runway/taxiway;
- a 126,000 (approx.) SF Arch Hangar capable of accommodating wide body aircraft;
- a 194,000 (approx.) SF DC Hangar;
- a 41,000 (approx.) SF hangar;
- a 22,000 (approx.) SF Alert Hangar consisting of 2 hangar bays;
- a 38,000 (approx.) SF jet engine repair facility;
- a jet engine test cell and sound suppressor;
- Control tower and lighting vault;

- numerous buildings for manufacturing and aviation support businesses;
- hundreds of acres of ramp space and a parallel taxiway; and
- uncluttered airspace.

The Loring airfield (ME16) has operated since 1997 as a private airport with landings by prior permission. Since its closure, Loring has been utilized by a number of aviation companies, including one developing and testing an unmanned airship for persistent surveillance, and an aircraft MRO, storage, tear-down and parting-out operation. In addition, over the years, the airport has hosted several annual aviation fly-ins and other special events, such as concerts and speed trials. In 2022, ME16 was visited by an active-duty B-52 during its Fly-in and open house.

In addition to Loring, the Central Aroostook region is served by Presque Isle International Airport (KPQI) and Caribou Municipal Airport (KCAR), with each supporting different aviation niches. Presque Isle is served by scheduled airlines with multiple flights daily, and some small private aircraft and business jets are based there. Small privately-owned aircraft are based at Caribou as well. These surrounding communities are supportive of Loring revitalizing its aviation facilities because of the broader economic impact that it would create to support the growth of significant aviation and aerospace industries in the area, while maintaining and strengthening their individual niche markets.

At the time of Loring's closure, a designation of Loring's airport under the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) did not occur. This planning process is expected to take approximately twelve months, will involve the active participation of a coordinating committee consisting of State and local stakeholders, as well as input from the FAA.

DuBois & King was selected for this project following a competitive bid process. "We are excited to be working with such a highly experience firm with extensive capabilities in future-oriented aviation activities and a strong record of success," says Carl Flora, the President and CEO of the LDA. "DuBois & King is excited to be involved in long-term planning for Loring International Airport," Senior Aviation Planner Patrick Sharrow said. "We are looking forward to working with the LDA to produce a Master Plan that will position the airport to be a key aviation asset in the State of Maine and to support aerospace development nationally."

For additional information about the airport master planning process and aviation opportunities at this this amazing asset, please go to [Loringcommercecentre.com](http://Loringcommercecentre.com) or email [stevel@loringcommercecentre.com](mailto:stevel@loringcommercecentre.com).

#### **Energy Resiliency Study:**

The Energy Capacity/Needs Assessment and Resiliency Plan will forecast the future energy needs of the Loring Commerce Center campus and evaluate the level,

capacity and improvements needed in this critical infrastructure to support growth. The Plan will also recommend needed improvements to allow for the Loring campus to enhance energy resiliency with a focus of long-term "behind the fence" sustainability, (e.g., becoming a self-sustaining energy island). The benefits anticipated for this project element will help set the stage for the creation of new investments on the campus and additional job creation in the energy sector. An added benefit from these investments will provide for energy resiliency and long-term security for businesses at the Loring campus. Requests for proposals for this project will be issued in the near future.

#### **Workforce Skills Assessment:**

While a substantial amount of work has been done in recent years to understand the workforce dynamics of the region, the LDA, working with the Northern Maine Development Commission will assess the skills of the 600 employees of DFAS and Loring. This effort will give a clear understanding of how to best to support DFAS's future workforce needs and help build a resilient workforce for the Region.

#### **MARKETING EFFORTS CONTINUE**

In 2022, the Maine State Legislature appropriated \$200,000 in Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023 to the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to oversee a business development and marketing program with the primary objective to attract new business

investment and to bring quality jobs and improved economic vitality to the Loring Commerce Centre and region and generate much needed new revenue for the LDA.

Following the State procurement process, SHL Enterprise Solutions (SHL), a Greenville-based economic development consulting firm, was identified as the winning bidder. SHL's principal is Steve Levesque, who most recently led the successful redevelopment of the former Brunswick Naval Air Station.

For this project, the SHL team is accompanied by Designlab, a full-service graphic design and marketing agency based in Millinocket and other specialists, as needed.

A two-year contract was awarded on June 1, 2022. Through increased brand awareness and implementation of a robust and focused national and international business marketing strategy, this work will focus on attracting the following primary business sectors: **transportation equipment, agricultural products, wood products, aerospace industries and energy operations.** These sectors were identified in the sustainability plan as likely to succeed in the area.

#### Activities to Date:

- Redesigned the Loring Commerce Centre website. The new website is: [loringcommercecentre.com](http://loringcommercecentre.com).
- Established and maintain active social media presence on Facebook and LinkedIn.
- Developed six target-sector "Pitch sheets" and other presentation materials.
- Distributed "Pitch sheets" to 275+ UAS and commercial aircraft manufacturers, MRO and R&D companies, 225+ machine technology companies, 175 European companies and 75 agricultural and forestry equipment manufacturing companies.
- Attended multiple trade shows for targeted industries.

#### Future Focus:

The major foci of SHL's marketing efforts in the near future to promote The Loring Commerce Centre will be to:

- Continue to work with strategic business partners; Identify and attract supportive supply chain business that complement the DG Fuels project;
- Continue to aggressively market and promote the Loring aviation complex for aerospace industries, including large aircraft maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO), Air Cargo, research & development, unmanned aerial systems (UAS) development and operations, and spaceport operations;
- Continue to attend strategic trade shows and industry events;
- Work collaboratively with Green 4 Maine on their Parcel 1 marketing efforts; and
- Work collaboratively with the Maine Space Corporation to promote Loring as an integral



element of the future Maine Spaceport Complex.

### **FOREIGN TRADE ZONE DESIGNATION**

The LDA is working with SHL and C3 Associates to prepare an application to the US Foreign Trade Zone Board to develop a new US Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) at the Loring Commerce Centre. Given its strategic business location, it makes a great deal of sense for the Commerce Centre to have its own FTZ with a Grantee that aids in future business development efforts. FTZs are excellent resources that attract domestic and international distribution and manufacturing companies, supplying the benefits needed to make these companies competitive from the start.

Geographically, Limestone is far from any existing zone; additionally, there is no incentive for any other Foreign Trade Zone in Maine to promote growth in an area outside of their responsibility as an economic development organization.

### **AIR FORCE PFAS STUDY ONGOING**

The US Air Force is in the process of conducting further “remedial investigations” into the PFAS issue at Loring. Looking into the application of Aqueous Film Forming Foams, “AFFF”, and assessing the potential ecological and human health risks is the latest phase in the Air Force's investigation into PFAS

contamination and will include multiple informational public meetings during the study period. AFFF was used at Loring to put out aircraft fires on the runway and conduct training.

In a recent Air Force presentation to the LDA Trustees, the initial site inspection was completed in 2018, confirming PFAS presence in eighteen areas, primarily where the firefighting foam was used and stored. This investigation concluded that groundwater at and around Loring does not exceed EPA health advisory guidelines. The level of contamination and the type of remediation needed will be determined in the remedial investigation, to be conducted this summer. The investigation includes a risk assessment report; the report is expected to be complete in June 2023.

Following this work, appropriate remedies will be accomplished by the Air Force to mitigate any public exposure. It is important to note that the US Government, through the Air Force is the primary liable party for any preexisting contamination at Loring, and there is an indemnification statute in place for transferees and subsequent transferees of military properties.

PFAS is being investigated in many Maine communities and is becoming better known. The US Navy has been conducting similar studies at the former NAS Brunswick and the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment

Authority has been working with the Navy, the DEP, and local developers to manage development and ensure public health is protected. This example, as well as others around the country, clearly demonstrate that this issue is manageable and that economic growth can occur at Loring.

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This newsletter is produced by SHL Enterprise Solutions, in collaboration with Designlab, Inc. Stay updated for current events by checking out the Loring Commerce Centre Facebook and LinkedIn pages and be sure to visit the new website linked below. Comments may be sent to: [Stevel@loringcommercecentre.com](mailto:Stevel@loringcommercecentre.com)



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