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Gardiner & Augusta Partner for Riverfront Grant

Gardiner, ME, December 18, 2008 —Gardiner and Augusta’s waterfronts are about to receive a major financial boost! Maine’s Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) announced it will provide Gardiner and Augusta a \$495,000 Riverfront Community Development Bond (RCDB) grant for the their Kennebec River waterfront projects.

“Gardiner is extremely excited to receive this funding and looks forward to completing its waterfront project in 2009,” states Gardiner Mayor Andrew MacLean. “This is a great opportunity to partner with the City of Augusta, on waterfront improvements, to help develop this region of the Kennebec River area to a real destination place.”

Gardiner and Augusta partnered on the RCDB grant application to better coordinate improvement efforts on their respective waterfronts. In Gardiner, \$450,000 in RCDB grant funds will go towards completing the waterfront park, which includes extending the boardwalk, installing new lighting, parking and greenspace areas. Gardiner last made significant improvements to its waterfront park in 2006. With previous grant funding totaling over \$850,000, and support from many funding state and federal agencies (including DECD, MaineDOT, Department of Conservation, Land for Maine’s Future, and others), the City built phase I of the project. Phase I included installation of over 525 linear feet of new timber boardwalk and railing over new shoreline-stabilizing timber crib sections.

In Augusta, \$45,000 in RCDB funds will be targeted towards signage improvements. New signage will feature the Kennebec River’s cultural heritage. For example, Gardiner and Augusta will install new overlook signs similar to the Kennebec’s International Chaudiere Corridor design in Hallowell. With new interpretive signage, visitors will experience historical sites along

the Kennebec all the way from Gardiner to Augusta. The timing of the grant announcement allows Gardiner and Augusta the opportunity to move forward with these improvements in 2009.

Gardiner and Augusta are truly linked by the Kennebec River and view this project as an opportunity to build critical mass for their downtowns and to form a collaborative relationship whereby the two will collectively be seen as a regional destination. Taking a page from both the Brookings Institute and the Kennebec River Initiative reports, the development of a 'sense of place' is unique to Maine and one of its greatest strengths. It is believed that should this 'sense of place' be continued through multiple communities working together, such as Augusta and Gardiner, the chance of success for both is that much more probable. With the downtown waterfront infrastructure in place, including the recently completed 6.5 mile Kennebec River Rail Trail, all communities, including Hallowell and Farmingdale, have an opportunity to take the next step and market this region as an exciting river walk region for the State of Maine.

The future of waterfronts in Gardiner and Augusta look bright, as does the Kennebec River. The Kennebec is currently the focus of an ambitious and significant regional action plan, which touts it as a regional resource for recreation, tourism, economic development and the environment. See the Kennebec River Initiative's Action Plan at <http://www.kcswcd.org/Projects/KRI%20info/KRI%20Page.htm> for more details on current regional efforts.

If interested in learning more about Gardiner's project, please click on http://www.gardinermaine.com/Public_Documents/GardinerME_EcDev/waterfront or contact Jason Simcock at 207-582-6888, or email to econdev@gardinermaine.com. To learn more details on Augusta's project, please contact Mike Duguay or Gerard Roy at (207) 626-2336.