

URIP FUNDING

*Towns will soon have to “report”
where their funds are going every year*

Over the summer of 2007, the state Office of Program Evaluation & Government Accountability (OPEGA) studied the Urban/Rural Initiative Program (URIP) which provides Highway Fund allocations to 501 towns, cities, counties, and Indian Reservations in Maine. In the current fiscal year, the “URIP pie” is \$ 25.7 million.

OPEGA sought to answer 3 questions:

1) Is the funding being fairly distributed?

The finding was “yes” and it noted that DOT has sound processes to insure that URIP calculations are accurate.

2) Are the funds processed and distributed in accordance with the law?

The finding was “yes” and that most towns return their Annual Certification Forms on time and that state checks are sent out before the 4 statutory dates.

3) Are the funds being utilized by municipalities in accordance with state law?

OPEGA found that it is likely that funds are being used properly but there is little specific data available to verify this opinion. There is no requirement to report how the funds are actually used or what roads were being fixed with these funds.

The Report concluded with 2 specific “findings” and action items.

1) Because there is no specific data being collected on how URIP funds are actually being used by each receiving town or city, the MaineDOT will now require each town, city, county, and Indian reservation to provide that information. In order to keep it simple, the information will be part of the annual certification process that occurs in July every year. On the flip side of the “Annual Certification Form”, the DOT will ask which roads were improved over the past year, the type of work completed on each road, and how much was spent on that road. For instance, if the Town of Mudville got \$50,000 last year and they fixed 2 roads, they would have to report:

“Maple St -- 0.3 miles, paving reclamation and 3 inch overlay for \$40,000”

“Pothole Lane – 0.2 miles, 2 inch hot mix overlay for \$10,000”

2) URIP administrative costs could be lowered by reducing the actual number of paper checks being processed and mailed. Many recipients have not taken advantage of direct deposit payments yet. By signing up for direct deposit, each town will get its funds sooner than the paper check, and never have to deal with depositing a paper check anymore. Plus, it would lower state mailing costs.

For more info, you can contact Pete Coughlan or Fred Hutchinson at 624-3270 or see the website at:

<http://www.state.me.us/mdot/community-programs/uri-program.php>



SPRING MEETING of Maine's Public Works Personnel

The Annual Spring Meeting of the Maine Chapter of the American Public Works Association (MCAPWA) will be held again in Waterville on Thursday, April 3, 2008. Any municipal official interested in road subjects like pothole patching, crack sealing, salting and sanding in the winter, or “stamped” concrete will find this meeting to be very beneficial..... and funny. The luncheon speaker will be a comedian from the Portland area.

It will be held at the Waterville Elks Lodge on the Industrial Park Road from 8 AM to 1 PM. The cost is \$30 per person and includes a nice hot buffet lunch.

A brochure was mailed to every town in late February so check at the Town Office or City Hall. Otherwise, all info can be found here at www.mcapwa.org or by calling the MMA Training Office at 1-800-452-8786.