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De: Yvon Labbé, Director
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Sujet: Franco-American Centre Commerce initiative and the University of Maine/Bangor Regional Chamber of Commerce Franco-American Partnership are flowering and producing more fruits.

Since Tony Brinkley, Franco-American Centre Economic Liaison person, and other Centre staff members began to nurture the seeds of our Commerce effort, seeds which were conceived in the mid 1970's by FAROG; the Maine and regional French language and cultural resources are well on their way to be recognized as a valuable human capital to be developed as a native resource for economic development.

It has been our hope that the UM/BRCC Partnership model would assist in the initiation of other projects, and that University staff, faculty, and departments would develop ways and means of meeting the developmental needs for new knowledge, teaching, and public service which will emerge. This process of accommodation to this community based commerce effort, as it relates to the Franco-American community, is already evident at the University in the interest and contributions made by faculty members in several disciplines during the past year — particularly in Business, in French, and in Journalism.

As commercial enterprises in Maine and the region are becoming aware of the Canadian francophone presence, and the largely untapped market, which nearly surrounds the state geographically, it has become a short distance to the realization that Maine has a unique resource and opportunity in the very significant French language/cultural resource which resides in the state's Franco-American population. And further, the results of the Centre's Commerce effort are about to decrease the distance between Maine enterprises and world markets, specifically the francophone world of more than 100 million people. In collaboration with members of the UM/BRCC Franco-American Partnership Project, the Centre's Community and Academic councils, Consul General of France Maurice Portiche, Severin Béliveau and Mark LeDuc of the prominent Maine law firm and Québec/Maine Co-Entreprise initiative.

In discussions and meetings with members of the business community, needs for access to University resources in research and teaching about the Maine and regional French Fact have been expressed. Among these being:

- a. the understanding of Franco-American contributions to the building of the state of Maine and the region,
- b. the teaching of courses which respect and reflect the Franco-American cultural/language experience in this region of North America,
- c. the research and teaching of the history, folkways and intellectual contributions — literature, art, business, science, etc. — of Franco-Americans,
- d. the development of appropriate curriculum and pedagogy for Maine/regional students and community members who possess French language/culture. A curriculum which will authentically reflect the Maine/regional Franco-American identity and produce functional bilinguals in business, government and education.

In addition to the above, and due to our participation in the Québec City Co-Entreprise conference this past April, we and a delegation of Maine francophone business persons have been invited to participate in the Canadian Francophone Business Forum which will take place at the end of October in Saint-Georges de Beauce, Québec. The American Consul in Québec with whom we had discussions about our Commerce effort apprised the Canadian Business Forum organizers, and suggested our presence.

Enclosed you will find a copy of an invitation, with its enclosures, which reflects well on the Franco-American Centre's Commerce effort and all those associated with it. It is important to state that the "**Kickoff Luncheon**" for **Lewiston's Franco-American Partnership Project** has been discussed by Mayor Jenkins for several years as he became aware, as Mayor of Maine's second largest city and the state's largest concentration of Franco-Americans, that the economic wellbeing of his city is entwined with the acknowledgement of Lewiston's Franco-American language/cultural capital and the realizable potential of that human capital as an important resource for economic development .

Merci Maire Jenkins pour votre contribution à la santé et à l'avenir de la communauté franco-américaine de notre région.

cc: Mayor John Jenkins, Lewiston
Tony Brinkley, Franco-American Centre Economic Liaison
Jim Bishop, Franco-American Centre Assistant Director for Academic Programs