

Making a Difference

A monthly sampler of educational, cultural, and economic contributions of Maine's public universities



CBS News correspondent Scott Pelley interviews Paul Mayewski during a research expedition to Antarctica in 2008. Photo courtesy CBS News

Mayewski UMaine Climate Change Director Honored

ORONO – UMaine's Climate Change Institute Director Paul Mayewski has been lauded worldwide for his work, and now he has been selected to receive the highest award in his field—the International Glaciological Society's Seligman Crystal.

The award is given to a person who has made an outstanding scientific contribution to glaciology so that the subject is now enriched.

Known worldwide for his global scale collection and analysis of ice core samples, he has demonstrated the existence of abrupt changes in climates of the past and the impact of humans on the climate, and has made important predictions about the future.

UCB Honors Heroes of 9/11

BANGOR – On September 11, UMA's University College at Bangor (UCB) Student Government Association held a special commemoration to honor the fallen heroes of 9/11 and celebrate the heroes of today who serve the greater Bangor community on a daily basis.

Joining UCB students, faculty, and staff at the event was Bangor's mayor, as well as representatives of Bangor's Police Department, Bangor's Fire Department, Penobscot County Sheriff's Department, and the Maine State Police. Each department was awarded a plaque of appreciation to recognize their service to the community.

UMF Shrinks Carbon Footprint

FARMINGTON – When students returned to UMF this fall, they found that Preble Hall, home of UMF's Department of Natural Sciences, is noticeably greener. Targeted renovations of the UMF building are focusing on providing students with advanced science facilities to meet the needs of today's technology, while also shrinking the university's carbon footprint.

Changes will include upgrading chemistry labs to facilitate modern scientific investigation methods, renovating the exterior window wall on the south side of the building to improve energy efficiency, and preparing the current heating system for a changeover to geothermal later this fall.



Preble Hall's renovations include a new energy-efficient exterior.

UMPI & MTI Sign \$96,800 MTAF Grant Contract



PRESQUE ISLE - Maine Technology Institute (MTI) President Betsy Biemann (center) and Assistant Professor of Geoscience and GIS and grant project director, Dr. Chunzeng Wang (right) look on as UMPI President Don Zillman signs a grant contract that officially makes the university the recipient of a \$96,800 Maine Technology Asset Fund (MTAF) grant. The grant, awarded by the Maine Technology Institute, will help fund the establishment of a state-of-the-art GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and GPS (Global Positioning System) laboratory on the UMPI campus. The lab is expected to start operations this fall. As one of the best-equipped laboratories of its kind in Maine, it will be used for teaching GIS and GPS classes and training local professionals in how to use advanced GIS and GPS technology, as well as for research and development.

First-year Students Tackle Community Service Projects

MACHIAS – The pouring rain wasn't enough to stop first-year students at UMM from tackling a range of community service projects during their first weekend of college.

More than 80 students, along with several student orientation leaders, faculty, and staff, hit the streets to clean up downtown Machias and the UMM campus.



UMM students remove old flooring as part of a community service project.

Among the several projects that the group took on was the prepping of Station 98—the historic Machias train station and future home of the Machias Bay Area Chamber of Commerce to get it ready for a complete renovation. The students primarily worked on removing the old wooden floor of the station, which is listed on the National Registry of Historic Sites.

New Art Show at UMA Gallery

AUGUSTA – A distinctly innovative show of interactive video and electronic sculpture created by artist Susan Bickford—titled “precarious balance”—opened at UMA’s Danforth Gallery on September 2.

The highly unique show, which invites viewer participation and interaction in a manner perhaps never before seen in Maine, will run through October 16.

The centerpiece of the show is an interactive video installation located in the 25 square foot “pit” area of the gallery. The space is mapped by a live feed which triggers the video content of the installation in such a way that the viewer actually plays the space.

The show is open to the public and admission is free.

UMFK Hosts Annual Community Fair

FORT KENT – UMFK invited the business community and service organizations throughout the Valley to participate in a day-long Community Fair on September 10.

The fair was designed to introduce university students to the products and services available in the region. It is a way for the business community and organizations to market themselves to the new and returning UMFK students.

The aim was to have as many businesses or organizations as possible participate to give UMFK students, particularly those from outside the area, an idea of what is available in the surrounding communities.

UMaine Research Makes Cancer Detection Easier

ORONO – A recent discovery by a UMaine engineering researcher is expected to make it easier for doctors to find cancerous tumors and start treatment in the early stages of the disease when it can be most effective.



Associate Professor of Chemical and Biological Engineering Michael Mason and a collaborator at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York have been awarded \$78,292 from the Maine Cancer Foundation for their project, “Improved Cancer Detection through the Use of Engineered Bioconjugates.”

The project has the potential to vastly improve early detection of many types of cancer.

USM Offers New Post-baccalaureate Programs

PORTLAND – USM’s Biology Department is launching two new undergraduate certificate programs to help students meet the requirements for application to medical, physician assistant, dental, or veterinary schools.

USM offers certificate programs for students interested in attending medical school. The programs are designed for students who already hold bachelor’s degrees, but need to complete required science courses in order to pursue a post-baccalaureate medical or veterinary degree. The courses in these certificates will be taught by existing USM faculty, and no new courses need to be developed. The certificates simply formalize the method by which students have been preparing for application to medical and veterinary programs in the past.

USM is the first UMS campus to offer these certificates, although several universities in the region provide similar non-degree, certificate programs for post-baccalaureate students.



USM offers certificate programs for students interested in attending medical school.

UMM to Host Health Care Forum

MACHIAS – UMM will host its annual Constitution Day Forum on September 16. This year's forum is titled "Health Care and the Constitution: Is There a Right to Health Care?"

Panelists include Rep. Anne Perry, House Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee, Doug Jones, CEO of Down East Community Hospital, Pamela Page, R.N., Hospice Coordinator for Community Health and Counseling Services, and Ron Mosley, Professor of Business Law at UMM. Jon Reisman, Associate Professor of Economics and Public Policy at UMM, will serve as moderator.

UMaine Surveys Coastal Property Owners

ORONO – A survey recently released by UMaine's Maine Sea Grant College Program shows that property owners along Maine's beaches are concerned about higher water levels during storms, increased erosion, landslides, and record rainfall.

These issues are addressed in a new documentary produced by the Oregon and Maine Sea Grant programs. The five-part video series describes Maine's unique climate and coastal conditions, such as storms and sea level rise, and construction techniques and other strategies for safeguarding property, such as elevating buildings and protecting dune systems.

Maine Sea Grant and UMaine's Cooperative Extension worked with the Center for Research and Evaluation and the Maine Coastal Program to survey 548 coastal property owners and 55 town officials in southern and midcoast Maine in 2007 and 2008. The project was funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



UMFK's ECO-Camp Offers Outdoor Exploration

FORT KENT – Eleven high school students entering their sophomore, junior, or senior years attended the UMFK ECO-Camp earlier this summer. The university's environmental studies faculty developed four days of outdoor exploration and fun, as part of the summer ECO-Camp experience.

Camp activities included canoeing on the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, water-quality testing and aquatic ecology, monitoring of local wildlife and learning about wildlife management, nature hiking to identify trees and plants, learning GPS and compass skills, and studying forest ecology and forest management.

Students also had the opportunity to meet with current UMFK students, graduates, and faculty to learn about their experiences in the environmental studies program.



USM to Host New England-wide College Fair

PORTLAND – USM's Office of Undergraduate Admission will host a college fair coordinated through the New England Association for College Admission Counseling (NEACAC) on September 27.

The college fair will be held in the Costello Sports Complex on USM's Gorham campus. This location allows more than 250 colleges and universities to attend, as well as representatives from USM's Office of Financial Aid, the Finance Authority of Maine, and the New England Board of Higher Education.

For an up-to-date listing of participating institutions, please refer to www.neacac.org/cf_fall.cfm. No registration is necessary.



UMaine Extension Helps Stressed Farmers

ORONO – Farming can be stressful in the best of times. Financial worries, unpredictable weather, plant pests, livestock diseases, and isolation all contribute to farmers' anxiety.

To assist farmers and their families who are experiencing stress, UMaine's Cooperative Extension has organized a web seminar and assembled a web page filled with a variety of resources.

The webinar, "Recognizing Farmer Stress, Anger, Depression, and Suicide: Thinking and Knowing What to Do Next," was presented on September 3.

All agricultural service providers and farmers were invited to participate in the free online webinar. For more information on this program, visit:

www.extension.umaine.edu/FarmersUnderStress.

UMF Teams Up to Prevent Hate Violence

FARMINGTON – Nearly 50 students from high schools in Maine, New Hampshire, and Northern Ireland recently attended the CommUnity Leadership Institute, a joint project of UMF and the Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence.

The forum provided the first step in a yearlong commitment by these young adults to prevent hate and build a culture of respect within their communities. Two students from Farmington's Mt. Blue High School and six students from high schools in Northern Ireland—the setting, in previous years, for serious religious/political conflict—were included among the session's participants.

Student teams develop projects with the goal of making a positive change in their communities. Upon successful completion of these projects in spring 2010, the students will network with each other again—at UMF and via video conferencing—to share the success of their civic-minded projects.

UMPI Kicks Off Senior College Courses

PRESQUE ISLE – An UMPI program that serves local residents over 50 and believes in "learning for life" hosted its fall kick-off with a luncheon event on September 10.

Seniors Achieving Greater Education (SAGE) has worked for more than a decade to bring short courses in arts, sciences, and specialty areas to the region's senior community. SAGE is one of 16 senior colleges in the Maine Senior College Network, and the only one north of Orono.

This fall, SAGE officials are offering a dozen courses and learning excursions. The program has no entrance requirements, grades or tests, and no college background is needed. The cost that participants pay is minimal. Full or partial scholarships to take part in the program are available through a simple, friendly, and confidential process.

USM Helps the Unemployed Earn Degrees

PORTLAND – USM is hosting three public meetings to give the unemployed and underemployed who are interested in pursuing a college degree a chance to find out if they can earn college credit for knowledge and skills gained outside the traditional classroom.

Attendees will find out more about earning academic credit for previous work and related experience, known as the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) program. Participants also will have the opportunity to meet with USM faculty and staff to begin an assessment of prior experiences.

USM's PLA program is one of the oldest in the country. Each year, about 1,000 students, or 10% of USM's student body, takes advantage of the program. For more information, contact Joyce Lapping, director of USM's Prior Learning Assessment, at 780-4867.

Chancellor Presents New Plan at UMS Trustees Meeting

BANGOR – The UMS Board of Trustees met on September 14 in Bangor, where Chancellor Richard L. Pattenau presented a proposed plan to the Trustees titled, "The University of Maine System and the Future of Maine—The Final Report and Implementation Plan of the New Challenges, New Directions Initiative."

The multi-year plan for the University System outlines recommendations for achieving financial sustainability, and also provides strategic direction for the System and its seven universities.

The Board is looking for public input regarding the plan. A series of public comment sessions will be held at the seven universities and the System Office in Bangor. Comments may also be submitted via email or regular mail. To view the report and learn details on the process visit www.maine.edu/UMSNCND.

H1N1 Update

BANGOR – Like campuses across the country, emergency planning officials from the University of Maine System have been preparing for the H1N1 influenza. For months, teams from each university and the System Office have been meeting regularly via conference calls to share ideas, news, and campus resources. The System is working closely with the Maine Centers for Disease Control and participated in the H1N1 Summit held this summer.

This fall, each university plans to hold H1N1 flu vaccine clinics, in addition to season flu clinics. For more information on H1N1 preparations at Maine's public universities, visit www.maine.edu/UMSHealthUpdate.