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## **Lewiston/Auburn commercial real estate development sector continues in positive mode: new Kitty Hawk Business Park given state and local approval for 8 lots**

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The Lewiston-Auburn Area (L-A as it is locally known) continues to be at the cross roads of many positive development trends, in spite of experiencing the downturn associated with the recent recession.

The recent uplift in commercial real estate activity is correlated with an overall positive attitude in the two communities that share frontage on the Androscoggin River about 25 miles north of Portland.

Community spirit has recently been given a shot in the arm by the growing success of the "Dempsey Challenge", a combined bike and road race, sponsored by Lewiston's native son, Patrick Dempsey, a movie actor of great renown. For the past 3 years Dempsey has brought world-class cyclists to the Lewiston/Auburn area to raise funds for the Patrick Dempsey Center for Cancer Hope and Healing at Central Maine Medical Center. The event now draws over 4000 participants and has raised over \$1 million in 2011 as well as the two previous years.

Recent stories in the Wall Street Journal, New England Cable News and the Boston Globe have focused Lewiston and Auburn not as mills towns that are crumbling but as resurgent communities where brick factories are being converted to modern offices, entertainment venues, and shops. Lewiston is also the home of four colleges including Bates College, one of New England's most highly respected academic institutions. L-A is also provides a venue for L/A Arts, the Lewiston-Auburn Film Festival, and over 400 cultural events sponsored annually.

Business development is also returning to the commercial areas on the outskirts of Lewiston and Auburn. In Auburn, a foreign trade zone, U.S. Customs clearance at the inter-modal freight facility, international rail freight connections, and an airport expansion plan have all made this area the fastest growing "inland port" in New England.

Most recently in this area, the new Kitty Hawk Business Park has been given state and local approval for 8 lots ranging from 2 to 4 acres. The site, abutting I-95, is already under construction. Zoning is flexible to allow for anything from a hotel to business and light industrial.

With well-established quality work force, L-A has become an attractive site for re-location and expansion of many businesses including TD Bank, which has based its largest back office operation in the northeast in Lewiston.

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