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Scarborough development remains bright: Town holds 11 ground breakings/ribbon cuttings

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Scarborough has been actively pursuing new commercial development for the last twenty years. The Scarborough town council created the Scarborough Economic Development Corp. (SEDCO) as a private non-profit corporation as an independent advocate for business in 1985. Since its relatively humble beginnings, SEDCO now employs two full-time staff members.

In addition to the typical responsibilities of an economic development office such as ours, SEDCO offers a diverse range of services to prospective clients including, but not limited to, assistance in working with local and state agencies and for the smaller entrepreneur, business counseling.

Since 1985, the number of Scarborough businesses has grown from 400 to over 1,300. Up until now, the community and SEDCO have not targeted specific industries and businesses, but rather have looked to attract a diverse group, including large and small retail, hi-tech, biotech and precision manufacturing, back office and hospitality. Scarborough has joined forces with the communities of Portland, South Portland and Westbrook to promote the Greater Portland region within the national and international biotech community.

The future for business development in Scarborough remains bright. We had eleven ground breakings and ribbon cuttings this summer. Large retail development is on pace with over 1.5 million s/f of new retail development over several projects.

The Gateway at Scarborough, the future home of Cabela's, a large national outdoor outfitter, is under construction and will anchor a mixed use development of approximately 350,000 s/f of retail, office and hotel development ultimately employing some 850 to 1,000 workers. Cabela's has estimated some 3-4 million visitors per year. The Gallery at Scarborough, a retail development of approximately 650,000 s/f is currently home to a new Lowe's home center, and will soon be joined by a Super Wal-Mart, Staples and several restaurants and other retailers. Scarborough Village Sq., an approved retail development of approximately 120,000 s/f is fully permitted and will hopefully begin construction soon on U.S. Rte. One. This project is joined by several new and redone smaller retail, office, and mixed use developments along U.S. Rte. One.

On the non-retail side, the town of Scarborough has partnered with the Enterprise Business Park, a 35 lot, high-end professional, technical and service-oriented park. Currently there are seven completed buildings, one under construction and one lot under contract. The Enterprise Business Park is adjacent to Scarborough's Professional Gateway, 333 acres of privately owned land bordering exit 42 of the Maine Turnpike, the Haigis Parkway, and Payne Rd. The town has invested \$10 million in infrastructure to serve this area.

All of this activity is fueling potential job growth in Scarborough. Latest estimates indicate a 33% increase in job growth over the next ten years compared to projections of 18% for Cumberland County as a whole.

Although residential growth is not within the purview of SEDCO, it is an important aspect of the community. We continue to see new single home subdivisions and work has begun on one of Maine's first "Smart Growth" communities. From 1990 to 2004 Scarborough has averaged 156 single-family homes per year. Future changes earmarked in Scarborough's recently updated comprehensive plan will allow for more densely populated developments that provide environmentally positive aspects such as accessible open space. Comparing current estimates of population with the 2000 census indicates that residential growth will remain strong in Scarborough. We are now the ninth largest municipality in the state, and will likely grow to seventh or eighth by 2010.

We believe that Scarborough remains the premier location in Maine for business development of all types. The town is currently working to open new areas within the community for industrial and commercial development. This proactive future planning, coupled with the vibrant economy of Greater Portland, along with Scarborough's excellent residential environment and easy access to Boston and Southern New England, Quebec, the Canadian Maritimes and beyond will hopefully continue Scarborough's rapid, but well-planned growth.

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