"Invest in Tomorrow" Forum set for March 29; event to feature release of Aroostook Community Assessment

Aroostook County - One of three regional forums planned for the state to discuss community solutions to advance economic opportunity and address childhood poverty is set for Aroostook County on Wednesday, March 29, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. at Northern Maine Community College in Presque Isle. The event, Invest in Tomorrow: Solving Child Poverty is Everyone’s Business, will also be the venue for the public release of a recently completed and comprehensive community assessment for Aroostook County.

The public is invited to participate in the forum. It will feature state and regional experts leading discussion on what can be done to improve the future for Maine kids, our community, and our economy.

"Taking steps to create opportunity and reduce barriers to employment for Maine families will improve their lives and contribute to the strength of Maine’s communities and our economy," said Dana Connors, president of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce and former Presque Isle City Manager. "The County was selected as one of the three places in Maine to hold one of the forums because of the region’s unique attributes and innovative spirit. Our goal is, with the feedback we receive in Aroostook - and at our two other forums in Piscataquis and Androscoggin Counties, that we will start to answer questions and develop solutions to challenges that demand our collective attention and action.

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce is one of ten state and local organizations that have come together to host the regional forum in Aroostook County. Other partners include the John T. Gorman Foundation, Maine Children's Alliance, Maine Community Action Association, Maine Community Foundation, Maine Equal Justice Partners, Aroostook County Action Program, Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce, Northeastern Workforce Development Board and United Way of Aroostook.

The Invest in Tomorrow event was selected as the forum to release the findings of the newly completed, comprehensive and objective analysis of community needs and assets, as it will help provide valuable context for the discussion. The assessment was conducted by consultant JSI, Inc., on behalf of ACAP and collaboratively with key stakeholders and the community-at-large. It is intended for use by the Community Action Program and its partners, as well as the full breadth of other public and private stakeholders, including the community, to explore ways to more effectively leverage activities and resources. More than 1,000 Aroostook residents were engaged in the assessment process from completing surveys to participating in focus group discussions.

County residents are encouraged to participate in the forum. Refreshments will be served and copies of the Aroostook Community Assessment available. Financial assistance for child care and transportation, for those who it would otherwise be a barrier, are available. For more information on the forum or to request assistance, contact Gloria Duncan at ACAP at (207) 764-3721 or gduncan@acap-me.org.

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