



RIDING THE  
COMMUNICATIONS WAVE:  
*Lessons learned from 30 years  
in the trenches*

David Cole,  
Former Commissioner, MaineDOT (2003-11)



MaineDOT 2003:

Revamping  
communications  
and building  
teamwork  
among highest  
priorities.

Communication vital to:

- Getting stuff done
- Telling your story to get more funding

# Top Down Forces Make Effective Communication More Vital Than Ever

- Shrinking funding base
- Increasing use of public-private partnerships (P3)
- Role of process innovation (cheaper, faster, better)
- Transparency in the age of social media



Courtesy of MaineDOT

# Bottom-up Forces Drive Process Too

- Need to integrate land-use, ED, transportation
- Regional distinctions
- Economic drivers
- Need for Context-Sensitive Solutions
- Need for multi-modal corridor planning

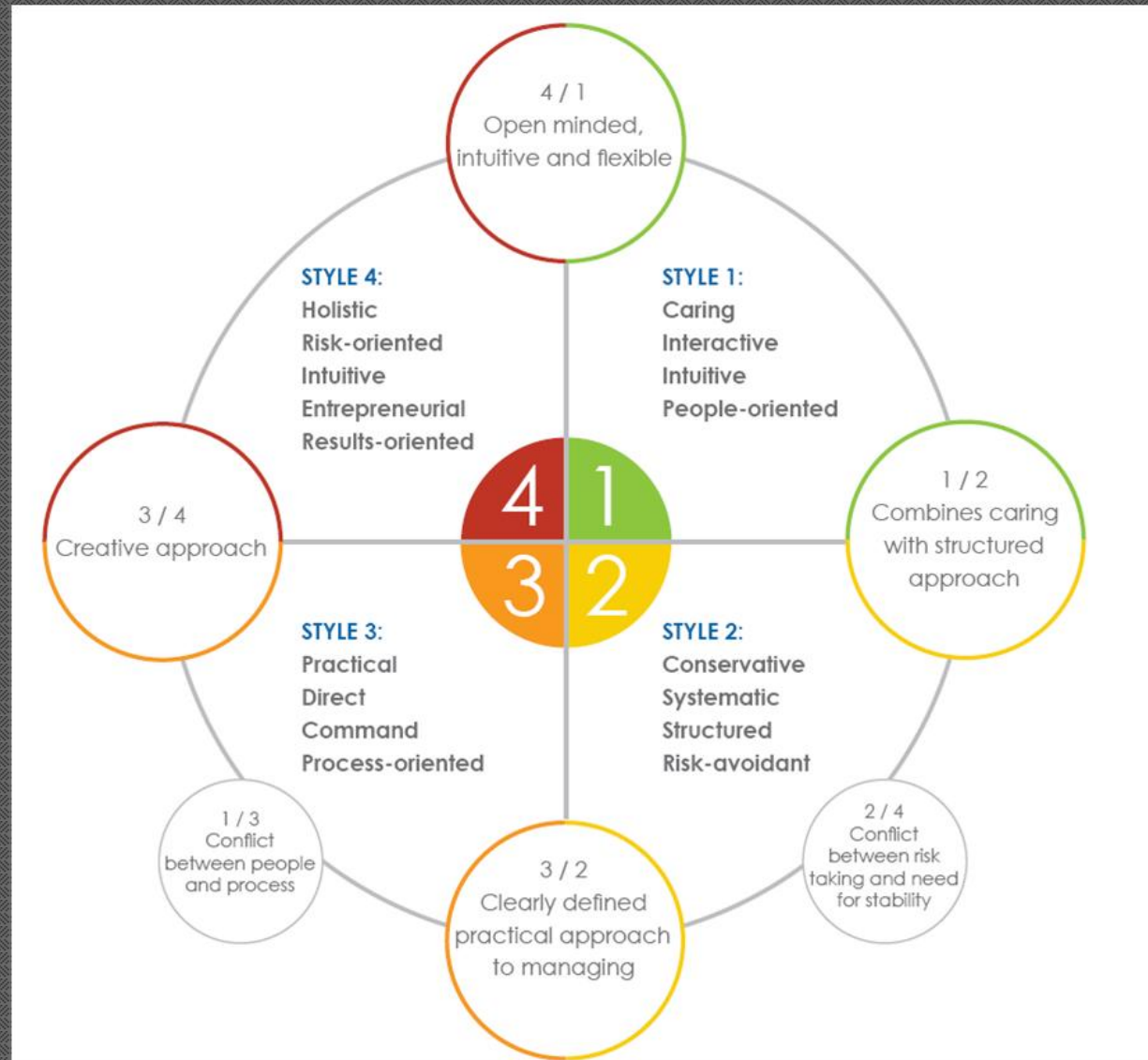


Courtesy of MaineDOT

# Creating a culture of teamwork: Starts with knowing your people



# Learning Type Measure Testing



# The Engineer: Q3 Characteristics

- ✓ Experiments
- ✓ Tests theories
- ✓ Steady
- ✓ Precise
- ✓ Patient with details
- ✓ Efficient
- ✓ Bossy
- ✓ Productive
- ✓ Impatient
- ✓ Interrupts
- ✓ Decisive
- ✓ Independent
- ✓ Dominating
- ✓ Strong willed
- ✓ Sees authority as necessary, but will bypass if forced.

# The Planner: Q2 Characteristics

- ✓ Deductive
- ✓ Likes order
- ✓ Logical
- ✓ Impersonal decision maker
- ✓ Must be treated fairly
- ✓ Moralistic
- ✓ Poor with deadlines
- ✓ Accurate
- ✓ Tends to be overly critical
- ✓ Indecisive
- ✓ Serious
- ✓ Likes tradition
- ✓ Chain of command authority

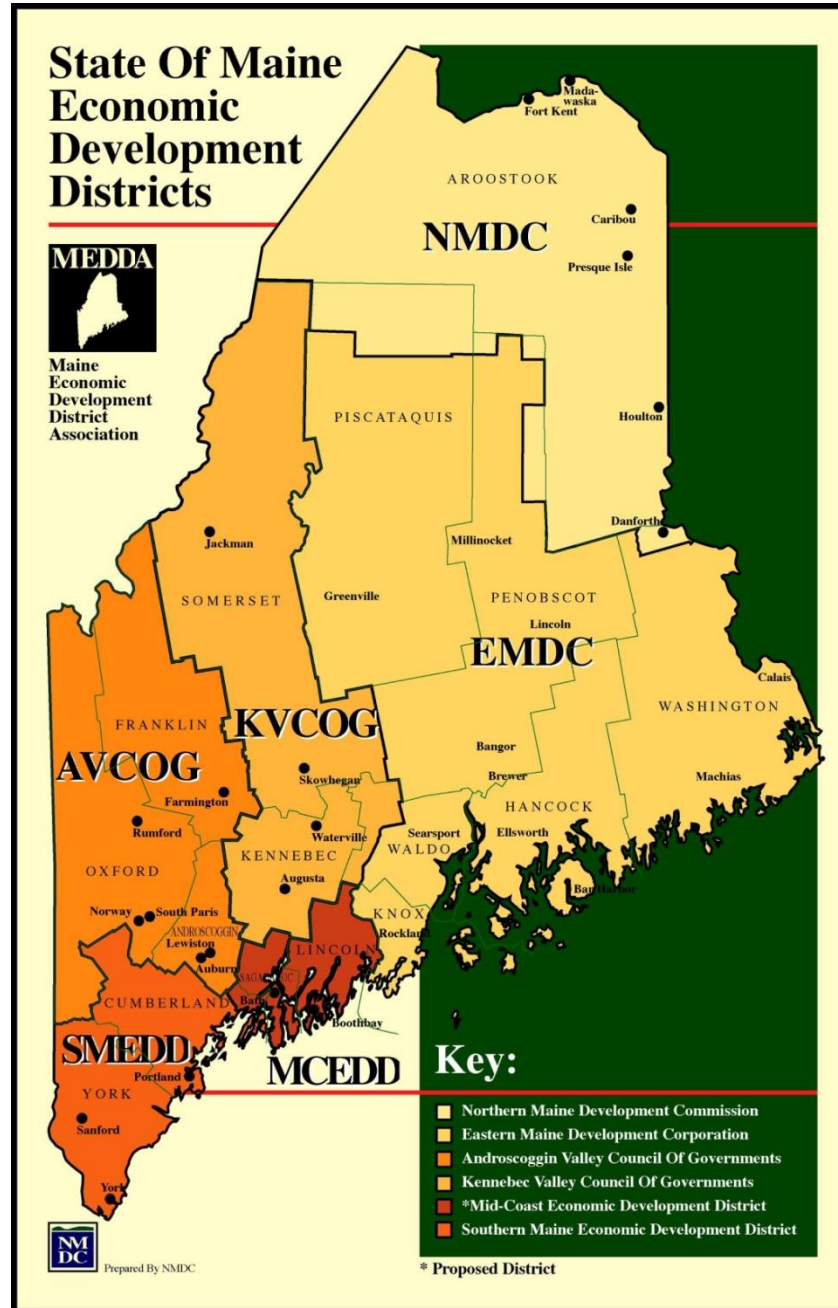


# The CEO: Q4 Characteristics

- ✓ Compares theory and experimental results
- ✓ Evaluates
- ✓ Reaches quick conclusions
- ✓ Risk taker
- ✓ Likes change
- ✓ Questions things
- ✓ Manipulative
- ✓ Dramatic
- ✓ Enthusiastic
- ✓ Ambitious
- ✓ Challenges complacency
- ✓ Undisciplined
- ✓ Tends to disregard authority

External  
Focus:

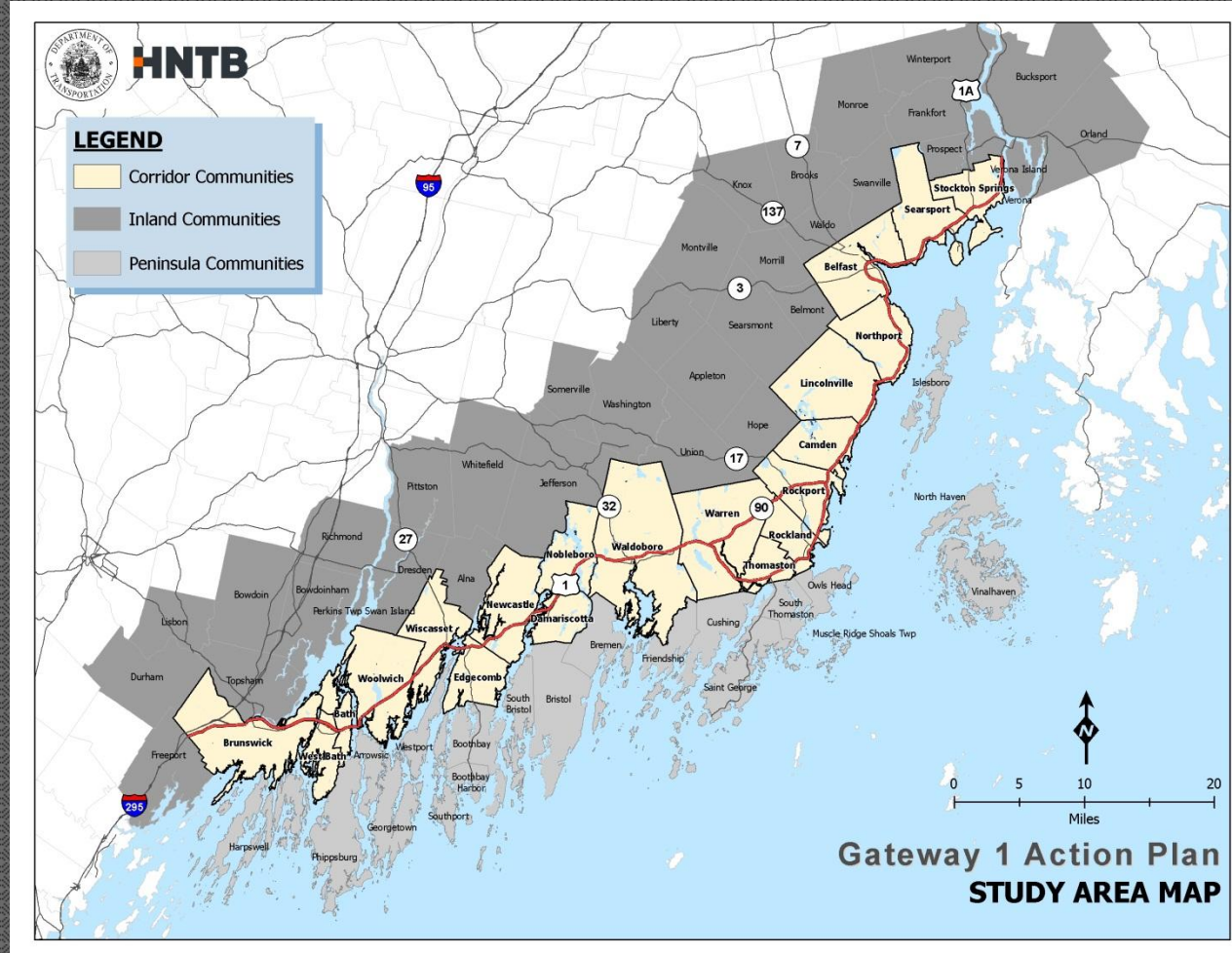
New  
partnership  
with EDDs  
and RPOs.



# Connecting Maine: Five Year Process

- User survey (2003)
- Focus group meetings (2004)
- Regional transportation assessments (2005)
- CREST designations (2005)
- Future visions workshops (2005)
- Regional forums (2005)
- Regional strategic investment plans (2006)
- Public consultation meetings (2007)
- Final draft public comments (2008)

# Gateway 1 Pilot Project



# Calais border crossing – 54 agencies involved : First new border crossing in over 30 years



Waldo-  
Hancock  
Bridge  
Gateway to  
Bar Harbor  
and Acadia  
National Park



June 2003:  
Corroded  
suspension  
cables

Huge  
controversy!  
48 mile detour



Bridge opens in 2006 – 20 national awards  
42 months from concept to completion



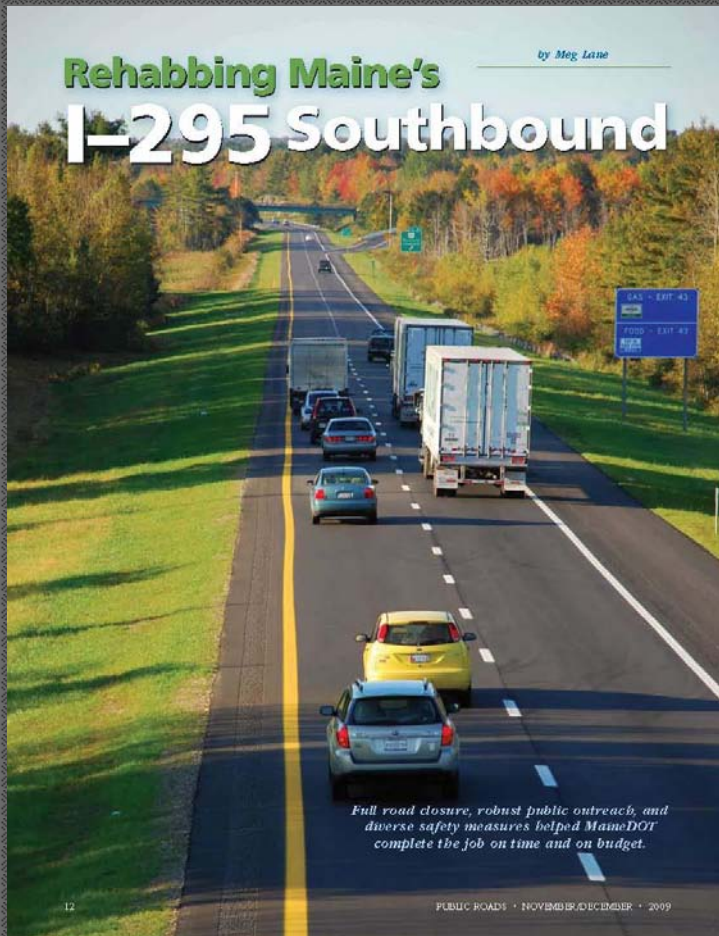
Courtesy of Cianbro Corp.



# Observation Deck (Vertical Trail!)



# 2008 reconstruction of I-295 SB : Gardiner to Topsham



Bold full closure of more than 18 miles of Interstate Highway

Reduced project duration, saved millions, ensured safer travel

Communication key

# Make the media part of your team

Hailed by Central Maine's *Kennebec Journal* as “an example of how to do things right” and praise from key community members.

**KENNEBEC**  **JOURNAL**

# The largest national rail abandonment in over 20 years – 233 miles



# “Save the Rail” Campaign



## SAVE MAINE’S RAILWAY Jobs and Mills Depend on It!



For over 100 years the 151 miles of railway between Madawaska and Millinocket, and the spurs to Houlton and Presque Isle, has sustained jobs and manufacturing in Maine. It is a vital North-South transportation lifeline.



For business and for the environment, rail is the best way to move wood to mills and finished forest products to market. A number of other businesses also depend on rail. Without a solution more than **30,000 transport trucks** will be added to Maine roads. Jobs, mills, and future economic development will be in jeopardy.

### What’s at risk ...

- **19,000 JOBS**
- **\$1.15 BILLION/YEAR IN WAGES**
- **\$6.9 BILLION/YEAR FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY**
- **34% GROSS STATE PRODUCT IN MANUFACTURING**

### COMMUNITIES THAT NEED THE RAIL LINE

Madawaska	Lincoln	Skowhegan
Fort Kent	Jackman	Waterville
Van Buren	Dover Foxcroft	Bucksport
Portage Lake	Woodland	Searsport
Presque Isle	Lagrange	Rumford
Ashland	Old Town	Dixfield
Oakfield	Bethel	Jay
Houlton	Solon	Livermore Falls
New Limerick	Madison	Rockland
Millinocket	Bangor	Casco
East Millinocket	Hampden	Baldwin
Mattawamkeag	Pittsfield	Portland

**THE VOTE IS TODAY. ENCOURAGE YOUR LEGISLATOR TO SUPPORT THE BONDS.  
KEEP MAINE’S RAILWAY LINE WORKING FOR MAINERS!**



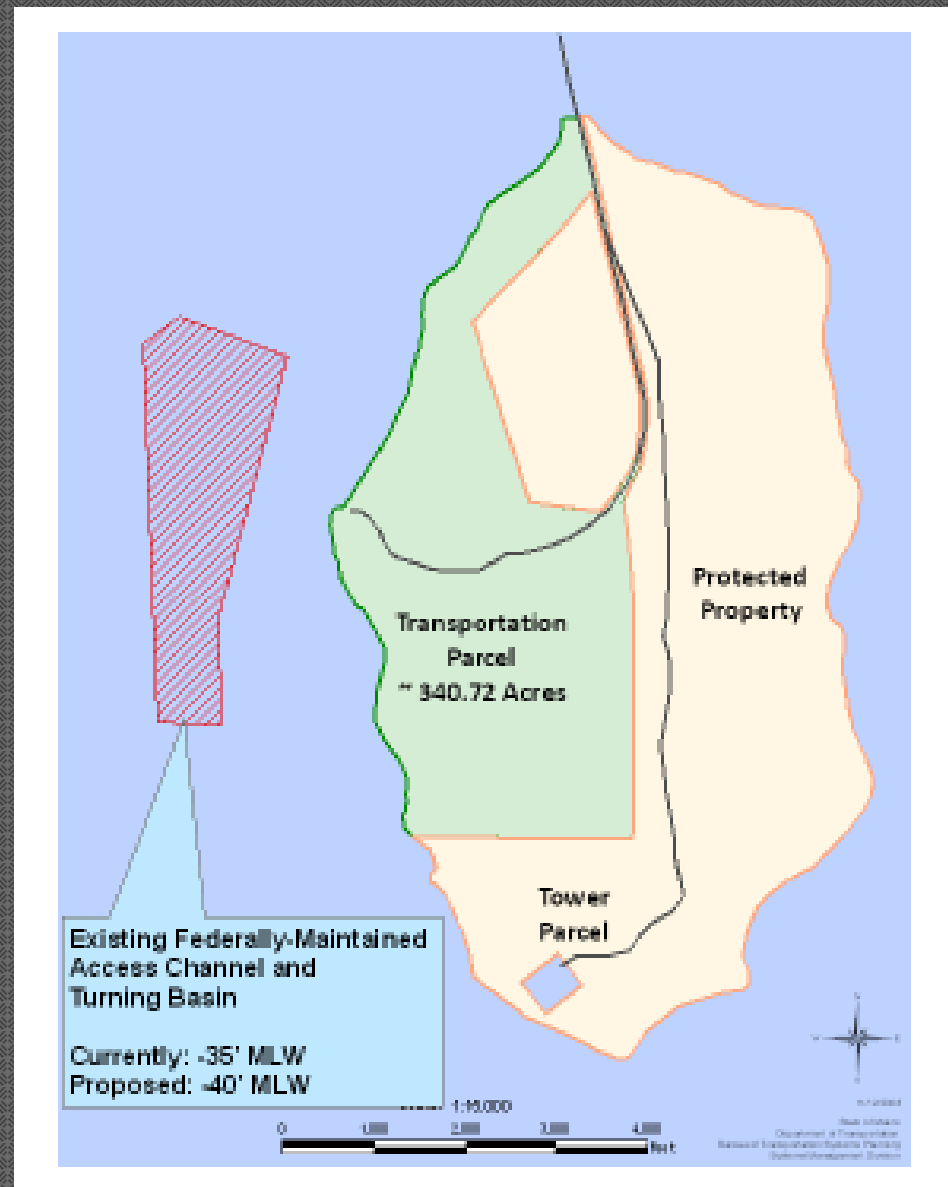
Against all odds, developed and funded a viable business model that preserved the operation



# Sears Island : decades of controversy



2008  
Consensus  
Agreement  
allows port  
expansion and  
conservation





# MaineDOT Productivity Indicators

- First state under Recovery Act to have 100% of road and bridge projects underway (2009)
- First state to put rail in the ground under HSPR (2010)
- Highest rated QA program among all state DOTs
- Twice awarded FHWA's Administrators Award for Teamwork Excellence (2004 and 2009)
- Clean audits

# Funding Success

- Raised unprecedented bonding -- \$738 million
- Maintained gas tax indexing over 8 years
- Awarded \$74 million in TIGER and HSPR funds in 2009-2010
- Leveraged several public-private and public-public partnerships

# Final thoughts...

- Get the term “public relations ”out of your vocabulary
- Don't be afraid to say you're wrong
- The public is smarter than we think
- Don't pull punches, they can take it
- Leadership comes from the top!

