



# *MaineHomeConnection*

Presents

## The Total Home Buying Program



Laura Sosnowski  
Michael Sosnowski  
*Brokers*



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# Potential Home Buyers

## Protecting Your Interests

As a potential buyer, you have more options than ever before in the home-buying process. Today, you can search for real estate online at any time of the day. Property information can be e-mailed to you in seconds, and virtual property tours allow you to preview homes from remote locations.

While the power of these new technologies provides new search options and greater flexibility, many buyers fail to take full advantage of one of the best new developments in the real estate business: *Buyer Representation*.

Working with a Buyer Representative today does not mean incurring additional expense during the buying process. Buyer Brokers are compensated entirely by the sellers in all normal commission agreements in the local MLS. Buyers get all the benefits of representation, but pay none of the costs.

Working with an experienced and knowledgeable broker during the buying process does not mean giving up your freedom nor does it limit your options. The truth is that active representation only enhances your search, providing you with expanded real-time market information and exclusive services.

The broker you choose can have a great impact on your search, your negotiations, and ultimately, on the quality and value of your real estate investment.

We believe informed and educated consumers make the best choices for themselves. Accordingly, we view our role as consultants protecting the interests of our clients, rather than salespeople. In this consultant role we listen to our clients and we strive to provide the best information and market data available. We never put pressure into any decision or situation, but seek to provide the space and objectivity to assist our clients in making the “best” decision.



As buyer's representatives, our job is to protect the financial interests of our clients, so we pay careful attention to property pricing, investment potential, market data, inspection items, financing details and more.

Our focus is to provide first-class buyer services to a select number of clients. We believe in the quality of our client relationships, rather than in the numbers. To provide great service, we customize a plan for working together that best meets the demands of busy schedules or special needs.

Sometimes, that may mean simply providing property addresses of new listings for “drive-bys.” Other times it may mean special showing arrangements and times. Whatever your property needs may be we strive to provide top-notch service.

We not only want to be your Realtors, we want to be the Realtors you tell your friends about. A great deal of our business is referral-based from satisfied clients, which we consider to be a great compliment. We would appreciate the opportunity to serve you.

## About Us

### *A Team of Committed Professionals*

We created *MaineHomeConnection* because of our firm believe that there exists a genuine connection between people, their neighborhoods, their homes and the quality of their lives. Connecting people and their dreams, through their homes, allow us in some small way to give something back to the community. Service is essential to our success - service that sets a new standard.

Our approach to buying & selling real estate is to provide our clients with products and services that give them a competitive advantage in the market. We introduced the **TOTAL HOME MARKETING PROGRAM** as a new way to sell homes. It combines the very best in new technology, innovative marketing and uncompromising service that yields results that can be measured – setting the standard in Southern Maine.

When it comes to buying a new home, first and foremost we start by *listening* to your special wants, needs and dreams. We make every effort to ensue that we provide you with the information you need to make good decisions about neighborhoods, schools and community resources. Only with this intimate understanding do we show you properties. It is with this detailed process in mind that we created and implemented our **TOTAL HOME BUYING PROGRAM**.

### *Business Experience & Real Estate Expertise*



RE/MAX Platinum Sales Award  
2007 & 2008

**Laura Sosnowski**, a native of Chicago IL, but a long-time Maine resident, has a passion for helping people. Whether it was as an owner of her own florist shop in Atlanta or in her current role as a Realtor®, she has always been committed to unyielding personal service. As a Realtor®, Laura has demonstrated a willingness to challenge the status quo. Her dramatic success is clear evidence that the market requires a constant influx of new ideas and approaches.

**Michael Sosnowski** is a consummate business professional. His career spans over fifteen years of international sales & marketing experience with several fortune 500 companies. He brings to Real Estate a level of marketing skill uncommon in the local market. His commitment to new technology and innovative marketing has resulted in many satisfied clients.

Our team, which was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the state of Maine for total sales in 2007 and 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2008, encompasses a complete staff of professionals, including our personal assistant Beth Gain, a full-time receptionist, marketing consultant, legal services and mortgage representatives.

One of the earliest steps in the relocation and home buying process is becoming familiar with the local housing market so that you can make informed decisions about where to buy and what type of home you can get for your money. As your local Realtor you can be assured of obtaining all the necessary area information regarding schools, taxes, housing values and trends - many times often before you even arrive in Maine. If you are not selective in demanding a Realtor experienced in relocation, you could end up with a more inexperienced or even part-time agent who may want to jump right into the home showing phase before you've even gotten acclimated to the area.

# *The Total Home Buying Program*

## *Customized Services*



We believe that satisfying the customer is simply the minimum requirement for staying in business. Our team is constantly working to improve our systems, processes and services to go well beyond the standard level of service in the industry. We have developed a reputation for combining the best technology available and premier service that provides our clients with an advantage in the market. That is why we developed the *TOTAL HOME BUYING PROGRAM*.

Our five-step program includes:

*Prior to finding you a home we work with you identify your needs:*

- ☞ Meet with you to discuss your needs and desires
- ☞ Highlight neighborhoods to determine which are best suited to you
- ☞ Define your interests & needs with the "Home Buyer Questionnaire"
- ☞ Explain Buyer Agency Relationship
- ☞ Provide you with our Personal Buyer Service Guarantee
- ☞ Assist you in Pre-qualifying for Mortgage Purposes

*During the search for the right home, we will:*

- ☞ Launch our detailed *Total Home Buyer Program* action plan
- ☞ Keep you informed of daily updates on newly listed properties via email
- ☞ Ensure that we are available to you by phone and 24 hour pager

*At the time of offer:*

- ☞ Review the Offer to Purchase
- ☞ Explain all conditions and special clauses
- ☞ Represent you in presenting the Offer
- ☞ Present the offer and handle negotiations until we have a conditional agreement

*When we have a conditional agreement, we will:*

- ☞ Ensure that all documents are sent to your Mortgage Representative
- ☞ Assist you in choosing a Lawyer to represent you if required
- ☞ Assist you in choosing a reputable and professional Home Inspector
- ☞ Ensure all conditions are completed in a timely manner

*Once we have a firm & binding agreement:*

- ☞ Stay in personal contact with you
- ☞ Ensure that all documents are prepared for closing
- ☞ Make you part of our **Client For Life** follow-up program

# Deciding Upon A Realtor®

## Advantages



When you have decided to buy a home, the services of a qualified real estate professional are of utmost importance.

The ideal Realtor will have a good working knowledge of local real estate market conditions, be prepared to deliver a high standard of service to customers, and a good agent will save you time and money and aggravation.

*The advantages of working with a Realtor when buying a home includes:*

- ☞ Realtors are experienced negotiators who will manage your offers and counter-offers.
- ☞ A Realtor is familiar with the neighborhood and can give you information on local real estate values, taxes, utility costs, services and amenities.
- ☞ A Realtor is knowledgeable with the entire home purchasing process and can advise you of your legal and financial options as well as recommend appraisal, home inspection and contracting services.
- ☞ A Realtor can pinpoint homes that fit your needs and dismiss those that do not, saving you time.
- ☞ A Realtor has exclusive access to the Multiple Listing Service (MLS). The MLS system allows an agent to access all properties for sale as they come on the market and short-list the ones that are right for you. This not only saves you the time of driving around or surfing the net, but in a highly active market, it can also save you the frustration of losing out on a home.

And Realtor knows the potential problem areas in a home, future development and traffic patterns in an area, and can guide you away from "lemons."

*Should I use a Realtor® to purchase a newly constructed home?*

The advantages of having a Realtor assist you in the purchase of a new home are the same as those for purchasing a resale home. A Realtor can provide you with valuable insight into the market, help you find the perfect home quickly, and provide you with expertise in contract writing, negotiation, and closing assistance.



The builder has a professional real estate representative watching out for their interests. You need and deserve expert representation to watch out for your interests.

Buying a new home is a little more difficult and time-consuming than buying a resale. A Realtor can professional guide you through this process. Realtors have considerable information on different area builders, subdivisions, floor plans, building contracts, etc. There is no financial advantage for your to buy directly from the builder. Builders have a "single-price policy meaning you will be charged the same price whether your interests are represented by an Agent or not. Just as in any resale,

the Seller pays the Buyers Agent fee.

# The Agency Relationship in Real Estate Transactions

## Understanding Your Options



Realtors are governed by the legal concept of "agency". An agent is legally obligated to look after the best interests of the person he or she is working for. The agent must be loyal to that person and fulfill many fiduciary responsibilities. It is important that buyers and sellers understand when an agency relationship exists and when it does not, - and to understand what it means. In real estate, there are 3 different possible forms of agency relationship: [Seller Agency](#), [Buyer Agency](#) and [Dual Agency](#). The following descriptions are provided

by the Maine Real Estate Association.

### *Seller's Agent*

- ☞ When a real estate company is a seller's agent, it must do what is best for the homeowner.
- ☞ A written contract, called a Listing Agreement, establishes seller agency. It also explains services the company will provide, establishes a fee arrangement for the REALTOR'S services and specifies what obligations a seller may have.
- ☞ A seller's agent must tell the seller anything known about a buyer. For instance, if a seller's agent knows a buyer is willing to offer more for a property, that information must be shared with the seller.
- ☞ Confidences a seller shares with a seller's agent must be kept confidential from potential buyers and others.
- ☞ Although confidential information about the seller cannot be discussed, a buyer working with a seller's agent can expect fair and honest service from the seller's agent and disclosure of pertinent information about the property.

### *Buyer's Agent*

- ☞ A company acting as a "buyer's agent" must do what is best for the buyer.
- ☞ A written contract, called a Buyer Agency Agreement, establishes buyer agency. It also explains services the company will provide, establishes a fee arrangement for the Realtor's services and specifies what obligations a buyer may have.
- ☞ Although confidential information about a buyer cannot be disclosed, a seller working with a buyers agent can expect to be treated fairly and honestly.
- ☞ Typically, buyers will be obligated to work exclusively with that company for a period of time.
- ☞ Confidences a buyer shares with the buyer's agent must be kept confidential.

### *Disclosed Dual Agent*

- ☞ Occasionally a real estate company will be the agent of both the buyer and the seller. The buyer and seller must consent to this arrangement in their listing and buyer agency agreements. Under this "dual agency" arrangement, the company must do what is best for both the buyer and the seller.

☞ Since the company's loyalty is divided between the buyer and the seller who have conflicting interests, it is absolutely essential that a dual agency relationship be established in a written agency agreement. This agreement specifically describes the rights and duties of everyone involved and any limitations to those rights and duties.

*Who's Working for You?*

It is important that you understand for whom the Realtor is working. For example, both the seller and the buyer may have their own agent, which means they each have a Realtor who is working for them.

In some instances buyers choose to contact the seller's agent directly. Under this arrangement the Realtor is working for the seller, and must do what is best for the seller, but may provide many valuable services to the buyer.

A Realtor working with a buyer may even be a "sub-agent" of the seller. Under sub-agency, both the listing agent and the co-operating agent must do what is best for the seller even though the sub-agent may provide many valuable services to the buyer.

If the seller and the buyer have the same agent, this is dual agency and the Realtor is working for both the seller and the buyer.

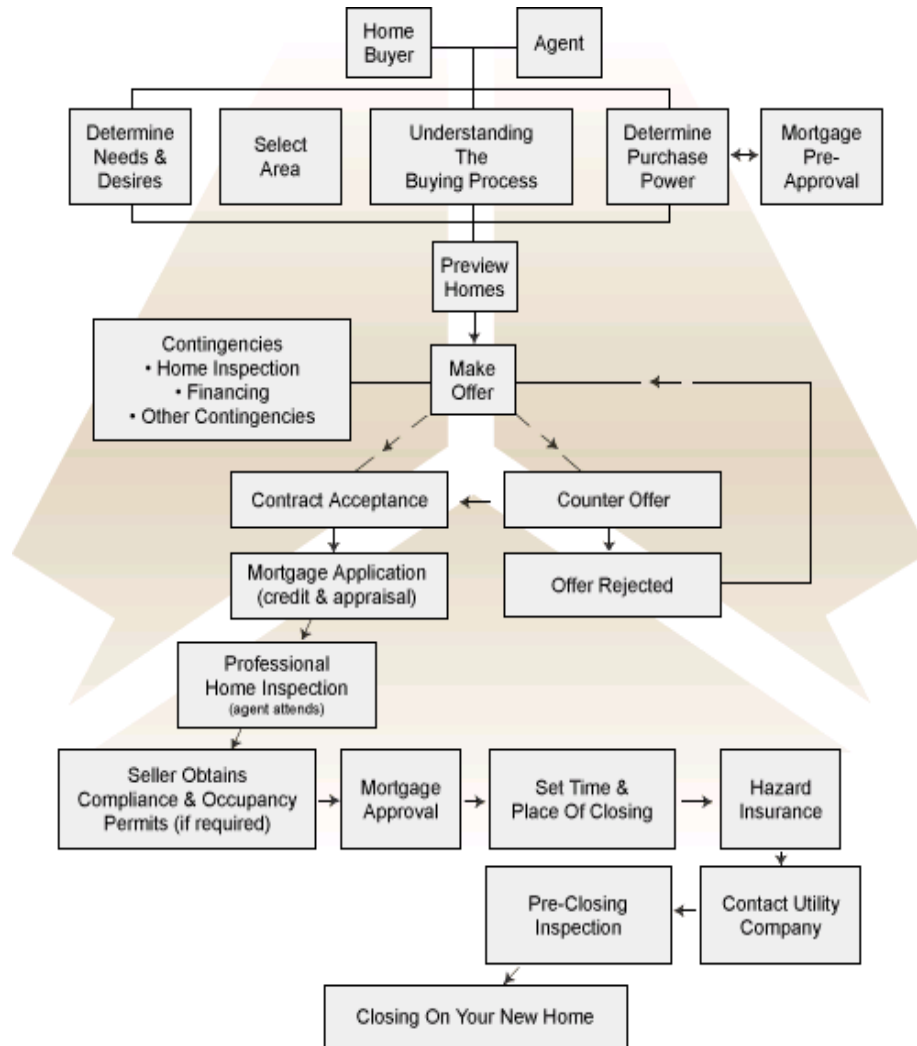
*Advantages of Buyer Agency with [MaineHomeConnection.com](http://MaineHomeConnection.com)*

	<u>Agent</u>	<u>Non-Agent</u>
Arrange property showings	Y	Y
Provide information on taxes and zoning	Y	Y
Maintain confidentiality of information	Y	Y
Disclose material defects on or about property	Y	Y
Disclose material facts	Y	
Point out strengths/weaknesses of property	Y	
Give advice as appropriate	Y	
Negotiate best price and terms	Y	
Provide comparable sales information	Y	
Prepare a market analysis	Y	
Present price range and suggest strategy	Y	
Disclose motivation of seller if known	Y	
Work in the best interest of the client	Y	



# The Home Buying Process

## Understanding the Basics



# Customary Closing Costs

## Maine Real Estate



Closing costs in Maine are fairly simple and straightforward. Below is a review of the typical costs paid by both the buyer and the seller.

The State Sales Transfer tax is required to be split evenly by law.

### *Seller*

Real estate sales fee  
Document preparation for Deed  
State Transfer Tax\*  
Loan fees (per contract)  
Payoff all outstanding mortgage  
Accrued interest to lender  
Home warranty (per contract)  
Any judgments, liens, etc.  
Any unpaid Homeowner's dues  
Bonds or assessments  
Water test  
Any delinquent taxes  
Points (per contract)

### *Buyer*

Loan origination fees (Points)  
Document preparation  
Application fee (appraisal & credit)  
Prepaid interest date of funding + 30days.  
Recording charges for buyers documents  
Inspection fees  
MIP (if applicable)  
Homeowners / Fire insurance  
Tax pro-ration (from date of purchase)  
Reserves deposited with lenders  
Home warranty (per contract)  
Title examination  
State transfer tax\*  
Survey  
Pest inspection (per contract)  
Lenders title policy premiums

\* Calculated as \$2.20 Per \$1,000.00 of sales price, for buyer and seller

# Local Market Prices

## Selected Communities - Cumberland & York Counties

2008 Full Year Sales Results & Statistics  
000's omitted

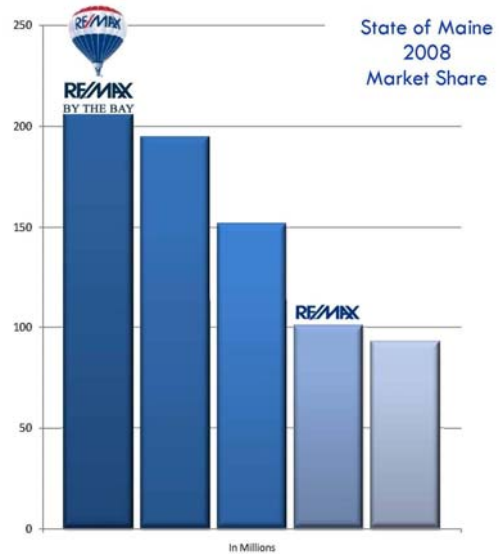
% Change  
2008 vs 2007

City or Town	Type	Units Sold	Med Price	Avg Price	Med DOM	Avg DOM	Units Sold	Med Price
Portland	SF	406	227	268	47	72	83.2	92.6
	Condo	249	207	225	65	105	86.8	94.1
South Portland	SF	195	210	243	35	59	71.9	95.9
	Condo	74	164	181	115	149	103.8	98.8
Cape Elizabeth	SF	94	358	454	74	86	71.2	95.5
	Condo	13	245	244	70	108	76.5	107.9
Scarborough	SF	178	326	349	61	84	80.2	97.6
	Condo	29	202	226	44	54	96.7	97.1
Falmouth	SF	121	430	477	74	104	72	102.6
	Condo	19	206	244	75	106	172.3	82.4
Old Orchard	SF	53	206	212	70	107	81.5	93.6
	Condo	79	170	207	111	184	58.6	85
Freeport	SF	67	320	475	67	97	79.9	101.9
	Condo	12	297	288	157	204	85.7	168.8
Cumberland	SF	81	355	402	73	100	NC	102.9
	Condo	14	320	310	136	162	NC	96.1
Yarmouth	SF	72	290	412	40	72	92.3	77.7
	Condo	13	200	256	41	65	76.5	72.9
County	Type	Units Sold	Med Price	Avg Price	Med DOM	Avg DOM	Units Sold	Med Price
Cumberland	Condo	2426	235	292	66	97	81.4	94
	SF	594	204	219	78	124	88.1	97.1
York	Condo	1605	223	281	88	123	82.1	94.9
	SF	362	198	239	99	156	68.6	96.6

# Market Share Reports

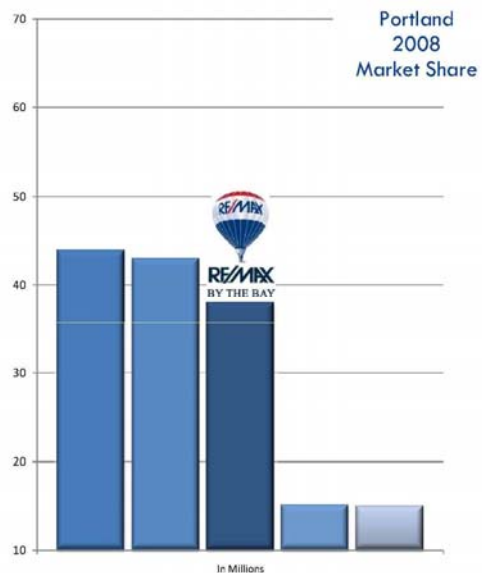
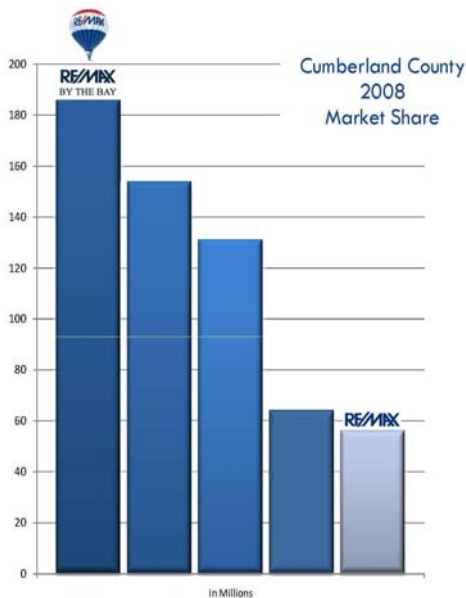
## 2008 Sales Results

RE/MAX By The Bay is the leading Real Estate Company in the local area and the entire state. Our complete market share report is available online, along with sales statistics for the past four years.



Graphs based on dollar volume data from the Maine Real Estate Information System for the period from January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008.

Download prior and current year homes sales statistics. If you do not find what you are looking for, we can prepare custom reports. View reports at: [Maine Home Sales Reports Archive](#)



## Questions & Answers

*Will it cost me anything to be represented by a Buyer's Agent?*

No, there is no cost to be represented. In local MLS-listed properties, the sellers pay our fee at closing in all normal situations. You receive all the benefits of representation but pay none of the costs. Excluding the transaction fee, there are no hidden fees or costs.

*I like to look on my own. Why do I need representation?*

Independence is great, but it doesn't always work well in this market. You have to be constantly connected to stay on top of new listings and hot properties. That's what we provide to our clients. Additionally, being represented allows your interests to be protected. By contacting many different listing brokers in the process of conducting your own private search, you have no true representation. In this situation, no one agent can represent you fully. Furthermore, there may be more pressure on each broker to sell you something, as your loyalty is not fixed. There is a great benefit to working with a trusted professional in a relaxed no-pressure environment. A successful working relationship allows for open and honest discussion, steadfastness and consistency.

*I don't know if and when I will buy anything. Does it make sense to have an Agent?*

Yes, it is still best to have an agent. It doesn't matter where you are in the buying process, you should be represented. You really cannot make an accurate assessment of today's real estate market from the outside. Working with our team, you are never under any obligation to buy anything nor do you incur any costs.

*What are the benefits of working with Michael & Laura and their Team?*

We provide consultative services and a no-pressure environment so that you have the time and space to make the best decisions. We are always watching the market and we are right on top of any new listings as soon as they become available. As your buyer agent, we provide you with all the information you need, and represent you fully at every step of the way. In every situation you can count on us to be direct, honest and open. If we think that a property is overpriced or a poor investment, we are going to let you know. Because the great majority of our business is referral-based, we want each and every buyer to have a great experience. We truly enjoy finding that perfect property for our buyers. It's a privilege to help clients reach their goals. We like to take the stress out of the process, and as often as possible, make it fun and enjoyable. We are good at this business – our results and our repeat clients are a testament to our success.

*Do I have to sign anything?*

Any good relationship requires a commitment of both parties. At some point in the buying process, you will need to sign something, whether it's a Purchase and Sale agreement or an Appointed Agency agreement. We know firsthand that the best working relationships are the ones that are clearly defined and mutually beneficial. As your buyer's representatives, we will put as much energy into our working relationship as you do. At the same time, we will provide you with the space and the time you need to make any decision. You will not be pressured to sign anything.

*What if I buy a "For Sale by Owner" or discount brokerage property?*

We include FSBO, discount brokerage and unlisted properties as part our thorough property search. We pay particular attention to pricing and disclosure on these FSBO properties, and any purchase and sale agreement we prepare on your behalf stipulates that the sellers pay our fee at closing. Discount brokerage properties regularly participate in the MLS, and many FSBO properties advertise broker participation.

*I have a house to sell. Is this a problem?*

No, in fact as part of the buying process, we can provide you with a market evaluation of your property to let you know how much you can expect to receive from the sale of your home. We can also estimate how long it will take to sell your home. Additionally, we'll provide you with valuable information about how to approach buying and selling at the same time. In a strong market, you don't want to sell your home without having a good plan.

*Can I work with your team as well as other area brokers at the same time?*

No. We have found that the multiple broker situations create too much confusion and conflict. We also do not believe that it serves the best interests of our buyers. We have access to every available property on the market. Some buyers mistakenly believe that if they work with multiple brokers, they will have access to more properties on the market. That's just not true. We work exclusively for our clients, and we dedicate a great deal of time, energy and information to the process. We have found the best results come from exclusive representation.

*What are a buyer's responsibilities in this Buyer Broker relationship?*

Buyers have a responsibility to conduct all real estate discussions and negotiations through our office. Clients should disclose our representation arrangement to other brokers and sales agents at open houses or in the process of obtaining property information.



Laura & Michael Sosnowski  
*MaineHomeConnection & Associates*

970 Baxter Blvd ☞ Portland, ME ☞ 04103  
Office: (207)-553-7505  
Mobile: (207)-807-1902  
Email: [Info@MaineHomeConnection.com](mailto:Info@MaineHomeConnection.com)  
Web: [www.MaineHomeConnection.com](http://www.MaineHomeConnection.com)  
Blog: [www.MaineRealEstateNews.com](http://www.MaineRealEstateNews.com)

