

Rumford, Maine

Profile of the community

Town of Rumford
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The Community



Rumford, Maine is a town on the Androscoggin River in Oxford County in western Maine, located about 154 miles north of Boston, about 63 miles north of Portland, Maine, and about 42 miles northwest of the Lewiston/Auburn cities in central Maine. Founded in 1800, the town has, since 1893, been the site of a major paper mill, currently under the ownership of an investment group called New Page. With a population counted at 6472 in 2005 by the U.S. Census, the town consists of several villages lying in the Androscoggin Valley in the foothills of the White Mountains. The largest village, and the "downtown" part of Rumford, is technically called Rumford Falls, named for the Pennacook Falls just west of town, where the Androscoggin River drops 177 feet over exposed granite ledge. These falls have provided hydropower both for the operation of the mill and for the region's electricity grid. The town was named for Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford, whose portrait can be seen in the Rumford town hall.

Rumford is part of a larger settled area along the Androscoggin, with the town of Mexico (pop. 2939) located on the opposite side of the river. While under separate town governments, the two towns of Rumford and Mexico essentially comprise one single community, both commercially and socially. Other nearby towns tied into the Rumford-Mexico area include Dixfield (pop. 2525), Peru (pop. 1537), Roxbury (pop. 385), Andover (pop. 900) and Byron (pop. 121), providing a regional population base of just under 15,000.

The major road into Rumford and Mexico is Route 2, a state highway stretching from Vermont to Bangor and variously two to four lanes along its distance. State-measured traffic volume has been counted at 10,000 to 12,000 vehicles per day along different sections of Rt. 2 in Rumford. Other major state roads include Rt. 108, running southeast to the Lewiston/Auburn area, and Rt. 17, north to the Rangeley Lakes area. A railroad line terminates at the New Page Mill, part of the Guilford system (now known as Pan Am Railways.) The nearest access to the Maine Turnpike (Rt. 95) is in Auburn. Rumford is the site of an 85 bed hospital with 24-hour emergency care.

The region around Rumford is a major winter vacation destination. A small ski resort, Black Mountain, is located within Rumford, and Sunday River to the west of Rumford, and Sugarloaf, to the north of Rumford, are major ski areas within an hour's drive. The area is also becoming a summer vacation destination, with a 20-mile stretch of the Androscoggin River west of Pennacook Falls suitable for kayaking, canoeing and swimming (but too shallow for motorized craft.) There are several excellent day hike trails in Rumford and the Appalachian Trail passes within a few miles of town.

Recreation and lifestyle



The area features four seasons of recreation, including skiing, snowboarding, snowmobile clubs, swimming, hiking, camping, kayaking, canoeing and ATV clubs. In addition to the benefits for our local residents, the activities attract a steady stream of tourists.

Rumford has its own ski area. Black Mountain of Maine is a small non-profit area, supported by the town as well as by its own revenues, with moderate alpine and world-class Nordic skiing trails. The area has a lodge which has been called one of the most beautiful anywhere. With two fireplaces, expansive views of the slopes, a large deck, exposed beam, the lodge feels rustic, but has all the modern conveniences, including full food service and a pub. Black Mountain is home to world-class collegiate Nordic (cross-country) skiing events on its extensive system of groomed trails. For alpine (downhill) skiing, Black Mountain features 20 different trails as well as a terrain park and night skiing. A short drive away from Rumford, either north or west, are two of the major ski areas of the northeast: Sunday River in Bethel and Sugarloaf in Rangeley. Both areas generate both traffic and jobs for the local economy. In the summer, there is increasing use of the Androscoggin River, ideal for non-motorized craft such as kayaks and canoes. Since the river is too shallow in places for motors, paddlers can have an undisturbed and tranquil float. An Androscoggin River Trail has been established, with several well-maintained boat launches. The River, once one of the most polluted in the country, has been restored to such a clean state that fishing and swimming are allowed.

For those who prefer motorized sports, the area is home to one of the largest networks of groomed snowmobile trails, perfect off-season for hiking or mountain biking. ATV clubs are establishing limited networks as well. The area hosts the yearly Maine Forest Rally, in which sports cars race along twisting forest roads. The Rumford event is one of the most popular on the rally circuit, hosting as many as 100 entrants each year.

For hikers, the area has numerous choices. The Appalachian Trail passes within a few miles of town, and within Rumford's borders are numerous popular day hike trails. Most notable perhaps is Whitecap, now a preserve under the protection of the Mahoosuc Land Trust, where the blueberry picking is unexcelled in late July and early August. Another popular day hike is to the fire tower on Mt. Zircon. A local "Peak a Week" club organizes regular excursions to the top of local hills and mountains. Options for golfers include a course in Mexico and a new world-class course nearby in Newry, near Sunday River.

Local government

**Town governance:**

Rumford has a town manager/selectboard form of government with the board meeting twice monthly and a yearly town meeting open to all voters in the Spring. Town hall is open weekdays from 8 am to 4 pm and offices including town manager, town clerk, tax collector, assessor and code enforcement officer can be reached at (207) 364-4576.

Town services:

The town has full-time, 24-hour police and fire services, professionally staffed. The town has a municipal sewer and water district serving most of the commercial and residential districts and a regional solid waste facility in Mexico. There is weekly curbside garbage pick-up. A Parks Department maintains a recreational area – Hosmer Field - with facilities from everything from baseball to ice skating to skate boarding.

Schools:

Schools have recently regionalized in the Western Foothills regional district, stretching from Buckfield to Rangeley. The local high school, Mountain Valley, with enrollment about 600, is located in Rumford. There is also a regional trades school, Region 9, instructing secondary and post secondary students in professional skills from truck driving to forestry.

Regulatory environment:

Compared to many New England towns, the regulatory environment is light. Local ordinances include the 2003 editions of the ICC Building codes, the National Fire and Life Safety Code, federal Flood Zoning, and a special zoning area to protect the wellheads of the town's water supply. Other restrictions are minimal, although new business must go through a Site Plan review process to be sure traffic and neighborhood impact are managed properly. There are no restrictions as to where a business may locate, and minimal controls on the size or shape of the buildings or lots.

Taxes:

Property taxes are lower than in most communities, due to the presence of the paper mill. The mill rate in fiscal 2007 was 18.77.

The local economy



The Rumford area has an incompletely developed economy with many opportunities for new business. A recent example of this is the successful opening in 2007 of the Marden's Discount chain at the River Valley Plaza, which filled a needed slot and has drawn steady volume since its opening. The engine of the local economy remains the local paper mill, now called New Page, with approximately 1,000 employees receiving proportionately high, union scale, wages. Recent census data shows approximately a quarter of the town's workforce employed at New Page or other manufacturing jobs. Two other drivers of the economy include Sunday River Ski area, which provides seasonal jobs to hundreds of Rumford workers, and the healthcare sector, including Rumford Hospital and social service agencies, which with educational employment, provides work for about a fifth of the area's workforce. The area is resource-rich, with plentiful wood and energy-generating potential, and many manufacturing niches exist to be filled. Due to transitional factors including the downsizing of the paper mill work force and the arrival of Wal-Mart, the area is also lacking in many obvious retail businesses, from shoe stores to ethnic restaurants to certain kinds of national brand name fast food outlets. With a regional population of 15,000 year round and up to 50,000 with seasonal increases, many additional kinds of retail and service businesses could thrive in this area. With a workforce seasoned by a century of hard work on farms, in the forests and in the mill, new businesses will find a capable, disciplined, and hard working group of employees. Training programs, too, are available for the acquisition of new skills. Contact our Economic Development Committee for more information. New businesses will find low property prices, low commercial rents, low property taxes and a business friendly town government and community.

A Demographic snapshot



Rumford/Mexico combined area demographic summary

2000 US Census Data
Total population: 9622
Median age: 40.7

Age breakdown:
Under 5: 291
5 to 65: 7365
Over 65: 706

Median income: \$27,869
Median family income: \$33,768
Per capita: \$16,553

How may we help you?

The Economic Development Committee was formed in June, 2009 with the mission to bring “new jobs, new investment, new business” to Rumford and the surrounding communities. The town government of Rumford is committed to making the local economy grow and welcomes your interest.

With a diverse membership and varied skills, the Committee can offer you the information and support you need to locate your business here.

Please feel free to contact us through the town or individually for any assistance you might need in this regard.

Phil Blampied
Committee coordinator
207-364-3827

Carlo Puia
Town Manager
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Rumford, ME 04276
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Why locate here



"I have traveled in many regions of the country and I have yet to find as rewarding an area than Rumford, Maine for raising a family and enjoying an active and healthy lifestyle"

– Mark Bolduc, P.E.,
President, The Fitch Company

The Fitch Company was established in 1986 as an engineering consulting firm specializing in electrical, instrument and process control systems for pulp and paper and related manufacturing industries. Founded by John Fitch, its president and owner since 2004 has been Mark Bolduc. Headquartered in Bangor, the company has branch offices in Gray and Rumford. The company has average annual sales of over \$3.3 million and a staff of 25, with diversification into industries beyond pulp and paper, including the power and chemical industries.

About being in Rumford, Bolduc writes:

"The Fitch Company success has resulted from the diverse staff of hard-working Maine people. The Fitch Company has hired local Maine people and has been able to retain these people in rural areas. We have found that engineers and technicians with technical college degrees have varied interests in outdoor activities including golf, downhill skiing, cross country skiing, hiking, mountain biking, hunting and fishing. Specifically, the Rumford office has had great success attracting young families to the area. The Rumford area is geographically one of the best locations in the country for individuals with an active lifestyle. This area is blessed with beautiful mountains, clean lakes, rivers and streams while being 3 hours from Boston and 70 miles from the Maine coast. As the owner of The Fitch Company, I have traveled in many regions of the United States and have yet to find a more rewarding area than Rumford, Maine for raising a family and maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle.



"I am certain that other technology businesses will find similar results as we have experienced as others relocate to the Rumford area. The internet infrastructure is in place in the Rumford area, allowing the Fitch Company high speed remote access to control systems through North America."

