

Economic Development Opportunities

Promising Market Sectors

The identification of business sectors that are suitable and realistic for Poland is based on a number of factors that are based on the assets in the community, what economic activity is occurring within the region and State and what are the industry sectors of tomorrow. In light of these factors, we developed the following listing of promising economic development opportunities for Poland, based on the following four criteria: 1) industries and businesses that build on existing local and regional business clusters and strengths; 2) industries and businesses that build on emerging regional business activities and clusters; 3) small business entrepreneurs that compliment the local environment and culture; and 4) industries in new emerging business clusters in Maine and New England.

1. Existing Local and Regional Clusters and Strengths:

a. Bottled Water

There are several important business clusters within Poland and adjacent communities that fit this criterion and pose significant opportunity for growth in Poland. The Town possesses a significant resource in its groundwater aquifers. Clearly the continued growth of Poland Springs Water Company and other related businesses should be considered a top priority for the community. This business and the Town of Poland have significant brand recognition in the bottled water marketplace, which could be capitalized on by the Community.

b. Resort Hotel/Tourism Oriented

In it's hey day, the Poland Springs Inn was one of the most desirable destination resorts in the northeast. Due to re-emergence of destination resort hotels in the tourism industry, we believe that there is a tremendous opportunity to grow and enhance this facility to capture this growing market opportunity. If coupled with recreation and nature based tourism opportunities, this facility could regain its prominence in the region.

2. Emerging Regional Business Clusters:

a. Transportation and Logistics

Based upon Poland's rail assets and its location adjacent to the developing industrial park in Auburn, there is a tremendous opportunity to capture new businesses that are involved in transportation and logistics. Currently, New England Public Warehouse has a facility in the northeastern section of town.

b. Back Office/Telecommunications

The back office and telecommunications related sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in the Central and Western Maine region, with multiple facilities in Lewiston, Auburn and Oxford. Back office opportunities exist in banking, insurance, medical administration, retail, travel management and third-party sales. Companies in these sectors require advanced telecommunications, affordable real estate and a capable workforce.

c. Manufactured Housing/Building Trades

The Oxford County region has developed into one of the largest clusters of manufactured housing builders and building trades companies in the Northeast. Based upon Poland's strategic location in close proximity to that cluster - close to major highways and possessing the rail asset - there is a natural opportunity to attract and grow this sector in the community.

d. Home Products/Fine Furniture

As a compliment to the manufactured housing and building trades sectors, Poland would be an ideal location for home furnishing and fine furniture businesses. While not currently a robust industry in New England, there are some successful businesses in this sector in Maine. New business in Poland could be successful if aligned in the supply chain of existing building trades or home products businesses.

e. Retirement Communities

The retirement/senior housing sectors is another rapidly growing business sector in Maine's economy. Based upon Poland's natural and recreational assets and location in proximity to the major healthcare and service centers in Lewiston and Portland, there is a promising opportunity to attract retirement communities and related businesses.

3. Entrepreneurs that Compliment the Local Environment and Culture:

a. Artisans/Craftmakers/Antiques

Maine has a significant cluster of small business artisans and craftmakers that play a significant role in the economy. Many of these small entrepreneurs are making beautiful products in their homes and garages and sell them at multiple venues. In addition, the region contains numerous antique dealers. Based upon the large volumes of tourist traffic on Route 26, we believe that there is an opportunity for Poland to develop an artisan/crafts/antique center that will become a destination attraction.

b. Ecotourism/Recreation Operators

Based upon Poland's multiple lakes and ponds, large tracks of land and large volume of tourism related traffic passing through the community, opportunities abound for small business entrepreneurs in the recreation/ecotourism business. Businesses that provide canoe, kayak and biking tours and rentals in the summer and fall, and cross-country and snowmobiling in the winter months should be successful.

c. Commerce/Specialty Retail

There is a general lack of commercial businesses and retail establishments in the community to support local residents, summer visitors and pass-through travelers. Restaurants, banks, and specialty retail establishments like small drug stores, grocery and other shops would be successful in the community.

4. Industries in New Emerging Business Clusters:

There are several emerging business clusters in Maine and New England that may hold future promise for Poland as follows. However, the attraction of these industries will be dependent on the State's ability to continue to develop supportive infrastructure for these emerging industry sectors.

a. Biotechnology (Agricultural Products)

b. Radio Frequency/Digital Electronics

c. Information Technology (Computer Software)

d. Advanced Wood Composites

e. Environmental Technology