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#### Staff changes at NMDC

CARIBOU - Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) is proud to announce the hiring of Robyn Bonville as accountant. The Mapleton native brings more than 10 years of experience to the position.

Bonville graduated from the University of Maine Presque Isle with a Bachelor of Arts in accounting in 2002.

## Cedar log home manufacturer has high praise for Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership



Katahdin Cedar Log Home CEO David Gordon shows off a sample of the company's manufacturing technique to, from left, Bob Dorsey, president of Aroostook Partnership for Progress, Dana Delano, project manager Maine MEP and Dave Spooner, PTAC coordinator for NMDC.

OAKFIELD - The Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) received some good PR this week when David Gordon, CEO of Katahdin Cedar Log Homes, addressed the crowd at the Maine Marine Trades Association (MMTA) meeting held at the Owls Head Transportation Museum near Rockland.

A week earlier Gordon gave a tour of his sawmill complex in Oakfield to representatives of the Aroostook Partnership for Progress (APP) and Northern Maine Development Commission officials. Before the tour, he spoke about potential growth at Katahdin Cedar Log Homes and the assistance he received from MEP back in 2005, which was also a component of his keynote speech to the MMTA.



"The Maine MEP assistance was worth its weight in gold to me," Gordon said.

Katahdin Cedar Log Homes hired Maine MEP to perform a strategic business and technology assessment of its company. The assessment determined that Katahdin held a strong competitive capable of manufacturing its high quality homes in a way that dramatically shortens the time from order to ownership thus reducing costs.

Gordon said two of the recommendations made after the assessment really hit home. The first was to get a better handle on his true costs and hire a person to deal with the finances, which he did, and engage in other business leaders to have a forum in which to exchange ideas.

"I was a one man band. I did not have a board of directors or something like that and MEP said you need someone to bounce ideas off and you need feedback," Gordon said.

He signed up for an executive CEO group in Portland, which is a group of business owners, who sit around a table for four hours every month with two facilitators.

"The final analysis is most businesses have the same challenges and everybody handles them a little bit differently," he added. "The beauty of this type of board is nobody there has a vested interest in your decision they are just there to help you, period."

Gordon said his involvement with this type of board will be a big focus of his speech to the MMTA.

The assistance from MEP came at a key point for Katahdin Cedar Log Homes, when the company was trying to take advantage of growth potential that resulted from its participation in the television program, "Extreme Home Makeover." And in hindsight the MEP assessment also helped the company weather the economic downturn in the housing industry.

"Maine MEP's project with Katahdin exemplifies the kind of assistance we provide to manufacturers across the state," said Maine MEP Project Manager Dana Delano. "By performing a Business and Technology Strategic Assessment for the company, we were able to identify Katahdin Cedar Log Homes competitive strengths as well as areas for improvement."

Maine MEP offers a broad range of services including: Lean Manufacturing, ISO/Quality Management Systems, Root Cause Analysis and Strategic Planning.

"Most recently, we've added a key new service to that portfolio - Innovation Engineering," said Delano. "Innovation Engineering brings a unique combination of tools. It integrates very creative techniques for idea generation with rigorous quantitative analysis to identify which ideas have the best likelihood of market success. By generating large numbers of new product ideas and then analyzing them against a database of known product lifecycles, we can guide clients to the concepts with the greatest potential sales, thereby reducing the risk of a new venture."

As for the immediate future for Katahdin Cedar Log Homes, Gordon said pre-orders are up 30 to 40 percent for next year and more importantly, so are deposits. At peak operation the mill employees more than 80 people in Southern Aroostook.

For more information at Maine MEP services in Aroostook and Washington counties contact Delano at (207) 521-5840 or email [danad@mainemep.org](mailto:danad@mainemep.org).

