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The official publication of the Maine Association of School Business Officials

Summer 2013

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Gratitude overflows after two years at the helm

Wow! Last President's Message.

Thank you all so much for your support and participation in MeASBO these last two years. It has been a pleasure to work with our officers and Executive Committee and be a part of leading this excellent organization. I look forward to continued participation and to seeing MeASBO grow even further in the coming years.

I would also like to extend my gratitude and thanks for the Dave Holden Award. It is humbling and a special pleasure to be recognized by one's peers. Thank you all again.

I am thrilled to welcome Sue Lambert to our Presidency. I know she will be awesome. I wish her and the rest of our incoming officers the best of luck in the next year and beyond.

We have some exciting things on our horizon in the coming months. The Picus report on EPS has been released and forums will be taking place this summer. If you haven't seen it yet you can read it at: [http://www.maine.gov/legis/opla/EPSReviewPart1\(PicusandAssoc%20\)4-1-2013.pdf](http://www.maine.gov/legis/opla/EPSReviewPart1(PicusandAssoc%20)4-1-2013.pdf)]



Kathy Warren

[http://www.maine.gov/legis/opla/EPSReviewPart1\(PicusandAssoc%20\)4-1-2013.pdf](http://www.maine.gov/legis/opla/EPSReviewPart1(PicusandAssoc%20)4-1-2013.pdf).

We are all hopeful that this scrutiny will result in some shifts and changes in educational funding in Maine. I personally would like to see us thinking outside the box, putting students **and** taxpayers first and really looking for some new ideas.

Time will tell if this is possible — perhaps it will be like the living room furniture and all end up back in the same places — but I would like to see the education professionals and legislators give it a

really, really good try.

We have excellent leadership and creativity here in Maine and this would be an excellent place to put it to work.

Perhaps come fall I will put together an article about this for the magazine and report back on the progress of the review process. Stay tuned!

Thank you again for your amazing work for Maine schools.

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MeASBO members elect new slate of officers for '13-14

Sue Lambert, financial director at Maine SAD #49 of Fairfield, will head a new slate of Maine ASBO officers for 2013-14.

Joining Lambert in taking office in July are 1st Vice President Stacie Field, business manager at RSU #72 in Livermore Falls; 2nd Vice President Adam Hanson, business office supervisor at the Auburn School Department; Treasurer Sherrie Small



of SAD #61 in Bridgton; and Secretary Lucianne (Luci) Milewski, business manager at SAD #58 in Phillips.

The new Executive Council will include Diane Boucher of SAD #15, Scott Eldridge of RSU #4, Cathy Messmer of Lisbon, Karla Miller of Augusta, Scott Vaitones of Rockland and outgoing President Kathy Warren of Vinalhaven.

The Tri-State Committee will consist of Boucher, Dean Flanagan of Westbrook, Alan Kochis of Bangor and Kris Pottle of SAD #9.

Deb Roberts of SAD #52 will chair the Certification Committee, joined by Messmer, Miller, Elaine Runyon of Lewiston and Vaitones.

Lambert will lead the Technology Committee, while Vaitones will serve as the MSMA liaison and Jude Cyr of Auburn and Warren will make up the Legislative Committee.

Executive Council meeting

The Executive Council has scheduled a meeting in Auburn on Friday, July 12, in order to plan the schedule for next year's meetings.



Lucianne (Luci) Milewski, center, business manager at SAD #58 in Phillips, was presented her certification as a school business official from Maine ASBO outgoing President Kathy Warren, left, and Deb Rogers, head of the Certification Committee during the association's May meeting.



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MeASBO engages Barker as first administrative assistant

The Maine Association of School Business Officials (MeASBO) has hired Ida Barker of Jay as its first administrative assistant.

"We are very, very excited to have Ida on board with us," said MeASBO outgoing President Kathy Warren. "She has already been a great addition to our team."

Barker's duties include:

- maintaining and updating the membership directory;

- billing dues and maintaining a record of paid and unpaid members;
- receive, sort and distribute incoming and outgoing mail;
- maintain the MeASBO web page;
- book meeting spaces and arrange for speakers;
- support Certification Committee; and
- other related duties.

The payroll and benefits specialist at SAD #52 in Turner, Barker said, "I look forward to working closely with mem-

bers of MeASBO and welcome any suggestions or considerations for a smooth transition."

Barker and her husband, Steve, and youngest son, James, reside in Maine and she enjoys outdoor activities.

She has opened a Post Office box for the association: MeASBO, P.O. Box 5, North Turner, ME 04266. Her telephone number is 225-1007.



Ida Barker

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Transfinder prints best practices book

SCHENECTADY, N.Y. — Transfinder, a provider of transportation management solutions has published a new book by Dan Roberts entitled, *Best Practices in Student Transportation*. The book is designed primarily for district personnel who are responsible for student transportation, but also is invaluable for district business managers and human resource directors responsible for budgets and personnel.

In her review of the book, Gwendolyn Santiago, executive director of the Texas Association of School Business Officials, said, "It is a must-read not only for chief finance officers, but also for chief operations officers and human resources directors.

Roberts said, "This book is a collection of strategies that have proved successful in districts across the country. The concepts were developed through years of dealing with issues and seeking better ways to operate transportation departments.

It is available for \$19.95 at lulu.com.

Warren presented Holden Award

Maine ASBO presented the Dave Holden Award for School Business Official of the Year to outgoing President Kathy Warren at its May 3 meeting in Lewiston. The award includes a \$500 scholarship for Warren to present to a deserving student from her school district: SAD #8 in Vinalhaven.

At SAD #8, Warren is responsible for the management and execution of accounting, purchasing, budgeting, federal grant administration, human resources, facilities and maintenance, and food-service operations for 175 students, 80 full- and part-time employees, a \$3.5 million budget and a 55,000-square-foot school.

Warren initiated and, “with a stellar team,” shepherded to completion the five-year \$14 million conception, design and construction of the largest building project ever to take place on a Maine island.

Working with the Department of Education and the state legislative process regarding “Minimum Receiver” communities, she was able to increase state subsidy revenue 90 percent in 9 years.

A graduate of the Sigma class of Leadership Maine, Warren serves on the planning committee for the Leadership Maine - Education Leaders Experience and is on the board of Many Flags/One Community representing the islands of Vinalhaven, North Haven and Islesboro. She also serve on the Maine Islands Coalition representing Vinalhaven and is a graduate of the Island Sustainability through Leadership and Entrepreneurship (ISLE) program.

Next Tri-State

Next year’s Tri-State Conference will be held at the Sheraton Burlington Hotel & Conference Center in Burlington, Vt., May 14–6.

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THE JOB

Lewiston school gets \$1.8M grant

LEWISTON – Montello Elementary School will use \$1.8 million in new State support to improve student proficiency by double-digit percentages, enhance teacher effectiveness and better engage the community.

The Maine Department of Education announced its award Thursday to the struggling Lewiston school, which joins 10 others across the state – including the Governor James B. Longley School also in Lewiston – that have received significant funding since 2010 through the federal School Improvement Grant program (SIG) to initiate intensive reforms that advance student achievement.

Montello is among Maine's lowest achieving schools, with proficiency levels in all subjects well below district and state averages. The school received an "F" on its State report card last month and in 2011-2012,

only 40.6 percent of its students were proficient in math and reading, a decrease of almost 10 percent from just three years before.

Under the leadership of new principal James Cliffe, who started July 1, schools officials intend to turn their struggles into successes over the three-year grant, using a transformation model of intervention that requires comprehensive curriculum reform, professional development, extending learning time and other locally-set strategies.

Education Commissioner Stephen Bowen said SIG complements Maine DOE's larger commitment to school improvement, spurred by the results of the recent A-F school grades. Other supporting efforts include the launch of a Center for Best Practice, a new school improvement webinar series and a technical assistance plan to help districts graduate every student prepared.

Free IRS forum

A free Internal Revenue Service (IRS) phone forum, conducted monthly with federal, state and local government IRS agents in the Northeast Group, will be held July 9 from 10 to 11 a.m.

Topics covered will be:

How is an employee defined for federal tax purposes?

How do you determine that a worker is an employee or independent contractor?

How should you report the payments of these individuals to the Internal Revenue Service?

What do you do if you can't determine the status as employee or independent contractor?

What do you do if you have not properly classified a worker?

MeASBO members wanting to participate should e-mail susan.m.eiben@irs.gov.

New: laptop choice

AUGUSTA – For the first time since the Maine Learning Technology Initiative began in 2002, schools have made a choice in the solutions they will use for 21st-century teaching and learning.

This fall, 39,457 students and educators will start using Apple's iPad tablet (\$266 per year, per seat with network), followed by 24,128 using Apple's MacBook Air laptop (\$319 per year, per seat with network) and 5,474 using the HP ProBook 4440 laptop which runs Microsoft Windows 7 (\$286 per year, per seat with network).

Those figures are not final as orders – including those for most of Maine's Career and Technical Education centers – are still trickling in.

Teachers in schools that went with Apple's iPad will also receive a MacBook Air to use over the four-year contract.



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Obamacare timetable puts squeeze on

ACA not the Zombie Apocalypse, neither is it 'affordable'

With Jan. 1, 2014, looming, many of the major provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) are upon us, accompanied by the fear of their impact.

But school business officials should, first, not fear the ACA like it's the Zombie Apocalypse and, second, stop searching for the affordable part.

Because the ACA is a sweeping reform that is going to impact everyone, we all must take action.

With the pending changes, we have prepared a benchmarking tool to help financial officers compare their progress in understanding and complying with the law. This latest update provides a checklist, tips and a look ahead on market trends.

For a more in-depth analysis of ACA, MeASBO has featured articles in the past few issues detailing certain provisions ranging from fines to plan designs, requirements and reforms specific to Maine.

The working assumption is that every school district is considered a large employer with more than 50 full-time-equivalent (FTE) employees and that the schools offer health insurance and have met all the requirements to date. These requirements include providing the Summaries of Benefits and Coverage (SBC's), caps on Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs), expansion of women's preventative health, W-2 Reporting, and the expansion of coverage for dependents up to age 26.

ACA Tip: The Employer Fine will not impact many schools.



- The fines against an employer are only triggered if a full-time employee applies for an individual health insurance plan through the state's exchange and qualifies for a federal subsidy.

- As long as a school offers qualified health insurance to all employees working more than 30 hours and their contribution to the single premium is less than 9.5 percent of their gross income as reported on box 1 of their W-2 then they will not be eligible for a subsidy.

- Is the school compliant with ACA's definition of a full-time employee? Business managers should make sure they set your minimum number of hours to 30, with waiting periods no longer than 90 days for all classes: Union and Non-Union.

2013 & 2014 Compliance Checklist

- Employee Notice of Exchange: Schools must supply a notice to all employees about ACA's health insurance exchanges. Model notices can be found on www.DOL.gov.

- ✓ New hires must receive the notice within 14 days of their start date.

- ✓ Current employees must receive the notice by Oct. 1, 2013.

- Update COBRA notices to include information about the exchanges. Schools must comply by Oct. 1, 2013.

- PCORI Fee (Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute): If a school has a fully insured plan then the insurance carrier pays the PCORI fee for it. However, if it has a self-insured plan, including a health reimbursement arrangement (HRA,) it will have to pay the fee. If its plan year ended between Dec. 1 and 31, 2012, then it will have to pay the fee before July 31, 2013.

- ✓ For 2012 the fee is \$1 per covered life. Fees increase to \$2 for 2013 plan years and will be indexed for inflation in 2014 and beyond.

- Affordability Audit: Is the single contribution required by any full-time employee more than 9.5 percent of their income as reported in box 1 of

their W-2?

- Has the school set up an internal committee or chosen an internal point person to help keep it on track?

ACA Tip: Using Variable Hour Employee Definition

If a school has a new employee and, based on the facts and circumstances surrounding their hire, it cannot be determined if the employee will exceed the 30 hours per week, the school may be able to use the variable-hours definition to deter-

Many complex market trends will impact the way schools interact with health insurance as consumers of health services.

mine eligibility. It consists of a three- to 12-month look-back measurement period to determine eligibility. It is then followed

by a stability period equal in length to the look-back measurement period in which the employee would be eligible. The employee would have to complete their waiting period at the end of the measurement period if it is determined they have met the full-time 30 hour requirement.

Trends

Many complex market trends will impact the way schools interact with health insurance as consumers of health services.

- Emphasis on Wellness & Employee Engagement.
- Defined Contribution Plans.
- Private Exchanges – Online Enrollment Benefit Stores.
- Rise in Consumer-driven Health Plans (CDHP).

With Jan. 1, 2014, drawing near, many of the major provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) are staring us in the face:

- √ Health Reimbursement Arrangements (HRA)
- √ Health Savings Accounts (HSA)

Do you know?

In 2014, schools can vary the employee's contribution up to 30 percent for participation in Wellness programs. If a school takes advantage of the change, it should be careful not to exceed the 9.5-percent income threshold in its variance in premium.

Danger Ahead – The 'Cadillac Tax'

Schools have been spared some critical ACA provisions until 2015 and beyond. Those provisions include the potentially budget-busting 2018 "Cadillac Tax" that would require a 40-percent tax if plans are deemed too costly. The threshold for the annual premium of a single plan is \$10,200 and \$27,500 for a family plan. Any excess premium would be subject to the 40-percent tax.

The potential impact of the Cadillac Tax and the preparations needed to head it off requires its own in-depth analysis. Schools that will be negotiating new three-year contracts in 2015, 2016, or 2017 need to think about how they can design contract

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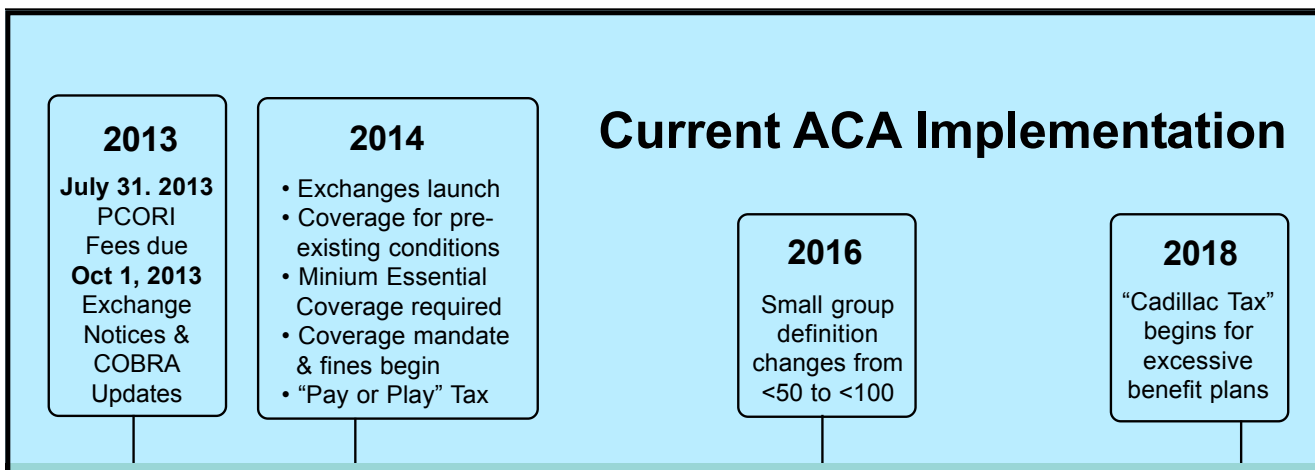
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language that would help offset their risk and/or limit the impact of the 40-percent tax and the damage it can pose to budgets.

Schools that fail to plan ahead will be caught off guard when it comes time to pay.

Deep Breath – Help Is Out There

The ACA regulations are complex and evolving. It's important to use

Collaboration is important as everyone shares a collective stake in mitigating the impact of these changes.

the buddy system. Keep peers informed by sharing articles, analysis, presentations, etc. Collaboration is important as everyone shares a collective stake in mitigating the

impact of these changes.

People should look towards experts in the industry such as attorneys, carriers and insurance brokers, and ask to join their newsletters or invitation lists for upcoming seminars.

ACA is coming. Are you ready? ...

Chad Cote is an employee benefits account executive at Clark Insurance.

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Beware: PBX fraud invading schools

By Beth McCarthy

Scams against Private Branch Exchange (PBX) voice systems are becoming increasingly common and schools with those systems are not immune.

In this fraud, unauthorized users gain access to a user's phone system and place large amounts of international calls, which get billed to the user.

FairPoint Communications has shared the following practices schools and others can employ to help protect their phone systems from these types of scams. It's important to remember that while a voice and data provider can supply assistance, the steps a school takes to secure its PBX are paramount in stopping this fraud.

What a school can do to prevent PBX fraud:

- Use high-strength passwords
- Unauthorized users can gain



access to a PBX by breaking password codes. Make sure all of the users change passwords from their default settings, use the maximum amount of characters available and ensure there is enough variation

in those passwords.

- Use digit dial block.

If the school does not need to make international calls and its PBX has the capability to do digit dial blocking, the administrator can prevent "901" or "9011" from being dialed to access outside lines for international calls. Check the capabilities of the PBX to determine if it supports this feature.

- Do not transfer inbound callers.

Notify users not to transfer any callers to an open line, or to any number that begins with the school's outside line code, normally 9 followed by a 0 or 001.

- Disable the remote call-out feature.

Many systems allow users to connect to an outside line after dialing into their voicemail box. If a school does not require this functionality, FairPoint recommends disabling this feature in the system.

- Disconnect the remote maintenance line.

Many systems have a phone line

Continued on page 23

O'Connor

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Maine school just one victim of PBX fraud

By Mark Leslie

BRIDGTON — Maine SAD #61 Finance Coordinator Sherrie Small can testify to the anguish of dealing with Private Branch Exchange (PBX) fraud — as much because of the time consumed as the money involved.

"This was a painful ordeal," Small said, "like a long-term root canal."

Sebago Elementary School was the victim of the fraud to the tune of \$9,500 while Small and others in SAD #61 were subjected to more than a year of back-and-forth investigation and negotiation.

Sebago Elementary is not alone SAD #49 Director of Business and Finance Sue Lambert reported that at the recent Tri-State ASBO Conference several members reported their telephone systems had been hacked and their bills had reached \$30,000 and more for overseas calls.

"One day," Small said, "the principal got a call from AT&T long-distance and they made her aware of the calls overseas and the large amount of money that was building up... AT&T's involvement is still a mystery because they are not our carrier."

The AT&T bill came in for \$2,500 while the bill from FairPoint, which is the carrier, was for \$3,300.

"FairPoint immediately removed those charges," Small said, "but we continued to get bills from AT&T and they wouldn't write those off. It took a year to get them to finally write them off."

Nine months later another set of FairPoint bills arrived, amounting to \$3,500, and another three to five months were consumed resolving the issue. FairPoint determined that once hackers had infiltrated the Sebago Elementary phone system they figured out the voice code.

The fraudulent calls were not being flagged because they first went through New Jersey before being routed overseas.

"We now don't allow any calls overseas," Small said, "but that still is not going to prevent instate fraud calls."

Also, she said, SAD #61 no longer uses 1234 or 0000 for its voice mailbox code, but rather a random set of numbers.

"We all had 1234 in case someone was out sick," Small



'This was a painful ordeal, like a long-term root canal.'
— Sherrie Small

said. "But now we put a sticky note under each phone with those codes."

Marian Kenseth of Kenseth Communications Consulting in Montpelier, Vt., who spoke on the subject at the Tri-State Conference, recommended that to beat hackers, "Make sure your tables and your passwords are very secure, and change the passwords with regularity. A password shouldn't be around for more than 30 days. Make sure you don't have all these routing tables with the 1010xxx codes and 1015xxx [for international calls]."

Telephone fraud "used to happen with regularity," Kenseth said. "The famous trick was to climb onto the pole line, call into the school or business, call the school or business and ask them for a dial tone. Now they just hack."

As for Sebago Elementary's hackers?

"To this day they have not been caught," Small said. ...



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Goodbye: skeleton keys and security lights ...

By Mark Leslie

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), “odds are one in 1 million that a student will die at school as a result of a violent act” and people are more likely to be killed by lightning than a violent human act.

And yet more than one parent would agree with William Weese of Lake Region Security who said, “If my taxes went up a hundred bucks a year I’d pay it in a heartbeat to know that my kids will be coming home from school every day.”

In the wake of the 26 killings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., last Dec. 14, many Maine school districts are hastening to better secure their buildings against intruders.

“Over the past six years we’ve seen an increase in security awareness, but Sandy Hook was a real catalyst to getting these projects done,” said Colin Dumont of Exactitude, Inc. (formerly Precision Access) in Westbrook. “It stepped up the initiative to improve security. Many schools have had an open-door policy. That has changed. You can’t just walk into a school anymore.”

“We’ve seen a marked increase since Sandy Hook,” said Peter Green, general manager of Securadyne (formerly Surveillance Specialties Inc.) in Westbrook. “Last year to this year, we are doing 43 percent more work in schools than we are in retail-commercial. It pretty much started after Sandy Hook. A lot of school boards woke up on that.”

Across the board, people agreed with Pat Hinckley, an education specialist with the Maine Department of Education who has worked with school units on this topic. She noted an increase in awareness about school emergency preparedness and security discussions. Costs, she said, range from a few dollars to thousands of dollars. Indeed, “thousands” could be restated to hundreds of thousands.

And yet, there are no guarantees that even if a school district spends as much as Bangor — \$650,000 over the past five years — that it will be truly safe.

Harty Norris, chairman of the board of Norris, Inc. in South Portland and Bangor, said: “If you profiled all the schools in Connecticut, Sandy Hook would have been the last one you would have predicted something would happen



... Hello: panic buttons and high-tech cameras

in. I was very impressed with them. They had a good plan in place before that happened. No problems. A small town. A lot of hometown pride.”

“Nothing is foolproof,” added Steve Spearin, senior sales representative at Seacoast Security, Inc. in Rockport, Presque Isle, Herman, Freeport and Portsmouth. “You can’t keep everyone out.”

“Many of the security measures that are used today are there for parents, students and staff to feel safer,” said Cheryl Brackett, director of operations at SAD #49 in Fairfield. “There is no way to keep someone out of a school if they want to come in. We would have to install bulletproof glass, buzz-in systems, etc. This is an area that scares me and frustrates me!”

Having added cameras and buzz-in systems at two elementary schools and being in the midst of upgrading the high school, Waterville School District Business Manager Jim Reny said, “If somebody has their mind made up to come, they will find a way, probably. But this is a way to give you time to deal with potentially dangerous situations.”

Michael McCormick, CPE, a consultant based in Dexter whose firm a decade ago inventoried some 400 of the state’s 700 school buildings including scrutiny of their “life safety,” added: “We have schools that I ask, ‘How secure are you?’ and they say, ‘You can’t get in,’ and I’ll tell them, ‘Well, I was in there yesterday. I came in the delivery door, the gym door and the cafeteria door, and the door the lawn mower goes in was wide open.’”

“‘Really?’ they say, ‘well that should have been closed.’ But it wasn’t.”

New Times, New Measures

To that end, gone are the days of skeleton keys for locked doors, streetlights for deterrence and the days when schools were designed to be “open” to the community at large.

“We used to have a couple street lights and call it good,” said Alan Kochis, director of business services for the Bangor School Department.

Today, school security is ruled by:

- High-tech 180- and 360-degree cameras that can zoom in and tell the color of an intruder’s eyes and can be connected via Internet directly to police and sheriff’s departments, and even to squad cars, as well as security monitoring companies.
- Key-card access systems (card swipes), which are given only

More cameras, less crime

The ultimate reason for surveillance cameras and other security measures in schools may be security, but one positive result has been immediate: crimes have been solved and even prevented by the cameras’ mere presence.

“We’ve used the cameras to narrow down suspects, deduce who made bomb threats and vandalize the school,” said Bangor School Department Director of Business Services Alan Kochis. “The other thing is, the kids know they’re on video so it’s a lot quieter.”

At RSU #72 in Jay/Livermore Falls, the cameras have been instrumental in figuring out who left bomb scares and threatening notes in the lavatories, according to Business Manager Stacie Field.

General Manager Peter Green of Securadyne said one school he deals with reported four suspensions for bullying in two weeks, all picked up by one camera in the schoolyard.

“Word spreads and bullying ends,” Green said. “It stops the bad actor from stealing iPads, phones and computers.”

Deterrence is certainly a result of cameras, agreed Steve Spearin of Seacoast Security, adding, “If you have a smoked-dome camera (halfball or dome camera) you can’t tell where the camera is pointing. It’s meant to deceive you. You’ve got to assume that you’re being watched. So a 12-year-old needs to be concerned and will decide not to do something bad. That has an added value to the school system.

William Weese Jr. of Lake Region Security in Naples said cameras at SAD #61 in Bridgton were used to catch several students for disciplinary actions and one person who stole a picnic bench.

Green added, “At one school a father who didn’t have custody tried to get buzzed in to pick up his daughter. The person at the office pushed the panic button, and the cops were there in four minutes.”

Monumental advances made in digital cameras

The transition from analog to digital systems has sent the effectiveness of surveillance cameras soaring — a result that should make them a prime focus of schools.

Imagine a camera that has four lenses, each of which can zoom in close up to people down a hallway, and so effectively that only one is needed at each end of a hallway to completely cover it.

“The cameras now are super high-resolution mega-pixel units and they’re very clear and the quality is so good they can actually see physical features,” said Colin Dumont of Exactitude, Inc.

Because of their digital systems, Harty Norris of Norris, Inc. said they are Internet Protocol (IP), or network-based, and “the wiring that schools have in place for all of their data and computers can be used to have the camera system connected to a remote monitor.”

The result: cameras throughout an entire facility can be connected to the local police or sheriff’s department.

While few schools are now connected to law enforcement, consultant Michael McCormick said, “It’s not complicated. You only have to have IP-based cameras and recording system so that law enforcement can tap into it.”

“The cameras aren’t that expensive,” Norris said. “and they connect to the Internet, which is not all that expensive. So the smaller schools could afford it.”

“In the old days of the VTR and even the DVR era, it took three hours to research an incident and the video was awful,” said Peter Green of Securadyne. “Not any more... And with megapixel cameras you can come close to seeing the color of their eyes.”

The price? Less than previously.

For instance, the cost of one Arecont camera, fully operated, is \$2,700 to \$3,200 compared to the price tag of \$4,500 for the old Pantel Zooms (PZs) that still hang on the side of many buildings.

“If you look at the smaller schools,” Norris said, “the sheriff’s department is all they’ve got... It has to be a coordinated effort. You can’t have the system sit there without anyone doing anything with it.”

to fully vetted administrators, teachers and staff to gain entrance to a school building.

- Panic buttons that school officials carry with them in case of emergencies and, when pushed, call 911 as well as lock down the building.

- Buzz-in systems in which someone inside the school must push a button to allow a visitor inside.

- And myriad other equipment like doors that seal automatically, classroom door locks, burglar alarms and cameras on buses.

Even with all the possibilities, the most important first step toward improved security for school districts is to establish policy and procedures which “is almost a no-cost item,” according to McCormick.

“You have to have a school-board policy and school-use policy to start everything,” McCormick said. “That’s your roadmap... Then you perform an infrastructure assessment, then make a list and prioritize it, categorize it and put dollar estimates to it.

One of the communities addressing this issue is Auburn, where Business Manager Jude Cyr said a consultant is “working with us to revise our emergency operation plans, put them into a guide for every position, be it administrative, teacher or bus driver. When an issue happens they can flip to their simple, color-coded book and, for instance, know what to do with a lockdown. Those booklets will be available by the end of June.”

Action to Words

The stampede toward improved security didn’t all begin after Newtown, although Randy Easter, the technology coordinator at RSU #72 in Jay/Livermore Falls, said a new enclosure and walkway between two school buildings has been added “directly because of Sandy Hook.”

Some districts have been improving security for years.

Immediately after the Columbine massacre on April 20, 1999, the

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‘Many of the security measures that are used today are there for parents, students and staff to feel safer. There is no way to keep someone out of a school if they want to come in.’
— Cheryl Brackett,
director of operations,
SAD #49



calls to security companies reportedly spiked off the charts. Then interest waned and life returned to normal.

But some schools did follow through.

Bangor spent roughly \$185,000 to upgrade the intercom systems at all its schools, allowing 911 calls to be made for every classroom, according to Kochis.

At RSU #73, codes and key cards have been in place at the middle-school buildings for 15 years and buzz-in systems have been operating for “some years now,” while teachers have been locking their classroom doors since Columbine.

In Auburn, “Sandy Hook may have heightened aware-

‘We used to have a couple street lights and call it good.’
— Alan Kochis,
business manager,
Bangor School Dept.



ness, but we’ve been doing this all along,” said Cyr. “It just reinforced that we need to do what we need to do. We’ve been picking away at their recommendations.”

At Falmouth Public Schools, Business Manager Dan O’Shea said, “Most of our security systems have been in place for some time. We started about 10 years ago, but we have improved and upgraded in recent years as well.”

At SAD #52 in Turner, Business Manager Deb Roberts said that in 2007 her district installed security doors at all six schools and purchased security cameras for the high school.

Then came Sandy Hook, after which “everybody paid



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attention,” said Norris. “We got 15 calls from schools wanting prices immediately, though most didn’t have money in their budgets to do them.”

Responding to the need for financing, the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Justice and others have made grants available to school systems. (Lewiston and Auburn combined to win a multi-million dollar grant.) [See sidebar]

At What Cost?

“People have been asking me for ‘a ballpark number’ for 40 years,” said Norris of school officials curious about the cost of upgrading their districts. “I tell them ‘315 down the leftfield line’ ... Most schools can’t chew the whole whale all at once. But most are searching for answers.”

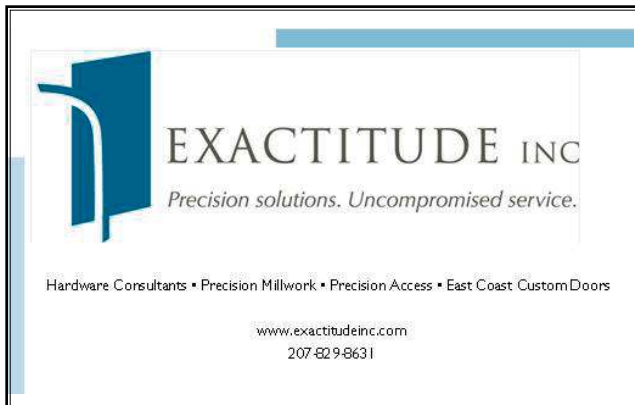
“If you’re looking at a standard school district with, say, five schools which have nothing except a sprinkler system, you’re looking at \$200,000 to \$350,000,” said Securadyne’s Green. “Some schools start small. Biddeford started at \$25,000, with all the front doors but still key-locking all the side doors.

“The Cumberland system we just did is awesome and grew from a \$20,000 to \$280,00 system.”

With or without grant money, RFPs are going out, bids made and massive changes are in the works.

“Prior to Sandy Hook, we already had the cameras and key-card access systems at each school, and the camera system ties into the local police dispatch,” said Falmouth’s O’Shea. “Since then, we upgraded main entrance controls (visual ID/buzz-in), installed key-card systems for our existing portables, and are pricing out systems that would alert for any ‘ajar’ external doors. We’ve reviewed protocols at all schools. We now have all external doors locked during the day, with visual ID access at each school’s main entrance. We converted all external doors to card-reader systems,

“I would say overall we’re approaching \$250,000 or so, plus whatever the built-in cost was for the new elementary school, built in 2010, which included the latest security system (card door access, cameras, visible administration check-in and entry air-lock area).”



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School security grants available

The U.S. Departments of Education, Homeland Security and Justice have made millions of dollars in preparedness grants available for schools across the country and some Maine districts have taken advantage.

The deadline for grants in 2013 passed at the end of May, but school officials might want to prepare for next year’s applications.

- Maine Department of Education’s Community Oriented Policing Services Secure Our Schools (SOS) Program grant funding is for payment of up to 50 percent of approved costs to improve school safety and security. SOS grant funds require collaboration with local police and must supplement, and not supplant, other funds already committed by the grantee.

Yarmouth and RSU #14 in Windham previously received SOS grant funds. It may be useful for other schools to contact them to learn about how they prepared a successful grant. The grant helped the SAUs with several safety items, including a safety audit/risk assessment (conducted by Safe Havens International).

- The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s grants “support core capabilities across the five mission areas of Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery based on allowable costs.”

Particulars of the grants are available on the Department of Homeland Security web site at: www.dhs.gov/school-safety

- The Department of Justice’s COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) is offering “microgrants” to highlight innovative and experimental community policing projects in state, local, tribal, campus, and/or other law enforcement agencies.

Completing an application is a two-step process. Applicants are first required to register via www.grants.gov and complete an SF-424, submitting it through the grants.gov website. Once the SF-424 has been submitted via grants.gov, the COPS Office will send an invitation e-mail to the applicant with instructions on completing the remainder of the CPD application through the COPS Office Online Application System.

“When you hit the panic button we know about it immediately and we notify authorities within 30 seconds.”

**— Steve Spearin
Seacoast Security**



Waterville School Department Business Manager Jim Reny said, “So far we’ve done two elementary schools with camera and buzz-in systems where there was nothing before. Now all the entrance doors are locked and people have to be buzzed in.

“Our high school is going to be set up like Cony’s [secured entry vestibule].”

Bangor’s Kochis said the department has added exterior lighting at 10 schools at a cost of \$199,000; installed new locks for lockdowns at all classroom doors in every building, so they can be locked from the inside, at a cost of \$96,000; mounted cameras, including in the office hallways and building exterior at seven elementary schools, at a cost of \$268,000; spent another \$80,000 on doorway buzzer systems; and upgraded the high-school burglar alarm for \$17,000.

Priorities, Priorities

So, if a school district takes the step to have an expert assess its buildings — reportedly at a cost of \$10,000 to \$20,000 — what should its priorities be?

“We all want nice-looking buildings, but ultimately we want our kids to come home at night.”
— Mike McCormick



“If you can keep people out of your buildings, you’ve got a pretty good start,” said McCormick.

If not...

√ “The most important thing,” said Spearin of Seacoast Security, “is a panic-button system that is monitored and fast because of cost-effectiveness and the desired effect of notifying someone. When you hit the panic button we know about it immediately and we notify authorities within 30 seconds.”

Norris said virtually every school his company has worked in lately — Cumberland, Yarmouth, North Yarmouth Academy, Biddeford, Thornton Academy — has panic buttons.

√ Set up the security system to be fully integrated with the police so they can do a full lockdown even from a cruiser and be able to access all the school’s cameras.

“We’ve been doing this for banks,” Securadyne’s Green said, “but it’s new for schools.”

√ Control the door with a video/intercom/door-release system, Spearin said, “because of its cost-effectiveness and keeping tabs on who’s in and out.”

√ Install effective camera surveillance.

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Choice for head of security varies from district to district

When a school district or individual school implements its security procedures, the person in charge varies by city, according to experts in the field.

"It can be the facilities director or even the police chief," said Peter Green, general manager of Securadyne (formerly Surveillance Specialties Inc.). "What we like to do in designing a big system is get them all in the room: an IT person, police chief, superintendent and facilities director.

Colin Dumont of Exactitude (formerly Precision Access) said his firm works with superintendents and, when working through the system design and engineering, consults closely with directors of maintenance or facilities directors to maintain the system and expand on it where needed.

"We tend to have a lot of site-

based management, but that does not work and I'll argue that to the end of the day," declared Michael McCormick, CPE, a consultant based in Dexter. "The building principal or assistant principal or secretary of the front office should not be responsible for these things. They have enough to do in regards to education. They have a role in the process, but site-based management does not work. It needs to be done at the central-office level and guided by the school board to set policy and direction, saying: 'This is what we're going to do and who's responsible and what we expect.'

"I don't think you have to hire a person... But you need to have probably the facility manager of the school district have security under his responsibilities. Then you give them policy and infrastructure to make it work.

Dumont of Exactitude said, "We usually start with exterior doors, video surveillance and card-access control at the entrances. Inside, each school is different. There's more procedural security and we [perform] the physical, building vestibules and installing security locks, camera systems."

McCormick added: "If you have an outer shell that's protected and secured, you have a pretty good start. People don't want to hear this, but in today's world, I'd make arrangements for the local law enforcement agency to have an armed officer at the front door when kids arrive. And there should be a couple of other people there as well. One set of eyes can't watch a couple hundred kids walk into a building.

"Next, you have to have a secure building. All doors must lock by themselves. When somebody opens the door — whether they're going in or out — when the door closes, it closes fully and latches. You would not believe how many we find that don't do that. They're out of square, out of balance; the hinges don't work properly; the door closer is worn out..."

McCormick suggested making the cameras "especially visible."

"People say, 'We want to hide the cameras,'" he said. "No. That's not the right approach. We want people to see the cameras and know 'You are being watched.'

"What we don't consider is people going out the doors. They can go out whatever door they want. No! Somebody on the outside could be just waiting for someone to crack the door open. So you go out the same door you came in — except for fire or emergency."

Expertise Counts

"Get somebody who understands security and loss prevention and ask for different solutions for their building," suggested Norris, who deals with 50 school districts and around 200 buildings. "They can then prioritize based on the district's budget. The district can start work-

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I would say overall we're approaching \$250,000 or so, plus whatever the built-in cost was for the new elementary school.'

— Dan O'Shea, Falmouth

ing on it systematically so that by the time it's done it has a total solution...

"Most look at the high schools first, only because of two things: they have open access day in and day out, and the high school kids are most apt to leave the school."

McCormick added that a school can have all the security money can buy, but "if staff is not instructed and disciplined in keeping their doors locked," it's all for naught.

"Policy has to be made and followed," he said. "We know educators don't want to feel like they're in a prison, but what do you tell the Newtown folks?"

"The one thing they did not have, and hardly anyone has, is a secured vestibule. The killer blew out the vestibule glass. We need bulletproof glass.

"There are things that can be done architecturally. We all want nice-looking buildings, but ultimately we want our kids to come home at night."

How 'Secure Is Secure?

Norris recalled: "It wasn't two years ago that a guy walked into Stockton Springs Elementary School with a gun. A state trooper showed up quickly and took control of the situation without harm to anyone. But if you were to say this would happen in Stockton Springs, most people would say 'Where is that?' ... None of these things are done by sane people.

"We opened up AMHI and BMHI and let loose a lot of people with mental problems."

In the end, McCormick declared: "Schools **can** be secure. I'm not against having security guards at



schools. But it's pretty expensive. How do you put a guard at a 200-student school in Jefferson? Let's fix bricks and mortar and technology that

is initially expensive but has a long, useful life. And have the procedures and policies in place in case something *does* happen.

"We're lax in schools and we don't want to have to think about these things, but it needs to be made a priority. I'm a trained firefighter. Sometimes we go two years without a structure fire, but we have to be trained and ready for when it *does* happen."

Securadyne's Green lent hope for an improved future, saying that Cloud-based systems and "connectivity" with police throughout the district are a wave school districts should catch.

"This is not rocket science," McCormick said. "There are a lot of things schools have to think about and this is just one of them. But you have to take it seriously." ...

A 'busing' solution

Consultant Michael McCormick has a simple, no-cost "policy" suggestion to improve school security when school opens and closes.

"The hardest part of the day is getting all the kids into the building," he said. "There are things you can do. Don't unload 10 buses and dozens of cars at the same time. This is simple stuff. You bring a bus up and unload it. The next bus is getting ready to go when there is no line at the vestibule.

"Will it take a little longer to get school operating? Yes, two or three minutes, or eight or ten. But little Billy and Suzy come home at night."

He mentioned that schools may face the same problem at the end of school "but in my experience when school lets out it's a little less hectic."

Some schools, he said, have their students stay in the school or at a staging area until their bus arrives. That is helpful.

"These are essentially no-cost measures," McCormick said. "Policy and procedure. It can make a huge difference.



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Security a key in Biddeford transformation

When Harriman Architects + Engineers and Ledgewood Construction led a team tackling the transformation of 60-year-old Biddeford High School into a 21st-century learning environment, security was a key component and logistics was a major obstacle since the school was in session.

“All antiquated building and safety systems had to be replaced, yet all systems had to operate uninterrupted,” said architect Jeff Larimer, AIA, CSI, of Harriman. “This required a chess-game-like series of moves where temporary measures often were first installed while new systems were added and connected.”

Security at the school was also greatly enhanced. The previous main entrance was relocated from the middle of the school, where visitors entered into a classroom wing, to a new addition where the administrative offices are now located.

A security vestibule was created to allow for screening of visitors, exterior doors were equipped with intrusion detec-



The new, secure entryway at Biddeford High School.

tion switches, security cameras were strategically placed to allow for interior and exterior monitoring, and a card-access system was installed.

Harriman’s and Ledgewood’s work in Biddeford indicates a new era in school design that is, importantly, safety-conscious. But the project also encompassed many other factors.

School officials knew they had to address their high school “issue” when Biddeford middle-schoolers, who graduated from the city’s recently completed state-of-the-art facility, were shocked on their first day in high school at the building’s condition and environment. After looking at three options, Harriman and the city’s School Committee concluded a total renovation and modest addition was the best and most economical choice to turn the school into a modern, technology-rich school.

The ultimate success of the project hinged on interconnected factors: ongoing communications to sell the project to the community and to keep it informed during construction, assembling a seasoned project team with past in-place renovation experience, and developing a tightly phased 27-month construction schedule.

Once the decision was made to expand and renovate the school, the School Committee set about to convince the City Council and skeptical residents that it was the right choice. With a preliminary estimate of \$40 million, the architect recommended that the Building Committee engage a construction manager (CM) to develop a detailed schedule and phasing plan before moving into the final design phase.

Working with a CM on school projects requires an exception from the state of Maine to deviate from the traditional design-bid-construct project-delivery scenario. The state agreed and granted the exception.

Depending on how the project was phased, costs could vary



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greatly. The challenge was to find the most time-efficient and cost-effective procedure. The CM analyzed numerous phased schemes and settled on a nine-phase construction schedule, which resulted in a final cost estimate of \$34 million. With the new lower cost, the School Committee now felt it had a stronger position and approached the City Council and residents.

Many town residents and former students were skeptical that it could be done. The existing 200,000-square-foot school was typical of its 1960s-era design, with double-loaded corridors, a non-descript, inefficient curtain-wall façade and outdated HVAC and building systems. There was an awkwardly added 1970s expansion, and the building had code, safety, ADA and egress issues.

Few could visualize how it could be transformed into a modern educational facility. The School Committee and project team made several presentations at public forums to inform and update residents on the scope of the project, listen to concerns and answer questions. Initially, the City Council was unconvinced the project would result in a “new” school and was reluctant to bring it to a town vote as the economy went into a tailspin. The council decided to bring it to a town-wide referendum vote in November 2009. Despite the unsettled economic climate, voters overwhelming passed the referendum by a 2-to-1 margin.

Rather than using a cost-per-square-foot approach for the schedule and phasing plan, the CM developed a detailed schematic design estimate that took into account every aspect of the nine-phase scheme. The phasing plan made adjustments for educational needs and schedule, emphasized the requirement for double and triple work shifts, and advocated for complete collaboration and cooperation.

Nearly every corner and space in the building would be changed and everyone would be inconvenienced by the end of the project. Only the foundation, structural steel, and some of the interior and exterior walls would remain. Essentially a new, nearly unrecognizable school would emerge.

A key to project success was ongoing communications with students, teachers, neighbors and parents. The project superintendents wrote a weekly report outlining work coming up and what building areas would be affected and a monthly online newsletter detailed completed, ongoing and upcoming work. During weekly project team meetings decisions were quickly made, not postponed, when issues arose.

The project moved through the nine phases over 27 months, with some lasting two months and others as long as five months. All antiquated building and safety systems had to be replaced, yet all systems had to operate uninterrupted while school was in session. This required a chess-game like series of moves where temporary measures often were first installed while new systems were added and connected.

‘All antiquated building and safety systems had to be replaced, yet all systems had to operate uninterrupted. This required a chess-game-like series of moves.’

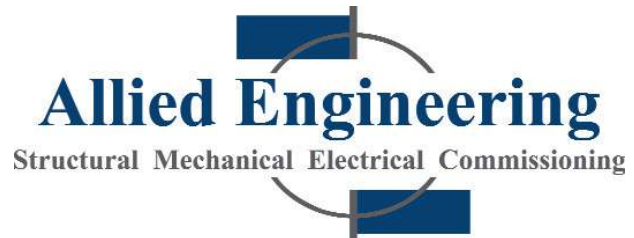
— Jeff Larimer, Harriman

All regular and science classrooms, two gymnasiums and locker rooms and adult-education areas were renovated. New music and band spaces, a 330-seat lecture hall, three stair/elevator towers, a new cafeteria and kitchen, and the administrative/library wing took shape.

The renovation gave school administrators the opportunity to move various departments around to create more efficient adjacencies. New highly efficient building systems and equipment – HVAC, electrical, safety, and fire-protection – were installed. All of the inefficient exterior curtain-wall on the classroom wing was replaced with well-insulated walls and windows.

In June 2011, the two-story addition to the building, containing the new entrance, administrative wing and second-floor library – was completed. Staff spent the summer moving into and preparing those spaces. When school opened in September, students and teachers got a first glimpse at how the transformation was taking shape. It was a well-received preview of what was to come that made it easier for all to put up with a final year of disruptions and inconvenience.

All work was completed in late August 2012 on schedule and under the \$34-million budget. The transformation of 60-year-old Biddeford High School was complete. ...



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VENDOR PROFILE

RPF Environmental gets job done

The phone rings at 7:15 a.m. on a typical Friday. After a brief conversation, two staff technicians are rerouted to conduct emergency review and air testing following an overnight fire at an elementary school in the Portland area. By the end of the day, air testing has been performed for asbestos, total dust, volatile organic compounds, mold and other general indoor air-quality parameters.

The school is able to take prompt action with fire restoration, abatement of asbestos floorings and other related work in very short order in order to minimize the disruption to school operations as much as possible. Quick response, necessary expertise, and fast turnaround of reports resulted in another happy customer.

For RPF Environmental, Inc. (RPF), this is not an unusual day.

An environmental health and safety (EH&S) firm serving Maine and northern New England, RPF was initially formed more than 20 years ago to focus on the unique needs of educational systems clients. But RPF customers now range from Fortune 500 companies to manufacturing and industry; construction and engineering firms; health-care and government clients.

Formed in 1991 by Roger Francoeur to assist clients confronted with the need to ensure regulatory compliance and safe buildings with hazardous building material present, RPF has since grown and expanded its service line to include comprehensive industrial hygiene and environmental testing services.

As part of the expansion in the late 1990s, Francoeur was joined by his brother Dennis Francoeur, Jr., CIH, CSP. The brothers have more than 50 years of combined experience in the environmental health and safety field. Principals and senior consultants at RPF have served on the



A worker deals with abatement and demolition of a boiler with asbestos at a high school.

boards and other membership positions for regional and national groups such as the Safety and Health Council of Northern New England, Downeast Chapter of the AIHA, ASSE, local chapter of the Indoor Air Quality Association, the American Lung Association Mold Task Force, and the American Industrial Hygiene Association.

RPF is also a member of the Tri-State Association of School Business Officials and routinely participates and exhibits in ASBO's annual conferences.

Recently, RPF has added infrared imaging to its service lines, greatly enhancing moisture intrusion, air-quality, electrical and heat-loss surveys.

The Francoeurs also both played key roles in the state-wide project to inspect all of the school buildings across the state of Maine, pursuant to the EPA Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) in the late 1980s. After more than 20 years, school systems, including k-12 and higher education institutions, remain one of the primary customer bases for the firm. RPF routinely provides a wide range of EH&S services for school systems, including:

- indoor air-quality and mold assess-

ments;

- remediation design and project management;
- air, materials, and water testing;
- asbestos, lead, PCBs, mercury, radon and HazMat Compliance Programs;
- industrial hygiene and safety plans and audits;
- OSHA and EPA regulatory compliance; and
- training for asbestos, lead, HazMat and OSHA.

In addition, the RPF professional development group provides corporate health and safety training programs for clients throughout New England. It also offers custom-tailored programs right at client sites as well as state-licensed and Consortium of New England States (CONES)-approved EH&S training programs at RPF training centers.

The RPF professional staff includes several industrial hygiene technicians, laboratory analysts, certified safety professional, certified industrial hygienist, environmental health and safety

instructors, and licensed asbestos and lead inspectors.

Recent growth in demand has been steady for the indoor air-quality services, particularly with the heightened awareness and public focus on indoor air quality, including mold and bacteria concerns in schools.

Asbestos Inspections

Another significant need for many schools is for the pre-renovation or demolition inspections for asbestos that is mandated by the Maine DEP, U.S. EPA and OSHA. Although k-12 school systems have already had initial AHERA inspections, that level of inspection is typically not sufficient to address the current regulatory requirements associated with renovation or demolition.

RPF highly recommends that school systems conduct confirmatory or pre-design surveys as early in the construction design and planning phase as possible to help avoid cost and time overruns on the project.

"All too frequently," Roger Francoeur said, "this critical step is missed or delayed until too late in the process and that can cause a lot of havoc on a project."

Many people do not realize that you can still purchase some building materials with asbestos present as it has not been banned completely in all products, he said, adding, "Be sure to specify in contracts that vendors must provide statements that no asbestos was used in newly installed building materials."

On the other hand, for asbestos already in place in buildings, Francoeur is also routinely reminding his customers, "If it isn't broken, don't fix it."

In many cases simply maintaining asbestos building materials in good condition per EPA guidelines is the best option unless renovation or demolition dictates full removal of the materials.

On top of the necessary technical expertise, Francoeur suggests that the key common threads for most successful EH&S projects at schools, whether it is asbestos, air quality, radon, or mold, comes down to the basics: great communications, team work and a pro-active approach.

A few examples of projects performed by RPF recently:

- Emergency air-quality testing for a major medical service provider in northern Maine.
- Brownfields related hazardous material surveys for the city of Biddeford.
- Testing and lab work for the Bug Light lighthouse restoration efforts in South Portland.
- EPA Asbestos AHERA Compliance Assistance for the Eliot schools.
- Air-quality assessment for a major medical center in southern Maine.
- Various initial assessments, remediation design and remediation oversight for various sites at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.
- PCB identified and remediation oversight for a large institutional client.
- Pre-demolition surveys at multiple sites for hazardous building material for national chain retailer.

RPF's office is located at 158 Danforth St., in Portland. For more information, people may visit RPF on the web at www.airpf.com or call 828-5020. •••

PBX fraud strikes Maine school districts

Continued from page 10

into the PBX for remote maintenance. Unauthorized users can use this line to gain access and make international calls. If the school has an administrator on-site or doesn't use remote maintenance, consider disconnecting this line to prevent intrusions.

- Ask the provider to turn on international toll block

A block can stop international calls from being made via the provider's network although unauthorized users can still use dial-around capabilities to reach other carrier networks and initiate international calls.

What steps should a school take if it suspects it has experienced fraud?

In the event that fraudulent activity occurs, the school's IT Department and facilities group should:

- have an up-to-date and readily available contact information list for the head of telecommunications and direct reports;
- contact its PBX vendor directly;
- establish a process so vendors can secure access to PBX equipment and perform a shutdown; and

- create a plan to disable international calling and provide instructions to shut down PBX equipment and make code changes

Who is liable for fraud charges?

The PBX owner is solely responsible for controlling access to, as well as the use of, telecommunications equipment and facilities. Furthermore, the PBX owner is solely liable for all charges incurred for all calls made over the owner's telecommunications equipment and facilities, even if the calls were made fraudulently.

The provider — FairPoint or otherwise — can help. However, protecting a phone system is of paramount importance in making sure a school doesn't become saddled with fraudulent toll-call charges.

For more information about how to protect a school system from fraud, visit www.FairPoint.com/Customer-Protection. •••

Beth McCarthy is senior account manager, government and education solutions, for FairPoint Communications.

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