

# FairPoint Helps Grow Annual Maine Expo

Each spring, the Maine Restaurant & Lodging Expo connects hundreds of the state's restaurant and lodging industry professionals with local and regional producers of foods, beverages, products and services. The Expo's relationship with FairPoint Communications helps keep event costs down, enabling small, start-up businesses the chance to meet potential buyers.



## Preparing for 30 Million Visitors

From lobster to lighthouses, and national parks to nautical adventures, the unique attractions of Maine draw millions of visitors annually. In Maine, tourism brings in \$5.23 billion in annual revenue and accounts for more than 88,500 jobs. Nearly all visitors patronize the state's restaurants and lodging establishments.

Each year, the Maine Restaurant Association and the Maine Innkeepers Association connect industry professionals with the goods and services they need to serve guests at a can't-miss event in Portland – the Maine Restaurant & Lodging Expo, the state's only business-to-business trade show for the hospitality industry. It's rare for a state to have its own expo – most are regional – but Maine has a distinct food scene and many local breweries, distilleries and wineries. The annual event provides a more affordable opportunity for those businesses to get in front of restaurant and lodging contacts.

On a single day each spring, more than 120 companies exhibit their offerings to food service and lodging industry professionals. It's a chance for attendees such as restaurateurs, hoteliers, innkeepers, chefs and others in the industry to see and sample some of the state's local and regional producers of foods, beverages, products, technology solutions and other services that will help them serve their customers.

"For most of Maine's hospitality-based businesses, summer is the prime tourism season," said Greg Dugal, President and CEO, Maine Innkeepers Association and Maine Restaurant Association. "We hold our Expo each spring to coincide with their purchasing cycle. But more than that, our tradeshow serves as a rallying point for industry professionals as the state prepares to welcome nearly 30 million visitors from around the country and, indeed, the world in the following months."

## FairPoint's Role

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The Maine Restaurant & Lodging Expo depends on sponsors for a successful event. For several years, FairPoint Communications has been a prime sponsor of the annual expo. It's just part of the company's commitment to the communities of Maine.

Since April 2008, FairPoint has invested an average of more than one million dollars per week in its communications infrastructure, technology and services in northern New England to reach new customers and upgrade its network. But FairPoint also knows that strengthening its local communities means more than supporting customers with data, voice and video services. It means making investments in the growth of the communities where the company does business — contributing to events and organizations that enrich quality of life and foster business so that communities can attract economic opportunities and jobs. In 2013, FairPoint made more than \$1.2 million in civic and charitable contributions and supported approximately 350 community donations and sponsorships.

“From the moment FairPoint Communications began business in Maine, they've demonstrated an interest in and support of the hospitality industry — a wise choice from our point of view,” Dugal said. “After all, ours is the largest industry in the state. We've always appreciated that our food service and lodging businesses have been a priority at FairPoint.”

## Making Participation Possible for Small Business

FairPoint's sponsorship ultimately helps the Expo keep costs down, enabling small businesses to exhibit when they otherwise might not be able to do so.

“FairPoint's sponsorship of our annual Maine Restaurant & Lodging Expo is essential to its success,” Dugal said. “It allows us to expand our marketing efforts and keep prices low so even start-up and smaller, local food and beverage purveyors can exhibit at the event — something that would be unaffordable at larger, regional shows. This diversity of exhibitors, in turn, makes attending the Expo all the more appealing to restaurateurs, hoteliers, innkeepers, chefs — all industry professionals. FairPoint has been instrumental in the continued growth of and development of this event.”

## For More Information

**Contact your local account manager to learn more:**

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