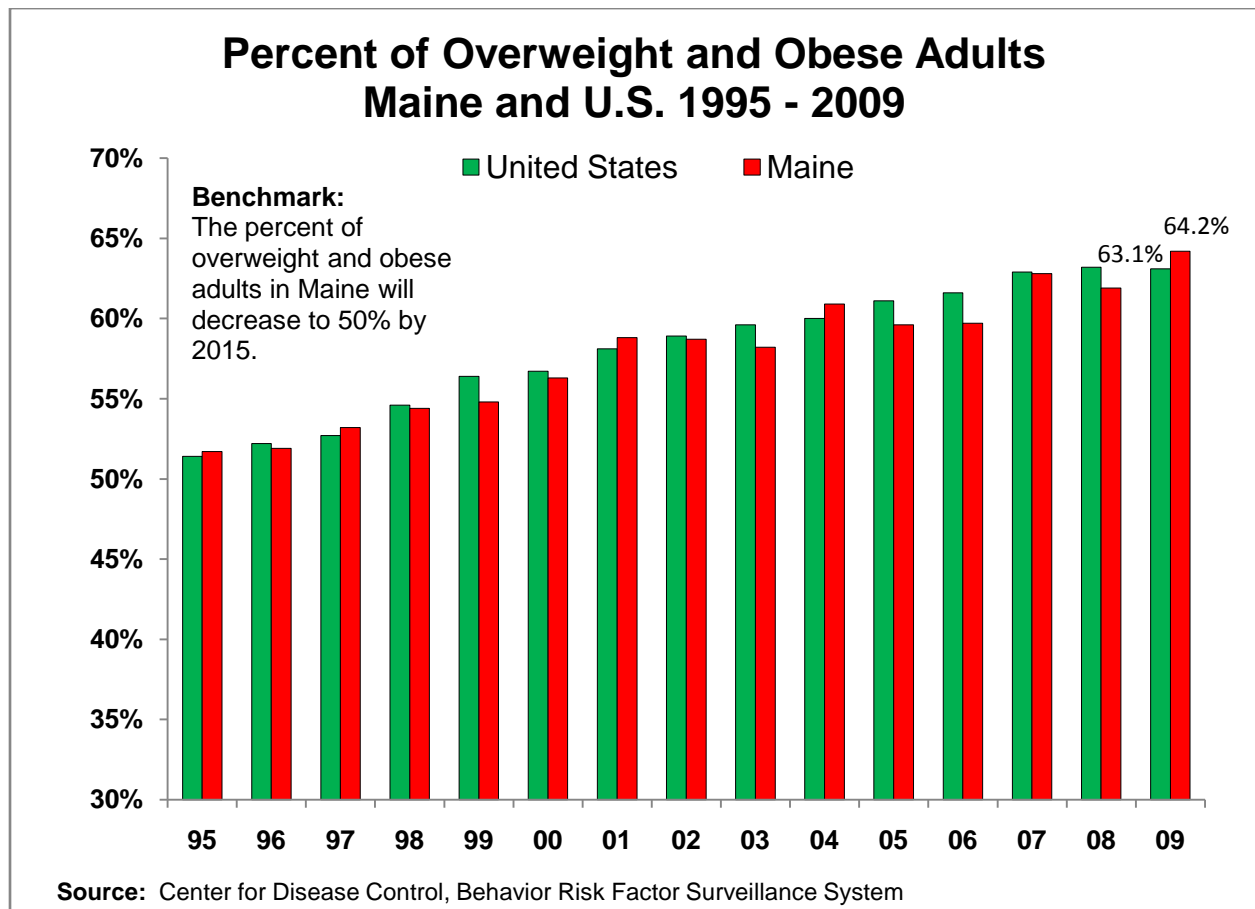


PROJECT 1: HEALTH AND WELLNESS – RED TEAM



FACTS: Two out of every three Maine adults are either overweight or obese. Being overweight or obese is the third leading cause of preventable death in Maine and the country. Overweight and obese adults are more likely to suffer from chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease, stroke, high cholesterol, asthma, arthritis, and some cancers. A 2004 study found that being overweight or obese in Maine drives \$357 million in medical expenses annually. Maine businesses identify lowering the cost of health insurance as their number one priority. Maine has the third highest health care expenditures per capita in the nation and the price of health care in New England continues to grow at a rate that outstrips our incomes.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT: An unhealthy population has an economic cost related to lost productivity in addition to the cost of care itself. A study in 2006 conducted by Anthem-Maine and MaineHealth found that the combined effects of overweight and obesity result in productivity losses of over \$2 billion annually. Healthy people generally cost less to insure (something most businesses want to offer but sometimes cannot due to cost) and use less actual health care, they miss work less frequently, and their children are less likely to be overweight and more likely to be healthy.

TASK: Reducing the prevalence of chronic disease by lowering obesity in Maine can have an immediate positive impact on the economy by boosting productivity and reducing the cost of care. What initiatives can you undertake to promote wellness, improve health, and reduce the costs associated with lost productivity, obesity and related chronic disease? How would these work with individuals, groups, and businesses – particularly small ones?

RESOURCES:

- Cianbro, Hussey Seating, JS McCarthy, and BIW have aggressive wellness programs that reward employees for participating in the effort to reduce the cost of their health care.
- Programs that work with children and communities include Let's Go! 5-2-1-0, Farm to Schools and Maine-ly Nutrition
- Maine Health Management Coalition (<http://www.mhmc.info/>)

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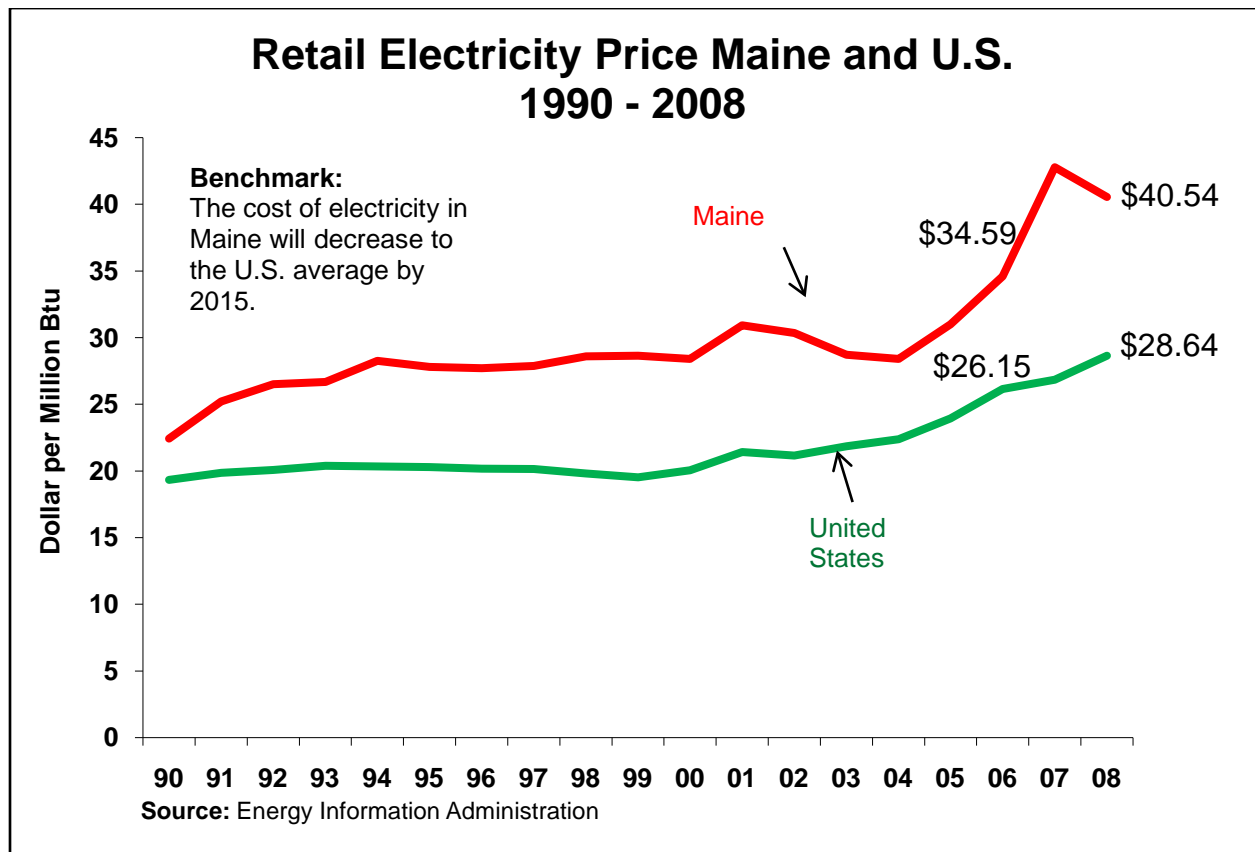
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PROJECT 2: COST OF ENERGY – YELLOW TEAM



FACTS: Maine businesses rank the cost of energy as the second highest, behind the cost of health care, challenge to growth. Maine is highly dependent on petroleum products like oil and gas for heating, transportation, and electric generation, which keeps the cost of energy high. Although the cost of oil and oil products doesn't vary greatly around the country, Maine's usage is high. Over 70% of Maine homes heat with oil. The national average is just under 7%. Almost all passenger movement (95%) in Maine happens via cars and 80% of freight in Maine travels by trucks over Maine roads.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT: We have little to no control over the price of a barrel of oil. Maine's electricity prices are much higher than the U.S. average, and the gap between our prices and the rest of the nation has widened over the last 20 years. This negatively affects our business competitiveness. Maine consumers also struggle to afford their transportation, heating, and utility costs on finite budgets.

TASK: Presumably, becoming more efficient in the ways we move goods and people and the ways we heat and power our homes and businesses, would reduce costs for businesses and consumers alike. Looking for alternatives to oil might also alleviate pressures from the world petroleum market. Can we capitalize on the Maine culture that values re-using and recycling existing resources, frugality, and strong work ethic to address our energy issues? How could you get those approaches more broadly accepted by the Maine public?

RESOURCES:

- Efficiency Maine Trust (www.energymainetrust.org)
- Maine Energy Marketers Association (www.maineenergymarketers.com)
- ISO – New England (www.iso-ne.com)
- The Muskie School of Public Policy (<http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/>)
- Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center (<http://mcspolicycenter.umaine.edu/>)
- Build Green Maine (www.buildgreenmaine.org)
- RGGI Maine (<http://www.maine.gov/dep/air/greenhouse/rggi.htm>)
- Energy Information Administration (www.eia.gov)

YELLOW TEAM MEMBERS:

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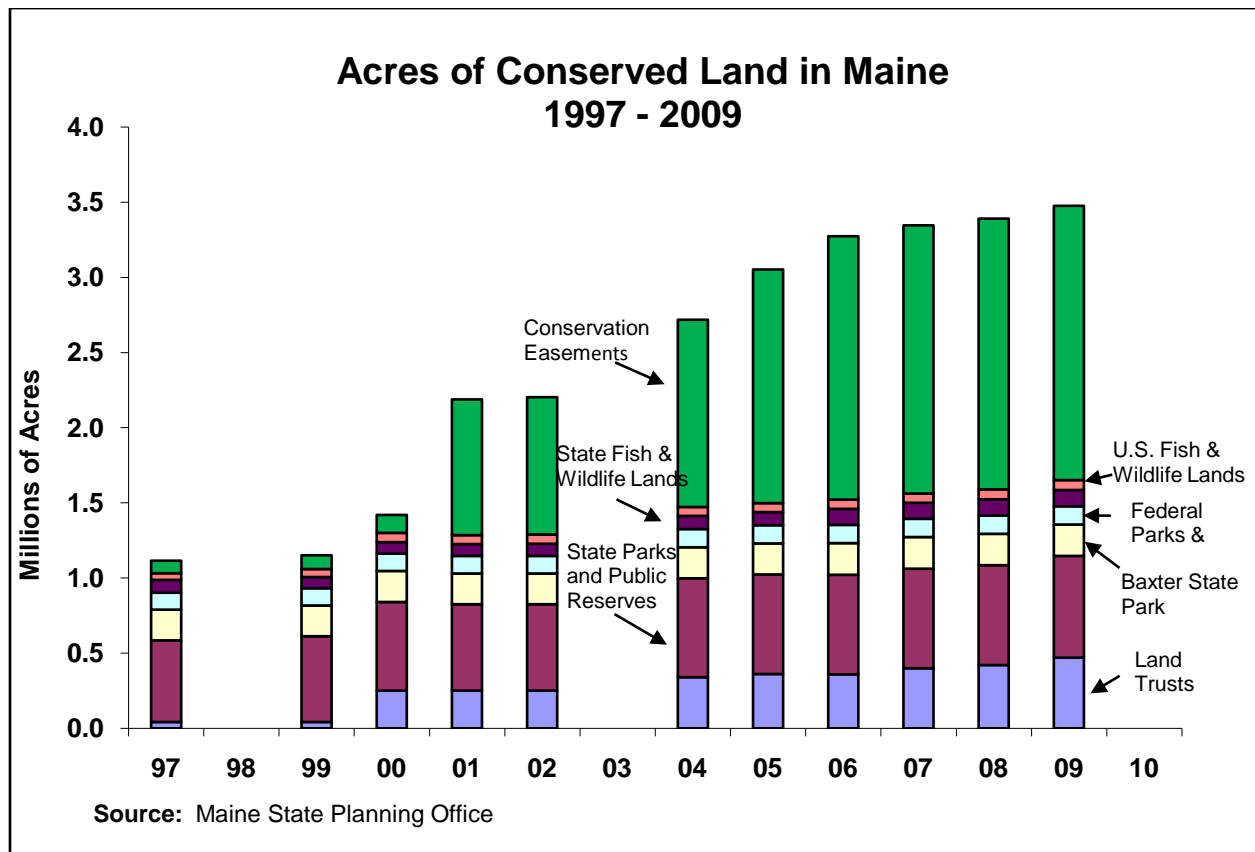
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PROJECT 3: QUALITY OF PLACE – GREEN TEAM



FACTS: Maine businesses overwhelmingly list quality of place as a major economic development asset. In the global struggle to attract and retain skilled workers, Maine’s quality of place is Maine’s competitive advantage. We have approximately 3.5 million acres of conservation land intended for public use as of 2010, and recreational opportunities are plentiful and accessible. Maine’s forests cover nearly 90% of our land area, and forests support healthy wildlife populations, provide clean water, offer recreational opportunities and supply raw materials to produce a wide variety of products. Maine is consistently ranked as one of the safest places to live in the country, and we have retained small towns and historic main streets in many places in spite of population decreases in our more urban places. (In 1960, 63.2% of Mainers lived in regional service center communities, but by 2009 as people moved to more rural areas that percentage had dropped to 47.8%.)

ECONOMIC CONTEXT: Whatever quality of place (or life) means to you, it’s more than likely one of the biggest reasons you and other people you know live in Maine. In spite of this incredible asset, we remain the oldest state in the nation, our population is barely growing, and the population of people between 20 and 44 is expected to continue to decrease. By 2030, citizens over 65 will comprise more than a quarter of the population. In-migration is a critical factor for renewing our population and labor force, and thus a major factor in our economic growth. Younger populations tend to value quality of place and life in their decisions about where to live and work.

TASK: Why isn't quality of place helping grow our economy *more*, even in spite of our other challenges? How do we better capitalize on strong quality of place and life to increase in-migration and attract people, particularly young, educated and qualified people, to Maine to bolster our workforce? What initiatives can help us replicate the phenomenon witnessed in Portland, OR during the recession, when in-migration of young people continued in spite of job loss and high unemployment?

RESOURCES:

- Brookings Report – Charting Maine's Future
- Maine Downtown Center (www.mdf.org)
- GrowSmart Maine (www.growsmartmaine.org)
- Midcoast Magnet (www.midcoastmagnet.com)
- Maine Quality of Place Council (<http://www.maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/qualityofplace/>)
- Maine Tourism (www.visitmaine.com)

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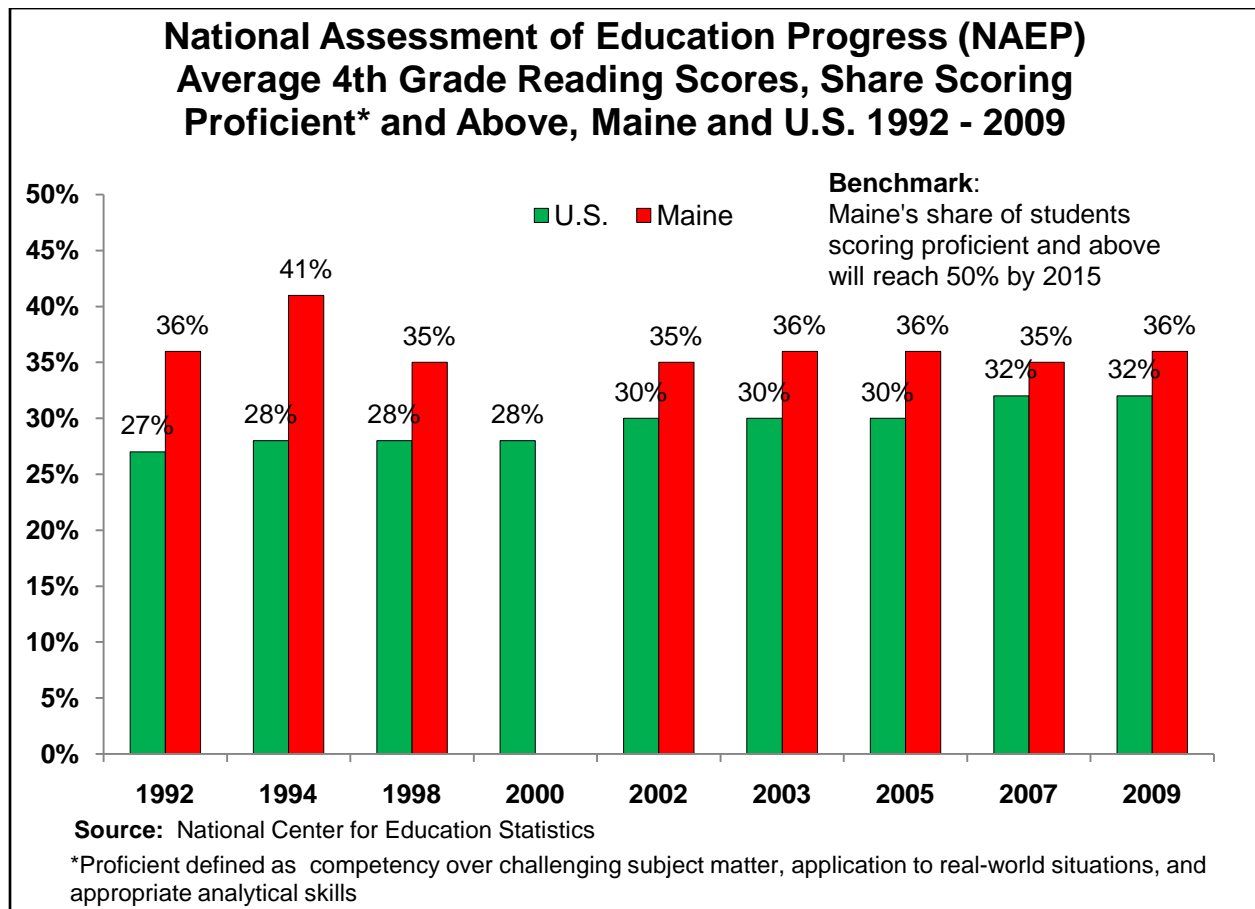
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PROJECT 4: SKILLED WORKFORCE – BLUE TEAM



FACTS: Maine employers rank our work force as the other top asset that supports economic growth. Forty-six percent of employers say that our loyal/skilled workforce ranks with quality of life as a unique attractive asset. We are creative & entrepreneurial, we are civic-minded and we care about our neighbors and communities. Employers recognize that these are not just the characteristics of good citizens, but good workers. Although our people are currently considered a strong asset by employers, there are some troubling signs that our workforce is not as prepared as it needs to be when you combine this issue with our aging population. First, a strong educational foundation is essential to success, and 4th grade reading scores are a measure of success because they can measure not just the effectiveness of earlier investments in early childhood education but also predict future student success and public costs (special education, work place productivity and criminal justice, etc). Maine has maintained proficient 4th grade reading scores at about 36%, slightly higher than national results, but has made no progress on this indicator over time. On the other end of the spectrum, Maine's economy needs more workers with higher education degrees. The knowledge-based economy requires a highly educated workforce, and educational attainment has a direct correlation to the earnings potential of Maine people. Businesses need educated people, and educated people simply earn more. Unfortunately, Maine has the lowest post-secondary degree attainment in New England and the lowest per-capita income.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT: Our early child-hood education efforts don't seem to be doing the job of effectively preparing Maine kids for the jobs of our future. In addition, Maine has 250,000 work-age adults with only a high school diploma, and only 7% of these adults were enrolled in post-secondary education in 2005. There are over 200,000 adults statewide who have some college experience but never received a degree. These numbers represent a significant portion of the Maine population that has the potential to fill more of our workforce needs, but may not be prepared to do so by early childhood education or higher education – leaving employers at a disadvantage.

TASK: What initiative can you create that will address the comprehensive view of education at these pressure points– from early childhood to higher education – to improve Maine's workforce and increase personal incomes? How are these things related or un-related, and is there a way to invest in the person comprehensively to address our workforce needs?

RESOURCES:

- Maine Children's Growth Council (www.maineecgc.org)
- Maine Employer's Initiative (www.mdf.org)
- Maine Department of Labor (<http://www.maine.gov/labor/lmis/>)
- Prepare Maine (www.preparemaine.org)
- Maine Compact for Higher Education (www.collegeforme.com)
- Educare Central Maine (www.educarecentralmaine.org)

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