

Introduction

by Linda Silka

It is with great pleasure that we bring you this special *Maine Policy Review* issue on leadership. Over a year in the making, this issue captures the broad array of work on leadership in Maine, exciting work that continues to build Maine's national visibility in the leadership arena.

It is no coincidence that we are publishing an *MPR* issue on leadership at this time. We are doing so to celebrate the qualities of leadership reflected in the work of Mary Cathcart, who has recently retired from her position as senior policy fellow at the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center (MCSPC). Mary originated and led the MCSPC's award-winning Maine NEW Leadership program and was also instrumental in creating the MCSPC's Distinguished Maine Policy Fellows program, which brings policymakers in the state to the University of Maine campus to engage with campus leaders and students. Throughout her work, Mary has been a tireless champion for strengthening leadership in the state. Her own work in the Maine Legislature is widely recognized as instrumental in creating change, building communication across parties, and modeling creative and innovative leadership. This work was recently recognized by Mary's award of an honorary doctorate by the University of Maine.

This *MPR* issue delves into the full array of leadership issues in Maine. You will learn about leadership programs in Maine in many different contexts: business, K–12 education, higher education, health care and nonprofit organizations, politics, and tourism. The articles show leaders who encounter unique challenges and cover leadership training aimed at different groups: nonprofits, youth, municipal leaders, and teachers. Across the articles, we see a recurring theme of how to learn from each other given our varied contexts: rural and urban, north and south, and local, regional, or state levels. Some articles delve deeply into one sector; others look across sectors and compare them. Many of the articles tackle the issue of the changing world. Other articles examine the changing views of what constitutes leadership or note the demographic changes that underlie many leadership challenges: keeping our youth, teaching leadership skills to our youth, assisting leaders

to work across age groups and remain open to new ways of leading in Maine.

Throughout many of these articles, research is front and center. The articles explore the research we need to help us understand leadership or what works and what doesn't in various leadership realms. Many of the articles describe research that looks at how leaders need to be attuned to rapidly shifting opportunities. In fact, change is an underlying theme throughout the articles.

This is our first *MPR* issue exclusively devoted to leadership, but it is a recurring topic in past issues. Past articles on leadership have covered a range of important topics: aging, community development, education, election reform and politics, tourism, women's leadership, and workforce development, to name a handful. As we look to the future of leadership in Maine, it will be important not to lose sight of past insights about leadership challenges and opportunities, which can be discovered in these past articles.

We hope that this issue will advance discussions on leadership throughout the state. As these discussions happen, it will be important not to lose sight of all the innovative leadership in the state. We should pay attention to leadership issues in both rural and urban regions of the state. We should not lose sight of leadership among our elders or young people. Ultimately, this issue is about how we learn from each other and how we can make it easier to do so. Finally, it is about drawing lessons from current practices, yet learning to innovate beyond them. 🐟



Linda Silka is the executive editor of *Maine Policy Review*. A social and community psychologist by training, Silka was formerly director of the University of Maine's Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center. In addition to her role with *MPR*, she is a senior fellow at UMaine's Senator

George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions.