

Maine Delegation to Arctic Circle Unveils Mini Documentary of Maine/Iceland Relationship

Reykjavik, Iceland - More than 50 members from the State of Maine joined Governor Paul R. LePage at the Arctic Circle Assembly in Iceland on Saturday (10/14/2017). More than 2,000 delegates from Arctic nations and countries all over the world were represented at this annual gathering of politicians, scientists, artists, academics and business leaders in the largest network of international dialogue and cooperation on the future of the Arctic.

Governor LePage and Eimskip CEO Gylfi Sigfusson presented the keynote plenary session on Saturday, describing the transformational nature of Eimskip's move to Maine in 2013. Governor LePage described the multitude of ways in which Eimskip's presence has had an effect on Maine business, culture, politics and academia, as well as a perspective on global issues affecting the arctic.

"We have to be good stewards," said Governor LePage, addressing the fact that Maine has been committed to the sustainability of its fisheries and forestry industries for quite some time. "We are very good stewards of our land, and we can only continue to grow trade between ourselves and foreign countries if we are good stewards."

Governor LePage also discussed his views that the most important asset is human life. "Until we, as a global community, pay attention to extreme poverty on earth, we will never be the greatest stewards," he said. Governor LePage noted that good trade relations with foreign countries can lead to economic growth and prosperity that provides the resources to combat poverty.

Eimskip CEO Gylfi Sigfusson illustrated how trust in a public-private partnership with the Maine DOT and Maine Port Authority has played a key role in the remarkable growth Eimskip has experienced while working with Maine. "We have recently announced that we are for the first time in 104 years of sailing to the United States, going to weekly service through Portland, Maine," Sigfusson said. "We have grown more than 20% each year while in Maine, and the trust and relationships we have developed have truly added to this growth."

Sigfusson described Eimskip's role in building communities and relationships between North Atlantic and Arctic communities on its shipping network as a key element of their success. He then unveiled a video illustrating the lengths to which Eimskip and Maine are willing to go to produce long-term trusting relationships, using just a bit of fun.

The video, produced by Maine Department of Transportation, Eimskip, Soli DG Inc. and Black Fly Media of Maine, captures the story of Maine's collaborative exploits in Iceland and the High North. "The partnership between Maine and Eimskip has been so transformational to our economy and culture, we had to find a way to share the story with the community," said Maine DOT Commissioner Dave

Bernhardt. “Transportation matters more today than ever before, but most people are unaware of the true value or impact transportation has on our daily lives and our future.”

The video features 20 CEOs and significant business leaders from Maine, including L.L. Bean CEO Steve Smith, cycling more than 800 miles around Iceland, while participating in the WOW air Cyclothon event this past June. The trip for these leaders was intended to be a bonding experience for them while at the same time opening new relationships and new trade opportunities abroad.

Simultaneously in Reykjavik, the Maine Beer Box, a refrigerated container with 78 beer taps, was being set up at Eimskip’s port facility for the Maine beer festival in Iceland. The interweaving of these events and the critical mass of Maine interests working together is indicative of a growing new trend that focuses more on collaborative development, something very common in Scandinavia.

“The strength of the Maine delegation and the power of the story conveyed in this video are the culmination of years of collaborative work between Iceland and Maine,” said Patrick Arnold, President of Soli DG, Inc. “Maine and Iceland are acting as a bridge, collaborative gateways between the United States and Europe.” The video can be seen on the newly launched www.transportationmatters.org

The Governor’s speech can be seen here: <https://vimeo.com/238255722>

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