

Investigation into explosion continues, 10 remain hospitalized

Maine politicians offered their condolences to the loved ones of Andrew Cross, the firefighter who was killed at Robbins Lumber.

By SOPHIE BURCHELL
Staff Writer

SEARSMONT

Ten people injured in the fire and explosion at a Searsmont lumber mill Friday were still hospitalized as of Sunday afternoon.

Katherine Paige, a firefighter for Belmont, was one of many first responders fighting the large fire at Robbins Lumber when the explosion occurred. Paige is being treated for severe injuries at Maine Medical Center in Portland, said her husband,

Paul Paige. "She has a long way to go," he said Sunday, adding that her recovery is expected to take several months. Morrill firefighter Andrew Cross was killed in the incident at Robbins Lumber. Authorities said the fire and

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A man walks past a burned out fire truck, left, and an incinerated structure at Robbins Lumber in Searsmont on Saturday. Federal agents have joined the investigation into the fire and explosion's cause. (RICH ABRAHAMSON/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)



Caitlin Hosmer, left, and Kate Howe, who launched MenoPantry this month, in Hosmer's kitchen in Portland. "I have built my life around learning, sharing and leveraging the healing power of food," said Hosmer, 59. (PHOTOS BY DEREK DAVIS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

Women-owned Portland nutrition company aims to ease menopause

The MenoPantry founders hope their smoothie mix will help them break into an \$18 billion marketplace.

By KELLEY BOUCHARD
Staff Writer

PORTLAND — Kate Howe suffered through most of her 40s with hot flashes, fatigue, sleepless nights and other symptoms of perimenopause.

Her frustrating search for relief led her to start MenoPantry, a new company with a food-based approach to easing perimenopause and menopause and supporting women's health in midlife.

Howe and her business partner, Caitlin Hosmer, a registered dietician, will be featured May 30 on Greenlight Maine, a Shark Tank-like TV series where local startups compete for \$40,000 and mentorship opportunities.

Their first product is MenoMix, a smoothie powder that is launching them into a global menopause



A smoothie made with MenoMix, cocoa powder, Swiss chard, strawberries and soy milk. MenoMix can be blended with milk or baked into muffins and other foods. Each serving contains 21 grams of protein, 5 grams of fiber and 9 grams of antioxidant-rich micronutrients.

market valued at \$17.8 billion in 2024 and projected to reach \$23.3 billion by 2030, according to Grand View Research. More than 80% of that market is in the U.S., where about 85 million women are age 40 and up. Before starting MenoPantry, Howe talked to doctors, worked out and took supplements, but she saw little

improvement in her health. She finally got some answers in late 2024, when a nutritionist recommended a diet high in protein and fiber to help boost her metabolism, stabilize her blood sugar and control her weight.

Over time her symptoms diminished. She stayed full longer. She had more energy and improved digestion. She even lost 5 pounds.

"I just felt good," said Howe, now 50. "I still feel good."

MIDLIFE GAPS IN NUTRITION

Menopause occurs when a woman ceases menstruation for a full year, usually between the ages of 45 and 55, according to the National Institute on Aging.

Perimenopause is the process leading up to menopause when the body's

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Maine to hold citizens' assembly on education. What is it?

The initiative seeks to bring together delegates from across the state to define forward-looking priorities for pre K-12 education in Maine.

By RILEY BOARD
Staff Writer

Residents from every county will converge on Bangor next month to discuss the future of education in Maine.

In all, 64 volunteers who raised their hand will take part in what is called a "citizens' assembly," with a shared goal to debate and arrive at several common priorities for Maine's pre-K through 12th grade education.

The event is part of an initiative called Maine Education 2050, organized by researcher Jennifer Chace, that hopes to draw on conversations with teachers, students, parents and community members to imagine the future of education in the state. The citizens' assembly is phase two of that project.

It comes as Maine is dealing with a variety of education challenges. The state's fourth grade math and reading scores were among the lowest in the country on a federal standardized test in 2024, and while the Legislature made progress on the outdated school funding formula this year, education leaders say there's more work to be done. Maine has also struggled to keep up with school construction needs and rising special education costs.

An assembly differs from public comment or testimony because it has a learning phase to educate participants — who are by design everyday citizens — about the issue, and builds in time for thoughtful deliberation.

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The growing influence of Calvary Chapel

Maine's network of evangelical Calvary churches has become increasingly vocal in state politics. Charlie Kirk's death has spurred greater interest.

By SEAN SCOTT
The Maine Monitor

One night in May 2021, Ken Graves, longtime pastor and founder of Calvary Chapel Bangor, ceded his lectern to a leader of a different kind: Charlie Kirk.

A year earlier, incensed by a ban on gatherings of more than 10 people instituted to prevent the spread of COVID-19,

Graves had loudly brought his Orrington church together for worship, violating state policy. The church also sued the state, alleging that the restrictions violated the First Amendment. Kirk, the firebrand conservative commentator and founder of Turning Point USA, took

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Pastor Travis Carey of Calvary Chapel Greater Portland said his job is to interpret the Bible and apply it to modern-day life. "I think oftentimes things are deemed political," he said, "but they're not political; they're biblical." Since January, Carey has opened the floor to each Republican candidate for governor, as well as several local candidates, to briefly address the congregation. "We have abdicated and been derelict in much of our duty in influencing public policy," Carey said at a Feb. 1 service. (JOSEPH CIEMBRONIEWICZ/THE MAINE MONITOR)

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