

## MAINE

## Send us your top five picks for what to do with Bates Mill No. 5

**1. Back to the future**

Science Center that includes: IMAX theater, Star Watch, Robotic Center, Science Arcade, music playing on a fountain of water, exhibit halls, hands-on experience areas and kids' park. **Mary Story, Auburn**

**2. A new home**

For homeless veterans: living quarters, social area, small medical office, learning center and even a day care/preschool classroom for the people who will work and/or volunteer there. **Charlotte M. Blier, Auburn**

**3. Making land**

Demolish it. Seed it over. List it for sale. Use proceeds to offset cost of demolition. If it doesn't sell, garden lots can be made available to Lewiston residents and the land will be productive again. **Bob Stone, Lewiston**

**4. Mother of invention**

An incubator hub for technology (math, science, emerging technologies, etc.) and social advancement (education, arts, economics, etc.). Seed money could come from USDA's Rural Business Enterprise Grant, a portion of Auburn municipal forest proceeds and private donations. **John L. Painter, Lewiston**

**5. Ice, ice baby**

An ice complex for hockey, figure skating and curling. A heated snack bar, licensed cafe and bar with comfy seats and a fireplace for parents watching games! L-A could be a nice destination! **Sarah Alto, Lisbon**

**6. Pure luxury**

Tear it down. Build a nice luxury hotel, convention center and an IMAX movie theater! **Paul Lacasse**

**7. Veggies and fish**

A giant hydroponic vegetable farm or aquaponics (a combination of aquaculture and hydroponic farming). The water from the fish being raised is used as a nutrient source for the plants, thus reducing the cost of needed nutrients to grow the plants and you have fish to sell, too. **Leigh Stevens, Livermore Falls**

**8. Dive on in**

An Olympic Swimming and Diving Center in the mill. One engineer I spoke with said the mill could handle it if the column supports in the mill are not in the way for an eight-lane pool or can be repositioned. **Jim Horn, Lewiston**

**9. Bikes 'R' Us**

A velodrome, an indoor cycling track. It could support several other businesses such as bike rental and repair, a gift shop, coffee shop, concessions, etc., not to mention all the hotel rooms sold since competitors would come from all over. **Jim Witherell, Lewiston**

**10. Indoor market**

Think Pike Place Market in Seattle and Faneuil Hall in Boston: Thoughtful renovation, parking/handicap access and a blend of vendors, shops, restaurants, take-away food stands and cultural attractions. **Victor R. Leclerc, Lewiston**

**11. Help center**

Training center for the unemployed. Homeless shelter. Low-income housing. Youth center. **Mike Bourget, Lewiston**



Above is James Mangrum of Providence, R.I.'s conception of the mill as a server farm, with a second floor for a productive farm and public space. (Suggestion No. 34.)

**12. Retail and the big 'O'**

Olive Garden and a small courtyard with a special gift shop, a women's shop and men's shop, a card store and then several townhouses (open concept with two or three bedrooms with their own laundry rooms). **Louise Samson**

**13. More brew for ME**

Turn Bates Mill No. 5 into a brewery. Demand for bottlers, farmers, labelers, truck drivers: All of these would go up. **Josh White, Turner**

**14. Manufacturing jobs**

Let's go back to the old days and get this place going with manufacturing of some type and create lots of jobs for the people that live in Lewiston first and teach them skills for it. **Paul Roy, Lewiston**

**15. New nonprofit**

The Trinity Foundation would be a three-part community service project. It would entail a short-term residential/reintegration unit, a career and educational center and a rehabilitation unit for the homeless. **Danylle M. Carson, Leeds**

**16. Arts mecca**

Artists' lofts, small galleries and reception space on the upper level with a balcony effect looking down. On the lower level: multi-functional space to include locally owned shops, restaurants and entertainment facilities. **Jan Barrett, Lewiston**

**17. Aqua land**

An indoor water park in Lewiston that would be open year-round (It would be weather-proof!). Just think: The name "Lewiston" would be associated with great memories of a fun family weekend destination! Maggie (age 12) and Leila (age 10) Chirayath, and mom. **Heidi Taylor, Auburn**

**18. Movie land**

Market Bates Mill No. 5 to Sony, Universal, Fox, etc. as a giant sound-stage or multiple sound-stages for TV and movie production. Let's push for a Universal Studios "east" based here in Lewiston! **Jeff Mayerson, Lewiston**

**19. Cultural home**

A true cultural center honoring not only Lewiston's French-Canadian heritage but also recognizing the strong Greek community that is an important part

of our city and the Irish who fled their country to find a better life in Lewiston. **Jane A. Lindholm, Brunswick**

**20. Hydro-trolley hub**

Build a trolley that is hydropowered from the Androscoggin River and Lewiston's canal system with sophisticated underground cables and wiring throughout the five counties (or all of Maine) starting at Bates Mill No. 5 and ending back here. The mill windows would be unbreakable Plexiglas and its roof would have solar powered panels housing the trolley terminal with a small trolley museum, a diner or whatever is desired. **Rita Jean, Lewiston**

**21. Year-round indoors**

A four-season inside dome that would include a water park/pools, sandy beach, ice skating, snow, leaves, an inside forest to picnic, see animals, fish, rock climb, golf and volleyball. **Shauna Schade, Lewiston**

**22. Sew nice**

An updated, energy efficient, fabric producing garment — and accessory-making factory. Green ideas would be welcomed. Rebuilt and operated with Lewiston-Auburn workers. From pot holders to quilts to designer dresses. Could "L-A MADE" work here? **Susan Brown, Auburn**

**23. New school**

Make the mill a new middle school and the old middle school can be used as another elementary school to alleviate the terrible overcrowding problems this city has. **Adrienne Rochon, Lewiston**

**24. Think paddle boats**

A mix of restaurants leading to a river walk around the canal and paddle boat rides in the canal for \$3/hour. **Theresa James, Lewiston**

**25. Play time**

Multi-use sports arena: Batting cages, archery, indoor soccer/lacrosse, extreme trampoline, virtual 3D gaming. Plus classroom space for floral arranging, wreath-making, stained glass and quilting. **Joe and Lisa Elitch, Auburn**

**26. Car heaven**

Something like Deer Lodge in Montana: A restored prison that now houses antique autos. **Gary Jordan, Greene**

**27. Extra rec**

Expand on the Multi-Purpose Center: pool, table tennis, exercise room, indoor track or a few bowling lanes if the budget allows it. **Bert Godin, Lewiston**

**28. Next Fisher kings?**

A spot for manufacturing Fisher plows. **Sylvia Thibodeau, Auburn**

**29. Flea market 'n' more**

A huge flea market containing usual flea market items, made-in-Maine products, a fresh vegetable section and possibly fun indoor stuff like golf, tennis, bumper cars, video games, rock climbing and a small convention center. **Claire Gamache, Lewiston**

**30. Senior living**

Elderly housing with a barber shop and beauty parlor, drug store, grocery store, lunch counter, thrift shop,

clothing store or Marden's, a religious center, health clinic and meeting room. **Cecilia Harkins, Lewiston**

**31. Working museum**

A museum with live displays of the old factories that have gone out of business or out of the country showing how Bates bedspreads were made, how paper is made, how sardines were canned, etc. It would keep the knowledge alive just in case it is ever needed again. **Ann M. Blais, Turner**

**32. Kayak hotbed**

Partly demolish the mill, create a park with water access for kayaks, a controlled white-water practice area and a circular paddle route featuring a canal lock. Renovate another section of the mill for lodging run by the Appalachian Mountain Club and the only indoor kayak launch ramp in the world. **Bill Webster, Lewiston**

**33. Organic growth**

An organic produce biodome. Each level would have specific vegetables or fruits growing, for example, a tropical level with oranges. **Scott Theriault, Lewiston**

**34. Two farms in one**

Retool the mill into a server farm. Computers take in electricity and data, then put out information and heat. Combine waste heat with the south-facing sawtooth roof, making a second-floor productive farm and public space. **James Mangrum, Providence, R.I.**

**35. Highlight the canals**

Build retail space along the canal facing Ash Street and a hotel adjacent to the canal. An office building could be leased for a Post Office and other federal agencies. Make the canal and Lewiston a destination. **Richard and Diane Grandmaison, Lewiston**

**36. Y not?**

YMCA: Please reconsider the new site in Auburn and build here. The future of the Twin Cities needs to center on facilities that are within walking distance of one another to restore a sense of community. **Elizabeth Dube, Lewiston**

**37. Temporary fix**

For a minimal investment, repair the mill's roof, windows and facade, and just generally make the building not look like an eyesore anymore. It would improve the downtown area and the subject of what to do with all that space could be discussed over time. **Matt Darlington, Auburn**

**38. The RuMor Mill**

A greenhouse, farmer's market, rent-a-plot, local grocer and cafe. Food is a revolution! And BM5 City Center is here!!! Come see the ways farming can boost the economy in downtown. Support your local community or blaze your own path. **Gabrielle Russell and Kevin Morissette, Lewiston**

**To vote:** Write the numbers of your five favorites on a postcard or, clip this page and circle your five favorite picks — and mail either to staff writer Kathryn Skelton at the Sun Journal, P.O. Box 4400, Lewiston, ME 04243 or vote online at [sunjournal.com/millfuture](http://sunjournal.com/millfuture). Votes are due by Dec. 7.

## Is conservative media the Grinch that stole tree growers' Christmas?

BY ABIGAIL CURTIS  
*Bangor Daily News*

BELFAST—In a world crowded with advertisements and promotion boards for agricultural commodities such as beef, potatoes, pork and even watermelon, the Christmas tree stands alone.

And a recent attempt by Christmas tree farmers to create their own industry marketing and research program was derailed earlier this month by conservative critics, according to one tree grower in Maine, who decried the situation as "discrimination."

"The other commodities have their programs. Ours has been taken away," said Jim Corliss of Piper Mountain Christmas Trees in Newburgh. "After all our hard work, it felt like a body blow."

On Friday, his snowy, 30-acre tree farm was alive with activity as families picked their Christmas trees, nibbled fresh doughnuts and enjoyed rides in a horse-drawn wagon.

But all the smiles and Christmas cheer belie the harsh reality that fewer and fewer people are choosing live trees each year, he said. And that is bad news for

Christmas tree farmers, most of whom run small, family businesses.

Corliss said that marketing is needed to combat negative ideas about Christmas trees, such as the idea they're a fire hazard and purchasing a real tree hurts the environment. But such marketing efforts are hard to sustain on a voluntary basis.

Enter the industry "checkoff" program. As proposed, Christmas tree farmers who sell more than 500 trees would pay a mandatory assessment of 15 cents a tree toward a new marketing and promotion program. This would

be overseen by USDA, but by design would not involve taxpayer or government funds.

This year, the USDA held a long open comment period for the proposed checkoff program, which growers supported 3-to-1, according to Corliss.

On Nov. 8, the final ruling to establish a Christmas tree checkoff program was published in the Federal Register, just in time for the farmers' selling season.

"Everybody was ecstatic," Corliss said.

But they had reckoned without David Addington, who writes for The Foundry, a policy news blog

for The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank.

In a Nov. 8 post titled "Obama Couldn't Wait: His New Christmas Tree Tax," Addington wrote that the president would impose a 15 cent tax on all fresh Christmas trees to support a new federal image and marketing program.

"The economy is barely growing and nine percent of the American people have no jobs. Is a new tax on Christmas trees the best President Obama can do?" Addington wrote. "And, by the way, the American Christmas tree has a great image that

doesn't need any help from the government."

His post, and the idea of an "Obama Christmas Tree Tax," burned across the blogosphere like a forest fire. Almost 3,000 people commented on Addington's blog. More than 180,000 people "liked" it on Facebook.

"Without checking with anybody in our industry, Fox News and Rush Limbaugh picked it up, started blasting it across the country," Corliss said.

On Nov. 10, the Obama administration announced that it would delay and re-evaluate the assessment.

