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Wright Express is doing all the right things,” says Evan Livada, founder of Livada Securities, of the South Portland-headquartered credit-card processing firm as he considers this year’s list of the top 100 businesses headquartered in Maine.

“They were founded here in 1983, and they’ve grown by leaps and bounds by making acquisitions all over the world. Two weeks ago, they acquired Fleet One, one of their biggest competitors, for $369 million. With that announcement,
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the stock popped nine percent.”

Even better, “They have a market cap of $2.7 billion, a big number for a Maine corp.” For readers unfamiliar with the business located near Maine Mall, across the street from Clark’s Pond Cinemas, “They’re huge in the corporate credit-card business. They were the first guys to set up credit cards for gassing up everybody’s vehicles. Look at the growth this year: The low for the stock was $35, and now it’s doubled, to $70.”

If you’re looking for a business that is quietly taking over the world, consider “Formed Fiber Technologies out of Auburn,” a tick below Oakhurst Dairy at $106 million.

Maine: Carpetmaker for Alfa Romeo, Fiat, Ford, and Lexus.

It isn’t difficult describing chocolate milk, but how unglamorous is FFT’s product of “needle-punched non-woven fabrics and polyester staple fibers.” Sound boring? Get back in the car! “What that means is they’re in just about every automobile in the country,” from Corvettes to Ford Mustangs. “Think of the cut-piled carpeting in every foot well and trunk in every car in every traffic jam.”

The stuff you spill your McDonald’s shakes on?

“Someone has to make it! They have plants in Auburn; Sidney, Ohio; and Sumter, South Carolina. With market penetration this deep, this one looks more than just interesting to me.”

Renys and Marden’s are turtleneck and turtleneck. “Maybe without our Gov. LePage’s leadership, they’ve slept a little bit at Marden’s, but I can’t imagine they’ve gone for $100M to $49M in one year! In any case, it’s nice to see Renys see an increase after they’ve taken the downtown Portland space where the L.L. Bean outlet store was. Certainly many people appreciate their believing in that spot.”

“Huge in Maine is environmental engineering and processing. Woodard & Curran, in Portland, takes their environmental engineering expertise all over the country. They help universities and towns” with their water management plans.”
Insider’s tip: “Angus King is on their board.”

To those who believe water runs to what is wet; maybe it’s true for dollars, too: “Everett J. Prescott is huge in water, sewer, drainage, and stormwater—a big employer.”

As for the biggest force at play in the Maine 100, it’s play itself: “Without a doubt, tourism is the biggest industry in Maine. As long as we can keep the weather perfect and the price of lobster down. I see that No. 51 on the list is Weathervane Seafoods,” Livada says. “It started in 1969 as a little takeout stand for lobster and chowder in Kittery.”

Another rising star in the tourism sky, “beyond 60 cruise ships coming into Portland, is Canada revitalizing [and underwriting] the Portland to Nova Scotia ferry connection.”

After The Cat skipped town, “it was sad to see Halifax getting farther away, and great to see it coming back to us” as part of the shared Northern Atlantic economy of Maine and the Canadian Maritimes. “Yes, this ferry is going to happen.”

Is there something in Livada’s crystal ball for us to watch? A dark horse? “Without a doubt, the boys who are putting the Oxford Casino together are knocking the cover off the ball. They’re printing money in Oxford. It’s got to be a little boost for Sunday River. That whole area of Route 26 has been suffering a long time. It’ll be nice to get a shot in the arm in that area.”

1. L.L. BEAN, Freeport, $1.52B†
2. IDEXX LABORATORIES, Westbrook, $1.2B
3. EASTERN MAINE HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS, Brewer, $964.01M*
4. WRIGHT EXPRESS CORPORATION, South Portland, $553.1M
5. MAINE GENERAL HEALTH, Augusta, $401.27M*
6. OLYMPIA SPORTS, Westbrook, $183.95M
7. DARLING’S, Brewer, $172.36M
8. CJANBRO COMPANIES, Pittsfield, $163.2M
9. YORK HOSPITAL, York, $148.79M*
10. HUTCHINS MOTORS, Augusta, $141.09M
11. BANGOR SAVINGS BANK, Bangor, $140.14M
12. MAINE EMPLOYERS’ MUTUAL INSURANCE, Portland, $122.69M
13. CAMDEN NATIONAL CORPORATION, Camden, $121.43M
14. OAKHURST DAIRY, Portland, $108.4M†
15. FORMED FIBER TECHNOLOGIES, Auburn, $105.9M
16. WOODARD & CURRAN, Portland, $98.73M
17. FABIAN OIL, Oakland, $90.65M
18. CENTRAL MAINE MEDICAL CENTER, Lewiston, $90.5M*
19. HAMMOND LUMBER COMPANY, Belgrade, $90M
20. C. N. BROWN, South Paris, $87.3M
(Continued on page 77)
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KEY TO THE NUMBERS
Companies must be for-profit and headquartered in Maine. All numbers were obtained by Dun & Bradstreet and represent 2011 gross revenues. (Revenue figures are estimates or reports for Calendar Year 2011. Please contact D&B, not Portland Magazine, for error corrections.)

SYMBOLS
*Though it’s difficult to tell what part of a hospital is nonprofit and for-profit, we’ll list them here. Consider Mercy Hospital’s turn to a for-profit organization.
† Figure provided by annual report.

The following companies made the 2011 Maine 100™ list but were not included in 2012 due to incomplete information per Dun & Bradstreet: Affiliated Materiel, Alm Composite Systems, Auburn Motor Sales, Bill Dodge Auto Group, Casco Bay Motors, CPM Constructors, Davric, Dennis Beverage, Eastland Shoe, Eldridge Lumber, Hardware Products, J & S Oil, Johnson & Jordan, Key Plaza Holdings, Libene’s, Lee Chrysler Plymouth, Maine Wood Treaters, Medical Mutual Insurance, Napa Distributors, Nickersons & O’Day, Patriot Mutual Insurance, Penobscot McCrum, Philip E. McPhail, Pleasant River Lumber, PM Construction, PowerPay, Read & Reed, Rove Ford Sales, Tal mage Solar Engineering, Tex-Tech Industries, TSSD Services, Viking Lumber, Wellington Group, Wright-Ryan Construction.

For the online list, visit portlandmonthly.com/port-mag/2012/09/maine-100-extras.
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