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Damariscotta Chamber Welcomes New Director

March 26, 2026 at 2:00 pm

Emily Bracher



Christa Thorpe will be starting her new position as the Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce’s director on Monday, March 30. Thorpe said she is ready to learn more about the region’s history and connect more with the community through this position. (Photo courtesy Christa Thorpe).

The Damariscotta Regional Chamber of Commerce and Information Bureau’s incoming executive director is ready to connect with the community that raised her.

Christa Thorpe will be stepping in to the role on Monday, March 30 after spending the last seven years with the Island Institute, an organization with the mission expanding opportunities in Maine’s more remote island and coastal communities.

Thorpe also represents Bremen on the RSU 48 Board of Directors.

“I’m excited about the relationships that I get to deepen on this peninsula, but the new ones as well,” Thorpe said. “This area has changed so much in my four decades being a part of it. We’ve got something unique going

on for us here.”

Originally from Newcastle, Thorpe said she grew up during a “golden age” for the Twin Villages, a time when locals fought off big businesses like Walmart and when the community would participate in the arts in a public way. With this new role, she said that she is excited to see the energy that still exists for those efforts.

She also looks forward to learning more about the history of the region and how it has been a center of commerce for thousands of years.

“The shell middens show us how people who lived here have remained resilient over thousands of years and I think a lot of it has to do with community and coming together, and that’s what gets me excited,” Thorpe said.

As the chamber enters its next phase, Thorpe said she is excited to bring in more connectedness across the entire coast, region, and state. This will include the redefinition of business, which Thorpe said goes beyond the normal business model and includes other efforts such as partnerships between nonprofit organizations and public entities.

Thorpe’s family has been on the coast of Maine since the early 1700s, one of her ancestors being the first person with a recorded marriage on Monhegan Island. While a part of her childhood was in Newcastle, her earlier years were also spent in Bangladesh with her two brothers and parents.

After moving back to Maine, Thorpe started fifth grade at Great Salt Bay Community School and then graduated from Lincoln Academy in 2005. She went to pursue a degree in anthropology with a minor in music at Wheaton College in Illinois. She went on to get her master’s in intercultural studies and teaching English to speakers of other languages, and after graduating returned to Bangladesh to teach English at a women’s university focused on women’s leadership empowerment.

“My career path at that point always pretty much focused on translating across different cultures,” Thorpe said. “I studied music, but more of the ethnomusicology side, and just was really fascinated by people and how we come together in a community.”

Thorpe moved back to Lincoln County in 2013 and started teaching English for second-language speakers at Lincoln Academy. Now, she lives in Bremen with her husband and two sons.

“I planted my roots back down and had the opportunity to end up here in Bremen, and I don’t plan on ever leaving,” Thorpe said.

After three years at Lincoln Academy and a stint in running a small business, Thorpe started her job at the Island Institute in 2019. She was responsible for running the organization’s education projects that were focused on supporting coastal and island students as they navigated career and college opportunities on the mainland.

She also led the Island Institute’s broadband program, which focused on improving access to high-speed internet for coastal communities and creating a business resilience plan for communities that rely on lobster fishing as the environment changes. The job consistently brought Thorpe to meetings in Washington County, which was a six-hour round trip.

“I’ve learned a lot, but I have a 2-year-old and a 5-year-old, and now I have the opportunity to bring what I’ve learned and apply it here in my home community,” Thorpe said.

When she is not working, Thorpe enjoys spending time with her family in their garden, playing the flute in the Seacoast Community Orchestra, and cooking. She said that after spending a lot of her life abroad, she feels a sense of “interconnectedness” with communities across the world, and has learned she has more in common than she thought with different cultures.

“I just want to thank Anne (Rundle, former executive director) and thank the board for the opportunity, and just let people know that my first priority is to come in and listen and learn,” Thorpe said.

For more information on the Damariscotta Region Chamber of Commerce and Information Bureau, go to damariscottaregion.com.