



## Cool As A Moose Named 2011 Merchant of the Year

**Augusta, Maine** - The board of directors of the Maine Merchants Association recently chose retailer Cool As A Moose as its 2011 Merchant of the Year. The award will be presented at the Maine Merchants Association 78<sup>th</sup> annual meeting on October 20<sup>th</sup> at the Augusta Civic Center in Augusta, ME.

The Merchant of the Year Award has three main criteria: *continued growth in employees or sales; commitment of company resources to community projects; and creation of a positive work environment for all employees.* Cool As A Moose exceeded the criteria on all counts.

Although a number of qualified merchants were considered, Cool As A Moose was chosen because of its commitment to Maine as a locally-owned business; its statewide presence with locations in Bar Harbor, Brunswick, Freeport, and Portland, ME; its investment in downtowns with its relocation to Brunswick, ME; its leadership of social media to expand their marketability beyond the Maine border and for working to help other small businesses in need.

“Cool As A Moose is an excellent role model for other companies in Maine,” stated Curtis Picard, Executive Director of the Maine Merchants Association. “I was very pleased to see them make the commitment to renovating the building in Brunswick and locate their headquarters there. I am impressed with their business skills, leadership and hard work to make their business successful.”

Founded in 1986, Cool As A Moose caters to both Maine residents and tourists with their creative designs, well-merchandised stores, friendly customer service, and fun atmosphere. Their product mix includes clothing for all ages, gifts, souvenirs and sunglasses.

The company, owned by Maine resident Kip Stone, operates four brick and mortar retail locations in Maine, a web store at [coolasamoose.com](http://coolasamoose.com), and has licensed two locations in Canada. Stone’s other business Artforms, a screen printing business founded in 1988 in Portland, ME, supplies Cool As A Moose with many of its popular t-shirt designs.

Looking to consolidate the headquarters of his two businesses, Stone purchased the building of the former Grand City department store at 128 Maine Street in Brunswick, ME in 2010, and relied on the talents of area businesses to design and execute the extensive renovations. The storefront features the flagship Cool As A Moose store, which opened in May 2011. The offices and screen printing operations will relocate from the current location in Westbrook upon the building’s completion.

“Cool As A Moose is thrilled to be chosen as the 2011 Maine Merchant of the Year,” said Stone. “We wouldn’t be here without the loyal customers of both Cool As A Moose and Artforms, our dedicated

employees, and to the communities of Maine who have welcomed us with open arms. This award is for them.”

Cool As A Moose sets the tone for all employers with their dedication to local communities and to their employees. Whether serving on volunteer boards like the Brunswick Downtown Association, supporting local non-profits or working with Maine’s SBDC to counsel other small businesses, Cool As A Moose is a leader in Maine’s merchant community.

The Maine Merchants Association has presented the annual Merchant of the Year Award since 1980. Other winners include The Beadin’ Path (2010), Acadia Corporation (2009), Johnny’s Selected Seeds (2008), Stonewall Kitchen (2007), Hammond Lumber Company (2006), and Indian Hill Trading Post (2005). The award will be presented on Wednesday, October 20, 2011 at the Maine Merchants Association Annual Meeting at the Augusta Civic Center in Augusta, ME.

*The Maine Merchants Association is a statewide, non-profit trade association representing over 400 businesses in the state, from large chains to small independent retailers. Formed in 1933, the Maine Merchants Association serves as the voice of merchants in Maine and concentrates on preserving the state's strong retail climate. For more information on the Maine Merchants Association, check the web site at [www.mainemerchants.org](http://www.mainemerchants.org) or call the Maine Merchants Association offices at 207-623-1149.*

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