



WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Week ending June 26, 2009

State law assigns four core duties to the State Planning Office that include: 1) conducting continuing economic analysis, including economic forecasting, 2) coordinating the development of the State's economy and energy resources with the conservation of its natural resources; 3) providing technical assistance to towns and regions; and 4) providing technical assistance to the Governor and Legislature by undertaking special studies and plans and preparing policy alternatives.

MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

New State Economist Appointed. This week, Director Martha Freeman appointed Mike LeVert as State Economist. Mike has been serving in that position in an acting capacity for six months. Mike has been a key player in the state's work with the Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission, Maine Quality of Place Council, Corrections Working Group, and tax reform and will continue working in these areas and others. While at SPO, Mike authored a key piece for the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place, [Public Access to Maine's Private Lands: A Cultural and Economic Asset – Findings and Recommendations](#).

Mike has been with SPO since 2007. Mike has master's degree in resource economics from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He lives in Cumberland with his wife Fonda, daughter Robin, and dog Jack. We are thrilled that he has accepted the position. **CONTACT:** Jody Harris at 287-5424 or jody.harris@maine.gov

Quality of Place Council to meet. The Maine Quality of Place Council will meet on July 1 at 1:00 p.m. in the main conference room of the State Planning Office. SPO Director Martha Freeman will brief the council on this session's legislative debate on LD 1389, the Governor's quality of place bill. The council will also set priorities for work over the summer. **CONTACT:** Linda LaPlante at 287-6077 or Linda.c.laplante@maine.gov

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

SPO staffer recognized by professional association. The Midcoast Code Enforcement Officers Association recognized Lana Laplant–Ellis at their annual meeting in Rockport on June 17 for all her work on behalf of Maine code enforcement officers. Lana, who headed up the Maine code enforcement officer training and certification program, accepted another position within SPO’s waste management program. Lana worked in the CEO program for close to 20 years, serving as program manager for the last 10 of those years. Many of the state’s code officers relied on her expertise and experience to help them deal with local issues. She was instrumental in making the program a success. **CONTACT: Jody Harris at 287–5424 or jody.harris@maine.gov**

Cumberland and York Mapping Meetings held. Maine Floodplain Management staff conducted four mapping meetings for the communities in Cumberland and York counties on June 22 and June 23. The purpose of the meetings was for the communities to review new, preliminary digital flood maps being developed under FEMA’s map modernization program. These meetings mark the beginning of a six-month review process prior to the issuance of final maps. Over a hundred people attended from 50 communities.

FEMA and their contractor representatives provided an overview of the mapping process. A few communities had new floodplain delineation performed and all maps have been upgraded to a digital format. When the maps are finalized, any community with GIS capabilities will be able to obtain floodplain data electronically and overlay the flood zones onto tax parcel maps. With this new system it will be easier for the community to determine whose properties are in the floodplain and make the floodplain management process work more smoothly. **CONTACT: Joe Young at 287–8051 or joe.young@maine.gov**

Two more Mainers become Certified Floodplain Managers (CFMs). Maine Professional Land Surveyor, Jim Nadeau from Portland and Professional Engineer Steve Blais from South Portland have become nationally certified floodplain managers. They join only two other Mainers who currently hold this certification and they are the first in the private sector to achieve this accomplishment. These gentlemen join former State Floodplain Management Coordinator, Lou Sidell, and current State Coordinator, Sue Baker, as certified floodplain management professionals. We are very proud of their accomplishment. **CONTACT: Sue Baker at 287–8063 or sue.baker@maine.gov**

Collaborative will enhance reuse efforts in Maine. Maine nonprofit reuse stores have embarked on an effort to collaborate with each other to get used goods and services throughout the state. The Reuse Collaborative effort consists of three educational reuse centers (Ruth's Reusable Resources, Everyone's Reuse Depot, and the SHARECenter) and two building materials exchanges (Maine Building and Housing Materials Exchange and the Habitat for Humanity's Maine Restores). The group has been meeting for several months to explore how they can better use resources, such as storage space, transportation, and volunteers. The State Planning Office has been assisting the group. Materials in even an economic slow time are overflowing at the centers. **CONTACT: Bruce White at 287-8053 or bruce.white@maine.gov**

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY

Heating Oil Price Averages Rising. The Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security's June 22, 2009, survey found the current statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil to be \$2.35 per gallon, two cents higher than last week's survey. The most recent average statewide price of gasoline and diesel in Maine as posted by AAA's Daily Fuel Gauge Report was \$2.70 per gallon for gasoline, and \$2.67 for diesel fuel. The most recent average price of natural gas delivered to Maine consumers was \$11.30 for a thousand cubic feet of gas, or equivalent to heating oil at \$1.53 a gallon. At the time of this release the price of WTI crude oil, major driver of refined product prices, including heating oil was \$66.85. **CONTACT: Ian Burnes at 287-8927 or ian.burnes@maine.gov**