



WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Week ending July 17, 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.

POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Quality of Place Council sets priorities for work plan. Members of the Maine Quality of Place Council met on July 1 and laid out a work plan in preparation for the 2nd legislative session. Priorities include:

- develop a strategy for advancing LD 1389;
- evaluate Mobilize Maine: attend meetings, monitor efforts, and track results;
- identify preference points offered through existing state grants for quality of place projects in order to report back to BRED with concrete information;
- develop a communications plan for quality of place for the fall that might include *Op Ed* pieces, talking points for the Governor, and presentations by council members at conferences and events.

The council will meet again in mid-September, date TBA. For more information: <http://www.maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/qualityofplace/index.htm>. **CONTACT:** Jody Harris at 287-5424 or jody.harris@maine.gov

MAINE COASTAL PROGRAM

Briefing on Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) reauthorization. Jim Connors of the Maine Coastal Program was part of a panel of speakers that briefed congressmen and women on the importance of coastal management. The briefing, which was co-sponsored by the Coastal States Organization, Restore America Estuaries, Association

of State Floodplain Managers, National Estuarine Research Reserve Association, and CZMA Coalition, was held on July 7 at the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington DC. Jim spoke about how Maine relies on the Coastal Zone Management Act, which provides important tools and resources to invest in working waterfronts and economies of coastal communities. **CONTACT: Jim Connors at 287-8938 or jim.connors@maine.gov**

Biennial Maine Beaches Conference held at SMCC. On July 10, a beautiful beach day, about 150 people attended the 2009 Maine Beaches Conference at the Southern Maine Community College campus in South Portland. The conference theme was *Maine's Beaches: Assets, Challenges, and Actions for Today and Tomorrow*. The conference was co-sponsored by the Maine Coastal Program, and sessions included several MCP funded projects -- including beach monitoring, coastal inundation/predicted sea level rise mapping, and coastal resiliency pilots. Other SPO teams participated, too -- Mike LeVert gave a plenary presentation on the economic value of Maine's beaches, and Sue Baker spoke about floodplain laws that affect coastal property. The conference program and proceedings can be found at <http://www.maine.gov/doc/nrimc/mgs/explore/marine/beach-conference/2009program.htm>. **CONTACT: Paula Thomson at 287-1482 & paula.thomson@maine.gov, or Kathleen Leyden at 287-3144 & kathleen.leyden@maine.gov**

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Floodplain Management Program participates in the 2009 Maine Beaches Conference. On July 10, Sue Baker, State Coordinator for the Maine Floodplain Management Program, presented a session on how state and federal laws affect coastal property, specifically with regard to the National Flood Insurance Program. Dawn Hollowell from DEP was co-presenter and discussed the State's sand dune rules and their implications for coastal property. Although the audience was small, the presentations were appreciated by the coastal property owners in the audience. **CONTACT: Sue Baker at 287-8063 or sue.baker@maine.gov**

Grants help municipalities promote recycling. This June, the State Planning Office provided grants to 16 municipal and regional recycling programs to help educate residents about their local recycling programs. The towns of Bar Harbor, Biddeford, China, Ellsworth, Farmington, Gardiner, Limington, Mars Hill and Blaine, Old Orchard Beach, Pittsfield, Presque Isle, Sanford, St. Agatha, and the Tri-County Landfill were

awarded up to \$500 each to pay for recycling outreach materials and activities. The funds were matched with required in-kind activities or funds. Portland's recycling program, *ecomaine*, received an additional \$500 to pilot recycling promotion aimed at tourists. As a result of the grants, an estimated 150,000 residents are learning about recycling through new signs, banners, brochures, posters and ads that utilize elements of the *Maine Recycles* toolkit. To see recycling education materials available in the *Maine Recycles* toolkit, go to:

<http://www.maine.gov/spo/recycle/municipalities/toolkit.htm>. CONTACT: Jetta Antonakos at 287-9074 or jetta.antonakos@maine.gov

MAINE COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

Registration Now Open. On-line registration is now open for the Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism, the State's only professional development conference tailored exclusively to the needs and challenges of leaders in the state's volunteer sector. The all-day conference is slated for October 13, 2009 at the University of Maine. Workshop topics include: social media, volunteer management from beginner to advanced, building partnerships, Kennedy Serve America Act, and *pro bono* and highly skilled volunteers. To register or for more information:

<http://www.maineservicecommission.gov/>. CONTACT: Rochelle Runge at 287-8933 or rochelle.runge@maine.gov

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY

Heating Oil Price Averages Dropping. The Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security's July 13, 2009, oil survey found the current statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil to be at \$2.26 per gallon, six cents lower than last week. The most recent average price of natural gas delivered to Maine consumers is \$11.30 for a thousand cubic feet of gas, or equivalent to heating oil at \$1.53 a gallon. The most recent average statewide price of gasoline and diesel in Maine as posted by AAA's *Daily Fuel Gauge Report* is \$2.60 per gallon for gasoline and \$2.62 for diesel fuel. At the time of this release, the price of WTI crude oil, the major driver of refined product prices, including heating oil was \$59.90 per barrel. CONTACT: Ian Burnes at 287-8927 or ian.burnes@maine.gov