



WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Week August 21, 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.

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

CEO program gearing up. The code enforcement program at the State Planning Office is gearing up again after a brief hiatus due to budget restrictions. At the beginning of August, SPO hired a training coordinator to restart state training and certification of local code enforcement officers (CEO) and plumbing inspectors (LPIs).

SPO is restructuring the program to adjust to declining revenues and to implement statutory changes. We are working to create a program that focuses on basic training, which is our primary statutory directive. Changes include reducing the type and amount of training, making greater use of electronic and web-based media, and eliminating one-on-one technical assistance. In order to ease this transition, the number of years that a certification is valid has been increased from five years to six years. This will give local CEOs and LPIs more time to become re-certified. **CONTACT:** Brianne Hasty at 287-8058 or brianne.hasty@maine.gov

Floodplain staffer accepts position at MaineDOT. It is with mixed emotions that SPO says good-bye to Diana True. Diana has been with the floodplain management program for almost a year and recently accepted a promotion as a transportation analyst position at MaineDOT. Diana was instrumental in creating a tracking database that allows us to log our activities, thus greatly reducing the amount of time that it takes to do our quarterly reporting to FEMA. We will miss her and we wish her the best in her new position. **CONTACT:** Sue Baker at 287-8063 or sue.baker@maine.gov

ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

June 2009 retail sales reported. Total taxable retail sales in June 2009 were down 12.2% from June 2008, and 9.7% lower year-to-date compared to the same period last year. Sales from food stores remained positive for the sixth month of 2009 while sales from all other categories of stores were negative. June building supply sales were down 19.3% from June 2008 and down 19% year-to-date compared to the same period last year. Lodging declined 16.4% this June compared to June 2008.

	% Change June 2008 to June 2009	% Change 2008 YTD to 2009 YTD
Building Supply	-19.3%	-19.0%
Food Store	2.2%	3.1%
General Merchandise	-8.0%	-5.4%
Other Retail	-6.6%	-1.5%
Restaurant	-5.1%	-1.0%
Lodging	-16.4%	-11.8%
Auto Transportation	-11.0%	-14.7%
Total	-12.2%	-9.7%
Business Operating	-27.8%	-18.6%
Personal Consumption	-9.5%	-8.3%

Source: Maine Revenue Services

The taxable retail sales data is available for download on the State Planning Office website at <http://www.maine.gov/spo/economics/economic/retailsales.htm>.

CONTACT: Donna Bradstreet at 287-5649 or donna.bradstreet@maine.gov

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY

Heating oil price averages increase. The Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security's August 17, 2009, survey finds the current statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil to be at \$2.42 per gallon, once cent higher than last week. The statewide kerosene price average is \$2.83 per gallon at this time. The most recent average statewide price of gasoline and diesel in Maine as posted by AAA's *Daily Fuel Gauge Report* was \$2.69 per gallon for gasoline, and \$2.73 for diesel fuel. **CONTACT:** Ian Burnes at 287-8927 or ian.burnes@maine.gov

LAND USE PLANNING

Planning For Climate Change web site launched. The State Planning Office recognizes that climate change presents many challenges and opportunities at the local level. Fortunately, Maine communities are taking action today to lessen the challenges and seize the opportunities of the future. SPO launched its [Planning for Climate Change](#) web site, which contains resources for communities to support both initial and ongoing climate change planning. **CONTACT:** Liz Hertz at 287-8061 or elizabeth.hertz@maine.gov

Regional Challenge Grant opportunity. This year's grant round will focus on regional open space planning, scenic inventorying, regional harbor or bay management, regional climate change planning, and regional asset development in the coastal zone. We currently have funds for projects in coastal watersheds and towns available through December 31, 2009. Up to \$25,000 per project may be requested. Please see the [Program Statement](#) for more information. **CONTACT:** Tom Miragliuolo at 287-3215 or tom.miragliuolo@maine.gov

MAINE COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

VolunteerMaine commercial production. The Maine Commission for Community Service and University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies collaborated on a commercial designed to promote volunteerism. The commercial features volunteers of different generations and highlight that people with disabilities can serve in their communities as well. It is produced by Time Warner Cable and can be seen starting in August on the following cable channels: History, TLC, Comedy Central, CNN, MSNBC, and A&E. **CONTACT:** Rochelle Runge at 287-8933 or rochelle.runge@maine.gov.



Volunteer newsletter released. The August issue of the commission's electronic newsletter, *VolunteerFare*, helps volunteer managers learn about tracking volunteer hours, taking advantage of pro bono volunteering, and using Volunteer.org, as well as other training and volunteerism news. To view the newsletter:

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