



WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Week ending October 16, 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.

ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Next year's LD 1 Average Personal Income Growth is 1.78%. With the passage of LD 1 in 2005, towns and counties are required to calculate a property tax levy limit each year based on local property growth and statewide average personal income growth. Each town and county is responsible for calculating its property growth. The State Planning Office (SPO) is responsible for calculating income growth. For the 2009 property tax year (the 2010 budget year for most towns), SPO has determined that figure to be 1.78%. For more information:

<http://www.maine.gov/spo/economics/ld1/index.htm>. **CONTACT: Mike LeVert at 287-1479 or michael.levert@maine.gov**

Two new members appointed to the Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission. Kathryn Dion is the President of Bigelow Investment Advisors, LLC. Catherine Reilly, former State Economist, is the Director of External Affairs at the Maine School of Science and Mathematics. They join current commission members: Charles Colgan, Charles Lawton, and John Davulis. The Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission prepares the official economic forecast for the State and is staffed by the State Planning Office. The next meeting of the Commission will be Monday, October 26, 9:30 am – 1:30 pm in the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee room. **CONTACT: Amanda Rector at 287-1475 or amanda.k.rector@maine.gov.**

SPO is pleased to welcome Joel Johnson to the Economics and Demographics Team. Joel graduated from Grinnell College in Iowa and spent several years as a Registered

Maine Guide in Bar Harbor. More recently he earned a master's degree in resource economics and policy from the University of Maine and subsequently completed a NOAA Coastal Management Fellowship with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. Joel will support research and analysis for a variety of SPO products and topics, including the annual report on poverty in Maine and issues related to energy and natural resources. **CONTACT: Mike LeVert at 287-1479 or michael.levert@maine.gov**

SPO economist outlines the Economy of Maine's Coast to NOAA Review Team. On September 14 at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute in Portland, Thomas Merrill, an economist with SPO, [presented a snapshot of Maine's coastal economy](#) for representatives of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The NOAA visit was part of an evaluation of the Maine Coastal Program, whose mission involves protection of coastal resources and distribution of federal funds for projects that benefit Maine's coastal communities. **CONTACT: Thomas Merrill at 287-1478 or Thomas.merrill@maine.gov**

MAINE COASTAL PROGRAM

Right-of-way discovery grants available. The Maine Coastal Program wishes to assist coastal communities with protecting public access to the ocean shore. In many instances, traditional rights-of-way for hunting and fishing access to the coast are being lost by the passing of generations and changing land ownership patterns. Discovery Grants are intended to help communities find and assert public rights-of-way to the Maine coast. Applications must be received on or before October 26, 2009. Individual grants may not exceed \$2500.00. Application instructions are available on-line at: http://www.maine.gov/spo/coastal/projects/project_summaries/right-of-way-discovery.html. **CONTACT: Jim Connors at 287-8938 or jim.connors@maine.gov** .

Ocean energy demonstration conducted. Representatives from the Department of Conservation, the State Planning Office, and the Department of Marine Resources recently convened a meeting in Machias to discuss the potential placement of ocean energy demonstration areas off Great Wass Island and the Cutler coast. The meeting was well attended by fishermen and their families, legislators, local officials, and other interested parties from affected areas (Cutler, Bucks Harbor, Jonesport, and Beals). Participants provided considerable and important local feedback regarding the two proposed demonstration areas. **CONTACT: Theresa Torrent-Ellis at theresa.torrent-ellis@maine.gov or 287-2351.**

Thousands of volunteers participate in Coastweek. During the week of September 12, the Maine Coastal Program and partners organized Coastweek, an annual celebration of Maine's coastal resources. Close to 3,000 volunteers registered with the Coastal Program, signing on as "coastal stewards" and removing thousands of pounds of debris from Maine beaches and shorelines. Most of the 63 registered beach cleanups occurred on Saturday, September 19, the official day of the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC.) Maine's volunteers along with others in over 80 states and countries recorded information about the debris collected and submitted the data to The Ocean Conservancy as part of the ICC. This information is used to identify debris sources and to inform possible solutions. A final report on the ICC, including Maine's contribution to the effort, will be released in spring 2010. **CONTACT: Theresa Torrent-Ellis at theresa.torrent-ellis@maine.gov or 287-2351.**

MAINE COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism a success! The value of volunteering has seen a surge in national attention this year. Locally, volunteering continues to be an important issue as evidenced by the record number of attendees at this year's Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism. In its 22nd year, the Blaine House conference had 310 registrants and focused on current and applicable best practices for Maine's volunteers and managers of volunteers. The conference drew a wide range of attendees including AmeriCorps volunteers and statewide non-profit managers and volunteers. In addition to numerous local presenters, this year's keynote speaker was Martin J. Cowling, president of People First: Total Solutions. Held at the University of Maine on October 13, the conference was sponsored by Time Warner Cable, the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the Bodewell Center for Service and Volunteerism, and the Maine Commission for Community Service. **CONTACT: Rochelle Runge at 287-8933 or rochelle.runge@maine.gov .**

LAND USE PLANNING

SPO releases manual for community planners. SPO's newest technical assistance manual is designed for municipal officials, community planners, and citizen volunteers who want to foster traditional neighborhood development. Traditional neighborhoods are the residential places with corner grocery stores and tree-lined streets that people love. Yet, requirements commonly found in local ordinances in Maine impede traditional neighborhood design. This manual walks through typical comprehensive

plan and zoning and subdivision requirements to identify where language can be modified to foster neighborhood development. For example, parks and ball fields, community centers, and small shops provide the diversity of uses within walking distance that are the essence of a traditional neighborhood and are not usually found in new, residential subdivisions. To see the manual:

<http://www.maine.gov/spo/landuse/index.htm>. CONTACT: Liz Hertz at 287-8061 or liz.hertz@maine.gov

Model wind energy facility ordinance presentation. SPO's model wind energy facility ordinance was the subject of a presentation by Phil Carey, a land use planner with SPO, at the Maine Wind Energy Conference on October 10. Carey's presentation was part of a municipal affairs session entitled "Hosting Wind Turbines of All Sizes." More conference information is available at: www.mainewindenergyconference.com. For a copy of the model ordinance: <http://www.maine.gov/spo/landuse/index.htm>.

CONTACT: Phil Carey at 287-3860 or phil.carey@maine.gov

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY

Heating Oil Average Rise. The Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security's survey found the current statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil to be \$2.38 per gallon, the same as last week. The statewide kerosene price average is \$2.77 per gallon at this time. The statewide average for propane is 2.56 per gallon. At the time of this release the price of WTI crude oil, a major driver of refined product prices including heating oil, was \$73.75. For more information:

<http://www.maine.gov/oeis/heatingoil.htm>. CONTACT: Ian Burnes at 287-8927 or ian.burnes@maine.gov .