



WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Week ending February 13, 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.

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY

Heating Fuel Prices Drop. The Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security (OEIS) conducted the weekly oil survey and has found that the current statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil to be at **\$2.31 per gallon** dropping \$.02 since last week. It is important to note that the price for heating oil is a statewide average and that prices in a given geographic region of the state may be considerably higher or lower than the statewide average. Within the OEIS sample, the lowest actual heating oil price of \$1.86 per gallon was found in the Southwestern region. The high-end price of \$2.55 per gallon was found in the Northern and Eastern region. At the time of this release the price of WTI crude oil, major driver of refined product prices, including heating oil was \$40.53 dropping slightly from last week. The statewide kerosene price average is \$2.79 per gallon at this time. Today's propane price survey found statewide average to be \$2.84 per gallon which is \$.01 lower than last week. The average price for propane represents the price per gallon for a 600-800 gallon domestic heating application. February's average natural gas price for the state is \$1.40 per therm for residential customers. That translates into \$14 per million btu's of energy for natural gas, compared with \$16.61 per MMBTU for heating oil and \$31 per MMBTU for propane at this week's price. The next scheduled survey will be on Tuesday February 17, 2009. **CONTACT: Ian Burnes at 287-8927 or ian.burnes@maine.gov .**

THE MAINE COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Maine Commission for Community Service receives grant funds to help keep Maine residents safe and warm. The grant was awarded to help coordinate planning and networking around community heating needs and increase visibility of sources of heating assistance. In addition the funding will support the formation of new, and build capacity of, existing local response teams.

The funding will be granted by the Points of Light Institute's Cooperative Agreement with the Corporation for National and Community Service. The Maine Commission for Community Service will receive \$49,972 which it will sub-grant to local organizations in each of Maine's 16 counties in \$2,500 increments. This money will be further leveraged by the matching funds required of selected agencies.

The Point of Light Institute received over 140 applications and only selected 21 for funding. Thanks to the hard work and commitment of Jody Harris and Pam Zeutenhorst the state of Maine was selected. **CONTACT: Pam Zeutenhorst at 287-5313 or pam.zeutenhorst@maine.gov .**

ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

LD 1 Report Shows Tax Burden Reduction but Continued Spending Beyond School Caps. In an annual report released today, the Maine State Planning Office found that in the four years since LD 1 became law the State, counties, and municipalities have stayed within their LD 1 spending limits. The law called "LD 1" resulted from a 2004 citizens' referendum. The referendum increased the State's share of aid to education in an ongoing effort to reduce property taxes and lower Maine's combined state and local tax burden.

State appropriations actually declined for fiscal year 2008-09 by 2.2 percent, \$221 million below the LD 1 limit. Fifty-six percent of municipalities reporting were under their 2008 property tax levy cap. Thirteen of Maine's 16 counties stayed within their 2008 LD 1 limits. As part of this year's LD 1 report, Maine Revenue Services forecasts that the combined state and local tax burden for 2008 will be 10.97 percent. More information about the LD 1 report can be found at www.maine.gov/spo. **CONTACT: Michael LeVert 287-1461 or michael.levert@maine.gov .**

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Biddeford Middle School Teachers discuss recycling. On Tuesday, Bruce White met with Biddeford Middle School science teachers to discuss recycling in the curriculum. During the meeting science curriculums and web site resources were also discussed. Many teachers set a date to meet with Bruce at the 2009 Maine Science Teacher Association Conference and agreed to work on a program for Maine Recycles Week 2009.

In addition, while travelling to Biddeford, Bruce made presentations of awards to five sponsors (L.L. Bean, Dragon Cement, Hannaford, National Semiconductor, and Poland Spring) for their support of Maine Recycles Week 2008. Bruce also delivered a five hundred dollar award to Lincoln Middle School in Portland for the MRW School Competition. **CONTACT: Bruce White at 287-8053 or bruce.white@maine.gov / www.recyclemaine.com.**

The City of Bangor celebrated its 175th Anniversary on Thursday, February 12th, 2009, and Recycling received a boost in the Gateway Community. The Fruit Street School was selected as one of the top three schools in the Maine Recycles Week 2008 school competition. They were awarded \$500 which the school was encouraged to use in improving or expanding their recycling program. The check was presented to the school on Wednesday from the Maine Recycles Week Committee and the school also received a resolution from the City Council. **CONTACT: Bruce White at 287-8053 or bruce.white@maine.gov / www.recyclemaine.com.**

Job Corps Academy takes first steps in recycling program. On Wednesday, February 11, 2009, the Penobscot Job Corps Academy kicked off their campaign for "Greening" their Union Street Campus. Encouraged by the commitment of the Director, Mr. Chris Kuhn, and led by the Green Club on campus, which consists of about two dozen faculty, staff, and students, have taken on recycling and composting. The State Planning Office Waste Management and Recycling Program has worked with the facility and offered a presentation Wednesday afternoon in support of their plans and efforts. **CONTACT: Bruce White at 287-8053 or bruce.white@maine.gov / www.recyclemaine.com.**