

SPO



Maine State Planning Office

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Week ending June 20, 2008

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.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Solid Waste Management Advisory Council

June 25, 2008 – 1:00 PM – 4:30 PM *American Legion Hall on Capitol Street in Augusta*

Contact [Rhonda Cartlidge](#) or call (207) 287-8934

DIRECTOR'S POLICY AND MANAGEMENT TEAM

SPO initiates review of municipal exemption under Maine's Informed Growth Act. The State Planning Office has invited a number of organizations to comment on the provisions under which municipalities may be exempted from the Maine Informed Growth Act. The review was prompted by a request from the Legislature's State and Local Government Committee after LD 1962, a bill that would have allowed municipalities to opt out of the Informed Growth Act entirely, failed to pass. The committee asked SPO to conduct an informal review and offer recommendations to clarify the exemption provision, specifically as it relates to municipalities that already have ordinances requiring economic impact studies. The committee also asked SPO to consult with interested organizations. SPO has asked organizations to respond by August 15. **CONTACT: Jody Harris at 287-5424 or jody.harris@maine.gov**

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Town uses toolkit to promote recycling. Maine's recycling poster, part of its recycling toolkit, helped create an exhibit to teach children and their families about what happens to the plastic they recycle. St. George used the fisherman version of the Maine Recycles poster since many of the children are from fishing families. The Maine Recycles toolkit contains a wealth of downloadable materials and resources to promote recycling and is available on-line at www.mainerecycles.com. **CONTACT:** Jetta Antonakos at 287-9074 or jetta.antonakos@maine.gov

ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

April retail sales. According to data released by the Maine Revenue Services, state retail sales were 5% higher in April 2008 than in April 2007. Lodging was the only sector that did not see a year-over-year increase. Sales in the building supply sector, which has had lower year-over-year sales for the last five months, were up 13%. The other retail and auto transportation sectors also increased 6%. The percentage increases reflect lower sales in April 2007 brought on by bad weather, including the 'Patriot's Day' storm. Year-to-date total sales are 1% higher than sales in the first four months of 2007.

April 2008 Retail Sales

	% Change	
	From Apr 2007 to Apr 2008	% Change YTD 2007 to 2008
Building Supply	13%	-1%
Food Store	1%	2%
General Merchandise	4%	-2%
Other Retail	6%	3%
Restaurant	2%	2%
Lodging	-4%	3%
Auto Transportation	6%	0%
Total	5%	1%

Business Operating	7%	2%
Personal Consumption	5%	0%

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/economics/retailsales.php>.

CONTACT: David Douglass at 287-1478 or david.douglass@maine.gov

Wind energy symposium held. On June 17, 2008, State Economist Catherine Reilly made a presentation on the potential economic impact of wind power development in rural Maine. The event, hosted by the Kennebec River Initiative, was an exploratory discussion about the effects that the development of wind power and other energy initiatives may have on conservation, land protection, and related economic development planning in Northwestern Maine and along the Kennebec River corridor. **CONTACT:** Catherine Reilly at 287-1479 or catherine.reilly@maine.gov.

LAND USE PLANNING



Frank Hample has retired after nearly 37 years of service to the state of Maine. Due to budget cuts effective July 1, Frank's position at SPO has been eliminated and Frank opted to retire rather than pursue other positions in state government. Looking back on his three decades in the planning field, Frank believes growth management is even more vital today - with challenges in energy and agriculture at the forefront.

Frank's first job in 1971 was as supervisor for VISTA volunteers in Aroostook County as part of the Economic Opportunity Program of the Executive Department. In 1972 he was transferred to Augusta and has worked in the capitol city ever since. The Division of Economic Opportunity became the Division of Community Services in 1973 and Frank provided planning and technical assistance to Community Action Program agencies. He worked on many projects, including training for the managers and boards of cooperatives - some of which are still around today, such as H.O.M.E. in Orland. In 1989 Frank moved to the Office of Comprehensive Planning at DECD helping to create Maine's new comprehensive planning program. His first comprehensive plan review

was for the town of Otisfield. Since then he has reviewed about 100 plans, certainly more than any other planner in the program's history.

Frank has also served locally as selectman and planning board chair. In retirement, he plans to continue contributing through his volunteer efforts with the new Sheepscot Valley School union and Sheepscot Valley Watershed Council, and volunteering in Somerville's local governance.

The Land Use Team will miss Frank's calm, caring presence. His contributions have been considerable, and he should be very proud of the work he has done over these many years. Thank you Frank, and enjoy life! **CONTACT: Stacy Benjamin at 287-8061 or stacy.benjamin@maine.gov**