



WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Week ending August 8, 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.

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Floodplain staff visits Fort Kent and Van Buren. On July 29–30, Sue Baker, State Floodplain Coordinator, and David Knowles, an engineer from the FEMA Region I office in Boston, travelled to Fort Kent and Van Buren to conduct community assistance visits. These visits provide an opportunity to talk with local officials about the National Flood Insurance Program and to gauge how effectively it is working in that community. As part of the visit, Sue and Dave toured the floodplains and viewed several structures that were damaged by floodwaters this past spring. Since both communities had sustained flood damage, it was a good time to focus our attention there. **CONTACT:** Sue Baker at 287–8063 or sue.baker@maine.gov

Four Maine towns convert to full insurance coverage. The Maine Floodplain Management program has assisted four Maine towns with converting from the Emergency Phase to the Regular Phase of the National Flood Insurance Program. Effective August 1, 2008, full insurance coverage is now available in the following four communities: Charlotte, Jonesboro, Littleton, and Wales. There are seven more communities still in the Emergency Phase of the program. **CONTACT:** Brigitte Ndikum-Nyada at 287–8932 or brigitte.m.ndikum-nyada@maine.gov

Tracking of community recycling and waste management programs continues. Of the over 300 municipal and regional recycling reports that are expected for the year 2007,

over 260 have been received, reviewed, and data entered by SPO's waste management & recycling program staff. The reports received so far represent 83% of the state's population. While a full analysis has not been completed, many of the reports are similar to what was reported by the communities for 2006. The data collected through the reports permit the office to identify and determine trends or opportunities in solid waste management and recycling across the state. A large part of our task is to verify the data, calculate a recycling rate for the community or region, and then relay that information back to the community for their own use. Communities are typically very interested in knowing how they did in recycling. Thanks to Rhonda Cartlidge and Sam Morris for willingly accepting this additional duty and ensuring the timely review of submitted reports and returning the data analysis and recycling rate information to communities. **CONTACT: George MacDonald at 287-5759 or george.macdonald@maine.gov**

Woolwich promotes recycling.

Woolwich Day, observed on Saturday, August 2, is a popular event with local residents and a great place to show off the Maine Recycles educational materials. This year's event featured a recycling table assisted by the event's youngest (and arguably cutest) recycling advocate. Working to promote recycling, volunteers shared information about how to recycle in Woolwich (population 2,800) and distributed free Maine Recycles posters, postcards and magnets.



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ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

David Douglass to leave State Planning Office. David Douglass has announced his intention to resign, effective August 15, after two-and-a-half years as an economist with SPO. David was responsible for staffing the Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission (CEFC), a core responsibility for SPO's economics team. Twice each year, the CEFC produces an economic forecast for Maine that becomes the basis for state

revenue projections. David organized those meetings, helped the commission generate its forecast, and wrote their report. He served as the lead staff person for the annual LD 1 report, a report required of SPO by statute that requires extensive data collection throughout the year from municipalities, counties, and other state agencies. David also maintained SPO's retail sales database, a data source that generates numerous calls for assistance from researchers and members of the general public. He will be missed. David, we wish you the very best! **CONTACT: Kate Reilly at 287-1479 or Catherine.reilly@maine.gov**

MAINE COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

AmeriCorps grant peer reviewers sought. The Maine Commission for Community Service seeks grant peer reviewers for its fall/winter 2008 grant competition. Every three years the commission conducts a competition to determine which organizations will receive AmeriCorps funding. Awards go to applicants who submit strong proposals utilizing citizen service as a strategy to meet high priority community needs. Grant applications are evaluated using a panel of volunteer experts. If you would like to serve as a grant peer reviewer please submit your application online at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=xF_2f1vZopSj4bK0tqOiWQzQ_3d_3d or contact Harold Shaw by September 20 to be considered. **CONTACT: Harold Shaw at 287-1588 at harold.shaw@maine.gov**

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY

Heating fuel prices continue to drop. The Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security conducted the bi-weekly summer oil survey and has found that the statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil as of August 4, 2008 was \$4.42 per gallon falling \$.20 from last week. The price of WTI crude oil, major driver of refined product prices, including heating oil last closed at 125.10 per barrel. The statewide kerosene price average is \$4.91 per gallon at this time.

Price drops can be attributed in part to driving habits. Americans drove 9.8 billion fewer miles in May of '08 compared with May '07. Overall, however, the market dynamics that drove prices to the record levels in July still remain. **CONTACT: Ian Burnes at 287-8927 or ian.burnes@maine.gov**