



## WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

*Week ending October 24, 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.

### **DIRECTOR'S POLICY AND MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**Downtown report released.** The State Planning Office has just released an analysis of technical assistance needs for Maine's downtowns. The report makes findings and recommendations based on eight towns selected for case studies. The report was prepared by Ali Worster, an SPO summer intern, in response to the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place's recommendations. Many people contributed to this report and we greatly appreciate their input. You can view or download the full report from the SPO website at

<http://www.state.me.us/spo/specialprojects/qualityofplace/index.htm>.

**CONTACT:** Sue Inches at 287-2989 or [sue.inches@maine.gov](mailto:sue.inches@maine.gov)

### **ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS**

**Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission meets.** The Maine Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission (CEFC) convened on October 16, 2008 to revise its February 2008 forecast. The new forecast projects a slowdown in national and state economic activity in the fourth quarter of 2008 (reflected in revised 2008 estimates) and into 2009. Since the commission's last meeting in January, the continued decline of the housing market coupled with a rapid rise in energy costs has further reduced

consumer and business spending and stressed the financial system. Despite federal interventions such as the economic stimulus package and the \$700 billion rescue bill, economic conditions have continued to weaken, leading to job losses, a credit freeze, and significant anxiety among consumers and business owners. The underlying weakness of the national economy, along with the impacts of the closure of NAS Brunswick in 2009 are the primary reasons for the current reductions in the CEFC's Maine economic forecast.

The commission is projecting modest losses in Maine non-farm wage and salary employment in 2008 and 2009 (-0.2% and -0.5%, respectively), followed by a slow recovery starting in 2010. The forecast for personal income in 2008 is projected to be slightly above the January forecast, but has been reduced for 2009 and 2010 as a result of the weak job market. The commission increased its forecast for the Consumer Price Index (CPI), a measure of household inflation, to 4.4% in 2008, reflecting the significant rise in energy prices observed in the first two quarters of this year. The CEFC's final forecast will be released within the next few weeks. **CONTACT: Michael LeVert at [michael.levert@maine.gov](mailto:michael.levert@maine.gov)**

The table below outlines the forecast's major indicators.

<b>Calendar Years</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Wage &amp; Salary Employment (Annual Percentage Change)</b>						
<b>CEFC Forecast 1/2008</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.6</b>	
<b>CEFC Forecast 11/2008</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.7</b>
<b>Personal Income (Annual Percentage Change)</b>						
<b>CEFC Forecast 1/2008</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.2</b>	
<b>CEFC Forecast 11/2008</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>CPI (Annual Percentage Change)</b>						
<b>CEFC Forecast 1/2008</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.1</b>	
<b>CEFC Forecast 11/2008</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>

## **MAINE COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**Governor's Volunteer Service Awards announced.** Awards will be presented at a special ceremony at the State House on April 21, 2009. For the past twenty-two years, the Governor's Volunteer Service Awards have celebrated and recognized the exemplary work of Maine's most dedicated citizens. This award program, administered jointly by the Maine Commission for Community Service and the Governor's Office, recognizes and honors the valuable contributions of Maine's extraordinary volunteers while

inspiring others to follow their example. Citizens who serve in their communities as volunteers contribute to the strength and vitality of every Maine town and city. They keep our neighborhoods safe, mentor our children, provide essential services to the needy, and comfort the elderly.

To submit a nomination, visit [www.VolunteerMaine.org/gsa](http://www.VolunteerMaine.org/gsa). The submission deadline is 2pm, Monday, February 16, 2009. Nominations will be reviewed in late February and award recipients will be notified of selection decisions in March. Contact: **Rochelle Runge, 287-8933 or [rochelle.runge@maine.gov](mailto:rochelle.runge@maine.gov)**.

### **COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

**Video Contest Simplified.** The process to compete in the Maine Recycles Video Contest is now easier. Videos should be 30 seconds long and submitted on an authored DVD. Authored DVD's can be played on any standard DVD player. This simplified format opens the competition to more students. Anyone attending a Maine college, high school or middle school is eligible to participate, regardless of age. Even a mini-DV camera can be used if the video is copied and submitted on authored DVD. Contest deadline is November 30. For more information, go to [www.mainerecycles.com](http://www.mainerecycles.com)  
**Contact: Jetta Antonakos, 287-9074 or [jetta.antonakos@maine.gov](mailto:jetta.antonakos@maine.gov)**

**Send us your poster ideas!** As part of Maine Recycles Week (November 8-15), we invite students to submit posters in a competition for the Maine Recycles calendar. All Maine students grades K-12 are eligible. This contest is an opportunity for students to creatively express the importance of recycling and buying recycled while allowing them to illustrate how their actions encourage the wise use of resources. Judging will take place during the last two weeks of November by the public-private Maine Recycles Week Steering Committee. The committee will select one winner from each grade. Winning entries will be made into a full-color 2009 calendar and distributed statewide. All entries must be postmarked by November 21, 2008. For information and an entry form visit: <http://www.maine.gov/spo/recycle/mainerecyclesweek/school.htm>.  
**CONTACT: Bruce White at 287-8053 or [bruce.white@maine.gov](mailto:bruce.white@maine.gov)**

**Two issues will air as segments on *Maine Street* cable TV show.** Jetta Antonakos promoted SPO's [video competition](#) encouraging students to submit their creative ideas for public service announcements to promote recycling on *Maine Street*, a cable show aired on Time Warner community access stations across Maine. Host Mike Edgecomb

also explored Governor Baldacci's quality of place initiative with Jody Harris. Jetta's show is airing now on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 pm. Jody's segment will appear in a couple of weeks. **CONTACT:** Jetta Antonakos at 287-9074 or [jetta.antonakos@maine.gov](mailto:jetta.antonakos@maine.gov)

## **LAND FOR MAINE'S FUTURE**

**Landscape conservation best practices report released.** The State Planning Office released its newest report — [Regional Landscape Conservation in Maine: Best Practices for Enhancing Quality of Place](#) this week. The report was prepared at the request of the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place, who recognized that Maine's natural landscapes are distinctive assets that will attract visitors and workers to bolster the state's economy. It directed the State Planning Office to study current regional conservation initiatives and identify best practices in Maine today. This report can be used across the state to organize effective regional landscape planning and conservation efforts. This report was prepared by Brett Richardson, an intern with the State Planning Office, with the help of a broad spectrum of leaders of Maine's existing regional conservation partnerships. We thank them for sharing their expertise and experiences with us. **CONTACT:** Tim Glidden at 287-1487 or [tim.glidden@maine.gov](mailto:tim.glidden@maine.gov) or Jody Harris at 287-5424 or [jody.harris@maine.gov](mailto:jody.harris@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 (OEIS) conducted the bi-weekly summer oil survey and has found the current statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil to be at **\$3.08 per gallon** falling \$.20 from since the last survey. At the time of this release the price of WTI crude oil, major driver of refined product prices, including heating oil, was \$74. The statewide kerosene price average is \$3.74 per gallon at this time. Today's propane price survey found the statewide average to be \$3.14 per gallon which is \$0.06 lower than last week. The average price for propane represents the price per gallon for a 600-800 gallon domestic heating application. The next scheduled survey will be on Monday October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008. For more information on energy prices, visit the office's web site at: <http://www.maine.gov/oeis/index.html>. **CONTACT:** Ian Burnes at 287-8927 or [ian.burnes@maine.gov](mailto:ian.burnes@maine.gov)