



## **WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS**

*Week ending November 28, 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**

#### **Energy Resource Council Meeting**

December 2, 2008 – 9:30–11:00 AM, Cabinet Room, Capitol Building, Augusta, Maine  
CONTACT: Donna Bradstreet at 287–5659 or [donna.bradstreet@maine.gov](mailto:donna.bradstreet@maine.gov)

#### **Natural Resources Agency Task Force**

December 8, 2008 – 9:00 AM–2:00 PM, Augusta area (TBD)  
CONTACT: Linda LaPlante at 287–6077 or [linda.c.laplante@maine.gov](mailto:linda.c.laplante@maine.gov)

#### **Solid Waste Management Advisory Council**

December 10, 2008 – 1:00–4:00 PM, State Planning Office, 184 State Street, Augusta  
CONTACT: Rhonda Carl at 287–8934 or [rhonda.carl@maine.gov](mailto:rhonda.carl@maine.gov)

#### **Land & Water Resources Council**

December 11, 2008 – 9:30–11:00 AM, State Planning Office, 184 State Street, Augusta  
CONTACT: Aline Lachance at 287–1485 or [aline.lachance@maine.gov](mailto:aline.lachance@maine.gov)

### **ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS**

**September retail sales released.** Total retail sales in September 2008 were 3.2% lower

than in September 2007. Personal consumption sales, which include all sales except the business operating sector, were 3.0% lower for the same period, and -0.7% year-to-date. Through the first nine months of the year, building supply and auto transportation sales were 3.1% and 3.5% lower than the same period last year, respectively.

	% Change Sept 2007 to Sep 2008	% Change YTD 2007 to YTD 2008
Building Supply	-0.4%	-3.1%
Food Store	-1.1%	1.9%
General Merchandise	-4.0%	-1.0%
Other Retail	1.3%	4.0%
Restaurant	-5.8%	1.6%
Lodging	-12.0%	0.8%
Auto Transportation	-3.1%	-3.5%
Total	-3.2%	-0.1%
Business Operating	-5.3%	4.0%
Personal Consumption	-3.0%	-0.7%

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: Donna Bradstreet at 287-5649 or [donna.bradstreet@maine.gov](mailto:donna.bradstreet@maine.gov)

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

**Maine Coast featured on Martha Stewart show.** Martha Stewart visited Maine in October and visited Mount Desert Island, Marshall Island, and other coastal sites. The segment recently aired on her morning network show, *The Martha Stewart Show*, featuring the conservation work of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. To see a video of the segment: <http://www.marthastewart.com/article/the-state-of-maine>.

### **LAND USE PLANNING**

**Regional planning summit scheduled.** A meeting of regional land use and transportation planners hosted by SPO and MaineDOT is scheduled for December 5. Participants will take a close look at the current planning tools available, how they are evolving to meet current/future needs, and how to apply them in different scenarios,

especially in times of economic downturn. **CONTACT: Ruta Dzenis at 287-2851 or [ruta.dzenis@maine.gov](mailto:ruta.dzenis@maine.gov)**

#### **GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY**

**Heating fuel prices continue to drop.** The November 24, 2008, survey of home heating fuel prices conducted by the Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security found the statewide, average cash price for No. 2 heating oil to be \$2.60 per gallon falling \$.10 since last week.

Today's average statewide kerosene and propane prices are \$3.15 and \$2.90 per gallon respectively. At the time of this release the price of WTI crude oil, a major driver of refined product prices, including heating oil, was \$50.46 per barrel. The next scheduled survey will be on December 1, 2008. **CONTACT: Ian Burnes at 287-8927 or [ian.burnes@maine.gov](mailto:ian.burnes@maine.gov)**