

## WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

*Week ending January 16, 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.

### **COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

**Code Enforcement Officer Training and Certification Program Training Announced.** The Code Enforcement Officer Training and Certification Program is conducting training during the month of January in the area of *Legal Issues and Enforcement Techniques*. This is a two day session, with day one focusing on the introduction to Legal Issues. Topics covered in day one include jurisdiction and authority, conflict of interest, incompatibility of offices, liability, variances, and appeals. Day two delves into more complex issues and includes review of recent case law, enforcement options, and relationship building. The instructor for these sessions is Durward Parkinson, Esq. from the Law Office of Bergen & Parkinson, Kennebunk, Maine. Sessions have already or will soon be held in Orono, South Portland, Presque Isle, and Lewiston. Two-hundred and forty (240) Code Enforcement Officer and Local Plumbing Inspectors are registered to attend this session. This training session is required for all Code Enforcement Officer and Local Plumbing Inspector certification. For more information **CONTACT: Lana LaPlant-Ellis at 287-1489 or [lane.clough@maine.gov](mailto:lane.clough@maine.gov)** .

**Report on Options to Increase Recycling of Plastics completed.** During the 123<sup>rd</sup> Legislative session, the Natural Resources Committee discussed having SPO conduct a review of the costs and benefits of state and local government options to stimulate an increase in the recycling of plastics, and report the findings and recommendations to the Committee in the next session. The types of plastics to be studied include plastic

bottles and rigid containers, numbered 1 through 7. Through a letter from the Committee, SPO was requested to undertake the study, which is now completed.

Even though the majority of Maine's communities' recycle some plastic containers, primarily the # 1's (PET) and # 2's (HDPE), there are frequent questions about the possibility of recycling other types of containers, as well as increasing the collection and recycling of the currently accepted containers. This report examines both current and possible recycling of plastics, and includes basic information on the various resins, community recycling programs, and specifications related to the processing and recycling of plastics. The report and appendices may be found at <http://www.maine.gov/spo/recycle/index.htm> . CONTACT: George MacDonald 207.287.5759 or [George.MacDonald@maine.gov](mailto:George.MacDonald@maine.gov) .

## **LAND USE PLANNING**

### **Newport Comprehensive Plan Found Consistent with Maine's Growth Management Act.**

The Newport comprehensive planning committee is to be congratulated for their hard work preparing their new plan. The committee was assisted by Dean Bennett of DLB Consulting. When adopted, the plan will replace the 1996 plan and help prepare the community for the decade to come. **Contact: Tom Miragliuolo at [tom.miragliuolo@maine.gov](mailto:tom.miragliuolo@maine.gov) or 287-3215.**

## **DIRECTOR'S TEAM**

**SPO submits report on Informed Growth Act.** Earlier this week, the State Planning Office submitted its analysis of the municipal exemption clause under Maine's Informed Growth Act. The State and Local Government Committee of the 123<sup>rd</sup> Legislature had requested the analysis from SPO in lieu of enacting LD 1962. The analysis identifies the issues and concerns with the existing exemption clause, identifies outcomes which the legislature may want to use to guide its decision-making, and provides suggested amendment language for each different outcome. The report is available on-line at: <http://www.maine.gov/spo/>. **CONTACT: Jody Harris at 287-5424 or [jody.harris@maine.gov](mailto:jody.harris@maine.gov)**

**SPO briefs State and Local Government Committee.** On January 12, Sue Inches of the State Planning Office provided the SLG committee with an overview of the Office's mission, core duties, and budget. The committee scheduled the briefing as part of its oversight of the office and in preparation of its review of the office's supplemental and

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

## ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Economics and Demographics newsletter was released this week. The January issue of this quarterly newsletter includes articles on October retail sales, reducing Maine's tax burden, population projections, economic impact assessments, and recent census data releases. To read the full newsletter and subscribe, please visit:

<http://www.maine.gov/spo/economics>. CONTACT: Catherine Reilly at 287-1479 or [catherine.reilly@maine.gov](mailto:catherine.reilly@maine.gov).

**November Retail Sales released.** Retail sales for all sectors in November 2008 were lower than in November 2007, with an 11.3% drop in total sales. Personal consumption sales, which include all sales except the business operating sector, were 10.8% lower for the same period, and -1.94% year-to-date. The drop in retail sales was driven by *Auto Transportation, Building Supply, and Lodging*.

November 2008 Retail Sales:

	% Change Nov 2007 to Nov 2008	% Change 2007 YTD to 2008 YTD
Building Supply	-14.4%	-4.4%
Food Store	-0.8%	1.8%
General Merchandise	-8.6%	-2.2%
Other Retail	-6.2%	2.7%
Restaurant	-1.8%	1.3%
Lodging	-13.4%	0.3%
Auto Transportation	-21.6%	-6.0%
Total	-11.3%	-1.3%
Business Operating	-14.8%	2.5%
Personal Consumption	-10.8%	-1.9%

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/economic/retailsales.htm>.  
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