



WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

February 5, 2010

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.

DIRECTORS POLICY AND MANAGEMENT TEAM

SPO submits report in response to Resolve 89. SPO's *Analysis of State Planning Office Purpose and Duties* was submitted to the Legislature's State and Local Government Committee this week in accordance with Resolve 2009, chapter 89. The report provides a history of the office, examines our statutory duties and functions, and describes our planning and coordination work on behalf of the Governor and Legislature. We believe that SPO as currently organized performs the nonregulatory functions and the planning, policy, and coordination among agencies sought by chapter 89. The report is available on-line at: <http://www.maine.gov/spo/legandgovreports/index.htm>, under legislative reports. **CONTACT:** Jody Harris at 287-5424 or jody.harris@maine.gov or Tony VanDenBossche at 287-1474 or tony.vandenbossche@maine.gov

ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2009 Annual Report of the Regulatory Fairness Board has been released. The Legislature created the Maine Regulatory Fairness Board (RFB) in 2005 to hear testimony and to report to the Legislature and the Governor on regulatory and statutory changes necessary to enhance the State's business climate. RFB hears testimony to elicit public comment from Maine businesses concerning: interactions or roles between businesses and government agencies; specific state regulations which seriously impact business; kinds of assistance, subsidies, grants, or other forms of aid that could be improved or better marketed; and other specific suggestions that could improve communications, programs, or policies between Maine's businesses state

agencies. The RFB meets in different regions of the state to hear testimony from business community representatives and also holds public meetings in Augusta for administrative and operational purposes and to discuss public comments received in writing in between public hearings. After being inactive in 2008, the current RFB reconvened in July of 2009 and elected officers. [This report](#) summarizes the Board's duties and its activities during the year 2009, and outlines RFB's direction for 2010. **CONTACT: Thomas Merrill at 287-1478 or tom.merrill@maine.gov .**

November Taxable Retail Sales released. The Economics and Demographics Team reports monthly retail sales information on its website. Total taxable retail sales in November 2009 were down 2.3% from November 2008 and were 7.8% lower year-to-date compared to the same period last year. Food store and auto transportation sales were higher in November 2009 than in November of 2008. Building supply sales were 6.5% lower through November compared to the same period last year. [Detailed reports on Maine retail sales are available here.](#) **CONTACT: Thomas Merrill at 287-1478 or tom.merrill@maine.gov .**

	% Change Nov 2008 to Nov 2009	% Change 2008 YTD to 2009 YTD
Building Supply	-6.5%	-17.2%
Food Store	2.5%	2.8%
General Merchandise	-3.1%	-4.4%
Other Retail	-0.5%	-1.6%
Restaurant	-3.9%	-1.2%
Lodging	-5.4%	-7.3%
Auto Transportation	6.6%	-7.8%
Total	-2.3%	-7.4%
Business Operating	-12.6%	-18.2%
Personal Consumption	-0.9%	-5.8%

Economics and Demographics Newsletter Released. In this issue find articles on the 2010 Census, November taxable retail sales, the 2009 Annual LD1 report and more. Visit us [online](#) to read the entire issue. **CONTACT: Amanda Rector at 287-1475 or Amanda.K.Rector@Maine.gov .**

MAINE COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

Photo Contest Announced. The Maine Commission for Community Service invites you to enter the "Volunteers in Action" photo contest celebrating volunteerism in Maine. Winning entries and honorable mentions will be displayed at the [Governor's Volunteer Service Awards](#) on April 22, 2010 and in our [Photo Gallery](#). Deadline to enter is March 17, 2010. **CONTACT:** Lauren Kelly at 287-6047 or Lauren.kelly@maine.gov .

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS



Recycling poster winners recognized by First Lady. The movie, *Ground Hog Day*, features events recurring over and over – just like recycled materials. So, it was appropriate that on February 2 Mrs. Baldacci, as she has done for eight years, welcomed the young artists whose posters were chosen for the 2010 *Maine Recycles* calendar to a reception at the Blaine House. Eleven students and their families and teachers attended where the First Lady presented certificates of accomplishment and thanked them for promoting recycling in Maine. The cover artist, Katherine Connolly, is from Scarborough (see accompanying photo above). **CONTACT:** Bruce White at 287-8053 or bruce.white@maine.gov

The CEO program has published its winter electronic newsletter which reached 600 code officials and local plumbing inspectors. Please visit <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs024/1102072836875/archive/1102956792476.html> to view the newsletter. Topics covered include DPS hiring a director for building codes and standards, an update on training opportunities, and information about exams. This newsletter is published quarterly with the next issue due out in April. **CONTACT:** Brianne D. Hasty at Brianne.Hasty@maine.gov or 287-8058.

FEMA welcomes the Town of Waltham to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The Maine Floodplain Management Program is pleased to report that as of December 31, 2009 the Town of Waltham, Hancock County, is officially a participating community in the Emergency Phase of the NFIP. Maine Floodplain Management Program worked closely with the Town of Waltham and FEMA, to accomplish this task. Flood insurance is now available to local property owners and may be purchased from any insurance agent or broker licensed to do business in the State in which the property to be

insured is located. There is a 30-day waiting period before a newly purchased flood insurance policy takes effect, or for any additional coverage or endorsement that may increase policy limits. **CONTACT: Sue baker at 287-8063 or sue.baker@maine.gov .**

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY

Heating Oil Prices Dip. The Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security (OEIS) conducted its seasonal oil survey and has found that the current statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil to be at **\$2.68 per gallon**, down six cents from last week. Within the OEIS sample, the lowest actual heating oil price of \$2.36 per gallon was found in the Southwestern region. The highest price of \$2.90 per gallon was found in the Eastern region. The statewide kerosene price average is \$3.06 per gallon at this time. The statewide average for propane based on a use of 600 gallons a year is \$2.97 per gallon. At the time of this release the price of WTI crude oil, major driver of refined product prices, including heating oil was \$73.42. The next survey is scheduled for February 8th, 2010. **CONTACT: Jennifer Puser at 287-6250 or jennifer.puser@maine.gov.**