

**WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS**

*March 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.

**ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS**

**Most new jobs will be in health care, but many will deliver information, not treatment.** The third in a six-part series of articles for MaineBiz by economists Michael LeVert and Chuck Lawton looks at the record job growth in Maine in the health care industry. The articles explore what Maine's business decision-makers really need to make a go of it. To see all articles to date: <http://www.maine.gov/spo/economics/index.htm>.

**CONTACT: Mike LeVert at 287-1474 or [michael.levert@maine.gov](mailto:michael.levert@maine.gov) .**

**SPO examines Maine's service center municipalities.** Maine has almost five hundred municipalities, but most of them are places where people live, not places where people work. The vast majority of goods and services transactions are concentrated in 77 municipalities defined as service centers. SPO's economics team prepared a briefing that compares service center municipalities to other municipalities in Maine. To see the briefing: <http://www.maine.gov/spo/economics/index.htm>. **CONTACT: Mike LeVert at 287-1474 or [michael.levert@maine.gov](mailto:michael.levert@maine.gov) .**

**The Economics and Demographics Team has a Facebook page!** Fan us to stay up-to-date with our current events and to network with other interested agencies and organizations. Visit <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Augusta-ME/Maine-Economics-and-Demographics/324226635834>. **CONTACT: Thomas Merrill at 287-1478 or [Thomas.merrill@maine.gov](mailto:Thomas.merrill@maine.gov) .**

**Maine population estimates announced.** The Economics and Demographics Team posted a one-page summary of the latest Maine population estimates from the US Census Bureau. An increase in domestic out-migration drove a slight decline in Maine's population between 2008 and 2009. The recession is likely a factor. The summary is located here:

<http://www.maine.gov/spo/economics/docs/publications/2009EstimatedPopulationLoss.pdf> . CONTACT: Joel Johnson at 287-1461 or [joel.johnson@maine.gov](mailto:joel.johnson@maine.gov) .

**Census 2010 on Maine Watch.** Following last week's census kickoff event, Maine Watch will air a segment on the 2010 Census. The segment features footage of the event and interviews with Kelsey Robinov, Manager of the Portland Local Census Office, and Amanda Rector of SPO. Distribution of census forms has already begun in some parts of the state, although most forms will be mailed out beginning March 15. The episode of Maine Watch will air on MPBN Thursday, March 4 at 8:00 pm with rebroadcasts Friday, March 5 at 8:30 pm and Monday, March 8 at 5:00 pm. CONTACT: Amanda Rector at 287-1475 or [Amanda.k.rector@maine.gov](mailto:Amanda.k.rector@maine.gov).

#### **COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

**The Maine Floodplain Management Program reminds the public about flood insurance.** Flooding is always a threat to properties located within a floodplain, but even more so during winter's river ice and spring rains. Many people believe that their homeowner's or business owner's insurance policy will cover any flood related losses but unfortunately, these insurance policies DO NOT cover flood related damages. In order to receive insurance protection related to flood damage, property owners and renters are urged to purchase flood insurance. For more details on the policies available, contact your local insurance agent. It is estimated that up to 75% of homes and businesses in floodplains in Maine are NOT covered by flood insurance. The average annual premium is \$882. CONTACT: Sue Baker at 287-6077 or [sue.baker@maine.gov](mailto:sue.baker@maine.gov) .

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

**Heating Oil Prices Remain Steady.** 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 \$2.67 per gallon, up one cent 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 \$2.85 per gallon was found in the Eastern region. The statewide kerosene price average is \$3.04

per gallon at this time. The statewide average for propane based on a use of 600 gallons a year is \$2.89 per gallon. At the time of this release the price of WTI crude oil, major driver of refined product prices, including heating oil was \$78.36. The next survey is scheduled for March 8th, 2010. **CONTACT: Jeffrey Marks at 287-8927 or [Jeffrey.marks@maine.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.marks@maine.gov) .**