



WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

April 2, 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

Economists examine tourism industry. In part four of a six-part series for MaineBiz, economists look at what the tourism industry must do to prosper in the 21st century. Michael LeVert, Maine state economist, and Chuck Lawton, chief economist with Planning Decisions, a South Portland-based consulting firm, are collaborating on *Working Knowledge*, a series exploring what Maine's biggest industries need to prosper. Part V will take a look at energy. To read the series to date:

<http://www.maine.gov/spo/economics/index.htm>. **CONTACT: Michael LeVert at 287-1479 or michael.levert@maine.gov**

SPO releases Maine state and county population projections. Demographics are important for companies making future plans based on workforce characteristics and for policy makers to make informed decisions about what skills, services, and resources will be needed years in advance. A few aspects of Maine's demographic picture stand out: an older population with a large number of baby boomers, relatively few children, and low numbers of racial and ethnic minorities. These factors all combine to give Maine a rapidly aging population and slow population growth. SPO's latest report, [Maine Population Outlook: 2013 – 2028](#) (PDF), provides an overview of Maine's population demographics and estimates the 20-year population outlook if recent demographic trends continue. **CONTACT: Michael LeVert at 287-1479 or michael.levert@Maine.gov**

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Individuals may experience difficulty getting flood insurance. Congress adjourned without extending the authorizing legislation for the National Flood Insurance Program. As a result, the federal flood insurance program's authority to write new policies ended on March 28 at midnight. After that time, insurance agents will not be able to provide new or renewed flood insurance policies, which are required by lenders to close on some real estate sales. This will cause delays for consumers waiting to close on the sale of a property within a flood hazard area. While no new policies can be issued during a lapse in NFIP authorization, consumers with current flood insurance policies remain covered. Claims payments are not affected. Congress could reinstate the NFIP retroactively when it returns on April 12. **CONTACT: Sue Baker at 287-8063 or sue.baker@maine.gov .**

Solid waste capacity report submitted. SPO submitted its annual *Solid Waste Generation & Disposal Capacity* report to the Legislature's Natural Resources Committee in accordance with 38 MRSA, section 2124-A. The report provides an overview of Maine's municipal solid waste generation, recycling, combustion, and landfill activities for 2008 in order to:

- 1) determine the impact of these activities on available solid waste disposal capacity,
- 2) identify planned and consumed capacity at disposal facilities, and
- 3) project the lifespan of capacity.

The report also determines the state's recycling rate, which stands at 38.7% in 2008. The report is available on-line at: <http://www.state.me.us/spo/recycle/index.htm>. **CONTACT: Sam Morris at 287-8054 or sam.morris@maine.gov**

Maine receives Silver-level award in the State Electronics Challenge. The State of Maine was recognized for its environmental stewardship of computer equipment in 2009; the second year it has been so recognized. Through its efforts to buy "green" computers and properly manage computer equipment at the end-of-life, the State has avoided greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to almost 200 cars, the use of 262 pounds of toxic materials such as lead and mercury, and the generation of more than 16 tons of hazardous waste. The energy savings from the effort is enough to power 280 Maine homes. The State Electronics Challenge is a voluntary program that assists state,

regional, and local governments in the Northeast to reduce the environmental impact of their computers. **CONTACT: George MacDonald at 287-5759 or George.MacDonald@maine.gov**

State's first environmental club networking conference held at Oak Hill. Last Friday, the Scarborough High School's Eco Club hosted the state's first environmental club networking conference. With school environmental clubs surfacing at a phenomenal rate, the event was both encouraging and enlightening. The Eco club of Scarborough organized the conference with help from the 156 club members that take part in weekly activities. Approximately 125 students from across southern Maine attended the day-long event. SPO's Bruce White was among the speakers. **CONTACT: Bruce White at 287-8053 or bruce.white@maine.gov.**

Maine mapping proposal selected for funding. USGS announced this week that Maine's LiDAR project will be fully funded with that organization's ARRA allotment. Maine is part of a project that will collect new high-resolution topographical data using LiDAR technology stretching from Manhattan to Cobscook Bay. The combined area is 13,500 square miles, covers 10,500 linear miles of coastline, and is home to roughly 20 million people and 7.5 million households. This is the first phase in what is a larger New England-wide goal of high-resolution terrain mapping. The project will help improve quality of maps for a variety of uses, including for identifying whether properties are located in floodplains for insurance and construction purposes.

The project application was supported by staff from the Floodplain Management program and included the cooperation of GIS contacts in each of the partner states, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York, with matching funding from a number of federal and state agencies and non-profit organizations. Over 50 supporting letters were also provided from two state governors (Connecticut and Maine), tribes, non-profits, and commercial interests. Financial partners in Maine included Acadia National Park, Maine DEP, Maine GeoLibrary, Maine State Planning Office, USDA, The Nature Conservancy, and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

The total project value is \$2.7M, with \$1.4M coming from ARRA funds, \$385K from cash match, and \$915K from in-kind contributions. Maine's portion totals \$823K in value, with \$487K from ARRA funds, \$156K from cash match, and \$180K from in-kind contributions. Over the next few weeks MEGIS and the other partners will begin working with USGS to flesh out the details of the cooperative agreement and contracts

for fall collection of lidar data. CONTACT: Michael Smith, Maine Office of GIS 215-5530 or Michael.Smith@maine.gov and Joseph Young 287-8051 or joseph.young@maine.gov

LAND FOR MAINE'S FUTURE

It has been a remarkably busy 10 days at LMF with 9 acquisitions closing before April 1 and one closing expected in the next couple weeks. The largest deal was **Branch Lake** project. The Fenn Trust had sold easements with a total value of \$2.4 million to the Forest Society of Maine and Frenchman Bay Conservancy. The Maine Department of Conservation (DOC) is a third party on both easements. At the same time, a portion of the fee ownership was transferred to the City of Ellsworth. Literally at the end of the day, watershed and drinking water source protection along with public recreational access and sustainable forestry has been assured on 1200 acres around Branch Lake, Ellsworth's primary drinking water supply and a significant natural asset in an area of the state expected to see rapid growth in the coming decades. LMF invested \$900,000.

The **Higgins Beach** parking acquisition was completed with the Town of Scarborough. \$623,145 from LMF combined with a roughly comparable sum from the town to acquire the only available site for public parking with walking distance of Higgins Beach. Anyone who has visited Higgins Beach knows that it is popular year-round and is a key asset to the greater Portland area. DOC is the sponsor and now has a project agreement with the town to assure long-term stewardship. As a separate part of the deal the town also acquired 10 acres on the Mousam River from the same landowners.

On Deer Isle, the Island Heritage Trust acquired 6 acres on **Lily Pond** to protect a much-loved swimming, picnicking and ice-skating spot. Again DOC is the project sponsor. LMF contributed \$140,000 to this \$230,000 project.

DOC acquired the **Madden Parcel** on the eastern boundary of the **Bradley Unit** just east of Bangor. With \$77,200 of LMF support, DOC gained legal access essential for recreation and timber management and also protected a long stretch of stream frontage. This acquisition becomes the westernmost part of conserved landscape that now stretches with only a few interruptions along the St Croix River to the Canadian border. Additional key acquisitions in this area are expected in the coming year.

On **Merrymeeting Bay**, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has added three new parcels to its holdings protecting the most productive estuary north of the

Chesapeake. The hunting and fishing in the estuary has a national reputation. The estuary itself provides the base of the food chain supporting offshore fisheries along Maine's coast. A fourth closing on the Kelley Farm easement is expected in the next few weeks. These lands and their rich soils, leased to several tenants, are under active cultivation for a range of organic greens and other vegetables serving a rapidly growing fresh market in the southern Maine. When completed, LMF will have invested another \$700,978 in the lower Kennebec marking another milestone in LMF's 20 yr commitment to conservation in this region.

Last but not least, the Maine Department of Marine Resources has acquired two new working waterfront covenants in **Friendship**. The combined investment of \$414,500 LMF dollars helps to safeguard the livelihoods of about 130 fishing families working 80 boats – a significant part of the Friendship fishing fleet. **CONTACT: Tim Glidden at tim.glidden@maine.gov or 287-1487.**

MAINE COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE



The Maine Commission for Community Service announces the release of its 2009 Annual Report. This report is provided to the State of Maine, the legislature, and the Governor under statute §7503. This year's report includes highlights from the volunteer sector including Maine's National Service Programs. Also featured, are the special projects the Commission Service oversees, including The Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism, The Governor's Volunteer Service Awards, and Martin Luther King Day of Service projects. **CONTACT: Rochelle Runge at 287-8933 or**

Rochelle.runge@maine.gov .

COASTAL PROGRAM

The Maine Coastal Program has issued a \$10,000 Shore and Harbor Planning Grant to the Town of Sullivan. The purpose of the grant is to support a project to develop a water access/harbor management plan for the coastal area of the town. The Town recently completed acquisition of the Gordon's Wharf property on the Taunton River which will be improved and used for recreational boating and commercial fishing access. The Town in general has very limited public access to its coastal waters. One element of the project will be a study of existing access and identification of new

access possibilities. The town has old, out of date “harbor” ordinances which need to be reviewed and updated, especial in light of new water access properties. The planning process is being lead by Gary Edward the new third selectmen who will be working closely with the Down East RC&D. **CONTACT: Jim Connors at 287-8938 or Jim.connors@maine.gov .**

GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY

Maine Heating Oil Prices Remain Stable. The Governor’s Office of Energy Independence and Security (OEIS) conducted its seasonal oil survey and found that the current statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil to be at **\$2.68 per gallon**, unchanged from last week. Within the OEIS sample, the lowest actual heating oil price of \$2.40 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 \$2.81 per gallon. At the time of this release the price of WTI crude oil, major driver of refined product prices, including heating oil was \$82.16. The next survey is scheduled for April 5, 2010. **CONTACT: Jeffrey Marks at 287-8927 or Jeffrey.marks@maine.gov**