



WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

May 6, 2011

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.

POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Amanda Rector named acting state economist. Director Brown named Amanda Rector acting state economist this week. Amanda joined the SPO economics and demographics team in 2007 and was promoted to senior economist in 2009, where she served as the Governor's liaison to the Census Bureau, staffed the Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission, and worked on special research projects. Amanda has a BA in economics from Wellesley College and a master's degree in public policy from the Muskie School at the University of Southern Maine. She is originally from mid-coast Maine and now lives in Union. Congratulations, Amanda!

Amanda's appointment follows several staff changes within SPO economics team. State Economist Michael LeVert accepted a job in the private sector and departed SPO earlier this week. Michael served as an economist at SPO before being promoted to state economist in 2009. He worked on a number of policy initiatives including keeping Maine's forest-based economy, corrections unification, and tax burden reduction issues. Mike's new position is as an economist with *Delhaize*. In April, SPO economist, Thomas Merrill, accepted a data analyst job with Martin's Point Health Care in Portland. Thomas coordinated the Maine State Data Center and tracked monthly retail sales and other economic indicators. He wrote reports such as the Office's annual poverty report and staffed the Regulatory Fairness Board. Thomas had been with SPO since January 2009.

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COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Preliminary Floodplain maps were issued for Androscoggin County communities.

Androscoggin communities are the first in the state to receive a complete updating of all flood hazard areas. The new flood insurance study completed 140 miles of new detailed study, 191 miles of new approximate studies and 111 miles of re-delineated studies. Prior to beginning its new flood insurance study, FEMA acquired a complete LiDAR data set for the county. This high resolution topographic data provides a critical component to accurate floodplain mapping. One meter digital elevation models that are accurate to the two foot topographic contour interval level were developed to enhance engineering models and plotting floodplain boundaries.

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ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

US Census Bureau releases 2010 demographic profile for Maine. The U.S. Census Bureau today released the 2010 Demographic Profile for Maine. State, county, and municipality data were all part of this release. Data include age and sex distributions, race, household relationship and type, housing vacancy/occupancy and housing tenure (whether the housing occupant owns or rents). For more information, including highlights of the data gleaned by SPO staff, click [here](#).

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LAND FOR MAINE'S FUTURE

SPO sponsors Maine land conservation conference. LMF staff hosted an informational booth at the state's largest land conference on Saturday, April 30, in Topsham. The conference provided training and best practices in land trust management, land transactions, fundraising, and stewardship for its 300 participants. It provided a valuable opportunity for LMF staff to answer questions about the program and its projects.

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MAINE COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

Maine Commission for Community Service assists with rescue efforts. To honor AmeriCorps Week (May 14-21) MCCS staff and AmeriCorps members will

participate in a mass rescue exercise conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard, the town of Bar Harbor, Hancock County, and Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines on Mt. Desert Island on May 18, 2011. Our role in the exercise is to staff the Volunteer Reception Center (VRC). A VRC is a place where trained volunteers can make use of unaffiliated volunteers in response and recovery operations in an efficient manner. VCRs register, screen, and place spontaneous volunteers in available opportunities and match spontaneous volunteers with requesting agencies. In the event of a real disaster, MCCS can be activated by MEMA to run a VRC.
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