



WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

June 2, 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

Business representatives discuss quality of place. A panel of Maine businesses helped the Maine Quality of Place Council understand how quality of place can be used to attract people and a skilled workforce. Representatives from Fairchild Semiconductor, Inland Hospital, and Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce told the council that while pay and benefits are important, things like vital downtowns, cultural events, and quality K-12 education are equally important to attracting workers. All the businesses talked about the need to attract and retain workers in order to fill workforce shortages. The panel recommended Maine market itself to young workers, engage young professionals to help revitalize downtowns, and market educational programs to foreign students, a percentage of which are likely to stay in Maine after their schooling is complete. The Council created a subcommittee to work on these issues more and will meet again in September.

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COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Assessing University of Southern Maine's recycling programs. Last Friday, members of SPO's waste management and recycling team were invited to the University of Southern Maine to help assess their recycling program at the Portland, Gorham and Lewiston campuses and offer guidance on re-invigorating it. Staff discussed using new,

standardized and easily recognizable recycling containers and better placement, along with designing appropriate signage and training.

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SPO staffer becomes certified floodplain manager. Joe Young, state mapping coordinator for the Floodplain Management Program, passed the exam to become a nationally Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM). Joe joins the ranks of 7,400 other certified floodplain managers across the nation. He is only the eighth person in Maine to reach this designation. The Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) established the national professional certification of floodplain managers to improve the knowledge and abilities of local, state, federal, and private-sector floodplain managers in the United States. Congratulations Joe!

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Androscoggin County preliminary flood maps reviewed. The Floodplain Management Program in cooperation with the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments coordinated a meeting between FEMA and Androscoggin communities to review the new preliminary floodplain maps. The meeting was well attended with thirteen out of fourteen communities sending representatives to the meeting. The communities will be reviewing maps over the next few months and providing feedback to FEMA and its contractors. It is anticipated that the final maps will have an effective date of midsummer 2012.

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MAINE COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

AmeriCorps grant to engage Maine residents to meet local needs. The Maine Commission for Community Service awarded federal AmeriCorps grant funds to the Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) to support more than 40 AmeriCorps members that will provide environmental education to students and maintain trails across Maine. The Commission will distribute more than \$390,000 in funding to the MCC which was selected in a highly competitive national process. In the fall, the Maine Commission for Community Service will announce additional AmeriCorps grants supported by AmeriCorps formula funding.

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366 community volunteers and AmeriCorps members volunteered 1,750 hours during AmeriCorps Week Celebration in Maine. AmeriCorps provides opportunities for more than 80,000 Americans to give back to their communities each year. It consists of three main programs: 1) AmeriCorps State and National, whose members serve with local nonprofit and community groups; 2) AmeriCorps VISTA, through which members serve full-time fighting poverty; and 3) AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps, a team-based, residential program for young adults 18–24 who carry out projects in public safety, environmental conservation, youth development, and disaster relief and preparedness. Visit [our Website](#) for more details.

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