

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

October 7, 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.

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Recycling capital investment grants underway. In May of 2011, the Waste Management and Recycling Program awarded capital investment grants to 16 municipalities/regional programs. Through a competitive process, the office awarded just over \$300,000 in grants to local programs to increase corrugated cardboard recycling and expand yard and leaf waste composting. To date, four communities have completed their projects. They include: Lubec's building addition for storage and collection of cardboard; Old Town's addition to its recycling center (see photo); Yarmouth's compost pad restoration and bin for storing finished compost; and an expansion of Lincoln County's compost pad. The remaining municipal grant recipients are still in the process of completing their projects.



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Floodplain management workshop announced. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and SPO's floodplain management program, will host a training workshop on how to estimate flood damage to residential structures for compliance purposes. Replacement or repair of flood-damaged structures may be required to meet

certain construction standards under the federal insurance program depending on the extent of the damage. Training is geared toward code enforcement officers, local plumbing inspectors, and other local officials who already have a working knowledge of floodplain management concepts. CEOs can earn credits toward their recertification. The workshop will be held twice; once on October 12 and again on 13 in Kennebunk in aid of Tropical Storm Irene's disaster declaration. It will be offered in other locations at later dates. Please see [our website](#) to register or for more information.

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ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Business and industry leaders share data with economic forecasters. On September 29, leaders of several business and industry groups assembled at the State House to share economic data and industry-specific information with the Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission (CEFC). Those presenting at the meeting included representatives from RM Davis, Inc., the National Federation of Independent Business (Maine), the Maine Bankers Association, the Maine Tourism Association, the Associated Builders and Contractors of Maine, the Maine Merchants Association, the Associated General Contractors of Maine, the Maine Automobile Dealers Association, and the Maine Association of Realtors. The data provides background to help inform the commission's forecasting process.

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State Economist speaks at Taxation subcommittee panel. On September 26, State Economist Amanda Rector participated in the first of five panels hosted by a subcommittee of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation. The purpose of the discussion was to gain additional insight into issues with Maine's current tax laws and possible areas of reform on which the Taxation Committee should focus. Ms. Rector spoke about the importance of having a tax code that is simple, equitable, adequate, and balanced. She also made the point that tax revenues and tax burden are closely related to the health of the economy, and increasing the availability of well-paying jobs and the profitability of companies can increase revenues while reducing expenditures and the tax burden.

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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY

Heating oil prices 84 cents higher per gallon than year ago. The Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security (OEIS) conducted its weekly heating oil survey on October 3, 2011, and found the current statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil to be at \$3.50 per gallon, \$0.84 higher than the price one year ago. The statewide kerosene price average is \$3.92 per gallon at this time. The statewide average for propane based on a use of 925 gallons a year is \$3.12 per gallon. On October 3, the price of WTI crude oil, a major driver of refined petroleum product prices, including heating oil was \$77.61.

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