



WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

December 9, 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

Appropriations Committee to take up Part FF report. On December 1, David Emery, chair of the Part FF working group, provided the Appropriations Committee with the group's final report and proposed legislation to implement the recommendations in the report. At their regularly-scheduled meeting on December 13, the Appropriations Committee will take up the report. For a copy:

<http://www.maine.gov/spo/rightcolumn/sporeorg.html>.

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ECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Broadband Capacity Building task force meets. The Broadband Capacity Building task force held their first meeting on Monday, December 5. Task force members heard from a panel of Maine businesspeople that are actively changing the way broadband works in Maine. Following the panel there was an energetic brainstorming session around future "game changing" policies and the work that the task force will do. The next meeting of the task force will be February 1, 2012.

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State Economist delivers guest lecture at Muskie School of Public Service. Amanda Rector, Maine State Economist, presented the final lecture in the Muskie School's

“November Nights” series on November 30. The topic of the presentation was “An Aging State: Demographic Change and the Implications for Maine’s Economy.” Included in the presentation were demographic trends, projected population changes, and a discussion of the economic implications of an aging population. Ms. Rector also addressed the importance of attracting younger, skilled workers to the state as well as retraining the existing workforce for new and future jobs.

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Census data of interest. The *Lewiston Sun Journal* explored the myriad of community data available from the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey. SPO Economist Joel Johnson provided some of the analysis. To read about it:

<http://www.sunjournal.com/news/city/2011/12/08/survey-shows-snapshot-life-maine/1125198>

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LAND USE PLANNING

Workshops aimed at keeping clam flats open. The Land Use and Maine Coastal programs at the State Planning Office will offer a workshop for local planners and code enforcement officers. The workshop is entitled “Keeping Clam Flats Open: A Valuable Resource for Municipalities,” and is scheduled for the first week in January, 2012. There will be two workshops covering the same information, one in Freeport and one in Ellsworth, to make travel easier for participants. The workshops will demonstrate the important social and economic benefits that clam flats provide to coastal communities and illustrate the connection between land use practices and shellfish growing area closures. Participants will explore solutions to improve water quality in shellfish growing areas using collaborative state and local resources and will learn how they can coordinate efforts to maintain and re-open clam flats. To register or for more information: <http://www.maine.gov/spo/coastal/index.htm>.

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COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Rockland strives to educate residents about waste management and recycling. The city of Rockland, which just completed its new composting facility with grant assistance



from the Waste Management & Recycling Program, is in the process of developing an educational center at its solid waste facility. Part of the educational effort will feature an animated display of scale-model solid waste and recycling trucks and handling equipment, providing visual aids especially to children learning about collection systems, transfer station and landfill operations. The models are generously donated to the city by

SPO's Bruce White.

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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY

Heating Oil Prices Remain Stable. The Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security conducted its weekly heating fuel survey on November 28, 2011 and found that the current statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil to be \$3.64 per gallon, which is down \$0.01 from last week and \$0.02 from two weeks ago. The statewide average for propane based on a use of 925 gallons a year is \$3.13 per gallon. On December 5, the price of WTI crude oil, a major driver of refined petroleum product prices, including heating oil, was at \$101.12 per barrel.

OEIS has included a [calculator on its web site](#) that will allow consumers to estimate home heating costs and price impacts of the various energy sources. Check it out!

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