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**MAINE PUBLIC UTILITIES  
COMMISSION AND UNIVERSITY OF  
MAINE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

**REPORT ON EXPANDING ACCESS  
TO RESIDENTIAL ENERGY  
PROGRAMS**

**Presented to the  
Utilities and Energy Committee  
April 5, 2010**

JAN 14 2013

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**REPORT ON EXPANDING ACCESS  
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**I. BACKGROUND**

During its First Regular Session, the 124<sup>th</sup> Legislature enacted Resolve, To Expand Access To Renewable Energy Programs (Resolves 2009, ch. 131). The Resolve directs the Public Utilities Commission (Commission), in cooperation with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service (Cooperative Extension), to conduct a 2-year outreach and education program to provide information to Maine residents regarding renewable energy technology and systems for residential use and the renewable energy programs and incentives available through Federal, State and local agencies. The program must include at least one informational presentation in each of the 16 counties of the State. The Resolve requires the Commission, in cooperation with the Cooperative Extension, to submit an interim report and a final report on this outreach and education program to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over utilities and energy matters (Committee) and authorizes the Commission to adopt routine technical rules as necessary to implement the program.

This report is submitted in compliance with the reporting requirement to provide the Committee with a summary of programs and activities that have been undertaken as a result of this Resolve.

**II. RESIDENTIAL ENERGY PROGRAMS**

1. Prepared presentation resources for each county's local programs including: PowerPoint programs, scripts, videos, demonstration materials, post-program evaluation, and sign-up sheets. Programs include the following:
  - Saving Home Energy – Assessing What You Use & Comparing Fuel Costs;
  - Saving Home Energy – Low Cost/No Cost Conservation Techniques and Beyond; and
  - Comparing Different Home Heating Fuels and Alternative Energy Systems.
2. Trained county Cooperative Extension staff (County Energy Coordinators & others) to present workshops on the basics of energy conservation and alternative energy options to individuals in the community.
  - Evaluations will be conducted and impacts gathered from program attendees and compiled for statewide impact; and
  - Prepared energy webinars with close captioning on energy topics for the general public. These will be archived and available for viewing by the public.

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3. Prepared program promotion materials including: flyers, newspaper announcements, and posters for use by county staff.
4. Residential Energy Programs given to date and presented to a total of 225 people.
  - Aroostook: Houlton, Presque Isle, Fort Kent;
  - Piscataquis: Dover-Foxcroft, Milo, Guilford;
  - Penobscot: Bangor, Orono;
  - Washington: Calais, Machias;
  - Waldo: Waldo; and
  - York County: Biddeford.
5. Future program development for presentation: Saving Energy in the Summer.

**III. OTHER ENERGY PROGRAMS**

- Cutting Edge Farm Energy Options presented at the Agriculture Trade Show in January 2010;
- Somerset County: Photovoltaic Workshops with adults and youths – see VISTA information below for more details; and
- Franklin County: County Energy Task Force Meeting.

**IV. KEEP ME WARM PROGRAM**

1. 2009 Operation Keep ME Warm

Cooperative Extension staff collaborated with the State agency planning team to carry out this program. Training was held at six county locations with a total of 68 volunteers trained. The counties were Franklin, Kennebec, Piscataquis, Somerset, Washington, and York.<sup>1</sup>

2. 2010 Operation Keep ME Warm

Cooperative Extension staff will serve on the program planning committee for the 2010 program.

**V. OUTREACH**

Outreach activities conducted to engage the public in energy saving opportunities include the following:

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<sup>1</sup> The following training sites were canceled due to low signups: Androscoggin, Aroostook, Oxford, Penobscot, Sagadahoc and Waldo.

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- 1) Newsletters
  - a) Piscataquis County programs
  - b) Somerset County programs
  - c) Photovoltaic Workshops
  
- 2) News releases sent to news outlets and released by University of Maine Public Affairs
  - a) Saving Energy During the Summer
  - b) Energy Incentives
  - c) Tips to Save Energy this Winter
  
- 3) Displays at Events
  - a) Piscataquis County:
    - i) Monson Snow Roller Days: Staffed Booth about Home Energy
    - ii) Energy Saving Tips Poster at Three Local Libraries
    - iii) Piscataquis Valley Fair
  - b) Kennebec County:
    - i) Augusta Hall of Flags for University of Maine Day at the Legislature: Staffed Booth about Home Energy
  - c) Somerset County:
    - i) Solar Gingerbread House displayed at the Skowhegan Public Library for Maple Week and at 4-H Demonstration Day
    - ii) Pittsfield Energy Expo
    - iii) Jackman Energy Audit Workshop
    - iv) Skowhegan State Fair, New Portland Fair, Harmony Fair
  - d) Hancock County:
    - i) Bucksport Bay Festival
  - e) Kennebec County:
    - i) Augusta Energy Workshop
  - f) Washington County:
    - i) Machias Energy Workshop
  - g) Penobscot County:
    - i) Bangor Hydro Winter Expo – Display and Workshop Presentation

**VI. HEARTH VISTA AND OTHER EXTENSION VOLUNTEERS**

HEARTH VISTA volunteers develop volunteer networks to share energy saving techniques. This program, which will serve as a model for program implementation, will help coordinate planning and networking around community heating needs and increase visibility of sources of heating assistance. This program will support the formation of new, and build the capacity of, existing local response teams and extend volunteerism and volunteer leader capacity to help solve one of Maine's most pressing needs: to keep citizens safe and warm in their homes. Piscataquis, Somerset, Penobscot and Knox-Lincoln have Vista and Hearth Vista volunteers who are forming volunteer networks to help keep

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people warm in the winter through winterizing efforts, setting up warming centers, and doing demonstrations on energy saving options.

- 1) Piscataquis County:
  - a) Milo Warming Center was open two months with an average of 30 people attending
    - i) Evaluation showed that 44% saved heating fuel as a result of coming to the center.
    - ii) 94% plan to attend the Warming Center next year.
    - iii) 67% were interested in a Cooling Center in the summer.
    - iv) 92% said they would be willing to volunteer at a Warming Center.
  - b) Sebec Warming Center was open for two months with an average of 8 people attending.
  - c) Dover-Foxcroft Warming Center was open for two months with an average of 20 people attending.
  - d) Operation Keep ME Warm local activities.
  - e) Plans for Summer Cooling Centers.
  - f) Networking with community members.
  
- 2) Somerset County:
  - a) Weatherization with organized community groups
    - i) Skowhegan Rotary Club funding winterization tool bags that will be signed out through local libraries. Plans are to have six tool bags available for signing out at six community libraries.
    - ii) SAD 74 school project that built a solar gingerbread house model and displayed it at several locations.
  - b) Operation Keep ME Warm Local Activities – 10 new volunteers weatherized homes.
  - c) Planning a Weatherization “Boot Camp” for youths that will give youths the background needed to sign up for Kennebec Valley Community College weatherization technician training program. The pilot project is planned for May 2010, and will serve as a model for statewide application.
  - d) Networking with community members on energy sustainability projects including developing a ZIP CAR (hybrid rental car/time share) energy transportation system with the University of Maine at Farmington.
  - e) Building Solar Panels Workshop – February 20-21, 2010, in which 12 people attended.
    - i) Evaluation showed that 100% of attendees increased their confidence in building a photovoltaic panel.
    - ii) As a result of attending this workshop people plan to build additional photovoltaic panels.
    - iii) 64% learned new information on how energy is consumed in their household.
    - iv) 55% gained information on how to save energy in their household.

- 3) Washington County:
  - a) Through Cooperative Extension, Washington County developed five volunteer groups with a total of 25 volunteers who winterized 50 homes with a grant funding necessary materials. Plans are being developed for an expanded 2010 program.

## **VII. WEB SITE AND HOME ENERGY PUBLICATIONS**

- 1) The Cooperative Extension Energy Information Website has been migrated to a new content management system and is in the process of being edited and updated. It can be accessed at: <http://extension.umaine.edu/energy>
  - a) From September to March 2010, 85 "Extension Energy" pages were viewed 12,732 times. The top viewed pages included:
    - i) Maine Home Energy: Insulating Window Treatments and Coverings
    - ii) Maine Home Energy: Draft Stoppers
    - iii) Maine Home Energy: Stop Window Drafts With Homemade Indoor Shutters
    - iv) Maine Home Energy: Energy Information for Homeowners and Renters
    - v) Maine Home Energy: Passive Solar Heating
    - vi) Maine Home Energy: How Much Heat Per Dollar?
- 2) New Cooperative Extension publications:  
<http://extensionpubs.umext.maine.edu/>
  - a) Options for Home Heating Fuels and Energy Systems – An Overview, Maine Home Energy Series, Item #7217
  - b) Draft Stoppers, Maine Home Energy Series, Item #7220
  - c) Passive Solar Energy, Maine Home Energy Series, Item #7219
- 3) Ideas for Future Publications in development:
  - a) Saving Energy During the Summer
  - b) Understanding Your Home's Thermal Envelope
  - c) Burning Pellets 101
  - d) Results of State Funded Residential Solar and Wind Installations
  - e) How to Make Neck Coolers for Summer

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

This educational effort was initiated in the middle of the fall when plans for educational programming for home winterization were being offered. As a result, public participation was light in some counties that offered educational programs in the late fall and winter. Public interest in low-cost, no-cost energy efficiency and conservation was high at public events that utilized the energy display, web pages and publications.

With lower prices for heating oil, the urgency of reducing home heating costs has waned somewhat. Current plans to continue this initiative call for the



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development of a summer energy saving program focused on electrical savings. Educational information about keeping cool and implementing conservation measures will help Maine residents reduce both cooling costs this summer and reduce heating costs next winter.

Since 2008, over 2,000 citizens of Maine have received energy information from the Cooperative Extension through workshops, and 40,000 by accessing the website. Since 2008-09, the Commission's Efficiency Maine staff have been consulted about energy topics and kept informed about the progress of the Cooperative Extension initiative. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Commission and the Cooperative Extension, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), will continue this Cooperative Extension effort in energy education and weatherization through 2010-11.