

Sustain Mid-Maine Coalition Newsletter

SPRING 2010



\$170,000 Energy Grant Awarded to Sustain Mid-Maine Coalition

On February 12 the City of Waterville, the Town of Winslow, and Sustain Mid-Maine Coalition (SMMC) were awarded a \$170,000 grant from the State of Maine Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant program to implement a two year residential and industrial energy saving plan. The award will help reduce home energy use and promote the use of solar and wood-based renewable energy.

Estimates suggest the residential plan will create a dozen local jobs. The residential plan could also save 35,750 gallons of fuel oil and \$115,000 in annual energy costs for Waterville and Winslow

homes. Eventually, the industrial plan could push annual energy savings to over \$10 million annually. The grant was the result of 10 months of development by the SMMC Energy Team. The initial plan was first formed a year ago at a meeting of 60 diverse stakeholders. Survey responses from over 100 local residents confirmed widespread agreement with the initial plan.

John Joseph, SMMC Energy Team chair and co-author of the grant, confirmed that the Energy Team worked hard to gain the input of many different stakeholders to create the best plan.

“The plan we devised is in line with

local and national efforts and aspirations to accelerate energy conservation, the use of renewable resources, and the creation of productive jobs for the future,” said Joseph.

Joseph was also excited about the importance of the grant to the local sustainability movement. He said, “this grant award—the third largest in Maine—is an encouraging sign that SMMC volunteers and municipal governments will continue to work together to bring energy security, environmental protection, and economic benefits to the region.”



The writers of the EECBG grant application (from left to right): Ken Fletcher, Elery Keene, John Joseph, Dick Thomas, and Steve Erario.

Rethink, Reduce, Reuse Recycle Team

The RX4 team led by Ross Nason has decided that the team's primary objective is to create a comprehensive recycling brochure. When completed, this will outline where and how to recycle various products. It will include all area recycling centers and their hours of operation. Addi-



The RX4 team from left to right: ?, Blanche Davison, Elery Keene, and Ross Nason

tionally, this team is hoping to reduce the use of plastic bags. Perhaps you've heard about "the new continent." It is a conglomerate of plastic that has collected in certain part of the Pacific Ocean as a result of the Gulf Stream. According to onthecommons.org, "It's twice the size of Texas, and it floats in the middle of the North Pacific Ocean. As reported by the *London Times*, the massive trash dump consists of six million tons of plastic bags, bottles and other synthetic throwaways in various stages of degradation. This is actually only one-third of the estimated 18 million tons of plastic junk floating in the world's oceans." Team member Blanche

Davison noted in her letter to the editor, that Hannaford's sign "Did you remember your reusable shopping bags?" is a strong beginning to this Reduce Plastic Campaign. If the RX4 Team is successful in obtaining grant money, they are planning to provide canvas bags to the public. These bags will have the Sustain Mid-Maine logo prominently displayed. The Sustain Mid-Maine recycling brochure would be included within each bag. As an extension of this campaign, the RX4 Team is hoping to get individuals to sign a pledge to limit the amount of plastic they use.

Grow and Support Local Foods Team

The Local Foods team led by Stu Silverstein is pleased to announce receiving a \$500 grant from Inland Hospital. This money will be used to create a community garden in the South End of Waterville. The team will model this new community garden after its prototype on North Street. Having additional community garden space will allow more area residents the opportunity to grow their own vegetables and to connect with others who share the same interest. If you are interested in obtaining a garden plot at either of Waterville's two community sites, contact Stu Silverstein. Individual

plots cost \$10 or more if you are able. Workshops on organic gardening techniques will be offered throughout the gardening season. These will be open to all area citizens, not just community gardeners. Be watching for specific dates and times in the Community Calendar section of *The Morning Sentinel*. This team maintains contact through a Yahoo discussion group that includes gardening tips as well as information about future meetings. If you would like to join in these discussions, contact Stu Silverstein.



Energy Team

The Energy Team has been bolstered by many recent successes. Bob Hussey and Chris Bryan of the Renewable Energy group worked closely with Thomas College and Kennebec Valley Community College (KVCC) to help each school secure \$50,000 for educational renewable energy projects. Thomas College will be installing electricity-producing “solar photovoltaic” panels, and KVCC

will be installing wind turbines. All three teams—Residential Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy, and District Energy—have been hard at work winning a \$170,000 grant for the project plans they have been developing over the last year. More information on the big grant award in the previous article.



Energy Team meeting with Efficiency Maine discussing the EECBG grant.

Education Team

The Education Team led by Iver Lofving is trying to connect with various local schools to discuss relevant environmental topics. A liaison between Lawrence, Messalonskee, and Skowhegan High Schools has developed. Efforts are being made to reach other schools and encourage participation in monthly educational events, including an Earth Day celebration. The focus of these

events will be to educate students about issues of environmental importance. In addition to educating the school community, the Education Team wants to educate the public about the importance of eating healthy foods. Team member Kate Newkirk attended a presentation that led to the Education Team’s coordinating “The Food Series.” During this series of free community presentations, a variety of food-

related issues will be covered. A tentative list of topics includes Where Food Comes From and When to Find It; Food Preparation and Storage; The Past, Present, and Future of Food; The Effects of Climate Change and Sustainability on Food; The Omnivore/Vegetarian/Vegan Diets; and State and Federal Food Policy. This team is looking for speakers to address these topics.

Looking for speakers for the following topics:

- *Where Food Comes From and When to Find It*
- *Food Preparation and Storage*
- *The Past, Present, and Future of Food*
- *The Effects of Climate Change and Sustainability on Food*
- *The Omnivore / Vegetarian / Vegan Diets*
- *State and Federal Food Policy*

Contact Linda Woods at lwoods@waterville-me.gov

Transportation Team

The Transportation Team led by Jim Wood will be meeting in early March to discuss enhanced public transit services for the area, development of new park and ride lots, and improved walking biking/trail information.

From the Desk of: Linda Woods, Interim Coordinator



Linda Woods

Although many of you saw me on January 16 at "Where We've Been/Where We're Going," you still might wonder what I do during my fifteen-hour work week. Let me describe for you my typical three-hour day. When I arrive, I have a job list in hand: e-mails to reply to, phone calls to make, connections to create. The very first thing I do is check my e-mail and work on whatever requests I've received. Invariably before this is completed, I get interrupted by a phone call or another incoming message tagged urgent. You certainly keep me busy! As often as possible, I spend my free time outside. One of my favorite places is Grafton Notch where I spent several days cross-country skiing in February. Normally skiing in February is considered routine; however, good snow has been difficult to find this winter. As you might have guessed, this activism led to my volunteering for Sustain Mid-Maine Coalition which eventually led to my being hired as the interim coordinator. Hopefully, my actions have helped each of you be more aware of the activities of SMMC. We all need to spread the word about Sustain Mid-Maine Coalition, so that our name gets attached to the many pursuits we are working on. I am so proud of each of the team's accomplishments. We have so much to celebrate!

Member Profile: Blanche Davison

Blanche Davison is on our Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Team. She is an experienced and committed member. Blanche once lived in a town whose "dump" was closed by the state. Drastic action was required so Blanche, with her husband and friends, formed a "Recycling Council". They organized volunteers, provided community education and did all the "hands on" work of recycling for the community. Eventually town government DID take over. Moving to Nobleboro, Maine in 1982, Blanche and her husband designed and built a passive solar home by themselves. She says they "believed in the power of books" and "had courage". Their home won one of 8 state-wide annual prizes for solar homes. Later Blanche and some friends attempted to

start a co-housing project. They worked for five years on the project but eventually their efforts failed, due to lack of support from the town. (Maybe a group like ours could have made a difference).

Blanche moved here recently, and her presence is a plus for us!

By Jane Edwards

Contact lwoods@waterville-me.gov for volunteer suggestions



Blanche Davison

SUSTAIN MID-MAINE COALITION

For more information contact:
Linda Woods, interim coordinator
Email: lwoods@waterville-me.gov
Phone: (207)-680-4208

Check out our website!
www.sustainmidmaine.org

Contact our team leaders for volunteer opportunities:

Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Team: Ross Nason, rnason@kvcog.org

Energy Team: John Joseph, john.joseph21@myfairpoint.net

Local Foods Team: Stu Silverstein, ssilverstien@gmail.com

Education Team: Iver Lofving, ilofving@msad54.org

Transportation Team: Jim Wood, jimw@kvcap.org