

SWRPC

Commission Highlights

January 2015

Vol. 21 - No. 1

Winter Commission Meeting Scheduled for February 10, 2015

The Planning Commission's Winter Meeting is set for February 10, 2015 at Papagallos Restaurant in Swanzey, NH. Our topic of discussion will be Renewable Energy Options for Communities and Rodney Bartlett, Department of Public Works Director for the Town of Peterborough will be our guest speaker. Rodney was instrumental in developing a program for the Town that allows it to purchase green power to meet the electric needs of municipal buildings and led to them receiving the 2014 Green Power Leadership Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The program includes a social beginning at 5:00 p.m. that includes light refreshments. Advanced registration is required. For additional information or to register, please contact Becky Baldwin of Commission staff.

Planning Commission Adopts Monadnock Region Future: A Plan for Southwest New Hampshire

On January 13th, the Planning Commission's Board of Directors adopted, "Monadnock Region Future: A Plan for Southwest New Hampshire." This document, which is advisory in nature, is intended to serve as a resource for the Region's communities as well as organizations, institutions, and other entities with an interest in planning and preparing for the future. It describes a number of trends and conditions impacting the Region such as our aging population, post-recession economy, outmigration of youth and families, increase in severe storm events, to mention a few. It also presents information on opportunities for communities to address these potential challenges while sustaining and enhancing community vitality, economic prosperity, stewardship of natural and cultural resources, and preparedness for emergencies and natural disasters.

What separates this Plan from those developed in years past, is the extensive level of public involvement and its integrative approach to planning. Much of the information contained in the Plan reflects the thoughts, ideas, and opinions gathered through a range of outreach activities through the project's three-year timeframe. In addition, the Plan focuses on the interconnections between factors, such as housing, transportation, economic opportunity, and environmental quality, which have an impact on overall quality of life and well-being. This integrative and comprehensive approach to planning helps to highlight the relationships between diverse elements and forces in communities, as well as opportunities for collaboration.

The Planning Commission anticipates that this Plan will stimulate discussion, action, and promote regional thinking and coordination among the Region's communities, organizations, institutions, and others. To view the Plan or for more information, please visit: www.swrpc.org/regionalplan or contact Tara Germond of Commission staff.

Woodstove Changeout Program Announced

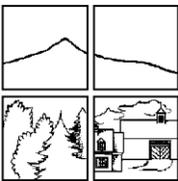
On January 22nd, SWRPC staff attended an event in Keene where a woodstove changeout program was announced for residents of Cheshire County. The changeout will improve air quality by reducing pollution, especially fine particulate matter, which comes from older, less efficient woodstoves. The program, administered by the American Lung Association New England, will distribute up to \$425,000 in vouchers for residents wishing to trade in their non-EPA certified woodstove or wood boiler for a new wood, pellet, or gas appliance. Participating vendors have received educational outreach materials created by SWRPC and the Greater Keene Air Quality Education and Outreach Campaign, an effort supported by the NH Department of Environmental Services and local stakeholders including Cheshire Medical Center, the City of Keene, the Greater Monadnock Public Health Network, and Keene State College. For more information about the woodstove changeout program, contact Michelle Edwards at medwards@lungne.org or visit <http://www.lungne.org/woodstove>. For more information about the Greater Keene Air Quality Education and Outreach Campaign, please contact Henry Underwood, of Commission staff or visit www.swrpc.org/airquality.

Natural Gas Pipeline Informational Webpage

During January, SWRPC published an informational webpage regarding the proposed Northeast Energy Direct (NED) project. The natural gas pipeline has been proposed along a route through southern New Hampshire, including seven Southwest Region communities. The page features information about the project, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and the NH Site Evaluation Committee. For more information, please visit www.swrpc.org/pipeline.

ReadyNH Website

With the winter storm season in full swing, many residents are interested in preparing for winter storm events. The NH Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management's ReadyNH website can help residents improve their preparedness for disasters. The website includes information on different types of disasters, suggestions for emergency kits and family plans, and how to sign up for emergency alerts. It also contains resources that municipalities can use to help residents become more prepared, such as sample Public Service Announcements for TV or radio. For more information, please visit the website at www.readynh.gov or contact NH HSEM staff at (603) 271-2231.



New Version of the Planning Board Handbook Now Available

The NH Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) has just released their latest edition of the Planning Board Handbook. This handbook is designed to serve as an introduction to the organization, powers, duties and procedures of Planning Boards in New Hampshire. It is a resource to acquaint board members and other interested persons with the basic responsibilities of the Planning Board and to suggest procedures by which the work of the board can be carried out in a fair and effective manner. The handbook is available on-line or in hard copy. To download a free copy, visit: www.nh.gov/oep/planning/resources/planning-board-handbook.htm. To purchase a hard copy, please call OEP at (603) 271-2155.

Southwest Region Planning Commission

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