

Falmouth Recycling and Energy Advisory Committee (REAC)

“Energy News You Can Use” Volume 3, Issue 2 February 2015 – Falmouth, Maine

- With oil prices dropping, and many heating options now on the market, it can be difficult deciding what fuel or fuels to heat your home with. I just recently moved into a new home, and we heat with a combination of oil and wood pellets. How are you heating your home, and have you found savings in combined fuel options?
- Have you had an energy audit or assessment done through Efficiency Maine or independently? Drop us a line at reac@falmouthme.org and share your home energy story with us!
- Any ideas or suggestions on how Falmouth can be greener? More sustainable? Use less energy? We'd love to hear your thoughts, and ways in which *you* live sustainably, give us a shout!

Falmouth is borrowing an electric car!

During the week of February 9th, the town will be borrowing a Nissan Leaf, 100% electric, courtesy of the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG). Falmouth will be allowing staff and Councilors to test drive the vehicle, but the community is more than welcome to come and check it out! I will be at the Green Drinks event at TideSmart on February 10th (see events calendar below) with the Leaf, if you'd like to come see it then. We're excited to be looking into this new technology, and thank TideSmart for letting us charge the vehicle at their facility over the course of the week we'll have it, and we thank GPCOG for providing us this wonderful opportunity!

Second Annual Home Energy Fair a Success!



Although the snow came earlier than predicted on Saturday the 24th, over 100 people braved the weather and showed their interest in home energy at the second annual Home Energy Fair. Vendors were pleased with the outcome, and have said that attendees came with adequate questions. Children were entertained by Maine Audubon who explained how animals conserve energy during the winter, alongside with Garbage to Garden who had a hands-on composting activity for the little ones. Didn't have a chance to get out to the Falmouth Home Energy Fair? Good news! This year the event is part of a regional series of fairs! The next will be held on Saturday February 28 in Gorham (see events calendar below). We look forward to seeing you there!






Thanks to all involved in the Second Annual Home Energy Fair!

Calendar of Local Green Events- February 2015

Event	Date/Time/Location	Description
<p>2015 Maine Home, Remodeling and Garden Show</p> 	<p>February 7-8 Saturday 10:00am-6:00pm Sunday 10:00am-4:00pm Cross Insurance Arena (formerly the Cumberland County Civic Center) 1 Civic Center Square, Portland</p>	<p>Come see what the Maine Home, Remodeling and Garden Show has to offer the weekend of February 7 and 8. This year's show will showcase over 180 exhibitor booths, with displays of the latest products and services for your home in areas such as building and remodeling, outdoor living, green living, décor and more! Visit the website for more information.</p>
<p>Green Drinks—TideSmart Global</p> 	<p>February 10 5:30-7:30pm TideSmart Global 308 US Route 1, Falmouth</p>	<p>TideSmart Global, an experiential media and marketing firm, became one of the first locations in Maine to install an electric vehicle charging station. The campus also features 350 square feet of solar panels that power 40 percent of the campus, amongst many other green features. Come out to tour the newest addition to their campus—the Viridescent House, the first net-energy-positive building in Maine! The cost is \$5 at the door if you bring your own glass/mug/drinking vessel, and \$10 if not. See you there!</p>

<p>Museum of Art Exhibit—Global Change: the Dance of Contingencies</p> 	<p>February 12 10:00am-5:00pm University of Maine Museum of Art 40 Harlow St, Bangor</p>	<p>In their second year of exhibiting, Deborah Cornell and Barbara Putnam unite science and art to reveal the interconnected effects of climate change upon the natural world. This exhibition explores ethical, social and environmental currents that arise from human interaction with the environment, and the concern of observing how our actions have thrown entire ecological systems out of balance.</p>
<p>Creating a Culture of Sustainability in Portland: Why What We Do Matters</p> 	<p>February 19 12:30pm Portland Public Library 5 Monument Square, Portland</p>	<p>Join NRCM Sustainability Director, Sarah Lakeman, at the Portland Public Library as part of Science Café to discuss how our choices impact the environment and quality of life. This event begins on Thursday, February 19 at 12:30 at the Portland Public Library, and is open to the public.</p>
<p>Hydropower: A Dam Good Forum</p> 	<p>February 26 7:15-9:30am University of South Maine Wishcamper Center 34 Bedford St, Portland</p>	<p>Hydropower is a key resource in Maine's energy basket, and one that is on the verge of expansion with new technologies, untapped potential at existing sites, and identification of new sites on small and micro facilities. This forum will highlight project proposals to bring Canadian hydro through Maine to dense population centers. The forum will also discuss how the State is evaluating existing regulations and public policy to identify opportunities for new investment in hydropower that balances economic and environmental considerations.</p>
<p>Solar Open House—Freeport</p> 	<p>February 28 9:00-10:30am The Leonard Residence 6 Pennell Ln, Freeport</p>	<p>Join ReVision Energy at the Leonard's home in Freeport to get answers to questions such as—how much do these systems cost; what can I expect for my return on investment; what are the available incentives for solar energy systems; and how do they perform in our Northeast climate? You will have the chance to tour the homeowner's 4.1 kW solar electric system that powers their home, as well as a chance to see and learn more about their heat pump water heater. For more information, call ReVision at (207)221-6342.</p>

<p>Home Energy Fair—Gorham</p> 	<p>February 28 10:00am-3:00pm Great Falls Elementary School 73 Justice Way, Gorham</p>	<p>Did you plan on attending the Falmouth Home Energy Fair last month, but didn't have the chance? Good news! This year, the town of Falmouth is partnering with the Greater Portland Sustainability Council to make the Home Energy Fair a part of a series. The second fair will be held on February 28 in Gorham, where you can expect to connect with at least 20 heating professionals, nonprofits, and other in the field of home energy. Bring the whole family; children's entertainment will be provided! For more detailed information, and a list of exhibitors, follow this link.</p>
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Energy News

Legislature Considering Measures to Lower Solar Power Costs—Maine could increase the use of solar power for electricity, heating and cooling homes under measures before the State Legislature this year. Some of the proposals under consideration include allowing more cooperation between individuals to generate solar energy, and providing rebates to lower costs and improve affordability. Sarah Gideon, a Democratic representative from Freeport wants to make it easier for larger groups of people to work together to generate solar energy, to use or sell to the power grid. She explains that, [In Maine] “we are generating about 10 megawatts and we would seek to go up to about 172 megawatts through what this bill would accomplish”. To read more, [follow this link](#).

Green-Energy Inspiration off the Coast of Denmark—last October, dozens of Americans, many of which were Mariners, gathered at Samsø, a small Danish island about four hours from Copenhagen. The trip's purpose was to not only see the transformation from fossil fuel energy to renewable sources—such as solar, wind and geothermal—but also to learn from the process and bring ideas back home. To read more about this exciting story, [click here](#).

Maine Needs Increased Natural Gas Supply to Keep Up with Competition, Panel Says—if Maine's largest employers and companies are going to thrive, the state needs to increase its supply of natural gas, according to the utility and business officials who attended an event focusing on how energy issues are holding back Maine's economy. Read about upcoming pipeline projects [here](#).

Green Consumer Tips & How-To's

Wondering about your home energy, ways to use less fuel, or maybe how to generate clean energy at home? One of the best starting points is to get a *Home Energy Audit/Assessment*! Let a professional share their expertise with you, and with a checklist, you'll be in charge of where to invest, and what is going to be the best paybacks. To find a registered energy auditor near you, use Efficiency Maine's search engine, [find a registered residential vendor](#), and get started today at ease!

For an average home in a cold climate, reducing home energy usage by just 15 percent saves the equivalent of 500 pounds of coal a year. Even if your home is insulated, small cracks can add up to big losses. The following projects are simple, and for the do-it-yourself folks: using a lit incense stick to find drafts, caulk them afterward; add a storm door; install weather stripping around doors and windows; seal patio doors with rubber compression kits/door insulator kits; and seal entry points of outlets with expanding foam insulation.

The next time you're shopping for products made from wood or plastic, consider bamboo instead. The fastest-growing woody plant on the planet, bamboo first came as flooring and furniture; now the versatile grass is turning up in clothing, computer monitors, surfboards, skis, and even in biodegradable plates and utensils.

Consider using non-toxic de-icing substance such as a clean clay cat litter, sand, or fireplace/stove ash to prevent hazardous waste from chemicals. Chemical de-icers can be hazardous to your pets, your trees and shrubs, and the environment. Antifreeze can leak from car engines, and chemical snow melters from driveways, roads, and runways can pollute surface waters and groundwater through the soil.

If you have a manual thermostat or no thermostat at all, one way to save energy and money this winter is to install a programmable thermostat. When installed and used with the four pre-programmed settings for weekend and weekdays, you can save \$100 each year while staying comfortable. Before leaving for vacation, turn down your thermostat (or programmable one) so that you don't waste resources by generating unneeded heat.

Did you know...?

...that artificial lighting doesn't just spoil the view of the stars, it can also confuse nocturnal animals? The International Dark-Sky Associates offers the following tips to reduce light pollution around your home: choose the lowest possible wattage for outdoor bulbs; add shielding that points the light downward for any source brighter than a 100-watt incandescent; and for security applications, use motion-sensor lights for they save energy and also draw attention to intruders.

...that annual carbon dioxide emissions, that could be avoided if 97 percent of U.S. wine was made to be consumed within a year was sold in boxes, instead of bottles, would be able two million tons?

...generator exhaust is toxic? Always put generators outside well away from doors, windows and vents. Carbon monoxide is deadly, can build up quickly, and linger for hours. Make sure to stay safe during any power outages!

...that you should winterize your vehicle? By checking your air filter and fluid levels, checking tires for tread wear and proper inflation, and checking the condition of your windshield wipers, you can ensure your vehicle is ready for weather changes. This will reduce damage, which prevents waste from broken parts, and will keep you safe on the roads.

REAC'S Mission: The Town of Falmouth Energy and Recycling Advisory Committee advises the Falmouth Town Council on matters relating to the town's solid waste recycling program, energy efficiency and other related matters deemed appropriate by the Council. Duties shall include but not be limited to the following: (1) Endeavor to save local taxpayer dollars through increased energy-efficiency of municipal facilities and operations; (2) Prioritize the ad hoc Falmouth Green Ribbon Committee's 2010 recommendations that the Council wants to pursue; (3) Educate Falmouth residents and businesses about energy-efficient, waste-reducing, clean energy opportunities and choices; (4) Enhance and promote the town's recycling program; (5) Promote the use of clean, renewable energy sources in Falmouth's public and private facilities through education and outreach; (6) Work with surrounding communities on potential regional energy efficiency and clean energy strategies; (7) Monitor new developments and options in the fields of energy and waste management as technologies evolve and change; educate the public and advise the Council on same; (8) Research and report policies to accomplish the above goals and/or other related goals deemed appropriate by the Town Council.