

## Falmouth Recycling and Energy Advisory Committee (REAC)

“Energy News You Can Use” Volume 2, Issue 12 December 2014 – Falmouth, Maine

- With snow flying a bit earlier than we may have planned for, it's clear that heating season is here! What are your plans to make your home more comfortable and more efficient for this heating season?
- Have you had an energy audit or assessment done through Efficiency Maine or independently? Drop us a line at [reac@falmouthme.org](mailto: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!
- Wondering what's been happening on Route One and the progress made? [Click here](#) for weekly updates!

## The Second Annual 2015 Home Energy Fair

Mark your calendars for the Second Annual 2015 Home Energy Savings Fair! We have changed location to the LEED certified Elementary School and will be having tours of the facility. Did you know that the building's heat and hot water demands come primarily from a wood boiler? How about that they collect rain water to flush their toilets? Make sure to get a tour and learn more!

This year we plan on having more energy vendors to provide plentiful information to help you tackle your home energy projects and get you on your way to reducing your heating costs and impact on the environment. Want to know more about solar power, or maybe natural gas? We'll have experts to answer any and all of your questions at the Home Energy Fair on **Saturday, January 24<sup>th</sup>**.

*Times and more information to come soon.*

## Single-Use Plastic Bag Update

At the November elections, members of REAC, along with students from the Environmental Action Club High School student group polled residents with a simple questionnaire inquiring about whether they use reusable shopping bags, what potential regulation they would favor, and if they were willing to commit to using reusable shopping bags while shopping in Falmouth.



Of the 254 responses, 57% use plastic bags, 10% do not, and 33% sometimes do. Of the 282 responses, 37% support a ban on plastic bags, 30% support a 5 cent fee, 13% support a 25 cent fee, and 20% do not support regulating the use of plastic shopping bags. Of the 263 responses, 80% would commit to using reusable bags, 6% would not, and 14% responded with “maybe”.

We have also created an online survey, which you can complete by [following this link](#). We anticipate on analyzing the online results within the next month.

We also held an informational business meeting on November 11<sup>th</sup> at the Falmouth Memorial Library. Although the attendance was low, we were able to hear input from small business, large business, and interested residents. Jim Wellehan, owner of Lamey Wellehan Shoes, provided his thoughts on not providing a bag to his customers, a decision he made in March. We are in the process of planning our next steps, and will be providing the Council a recommendation by the beginning of the New Year. To share ideas, thoughts or concerns on the issue, please email Kimberly Darling, Energy & Sustainability Coordinator at [kdarling@falmouthme.org](mailto:kdarling@falmouthme.org)

## Calendar of Local Green Events- December 2014

Event	Date/Time/Location	Description
<p>Green Eggs—Advocacy for Climate Change and Green Buildings</p> 	<p>December 3 7:30-9:00am Maine Audubon Society Gisland Farm Education Center 20 Gisland Farm Rd, Falmouth</p>	<p>Green Eggs is the U.S Green Building Council Maine Chapter’s monthly breakfast forum which features a speaker and topic relevant to green buildings. In the third session of their Green Eggs series titled, “Climate Change and the Built Environment,” local advocates will speak on behalf of advocacy opportunities and imperatives for climate change challenges and green building. Email <a href="mailto:programs@maineusgbc.org">programs@maineusgbc.org</a> to reserve your spot!</p>
<p>Maine Local Climate Action Conference</p> 	<p>December 6 65 Campus Rd S Maine Lounge, Moulton Union Building, Brunswick</p>	<p>The Main Local Climate Action Conference will be held in early December at Bowdoin College in Brunswick. Come join fellow Maine climate activists who want to take action to improve their town and build the momentum for state and national action on climate. <a href="#">Follow this link</a> to RSVP.</p>
<p>Training for Climate Change and Adaptation in Conservation</p>	<p>December 8-10 Brunswick Questions on location and time—contact Maria Janowiak at (906)482-6303 x29 or Erika Rowland at (406)640-1204</p>	<p>The Wild Life Conservation Society and the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science are hosting this two day training course for those interested in climate adaptation. This unique opportunity will provide hands-on training to participants in how to consider climate change information and identify adaptation action for conservation planning and activities. For more information and contact information, <a href="#">click here</a>.</p>
<p>Sustainable Wood Pellet Heat for Business—ReVision Energy</p> 	<p>December 10 6:00pm 142 Presumpscot St, Portland</p>	<p>By switching to a Kedel pellet boiler, ReVision Energy is able to reduce their heating costs and CO2 by 90% while supporting the growing wood pellet industry in Maine. Come meet ReVision; learn how they are helping people lead more sustainable lives by installing solar, and how their company uses sustainable wood pellets for office heat. While you’re there, enjoy a cold drink and delicious food from Verbena in South Portland. <a href="#">Follow this link</a> to RSVP, or call ReVision at (207)221-5677.</p>

<p>Energy Efficiency in Your Buildings and in Your Downtowns</p> 	<p>December 10 1:00-4:00pm Curtis Memorial Library 23 Pleasant St, Brunswick</p>	<p>This informational session will be hosted by Efficiency Maine in Brunswick on December 10<sup>th</sup>. Information will be shared and delivered by professionals in energy related fields regarding energy efficiency in historic buildings including: funding opportunities, incentive programs, sustainable building practices, energy efficiency practices and concerns in historic buildings, the importance of the energy audit, and more. This session is offered by the Maine Downtown Center in cooperation with the Grants to Green—Green Champions training. For more information on the Grants to Green Program, <a href="#">click here</a>.</p>
<p>Ocean Acidification Forum and Winter Networking</p> 	<p>December 16 4:30-7:30pm Gulf of Maine Research Institute 350 Commercial St, Portland</p>	<p>Ocean acidification is changing the chemistry of the ocean and is caused primarily by the buildup of carbon dioxide and the reductions in pH and calcium carbonate in its waters. Runoff and river discharges, as well as changes in the climate are contributing to the problem. Come learn how the Gulf of Maine is particularly susceptible to these changes and how shell-producing resources like lobster, clams and mussels are at risk. Speakers include representatives from the Friends of Casco Bay, Gulf of Maine Ocean Institute, and Maine Ocean Acidification Commission. For more information, <a href="#">click here</a>.</p>

## Energy News

**Maine Audubon to Install Solar System at Gilsland Farm Headquarters**—partnering with ReVision Energy, the Maine Audubon Society in Falmouth will be installing the largest array of solar panels installed by a conservation organization in the state. The installation will consist of six solar tracks, totaling 144 panels, and a rooftop array, composed of 24 panels. The system will provide roughly 84% of Gilsland Farm’s electricity. Installation has already started, and is expected to be completed before the end of the year. To read the full article, [follow this link](#).

**Heating Oil Continues its Slide as Worldwide Oil Glut Continues**—in early November, the Governor’s Energy Office conducted its weekly heating price survey and found the current statewide average cash price for No.2 heating oil was \$3.09 per gallon, where a year ago at this time heating oil averaged \$3.52 per gallon. The actions of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) do not plan on cutting production anytime soon, and expects the oil markets would absorb the surplus. The largest OPEC producers are cutting prices, rather than reducing production, in an attempt to compete with ever increasing U.S. oil production. [Read more here](#).

## Green Consumer Tips and How-To's

Now that fall has come and passed rather quickly, here are 15 ways to get your house ready for winter; many of which you can do yourself; most of which will save you money:

- ✓ Tune up your heating system
- ✓ Reverse ceiling fans
- ✓ Prevent ice dams
- ✓ Hit the roof
- ✓ Caulk around windows and doors
- ✓ Divert water away from the foundation
- ✓ Turn of exterior faucets
- ✓ Drain lawn irrigation system
- ✓ Prepare to stow your mower
- ✓ Test your sump pump
- ✓ Call a chimney sweep
- ✓ Mulch leaves when you mow
- ✓ Restock winter essentials
- ✓ Clean the gutters
- ✓ Don't prune trees and shrubs until later in the winter

For more detailed information on items in the list above, [follow this link](#).

Are you climate savvy? Take a quick fun nine-question quiz to determine your climate change personality. Take the EPA's quiz [here](#) to test your knowledge!

### Did you know....?

...that in the average home, 75% of electricity used to power home electronics is consumed while the products are turned off? The average desktop idles at 80 watts, while the average laptop idles at 20 watts.

...that the television sets in the U.S. collectively draw the power equivalent of a Chernobyl-sized nuclear plant when they are turned off? They use this power for their instant-on capacity, so we don't have to wait a minute or two for our screens to warm up.

...that the U.S. houses 5% of the world's population, but uses 23% of the world's energy?

...that every year, more than \$13 billion worth of energy leaks from houses through small holes and cracks? That's more than \$150 per family!

...that across America, home refrigerators use the electricity of 25 large power plants each year?

...that some new refrigerators are so energy-smart that they use less electricity than a light bulb?

**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.