

FRANKLIN REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Executive Director • Linda Dunlavy



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NEWSLETTER



WELCOME to Our "New" FRCOG Newsletter

We are going paperless! Starting with this issue, we will be emailing you our News. Do you like it? Is it easy to read? Please take some time to check it out. We hope you like our newsletter this way, will share it with your Board members, will continue to read all about us, and will learn more from us in the coming months. Feel free to comment, by email to info@frcog.org, or by phone to Executive Administrative Assistant, Leah Gibson at 413-774-3167 ext. 100. If you did not get your own copy of this email, please let us know and we will gladly add your email address to our list. If you know of someone who might be interested in receiving this newsletter or, if you would like a hard copy, please let us know. Thanks.

Farewell Margaret Sullivan; Congratulations Andrea Woods

Margaret Sullivan, Chief Procurement Officer for the FRCOG, has left us after 24 years. She began working as the Assistant Assessor Consultant in 1984 and was appointed to the position of Assessor Consultant when that position became available a few years later. After the Purchasing Laws changed in 1990 – 1991, she was also hired as the Chief Procurement Officer. Slowly the Assessing position faded out of existence and the Purchasing position became full time. Purchasing tasks were completed for the agency, its grants, and the municipalities and non-profits in Franklin County were also provided with cooperative purchasing bids and contracts for numerous different items.

In 1997, the Purchasing Program became a Fee-For-Service Program. It was a new initiative that she was asked to create and manage. It was an attempt to copy what the private sector had been doing for years by requiring that the fees collected for the services provided cover the cost of providing those services. Margaret accepted the task and created what has been a successful program in the FRCOG, remaining strong and viable over the past eleven years. Margaret considers that quite an accomplishment. The FRCOG considers that quite an accomplishment as well. Margaret credits her background of managing a retail business, managing and renting apartments, and the various bookkeeping positions she held over the years for providing her with the necessary skills to make it all work successfully.

Following Margaret's departure, the Fee-For-Service Purchasing Program remains in place and continues to provide cooperative bidding and contracting services for the following items: highway products and services; #2 fuel oil, diesel fuel and gasoline; and dog tags and licenses. Margaret also provided individualized procurement services to many local and regional government and non-profit entities; a service that is still available today.

We wish Margaret well and congratulate Andrea Woods as our new Chief Procurement Officer. Andrea has been with us since October 2007 and was hired as the Chief Procurement Officer as of July 1, 2008. Many thanks to Margaret for providing training and for giving Andrea the benefit of her extensive knowledge of Massachusetts procurement laws and of FRCOG's Purchasing Program. Andrea can be reached at 413-774-3167 ext. 104 or bids@frcog.org.

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Petroleum Brownfields Grant

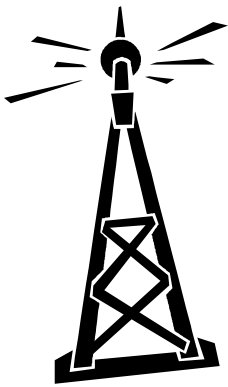
A grant from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) allows the FRCOG to fund environmental site assessments at properties that may be contaminated by gasoline or other petroleum products. Communities in Franklin County are invited to submit sites to be considered for assessment. From the sites submitted, the FRCOG Brownfield Steering Committee will select and prioritize sites for inclusion in the FRCOG Brownfields Program and assessments using these grant funds. For more information contact Director of Planning and Development, Peggy Sloan at 413-774-1194 ext. 105 or psloan@frcog.org.



Economic Target Area Expanded

The FRCOG maintains the Greater Franklin County Economic Target Area (ETA) Program, which allows municipalities and businesses to work collaboratively to participate in select tax incentive programs offered by the State, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The goal of the ETA Program is to promote job creation and retention, attract new business investment, and encourage existing businesses to expand. The FRCOG applied to the State to amend the current ETA Region to include the Towns of Hawley and Warwick, per the request of these municipalities. In June 2008, the State's Economic Assistance Coordinating Council voted to approve this expansion. The Greater Franklin County ETA Region now includes thirty municipalities. Since the Greater Franklin County ETA Program's creation in 1994, sixteen municipalities have participated, with over 90 projects approved. These projects are estimated to have created and retained over 4,800 jobs and leveraged over \$300 million in private investment. For more information please contact Economic Development Planner, Jessica Atwood at 413-774-1194 ext. 101 or jatwood@frcog.org.

Broadband Access Update



Berkshire Connect and the FRCOG-staffed Pioneer Valley Connect (the Connects) are pleased to announce that the state broadband bill establishing and funding the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) was passed by the Massachusetts Legislature and then signed by Governor Patrick on August 4th in Goshen. This legislation designates \$40 million for investment in broadband infrastructure in the Commonwealth to support deployment of affordable and ubiquitous broadband access to unserved citizens. The Connects will continue to advocate for the most rapid and effective deployment of this infrastructure, and look forward to working with the MBI and their partners to achieve broadband access equity in Western Massachusetts. For the latest news and updates from the Connects, go to www.pioneervalleyconnect.org, or contact Economic Development Planner, Jessica Atwood at 413-774-1194 ext. 101 or jatwood@frcog.org.

Chapter 43D: Expedited Permitting Update

The Chapter 43D Program encourages towns to implement an expedited and streamlined local permit process for targeted economic development sites. A town may choose to designate one or more "Priority Development Sites" (PDS), which must meet specific criteria and have property owner approval, and then apply to the state for the formal approval of this designation. Participating towns, that have designated PDS, are eligible to apply for a one-time technical assistance grant of up to \$100,000. This grant can fund the hiring of consultants to develop a site-specific permit application package, as well as site-specific pre-development work. In order to be eligible for the grant the town must accept the provisions of Chapter 43D, which includes a maximum 180 day time frame for making permitting decisions for the PDS.

The FRCOG's role is to help towns explore whether the Chapter 43D Program is suitable for their community, and to help develop the PDS designation and grant application. To date, the towns of Deerfield, Montague, Gill and Orange have all had Priority Development Sites designated and over \$400,000 in total grants have been awarded with technical assistance provided by the FRCOG. The FRCOG is currently working with the towns of Bernardston and Greenfield in developing their individual PDS designation and technical assistance grant applications. If your community would like more information about the Chapter 43D Program or about how to streamline the permitting process in your community, please contact Director of Planning and Development, Peggy Sloan at 413-774-1194 ext. 105 or psloan@frcog.org. Information is also available from the Massachusetts Permit Regulatory Office at www.mass.gov/mpro.



Energy Saving Performance Contracting Update

The project to provide energy saving services to sixteen participating towns and three regional school districts in Franklin County made significant progress this quarter. With the help of our consultant, Beacon Integrated Solutions from Boston, the FRCOG Selection Committee reviewed the applications and interviewed all respondents to the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from Energy Service Companies (ESCOs); Siemens Building Technologies, Trane and Johnson Controls. Siemens Building Technologies was chosen by the Committee.

Another significant development is that the FRCOG was given the legal clearance to allow all Franklin County municipalities and school districts the opportunity to participate in the performance contracting process with Siemens. Letters were sent to each entity explaining the process and next steps.

Each participating entity will be provided generic documents for use in contracting for energy saving improvements to their facilities. Each document will have been reviewed by both a municipal and a school legal counsel.

The development of specific contract documents will then proceed directly between Siemens and each individual participating town and school district. The first step is a free preliminary audit, followed by a more detailed investment grade audit. At this point the individual participating towns and school districts will be able to enter into direct contract negotiations with Siemens for their specific scope-of-work and energy saving guarantee agreements. For more information please contact Director of Regional Services, Bob Dean at 413-774-3167 ext. 112 or bdean@frcog.org.

Planning Department Receives a \$286,000 Targeted Watershed Grant



The Connecticut River is New England's largest river and drains a huge watershed that encompasses 11,260 square miles and 4 states. In Franklin County, the Connecticut River and its watershed lands are integral to our region's sense of place and provide productive farmlands, recreational opportunities, and important wildlife habitat. The Franklin Regional Council of Governments has teamed with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, the Connecticut River Joint Commission, and the Massachusetts Water Watch Partnership to implement a \$1.5 million multi-year project to address water quality problems in the Connecticut River and its watershed, including erosion, sedimentation, agricultural runoff, urban storm water runoff, and threats to municipal water supplies. FRCOG's other project partners include local residents who will be volunteer water quality monitors and FirstLight Power Resources, Inc., the owners and operators of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Facility.

In Franklin County, the project tasks will include: monitoring water quality for recreational use of the river, developing Smart Growth tools for municipal water supply protection, and implementing innovative bioengineering riverbank stabilization techniques. There is also a significant public outreach/education component of the project. A project website will be launched and virtual tours of the watershed that include descriptions of all project-related tasks will be developed.

For more information about this project, please contact Natural Resources Program Manager, Kimberly Noake MacPhee, P.G., at 413-774-1194 ext. 103 or natres@frcog.org.

We Want Your Input Franklin County Bikeway Plan Update

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments is updating the *Franklin County Bikeway Plan (1993)*. The update is intended to expand on the now almost completed 41-mile Franklin County Bikeway network that travels through the towns of Deerfield, Erving, Gill, Greenfield, Leverett, Montague, Northfield, and Sunderland. The off-road and shared roadway facilities that were defined in the 1993 Bikeway Plan are centered along the Connecticut River and provide access to employment, educational, cultural and recreational sites. The update of the Bikeway Plan will explore opportunities to expand this bicycling network and make connections to other areas of Franklin County, the neighboring counties and neighboring states. The update will also explore bicycling for transportation, recreation and energy conservation purposes.

We want your input in developing this updated plan. A Public Meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 3rd at 6:30 p.m. The Meeting will be held in the Conference Room at the Downtown Campus of the Greenfield Community College located at 270 Main Street in Greenfield. We are looking for input and ideas on regional bicycle facility improvements and potential connections to the Franklin County Bikeway.

Please join us at this meeting. For further information please contact Senior Transportation Planner, Elizabeth Giannini at 413-774-1194 ext. 104 or giannini@frcog.org.

New COG Staff

Melissa Adams joined the FRCOG in May as Land Use Program Manager. Melissa has over 10 years of experience in planning and has worked extensively on agricultural and natural resource projects. She will be responsible for conducting land use planning projects for towns in Franklin County specializing in those related to agricultural land preservation, open space and recreation planning, master planning, and scenic byways. Melissa has a Masters Degree in Regional Planning from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst with a concentration in Natural Resource Economics. Melissa can be reached at 413-774-1194 ext. 107 or adams@frcog.org. Welcome, Melissa!

Susan Brown joined us on July 7th as the new Homeland Security Program Manager, overseeing the fiduciary responsibilities for the Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council which serves the 101 municipalities in Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden and Berkshire counties. Susan brings several years of experience in both local and state government and experience with emergency preparedness planning as former vice chair of the Northern Berkshire Regional Emergency Planning Committee. Susan can be reached at 413-774-3167, ext. 117 or sbrown@frcog.org. Welcome, Susan!

The Community Coalition for Teens is pleased to welcome Glenn Johnson as the new Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator. His primary responsibilities will be managing the Tobacco grant from the Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program, which focuses mainly on increasing cessation and decreasing youth social access; and coordinating environmental prevention strategies including alcohol purchase surveys, compliance checks, and collaboration with towns to reduce youth access to alcohol. Glenn joins us after two years at Tapestry Health where he coordinated Service Coordination Collaboratives, networks of People with HIV and service providers, working together to improve HIV/AIDS Services in Western Massachusetts. Prior to working at Tapestry, Glenn worked for six years at the AIDS Project of Southern Vermont where he pioneered the implementation of MPowerment, a science-based HIV Prevention program for men at increased risk. For fun, Glenn enjoys writing, blogging and providing the disinterested perspective on sports to WRSI - The River where he is a regular commentator. To contact Glenn, please call 413-774-1194 ext. 117 or glennj@frcog.org. Welcome, Glenn!

We are pleased to welcome Megan Rhodes as our new Transportation and Land Use Planner in the Planning Department. Megan has recently relocated to the area from Maryland where she completed her master's degree in Community Planning at the University of Maryland, and worked for the Maryland Department of Planning on various land use and transportation projects. Megan can be reached at 413-774-1194 ext. 110 or mrhodes@frcog.org. Welcome, Megan!

We are pleased to announce that Thomas Williams of Greenfield joined the FRCOG in June as the Regional Preparedness Program Manager. Thomas joins us with extensive experience in exercise planning and implementation, fundraising, and working with citizen volunteers in an emergency setting. He is also a Colonel in the Army Reserves. In his new position, Thomas will be responsible for overseeing and coordinating the work of the Regional Emergency Planning Committee, the public health preparedness projects, the MRC and CERT, and other emergency preparedness efforts. Thomas can be reached at 413-774-3167 ext. 118 or twilliams@frcog.org. Welcome, Thomas!

FRCOG Council Representatives for FY 2009

Ashfield	Dave Deherdt	Montague	Patricia Allen
Bernardston	Stanley Garland	New Salem	Jennifer Sandova
Buckland	Stefan Racz	Northfield	Kathleen Wright
Charlemont	Paul Fantucchio	Orange	Rick Kwiatkowski
Colrain	Duane Scranton	Rowe	James Brown
Conway	Tom Spiro	Shelburne	John Payne
Deerfield	John Paciorek	Shutesbury	F. Ellen McKay, Chair
Erving	Thomas Sharp, Vice Chair	Sunderland	Tom Fydenkevez
Gill	Nancy Griswold	Warwick	Frederick Abbott
Greenfield	Christine Forgey	Wendell	Nina Keller
Hawley	Philip Keenan	Whately	Lynn Sibley
Heath	Thomas Lively	FRPB Rep.	Sam Lovejoy, Secretary
Leverett	Gordon Fretwell	Reg. Elected	Ann Banash
Leyden	Michele Giarusso	Reg. Elected	Bill Perlman
Monroe	David Nash		