

FRANKLIN REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Executive Director • Linda Dunlavy



NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2008

Welcome

The FRCOG is pleased to welcome two new employees. Bob Dean joins the FRCOG as the Director of Regional Services. As the Town Administrator of Buckland for nine years, Bob brings a wealth of information and knowledge to the COG. Bob will be working on special projects for the region and towns and helping with organization administration. Cam Weimar is our new Land Use Program Manager in the Planning Department. Cam has a Masters of Urban Design from the University of Michigan and has expertise in energy analysis and land use planning. We look forward to the fresh perspective that he will bring to planning and land use in Franklin County.

FY 2009 Regional Services Assessment Level-Funded

For the second year in a row, we are able to bring a 2009 budget to towns with a level-funded Regional Services Assessment. In fact, the increase to the

Regional Services Assessment has increased only 0.7% since 2001. The Regional Services Assessment is the voluntary, membership fee towns pay. It is used to fund special projects for the region, for overall administration of the agency, and for agency-wide costs such as insurance. We have worked hard to keep this assessment as low as possible because we know how tight municipal budgets are.

While the total assessment is level-funded, towns may see increases or decreases to the assessment when they receive their Budget Advisory Notices. This is because the formula used to assess member town is based, in part, on Equalized Value. Equalized Value is an appraisal of the total property value in a community as determined by the

Department of Revenue. The DOR recalculates municipal EQVs every three years. Thus, when EQVs change, the percentage that a community pays for FRCOG membership also changes. Questions about the formula or the budget? Contact Executive Director, Linda Dunlavy at 413-774-3167 ext. 103 or lindad@frcog.org.

Regional IT Consultant Now Available!

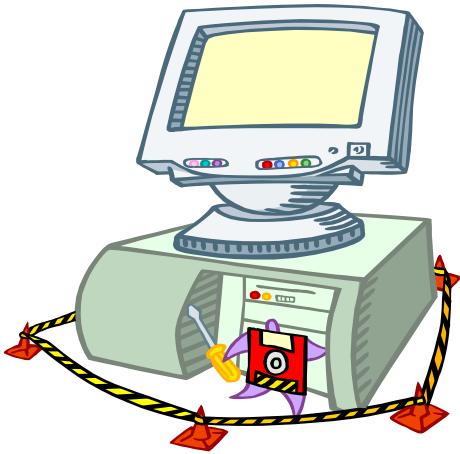
Over the past year the Regional Issues Committee of the FRCOG has been investigating new ways to save towns money. The Committee met with Select Board members, Town Administrators, and other local officials to conduct research on good ideas. One of the early suggestions was to go out to bid for technical assistance to Towns in Franklin County for computers and networks. We are pleased to announce that we have awarded the contract for Town IT Consultant to Paul Swem of JPS Computing. The Consultant will perform work on an independent basis – and is not an employee of the FRCOG. He will bill towns directly on an individual basis.

Paul Swem has 25+ years of experience with all phases of technology, from hardware to software, and from independent stand-alone pc's to local area networks and the internet. He has served as a teacher, school administrator, school technology coordinator, and independent IT Consultant for a number of towns. He holds A+ Certification, has excellent interpersonal skills, and is able to respond quickly to emergencies. Paul can provide assistance with the following software applications: Microsoft Windows (98 through XPPro; Some Vista), Server 2003, Some SQL support, all Microsoft Office Applications, POINT Software, Patriot Properties, Kintera FundWare (Municipal Accounting FundWare), and Police Department

Application Databases.

The Regional IT Consultant is available to towns that participated in the RFP as of January 4. The 14 participating towns are: Buckland, Conway, Deerfield, Erving, Hawley, Heath, Leverett, Leyden, New Salem, Northfield, Shelburne, Shutesbury, Wendell, and Whately.

Paul Swem can be reached at 413-625-2259, cell 413-522-4152 or paul@swem.org.



Homeland Security Council Files Plans for Next Funding Period

The Western Region Homeland Security Council has received notification of funding for the FFY 2007 Homeland Security Grant Program. Funding in the amount of \$3,876,068 was awarded to the Western Region which encompasses Franklin, Berkshire, Hampden, and Hampshire Counties. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has selected the following priority investment areas to be addressed with this funding: 1) Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive (CBRNE) Preparedness; 2) Private Sector and Community Participation; 3) Mass Care and Evacuation; 4) Communications Interoperability; 5) Enhancement of Preparedness and Response to Pandemic Influenza, 6) Information Collection and Sharing,

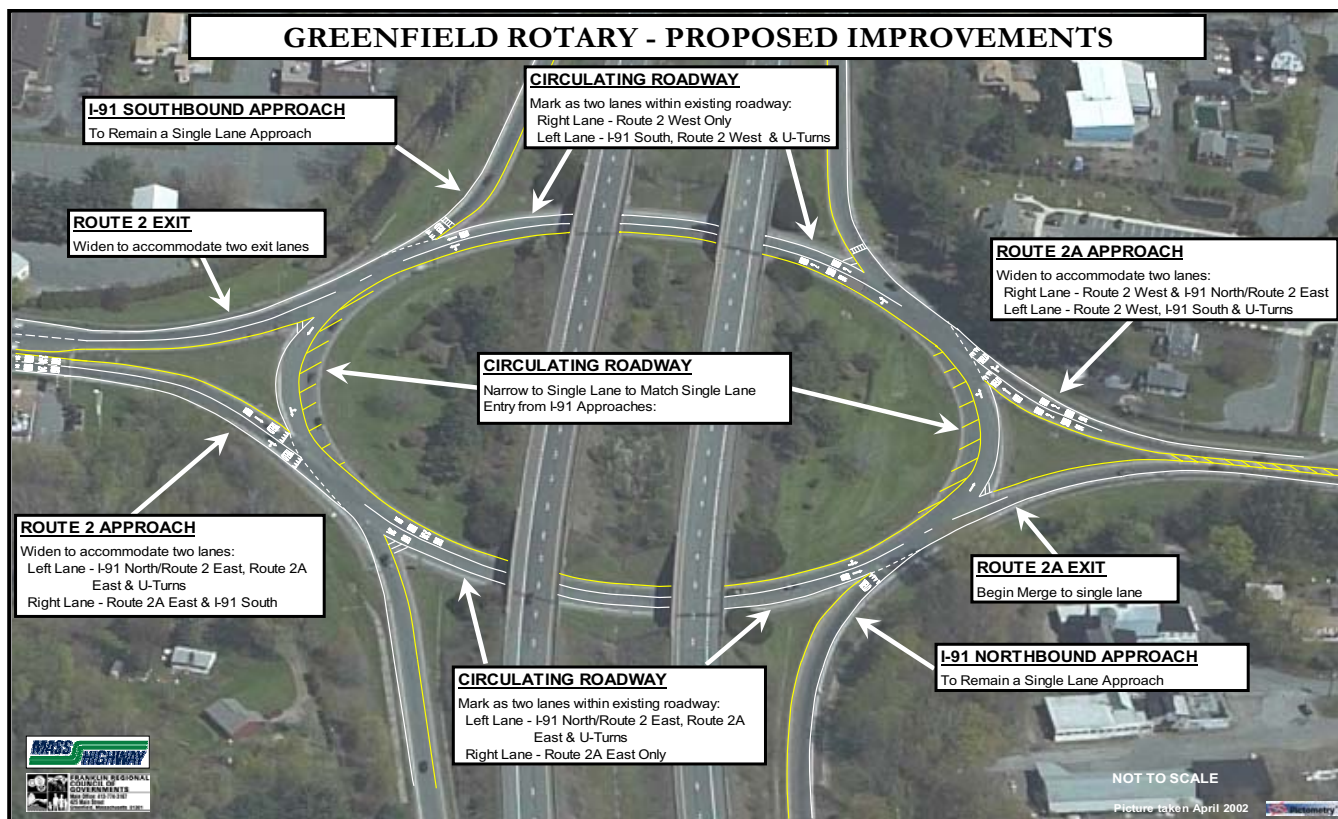
and 7) Capabilities Assessment, Evaluation, and Compliance.

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments, as fiduciary for the Western Region Homeland Security Council, has submitted the Councils' plan to the Commonwealth for meeting these investment objectives. The project period for these funds runs 24 months, or until 12/31/2009. Information about the Western Region's activities and programs can be found at www.wrhsac.org or by contacting Homeland Security Grants Coordinator, Andrea Woods at 413-774-3167 ext. 117 or awoods@frcog.org.

Greenfield Rotary Improvements Update

In October 2007 a contract was awarded to C&A Construction Company of Ludlow to undertake the construction of the much anticipated safety improvements to the Greenfield Rotary. At the Pre-construction Meeting C&A Construction indicated they planned to start work as soon as the weather allowed in the Spring, most likely March. Prior to the start of work electronic signage will be installed to inform motorists of the impending work. The bulk of the improvements involve adding pavement markings and directional signage, but some minor widening is required to accommodate an additional lane on the Route 2 and Route 2A approaches. Additionally, as part of the project the top layer of pavement is to be removed and relaid. This work is to be done during the night time hours to limit the impact on traffic. Other improvements including minor widening, new sidewalks, signage installation and traffic signal upgrades will likely be completed during the day time.

Once a more definitive timeline has been established the FRCOG plans on conducting some educational outreach to inform drivers of the impending improvements. For more information on this project contact Transportation Planning Engineer, Keith Wilson, at 413-774-1194 ext. 109 or kwilson@frcog.org.



Annual Inspection Requirement for Large Hot Water Boilers

Who is responsible for inspecting large oil or gas-fired boilers that are used to heat commercial buildings and apartment units? The Building Inspector? The Plumbing Inspector? The Fire Department? This question arose in early January, after a furnace malfunctioned at a local apartment complex for the second time in less than a month, resulting in measurable Carbon Monoxide levels in several apartments. Steam or hot water boilers do get inspected by the Fire Department when they are first installed. New boilers also require an initial permit from the Building Inspector, and the Plumbing Inspector makes sure that the water supply connection is plumbed correctly with a backflow prevention device, but once the furnaces are installed according to code is anyone responsible for checking to make sure they are maintained and serviced routinely?

Nobody seemed to know who was responsible, but a section in the State Sanitary Code -Minimum Standards of Fitness for Human Habitation (105

(http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/regs/105c_mr410.pdf), which is enforced by the Local Board of Health, requires that heating facilities must be maintained in a safe operating condition. This general direction led to a Google search that uncovered a State-mandated inspection process for oil and gas-fired boilers that are rated at 200,000 BTUs or above. The requirements are codified in MGL Chapter 146, INSPECTION OF BOILERS (<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/gl-146-toc.htm>), and are under the jurisdiction of the MA Department of Public Safety (DPS).

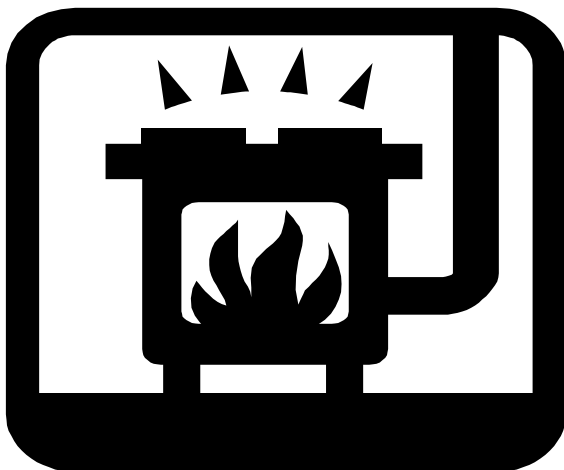
MGL Chapter 146 requires that all boilers above the 200,000 BTU output level must be inspected annually by a state-licensed Boiler Inspector. Boilers located in Private Residences, those being used exclusively for Agricultural purposes, and ones owned by the Federal Government are excluded from Chapter 146. The annual inspections must

either be done by a licensed inspector working for an insurance company, if the boiler owner has “boiler insurance” or if not insured then the

inspection is done by the Boiler Inspector from the DPS. Inspected boilers are issued an annual Certificate of Inspection to show they are in compliance with Chapter 146.

It turned out that the oil-fired boilers at the local apartment complex where the furnace malfunctions occurred had never been inspected under Chapter 146, even though they were insured and had been installed 25 years ago. This discrepancy was rapidly addressed and these units were inspected by both the insurance company and the DPS inspector, with a total of 20 violations found in the 8 boilers at this complex. As a result of the inspection process, the controls and safety devices on these boilers were quickly repaired or upgraded and because of the advanced age of the furnaces, they will all be replaced with modern, more efficient units.

The bottom line is that the local Board of Health should be checking for the annual Certificates of Inspection for all gas and oil-fired non-residential boilers that are rated at or above 200,000 BTUs. Maintenance records for smaller heating units should also be checked to make sure they are being correctly maintained and are receiving an annual service and cleaning by a qualified, certified technician. This is one way that the State Sanitary Code, 105 CMR 410, can be used to ensure that public health and community safety is protected. Additional information is available by contacting FRCOG Regional Health Agent, Glen Ayers, at 413-774-3167 ext. 108 or glenayers@frcog.org. District Engineering Inspector for the DPS, Henry Geryk, is located in Springfield and can be contacted at 413-736-3628 ext. 105.



Drilling to save lives

The 1918 influenza pandemic killed millions of people worldwide. Dr. Alfred DeMaria, Director of the Massachusetts Bureau of Communicable Disease Control, in a January 2008 conference at Amherst College said that it is not a question of “if” another flu epidemic will hit this country but “when”.

What can residents of Franklin County do, if anything, to minimize or prevent illness and death when the next pandemic hits? The answer is quite a bit and the good news is that much of this preparation is going on in your communities. Pandemic flu is a very virulent form of the common flu that occurs through the intermingling and mutation of genetic material within the flu virus. Should pandemic flu or other health crisis hit our communities we may need to rapidly deliver medicines and vaccines to area residents in a short amount of time. Our communities are practicing how to accomplish this by running a variety of clinic drills throughout the area.

11 of the 26 towns served by the FRCOG through the Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition conducted free influenza mass vaccination clinics during the past few months. These clinics, as mentioned above, doubled as an opportunity for towns to test their ability to treat/vaccinate a surge of residents during a large-scale health crisis. The Frontier Region (Conway, Deerfield, Sunderland, and Whately) distributed 490 vaccine doses at their clinic drill. This is the second year they have drilled their plan. Shutesbury (about 100 vaccinated) and

Ashfield (231 vaccinated) also drilled their plan for the second time at the end of 2007. The Pioneer Region (Bernardston, Leyden, NMH School, Northfield, and Warwick) used a health fair to drill their planning.

Sunderland vaccinated 215 residents at their Elementary School. Most of the remaining 15 towns are deep in the planning process for mass clinics in 2008.

These drills enable towns to practice what it would be like to set up a clinic to protect their residents against flu, other disease pandemics, or a bioterrorism attack like the anthrax events of 2001. Towns utilize their own volunteers in combination with members of the Franklin County Community Emergency Response Team and Franklin Medical Reserve Corps to run these clinic drills. By conducting these clinics, our community volunteers learn more efficient ways to hourly move hundreds of residents through a clinic site and ultimately protect them against serious diseases. It also allows them to connect with agencies such as the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, as well as other local fire, police, and municipal departments that would assist in a large scale health crisis.

If you have questions or would like more information about pandemic planning please call Regional Preparedness Program Manager, Teri Koopman, at 413-774-3167 ext.118, or teri@frcog.org; Public Health Emergency Planner, John Peterson, at 413-774-3167 ext. 114 or jpeterson@frcog.org; or Public Health Emergency Planner, Nina Martin-Anzuoni, at 413-774-3167 ext. 105 or nina@frcog.org.



Energy Saving Performance Contracting Update

We are pleased to announce that sixteen Franklin County municipalities and two regional school districts are participating in the FRCOG's Energy Saving Performance Contracting effort to help

facilitate energy saving improvements to municipal and school facilities.

In 2007, the participating municipalities and regional school districts reported total energy costs of \$1,874,624. A hypothetical assumption of a 25% reduction in these energy costs over a twenty-year period could finance over \$9 million in energy saving improvements. Whatever the final amount of energy saving improvements, it is clear that this is a great opportunity to improve the energy efficiency of our region's municipal and school facilities, save money, and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The FRCOG advertised a Request for Qualifications in the Central Register on December 19, 2007 for certified Energy Service Companies (ESCOs) to submit responses by February 8, 2008. For more information, please contact Special Projects Coordinator, Bill Gran at 413-774-3167 ext. 107 or wgran@frcog.org

An Invitation To All Franklin County Towns To Join The Employers Association Of The Northeast (EANE)

The Employers Association of the NorthEast (EANE) is very pleased to continue to extend adjunct membership benefits to the FRCOG member communities. EANE's goal is to assist its 800+ member organizations to promote and practice sound employee/employer relations and remain informed and compliant with state and federal employment regulations. Many towns already participate but others are welcome to join. Information has been forwarded to all Town Administrators. If anyone is interested in joining please contact your Town Administrator or Executive Administrative Assistant, Leah Gibson at 413-774-3167 ext. 100 or info@frcog.org.