The CRCOG Annual Meeting was held June 18 in Manchester. Chair David Kilbon (left in photo) acted as master of ceremonies. He spoke on the theme of greater connections in the region and cited the recent regional Geographic Information System (GIS) and online cooperative purchasing system as examples of recent progress.

Keynote speaker Robert Yaro, President of the Regional Plan Association of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut (at left) spoke on the national work “America 2050” on “mega-regions” and how connecting to mega-regions such as New York City can benefit relatively nearby regions such as North Central Connecticut.

Regional awards were presented to the towns of East Granby, Granby and Hartland for a joint agreement with Cox Cable Company to allow for live broadcasts for local community access programs. The towns of Bloomfield, Windsor, South Windsor, East Windsor and Manchester formed a Metro Traffic Unit to increase vehicle safety in all towns. The towns of Wethersfield, Rocky Hill and Newington participated in a joint youth leadership initiative. (Wethersfield Town Manager Bonnie Therrien receives the award from CRCOG Community Development Director Mary Ellen Kowalewski).
CRCOG Helps CT Transit Clear the Air!

CRCOG, responding to a recommendation from its Environmental Justice Advisory Board, successfully submitted an application for CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program) funds to retrofit CT Transit buses with diesel particulate filters. Retrofitting the fleet of buses will significantly reduce diesel exhaust emissions and decrease the adverse impact on Hartford’s residential neighborhoods by reducing the particulate emissions from buses. (In photo Steve Warren of CT Transit shows effectiveness of new filters). A contract was awarded on April 26th to purchase 145 diesel particulate filters to be installed on CT Transit buses in Hartford and Stamford. The 145 filters cost about $1.3 million. The vendor made a site visit on May 16th to measure the buses for the filters, which will be custom made for each bus model. About thirty filters will be installed each quarter over the next 24 months. This summer and fall the CT Transit Hartford division will take delivery and put into service 65 new buses already equipped with active diesel particulate filters.

Farm Friendly Zoning Report Available Now

“Regulating the Farm: Improving Agriculture’s Viability in the Capitol Region” is now available on CRCOG’s website. This report summarizes the process and results of our Department of Agriculture grant project to develop model farm-friendly zoning regulations. Dozens of farmers and planners from 11 towns worked with CRCOG during the past year to produce the model regulations. A lack of consistency in regulations across towns emerged as a major concern to farm businesses through a series of meetings and interviews. Therefore, the recommendations include broad concepts and frameworks that, if adopted by towns, would create a more consistent regulatory environment for farm business owners, many of whom work land in multiple communities. The recommendations address definitions of agriculture and farming, farm stands, on-site processing and sales, signs, and alternative uses of farms. The recommended language can be incorporated into regulations as written, or adapted to local needs, through changes to specific details such as frontage requirements, building sizes and setbacks. CRCOG staff will work with planning & zoning commissions to implement the recommendations. For further information, contact Rebecca Augur at raugur@crcog.org or 522-2217 ext. 29.

First Bids on New CRPC e-Procurement System Goes Smoothly

The Capitol Region Purchasing Council is pleased to announce that its first two bids for the 2007-2008 “bid season” have been successfully facilitated by the new CRPC e-Procurement system provided by RFP Depot. Not only were towns pleasantly surprised at how easy it was to enter their quantities for bids online, CRPC staff were thrilled with the efficiency of the system. Significantly less time was spent reviewing bids and only a small fraction of time was spent preparing bid tabulations for posting on the CRCOG website. Vendors also communicated to CRPC that their initial apprehension of the system quickly dissipated as they logged in and were directed by friendly RFP Depot staff on how to respond to the bids online. All of our vendors from past bids participated in the online bids and we even had a few new vendors!
The next bids to be facilitated by the system will be in late July (Anti-freeze and Snowplow Blades). If you have not yet set up your town’s username and password for this system, please do so now! You, too, will be pleasantly surprised by how easy it is to use!

You also have the option of using RFP Depot for your town’s bids. Orientation sessions for using RFP Depot for your own bids (under CRCOG’s contract) will be held Wednesday, June 27, 2007 at 10am and 2pm. If you cannot attend one of these online orientations and are interested in learning more about how to use the system for your own bids, please contact Jennifer March-Wackers, CRPC Program Coordinator at jwackers@crcog.org or 522-2217 ext. 39.

**Webinars offered on Reverse 911 System**

CRCOG sponsored three webinars during June on the Reverse 911 system. Reverse 911 is an emergency notification system that uses database and GIS technologies to deliver outbound announcements.

The system is designed for use during public safety incidents, such as mobilization of emergency responders, natural disaster evacuations, missing person alerts, hazardous materials evacuations, and notification of terrorism or biological threats. It is being implemented in the region and funded through CRCOG’s Homeland Security initiative. Rick Tardif, Town of Farmington’s Public Safety Communications Supervisor, is managing the project.

**Behind the Scenes of Israel’s Counter-Terrorism Operations**

Bill Austin, Chairperson of the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee (CREPC) and West Hartford Fire Chief, recently spend twelve days in Israel studying the homeland security and defensive measures used by Israel to counteract the terrorist threat. Picture to the left shows Chief Austin in front of the Israeli terrorist barrier in Jerusalem. He gave a presentation of his trip, “Behind the Scenes Tour of Israel’s Counter-Terrorism and Security Operations,” at the June CREPC meeting.

Chief Austin and 29 other professionals from around the world got an inside look at the security operations of some of Israel's most sensitive sites and protected environments. During the February trip, briefings and site visitations were conducted in highly classified locations including the Gaza Strip, Lebanon border, Golan Heights, West Bank, and Jerusalem. Some of the facilities included airports, seaports, border crossings, mass-transit hubs, and critical infrastructures. The trip was designed to show what Israel could teach the United States about homeland security. Chief Austin commended the resolve and stamina of the Israeli population. He found the trip to be educational and highly beneficial in illustrating the preparation necessary. Bill Austin attended the tour in his role of CREPC Chairman as well as a member of the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) Coordinating Council.
Upcoming CRCOG Meetings

Jobs Access, Thursday, July 19, 9:30 a.m., Greater Hartford Transit District
CREPC, Thursday, July 19, 9:30 a.m. South Church
Transportation Committee, Monday, July 23, Noon, CRRA
Executive Committee, Wednesday, August 6, Noon, CRCOG Board Room
Public Safety Council, Thursday, September 13, Noon, South Church
Transportation Committee, Tuesday, September 18, Noon, CRRA
Community Development Committee, Thursday, September 20, Noon, South Church
Regional Planning Commission, September 20, 7:00 p.m., West Hartford Town Hall
CRCOG Policy Board, Wednesday, September 26, Noon, CRRA

Capitol Region Update is published ten times per year by of the Capitol Region Council of Governments (www.crcog.org). This issue is Volume 39 Number 6. CRCOG was formed January 28, 1968 and organized under the laws of the State of Connecticut. Member municipalities of CRCOG are: Andover, Avon, Bloomfield, Bolton, Canton, East Granby, East Hartford, East Windsor, Ellington, Enfield, Farmington, Glastonbury, Granby, Hartford, Hebron, Manchester, Marlborough, Newington, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, Somers, South Windsor, Suffield, Tolland, Vernon, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor, and Windsor Locks. The current Officers of the CRCOG Policy Board are: David K. Kilbon, Chair, First Selectman of East Granby, Eddie Perez, Vice Chair, Mayor of Hartford, Vice Chair John Adams, First Selectman of Granby, Mary Tomolonius, Treasurer, First Selectman of Canton, Susan Karp, Secretary, Chair Glastonbury Town Council. Lyle D. Wray, PhD, Executive Director.

Capitol Region Council of Governments
241 Main Street 4th Floor
Hartford, CT 06106
860-522-2217
www.crcog.org