



# Capitol Region Update

**Capitol Region Council of Governments  
Connecticut (May 2006)**

[www.crcog.org](http://www.crcog.org)

## **CRCOG Wins Food Security Award**



The City of Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy and Hartford Hospital presented a 2006 Community Food Security Award to CRCOG on May 4<sup>th</sup>. Community food security has been defined as strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times. CRCOG Community Development staff worked with Hartford's Advisory Commission on Food Policy to identify food resources in Hartford and map these resources for use by residents. The importance of food system issues is addressed in CRCOG's Regional Plan of Conservation and Development. As shown in the photo, the winners of the 2006 Community Food Security Awards and citations from the left are: Jiff Martin of the American Farmland Trust, Maria Serrano of the Hispanic Health Council, Jim Wehr of the Phoenix Companies, Mayor Eddie Perez who presented the awards, Rebecca Augur of CRCOG, Bill Weaver and colleague of Save-A-Lot Supermarket, and Rita Ortiz and Roxanna Hernandez of Leadership Greater Hartford.

## **Natural Gas Program To Save Towns \$1.2 Million**



The CRCOG/Purchasing Council Natural Gas Program recently locked in a very competitive price for all 36 towns participating in the program: \$1.441 per ccf. If usage in FY 2006-2007 is the same as last year, this translates into a 12% savings totaling over \$1.2 million for the 29 participants in the regional pool.

The volatile oil and gas market has proved a challenge to this group. However, the Procurement Committee of the natural gas program developed a successful strategy to attain the lowest possible prices for member municipalities. Towns and cities will be saving 20 cents per ccf over last year's price, proving once again there are significant savings to be found in collective bidding! If you would like to join the next phase of the Natural Gas Program in July 2007, email Jennifer March-Wackers, Municipal Services Coordinator at [jwackers@crcog.org](mailto:jwackers@crcog.org).

### ***CRCOG Welcomes New Staff Person***



On May 8<sup>th</sup>, Jennifer March-Wackers joined the CRCOG staff as the new Municipal Services Coordinator. Jen replaces Hedy Ayers, who will continue to serve CRCOG on a part-time basis as Special Projects Manager.

Jen holds a B.A. in Political Science from Mount Union College in Ohio, and a M.A. in Public Policy from Hartford's Trinity College. She comes to CRCOG with over six years experience with public policy advocacy and communications at the state, federal, and international levels in Connecticut and Washington, D.C. Jen looks forward to serving member

municipalities through the varied initiatives of the Municipal Services Committee and Regional Purchasing Council.

### ***Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel Information Session***



An information session on Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel (ULSD) was held on Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup> for towns participating in the Capitol Region Purchasing Council (CRPC). Fifteen towns attended the session to learn about the implementation schedule for this EPA mandated product and how it will affect supply and pricing. Tracy Babbidge from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and several vendors from CRPC's fuel oil bid were present for the hour-long session.

Those attending learned that ULSD regulations will be fully implemented as of October 15, 2006 with distributors and retailers mandated by the EPA to provide 80% ULSD to the market. This is a precursor to ULSD being the only diesel product available by 2010. Those present also learned that ULSD is backwards compatible, meaning minimal difficulty for municipal users to adapt to the new product. Other concerns addressed were storage, lubricity, and blending of ULSD. Information has been distributed to municipalities for submitting their requirements for the 2006-2007 fuel oil bid, which will go into effect on July 1, 2006.

## **HOMEConnecticut Begins Affordability Campaign**



Declaring that “a critical problem now threatens the future of Connecticut,” Connecticut State University chancellor emeritus and former OPM Secretary William Cibes on May 24<sup>th</sup> announced the kickoff of HOMEConnecticut, a statewide campaign that will seek to bring the skyrocketing cost of housing back within reach of all state residents. “Our economy, our families and our quality of life are all threatened by the lack of rentals, starter homes and other housing opportunities for our children, our young professionals, our working families, and our aging

population,” Cibes said. As evidence, Cibes cited research released by HOMEConnecticut that indicates families earning the median income in 157 of Connecticut’s 169 municipalities cannot qualify for a mortgage to buy the median sales price home in that town. The rising unaffordability of housing has resulted from a 63.6% increase in state housing costs between 2000 and 2005, which has outstripped the corresponding wage increase (18.5%) by 3½ times. Cibes expressed concern that businesses will not come or stay in Connecticut, and we will fail in our effort to create jobs, if we don’t have housing that workers can afford.

Over the coming months, HOMEConnecticut will engage municipal officials and private citizens in a dialogue about issues affecting housing affordability and ways to address this problem. In the fall of 2006, the campaign plans to offer its research and a set of policy alternatives to state and municipal policymakers, including the governor and General Assembly, for action in next year’s legislative session. The CRCOG Policy Board will be briefed on the campaign at its June meeting.

Cibes will serve as chairman of the campaign, which is guided by a 42-member steering committee of bankers, business executives, economists, educators, planners, housing experts and other specialists from all regions of the state. The Capitol Region is represented on the steering committee by several individuals, including Steve Cassano, former CRCOG Chairman, Mary Ellen Kowalewski, CRCOG Director of Community Development, Mark Pellegrini, President of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association and Manchester Director of Planning and Economic Development, Al Ilg, former Windsor Town Manager, and Ivan Pour, Director of the Glastonbury Housing Authority.

## **Upcoming CROG Meetings**

Community Development Committee, Thursday, June 8, 12 noon

Public Safety Council, Thursday, June 8, 12 noon

Regional Planning Commission, June 15, 7:00 p.m., West Hartford Town Hall

Municipal Services Committee, Tuesday, June 20, 12 noon

CREPC, Thursday, June 22, 9:30 a.m.

Transportation Committee, Monday, June 26, 12 noon

CROG Policy Board, Wednesday, June 28, 12 noon

**CROG Annual Meeting, Thursday evening, June 29, Manchester Country Club**

Executive Committee, Wednesday, August 9, 12 noon



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