

The Civic Engagement Times

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2008

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A Message from the Governor

The global economic downturn has hit home in Massachusetts. Earlier this month, I announced more than \$1 billion in spending cuts, cost controls, and other budget solutions to fill a budget gap. You can get more information by visiting www.mass.gov and clicking Governor's Fiscal Action Plan.

I have not taken these decisions lightly. I know that behind every cut is a family, a worker, an important service or a worthy idea. Throughout this process I have attempted to balance our fiscal realities with the very real human impact behind each decision. As much as possible, we have tried to preserve funding and assistance for the people who lean on their government more in times like these.

No one knows how long this will last or just where the future will take us. However, come what may we will confront that future together, as a strong statewide community. Now is the time for us to lean on one another and see our common stake in each other's well being. If you are fortunate enough to have resources, energy, or time to spare, please do what you can to help as well. Check in with a neighbor who you think might be struggling, learn about energy and cost savings measures for your home and pass the information along to friends. Learn more about how you can help by visiting www.mass.gov and clicking "Want to Help" My confidence in the future of the Commonwealth and her people is unshaken and unshakable. I intend to stick with you, and I ask you to stick with each other. Together, we will get through today's challenges to a brighter tomorrow.



HAPPENINGS IN WESTERN MA

Governor Patrick makes stops in W. MA towns 98 times since taking office.

Nov. 7, 2008— In response to Governor Patrick's call for greater engagement between **UMass Amherst** and the **City of Springfield**, a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed to formalize a commitment to increase education and economic development.

Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development launches **Building a Better Workforce— City of Springfield Workforce Development Plan** Focusing on High Growth Sectors, Adult Literacy, Youth Education

Governor Patrick, **Liberty Mutual** and local officials bring a new office and the commitment of 300 jobs to the City of Springfield.

Governor Swears in Statewide Youth Council

On September 12, 2008, Governor Deval Patrick swore in the inaugural members of the Governor's Statewide Youth Council.

As part of the Governor's commitment to engaging all residents of the Commonwealth in their communities and their government, this Council encourages community participation and problem solving through leadership and planning.

For more information please visit:
www.mass.gov/governor/youthcouncil

Comments from the Council:

"I can bring a lot to the table... There's a lot of issues in Western MA I want to change," Christopher Alvarez, 17, of Springfield.
Springfield Republican, Sept. 14, 2008

"I want to see more involvement of youth... And really, I'm just honored to be able to represent my small town," Valerie DiCristoforo, 15, of Monson.
Boston Globe, Sept. 12, 2008



A Call from the Corner Office

In times of economic uncertainty, service matters even more, not less. As we approach the holiday season, it is important to remember our shared responsibility in our shared prosperity.

So far this year over 4,000 Executive Branch state employees have volunteered over 17,000 hours of their time to communities where they live and work.

And on September 25, 2008 over 60 state employees from twelve agencies and executive offices across state government joined together to participate in the United Way's Community Care Day.

Alice Sweeney from the Department of Workforce Development said "...I have always

been proud that I have made my career in public service and the SERV shift was a great reminder of why I still remain in the business."

Executive Branch state employees can participate in the State Employees Responding as Volunteers (SERV) program and volunteer up to 8 work hours per month at an approved organization.

(Please visit www.mass.gov/serv for program details and a list of approved organizations in your community.)

The Connect and Serve portal on www.mass.gov also connects individuals with volunteer opportunities within their communities. Now is the perfect time to consider volunteering at a food pantry, shelter, hospital,

or school. You could mentor a student, transcribe books into Braille, provide elder services or consider making a donation to a food or clothing drive.

(For organizations in **your** community that need **your** help, please visit

www.mass.gov/connectandserve.)

"We have to transform our commonwealth. We have to do that and can only do that one person at a time. We must encourage and foster active citizenship neighborhood by neighborhood and stand up as a community to say that we will not allow anyone to become trapped in a life without hope or a future." Gov. Patrick 7.11.07

GOVERNOR'S CALL TO ACTION

Service Matters

Did you know:

- In 2007 **1.4 million people** in MA volunteered more than **160 million hours**
- The estimated economic contribution of which was **\$3.1 billion** last year alone

What will your contribution be?

Visit Connect and Serve to find volunteer opportunities in your community



www.mass.gov/connectandserve

Are you a State Employee?

So far this year more than 4,000 employees have volunteered more than 17,000 hours in 2008



Visit www.mass.gov/serv for approved organizations

Engaged Governance

At the core of Governor Patrick's Administration is a message of engaged governance and a call to all residents of Massachusetts to have a stake in our Commonwealth, in our communities and in each other.

For many that call has been to serve the Administration and the Commonwealth on one of the more than 750 boards and commissions across Massachusetts.

We are fortunate that so many of Massachusetts' most distinguished and engaged minds have already answered the Governor's call. To date, Governor Patrick has appointed over 930 individuals from 222 cities and towns across the Commonwealth. Earlier this year

the Governor appointed the Hyams Foundation's **Angela Brown-Jones** to the Massachusetts Asset Development Commission (MADC); which focuses on asset development strategies for low-income and low-asset individuals and families. Established in 2006, MADDC strives to ensure that all residents of the Commonwealth, especially those who are low and moderate income, have the opportunity to experience financial stability, achieve financial independence, and contribute to civic participation and the economy.

In August, Governor Patrick appointed **Mark Bilotta** of the Colleges of Worcester Consortium, Inc. to the Board of the Massachusetts Health

and Education Facilities Authority. The mission of HEFA is to help nonprofit organizations like hospitals, colleges and universities, cultural and research institutions, and human service providers to thrive by securing low-cost, tax-exempt financing for important capital projects.

These appointments and hundreds of others reflect Governor Patrick's commitment to engaged governing. For more information about housing, economic and community development, please visit www.mass.gov/hed.

Winter Heating Assistance

On September 29th, a push by Governor Patrick and the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation for significant new investments in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) paid off when the President signed the 2008 Continuing Resolution into law. LIHEAP is a federal program that makes home heating more affordable, targeting assistance to families living at or below 200% of the federal poverty level or up 60% of median state income depending on yearly funding. The program is especially crucial in Massachusetts, where harsh winters and rising oil and natural gas prices often force families to make a terrible choice between heating their homes, making mortgage/rental payments or seeking appropriate medical care. 40% of Massachusetts households rely on oil to heat their

homes, and with high fuel oil prices, families are looking at paying close to \$1,000 more to heat their homes than they did last winter.

Last winter, LIHEAP helped nearly 144,000 households in Massachusetts meet their energy needs. This winter, Massachusetts hopes to assist a greater number with increased federal funding. With additional federal LIHEAP and emergency assistance funding, and a contribution by the Commonwealth, Massachusetts will have approximately \$55 million more in funding to assist low income families this year.

LIHEAP is administered locally, call the Mass Heat Line toll-free at 1-800-632-8175 to find a program near you and to learn more. There has also been important progress in health care funding. Last month, Governor Patrick reached a

\$21.2 billion Medicaid waiver agreement with the Bush Administration. The agreement will allow Massachusetts to continue to expand its universal health care reform program. It provides a \$4.3 billion increase in Medicaid funding from last year, and ensures that existing eligibility and benefit levels for Medicaid will be protected. Since the launch of Massachusetts' health care reform program two years ago, nearly 440,000 residents who were previously uninsured have bought affordable health care plans. **For more information on health care options for you and your family and to learn more about health care reform in Massachusetts by calling 1-877-MA-ENROLL or visiting the Massachusetts Connector website at www.mahealthconnector.org.**

Sitting Down with Non-Profits

Governor Patrick meets with the Health and Human Service Providers

In preparation of his Fiscal Action Plan announcement on October 15, 2008, Governor Patrick and Lt. Governor Murray hosted a series of meetings with key stakeholders including representatives from labor, homelessness, veterans and substance abuse recovery communities, the MA Nonprofit Network and several umbrella organizations that focus primarily on health

and human services programs. These conversations allowed the Governor to hear first hand the impact our economic and budgetary climate may have on health and human service providers and how to ensure the continuation of critical services within the Commonwealth.

Because of his belief that the most vulnerable among

us should not be asked to shoulder the burden in difficult economic times, the Governor assured those service providers that cuts would be made with care and compassion.

The impact was ultimately limited on such services as health care, homelessness, domestic violence and hunger programs as well as funding for veterans, elders and disability services.

**COMMONWEALTH
CORPS
INSPIRE. UNITE. ACT.**

**SPONSOR
SPOTLIGHT:**

**UMASS-
DARTMOUTH &
BRISTOL
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**

Project—Leadership for Educational Attainment through Service (L.E.A.D.S.)

In September, pairs of Corps members working as LEADS teams began working with middle school students in the Fall River and New Bedford schools, educating them about leadership, educational attainment, and service to the community.

Roselle Arpino, Commonwealth Corps member and senior at UMass-Dartmouth looks forward to "developing a relationship with the students and schools" and promoting leadership skills that will help youth for a lifetime.

From the Executive Branch and Across the Commonwealth

Public events being hosted by the Executive Offices include:

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Dept. of Public Health

Nov. 14—The Mechanics of Substance Abuse Treatment: How to Get it to Work! Florian Hall, 55 Hallet St., Dorchester

Covering the most current treatment strategies and interventions for individuals with an addictive disorder. For registration details please call 617.971.4971.

Public Health Council

Nov. 12 +Dec. 10—250 Washington St., Henry I. Bowditch Public Health Council Room – 2nd Fl., Boston 9AM
www.mass.gov/hhs
keyword: Public Health Council

Office of Refugees and Immigrants

New Americans Agenda Public Meetings, 5:30PM–7:30PM

Nov. 19—Hyannis

Dec. 10—New Bedford

The NAA is a year long planning initiative, which aims to better integrate refugees and immigrants into the economic and civic life of the Commonwealth. These public meetings are a wonderful way for community groups and individuals to provide valuable input on this important topic.

www.newamericansma.org

PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY

Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB)

Public Meetings - to consider applications submitted by agencies seeking CORI certification.

Nov. 19—CHSB CNFR, 200 Arlington St., Chelsea 9:30AM-12:30PM

Gun Control Advisory Board
Dec. 12—State Police HQ, 470 Worcester Rd., Framingham, 10AM

USEFUL CONTACTS:

**Not sure where to turn?
Let us help.**

www.mass.gov

Governor's Office
617.725.4005

Homeownership Preservation Foundation
Foreclosure Hotline
888.995.4673
Www.995hope.org

Pro Bono Foreclosure Assistance Hotline
800.342.5297
617.603.1700

Department of Housing and Community Development
Heat Hotline: 800.632.8175
www.mass.gov/dhcd

Greater Boston Food Bank
617.427.5200
Worcester County Food Bank
508.842.3663
The Food Bank of Western MA
413.247.9738
Merrimack Valley Food Bank
978.454.7272

Food Source Hotline
800.645.8333
800.877.1292

Commonwealth Health Insurance Connector
877.623.6765
www.mahealthconnector.org

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

MassDEP

Cape Wind Project Waterways Application Public Hearing

Nov. 5—Mattacheese Middle School, 400 Higgins Crowell Rd., West Yarmouth 6:30PM

Public hearing to construct and maintain submarine cables in association with the Cape Wind Energy Project wind farm.

Dept. of Conservation and Recreation

Nov. 7—Lawrence Heritage State Park, 1 Jackson St., 1pm

The Stewardship Council works with the Department of Conservation and Recreation to provide a safe, accessible, well maintained, and well-managed system of open spaces and recreational facilities.
www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship_council.htm

LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Massachusetts Regional Workforce Strategies Initiative is a statewide effort to build regional capacity to prepare MA workers for high demand jobs.
(For event details, please visit www.mass.gov/eolwd.)

Nov. 24—Cape Cod Community College, Hyannis 9:00AM-12:00PM

Dec. 11—Boston (location TBD) 8:30AM-11:30AM

HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Dept. of Housing and Economic Development

Nov. 7—Organizing For Community Development Workshop, Merrimack College, North Andover, 8:30AM-3:30PM

Workshop introduces participants to different phases of community development, helping communities move beyond planning to successful project implementation.
(For location, details and registration information visit the **News & Updates Section** at www.mass.gov/dhcd.)

Office of Access and Opportunity

State of Civil Rights in the Commonwealth

Residents are encouraged to come forward and share their comments and concerns about civil rights issues impacting them or their community.

(If you cannot attend, but would like to submit comments, you can do so at stateofcivilrights@state.ma.us.)

Nov. 6—Springfield Technical Community Colleges, Scibelli Hall, Rm. 703, Springfield, 6:00-8:00pm

(Hosted in conjunction with the MA Commission Against Discrimination, the Civil Rights Division of the Attorney General's Office, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the MA Office on Disability.)

TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS

The State Freight and Rail Plan

Nov. 3—Union Station (second floor), 2 Washington Sq., Worcester, 1-3PM

Nov. 5—Pomodores, 2424 Cranberry Highway (Route 28), Wareham, 3-5PM

Nov. 20—Copley Plaza Hotel - 138 Saint James Ave. Boston, 2-4PM

MPO Meetings— Topic : 2009 Transportation Improvement Program

Nov. 5—Pioneer Valley— Planning Commission, 26 Central St., West Springfield 10AM

Nov. 6—Boston Region—10 Park Plaza, CNFR 2, Boston 10AM

Safe Routes to School Forum

Nov. 6—Royal Plaza Hotel, 181 Boston Post Road W, Marlborough, 9AM - 4PM

Share best practices, lessons learned, and further growth of the program, which reaches nearly 160 schools and 70,000 students in 66+ communities statewide.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

Affirmative Market Program

Nov. 13—Basic Vendor Workshop
Operational Services Division, 1 Ashburton Place, Room 1017, Boston, 10AM-12PM

For minority and women-owned businesses who want to learn how to
* maximize their SOMWBA certification status
* find opportunities for AMP partnerships
* and market services as an AMP participant to state departments.

Nov. 5—How to Submit an Effective AMP Plan Workshop
Operational Services Division, 1 Ashburton Place, Room 1017, Boston, 10AM-12PM

(All workshops and training require pre-registration and some require an entrance fee. Please go to www.mass.gov/amp for details.)

Operational Services Division- Quality Assurance, Training and Outreach

OSD will be providing information to municipalities on cost saving opportunities with OSD's statewide contracts, programs and services:

Nov. 4—Acton Professional Development Day - Acton

Nov. 12—Department of Fire Services Fall Conference - Westford

Nov. 19+20—MA Association of Computer Using Educators - Sturbridge

Citizens Advisory Committee Meetings

Nov. 13—Quinsigamond Community Center, Worcester, 4:30PM

Dec. 17—District 4 Office, Arlington, 8AM

South Coast Rail Advisory Committee Meeting

Nov. 19—New Bedford Whaling National Historic Park Visitors Center, 33 Williams St. 3PM

Trails and Greenways Task Force Meeting

Nov. 19—Executive Office of Transportation, 10 Park Plaza, 3rd Floor Conference Room 1, Boston 10—11:30AM

MA Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting

Nov. 19—Executive Office of Transportation, 10 Park Plaza, 3rd Floor Conference Room 1, Boston 1—3PM

MA Smart Growth/Smart Energy Conference

Think Green: Educate & Engage

December 12, 2008
8AM-4PM

Boston Convention & Exhibition Center
415 Summer Street

Focusing on the latest in:
Housing **Transportation**
Energy **Public Health**
Economic **Environmental**
Development **Innovations**

Registration information at:
www.mass.gov/smartgrowth

Sponsored by: The Patrick/Murray Administration; EOHED; DHCD; EOEEA; EOHS and EOTPW.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service Project Initiative Request for Proposals Offered by the Massachusetts Service Alliance

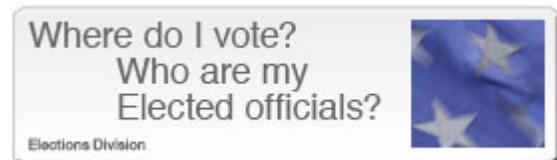
Requirements:

- Projects must engage volunteers in service during the Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend (January 16-19, 2009).
- Projects can meet a tangible need, such as fixing up a school or senior center, or may meet a need of the spirit, such as building a sense of community or mutual responsibility.

Applications available at www.mass-service.org.
Deadline: 12 noon, Thursday, November 13, 2008.

The MSA will provide technical assistance on an individual basis. Please contact Lisa Frederick, 617.542.2544 x. 226 or lfrederick@mass-service.org.

Don't Forget to Vote



Tuesday, November 4th is Election Day. As citizens of Massachusetts and the United States, there is no greater act of civic engagement than casting your ballot for your representation. This year we will be electing a new president, members of the state legislature and voting on three statewide ballot questions.

For more information, please call Secretary of State William Galvin's office at (800) 392-6090 or (617) 727-7030 or visit <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleidx.htm>.