

The Berkshire Eagle

Governors talk green tech at conference

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Updated: 07/13/2010 11:00:44 AM EDT

Tuesday July 13, 2010

LENEX --Resolutions to encourage energy efficiency and promote "green" transportation technology were the two principal points of agreement announced Monday following the 34th annual conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers, held at Cranwell Resort.

The theme of the three-day event was "promoting economic growth through clean energy in New England and Eastern Canada." The event was co-chaired by Gov. Deval Patrick and Premier Darrell Dexter of Nova Scotia.

The organization is made up of the governors of the six New England states and the Canadian premiers of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island and Quebec.

The group was established in 1973. Conferences have been held annually since then. There was no conference in 1991, 1992 and 1996. This is the first time the conference has been held in Western Massachusetts and the Berkshires. Previous Massachusetts sites were Chatham in 1976 and Lowell in 1986.

Discussions over the weekend included regional approaches to promoting renewable energy, including drawing up coordinated renewable

procurement policies. In addition, the governors and Canadian premiers talked about coordinated transportation solutions in the Northeast, climate change initiatives, emerging energy technologies and energy efficiency and "green" employment in that region.

Patrick termed the discussions "productive", adding that the resolution to

create policies to increase energy efficiency by 20 percent by the year 2020 "is an accomplishment we are all very capable of making."

"[The committee] is continuing its good work," agreed Dexter. "We're moving toward greater energy efficiency."

"[Working cooperatively] on energy issues enhances the relationship between Canada and the U.S." said Jean Charet, Premier of Quebec. "We live in an integrated energy market. To assume otherwise is inaccurate."

The states and provinces agreed over the weekend to propose stronger energy codes for all new buildings as early as is feasible and to allow, where possible, to allow municipal or county governments to voluntarily adopt stricter building codes.

The group also agreed to convene a committee to set energy efficient standards in the region, where those standards do not exist on a federal level.

The transportation resolution included a vow by the states and provinces to coordinate their respective transportation planning processes, and to emphasize efficient intermodal passenger and freight transportation.