

Lighten Up Tompkins aims to cut carbon emissions

Outreach effort to distribute 5,000 energy-efficiency kits

*By Lyndsey Lyman
Correspondent*

Tompkins County's effort to reduce carbon emissions should reach 5,000 local residents this weekend with the start of a yearlong campaign to conserve energy and use it more efficiently.

The plan is to give 4,000 energy-efficiency education packets. Each will contain a compact fluorescent light bulb, an energy efficiency informational CD, packet, flier and guide to 4,000 residents in the towns of Dryden, Danby, Newfield, Enfield, Ulysses and Lansing on Oct. 30. An extra 1,000 bags will be assembled and available for pick up by county residents who cannot be reached that day, said Shawn Lindabury, a community energy educator at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County.

This weekend's community outreach is the first initiative of the Lighten Up Tompkins campaign, a program launching efforts to reduce local carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050.

"It is amazing to be able to hit 5,000 people in one afternoon with this information," Lindabury said. "If we can get people on this path to energy efficiency and thinking about the steps they can take, and really make a meaningful impact in reducing energy consumption -- I'm really excited about those possibilities."

The event's partners include Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, the Public Service Center at Cornell University, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and community businesses.

Planners of the initiative say this mass distribution combined with face-to-face interaction should provide great results toward meeting the county's energy efficiency goals.

"We'll be saving county residents over \$250,000 just by going door to door if every household uses the light bulb they get," said Dominic Frongillo, a Town of Caroline councilman and a communities coordinator for NYSERDA's Energy Smart program.

The county's overall goal is to reduce carbon emissions 80 percent by 2050. Two additional benchmark goals have been set, according to Town of Lansing Senior Energy

Management Coordinator Koplinka-Loehr. The first is for 11 percent of Tompkins County households to reduce their energy usage by 11 percent by Nov. 11, 2011, chosen because of its memorable numeric form, 11/11/11. The next is to reduce carbon emissions by 20 percent by 2020.

Koplinka-Loehr said reaching these goals -- especially the 2011 goal -- will increase morale for the entire campaign.

"Hopefully, literally within this length of time -- a little over one year -- we can see an impact right away, and it can help build momentum not just in my household and my neighborhood, but literally countywide," he said.

Frongillo also noted how important this campaign is because of the direct effect reducing energy usage has on the community's economy.

"In the long run, energy is about putting food on the table," he said. "This is an example where you can put money right back into the pocket of our local community, the money can circulate, we strengthen our neighborhoods, and, in the long run, it will make our community a better place to live, as well."



Volunteer Anne Rhodes shows students in the Dryden Sustainability Club the contents of the bags that will be delivered on Oct. 30 as part of Lighten Up Tompkins. Rhodes was showing the students what is involved with stuffing the bags that will contain literature on energy-efficient and money-saving home improvements, raffle items, coupons and compact fluorescent light bulb.



ROBYN WISHNA / Contributed Photo Volunteer Anne Rhodes shows students in the Dryden Sustainability Club the contents of the bags that will be delivered on Oct. 30 as part of Lighten Up Tompkins. Rhodes was showing the students what is involved with stuffing the bags that will contain literature on energy-efficient and money-saving home improvements, raffle items, coupons and compact fluorescent light bulb.



