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'Newark Conserves' urges energy conservation

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NEWARK, NJ - City dignitaries on Dec. 2 launched the "Newark Conserves" energy and recycling-awareness initiative during a press conference in the Rotunda of City Hall. The goal of this citywide program is to encourage Newark residents at large to take simple energy-conservation and recycling steps at home and in the workplace.

In attendance for the conference were Mayor Cory A. Booker; Councilmember Donald M. Payne Jr.; the director of Neighborhood Services, Melvin Waldrop; sustainability officer Chelsea Albucher; acting demolition and recycling manager Rose Rabb; PSE&G Vice President Al Matos; and BPU Commissioner Joseph L. Fiordaliso.

"As our society faces the twin challenges of tough economic times and the cold winter months, we must unite to act locally in order to create change globally," Booker said. "Thousands of Newark residents are eligible to benefit from assistance in paying their power bills and protecting their homes from winter weather, but unfortunately few know about this opportunity. Through this program we hope to promote awareness and educate our Newark residents to take simple measures around their homes that can save power and the planet at the same time."

Booker urged Newark residents who are first-time home-buyers and current homeowners to take a home energy analysis. According to the U.S. Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star program, it is estimated that the average household spends about \$1,400 a year on electric bills alone, and many homeowners don't realize there are easy and low-cost ways they can save up to 30 percent on electricity and heating costs. The event also highlighted free home-improvement programs that are available for many of Newark's income-eligible households to make their homes more energy efficient by installing solar panels or other home modifications.

During the ceremony, the city Division of Demolition and Recycling highlighted its deployment of solar recycling containers at a customer-service point-of-contact in City Hall and at a location between City Hall and Police Headquarters on Green Street.

On Saturday, the city will participate in "Project Porchlight," a program being sponsored by OneChange and the N.J. Board of Public Utilities, to distribute thousands of free energy-efficient CFL light bulbs to Newark residents for their homes and porches. To receive more information about Project Porchlight call 888-767-2458.

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