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Press Release

For Immediate Release April 22, 2010

Municipalities sign an “Inter-dependence Day” accord to cooperate on energy action plans.

[April 22, 2010, Bedford, NY] Twelve northern Westchester municipalities declared “Interdependence Day” this evening, officially authorizing the creation of the Northern Westchester Energy Action Consortium in a signing ceremony at the Town of Bedford Court Room on the evening of April 22, 2010. With a combined population of over 190,000 residents, these municipalities agree to share grant writing services, pool resources for joint conservation and efficiency projects, develop innovative pilot programs that can be exported throughout New York State, and use the Consortium’s network for exchanging cost-containment ideas and practices.

The signatory member municipalities include the City of Peekskill, the Towns of Bedford, Cortlandt, Lewisboro, New Castle, North Castle, North Salem, Pound Ridge, and Somers, the Villages of Croton on Hudson and Ossining, and the Town/Village of Mount Kisco. Member status requires a small annual dues payment, a pledge to cooperate on the principals of the Consortium, and entitles each municipality to one seat on the Consortium’s Board of Directors. Two additional towns, Ossining and Yorktown, have observer status at present, which allows participation at meetings and in the networking opportunities among Consortium members. Observer status can be elevated to Member status. Ossining’s Town Board will take up the Consortium resolution at next week’s meeting, and, upon ratifying it, would become the thirteenth member. The Consortium’s Board of Directors will be preparing a set of by-laws as its first order of business.

During 2009, fourteen municipalities in the northern tier of Westchester County, New York, banded together to help each other develop good grant applications for the new ARRA stimulus funding streams, especially the new Energy Efficiency Community Block Grant programs. Each municipality had experts within its staff or on its volunteer boards. Yet, the value of pooling the expertise and creative insight across all the municipalities led to several innovative proposals that caught the attention of state and federal decision makers—specifically in new home energy retrofit financing tools and in cost-effective regional smart grid demonstration concepts.

Beyond cost containment for energy, the Consortium members have a strong commitment to reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions and pollution. On top of pursuing new models for sustainable local community development, the Consortium members will pursue projects that will become self-financing through the savings they produce, or that produce outright revenue from activities that capture value, such as demand response systems for electricity, or increasing local renewable energy production.

In the past two weeks, both New York State Energy Research Development Authority and the US Department of Energy have announced grant awards for the Consortium’s “Bedford Pilot” home energy retrofit ramp up program, which could deliver between \$600,000 to \$1.3 million as seed money. And NYSERDA also announced a significant grant award of \$280,000 for the Consortium’s “Climate Action Plan” development work among 7 partner municipalities for which Croton-on-Hudson is the lead municipality.

Statements by Signatories:

Lee V. A. Roberts, Supervisor, Town of Bedford: “Bedford is thrilled to be joining with the Northern Westchester Energy Action Consortium to collaborate on energy efficiency projects such as the retrofit program and the emissions inventories. We believe that our environmental initiatives have the opportunity to be even more effective given the combined efforts and expertise of the consortium members.”

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Mary Foster, Mayor, City of Peekskill: “Peekskill is excited about joining the Consortium since it is the best way to leverage our respective knowledge, staff and community-based efforts in order to achieve impactful energy reductions, cost savings and sustainability for our communities.”

Leo A. W. Wiegman, Mayor, Village of Croton-on-Hudson: “Today, what is best for the economy is also what’s best for the environment. By collecting our grassroots efforts and our own local comparative strengths, the Consortium gives us the strength of numbers. We are building a market for innovation, demonstration, and deployment of all kinds of initiatives that represents 200,000 people within a compact trading radius. This consortium is precisely the kind of coordinated, proactive consumer group that Albany, Washington, and major for-profit firms really want to work with to pilot the new economy.”

J. Michael Cindrich, Mayor, Village/Town of Mount Kisco: “By exploring alternative energy sources, implementing energy saving strategies and utilizing new “green technology.” the Village/Town of Mount Kisco, as part of the NWEAC, will chart a new course in reducing our dependency on conventional fuels. Hopefully, the by-product of this venture will be an informed public, willing to accept the responsibility to protect the environment and utilize the programs and ideas we develop.”

William Weaver, Supervisor, Town of North Castle: "North Castle is looking forward to working cooperatively with the other Towns and Villages so that as a group we explore ways to educate our residents concerning maximum energy efficiency and conservation."

Contact: Herb Oringel, chair, Northern Westchester Energy Action Consortium, herb@oringel.com or 914-277-5370. For details, visit www.nweac.org

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