

# The North Haven Citizen

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## Energy forum focuses on efficiency, environment

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Special to the Citizen

With financial difficulties brought on by a troubled economy, the rising prices and dependency on foreign oil and gas, and global warming threatening the environment, people are concerned and trying to find ways to become energy efficient. To further that goal, the North Haven Clean Energy Task Force, the North Haven Conservation Commission, and the Friends of the North Haven Library hosted an Energy Efficiency Forum in the community room at the North Haven Library last weekend.

The program was presented by Roger Smith, campaign director for Clean Water Action. The topics discussed dealt with how to save money on energy costs, practical

ways to increase energy efficiency and comfort in one's home or apartment, and the latest on Connecticut state energy policies and programs that can get people to save money.

"We hosted this forum as a means of trying to raise public awareness to protect the environment and to use energy efficiently, as well as informing people about clean energy options and encouraging sign ups for clean energy," said Hugh Davis, chairman of the Conservation Commission and the Clean Energy Task Force.

The Clean Energy Task Force requested Smith speak on ways to be more efficient and help people know their options on how to upgrade their homes and apartments in an effort to lower house-

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hold energy costs. Smith's organization, Clean Water Action, was started in Connecticut in 1998 to clean up the power by reducing "black carbon" diesel soot in the state, and to find ways to invest and use clean renewable energy. The group has worked to get bills passed at the state and local levels that will make Connecticut a leader in stopping global warming, strengthen consumer energy efficiency programs, invest in public transit, and increase recycling.

"We are working to dramatically expand investments in solar power and energy efficiency programs for electricity, heating oil and natural gas, take our progress to Congress and support and encourage more towns to become 20 percent

clean energy communities by 2010," said Smith.

Smith spoke about how to insulate homes during the winter by eliminating leakage on old doors and windows by using the V strip on doors and using honeycomb blinds, window quilts, and draft dodgers (as recommended by Mary Mahon, an attendee at the program), or replacing old windows with new Energy Star windows, which are more efficient. He also talked about insulating ceilings, attics, basements, pipes, and walls with material such as fiberglass, cellulose, blue-jeans, and spray foams. Adequate insulation will keep the excessive cold out in the winter and the oppressive heat out in the summer resulting in lower heating and cooling costs.

"I want to learn more about how to get off the oil habit and learn more about how I might be selective in the appliances and electrical equipment I am about to purchase," said Maurice Libson, a North Haven resident and

member of the Clean Energy Task Force. "I'm a person who thinks green."

Smith further explained the importance of upgrading appliances and making them more energy efficient, using programmable thermostats that are programmed to regulate the temperature in a house automatically, replacing old water heaters and old furnaces, and several heating options including oil, propane, natural gas, electricity, geothermal, wood stoves, pellet stoves, and solar geothermal.

"There are many ways to make our homes more efficient when it comes to using less electricity," Smith said. "We must cut back on wasteful usage and excessive spending by using these energy solutions."

He also gave helpful ways to save on the electric bill by not only encouraging the purchasing of programmable thermostats but also turning down the heat at night or when not at home, getting rid of or unplugging

a second freezer or refrigerator, replacing old light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs or Energy Star rated bulbs, drying clothes on the line or rack, and putting televisions and computers on power strips and turn them off when not in use.

"Everything runs on energy and we need to move away from our dependency on foreign oil and we need to move to a more clean and green economy that will help the economy financially especially in these difficult times," said Kenny Foscue, a member of the Clean Energy Task Force. "Let's become thrifty, enterprising, and patriotic environmentalists."

The program was attended by nearly 45 people and it was well received. After Smith's PowerPoint presentation, there was a question and answer session that followed. Those in attendance left with a better awareness of energy efficiency and the necessity to preserve the environment by helping to prevent global warming. They also received

knowledge about the programs and options that are available in offering solutions to heating and energy, and environmental problems, as well as valuable advice on how to lower their energy bills.

Members of the Clean Energy Task Force encouraged those present to sign up for a clean energy option for their electricity. Sign ups for clean energy will not only benefit those who participate, but the town will also receive solar panels after a certain number of people in town register. Solar energy is one possible solution to cutting energy costs.

"I am glad that I attended today's presentation. I learned about rebates, tax incentives, sign ups for clean energy, and home energy solutions," said Pam Sletten, a North Haven resident. "We need to be efficient and to prepare for the future."

"If we can save money while saving the planet, then we will all benefit," said Carolyn Humphreys, community outreach coordinator of Sunlight Solar Energy.

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