

Bordentown City Environmental Commission NEWSLETTER

Issue #12

www.bcec.us

Winter 2007

BCEC Contact Information



BCEC meetings are held on the **2nd Wednesday** of every month and are open to the public.

Meetings are held at the **Carlake Community Center** at **7:00pm**.

Mail may be sent to **BCEC at:**
Bordentown City
Environmental
Commission,
City Hall,
324 Farnsworth Ave.,
Bordentown, NJ 08505

Email:
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ENERGY CONSERVATION STARTS AT HOME

The temperature is dipping and our first response is to crank up the heat. Well, before you do that, think of this -- according to the U.S. Department of Energy, we Americans spend more than \$160 billion a year to heat, cool, light and live in our homes. Our homes use about 21 percent of the nation's energy each year, consume a significant amount of electricity and natural gas, and contribute about 17 percent of our national emissions of greenhouse gases.

What you should do first before taking any steps is to conduct a home energy audit. A home energy audit is the first step to assess how much energy your home consumes and helps you to evaluate what measures you can take to make your home more energy efficient. An audit will show you problems that may, when corrected, save you significant amounts of money over time. Audits also determine the efficiency of your home's heating and cooling systems, and can show you ways to conserve hot water and electricity. You can perform a simple energy audit yourself, or have a professional energy auditor carry out a more thorough audit. If you do it yourself, some of the things to check for are:

- **Make a list of obvious air leaks (drafts).** The potential energy savings from reducing drafts in a home may range from 5 to 30% per year. You should plug and caulk holes or penetrations for faucets, pipes, electric outlets, and wiring. Look for cracks and holes in the mortar, foundation, and siding, and seal them with the appropriate material. Check the exterior caulking around doors and windows, and see whether exterior storm doors and primary doors seal tightly.
- **Check your attic insulation.** Heat loss through the ceiling and walls in your home could be very large if the insulation levels are less than the recommended minimum. Given today's energy prices, the insulation level for your house when it was built might now be inadequate.
- **Your water heater, hot water pipes, and furnace ducts should all be insulated as well.** Check the home improvement stores for special insulation (new hot water heaters often do not require additional insulation)
- **Inspect heating and cooling equipment annually,** or as recommended by the manufacturer. If you have a forced-air furnace, check your filters and replace them as needed, generally about once every month or two, especially during periods of high usage. Have a professional check your equipment once a year. If the unit is more than 15 years old, you should consider replacing your system with one of the newer, energy-efficient units.
- **Examine the wattage size of the light bulbs in your house.** Energy for lighting accounts for about 10% of your electric bill. You may have 100-watt (or larger) bulbs where 60 or 75 watts would do. You should also consider compact fluorescent lamps for areas where lights are on for hours at a time.

Professional energy audits generally go into great detail. The energy auditor should do a room-by-room examination of the residence, as well as a thorough examination of past utility bills. For more energy-saving solutions, check out www.energysavers.gov.

Upcoming Events

Conservation Element Public Meeting, Wednesday, January 10, 7:00 PM

Come hear about the process of creating a document that will outline the conservation of natural resources in Bordentown City. *Carlake Community Center, Crosswicks Street.*

Also, please take a minute to fill out the Residents Survey available at www.bcec.us or City Hall

Earth Talk, Tuesday, February 27, 7:00 PM

Organic Gardening in the City: Guest Speaker Mikey Azzara from Northeast Organic Farming Association will show how to green up your garden without chemicals. *Carlake Community Center*

Earth Talk, Tuesday, March 27, 7:00 PM

An Inconvenient Truth: See the award-winning documentary film about global warming on the big screen. *Carlake Community Center, Crosswicks Street*

LOCAL ECO-NEWS

Help Save Planet Earth: Recycle Now!

Continuing in an effort to encourage recycling, BCEC invited apartment landlords, restaurant and other business owners to a meeting at the Carslake Center on November 14. Wayne DeFeo, an authority in the field of waste management, spoke to a dozen attendees, emphasizing the monetary as well as the environmental value of properly disposing of used materials. Environmentally, because landfill space for Burlington County is rapidly approaching capacity. Recycling steel, plastic, aluminum, and paper allows space for other waste. Monetarily, because the City and County receive payment for recyclable material and thus keep low the cost of other waste disposal. Reference was made to the Bordentown City code, which defines the duties of landlords, who are required to provide their tenants with City recycling regulations, as well as recycling buckets. The rules also apply to businesses. All are required to recycle. If they choose to use the County pickup, there is no charge to them. Last spring the County sent brochures which explain what, when and how to recycle to all home and business owners. Additional copies of that brochure are available at City Hall.



Over 50 people turned out for the Point Breeze Walk, which featured one of the carriage trail bridges dating from 1840s

Conservation Element Update

A subcommittee has been formed to create a Conservation Element for the City's Master Plan. This will incorporate the recently adopted Environmental Resource Inventory as a means of establishing a baseline of the City's natural resources, and recommendations for ensuring that our natural resources are protected. Public input on this process is important! A Residents Survey is available at City Hall or www.bcec.us. A public meeting will be held on January 10 at 7pm at Carslake Community Center, where the project consultant and subcommittee will give an overview of the Conservation Element and take public comment.

BCEC Earth Talks Speakers Series

Several dozen area residents attended the first BCEC Earth Talk, "Get to Know Your Local Environment", a visual tour of the environment in and around Bordentown City. Earth Talks in Spring 2007 will include *Organic Gardening in the City* (February 22) and *An Inconvenient Truth* (March 27), the Oscar-nominated film about global warming. Please let us know of a topic you wish to know more about!

BCEC Subcommittee: Parks and Trails

The BCEC has a subcommittee that is working on planning and obtaining grants for the development of natural parkland and trails within the City. Project areas include along Blacks Creek, including Lime Kiln Alley, Oliver Street and Bordentown Beach; and along Thorntown Creek, including a walking trail along this greenway. Volunteer opportunities for these projects will include trail-building, invasive species removal, and native species planting.

BCEC Field Trip: Bordentown Sewerage Authority (BSA)

In November BCEC members and friends were given a guided tour of the sewerage treatment facility by Exec. Dir. Frank Hartman. The BSA serves Bordentown City and Township, and utilizes biological processes to break down sewerage before discharging to Blacks Creek. The tour was an excellent introduction to one of the key pieces of environmental infrastructure for Bordentown City. For more information, see www.bordentownsa.org. A tour of the Bordentown Water Treatment plant will be organized in 2007.



BCEC members and friends get a tour of the Bordentown Sewerage Treatment plant

Bordentown City Residents Survey

Provide input to the Conservation Element planning process.
Survey available on BCEC homepage at www.bcec.us

Environmental Calendar

Wednesday, January 10

Public Meeting: Bordentown City Conservation Element

Carslake Community Ctr., 7pm

Wednesday, February 7

Bordentown City Planning Board

City Hall, 7pm

Wednesday, February 14

Bordentown City Environmental Commission

Carslake Community Ctr., 7pm

Tuesday, February 27

Earth Talk

Organic Gardening in the City:

Learn how to green up your garden without chemicals. Speaker: Mikey Azzara, Northeast Organic Farming Assn., Carslake Center, 7pm

Wednesday, March 7

Bordentown City Planning Board

City Hall, 7pm

Wednesday, March 14

Bordentown City Environmental Commission

Carslake Community Ctr., 7pm

Tuesday, March 27

Earth Talk

An Inconvenient Truth:

See the award-winning documentary about global warming on the big screen. Carslake Center, 7pm

Wednesday, April 4

Bordentown City Planning Board

City Hall, 7pm

Wednesday, April 11

Bordentown City Environmental Commission

Carslake Community Ctr., 7pm

Saturday, April 21

5th Annual Earth Day Cleanup

10:00am. Location TBA

Saturday, April 28

Arbor Day Tree Planting

City Hall, 9am