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Green event full of ideas, help

Lifestyle changes: Environmentally sound advice and samples fill Sandwich park

June 8, 2008 **BY JULIE LORD Special to the Beacon News**

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SANDWICH -- As summer sets in and the Chicago area is turning on the air conditioning and filling up gas tanks, more people than ever seem to be going green.

That was the reason the Sandwich Park District Saturday held its "Go Green Environmental Awareness Event" at James Knight Park, featuring displays, demonstrations and presentations about being a little more eco-friendly.

The Citizens Utility Board and ComEd both hosted tables at the event, with the common goal of educating attendees on simple ways to reduce energy consumption and save money.

Sarah Moskowitz, CUB outreach manager, said saving energy really is easy.

"If you can only make one change, turn off the lights when you leave a room," Moskowitz said.

She said replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs and installing sensors and timers on some lights are also great ways to make the home a little greener.

Air conditioning is one of the biggest energy culprits during the summer. ComEd set up shop at the event to inform people about air conditioning options it claims will dramatically reduce energy consumption and save money.

ComEd's Nature First is an air conditioning cycling program that lets the company turn off household central air compressors to lessen demand during peak hours in the summer. According to Paul Callighan, ComEd external affairs manager, households that join this program earn credits on electric bills and help the power company use resources more efficiently.

"We want to be able to use our energy resources wisely," Callighan said. "(Nature First) isn't a new program, but we are reintroducing it in light of heightened interest and awareness of energy costs."

A table sponsored by Wal-Mart featured other environmentally friendly products that also claim to be safe for kids and easy on the wallet. According to Terri Lynn Ribel, Wal-Mart representative, replacing just a few household items could make a world of difference.

Ribel gave the example of using cloth diapers, saying that while she didn't expect parents to cut out disposable diapers completely, replacing just one disposable diaper with a cloth one

every day would be a positive step.

She also mentioned other small changes, such as using rubber mulch instead of wood, natural cleansers instead of chemical, and drinking home-filtered water instead of buying wasteful and expensive plastic water bottles.

"If you make simple changes every day, it eventually becomes a lifestyle," Ribel said.

Presentations took place throughout the day covering topics from rain barrels to "Going Green in the Retail Environment."

The retail presentation, given by Wal-Mart Manager Eric Issacson, focused on Wal-Mart's lofty goals for environmental sustainability, which include using 100 percent renewable energy, producing zero waste and selling eco-conscious products.

"Basically, if we can throw it away, we don't want it," Issacson said.

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From Green Chemicals

The views expressed in these blog posts are those of the author and not of the Sun-Times

News Group.

rubbercycle wrote:

Re: She also mentioned other small changes, such as using rubber mulch instead of wood.-----Agree, rubber mulch protects our kids and the environment. I got Rubber mulch from Rubbercycle.com and we are very happy. In the past few years it saved several times our kids from severe injuries. It is long lasting.

6/11/2008 8:55 AM CDT on suburbanchicagonews.com

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