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8/17/2010 4:23:00 PM
CUB Helps Consumers Cut Costs
 BY KIRA STIERS

The City of Evanston is joining with the nonprofit Citizens Utility Board (CUB) to launch a campaign to help people save on energy bills while saving the planet. CUB Energy Saver, a free online service, tracks energy usage and shows consumers how to save an average of \$200 a year.

On Aug. 9, Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl and CUB executive director David Kolata announced that Evanston customers who signed up at www.CUBEnergySaver.com would receive a free Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) bulb and qualify for periodic drawings to win a month of free electricity. The City will also benefit from citizen participation. For every Evanston resident who signs up, the City will receive five donated CFLs, up to 10,000, to be used in hospitals, City buildings, and for the Evanston Porch Light Campaign to promote residential energy efficiency.

The first 10,000 customers to sign up for the service are also eligible to join a points program. With the energy savings, the average household can earn up to \$130 a year in rewards points redeemable at local and national retailers. Consumers receive 100 points for signing up and collect more points for each energy reduction they make.

"This is the first idea that is absolutely non-controversial," said Mayor Tisdahl. "Citizens can now participate to save money and save the planet. It's win-win-win for one and all."

In 2008 Evanston committee members signed the Climate Action Plan, which outlines plans to reduce Evanston's carbon footprint. With the CUB Energy Saver website, residents can now contribute even more to helping Evanston achieve its goals.

"These days there's a real hunger for money-saving advice," Mr. Kolata said. CUB previously gave advice over the phone to callers requesting information on saving energy and money. "[With CUB Energy Saver] everyone is going to be able to find a money-saving option for them," Mr. Kolata said.

While this website is available nationwide, the initial campaign is being launched in Evanston. Anyone wanting to join must be a ComEd customer with a home and e-mail address.

"We are aware of the digital divide," Mr. Kolata said. For those without access to a computer, Mr. Kolata mentioned that the main library has 25 computers for public use. The Levy Senior Center also has computers and classes available to senior citizens who are interested in joining the site.

As part of the campaign, CUB is holding a free event on Sept. 7 at the Levy Center. They will be giving free "Utility Bill Checkups" from 10 a.m. to noon, and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., so people can bring in



Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl and CUB executive director David Kolata, right, announce an energy-saving program for Evanstonians. Persons without access to home computers can sign up at the Levy Center or the library. Jack Darin, executive director of the Illinois Sierra Club, left, said his club endorsed the program.
 Photo By Mary Mumbroe

More Ways to Sign Up for the Energy-Saver Program

The website for this online service is www.CUBEnergySaver.com. Having a ComEd bill handy makes sign-up easier. Those without computer access can visit one of the three library locations or the Levy Senior Center.

The Main Library, 1703 Orrington Ave., 847-448-8600, has 25 public computers.

The North Branch, 2026 Central St., 847-866-0330, has one public computer.

The South Branch, 949 Chicago Ave., 847-866-0333, has three public computers.

The Levy Senior Center, 300 Dodge Ave., 847-448-8250.

More information about CUB, the Citizens Utility Board, is available at www.citizensutilityboard.org.

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their utility bills, sign up for the website and receive tips on how to save money.

“We are hoping to get people excited about this,” said Jim Chilsen, communications director at CUB. “It’s like having your own private energy auditor in your home for free.”

“Evanston loves a good idea, and there’s no better idea than one that saves money and helps the environment,” Mayor Tisdahl said in a press release. “CUB Energy Saver proves that it pays, literally, to be energy efficient.

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