



# WESTCHESTER GOING GREEN

## THE TOWN OF BEDFORD

For the next article in our 'Westchester Going Green' series we examine the energy preservation and sustainability efforts of the town of Bedford. The Town of Bedford has undertaken a unique initiative entitled "Bedford twenty by 2020", the goal of which is to reduce the town's carbon emissions by 20% by the year 2020. While this may seem like a huge goal, Bedford town Supervisor Lee Roberts, thinks that by collectively focusing on a few small things, the town can make big strides toward its goal. To reach this goal the town has formed an Energy Advisory Panel, which provides recommendations and information to town leaders and citizens on reducing carbon emissions. Community members are encouraged to use this resource to educate themselves on how they can reduce their own carbon emissions and help the town achieve its goal. The Bedford program works to educate residents on the benefits of reduced carbon emissions by helping them understand how these simple changes can save them money, conserve energy and provide cleaner and safer air to breathe in their community.

The "tips" page on the Town of Bedford's website ([http://www.bedfordny.info/html/green\\_tips.htm](http://www.bedfordny.info/html/green_tips.htm)) provides Bedford residents with valuable resources and information on how to reduce their own household's carbon emissions. The tips include; changing your light bulbs to energy efficient CFL "energy star" brands, purchasing energy star rated appliances when replacing old ones, purchasing locally produced food which is not shipped to the area for consumption, reducing thermostat temperatures by two degrees in the winter and raising them by two in the summer, turning off appliances, chargers, and computers immediately after use, and driving one's car in a efficient manner by reducing speeding and quick acceleration which produces additional carbon emissions and reduces energy efficiency. Information is also provided on "green" building and energy technologies so that residents will perhaps consider in investing in these when building or renovating their homes. Residents are encouraged to obtain an "energy audit" of their home to identify areas of improvement. The Town of Bedford has delivered these tips to their residents in a variety of creative ways including WebPages, YouTube videos, and links to other sites such as Energy Star and NYSERDA's green building page as well as other helpful resources. By providing these sources the town hopes to empower residents to make simple changes to reduce their own carbon emissions.

The tips page also encourages residents to reduce consumption of various products which are harmful to the environment and which raise carbon footprints. These tips include reducing or not ordering print catalogs, using tap water or filtered tap water instead of bottled water, carrying school and work lunch's in reusable containers and reducing junk mail by signing up for services which help stop its delivery to your home. A link is also provided to a website where residents can analyze their own "carbon footprint" and thus assess their own ways to reduce it. Residents are also encouraged to walk or ride bicycles to reduce emissions by leaving their cars at home.

Residents of Bedford are encouraged to join the twenty for 2020 campaign by signing a pledge on the "Green Page" of the Bedford website ([http://www.bedfordny.info/html/green\\_pledge.htm](http://www.bedfordny.info/html/green_pledge.htm)). Residents who sign on to take the pledge receive a Bedford twenty for 2020 decal and additional resources on how to begin to reduce

their household carbon emissions. Residents who take the pledge will also receive email updates on the town's activities.

The town of Bedford has had multiple recent successes in developing this climate action plan. Recently Bedford was awarded two separate grants to fund further development and programs for the plan. The first grant was awarded in April 2012 by the U.S. Department of Energy to Bedford and its partners NWEAC and NYSEERDA to further develop best practices for increasing "green" building retrofits in Bedford and NWEAC towns which will hopefully become a model for other small or medium sized municipalities. In June, Bedford and NWEAC were awarded an additional \$1.26 million dollars to specifically fund the town's "Climate Action Plan" and to launch a new program to create specific finance and marketing tools to promote residential energy efficiency, building retrofits and PACE benefit funding. Lee Roberts, supervisor for the Town of Bedford believes that community energy use could be reduced by 15% if every homeowner signed up for the residential retrofit program. Bedford hopes to use the grant funds to engage marketing experts and spread the initiative to additional residents and NWEAC communities, as well as to develop a comprehensive web-based tool for estimating scaling demand for "green" retrofits of existing buildings. Bedford hopes that a successful reduction of energy usage and carbon emissions will help the town and region serve as a model for similar programs throughout the nation.

Bedford has furthered their efforts by joining multiple collaborations to share ideas and work with other organizations on sustainability and climate change. These include ICLEI, a membership organization of local governments and national organizations that are committed to sustainable development as well as "Cities for Climate Protection" (CCP) a flagship campaign, which is designed to empower local governments to take action on climate change, issues. The CCP program is performance-oriented campaign, which helps local governments establish frameworks for addressing climate change issues.