

News Release

COALITION LAUNCHED TO TACKLE TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT ENERGY PRODUCTION AND USE IN THE ADIRONDACK PARK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 1, 2007

Contacts: See List Below

Lake Placid, NY – Responding to what has been called the greatest challenge of our generation, a group of 25 energy experts, state agency representatives, local officials, and members of the academic community gathered here over several days last week to hammer out a set of strategies to deal directly with the urgent need for a regional transition away from the use of fossil fuels, and toward clean, green, and affordable climate friendly sources of locally produced energy. Calling itself the Adirondack Energy \$mart Park Coalition (E\$P), the group met in the bucolic setting of the Uihlein Foundation's Heaven Hill Farm on the outskirts of Lake Placid.

Attendees agreed that an Energy \$mart Park should promote wise energy use and production to build economic strength and diversity; help secure an affordable, reliable supply of renewable energy; and protect the Park's unique environmental heritage in ways that will benefit Adirondack residents and communities, now and in the future. Many saw an opportunity to transition from increasingly expensive, polluting sources of fossil energy and reap the benefits of new jobs, business opportunities, and community development.

The Adirondack Energy Forum was sponsored by:

- The Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks

The forum received strong organizational support from

- Community Power Network of NYS
- Community Energy Services, Inc.
- SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
- Adirondack Sustainable Communities, Inc.

Others attending the Forum were the:

- Mayor of Lake Placid, and representatives from the:
- Adirondack North Country Association
- Lake Placid/Essex County Visitors Bureau
- NYS Adirondack Park Agency
- NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)
- Association of Adirondack Towns and Villages
- Clarkson University

- Building Code Assistance Project/Alliance to Save Energy
- Richmond Energy Associates/Yellow Wood Associates
- Center for Humans and Nature
- Natural Resources Defense Council

Some of the major energy-related challenges currently facing Park residents and communities that were identified at the Forum include a fragile, unreliable, outdated electrical grid; heavy reliance on expensive fossil fuels for home heating during long, cold winters; energy inefficient homes and appliances; long commutes to jobs and schools; lack of public transportation options; and lack of capital to help make needed improvements in energy efficiency.

Participants were asked to describe how an Energy Smart Park might differ from the Park of today. They envisioned:

- A refurbished electrical grid capable of utilizing locally produced power derived from renewable sources such as wood biomass, photovoltaic cells, and small-scale wind and hydro plants
- Housing, schools, and businesses retrofitted with energy efficient appliances, heating and cooking systems, windows, and insulation
- Public transportation options for Park residents and visitors
- Paper products, bio-plastics, and liquid fuels produced locally from renewable sources
- More reliance on a variety of foods grown within the region

Participants felt that an Energy Smart Park must strive for equity, fairness, and broad participation throughout the Park. It should also promote a sustainable economy based in part on the Park's biological and physical resources, and on a comprehensive, science-based plan that is in harmony with Adirondack legacies and traditions.

Buoyed by the positive nature of the gathering and the synergy between the Energy Forum and the climate change conference that was held at the same time in Tupper Lake, Forum members pledged to continue to meet this year, while broadening the scope of the E\$P coalition to include other stakeholders in the region. There was agreement to coordinate and not duplicate other efforts. Before adjourning, the group reached consensus on the need to engage in a set of near-term activities to help move the E\$P process forward, including:

- Start a Park-wide dialogue on the Energy Smart Park concept
- Greatly increase the number of Park communities participating in NYSERDA's Energy Smart Communities program
- Begin to assemble a database on regional energy production and use, to inform decision-making and facilitate the preparation of a regional energy plan
- Seek funding to support implementation of the Energy Smart Park program

For more information, contact the E\$P coalition members listed below.

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