

## **PSE&G bulbs give savings green light**

### **Fluorescents are free for low-income families**

Tuesday, November 20, 2007

**BY DIEGO CUPOLO**

**Star-Ledger Staff**

On the heels of the latest gloomy international report on global warming, Public Service Electric & Gas yesterday announced a giveaway program designed to help reduce local energy consumption: the utility will distribute 100,000 energy-efficient light bulbs free of charge.

The "Switch and Save" campaign will reach out to low-income families with the goal of lowering their energy bills and raising their environmental awareness, said Ralph Izzo, chairman and CEO of PSEG, parent company of PSE&G. Customers who visit one of the company's 16 customer service centers will be given an Energy Star certified compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL).

The bulbs will also be distributed by PSE&G's service technicians when they make service calls and by electrical delivery employees who interact with customers on a daily basis. The installation of 100,000 CFLs will be the equivalent of taking 9,000 cars off the road for one year, saving about 40,000 tons of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere, Izzo said.

"It's amazing to think that a light bulb can make a difference in the fight against global warming, but it's true," said U.S. Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), who attended a Newark press conference announcing the program. "If every home in America replaced just one bulb with a CFL bulb the nation would save more than \$600 million in energy costs each and every year."

CFL bulbs use 75 percent less energy than standard incandescent lights and last up to 10 times longer, saving customers an average of \$30 in energy costs during the life of each bulb.

In addition to CFLs, customers will be given information packets listing simple energy saving techniques for their homes and flyers explaining the proper ways to dispose of old or broken bulbs.

Raymond Ocasio, executive director of La Casa de Don Pedro, a local nonprofit which focuses on neighborhood improvements, expressed his gratitude for PSE&G's focus on helping low-income communities through the Switch and Save campaign.

"An energy bill for our low-income families competes against rent, food and medical care; the vital importance that this program plays goes beyond energy," Ocasio said. "It's often difficult to see the improvements in the environment, but clearly a dollar saved in electrical energy, is a dollar that goes towards heating one's home."

Adam Markham, executive director of Clean Air-Cool Planet, also praised Izzo's leadership in taking action against climate change.

"This is a utility that is moving into the future with an emphasis on renewables and energy efficiency," Markham said. "This initiative here, with the light bulbs, is just one element of that new vision that we are seeing from PSE&G."

As the press conference came to an end in an adjacent room, Newark residents who had never used CFLs gladly accepted the bulbs from Sanie Allen, a PSE&G customer service representative.

"It's a free program and they're happy about what we are doing, a lot of them wanted more than one," Allen said.

*Diego Cupolo may be reached at [dcupolo@starledger.com](mailto:dcupolo@starledger.com) or (973) 392-1644.*