

## Middlesex to tap green industries

### Panel to look at manufacturers

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**MIDDLESEX COUNTY** — For Middlesex County officials, "green equals green" when it comes to creating economic opportunities for environmentally-friendly businesses.

A new county committee has been formed to harness the power of emerging "green" industries, and one of its primary goals is matching vacant warehouse space with manufacturers of products, such as solar panels, that promote energy efficiency and sustainability.

The Middlesex County Green Economic Development Zone Committee has been established to study the financial and economic value of establishing such "green" zones. A team of local, county and state officials and representatives from the corporate and academic sectors met recently to develop a plan of action.

They established subcommittees to study the following key areas:

- Business and site identification.
- Education and curriculum development.
- Funding and financing— including government grants and incentives available to companies.

"In order for this effort to be a success, we need strong partnerships between the state, the county and our municipalities to pool all the necessary resources, financial support, and educational support to attract new businesses and assist incubator ventures to move into the state and stay in the county permanently," said Freeholder H. James Polos in a press release. Polos, who convened the meeting, has spearheaded many of the county's environmentally-friendly initiatives.

"After having this meeting, I am convinced we can open up good job opportunities for Middlesex County residents and strengthen economic development in the emerging Green technology market," Polos added.

Gov. Jon Corzine has put forth a state Energy Master Plan that calls for reducing energy consumption by least 20 percent by 2020 and to generate 30 percent of the state's electricity needs from renewable sources by 2020.

County committee members see education as a key component to successfully fostering green technology growth.

"One of the best ways to attract business to the area is to show them you have an educated workforce ready to take on the jobs they need to fill," said Freeholder Ronald G. Rios, chair of the County's Public Health and Education Committee, in a press release. "We are quite lucky to have Rutgers University, Middlesex County

College and the County's Vocational-Technical Schools, each of whom are developing programs and are as excited about this initiative as we are."

Representatives from Rutgers and Middlesex County College lauded the initiative from both an economic and environmental standpoint. New Brunswick Mayor James Cahill and Woodbridge mayor John E. McCormac noted that multiple levels of government working together would increase the chances for the initiative to succeed.

"A collaborative effort puts forth a much stronger case when interacting with state agencies on these green issues," Cahill said.

At the meeting to form the county committee, McCormac noted, "Everyone who can help move our economic development forward is in the room."

The county committee also received input from representatives from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, the State Department of Community Affairs, Office of Smart Growth (DCA) and the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities. In addition, utilities represented at the meeting included Middlesex Water Company, Jersey Central Power and Light and Public Service Electric and Gas.

"This was a good start," said Ronald H. Reisman, manager of business outreach for the BPU. "The county was able to bring together all the stakeholders to come up with a plan to promote green economic development and green jobs that is consistent with the governor's master plan. The BPU would like to act as a resource for the group and to work with the utility companies and the energy saving programs they propose."

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