



## The Star-Ledger

### Edison expands its fleet of gas miserly hybrids

Mayor switches to Ford SUV, says eight vehicles will save \$70K in fuel

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Edison Mayor Jun Choi now drives a hybrid Ford Escape -- one of the 26 fuel-efficient vehicles the township bought for its fleet, which touts more hybrids than any other Middlesex County town.

Eight of the new vehicles were on display around Lake Papaiani across from the township municipal complex yesterday as Choi explained the vehicles will save Edison \$70,000 in fuel costs annually, lowering the overall gasoline budget line by 7 percent.

Officials said the hybrids will be used throughout the township, including by workers in the code enforcement division, the fire department and the community development block grant program. The new vehicles include the Escapes, which have a sticker price of \$25,357, and the \$20,349 Toyota Prius.

"It shows our commitment to the environment," said Choi, who emphasized the vehicles are replacing gas-guzzling cars, several of which were more than 20 years old. The mayor previously drove a Ford Crown Victoria.

The township saved more than \$100,000 on the purchases by obtaining rebates from the state Board of Public Utilities and subsidies from Middlesex County, which encourages towns to use hybrids. Edison is also exploring other ways to conserve energy by possibly installing solar panels.

Jeffrey Roderman, the township public works director, said as more models of hybrids become available, it is realistic to expect Edison could convert half of its 435-vehicle fleet.

"We're looking forward to transforming the fleet over," he said.

The Prius is known for its fuel efficiency, officials said, noting it uses regular gas and is rated at 52 city miles per gallon and 45 highway miles per gallon. The Ford Escape is rated at 34 in the city and 30 on the highway.

Choi said four hybrid Honda Civics are also on order for the police department and there are plans in the 2009 capital budget to buy 26 more hybrids. Along with the mayor, township Business Administrator Anthony Cancro drives a hybrid, officials said. The fire chief and police director are expected to receive hybrids also.

Councilwoman Melissa Perilstein congratulated the administration on its initiatives, saying it would "move Edison to a greener future."

Councilwoman Antonia "Toni" Ricigliano also supported the use of hybrids at yesterday's news conference. But she questioned whether the vehicles will be used by employees to commute from their homes outside of Edison. The councilwoman is drafting an addition to the township administrative code that would preclude the use of township vehicles for commuting outside Edison's borders.

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