

City officials hope expo raises awareness about green energy sources

By BEN LEVINE

STAMFORD — The city wants to do everything it can to bring green resources to its residents.

And that is why on Monday, March 14, Mayor Dannel P. Malloy along with Rep. William Tong, D-147, and Sustainable Stamford (the mayor's environmental task force) announced the inaugural Stamford Energy Future Expo.

"The expo is the first of its kind in Stamford, and it's a chance for residents to learn about the renewable and alternative fuel technologies available right now," said Tong, who is a member of the state's Energy and Technology Committee. "The expo allows them access, and then make a meaningful transition in order to have an immediate affect on their energy costs."

Tong said the state has passed major energy reform within the last year, but those changes are more structural. Because of their macro nature, it will take time for residents to see the benefits. Tong hopes the expo will act as an impetus at the city level, moving green-minded residents to take advantage of resources.

The expo will be held on Tuesday, May 20 at the Government Center. Local vendors who offer alternative energy products and services, as well as organizations who participate in conservation and environmental industries, will be in attendance.

The expo is co-sponsored by the Connecticut Light and Power Co., and the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund.

Tong said vendors from a variety of renewable energy industries will be featured at the expose, including solar power, geothermal heating and cooling, wind and hydro energy, wood-burning power and bio-based fuels. Several vendors have already expressed interest in participating, though Malloy did not name any specifically.

The expo will feature two panel discussions; one will be held by representatives from the renewable energy industries and the other will be held by legislators. The discussions are geared to build more awareness of the realities of climate change, and to give citizens a clear course of action they can take in order to make a difference at the city, state and national level.

"Ultimately, we are going to run out of fossil fuels," Malloy said. "We can't continue to do what we're doing and expect to maintain the quality of life we've grown accustomed to. We've got to play a larger role and this forum is a chance to take those steps, and make a better world in which to live."

Barbera Muller, director of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), believes the expo will prove to be

an important day for the city. She said it is vital for the city to pay attention to its energy usage.

The sentiment is close to her heart. Global warming is on the forefront of the AJC's concerns, Muller said.

Muller, who is also a member of the mayor's environmental task force, said the AJC helps to advocate for legislation it believes is beneficial to the state's environment, and helps to reduce the state's reliance on foreign energy sources. Reducing our reliance on oil from overseas is important, Muller said, because our continued use is helping fund both sides of the war in Iraq.

"I'm pleased with the leadership the city has shown," the Stamford resident said. "We need to steer a new path (towards renewable energy), because if we don't we could very well end up with I-95 under water."