

Village of Orland Park Media Relations

NEWSRelease

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Village of Orland Park Unveils Community Wide Green Initiative

“Smart Living Orland Park” Includes Municipal Operations, Residents & Businesses

ORLAND PARK – The Village of Orland Park has unveiled *Smart Living Orland Park*, a comprehensive green initiative for the entire community.

“We’ve been working on this initiative for almost a year and we are anxious to roll it out,” said Orland Park Mayor Dan McLaughlin.

Smart Living Orland Park is comprised of five components, including *Smart Neighborhoods, Smart Living, Smart Business, Smart Village* and *Smart Codes*. The five part plan is encompassed within the village’s ECOMAP, *Energy Efficiency and Conservation Municipal Action Plan*.

Smart Living Orland Park offers guidelines for the wise use of resources. Smart Building encourages green buildings in the community with Smart Codes calling for modernized building codes to encourage green construction and lifestyles. Smart Neighborhood encourages green homes in new subdivisions and with new construction in existing subdivisions.

Explaining the program’s origin, McLaughlin said, “We have been working for many years on being sensitive of our environmental impact and Orland Park has led the way in many areas, including our Open Lands Program, community wide residential recycling and pedestrian oriented developments.”

The mayor continued, “The village received national honors in October, 2007 for developing its new police facility from an existing building and making it a ‘green building.’”

The Orland Park Police Station is the first LEED (Leadership in Engineering and Environmental Design) Gold Certified police station in the country, being a model for energy and resource conservation.

“We wanted to take this further and develop a village wide program that offers incentives for all facets of the community --- residential, commerce and government --- to work together to conserve resources,” McLaughlin explained.

During its first year, Orland Park’s goal is to reduce the energy footprint of the village by 0.5% to 1.5% or begin the downward trend in energy consumption, establishing a benchmark for future reductions.

In November, 2008, Orland Park was one of twelve Chicago area suburbs chosen to participate in the ComEd Challenge. Participating municipalities were chosen because of their demonstrated commitment to sustainability.

"Orland Park was honored to be a part of the challenge, both because of our green efforts thus far and as the only south suburban community named," said Mayor Dan McLaughlin. "Our staff developed an outstanding program of which our Smart Living components are key elements," the mayor added.

Orland Park’s ECOMAP outlines seventeen tasks and more than 100 deliverables and recommendations that will help meet the goals and objectives of the plan while improving the quality of life in Orland Park from an energy perspective.

“Most people want to do the right thing but aren’t sure what to do or how to do it,” McLaughlin said. “The village’s plan gives residents a list of things they can do, from the easiest and least expensive on up to more detailed ways to conserve energy and save money,” the mayor added.

“Our goal is to distill this very comprehensive ECOMAP road map into a packaged, marketable approach that every home and business can understand and be a part of,” said Orland Park Village Manager Paul Grimes.

“Smart Living enables homeowners to gain recognition for obtaining certain attainable levels of sustainability and have fun doing it,” the village manager added.

The village’s plan calls for the revision of code amendments, planning and development review procedures, and municipal economic development loans and incentive programs to increase energy savings.

“Orland Park wants to encourage new green developments throughout the village. We’re hoping to spur this by offering incentives for businesses and developers to build green,” said Development Services Director Karie Friling.

The program targets homes, businesses, schools and faith communities for energy savings and to market energy saving products. Among its objectives is encouraging local architects, engineers and designers to build green and working with contractors to deliver energy saving programs.

“Orland Park is pleased to again take a leadership role in energy conservation,” McLaughlin said. “We’re very proud of our plan that addresses the community as a whole, bringing many facets together for everyone’s benefit,” he added.

Village Planner Nectarios Pittos developed the village’s ECOMAP as part of the village’s entry for the ComEd Challenge and to facilitate the village’s green initiative.

“The plan will help change the way Orland Park residents, businesses and visitors acquire, use and think about energy,” Pittos said.

“For the village, ECOMAP is a first step down the road toward green and sustainable practices and development. It is a forerunner plan that will prepare and position the village for more advanced green and sustainable opportunities in the future,” he added.

Village government will do its part to conserve energy as the plan calls for targeting specific planning and public works projects and goals that reduce traffic congestion, green house gas emissions and save energy. Municipal and public buildings will be targeted for energy savings with the village establishing energy conservation measures.

Parks and Buildings Director Frank Stec is overseeing the village’s portion of the program, Smart Village.

“The village has committed itself to planning for future generations with the energy saving that we’re promoting now,” Stec said. “We currently have three projects underway that illustrate the village’s efforts, including the native landscaping at the police station, our chemical-free Frontier Park in Old Orland and the Native Plant Demonstration Garden outside of the Village Hall,” he added.

Parts of the program already unveiled include the village's "Green Tent" appearing at public events. Explaining how the Recreation Department is delivering the village's message, Recreation Director Nancy Flores said, "We've been distributing information about energy and water conservation, recycling, rain barrels and upcoming gardening programs hosted by the Prairie Godmothers. We've had great interest and feedback from residents asking about the Green Tent Challenge." Flores noted that residents may choose among thirteen easy steps to a "greener life," which lead into the next initiative, the Residential Rewards Program.

Orland Park's Residential Rewards Program targets homes for energy savings. "Homes account for the vast majority of buildings in Orland Park and cumulatively use the most energy," McLaughlin said. "The village will share resources available to reduce energy consumption through a number of programs and policies for home improvements," the mayor added.

McLaughlin noted, "Special effort will be made to reach the special populations of the village, including seniors, those with disabilities and low income residents."

"Our public education efforts will let residents know about the many programs available to conserve energy and save money doing it," the mayor said.

The Village of Orland Park will soon launch its green initiative website at www.smartlivingop.com, offering 24-hour access to energy conservation information and resources.

McLaughlin added, "We're pulling out all stops to actively help the entire community learn more about the importance of energy conservation and all that we can do to make Orland Park one of the top energy conscious communities in the country."