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Andover looks to cut energy costs

Launches process to provide new supplier for residents

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Outreach event

The borough will hold a public meeting to help educate residents about the program and answer their questions on Tuesday, Sept. 23, at 7 p.m. at:

Andover Borough Hall
137 Main St.
Andover, NJ 07821
Phone: 973-786-6688

For more information visit njaggregation.us or call 855-200-2648 Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Andover borough — Andover Borough officials are working with a regional program to reduce electric bills for borough residents, according to a press release from the energy consulting company working on the project.

The borough has joined a cooperative led by Passaic County to pursue Government Energy Aggregation, a state-supported process. Passaic has operated a similar cost-saving cooperative for municipal energy needs for four years.

"GEA adds significant value to the existing cooperative for municipal facilities' gas and electric aggregation," said Passaic County Freeholder Bruce James. "We're glad to pass this additional savings opportunity on to area residents."

Under the GEA program, the county will aggregate the energy needs of eligible residents in Andover and other participating towns, then seek bids on this pool from more than 30 state-licensed energy suppliers. The suppliers bid their lowest rates in exchange for this potentially large volume of business, the release states.

According to the release, there is no cost to the borough or residents for these services, and Andover is not obligated to accept any bids.

Residents may also opt out of the cost-saving program at any time. Andover is joining about 15 other municipalities in the co-op called the Passaic County Energy Cooperative Pricing System to maximize savings to residents.

"We've enthusiastically embraced this program to offer our residents this outstanding opportunity to lower their monthly utility bills," said Mayor John Morgan.

Borough officials aim to save residents an amount equal to about one-to-two months of energy costs per year, according to the firm.



If your energy bill is currently \$250 a month, you could save about \$250 to \$400 a year through the program, according to the release.

GEA is like buying energy in bulk, so the price is much lower than what an individual household would traditionally pay, said Morgan. The local economy should benefit, too, because residents will have more money to spend at our shops and businesses.

GEA, created by the N.J. Board of Public Utilities and the Rate Counsel (formerly known as the Ratepayer Advocate), is designed to help people take advantage of

energy deregulation and cut energy costs. Aggregation refers to customers who form a group to purchase

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energy.

State government already sets residential utility rates, noted Freeholder James. GEA offers a way to compete against the government rate, he explained.

With GEA, the utility that serves a residence will not change. In Andover, for instance, JCPandL would continue to handle customer accounts, respond to outages and maintain services. The only changes would be the energy supplier (the company that makes the energy for your home), the lower energy costs, and the supplier information on your utility bill.

The county expects to run a live, online energy auction on residents behalf in mid-October or later, depending on market conditions. This highly efficient, web-based process enables state-licensed energy suppliers to provide bids on the same day, at the same time, providing for a true apples-to-apples comparison based on the energy market.

Andover officials will then have the option to accept or reject the bids. If the borough accepts a bid, the new rate would go into effect about 90 days after the auction. If the borough rejects all bids, no changes will occur.

If a bid is accepted, residents will have 30 days to opt out of the program before it starts. You can also opt-out anytime thereafter, without fees or penalties. All residents who have not already switched to a different (third-party) energy supplier will be automatically included.

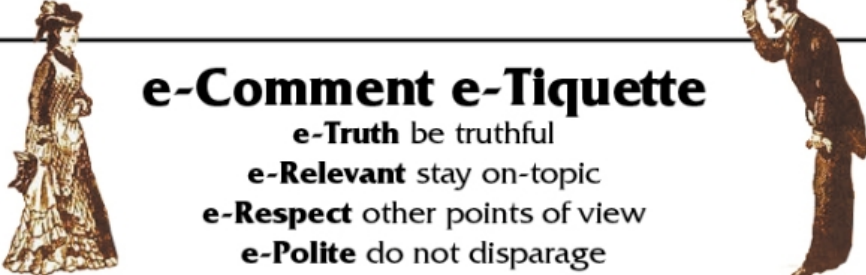
Under the terms of the planned auction, rates are fixed for up to 24 months, with no early cancellation fees, penalties or fine print for customers. At the end of this period, another auction could be held. Residents would again have the option to stay with the program or opt-out, based on the new rates.

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