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## Wayne to cut residents' energy costs

*The township has joined a county group to lower residents' energy bills through a state-supported process called energy aggregation.*

By Julie Walsh (Open Post) (/users/advocare-communicationsc22d240879ee6d7e92e66e9fbe8fe9e14d6387e1f0a73d0be4bb8b794b11b699)

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### Wayne launches process to cut residents' energy costs

***Township joins county group to seek lowest bids from dozens of energy suppliers; Public meetings scheduled for Nov. 17, 2014***

The Township of Wayne is working with a county-run program to help reduce electric bills for township residents.

The Township has joined Passaic County's cooperative to pursue Government Energy Aggregation (<https://www.njaggregation.us/about-the-program.html>) (GEA), a state-supported process. The Township has participated in a similar County-operated cost-saving cooperative for municipal energy needs for the past few years.

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

Under the GEA program, the County will aggregate the energy needs of eligible residents in the Township 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.

There is no cost to the Township or residents for these services, and the Township is not obligated to accept any bids. Residents may also opt out of the cost-saving program at any time. Wayne is joining about 12 other municipalities in the co-op – called the Passaic County Energy Cooperative Pricing System – to maximize savings to residents.

“We are always looking for cost savings opportunities for our residents and we just felt that this was a good way to provide that opportunity to them,” said Mayor Christopher Vergano. “It is anticipated that residents should, on average, be able to save an amount equal to about one to two months of energy costs per year. In other words, if your energy bill is currently \$250 a month, you could save about \$250 - \$400 a year through this program.”

Councilwoman Lonni Miller-Ryan, who is helping to coordinate this program, added: “Our residents will now have the same chance to save that large utility customers have.” Miller-Ryan went on to state that “on top of that, there’s an unbeatable price guarantee. If Public Service or Jersey Central lowers its rate, this program will match that lower rate, yet the original bid rate will never increase throughout the life of the contract.”

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 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 Wayne, for instance, PSE&G or JCP&L 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 early December 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.

Township officials will then have the option to accept or reject the bids. If the Township accepts a bid, the new rate would go into effect about 90 days after the auction. If the Township 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 electing to opt out any time prior to the expiration of the contract. 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.

## **Outreach Events Planned**

The Township will hold public meetings to help educate residents about the program and answer their questions on Monday, Nov. 17, 2014, at 4 and 7 pm at the Municipal Building in Health Room #2.

For more information, please visit njaggregation.us (<http://www.njaggregation.us>) or call (855) 200-2648 toll-free, Monday through Friday between 9 am and 5 pm. Check the Township website for updates: [www.waynetownship.com](http://www.waynetownship.com) (<http://www.waynetownship.com>).

Residents who wish to opt-out of the rate-lowering program will have the opportunity to do so and will receive a notice explaining how to opt out. Additionally, residents can visit [njaggregation.us](http://www.njaggregation.us) (<http://www.njaggregation.us>) or simply call. #####

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