

Gwinnett County Government NEWS RELEASE

Charles E. Bannister, Chairman
Board of Commissioners

Heather W. Sawyer
Public Relations Manager
Phone: 770.822.7035
Fax: 770.822.7189

Story contact: Dennis Baxter
Department of Support Services
770.822.7042
dennis.baxter@gwinnettcountry.com

GWINNETT COUNTY TAKES ENERGY STAR® CHALLENGE AND ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH EPA'S ENERGY STAR® PROGRAM

(Lawrenceville, Ga., July 16, 2009) – In a positive step toward reducing energy use, Gwinnett County has taken the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) ENERGY STAR Challenge and announced a fundamental commitment to protect the environment by becoming an ENERGY STAR Partner.

The ENERGY STAR Challenge, launched by EPA in March 2005, calls for an energy efficiency improvement of 10 percent or more for the more than five million commercial and industrial buildings in the United States. Energy is often generated by burning fossil fuels, which emits greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Forty-five percent of US greenhouse gas emissions are caused by buildings and industrial facilities. Making more efficient use of energy is the best starting point for reducing our carbon footprint and saving money.

The Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners established a goal for the County to improve its environmental sustainability. "In most instances, 'going green' means starting with energy," said Dennis Baxter, environmental sustainability program coordinator. "We see the ENERGY STAR Challenge and Partnership as part of a logical progression in improving our overall environmental sustainability; we can reduce our energy use and save money while protecting the environment."

The potential savings are staggering. EPA estimates that if the energy efficiency of commercial and industrial buildings in the US improved by 10 percent, Americans would reduce greenhouse gas emissions equal to those from about 30 million vehicles while saving about \$20 billion.

Today, leading companies realize that energy efficiency is not only the first step in being green, but it is also smart business. Energy efficiency improvements can yield a high return on investment and are necessary in order to remain competitive. Businesses, organizations and governments that are leaders in energy efficiency use about 30 percent less energy than their competitors.

-more-

Gwinnett County Government NEWS RELEASE

Charles E. Bannister, Chairman
Board of Commissioners

Heather W. Sawyer
Public Relations Manager
Phone: 770.822.7035
Fax: 770.822.7189

ENERGY STAR Program/Page 2

“There is no single best solution for energy efficiency. Each organization should develop its own individual approach based on its perception of risks, opportunities, targets, available resources, and schedules,” Baxter said. “By partnering with ENERGY STAR and participating in the ENERGY STAR Challenge, the EPA provides the tools and resources to help organizations identify areas for improving energy efficiency and developing a strategic energy management plan.”

"ENERGY STAR partners such as Gwinnett County are leading the fight against global warming by improving the efficiency of their buildings and facilities," said Kathleen Hogan, director of EPA's Climate Protection Partnership Division. "We applaud these efforts to help protect our global environment for generations to come."

ENERGY STAR, a federal government backed program, is a voluntary program that sets standards for superior energy efficiency in buildings, products, and services. To date, more than 1,500 organizations and individuals have joined the ENERGY STAR Challenge, including more than 270 local governments and about two-thirds of the nation's state governments.

###