



## SUSTAINABLE HUDSON VALLEY



## News Release

August 17, 2010

For Release: Immediately

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### **Red Hook Challenges itself to use less energy**

The Town and Village of Red Hook have become the first communities to adopt the innovative energy-saving campaign, the Ten Percent Challenge. Endorsed by the Town and Village boards, the campaign challenges communities, businesses, institutions and households to reduce their fossil fuels use by 10 percent and also motivate 10 percent of their citizens, employees, or social contacts to become involved. Designed and spearheaded by Sustainable Hudson Valley, the campaign is supported by partners including Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation, Mid-Hudson Energy Smart Communities, the Student Conservation Association's AmeriCorps team, and the local leadership coalition Red Hook Together.

The Ten Percent Challenge is a grassroots campaign calling on individuals and organizations to take simple actions that, when taken together on a large scale, make a measurable difference in energy use, environmental protection and economic security. Sustainable Hudson Valley is a regional organization that speeds up the shift to a low-carbon economy while promoting a high quality of life for all.

According to Melissa Everett, Ph.D., Executive Director of Sustainable Hudson Valley, "Public attitudes are changing in a good way. People realize that wasting energy is not in anyone's best interest. But there's a gap between attitudes and common behavior, and that gap will only be closed if we work together and nudge each other forward. This ambitious pilot project is intended

to develop a model that can be replicated in other Hudson Valley communities, and potentially on a much broader scale.

“The key to this campaign is participation and collaboration,” said Everett. “Central Hudson has provided seed funding for this important initiative, as well as targeting outreach for their home and business energy efficiency programs in Red Hook, making them a natural partner. Central Hudson is one of the leading utilities nationally in its support for solar energy, as well as continuously expanding its energy efficiency programs. Mid Hudson Energy Smart Communities, which educates, promotes and coordinates energy efficiency programs offered through the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), is another strategic partner bringing education and financial assistance into the campaign.”

Sustainable Hudson Valley has enlisted a volunteer force of 30 AmeriCorps members to educate households and businesses in Red Hook about programs and opportunities offered by Central Hudson and NYSERDA to save energy, including refrigerator and air conditioner recycling, energy audits, and rebates for qualifying upgrades. On Aug. 19, these trained volunteers will visit homes and businesses, as well as staff information tables in five Red Hook locations. In addition to the AmeriCorps canvass, residents will have an opportunity to learn about the Ten Percent Challenge on Sept. 25 at the community’s popular festival, Hardscrabble Day, which will feature The Average White Band and an energy/environment exhibit area.

Businesses will be introduced to the initiative at the Red Hook Chamber of Commerce Breakfast Meeting on Aug. 19 at the Red Hook Golf Club, where they can sign up for a free energy assessment from Central Hudson and be introduced to NYSERDA’s rebate programs. Two prominent businesses, Agway and the IGA Supermarket, have already signed up for audits in advance to get the campaign rolling.

“We’re excited to participate in this region-wide initiative, to help our customers reduce their energy use and save money, protect the region’s unique environment and improve our communities,” said James P. Laurito, President of Central Hudson. “We encourage our residential and business customers to take advantage of our energy efficiency programs, and to learn as much as they can about energy conservation through the Ten Percent Challenge.”

Town Supervisor Sue Crane commented, “We are so proud of our forward-thinking community and the amazing volunteers who have driven this initiative forward. We all recognize this is an era when we have to work together across geographic and political boundaries. This Ten

Percent Challenge campaign moves us forward in that regard, and the expertise of our interested and committed citizens is the greatest kind of reward. We're privileged to be part of this important and dynamic effort. Involving 10 percent of our residents as leaders seems daunting, but we're up for it."

Brenda Cagle of the Red Hook Conservation Advisory Council added, "We're very excited about the Ten Percent Challenge that Red Hook has taken! The Town has been working on energy conservation and efficiency for many years and 'taking the Challenge' will help get the whole community involved. Residents will learn how to reduce energy use while saving money, having fun, helping the environment, and working with their neighbors. We are a Climate Smart Community, have completed a greenhouse gas inventory, and secured grant funding for solar installations. This is the time to keep the momentum going and invite our residents to participate. It should be a great year."

Also adopted by the Town of Warwick, the Ten Percent Challenge Campaign will award a free solar hot water system to the first community that achieves a measurable 10- percent reduction goal, courtesy of EarthKind Energy. Prestige Toyota, Williams Lumber, and other area businesses are also sponsors of the campaign.

For more information on Sustainable Hudson Valley and to make a commitment to the Ten Percent Challenge, visit [www.sustainhv.org](http://www.sustainhv.org); for information on Central Hudson's Energy Efficiency programs, visit [www.SavingsCentral.com](http://www.SavingsCentral.com); and to learn more about energy efficiency programs offered through NYSERDA, visit [www.GetEnergySmart.org](http://www.GetEnergySmart.org).

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