

Good afternoon.

I am honored to be here with my peers who are being recognized today as Smart Energy Communities and among such an esteemed group of individuals who are committed to being energy smart.

In Bowie we have always tried to be efficient about our energy use, but in 2008, we decided to step up our game when it came to energy and the environment.

We made a firm commitment then to becoming a leader in the energy arena and embarked on a new approach to protecting the local environment and reducing energy consumption, and quite frankly to saving some money.

We have made energy efficiency a part of every facility project, we have involved employees in identifying and promoting opportunities for conservation, and we have leveraged grant funding for programs, and for helping seniors make their homes more energy efficient.

Some of those facility projects include:

- A new LEED Silver Certified Parks and Grounds Facility built in 2008 with a geothermal heating and cooling system.
- A new 80,000 square foot LEED Gold Certified City Hall that opened in 2011.
- A 4 Mega Watt (MW) solar array on City owned property, which we understand is one of the largest municipal solar arrays in Maryland. This project will provide approximately 61% of the City's electrical consumption from renewable energy. It will result in cost avoidance to the City of over \$7 million during the 20 year life of this project.

We also created a Renewable Energy Technology Capital Improvement Program in 2012, funded at \$50,000 per year. These monies, along with Maryland Smart Energy Communities Grant funds and a Department of Energy Grant, have allowed us to construct photovoltaic systems at six City facilities.

Our employees have embraced the increased focus on energy efficiency as well.

- In 2010, with the help of a consultant, we developed a Comprehensive Efficiency and Conservation Strategy. Thirty-three (33) specific action strategies were identified to save energy in City operations and to encourage energy conservation in the community.
- We formed a Municipal Green Team and an Employee Energy Ambassador Program to educate and promote smart energy use throughout the organization. From things as simple as closing blinds at the end of the day, to turning off equipment when not in use, to encouraging double-sided printing, we have made conservation a habit in all of our municipal buildings.
- Our vehicle fleet includes hybrids and in the last year we have added two electric motorcycles for the Police Department and an electric car to the fleet. Not only do these vehicles save energy, they demonstrate to employees and to the public, how practical energy efficient vehicles can be.

We have also involved the community in identifying ways to make conservation a priority.

- In 2010, we introduced a Senior Housing Rehabilitation Program funded by HUD/CDBG. For eligible seniors, this program:
 - Performs free home energy audits.
 - Funds energy efficiency improvements such as installing new insulation and energy efficient appliances.
 - To date, 130 seniors have benefited from this program and approximately \$1.3 million dollars has been spent.
- We provided rebates of \$100 to any homeowner who wished to have an energy audit performed by BGE.
- We set an aggressive tree canopy goal for Bowie and also sponsored a program to provide rebates for the planting of trees on private property.

- This year, with Maryland Sun, we organized a very popular solar energy co-operative to educate about solar energy options and to negotiate a group rate for those who decide to have solar panels installed on their homes.
- And finally, we have been assisted in all of our outreach efforts by our Environmental Advisory Committee and our Green Team, which are made up of citizen volunteers who advise the Council on environmental matters and actively work with staff to implement our Green Team Action Plan.

These are just a few of the highlights of what we have done, but I think they illustrate how important these steps can be to a sustainable future for Bowie. Having tangible and effective programs that can reduce energy consumption and promote the use of renewable energy is critical. But we have not done this alone. Programs such as the Maryland Smart Energy Communities Grants have helped us to achieve our goals; and the assistance of the Maryland Energy Administration and the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center have been invaluable in guiding us along the way.

The message that I would like to leave you with is that ours is a multi-faceted approach to energy efficiency and conservation. Elected officials can set policies, but the real successes come only when you lead by example and when you involve your community and your employees in making real and lasting changes.