

Upper Village B.I.A.

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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Government and community join together to promote energy-saving initiatives

Councillor Joe Mihevc and others to attend first annual Eco-Fair

Toronto, ON – September 12, 2003 – Toronto City Councillor Joe Mihevc will join local MPP Michael Bryant, and MP Carolyn Bennett at the first annual Upper Village Eco-Fair on Eglinton Avenue West on Saturday September 13 to promote energy efficiency in **POST-BLACKOUT** Toronto.

“I think we discovered in the aftermath of last month’s blackout that there are solutions out there that make economic and environmental sense, and need not reduce anyone’s quality of life,” said Councillor Mihevc. “I’m happy to be supporting this project, because some of these retailers had already committed to energy savings initiatives well before the Blackout.”

The program is part of a unique partnership between the Upper Village Business Improvement Area and Greenest City, a local environmental group. Councillor Mihevc, Mr. Bryant and Ms. Bennett will be handing out FREE compact fluorescent lightbulbs to over 100 retailers located on Eglinton Ave. West in Toronto. Compact fluorescent lightbulbs save 75% of energy costs, last 10 times longer and help to significantly reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Bryant sees the project as a way to engage an often overlooked sector. “Small retailers were the public face during the Blackout,” he said. “Providing them with low-cost solutions to energy efficiency will spur further action in the community.”

Ms. Bennett echoed these comments. “The Blackout was a wake-up call. It’s important to use it as a further call to action,” Bennett said. “I’m really happy to be part of a unique partnership between small retailers and an environmental group. They are proving that by working together, environmental health and local economic development need not be separate goals.”

Mihevc, Bryant and Bennett will be present to promote the Eglinton Ave. West strip (between Allen Rd. and Bathurst St.) as the greenest retail strip in Canada. The Eco-Fair will run from 11:00am-6:00pm and also include a sidewalk sale, restaurant sampling, arts and crafts for kids and environmental technology displays.

In the fall of 2002, the Upper Village Business Improvement Area initiated the project in an effort to promote environmental and social well-being in the community. They invited Greenest City to partner with them on the project. Greenest City's Cool Shops program works with street-facing retailers in Toronto neighbourhoods to identify and implement in-store energy management measures to reduce energy use, save on utility costs, and improve environmental health. For more information, visit www.greenestcity.org.

The joint program is being funded by the Toronto Atmospheric Fund.

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