

## **More Details about HES and CT SolarChallenge**

In addition to the Council of Beaches meeting, Westbrook will be introducing both the Home Energy Solutions and CTSolarChallenge programs at the Senior Center (lower level of Town Hall) at 11:00 AM on September 17th. Personnel from each program will make presentations. Then there will be individual workshops for each program held later, with the vendors attending to answer detailed questions.

The Home Energy Solutions Program (HES) is an audit of a homeowner's or renter's dwelling, which involves a blower test to determine air leaks, and then personnel caulk cracks, add door sweeps, and other sealing as appropriate. They also provide several compact florescent light (CFL) and light emitting diode (LED) bulbs and then sit down with the recipient to review their findings, make recommendations for energy savings on the property, and provide rebate certificates for insulation, heating, hot water and air conditioning equipment replacements or upgrades. The cost is \$99, with \$25 being rebated to the Town's Social Services Fuel Assistance Donation Fund. Property owners typically see an average of \$200 in annual energy savings that result from the visit.

<http://energizect.com/residents/programs/home-energy-solutions-core-services>

Residents with income levels below 60% of the state median for their family size qualify for the income eligible program, which is free. One can determine their eligibility at the following site:

<http://energizect.com/residents/programs/save-energy-and-money-all-year-long/>

Westbrook's Solar Challenge is a town-wide program in which residents can save some 25% on installation costs through group purchasing. Solar electric or solar hot water systems can be purchased or leased, with monthly costs lower than one's electric bill. The installation is eligible for a rebate of about 15% from the state's

Clean Energy Communities program, plus a 30% federal tax credit.

The most efficient installations are on south-facing roofs or adjacent land without much shading from trees, but roofs that are north-south in alignment can still install systems, with some loss of efficiency.

Electricity produced in excess of the home's needs is fed back into the electric grid, and residents receive a credit on their electric bill, which could eliminate energy consumption charges and leave them with only the monthly delivery charge (a flat fee, currently \$16.00).

<http://ctsolarchallenge.com/westbrook/>

The initial Westbrook SolarChallenge workshop will be held at the Westbrook Library and then at the High School on McVeagh Road on September 9th and October 7th, respectively (more details on the web site above).

The Town of Westbrook benefits from residents' participation in both programs, earning credits toward cash grants for energy efficiency purposes or free solar panels for installation on town or school buildings. Westbrook is close to earning its first \$5,000 grant and has qualified for one and a half solar panels so far due to prior actions of the Town and residents.

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In addition, the Westbrook Energy Committee's website (link on the Town's website) will have Town-specific info on the programs including any additional dates, added in the next couple of weeks.