



Eastern Connecticut State University

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Connecticut's Municipal Leaders to Share Sustainability Successes

Municipal Forum coordinated by Eastern's Institute for Sustainable Energy

Willimantic, Conn. – More than 85 representatives from municipalities across Connecticut will gather on Sept. 17 in Middletown to share best practices on making their towns more sustainable. The statewide forum, *Climate Change and Sustainability: Practical Solutions for Your Municipality*,” is being convened by the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern Connecticut State University, in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

The agenda features presentations by Connecticut mayors, town managers, planners, economic development directors and other municipal professionals. They will discuss the challenges and successes of their sustainability initiatives, ranging from transit-oriented development, resilience and climate adaptation to microgrids, eco-tech parks, energy retrofits, composting and local sustainable foods.

David Kooris, director of the Office of Planning and Economic Development for the City of Bridgeport, will speak about Bridgeport's comprehensive approach to sustainability. The city created a blueprint for sustainability in 2010, “BGreen 2020.” Since then Bridgeport has worked to reclaim degraded industrial land on the west side of the city. This eco-tech park is attracting companies that create “green” jobs through recycling and clean energy. The city also won a national Rebuild by Design competition focused on making Bridgeport's coastal communities more storm ready and resilient in preparation for future major storm events.

“I know that many Connecticut cities and towns share our vision of becoming cleaner and greener,” said Kooris. “We look forward to sharing our sustainability accomplishments and challenges and learning from our peers at the upcoming municipal forum.”

Two special guests — municipal leaders from New Jersey — will share the successes of “Sustainable Jersey,” a vibrant network and movement of more than 400 New Jersey municipalities and 300 schools and school districts working collectively to achieve a sustainable future. The rapidly growing program was created by a broad coalition of stakeholders which has set standards and best practices for sustainable actions communities can take. Participating municipalities receive support, certification and recognition for meeting a set of rigorous standards.

Commissioner Rob Klee of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection will discuss the importance of local action and municipal leadership in meeting the state's ambitious climate change targets. Klee chairs the newly created Governor's Council on Climate Change.

“There are so many great examples of towns in Connecticut that are showing strong leadership and taking action on climate change,” said Lynn Stoddard, director of the Institute for

Sustainable Energy. “We want to make sure that these stories are heard and that our towns learn from their peers and support each other in the next steps. It will be an inspiring day.”

The Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation, Common Sense Fund and Hampshire Foundation are providing support for the municipal forum. For more information or to register for the forum, visit tiny.cc/ctforum.

Eastern Connecticut State University is the state of Connecticut’s public liberal arts university, serving more than 5,300 students annually at its Willimantic campus and satellite locations. In addition to attracting students from 161 of Connecticut’s 169 towns, Eastern also draws students from 25 other states and 18 other countries. A residential campus offering 38 majors and 55 minors, Eastern offers students a strong liberal art foundation grounded in an array of applied learning opportunities. Ranked in the top 30 public universities in the North Region by U.S. News and World Report in its 2016 Best College ratings, Eastern has also been awarded “Green Campus” status by the U.S. Green Building Council six years in a row. For more information, visit www.easternct.edu.

The Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern is supported by the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund and foundation grants and works with state agencies, municipalities, colleges, universities, K-12 schools and others to implement practical solutions that increase energy efficiency, sustainability and resilience. The Institute believes that a sustainable world is possible and works to help make that possibility a reality.

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