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Contact: Contact: Martha Lieblich, Chair, Leonia Environmental Commission
Phone 201-592-7887
Email mlieblich@leonianj.gov

Small Changes Make a Difference

Driving smarter can save you money and keep the air cleaner

Do you love road rage, brown skylines, searching for parking and traffic jams? These things are not only unpleasant, but they also cause air pollution that damages the environment and makes people sick. And Leonia's air pollution indexes for carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide are more than 50 percent worse than nationwide indexes.*

That's why the Leonia Environmental Commission is encouraging residents to make a few simple changes in everyday habits that can help clean up the air and save money too. "Small changes make a difference," explains Commission Chair Martha Lieblich. "How you drive and maintain your vehicle can affect your fuel efficiency and gas costs. And a well maintained car also belches out less pollution."

The Commission encourages local drivers to take the Drive Smarter Challenge, an initiative of the Alliance to Save Energy (www.ase.org). They offer these simple tips that can add up to savings worth weeks of groceries or other needs for you and your family.

- **Tune up.** Fixing a car that is noticeably out of tune or has failed an emissions test can improve its gas mileage by an average of 4 percent – saving up to 20 gallons of gasoline and about \$56. Fixing a faulty oxygen sensor can improve mileage by as much as 40 percent – saving up to 320 gallons of gasoline or up to \$1,218 per year.
- **Select the right oil.** Using the manufacturer's recommended grade of motor oil can improve gas mileage by 1 to 2 percent, resulting in annual savings of up to \$37. Motor oil that says "Energy Conserving" on the API performance symbol contains friction-reducing additives. To save even more money, change your oil regularly to extend the life of your vehicle. And remember to recycle used oil which, with proper controls, can be safely reused as a fuel or re-refined back to a lube oil.
- **Inflate your tires.** Keeping your tires properly inflated is simple and improves gas mileage by around 3 percent, saving as much as 14 gallons of gasoline, or up to \$56.
- **Turn your ignition off** when waiting for trains to pass at railroad crossings, at drive through windows, when stalled in traffic for long periods, or while fueling your car. Vehicles that idle 10 minutes per day waste more than 29 gallons of fuel each year. At \$4/per gallon that's a savings of \$116.
- **Curb road rage.** Speeding, jackrabbit starts and rapid braking can lower gas mileage by 33 percent at highway speeds. Drivers can save up to 240 gallons of gasoline—about \$913-- by driving sensibly on the highway.
- **Carpool.** Using the average U.S. work commute of 12.1 miles, commuters could save about \$159 a year by carpooling twice a week with two other people in a vehicle that gets 20.1 miles per gallon – assuming three passengers share the cost of gas.

- **Drive less.** By cutting your vehicle miles traveled by just 5 percent by combining trips, walking, biking, or taking public transportation, you can save up to \$91 per year on gasoline costs. Walking and biking are good for your health too!

While the figures above are based on averages, you can find out how much money you can save by making simple changes in the way you drive and care for your own vehicle by using the Drive Smart Challenge online calculator at <http://nonflash.drivesmarterchallenge.org/>.

Find out more at Leonia Day

Walking more and driving less is another way to keep the air cleaner and save money on gas. That's why the Leonia Environmental Commission is rolling out its **Walk Leonia** campaign at Leonia Day on May 20 from 1-5PM at Wood Park behind the Library at 227 Fort Lee Road. Residents can stop by the Commission's information booth to pick up a new walking map of the Borough that shows how fast and easy it can be to get around town on foot. School-age children who stop by with their parents will also receive a free **Walk Leonia** compass/emergency whistle to use on their walks around town.

The Leonia Environmental Commission, one of the first environmental commissions in New Jersey, is appointed by the Mayor to advise the town on conservation, open space preservation, water resources, solid waste management and other environmental matters. The Commission meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:30PM in the Committee Room of the Leonia Borough Hall, 312 Broad Avenue. The public is welcome to attend. For information call 201-592-7887, email mlieblich@leonianj.gov or visit the Environmental Commission page on the Borough's web site at www.leonianj.gov.

* Leonia, NJ Pollution Levels and Indexes: http://www.clrsearch.com/Leonias_Demographics/NJ/Pollution-Levels

References:

- The Drive Smarter Challenge
<http://drivesmarterchallenge.org/money-saving-tips/Default.aspx>
- How to Reduce Vehicle Emissions http://www.ehow.com/how_2078060_reduce-vehicle-emissions.html
- Crissy Trask, "It's Easy Being Green – A Handbook for Earth-Friendly Living"