

Citywide Rollout of Wilmington's Incentive-Based Recycling Program Continues with Support from Congressman Castle -- May 7, 2007

Wilmington, DE -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle joined Wilmington Mayor James M. Baker today at the intersection of 20th and Franklin Streets to lend his support to Wilmington's first incentive-based, curbside recycling program and witness firsthand the level of participation throughout the City's neighborhoods. At today's event, Mayor Baker also shared some preliminary results from the ongoing citywide rollout of the incentive-based recycling program.

The City of Wilmington's recycling initiative began as a six-month pilot program launched in June of 2006 in six geographic areas of the City. Based on the success of the pilot program, Mayor Baker, with the support of the Clean Wilmington Committee, made the decision to extend the program citywide. The three-phase citywide rollout began in mid-March and will be completed later this month.

"Our recycling program was initially targeted for approximately 6,800 households in the pilot program," said Mayor Baker. "The results of the six-month pilot period indicated we were successfully diverting approximately 35% to 37% of trash from the pilot area into recycling rather than to the landfill, so we decided to take the voluntary program citywide."

Mayor Baker said the City delivered recycle bins to about 9,400 homes in March and late April with another 7,000 homes scheduled to receive their recycling bins later in this month. When completed, the RecycleBank program will involve approximately 23,000 to 24,000 residential properties throughout Wilmington."

Mayor Baker said initial results of the Citywide rollout are encouraging. 51% of new households that have received bins are recycling just about every week while nearly 80% of total households are recycling less frequently, but still on a consistent basis. He said those results nearly match the success of the pilot program. The Mayor said the diversion rate after the addition of new residential dwellings over the past month or so is down a few percentage points from the 35% to 37% rate of the pilot program but is expected to increase as more property owners and renter get used to how the recycling program works. Public Works officials also noted that the diversion rate is down slightly because overall trash volume increases each spring as residents get involved in neighborhood and community clean-up efforts.

Wilmington's recycling program, in partnership with RecycleBank, a Philadelphia-based recycling company, is one of the first in the country to implement a system which rewards households for the amount of materials recycled with "RecycleBank dollars" that can be redeemed at more than 100 participating retail outlets.

"As with so many other initiatives, Delaware is once again leading the way for the rest of America by the implementation of this highly successful new recycling program in Wilmington. I am proud to support Mayor Baker as his administration rolls-out this important initiative and encourage the rest of Delaware as well as cities throughout the country to consider moving forward with similar incentive-based recycling programs. The fight against global warming is one that we must all

work together on and this is a perfect example of a City actively trying to get its citizens involved. It is no longer an option for any of us to sit on the sidelines and not take action to help our environment," Castle said.

Mayor Baker credits RecycleBank for making Wilmington one of the leading cities in the country in terms of measurable results from recycling. RecycleBank Chief Operating Office Scott Lamb said the company is very pleased to have been able to bring its incentive-based recycling program to the residents of Wilmington. "We are delighted to be a part of the Wilmington community; Mayor Baker's environmental vision is truly an example of social responsibility with his support of the RecycleBank program. Together, we will work to increase landfill diversion rates while fueling local economies and creating a greener place live and work."

Also present at today's ceremony was Howard G. Scholl, Jr., President of the Triangle Neighborhood Association, in whose neighborhood the event was held. Like most City residents, Scholl is enthusiastic about the recycling program. "I would hope the Triangle Neighborhood is helping to set the pace for this recycling program by encouraging our neighbors to become involved on a consistent basis," said Scholl. "This program is voluntary, so we have to do our part as active community leaders to encourage people to recycle. Trash disposal will continue to be a problem long into the future, but in Wilmington we are trying to do something that can help set the tone throughout Delaware and this region."

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