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North Brentwood hosts second annual Going Green Expo *by Daniel J. Gross*
Staff Writer

Rather than the typical board game, DVD or food basket raffle prize, energy-efficient light bulbs and low-water flush toilet systems were given out at North Brentwood Community Center on Saturday, when residents and visitors turned out to North Brentwood's second annual Going Green Expo.

The town hosted the annual event as a way to encourage residents to live environmentally friendly lifestyles and provide information on how to do so.

About 20 different vendors came to the event to showcase a product or offer a service that focuses on environmentally sustainable living and learning. Organizations including the Prince George's Master Gardeners, Viridian Energy and the Anacostia Watershed Society were invited to host booths at the event to share information to residents as North Brentwood strives to be more environmentally friendly, said Maryanne Anthony, North Brentwood's town manager.

She said the event, which attracted more than 300 people over the course of Saturday's four-hour event, was more about education rather than selling products.

"There are not many 'green' events like this, because the whole thing is about educating people. Everything here is free other than food, to give people the information," she said. "We want to make this town as green as possible and educating people on what their alternatives are."

She said they invited Viridian, a Connecticut-based energy company that supplies solar and wind energy to Prince George's County residents, to encourage them to switch to solar power for their homes. Anthony said the town installed solar panels on their municipal building last year.

In addition to informational vendors, the town sponsored an "e-cycling" program for residents to bring their old electronics to be recycled, a paper-shredding stand to recycle paper and had on display a 2011 Chevrolet Volt, a new hybrid electric vehicle known as the most fuel-efficient car in the U.S., Anthony said. They also had local steel drum band Pan Masters play music during the event.

Raffle prizes were also given out such as energy-efficient light bulbs and low-water flush toilet systems for water conservation.

Brent Bolin, Anacostia Watershed Society director of advocacy, said the organization came to the event to talk with residents about any issues they are seeing with the watershed and promote some of their educational programs, such as their canoeing, hiking and biking events.

"North Brentwood, where we are now, sits right on bank of the Anacostia [River]. So we're talking to people about what they experience and the policy measures that we're advocating for in terms of flooding in their community and storm water runoff and things like that," he said.

Amy Adler, who coordinated the Going Green Expo, is an intern with the town of North Brentwood and said the town met weekly since June to organize vendors and plan activities.

"Our basic goal was to provide services and information on how they can green their households, green their lives and their everyday routine," she said.

Anthony said the town hopes to expand the event each year with more vendors and demonstrations.
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