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City, Wesleyan plan Earth Day activities

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MIDDLETOWN — The city is holding a ceremony at 12:30 p.m. on Friday at the Municipal Building's front lawn to celebrate Earth Day.

City officials, environmental organizations and representatives from Wesleyan University will be attending the event that will highlight a number of environmentally-friendly initiatives.

Pete McCloskey, former Republican congressman and co-chairman of the first Earth Day in 1970, is speaking on Thursday at 8 p.m. in room 100 of Wesleyan's Center for Film Studies.

On Friday the first year of recycling electronic equipment and fourth year of sneaker recycling will be kicked-off.

Electronic waste is dangerous because it contains heavy metals, according to Bob Kalizewski, state Department of Environmental Protection ombudsmen.

"It's a growing problem," Kalizewski said.

The DEP is doing a year-long review of the electronic waste management process to try find a way to remove the devices' heavy metals found in ash after their incineration.

The 50-page "Open Space Guidebook," a review of the

"The guidebook is an excellent resource for people and families interested in Middletown's natural environment and shows the importance of open space land purchased to date," said Stoane.

Open space, she said, is vanishing.

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The university and city are also using the day to focus on the CTCleanEnergy-Options "20% by 2010 Campaign", which would make the city eligible to get a free solar energy system for every 100 residents or businesses that sign up.

The program's goal is have 20 percent of a community's energy needs met with renewable sources.

The university is going to buy 100 gigawatts, equivalent to 100 homes, according to Mayor Dominique Thornton.

She said they are now challenging residents to become a part of the conservation effort.

"This is an historic partnership between the city and a large institutional user," said Thornton.

Thornton is encouraging residents to bring their utility bills to join the program. Connecticut Light & Power and United Illuminating customers can participate.

"There are bill inserts that point to two companies that offer options to purchase renewable energy," said Mitch Gross, CL&P spokesman.