



# NEWS

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## **Shapiro Touts Montco Energy Savings Program to Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce**

**East Norriton, PA (April 30, 2013)** – Montgomery County Commission Chairman Josh Shapiro today outlined the aggressive steps the county is taking to reduce energy consumption by 50 percent.

Shapiro delivered the opening remarks at a program sponsored by the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce at the headquarters of the Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. in East Norriton.

“As the 5<sup>th</sup> largest employer in Montgomery County with over 2.3 million square feet of office space, we have a responsibility to lead and we are,” Shapiro said. “It’s good for the environment, and great for the taxpayers, who will save millions by the time we are done.”

Shapiro told the group that the county has about one million square feet of space in just four office buildings – One Montgomery Plaza, the county courthouse and the county’s Human Services Center in Norristown and the Willow Grove Annex.

“We realize that the county is a major consumer of energy, and we realize that we have a responsibility to pursue efficiencies wherever possible,” Shapiro said. He pointed out that when his administration took office the annual energy costs at the 10-story One Montgomery Plaza across from the courthouse cost the county \$400,000, while the energy costs at the cavernous courthouse were \$600,000 a year. “We have undertaken a comprehensive program to cut those costs in half by 2015.”

One of the first initiatives the new administration, including Shapiro and Commissioners Leslie Richards and Bruce L. Castor, Jr., undertook after taking office in 2012 was to order a comprehensive space plan to ensure that the county was efficiently using the space it had and to encourage ways to modernize the way the county workforce conducted its business.

“At One Montgomery Plaza we undertook a partnership with Energy Efficient Buildings Hub to create an integrated design retrofit of the building to achieve maximum efficiency,” Shapiro explained. Energy Efficient Buildings Hub has been established by the U.S. Department of Energy and tasked with improving buildings for efficiency and promoting regional economic growth and job creation.

Shapiro told the crowd that the county has entered a partnership with Constellation Energy to design, install and finance energy conservation measures in the courthouse with the goal being to cut energy consumption by half in the courthouse by 2015.

At the county’s Correctional Facility in Eagleville, the county previously partnered with Honeywell to design, install and finance a project aimed at reducing water consumption. The project resulted in a reduction of the prison’s water bill from \$450,000 to \$225,000. “The program was so successful that the water company called to see if our inmates were still showering,” quipped Shapiro.

The county has also initiated a Demand Response Program in which the county works with utilities to cut back on the use of power at times of peak load. The county achieves this by switching over to generators at those times, and the utilities are paying the county \$800,000 over a five-year period for its participation.

“Our efforts are not only aimed at our buildings,” Shapiro said. “We have extended our efforts to our fleet of vehicles, technology and making cultural changes in how we work and commute.” Some of the examples he cited were:

- Planning is underway to upgrade an aging fleet of vehicles the administration inherited. Hybrid and electric vehicles and those that use natural gas are under consideration.
- Virtualizing many of the county’s servers, which require space, cooling and electrical consumption. In the past 18 months, the county has virtualized 34 percent of the servers in the county.
- Controlling computer sleep and idle times saves energy consumption.
- Encouraging employees to bike to work, turn off office lights when the office is not being used and going to single towel dispensers in restrooms instead of the c-fold dispensers, which has saved over \$10,000 a year.