

City won't be turning down the lights for Earth Hour

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Environment: Fredericton, Moncton, Quispamsis will dim non-essential lighting

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SAINT JOHN - As neighbouring communities turn off the lights for Earth Hour on Saturday, Saint John municipal buildings will keep the sky aglow.



[ENLARGE PHOTO](#)

Mayor Ivan Court says he hadn't heard about any plans to shut off the lights for an hour in any city-owned buildings.

"We already save more than a million dollars a year. We got an award for that," Court said Thursday.

"We saved over \$5 million in the last five years on energy consumption reduction."

New lights in Harbour Station, for example, help the city cut back on energy use, he said.

"There's things you can't shut down," he said.

"We usually ask the citizens for one hour to turn the lights down and cuddle and huddle."

KatÉ Braydon/Telegraph-Journal

Dermot Collins, director of sales and marketing at the Hilton, which is putting on a candlelight dinner night to mark Earth Hour.

Earth Hour, organized by the World Wildlife Fund International, started in Sydney, Australia in 2007 as a stand against climate change.

In 2009, hundreds of millions of people around the world took part. More than 4,000 cities in 88 countries officially switched off to pledge their support for the planet.

In Fredericton, Moncton and Quispamsis, municipal facilities will shut down non-essential lighting at city or town halls, fire stations and recreation centres.

"It's important we show a certain amount of leadership on this," said Scott McConaghy, a Fredericton city councillor who is the chairman of that city's public safety and environment committee.

"The real power is not necessarily how much reduction there is in power consumption. It's more the awareness of the issue of being environmentally friendly and reducing your footprint."

McConaghy said Earth Hour fits well with the Fredericton's Green Matters campaign, a movement to be the first city in Canada to achieve its Kyoto targets for greenhouse gas emissions. The WWF has also declared Fredericton one of Earth Hour's flagship cities.

Although Saint John's municipal buildings won't be powering down, there will be no shortage of romance in the Port City Saturday night, with a collection of restaurants offering candlelight dinners.

At the Hilton's Brigantine Lounge, guests will be invited to a cold buffet of wine and cheese from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. by candlelight.

"The hotel will go down to minimal lighting in all areas," said Dermot Collins, the hotel's director of sales and marketing.

At the Saint John Ale House, chefs will use head lamps to cook dinner as the lights go out, said owner Peter Stoddard. There will also be a candlelight dinner during the official Earth Hour, from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m.

It will be the same scene at the Market Square boardwalk at Lemongrass and Pepper's Pub, said Matt Driscoll, the general manager. Along with the candles, patrons will enjoy acoustic music.

"It's good for the planet, good for the environment and good for the community," he said.

The Opera Bistro will black out with candles and earthy meal specials, said owner Margret Begner.

The lights will go out at the Fortis Properties Buildings, including Brunswick Square, the Delta Brunswick hotel and adjoining office tower, said general manager Paulette Hicks.

There will be a candlelight cocktails at Shuckers Restaurant, she said.

McDonald's Restaurants will dim the exterior roof lights and road signs for the hour.

Jane Barry, executive director of the Saint John Community Foundation, said she was surprised to hear the city had no official plans to participate. Last year, the foundation invited people to log their activity online, with around 300 people signing up. This year, Barry said the foundation is directing people to www.earthhour.org.