

## KEEPING LATIMER'S LEGACY ALIVE...



*NYPA's Marko Bradica talks about electricity with seventh grade students at the Latimer House Museum in Flushing.*

For years, Lewis Latimer toiled to improve the efficiency of incandescent light bulbs and make them practical and enduring for daily life. His efforts in inventing an electric lamp with a carbon filament paved the way for advancements in the electric industry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The New York Power Authority continues to recognize Latimer's efforts. Since 2005, NYPA has supported a fund honoring the African-American inventor, and has advocated visits by area schoolchildren to the Lewis H. Latimer House Museum in Flushing.

## NYPA Travel Campaign: Stay Close, Burn Less Gas

Don't let high gasoline prices put a damper on late summer travel plans. The New York Power Authority (NYPA) wants to demonstrate that some of the best travel destinations can be practically right around the corner.

NYPA's travel campaign, "More Cruisin', Less



Fuelin'...No Foolin'!" has returned for the second consecutive year, promoting "close to home" hotspots in regions around the state that require reduced consumption of gasoline.

A main attraction is the Power Authority's admission-free Visitors Center at the Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Power Project in North Blenheim, Schoharie County. A variety of hands-on exhibits on energy, the environment and local

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*Interactive science exhibits and Historic Lansing Manor are featured at NYPA's power project in the Catskills.*

Latimer's goal was to improve upon the short life of Thomas Edison's light bulb, which was lit by an electrified filament made of paper and therefore burned out quickly. In 1881, Latimer discovered a way of encasing carbon filaments within cardboard envelopes, preventing carbon from escaping. He later patented a way to manufacture the filament, and even developed a threaded wooden socket for the bulbs.

As the carbon filaments increased the life span of light bulbs, they also made them cheaper and more useful. Latimer soon began supervising the installation of electric lights in buildings and factories in New York, Philadelphia, Montreal and London.

Born the son of a slave, Latimer had engineering skills and a dedication to inventing that led him to originate many other practical designs. He drafted the patent drawings for Alexander Graham Bell's telephone application; conceived the idea of putting toilets on railroad cars; and improved on existing elevator systems by formulating safety elevators. His achievements helped him to become a member of Thomas Edison's research team, Edison's Pioneers, later in life.

Although modern incandescent light bulbs no longer use carbon filaments, the Power Authority

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## ERN NOTES

### Queens Residents Try to BE COOL

Even as temperatures rose this summer, Queens residents were in a competition to show they were the "coolest" county.

Queens joined other counties in New York City, and Westchester, in the BE COOL Challenge, an inter-community contest promoting energy efficiency in the home.

In the BE COOL Challenge, sponsored by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, the New York Power Authority and Con Edison, residents could replace their working, inefficient air conditioners with new ENERGY STAR® qualified systems that help reduce electricity consumption and air pollution from power generation.

By turning in their old air conditioners, participants could earn \$35 toward the purchase of a new window unit, and \$100 when buying a through-the-wall unit. The ENERGY STAR® efficient air conditioners use 10 to 25 percent less energy than new, standard models and up to 40 percent less than 10-year-old units.

The winner of the challenge will be the community with the highest percentage of participating

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## Be Cool

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residents. The program kicked off in mid-June, and winners will be announced at the end of summer.

As of mid-August, Queens residents turned in 1,344 window air conditioners and 883 through-the-wall units, a strong showing compared to the other counties. These submissions alone will save 279,350 kilowatt-hours (kwh) of electricity and prevent about 305,050 pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the air each year.

On Aug. 1, Queens Borough President Helen Marshall hosted a media event outside Borough Hall encouraging Queens residents to continue their participation.

Retailers in Northwest Queens that serve as drop-off centers for the old air conditioners include Broadway Vacuum in Astoria; C & I Appliance Corp. in Flushing; Electronic Land in Flushing; J.C. Appliances Inc. in Jackson Heights; Joy Electronics & Appliances in Flushing; P.C. Richard & Son in Forest Hills, Astoria, Rego Park and Woodside; Steinway



On Aug. 1 the borough of Queens joined the citywide challenge to trade in inefficient air conditioners. From left: Paul Tonko, president, NYSERDA; Joe Leary, director, public and governmental affairs, Southeastern New York; Helen Marshall, Queens borough president; Alfonso Quiroz, Con Ed; Joan Ettlinger Weston, Weston Bros. Inc.; and Donald Thompson, Con Ed.

Electronics in Astoria; and Weston Bros. Inc. in Forest Hills.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, if one out of every 10 families made the switch to ENERGY STAR® heating and cooling equipment, more than 17 billion pounds of air pollution could be prevented.

For more information on county participation, visit: <http://www.getenergysmart.org/BeCoolMap.aspx> ♦

## Latimer

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helps to maintain the memory of Latimer's accomplishments in expanding on the light bulb's early design.

"Lewis Latimer was Edison's right hand. Without him, we might still be using kerosene to light our homes," said Ed Birdie, a NYPA community affairs representative, in a presentation this summer to a group of seventh-grade science and math students from Queens' Intermediate School 59.

He was joined by Marko Bradica, a Power Authority engineer whose expertise is in electric lighting. Bradica noted that Latimer wrote the first scientific text on electric lighting.

A recent biography of Latimer by Robert Koolakian, an associate curator at the Henry Ford Museum in Michigan, paid tribute to Latimer as one who "had the courage to dream an ambitious dream and make it come true. His accomplishment, although little known, proved that a determined person can make good no matter what the odds."

The Latimer House Museum is located at 34-41 137th St. in Flushing, and the phone number is 718-961-8585. ♦



## Travel

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history are on display, and then take a tour of historic Lansing Manor, a restored 19th-century manor house. Brochures on nearby attractions, along with energy-saving tips, are also available.

Other, closer retreats in Southeastern New York include the New York Botanical Garden, the Wave Hill public garden and cultural center and the Bronx Museum of the Arts, all in the Bronx; the Hudson River Museum in Yonkers; Playland in Rye; Franklin D. Roosevelt State Park in Yorktown Heights; and the Peekskill Riverfront. ♦



## Rockets' Red Glare Soars Over Queens

More than 10,000 rocked to Gucci fireworks lighting the sky over the Triborough Bridge, and swayed to the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, during the LDC Independence Day Celebration June 29 co-sponsored by the Power Authority.

## East River News

Welcome to East River News, a periodic newsletter for residents of Astoria. The New York Power Authority has launched East River News to keep our neighbors up-to-date on NYPA activities in the Queens community. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Joseph Leary, director of public and governmental affairs, at 718-626-8239, or by email at [joseph.leary@nypa.gov](mailto:joseph.leary@nypa.gov). ♦