

Town of Tonawanda Commission for Conservation of the Environment
Energy \$mart Holiday Decorating Contest
2006 Education Award

The Town of Tonawanda Energy \$mart Holiday Decorating Contest was an initiative of the Town of Tonawanda Commission for Conservation of the Environment. Each year the Commission holds a holiday decorating contest for residents of the Village of Kenmore and the Town of Tonawanda, highlighting homes that demonstrate significant holiday spirit. In September of 2005, it was decided by the Commission that the program should be altered to solely promote energy efficiency in holiday decorating.

The Commission partnered with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and LED technology companies that specialize in light emitting diode products. Throughout the Fall and early Winter months the groundwork was laid to promote the Energy \$mart Holiday Decorating Contest among area schools (both public and private elementary and middle schools) to educate students on the importance of energy conservation and efficiency, encouraging them to decorate their own homes with these principals in mind. Schools were also provided with LED light strands to display in the school for the holiday season.

The Commission encouraged homeowners to enter their energy efficient holiday display into the contest. Each home was judged on a number of environmental factors, including the amount of electricity used, energy saving devices, use of LED lighting, and overall aesthetics. On December 19, 2005 winners were honored at the Tonawanda Town Board meeting and awarded cash prizes provided by area businesses, along with energy saving compact fluorescent lights donated by NYSERDA.

The project helped to educate students and residents on the importance of energy conservation, and encouraged homeowners to use energy efficient tactics to decorate their homes during the holiday season, from timers, to LED light displays, to using no electricity at all.

We would like to help spread the word to municipalities across New York State so that they too can create their own Energy \$mart Holiday Decorating Contest to encourage energy efficiency during the holiday season.