



# The Daily Gleaner

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## **Fredericton Celebrates Earth Hour (tonight 8-9pm!)**

It started with the question of how to inspire people to take action on climate change; the answer was to ask the people of Sydney, Australia, to turn off their lights for one hour. On March 31, 2007 the question was answered when 2.2 million people and 2100 Sydney businesses turned off their lights for one hour. This was the inception of Earth Hour.

One year later the Earth Hour campaign has gained global attention with many countries making a commitment to turn off lights in their towns and cities. The City of Fredericton is no exception. Fredericton is among approximately 70 Canadian municipalities that have signed on to turn off lights for one hour.

The beauty of Earth Hour is the same message Green Matters is spreading: individual action on a mass scale can make a change for the better of our planet. The only difference is that Earth Hour is on a global scale where Green Matters is at the community level. At either end of the spectrum, we as a global and local community can come together and address the biggest threat our planet has ever faced.

Earth Hour is about awareness. When we walk down the street at night, how many of us really notice all of the store signs and building lights? Do stores really need to be lighting their signs when they are closed? Do office buildings really need to have lights on when no one is there? The universal sign for a store being closed should be when all lights are out, not when there is an electrically lit up "Closed" sign in the window.

Security measures are essential, and that would be where lighting such as streetlights cannot be disputed. Earth Hour is about demonstrating the impact we can make by acknowledging and taking action to reduce non-essential lighting. We can also take action on essential lighting, which is action the City of Fredericton has already demonstrated by switching all traffic lights to LED lighting.

So whether it is essential or non-essential lighting, let's look into ways we can reduce our lighting-related carbon footprint, such as turning off lights when they are not in use and switching to compact fluorescent light bulbs. According to Natural Resources Canada, replacing just one 60-watt incandescent light bulb with a 20-watt compact fluorescent in every Canadian household reduces as many greenhouse gas emissions as taking over 66,000 cars off the road!

So what are you going to do tonight between 8pm – 9pm once your lights are turned off and stand-by appliances are unplugged, you may ask? Think of the possibilities! If you are seeking the comfort of your home, get out that book you've been putting off reading, or play a board game by candlelight. If you want to venture outside, grab some friends or family and go for a nice evening walk, and while you're at it, enjoy stargazing while the lights are out!

For those of you who are looking for something more social during Earth Hour, make your way to Cocktails by Candlelight at the Delta and enjoy drinks, cheese fondues and unplugged acoustic music by candlelight at DJ Purdy's.

Earth Hour is a project from the World Wildlife Fund International, the world's largest and most experienced independent conservation organization. Earth Hour shows that, together, our small actions can continue to make a difference to mitigate global warming. Don't miss out! The Green Matters Team wants to know what you are doing during Earth Hour, so please go to <http://greenmattersfredericton.com/en/EarthHour.asp> and tell us!

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