

# Free cleaning products make it easy to be green

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BRICK--For the next two weeks, the township municipal building will be "green cleaned."

The building's maintenance staff will use natural products that do not contain carcinogens, dyes or substances like arsenic or lead. The products do not irritate skin and are biodegradable.

The idea for Greening the Cleaning, as the program and its products are known, comes from a partnership between the New Jersey Environmental Federation and The Deirdre Imus Environmental Center for Pediatric Oncology at the Hackensack University Medical Center.

The program especially targets schools, but has spread to hospitals and municipalities as well. Mayor Joseph C. Scarpelli wants to bring the program to Brick Township, starting at the municipal building.

"It really seems like a winner to me," Scarpelli said at a press conference yesterday. "We're just talking about basic products that are environmentally safe -- and that work."

Although no firm plans have been made, Scarpelli would like to see the school district and the township's housing authority use the products as well.

The Imus Center sells the cleaning materials, but the township received a two-week supply free of charge, Scarpelli said.

The mayor declined to say how much the environmentally safe supplies might cost compared to what is currently spent on cleaning materials.

Most customers either break even or save money, the Imus Center's director of environmental programs, Jim Ronchi, said at the press conference.

Ronchi said that complaints of skin rashes by employees at the Hackensack medical facility have decreased significantly since it first started using the products four years ago.

NJEF Program Organizer Peggi Sturmfels said two Red Bank schools clean their buildings with the Imus Center's products, and Sylvia Rosenauer Elementary School in Jackson began its own trial run with the cleaning products Tuesday.

Bill Anderson, head of maintenance at the municipal building, had no qualms about the switch.

"I'll try anything," he said, "and give you an honest opinion."