

July 26, 2006

**MAYOR BLOOMBERG ANNOUNCES QUICK AND EASY REFUNDS FOR CONSUMER CLAIMS,
EMERGENCY LOAN PROGRAM FOR QUEENS SMALL BUSINESSES & CITYWIDE ADVERTISING AND
PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR QUEENS**

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg announced today new initiatives to alleviate the hardships and damages suffered by the residents and small businesses of Queens affected by the power failure, including a new agreement with Consolidated Edison to relax requirements on residents who submit claims up to \$350 for spoiled food and to extend claims to cover medication due to lack of refrigeration. Mayor Bloomberg also unveiled a new emergency \$10,000 low-interest loan program developed in collaboration with the City's Department of Small Business Services (SBS) and the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to assist small businesses in Northwest Queens that have suffered a negative economic impact as a result of the power failure of the last week. The City's emergency loan program will be administered by SBS. Mayor Bloomberg also presented a new Citywide advertising and promotional campaign - Power Up Queens - to encourage residents and visitors to explore Queens' world-class restaurants and cultural institutions. Mayor Bloomberg was joined at LaGuardia Community College in Queens by LaGuardia Community College President Dr. Gail Mellow, Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, SBS Commissioner Robert W. Walsh, Interim EDC President Joshua J. Sirefman, Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Commissioner Joe Bruno, New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Jonathan Mintz and Chair of the City's marketing, tourism and big events organization George Fertitta.

"Today, even as we continue some of our short-term emergency response efforts, we are beginning to offer long-term assistance and support for Queens residents and businesses that suffered through the power outage," said Mayor Bloomberg. "We have secured important new commitments from Con Ed that will help residents of the affected area secure reimbursements as quickly and easily as possible. In addition, we are launching three new initiatives to help small businesses recover, including emergency low-interest loans. Small businesses are the backbone of our City, and we're going to use this opportunity to bring new customers to Northwest Queens through three unique marketing campaigns and promotions. For the past four and half years, our Administration has been working hard to ensure that small businesses in this City succeed, and we're not going to let last week's power outage slow us down one bit. The programs that we've announced today will help make the future of small business in Northwest Queens brighter than ever."

"We are determined to help the affected small businesses and communities in any way possible," said SBS Commissioner Walsh. "Whether it is establishing a loan fund, handing out reimbursement forms or providing general business support, we are doing everything we can to assist the affected areas, and we will not stop now that the power is back on in nearly every home and business. We will continue to go door-to-door to ensure all small businesses in the area have the support they need. And we will join the Mayor, the area's residents, and all New Yorkers in celebrating all that this area has to offer."

Relaxed Reimbursement Requirements

As part of the consumer reimbursement agreement arranged by Mayor Bloomberg and the City's Consumers Affairs Department, Consolidated Edison has agreed to: waive the requirement that residents submit the official claim form; waive the requirement to itemize spoiled food items; waive the requirement to present receipts and photos; and extend claims to include spoiled medicine due to lack of refrigeration. Consolidated Edison will now accept written letters, in any language, with valid addresses for submissions, or the official claim form, for claiming loss of food and or medication requiring refrigeration. Consolidated Edison has committed to process and mail reimbursement checks within one week of receiving claims.

"These are encouraging commitments, so all the more reason that residents in affected areas should submit their claims quickly," said Commissioner Mintz. "We will continue to monitor the process, remain in close contact with Con Ed, and stand ready to intervene on residents' behalf, if help is needed."

All affected residents are urged to submit reimbursement claims to Consolidated Edison quickly. Residents also are urged to provide their account number, if readily available, and apartment number, if part of a multiple dwelling along with their claims. Residents are encouraged to keep copies of submitted, dated letters or forms for their personal records. In addition, customers of Time Warner Cable, Cablevision, or RCN, who have experienced cable service outages can contact their cable company to receive the appropriate credits on an upcoming bill. Residents can contact the NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) by calling 311, or online at www.nyc.gov/doitt to report problems with receiving credits in a timely manner.

Small Business Loans

Beginning today, the City - through the Department of Small Business Services and the New York City Economic Development Corporation - will make available low-interest loans equal to the amount of lost revenue up to \$10,000 to qualified businesses and not-for-profit organizations. These loans will have a two-year term and will be interest-only for the first six months. The program will employ a simplified and expedited application process.

"Our goal is to ease the extraordinary burden faced by companies affected by this blackout and to help them resume business operations as quickly as possible," said Interim EDC President Sirefman. "The outage caused hundreds of businesses to lose revenue, and providing these emergency low-interest loans is one of the ways we can help businesses in Northwest Queens get back on their feet."

To qualify for a loan, businesses must be located in the affected areas of Northwest Queens and must have lost power during the recent outage. Business owners must complete an application and provide copies of both their 2005 tax return and one utility bill (not-for-profit organizations should provide a 990 form). Representatives from SBS and Seedco Financial Services, the program administrator on behalf of the City, will run workshops beginning 3:00 PM this Thursday at LaGuardia Community College and at 6:00 PM at Commerce Bank in Astoria. To attend a workshop, business owners should call (212) 994-2741 or 311 in advance to reserve a space. Owners can also come by the centers on a drop-in basis.

"Power Up Queens" and New Queens Visitor Guide

"Power Up Queens" is a Citywide advertising and marketing initiative designed by the City's marketing, tourism and big events organization to promote the many dynamic attractions of Queens to residents and visitors and spur much needed economic activity.

"In the face of adversity, New Yorkers rush to respond. To help our neighbors in the areas affected by the power outage, NYC & Company is inviting New Yorkers and visitors alike to 'Power Up Queens!' and dine out and explore the city's most diverse borough," said NYC & Company Chairman Jonathan M. Tisch. "Working together, NYC & Company and NYC Marketing created an exciting consumer campaign designed to drive visitor volume and spending to the areas of Queens that need it most."

Numerous local newspapers have agreed to support the City's campaign to boost the Queens economy. Outlets such as *The New York Times*, *amNewYork*, *Metro New York*, *El Diario*, *HOY*, and *Crain's New York Business* have all agreed to donate advertising space worth hundreds of thousands of dollars to publicize that Queens is open for business. In addition, the City will be posting outdoor advertising Citywide to promote "Power Up Queens."

The City's Convention and Visitor's Center, NYC & Company, has produced and will distribute a guide of Astoria, Long Island City, Hunters Point, Sunnyside and Woodside that features restaurants, cultural organizations, attractions and special events throughout the remainder of the summer. The guide will be distributed at NYC's Official Visitor Information Centers in Chinatown, Midtown, Lower Manhattan and Harlem.

Special Restaurant Promotions

In partnership with Gray Line New York Sightseeing, NYC & Company is inviting nearly 1,900 tourism influencers and businesses on a special Dine Around in Queens on Thursday evening. In addition, "Taste & Tour," a new Citywide summer tourism promotion, will showcase the most notable dining experiences, cultural organizations, historic sites and other points of interests of New York City's diverse neighborhoods. Through a five borough media campaign, as well as special online and printed guides, the program spotlights Astoria, Bayside and Long Island City in Queens in addition to local dining and cultural destinations in all five boroughs. A full listing of Taste & Tour participants and itinerary ideas can be found on nycvisit.com or by calling 1-800-NYC-TASTE.

Queens Emergency Loan Program Centers

Drop-in hours are from 10:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.

The first workshop will be Thursday, July 27th at 3:00 p.m. at LaGuardia.

Friday, July 28th at LaGuardia at 10:30 a.m., and at 3:00 p.m. at Commerce Bank

Monday, July 31st at LaGuardia at 3:00 p.m., and at 6:00 p.m. at Commerce Bank

LaGuardia Community College
Small Business Development Center
29 -10 Thomson Avenue
Building C, Room C916
Long Island City, N.Y. 11101

Commerce Bank
31-04 Ditmars Boulevard
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