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By: Dan Maley

Outdoor expo promotes green living

Niya Hicks visits Tattnall Square Park just about every weekend, but on Saturday she got a little more out of her outing than fresh air and relaxation.

She learned how to save energy and money.

Hicks saw a collection of tents and tables set up in the park near Coleman Avenue and she took her 4-year-old daughter, Ari Taylor, with her to investigate. It was the PIC Green Field Day, sponsored by Historic Macon Foundation. Hicks got a few handy tips from the experts she met there.

“I’m not going to let my computer run all night any more,” Hicks said. “And instead of keeping the overhead lights on at night, I’ll use lamps instead. They say you can save 20 percent on your power bill that way.”

PIC stands for “preservation is conservation.” Historic Macon Executive Director Josh Rogers said Saturday’s four-hour expo was a first for the region. The idea came from local rock musician Chuck Leavell, a Historic Macon supporter who challenged the organization to spread the word about green living.

Rogers said he visited a similar event in Athens and researched the idea further before he and others planned Saturday’s event. About 40 vendors participated. Rogers said he was pleased with the turnout, although it was difficult to count visitors because the vendor area had no boundaries.

“The idea is to get people to live greener lifestyles,” Rogers said. “Saving old buildings is the best kind of recycling you can do, but even if you live in an apartment or a newer home, there’s something here that you can take home to make your lifestyle a little greener and cheaper.”

Heating and air-conditioning vendor Burt Lee said he thought the field day was a success, partly because he made several appointments to visit homes and provide estimates.

“I think the event is great because it exposes everyone to what’s out there,” Lee said.

Lee said many people don’t know how today’s high-efficiency equipment can save them money. Not only can a new unit cut energy costs, it can earn a buyer a tax rebate of up to \$1,500.

The field day included a program of demonstrations, such as a lesson on how to prepare Fresh Garden Tabbouleh by Shari Morgan, aka Chef Shari.

Naomi Davis of Davis Farms in Roberta set up a tent at the field day, where she sold organic strawberry plants, seeds and organic lettuce.

“It went well; they’re really well organized,” Davis said. “We had a good crowd and we had a nice breeze. That makes a difference.”