Greening Your Community

Incentives for Increasing Energy Efficiency In Your City or Town

Some communities are leading by example.

Simsbury

Over the past ten years, the town of Simsbury has participated in Connecticut Energy Efficiency Programs for all new and renovated town buildings, resulting in energy savings and award payments totaling $339,341.00, and cost increase avoidances of between 20% and 30%. In their April 2008 town report, officials cited energy savings through the use of efficient lighting, occupancy sensors, upgraded motors, digital control heating and ventilating systems, and more efficient HVAC equipment.

Stamford

The City of Stamford began working on energy efficiency measures in 1998 and has followed action plans for accomplishing a 20 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2018 along with a commitment to purchasing 20% of its energy supply come from clean, renewable energy sources by 2010.

Through cost effective investments, comprehensive changes in major energy systems, improved energy performance through operational practices and management level support, the city has saved an overall 15% reduction in energy use, for an annual cost savings of over $1.2 million in FY 2007. Stamford's commitment to energy efficiency has led them to implement conservation systems throughout its entire public school system, including the construction of a new pre-K through eighth grade magnet school that meets LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) silver standard.

Lebanon

Earlier this year, the town of Lebanon contracted with a local company specializing in energy conservation for improvements to their Town Hall. Upgrades in lighting, including more energy efficient ballast's, fixtures, CFL bulb replacement, occupancy sensors in offices, and new LED exit signs will produce an estimated cost savings of almost $2000 this year.

The entire project was scheduled to cost a total of $12,000, however the program incentive provided almost 50% of the costs, and helped finance at 0% interest the remainder. Monthly payments are equal to the estimated monthly energy savings, so there is no increased cost to the Town. At the end of the repayment period, the Town realizes the savings from the reduction in electric use.

CT CLEAN ENERGY COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

Right now, individuals and local businesses who participate in the CT Clean Energy Options Program (offered to CL&P and UI customers only) are given an opportunity to choose clean energy from sources such as wind, landfill gas, and small, low-impact hydropower. Participants can easily enroll in the Options Program by signing up on their bill, or online at http://www.gocleanenergy.com.

By meeting these three requirements, local towns can qualify for one or more free solar energy systems. In addition, the town will be able to access real-time information on the performance of their solar system.

For example, the City of Middletown qualified as a Clean Energy Community because of the number of enrollees in the Clean Energy Options program; the City received a 2 kilowatt solar system. The system was installed at the Middletown High School, and the amount of energy generated from the system over time (historical) or in real-time can be viewed by the public.

Visit http://www.view2fatspaniel.net/CCEF/middletown/index.html, and be prepared to be fascinated. In addition to viewing the performance of the system, the technology also calculates the amount of greenhouse gases avoided.

For more information about Connecticut Clean Energy Communities program call (860) 563-0015. Visit http://www.ctcleanenergy.com

COMMUNITY INNOVATIONS GRANTS PROGRAM

The CT Clean Energy Fund provided 40 communities with $5000 grants to increase local awareness about the Connecticut Clean Energy Options program. This program was a pilot project and is now fully subscribed. CCEF intends to seek additional funding. Governor Rell and your state legislators can help support this effort.

Towns that received clean energy grants used them to support a wide variety of public outreach efforts, including the purchase of compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL) to give residents who enroll in the CT Clean Energy Options program, support educational projects involving children (such as art competitions and essay contests), and stocking public libraries with new books and DVDs on alternative energy and climate change. Visit http://www.ctcleanenergy.com for program updates.

As of September, eighty (80) CT cities and towns have committed to purchase at least 20% of their electricity from Clean Energy sources.

RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRAMS

In addition to the Connecticut Clean Energy Communities Program and tthe Community Innovations Grants Program, the following programs are also available to communities.

REBATES, INCENTIVES AND SERVICES	
State of Connecticut Incentives	**Solar PV Rebate Program** The Connecticut Clean Energy Fund offers rebates to government and nonprofit agencies who work through participating solar installers that install solar PV systems up to 10 kilowatts (kW). Performance-based rebates up to $5 per watt for system and installations costs on the first 5 kW and $4.30 per for the next 5 kW. Up to $46,500 rebate per household. Call (860) 257-2362 or visit http://www.ctcleanenergy.com.
	DPUC-Approved Ameresco CT Energy Efficiency Incentive Program Ameresco offers rebates to all Connecticut commercial, industrial, and institutional customers who reduce electric demand during peak hours: Summer – 1-5pm and Winter 5-7pm. Technologies used during all peak hours are eligible, including lighting, motors, and air compressors. Qualifying projects include retrofits and new construction. Rebates available up to $600 per kW savings for summer and winter, and up to $50 per kW for winter-only savings. Call (866) 314-9611 or visit http://www.amersco.com/ctdsmeep.
Utility Companies	**Net Metering** The state's two largest utilities, United Illuminating and Connecticut Light and Power, are required to provide net metering to customers that generate electricity using Class I Renewable Energy sources up to 2 megawatts in capacity. Any customer's net excess generation (NEG) during any monthly billing period is carried over to the following month as a credit, and at the end of an annual period the utility will pay the customer for any remaining net excess generation. Call the Connecticut Department of Public Utilities at (860) 827-2961 or visit http://www.dpuc.state.ct.us.
United Illuminating Company (UI)	**Energy Conscious Blueprint Grant Program** Provides design and implementation grants to help with costs of energy efficient buildings. Call (877) 947-3873 or (203) 499-2025 and visit http://www.uinet.com/index.asp.
	Energy Conscious Blueprint Rebate Program Customers with commercial and industrial new construction, additions or major renovation projects are eligible to participate. Rebates are customized to the individual project and so vary. Call (877) 947-3873 or (203) 499-2025 and visit http://www.uinet.com/index.asp.
	Energy Opportunities Program UI offers rebates for a wide range of technologies to retrofit existing building in energy efficient ways. Rebates vary by technology and efficiency but are determined by either 50% of the project cost or 75% of the system savings, whichever is less. Call (877) 947-3873 or (203) 499-2025 and visit http://www.uinet.com/index.asp.
LOANS	
State of Connecticut Incentives	**DPUC Low Interest Loans for Customer-Side Distributed Resources** Long Term Financing is available to install customer owned electric generating systems e.g. fuel cells, photovoltaic, wind, CHP/cogeneration. Projects must have a minimum capacity of 50 kw and no more than 65 MW. Loans also available for the conservation and load management, for example peak reduction or demand response systems. Fixed interest rates (no more than prime) and loan amounts varies. Contact Bank of America Leasing and Capital at (201) 345-2860. Contact the Connecticut Department of Public Utilities at (860) 827-2811 or visit http://www.state.ct.us/dpuc.

RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRAMS

GRANTS	
State of Connecticut Incentives continued	**CT Clean Energy Fund (CCEF) - On-Site Renewable Distributed Generation Program** Provides grants to support the installation of renewable energy systems that generate electricity at commercial, industrial and institutional buildings. Eligible systems include wind, solar photo-voltaic (PV), fuel cells, landfill gas, biomass, and certain kinds of hydropower. Grant amounts of varies by technology. PV projects are limited to $850,000 to $4 million maximum on other eligible projects. Additional incentives are available for projects in Southwestern Connecticut. All installations must participate in the ISO-NE demand response program. All applicants are encouraged to schedule pre-application discussions with the CCEF staff before submitting an application. Call (860) 563-5851 ext. 331 or visit http://www.ctcleanenergy.com.
	DPUC Capital Grants for Customer-Side Distributed Resources Grant payments of $450 per Killowatt for customer owned electric generating systems (fuel cells, photovoltaic, CHP/cogeneration, wind, etc.) Maximum unit capacity is 65 MW. Call the Connecticut Department of Public Utilities at (860) 827-2961 or visit http://www.state.ct.us/dpuc/.

GREEN SCHOOLS

In Connecticut, the cost of energy for public schools is over $125 million annually. A report by the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern Connecticut State University determined that energy efficiency measures could save taxpayers over $37 million a year. In addition to the cost savings, "green" schools provide better indoor air quality and better learning environments.

Beginning in 2009, Connecticut will require all new school facilities costing $5 million or more (with at least $2 million in state funding) to achieve LEED–Silver Certification or equivalent "green" building standards. The requirement also applies to renovations of $2 million or more.

Contrary to concerns that "green schools" are too costly to be built in line with local budgets, the report, *Greening America's Schools, Costs and Benefits* (Greg Kats, October 2006), described several "green schools" that were constructed with no cost premiums, and determined that the average school cost increase was only 1.7%.

In the *High Performance Schools Initiative Report* by the CT Green Building Council and the Institute for Sustainable Energy, stakeholders concluded that high performance or "green" schools provide multiple co-benefits to students and their communities, including:

- Overall cost savings through lowered lifetime operating costs
- Healthier environments for the building occupants
- Enhanced learning atmosphere
- Environmental stewardship.

Numerous other studies have also determined that increases in early costs are outweighed by lower utility costs paid with taxpayer money, improved student academic performance, and any health and productivity improvements for students, faculty, and office personnel.

For more information on "green" schools, visit http://www.buildgreenschools.org/action/index.html.