

2008 Highlights of the Broome County Energy Advisory Board

ENERGY STAR PURCHASING PROGRAM

The board helped develop a resolution that was passed by the Broome County Legislature which established an Energy Star purchasing program. The program requires the county to purchase energy star appliances when they are the same cost of similar appliances.

ENERGY ACTION TEAM

The brainchild of Energy Advisory Board participant Mike Lynch, the Energy Action Team is a monthly lunch meeting where various issues related to use of electricity, natural gas, fuel oil, water, gasoline and diesel fuel are discussed, the goal being a reduction of use and cost. Technology is addressed, as well as work habits, amongst other issues of concern. The team focuses on awareness of the amount of energy and money expended at each location, then on benchmarking, goals, strategies and policies to reduce energy use. They invite the participation of vendors and others such as NYSERDA to provide assistance and education. The attendees include those responsible for the day to day decisions that effect building energy consumption, Facility Managers from the Public Safety Facility, Willow Point, the Airport, DSS, the Courts, the COB, the Arena and Forum, Library, etc. There is also representation from the Engineering Department and the Legislature.

TAX-FREE EXEMPTION FOR RESIDENTIAL SOLAR POWER PURCHASES

The board discussed this proposal at meetings and recommended that the legislature enact this legislation, which removes all sales tax on residential solar power systems, in order to help reduce the up-front costs of using alternative energy. The legislature unanimously approved this resolution.

DENNIS MASTRO/NYSERDA GRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Dennis Mastro a member of the Energy Advisory Board and a NYSERDA representative briefed a number of county administrators on a variety of NYSERDA energy efficient grants available to Broome County.

EASTERN ENERGY SOLUTIONS/ENERGY EFFICIENT LIGHTING PILOT PROGRAM

In a partnership between Broome County and Eastern Energy Solutions, energy efficient lights from Softrace Lighting were installed in the county office building in Binghamton as part of a pilot program. They were donated and installed for free by Bob Granger, an energy advisory board participant, owner of Eastern Energy Solutions. The lights are projected to be about 57 percent more energy efficient than most others. The performance of the two lights will be compared to all the other lights in the building.

SUPPORTING THE 2008 ENERGY BLOCK GRANT

Members of the advisory board asked the Legislature to send an advisory resolution to Congress, urging them to fully fund the 2008 Energy Block Grant, which would allocate 2 billion dollars to local governments to make energy efficiency improvements such as developing and implementing efficient energy and conservation strategies; developing programs to conserve energy used in transportation such as flex time for workers, satellite work centers, bike paths, and pedestrian walkways; updating building codes and inspection procedures; installing renewable energy technology on or in government buildings; replacing traffic signals and street lighting with energy-efficient technology; energy audits; conservation programs; retrofitting to increase energy efficiency; smart-growth planning and zoning; and installing technology designed to capture greenhouse gases. The county legislature unanimously passed the resolution.

GREEN RIDE ONLINE CARPOOLING WEBSITE

The Transportation Sub-Committee presented this idea to the Binghamton Metropolitan Transit Study. GreenRide's Web- and geographic information system- (GIS) based architecture provides a robust "out-of-the-box" ability to manage ride matching programs, integrate trip planning including transit, as well as the flexibility to customize the program to specific county needs. GreenRide supports climate action and sustainability initiatives by providing an easy to use solution that reduces transportation related greenhouse gas (global warming) emissions and tracks the savings. The County legislature approved funding for this program in December, and BMTS secured a grant from NYSERDA to market it.

NYSEG ASSISTANCE:

NYSEG has sent a representative to almost every meeting. Alan Hertel made most of the meetings in 2008, and Bob Pass will continue to attend meetings in 2009 after Alan's retirement at the end of the year. Both have provided a wealth of information regarding the current status of the energy in NY State, and provided a good deal of technical assistance, particularly in the area of smart-metering.

WIND POWER PRESENTATION

A representative from Empire State Wind Power, a wind power company owned by billionaire Tom Golisano, gave a presentation about wind power in Broome County. He suggested that Broome County should explore the feasibility of community wind, in which wind power could generate electricity for Broome County's facilities, such as Broome Community College or the Public Safety Facility.

WILLOW POINT WALKTHROUGH

Members of the Energy Advisory Board Facilities sub-committee participated in a walk-through of the county-owned Willow Point Nursing Home. They performed a preliminary evaluation of low-cost/high-cost energy efficiency upgrades.

COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY INFORMATION REPORT

At the request of the Energy Advisory Board, Mike Lynch created a comprehensive energy report for all of Broome County's facilities, which he keeps current and up to date.

CAPITALIZATION OF ENERGY PROJECTS

Board members met with County Budget Director Naathalie Maxwell and Kathleen Bevelacqua from Public Works to discuss the budget process and how it relates to making investments in energy efficient upgrades for building projects.

PARTNERSHIP WITH BROOME COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Members of the Energy Advisory Board are working to plan and participate in a two-day long local sustainability conference at Broome Community College in March.

CARBON CREDIT DISCUSSION AND ADVISEMENT

Several advisory board members weighed in on a county proposal to sell carbon credits from the conversion of methane gas at the county landfill together with Broome Energy. Board members concluded that this agreement was in the best interests of the county and urged legislators to approve it.