

Press Release



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Consortium lands \$379,800 in stimulus funds to share energy efficiency services

[25 March 2010] New York Governor Paterson announced awards yesterday afternoon totaling \$24 million state-wide for a range of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects specifically aimed at smaller municipalities. Under a competitive process, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority reviewed over 420 proposals in selecting the 206 projects awarded to 137 municipalities. The funds come from the Energy Efficiency Community Block Grant program established by the American American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

Both of the Northern Westchester Energy Action Consortium's inter-municipal proposed inter-municipal projects received awards: (1) \$100,000 to Town of Bedford as lead proposer to hire a contractor for 1 year to act as project director in implementing energy saving measures across 10 municipalities; (2) \$279,800 to the Village of Croton-on-Hudson to hire a consulting firm to conduct a green house gas emissions inventory for 4 municipalities, to update a green house gas inventory for 1 municipality, and develop a Climate Action Plan for 6 municipalities. The partnering municipalities for these awards include the City of Peekskill, the Towns of Bedford, Cortlandt, North Salem, Pound Ridge, and Somers, and the Village of Croton-on-Hudson.

Comments by Consortium leaders:

Mark Thielking, Director of Energy Resources for the Town of Bedford: "The new home energy retrofit program we call the Bedford Pilot has enormous potential to help middle class homeowners cut their energy bills. This seed money will help us launch the program this year."

Amy Rosmarin, Councilwoman on the Town Board in North Salem, and Liaison to the North Salem Energy Advisory Panel: "By funding a consultant for 7 towns and villages, we will break a serious logjam and get our greenhouse gas inventories and climate action plans underway."

Leo Wiegman, Mayor of Croton-on-Hudson: "What makes our Consortium awards unique is that Bedford and Croton each received funding as lead proposers acting on behalf of other municipalities. In other words, we proposed work that would be more cost effective as a shared service and the state agreed by ponying up to pay for 100% of the costs."

Herb Oringel, Consortium chair, and chair of the Somers Energy Advisory Panel: "After a year of planning and collaborating, the leaders of the Northern Westchester Energy Action Consortium have successfully applied for NYSERDA Grant funds to enable a number of initiatives aimed at reducing homeowner energy costs and identifying municipal actions to reduce carbon emissions. This innovative thinking and hard work will culminate in our reaching a milestone next month when Supervisors and Mayors from the participating municipalities will sign the Intermunicipal Agreement officially establishing the Consortium at Bedford Town Hall on April 19, 2010."

For more, see the Governor's statement: Permalink:
<http://readme.readmedia.com/Governor-Paterson-Announces-24-Million-in-Stimulus-Funding-for-Clean-Energy-Projects-in-Small-Municipalities/1213496>

enclosure: Why Join NWEAC? (pdf)

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For more information on the Northern Westchester Energy Action Consortium, please contact Herb Oringel at herb@oringel.com or 914-277-5370 or visit www.nweac.org



Why join the Northern Westchester Energy Action Consortium?

1. Save Money (aka Cost Containment)

The bad news is municipalities probably spend more on energy than they may realize. For example, after a detailed study of its own bills, Croton discovered it spent over \$500,000 on utilities and energy-related costs during a recent year, or \$62 per resident per year. The good news is that expenses on energy—unlike many operating costs we face—is one over which any municipality has considerable control. A proven set of existing programs, policies, and behavior changes can lower this energy bill in future years. Many energy reduction measures have a 30% rate of return, meaning they pay for themselves in utility savings within 3 years. NWEAC members can use the Consortium network for exchanging cost-containment ideas and practices.

2. Reduce Emissions (aka Climate Action Plans)

Many federal energy-related grants now require applicants to project the greenhouse gas emissions reductions that a project proposed for funding might achieve. The good news is the application packets—if you find the right worksheets—offer a generic formula for emission reduction that an applicant can use. The bad news is that applicants who use a generic formula may not score as highly in the grant award process as applicants who have locally researched and validated emission and energy consumption baseline. NWEAC members can use the Consortium's growing database of municipal greenhouse gas emission baselines and reduction targets and climate action plans as case examples to draw upon in conducting the inventories for their own communities.

3. Get Grants (aka Grant Writing Assistance)

The good news is that new administration in Washington and the roll out of the ARRA initiatives have completely changed both the federal and state grant and proposal landscape for the better. The not-so-good news is that many of these funding opportunities are either radically scaled up from much smaller existing programs or in many cases are entirely new programs. In other words, the feds and state energy agencies are trying a lot of different approaches to see what works best. So the process of sorting out which grant opportunities are the best fit for specific local needs requires ongoing proactive prospecting. NWEAC members can and do use the Consortium's growing knowledge of these opportunities and the program directors behind them to help choose the grant that is the best fit for a local need.

4. Shared services (aka Boosting Efficiency of our Operations)

Quite a few local services provided by municipalities in Northern Westchester are both costly and relatively similar across the region. Where two or more neighboring municipalities see an opportunity for sharing a service for which larger scale lowers the unit price per participant, the Consortium can be a vehicle for both developing that idea into a workable plan and implementing the resulting program. Potential shared services for Consortium members include, but are not limited to, procurement of goods and materials, administration of energy retrofit programs, production and dissemination of community outreach tools and materials, solid waste resource recovery, consultants to assist in emission inventories and climate action plans, to name a few.

5. Increase Income (aka Non-property Tax Revenue Opportunities)

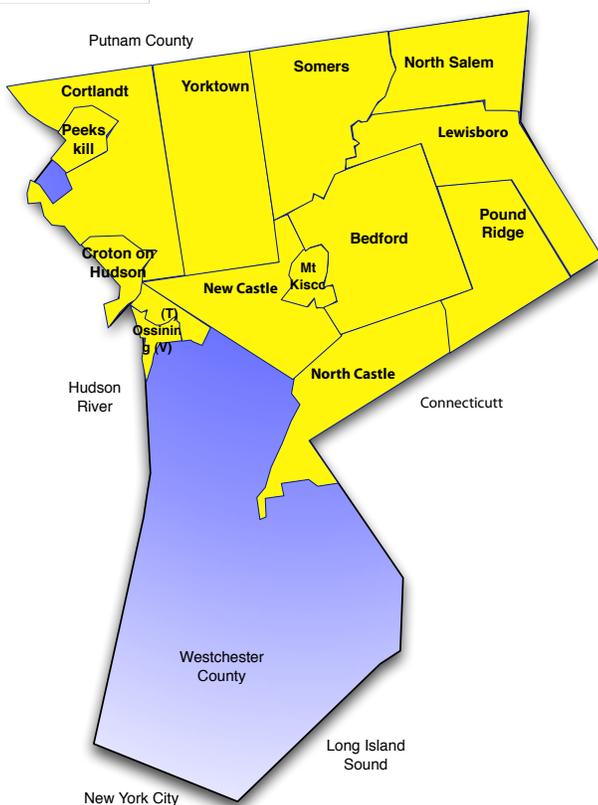
As flat as the economy appears today (in early 2010), it is critical to note the following: Many of the energy savings programs the Consortium is developing have the potential to more than pay for themselves in cash that flows back to the community and the municipal coffers. For example, the Bedford/NWEAC Energy Retrofits for home and local businesses will provide a modest revenue stream back to the municipality that will exceed the clerk's cost administering the added line on the property assessment records. At a much larger scale, the Consortium's \$4 million proposal for federal and state funding for a local smart grid (nodal metering) demonstration project will generate potential energy savings for which the utilities will pay millions of dollars to have access to. NWEAC members will choose from among the Consortium's different revenue opportunities to identify which income generating programs to join.

6. Share Ideas (aka Knowledge Networking)

No one knows everything, but everybody knows something. As important as getting the facts on the table about energy spending or consumption habits can be, the real value comes from sharing the knowledge. The Consortium grew out of common interest in early 2009 among individuals who were not previously aware of each other's existence in how to fund some of the most promising ideas on emissions and energy reduction. The Consortium labor pool to date has been entirely pro bono from all parties. The range of professional areas of expertise lent to this entire ongoing project has been nothing short of breathtaking, from banking and finance to communications and public management and from accounting to energy industry professionals. The diversity of opinion, skills, and experiences provide tremendous learning opportunities and improved decision-making.



Municipal Members (Feb 2010)



7. Why Washington and Albany need our Consortium?

The reason the feds and state energy agencies are paying so much attention to NWEAC is simple. For years now, federal and state energy initiatives, however brilliant in the lab, simply have not succeeded in reaching the kind of market penetration rates that are now required to push the reset button on our economy as the energy internet arrives. There is strength in local numbers. Right here in northern Westchester, we have created exactly the kind of grassroots expertise and initiatives for these policies and programs that the feds and Albany could only dream of. If only one or two communities join together that would be great. But if all 14 or more northern Westchester municipalities join forces, we represent over 220,000 residents living in over 50,000 homes. We want Washington and Albany to help us help them by giving us seed money for programs that they need. We'll create good, effective programs. And the Feds and Albany will be able to export our models for adapting many other regions elsewhere. (See the DOE's [OpenEnergy](#) site.)