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Port Jervis hears offer for energy program

PORT JERVIS - Alternative energy and energy efficiency upgrades could soon become accessible to Port Jervis commercial building owners, according to Mark Thielking, executive director of Energy Improvement Corp., a nonprofit based in Yorktown Heights.

In presenting EIC's Energize New York Commercial program to the Port Jervis Common Council, Thielking said the program was motivated by the troubling statistic that \$10.5 billion of the \$35 billion that New Yorkers spend annually on energy is wasted largely because buildings are energy inefficient.

If Port Jervis chooses to become an EIC member, long-term loans for energy efficiency upgrades and alternative energy would be available to building owners if their annual energy savings would be greater than the annual cost of the loan, said Thielking. That assessment would be done by representatives from New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) or a utility.

If approved, long-term financing would be arranged through New York State's Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) finance program. If a property owner used the loan program, the city would add a line to the property owner's tax bill, so the city manages collection of the loan. Should the property owner default, the city is protected by insurance at \$3 per \$1,000.

"If commercial building owners default on their tax bill, Port Jervis is responsible, but insurance covers it," explained Fourth Ward Councilman Frank Bell, Finance Committee chairman. He said the program had no direct financial benefit to the city, but could make the city more appealing to businesses by helping businesses pay for energy.

City membership in EIC is free, requiring only that the city agrees to their terms, he said. Energize New York assists building owners by finding qualified energy appraisers to determine if a building is eligible for PACE financing. If so, assistance is also provided to find design and building contractors, financing, and incentive programs.

"New York state and the U.S. offer energy efficiency programs, but people don't know how to leverage them," Thielking said. "We leverage programs no one knows about."

Goshen has joined EIC, and Middletown is considering it, Thielking said.

"About 20 percent of the state outside New York City is now covered," he said. "We've closed a total of seven building projects, with two closing next month."

EIC's first Orange County project was Five Spoke Creamery in Goshen, which EIC assisted in installing solar energy.

EIC recently opened a new office in Newburgh because of its central location, but Newburgh does not have a high enough credit rating to join EIC, Thielking said.

"We hope to figure out a way for them to join," he said.



Energy Improvement Corp.'s first Orange County project was Five Spoke Creamery in Goshen, which EIC assisted with installing solar energy. The company is recommending alternative energy and energy efficiency upgrades for Port Jervis commercial building owners. PHOTO PROVIDED