

Sullivan approves energy loan law

By Amanda Loviza-Vickery
Times Herald-Record

MONTICELLO — Commercial property owners in Sullivan County will soon have access to energy improvement loans offered through a program approved by the legislature on Thursday.

A local law to establish a sustainable energy loan program under Energize NY was passed with one dissenting vote by small government-minded legislator Mark McCarthy. Under the new program, commercial properties will be able to apply for funding to pay for energy improvements, ranging from solar energy to insulation and efficient lighting.

The county must sign a municipal agreement before it goes into effect, but Energize NY Executive Director Mark Thielking said his local development corporation has the infrastructure and local contacts in place to get the program moving as soon as the contract is signed.

Existing commercial properties can apply for 5-20 year energy improvement loans through Energize NY. In order to be approved, a project must be efficient enough that it immediately begins saving the property owner money above the owner's loan payment. Loan payments will be collected as a charge on the building's property taxes, documented and passed through the county assessor's office, but facilitated by Energize NY and funded by its banking backers. Energize NY can fund projects as large as 10 percent of a property's value.

Obtaining energy efficiency will help property owners save money, raise the overall structural value of the community, and reduce Sullivan County's carbon footprint, Thielking said. Orange and Ulster counties have already enacted Energize NY energy loan laws, and Middletown has approved one.

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Source: <http://www.recordonline.com/news/20161117/sullivan-approves-energy-loan-law>

Date: November 17, 2016