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Energize NY Makes Solar Work for Ossining Small Business

Today Ossining Town Supervisor Susanne Donnelly and 25 local leaders and business owners celebrated the first solar installation by a local business as part of the Solarize Ossining-Briarcliff campaign. The new solar panels on the roof of Terra Tile & Marble's 30,000 square foot headquarters in the Town of Ossining are supplying nearly 100% of Terra Tile's electricity needs. This project was made possible with financing provided by Energize NY (PACE) Finance, which offers low-cost, long-term financing for energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy installations, like the solar panels at Terra Tile.

This project is an example of how local governments working together with community-based programs like Solarize Westchester and Energize NY can bring about positive economic and environmental change in their communities.

"The need to conserve energy and be kinder to our planet is a daily conversation for me and for most people I know," said Susanne Donnelly, Supervisor of the Town of Ossining and Chair of Energize NY's Board of Directors. "Local leaders like myself can encourage folks to participate in solar projects – it's easy and will save them money. It's good for building owners," she explained. "Increased participation also brings municipalities lots of benefits: a more engaged citizenry, residents and property owners with more money to spend at local businesses, and the opportunity to provide leadership and model best practices for our neighbors, near and far."

The Terra Tile solar installation was one of almost 30 solar installations brought about through the Solarize Ossining-Briarcliff campaign. "The idea behind the Solarize campaigns is to help homeowners and commercial property owners organize as a community to get lower rates from qualified solar suppliers to make it both less expensive and easier to install solar," said Nina Orville, Program Manager of Solarize Westchester. "We are very pleased that our first round of Solarize campaigns, which involved ten Westchester municipalities, including Ossining and Briarcliff Manor, resulted in 200 residential installations totaling 1.4 MW. The commercial program is closing in October and to date we have 7 commercial contracts for over 270 kW, with a number of additional large projects pending" she said.

Energize NY Finance, which financed the Terra Tile installation, is New York State's PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) program and is supported by the New York Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). Energize NY makes clean energy project financing accessible and affordable for commercial building owners and not-for-profits. Financing is available for up to 100% of the project cost and is based on the property's potential for energy savings. Repayment is made through an annual charge on the property's tax bill that automatically transfers to a new owner if the property is sold. Annual energy savings are larger than the repayment amounts, making projects cash-flow

positive immediately. The energy savings realized by these projects improve bottom lines and can be used to expand and improve facilities or hire new employees.

“It just makes business sense,” said David Gasch, whose family has owned and operated Terra Tile for nearly 40 years. “We’re now paying almost nothing for our monthly electricity supply, and the capital investment has improved the energy performance and value of our building,” he explained. “With the long-term savings from our solar installation, we’re planning to hire another employee.”

Clean energy projects make financial sense for a most buildings, including multifamily, commercial and industrial, retail/mixed use, private schools, colleges and universities, and institutional properties. In addition to energy savings, there are a number of tax and other financial incentives available that make these projects extremely cost-effective.

“Many of our member municipalities view Energize NY Finance as a tool to spur economic development and achieve sustainability goals,” said Mark Thielking, Executive Director of Energize NY. “We work with members, like the Town of Ossining, to realize the many benefits of reducing energy waste in local buildings – increased property values, decreased energy spending, greater profitability for local businesses, increased local economic activity and job creation, and reduced air pollution associated with energy consumption.”

Sustainable CUNY has also played an important role in municipalities like Ossining by providing trainings to solar installers across New York State on permitting, interconnection, and financing, which Energize NY provides. Sustainable CUNY’s SolarSmart program also recently released a comprehensive guide for municipalities, the 2015 New York State Multifamily Solar Guide,

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Energize NY, www.EnergizeNY.org, is a NY State mission-driven local development corporation that works with its member communities and property owners to unlock the energy savings in their buildings, saving money, fuel and greenhouse gas emissions. Energize NY drives demand for clean energy upgrades to existing buildings through community-based marketing and outreach and by providing affordable and accessible project financing.