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## SITE INDEX

- Homepage
- News
- Editorials
  - ▶ Columns
  - ▶ Letters To The Editor
  - ▶ Email Us
- Local Sports
- Obituaries
- Real Estate
- Classifieds
- Public Notices
- Dining & Entertainment
- Calendar
- Local Links
- Suffolk County News
  - ▶ About Us
  - ▶ Staff Roster
  - ▶ Advertise With Us
- Special Sections
  - The Islip Bulletin
  - The LI Advance

## Energy savings generating interest

Story By: KATHERINE KLAHN, Staff Writer

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Saving money could be as simple as updating energy draining appliances for some school districts. And an 8-year-old provision in the New York State Energy Law allows for school districts to upgrade their facilities at no extra cost to the taxpayers in that district.

Connetquot School District has taken advantage of the offer and hired ECG Engineering Inc., a New York based company that specializes in energy conservation, renewable energy and sustainable design.

ECG, currently working with nearly 60 other school districts and providing the same service, approached the district months ago regarding the project and will aid them in implementing an energy plan.

Superintendent Alan Groveman thinks the plan will save the district money in the future and will allow them to update old technologies.

"Technology has dramatically changed over the years and has allowed for us to make changes that will improve efficiency and save money for years to come," Groveman said. "Residents will save money for years going forward."

Through the recent drafting of a Request for Proposal (RFP), energy service companies, such as Honeywell, will generate proposals for the project plans demonstrating what is needed to refurbish the existing facility.

After the RFPs are received, "it will take approximately six months to design and receive approvals from the [New York State] Education Department (NYSED)," said Kendra McQuilton, president of ECG.

NYSED is required to approve or reject the plans after ECG creates an energy audit, to ensure that all possible avenues of savings have been taken. Construction of the project will take an additional six to nine months to complete.

The firm chosen by both ECG and the district will "identify the project scope and determine the energy savings and payback period," McQuilton said. They will also be required to guarantee that the energy savings will pay for the entire cost.

Each year the district will save money on their tax bill by using the energy efficient products and the savings will pay for the project, according to McQuilton.

"The goal is to produce the largest project that can be paid for entirely by energy savings," McQuilton said. "This will benefit the taxpayers who would normally fund these improvements and the students and staff who will enjoy a more comfortable and productive learning environment."

Over the course of an estimated 18-years, the entire cost of construction, labor, products and interest accrual associated with the project will be paid for.

"By the time they make the first payment, they will already have saved enough in their energy bill to pay for it," ECG Vice President George Lawrence said. "The district will have no out-of-pocket cost."

As crafty as the system is, savings can be generated from a number of sources. New boilers, double pane windows and the replacement of old electric motors could potentially save the district a lot of money, Lawrence said.

The implementation of lighting and heating controls also carry a large payback. The installation of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and geothermal, might be a source of revenue.

A referendum is not required to go forth with the project, McQuilton said. But, the district has spoken lightly of the project at recent board of education meetings.

"There are groups that come to the meetings all the time and remind us bi-monthly that we should be looking into other things for savings," Board of Education President Lee Kennedy said. "They're happy that we are."

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