

#149 There is a lot of GS going on

The Sullivan County Government has completed building and energy audits of several buildings at the Liberty campus of the Department of Health and Family Services. Similar audits will be shortly commissioned for the Government Center and other major buildings under county management. Grants are being filed in a number of areas including installation of a large solar electric system and installation of the latest lights and lighting controls at one of the buildings mentioned above. Several towns are filing similar grants. The county is also filing a grant for funding an energy manager who will seek ways to save energy and operational costs in existing buildings and bring such expertise to current and future projects such as landfill based projects, the county jail, Apollo Mall development, etc. Another round of grants will be filed in March to maintain the pace of energy and cost savings to government and citizens.

CACHE in Liberty offers free energy audits and retrofits up to \$6500 to qualified home owners. Other organizations are hard at work to develop more extensive weatherization and energy retrofit programs on a pay as you save, no upfront cost and repayment based on energy savings alone.

Large scale wind and solar electric farms are being promoted. The same is true for hydro-electric projects.

The long neglected farming sector is now receiving attention with proposals going forward on a model demonstration farm, animal processing plant, milk creamery, indoor year round farmers market, and community kitchen.

Every week there is news of another group exploring wind generated energy, another geo thermal, solar thermal and/or solar electric system installation. Zero energy homes and near zero energy homes are under construction in many parts of the county. Scouting camps grounds are exploring greening their operations, buildings and activities. Schools are ramping up their recycling programs, applying green standards in new construction plans and writing grants for renewable energy generation on site.

Courses to educate and provide hands-on skill acquisition are available on a short and long term bases in high schools, BOCES, Work Force Development, Sullivan County Community College, and via not for profit organizations such as Sullivan Alliance for Sustainable Development.

Community gardens and school-based gardens are proliferating as well as enhanced main street beautification and renewable energy retrofits.

Several local websites are available for information and contact such as SASOnline.org, ObjectGreen.com, sustaintheworld.com. Getenergysmart.com, one of the NYSEDA websites, provides a list of local building auditors and renewable energy installers who have websites that contain a lot of useful information.

Several meetings in the next few weeks are focused on greening Sullivan such as Cornell Cooperative Extension workshop on Saving Energy, Tuesday 2/26 at 5:30pm, Sullivan Renaissance Winter Conference and Expo, 8am to 1pm, Saturday, 2/20 at C VI in Liberty, the Mayor of Dish, Texas on the experience of his town with gas drilling at 4 pm, Saturday, 2/20 at the Callicoon Youth Center, the USDA workshop on renewable energy and value added grants from 10-noon on Wednesday 2/24 which has funding in these areas for every kind of business, large and small, in Sullivan County.

I am certain to have left unmentioned many other greening Sullivan events and activities. Send me a note at renewableenergy@applepondfarm.com with your Information. Together we can make much faster progress towards the sustainable economy that is the best hope for the future.