Project management counting the benefits of solar power in hempstead town article...

Environment

Renewable energy pertains to energy that is continually replenished no matter how much of it is used as energy resource. Examples of renewable energy are sunlight, rain, wind, waves, and geothermal heat. Among these, the sun is the best source of renewable energy considering that there is never a shortage of it despite advanced technologies' dependence on solar energy. It is also good for the environment unlike other traditional energy sources. Using solar energy, locations that depend on solar energy save a lot on electricity costs as they generate power through natural means. One of these areas is the Town of Hempstead in New York, which already has over 10 solar energy projects under its name.

Purpose and Goal of Project

The goal of the project is to add to the growing number of Hempstead facilities running on solar power as main source of energy. According to Town Supervisor Kate Murray, by using solar energy, the town is able to help in " reducing carbon footprint on the planet and conserving natural resources" (Town of Hempstead). More importantly, they are able to save on taxpayer money. Considering that solar is a natural energy resource, the possibility of destroying forests and eco-systems is remote unlike with most fossil fuel operations.

Hempstead's additional solar power projects include " a 'solar tracker' system [that will become the energy source for] Seamans Neck Park offices and garage, a photovoltaic system at the Merrick Senior Center [to add to the center's energy requirements], a unique solar panel system [that will serve as] an energy producing decorative canopy at Newbridge Road Park, and a [huge line] of photovoltaic panels at the Roosevelt Highway yard"

(Town of Hempstead). When the projects are complete, the total number of Hempstead's solar energy projects goes up to 15.

Project Stakeholders

Currently, the main stakeholders of the projects are Hempstead Town Supervisor Kate Murray, representing the Town of Hempstead, and State Senator Charles Fuschillo, who helped secure the financial grants for the solar installations and the sun powered street lighting project.

Project Completion

As of August 23, 2013, the first three solar power projects have already been completed, with the fourth project, the sun powered street lighting project Roosevelt Highway yard next in line for construction. Other than stating that the " field lighting project [will be] undertaken in the near future" (Town of Hempstead), no additional information about the project was released.

Project Cost

According to the report, the funding for the first three solar projects amounted to approximately $208, 000, including the $24, 000 solar energy parking field lighting project all sourced by Senator Fuschillo through state grants. On the other hand, the Roosevelt Yard project amounting to $250, 000 came from the Federal Department of Energy.

Project Outcome

Considering Hempstead's success in initiating efforts to utilize renewable energy to minimize energy costs and save the environment, the town is spreading a strong message that it can be done, despite what naysayers

claim. Use of solar power is environment-friendly and helps keep the air clean, thus, proponents of solar-powered systems and devices do not contribute to global warming and help reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

The Seamans Neck Park solar trackers, for instance, include " three units that pivot and follow the sun's path to maximize energy efficiency" (Town of Hempstead). As a result, despite generating only 11-kilowatts of energy, the tracking feature gives off 40% more energy output, which is already as good as the old solar panel-types that produces energy of 15-kilowatts using a still solar panel system. Thus, with the new, movable solar panel device, the town will be able to save on costs while still producing the desired amount of energy output.

As the town continues its tie up with state and federal governments in implementing the use of renewable energy sources, Hempstead is showing that implementing and demonstrating renewable and sustainable energy can lead to clean energy projects that benefit not only today's generation, but also the future generations as well. Dependence on local energy providers is also reduced as there are alternative sources of energy. As a result, monopoly of energy distribution also diminishes.

Use of solar energy has its risks as well. Yirka (2013) asserted that solar or wind farms are best built in the southern part of the globe where the sun shines the brightest unlike in the northern part. It means collecting solar power has limitations and cannot be done at night. In addition, apart from fluctuations due to weather conditions, there is a possibility that solar production decreases during winter.

While there are supporters of alternative sources of energy, there are also believers who think that studies have not been thoroughly conducted, thus, proclaiming the benefits of using solar energy are baseless. However, at this point, what is more important is that it is slowly entering the consciousness of consumers, thus, in time, they can make informed decisions whether to use it or not.

References

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