

Seeing the Light in Central New York

- Marcellus Central School District uses Recovery Act funds to upgrade lighting and controls
- District carefully monitors facility energy use
- Upgrades will save approximately \$30,000 per year

Stewardship of the environment comes naturally to the Marcellus Central School District. Its location in the Finger Lakes Region of New York offers a backyard of more than 1,000 waterfalls, 26 state parks, and the 17-mile “Grand Canyon of the East”: the ultimate playground for students of all ages.



Leadership and Commitment

Strong leadership and a commitment to reducing the environmental impact of school facilities has led the District continually undertake projects that will help to maintain and preserve the area’s natural landscape over time.

Funding, however, often presents a hurdle in realizing these plans.

“The District is very happy and feels fortunate to receive ARRA money at a time when the school

district is already working on energy projects,” says Asst. Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds Keith Watkins. “Performing these lighting upgrades shows tax payers and students how to set an example to become good stewards of energy savings.”

A Bright Idea

Students are currently enjoying several recent improvements to their school facilities and will soon notice an additional upgrade to lighting systems throughout the district. Marcellus CSD was awarded a \$98,000 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to implement a project that will replace approximately 650 old, inefficient lights with new, efficient T-8 lighting.

“By upgrading the lights and controls, we will save taxpayer money, and the students will have a more pleasant environment in which to learn,” says Mr. Watkins. “The school facilities are undergoing several renovations, and the ARRA funded energy-efficiency upgrades will complement them nicely. Only

through partnerships of students, staff, and the community, are true energy savings fully capable of happening.”

Previous Relationship with NYSERDA

Marcellus CSD has history of successfully completing efficiency upgrades and has been a consistent participant in many of the programs that NYSERDA provides for schools across New York State. Marcellus staff has participated in Building Operator Certification training and Boiler Optimization training.

Marcellus CSD’s participation in NYSERDA’s Energy Performance Benchmarking Program also has provided critical information and feedback to the district’s efforts. Analysis provided by the program helps schools to understand the energy consumption and cost trends at each building, allows for comparison to the energy performance of other schools locally and nationally, and helps identify opportunities to improve operations and reduce costs.

Building description and energy use data provided by the district is processed to produce a report for each facility. “With each yearly update of our benchmarking information, Marcellus shows a commitment to understanding the energy use of our school buildings,” says Mr. Watkins. “Tracking changes in energy use over time is one way our district can adequately plan to meet evolving energy needs.”

“Because the Benchmarking Reports confirmed our assumptions about the performance of each school, we were able to quickly identify where ARRA monies could be most effectively spent.”

Energy Saving

The District estimates that the ARRA-funded improvements will save 218,901 kWh, annually, and in turn save the district \$30,000 in utility costs each year. This boost to the District and taxpayers will allow the school to continue with its ongoing efficiency improvement plans.

“It’s a never-ending process,” says Mr. Watkins. “One project ends, and another begins.”

The Marcellus Central School District received this award from the [U.S. Department of Energy’s State Energy Program](#). The State Energy Program provides grants to states and directs funding to State Energy Offices from technology programs in DOE’s Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. States use grants to address their energy priorities and to adopt emerging renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. SEP is distributing \$3.1 billion of funding to the states and U.S. territories under the [2009 Recovery Act](#).”