



NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY

NYSERDA

Small energetic team, big energy goals

Case Study

Location:

Boonville
(Oneida County)

High Impact Actions Taken:

- Unified Solar Permit
- Clean Fleets
- Benchmarking
- Energy Code Enforcement Training

Background

Boonville — a small village less than two miles north of Utica with just over 2,000 residents — is a strong community with a big approach to increasing their use of clean energy. Like most small communities, Boonville has limited resources, but that hasn't prevented them from taking on projects to save energy and money. The village's can-do dedication earned them a Clean Energy Community (CEC) designation from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

A six-member team worked to win a \$100,000 grant after implementing four CEC High Impact Actions, each strategically planned using a roadmap they created. Results rolled in with surprising speed, and Boonville reached milestones ahead of schedule.

Unified Solar Permit

Boonville was drawn to the Unified Solar Permit because of the financial incentive and the community benefits of simpler, faster solar permitting. Necessary changes were made to align the current town code with the permit while addressing residents' concerns for historic properties. The planning board adopted the permit, making solar approvals more affordable, attracting investment, and yielding savings.

Barbara Freeman, a key figure on the team, hosted workshops on solar options. The village installed rooftop panels at Adirondack Middle/High School, and the science curriculum uses the data for classroom learning. In all, a dozen solar projects are complete with more pending.



“It isn’t always the dollar, but the dollar opens the door.”

— *Barbara Freeman*

Plugging in to Savings

Because the town has a plug-in hybrid car in its fleet, the Clean Fleets High Impact Action was an obvious choice. Purchase of an electric bucket truck and installation of a Class 2 charging station for public use on municipal property are underway. Next was Benchmarking, to analyze energy use and costs and identify future projects. In just two weeks, they audited energy use in municipal buildings larger than 1,000 sq. ft.

Energy Code Enforcement Training was the final High Impact Action to secure CEC designation. Boonville was first in the Mohawk Valley to complete the action, which became so popular that the three-day program covering plan reviews and site visits was condensed into eight hours to meet demand. The five Code Enforcement Officers who completed training in Boonville found that once even the most skeptical building owners see the potential savings in electricity costs, they want to know more.

\$100,000 Grant Winner

Once Boonville secured a \$100,000 grant from NYSERDA, the village stepped up with a forward-thinking plan — invest in new energy-efficient equipment to replace 50-year-old blower motors at the sewage treatment plant. This critical infrastructure has a large energy footprint.

The new motors reduce energy costs by about 15% and net an electricity savings of 43,099 kWh per year and a reduction of 25.75 tons of CO₂.

This small town has big ideas for a cleaner, more efficient, and resilient future. Boonville residents gained significant energy savings and became a leading NYSERDA Clean Energy Community.

Boonville has the Energy to Make it Happen

- By implementing the Unified Solar Permit, Boonville made solar installation quicker and easier for residents and building owners.
- Completing Benchmarking helped the community identify a clear path to lower energy use and costs.
- A \$100,000 NYSERDA grant was used to upgrade blower motors at the Wastewater Treatment facility. The upgrade saved 43,099 kWh, reducing costs by 15%.

NYSERDA’s Clean Energy Communities Program provides tools, resources, and technical assistance, and recognizes and rewards leadership for completing clean energy projects in 10 High Impact Actions.

Learn how to implement clean energy actions, save energy costs, create jobs, and improve the environment.

Visit: nysERDA.ny.gov/clean-energy-communities

Call: **1-866-NYSERDA**

