

City of Geneva lauded for energy-saving initiatives

By STEVE BUCHIERE sbuchiere@ftimes.com

Oct 13, 2017

GENEVA — The city's efforts to become a more sustainable community are getting state recognition.

Geneva has been named the 100th community in New York to be designated a Clean Energy Community. The announcement was made Thursday by Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

In a press release, the governor said the award is given to communities that reduce energy use, cut costs and drive clean energy policies.

“The city of Geneva has made major efforts to reduce energy use while promoting green alternatives in their community, setting an example for cities and towns across New York,” said Cuomo.

Geneva received the designation for completing four of 10 high-impact clean energy actions identified by the state Energy Research and Development Authority as part of the Clean Energy Communities initiative. In addition, the designation gives the city an opportunity to apply for up to \$50,000 toward additional clean energy projects, with no local cost share.

City Comptroller Adam Blowers, chairman of the city's Staff Sustainability Team, said the designation is an indication of the value Geneva's government and its residents place in reducing energy consumption and encouraging renewable energy.

“This has been a city-wide effort,” said Blowers. “We have a wonderful team in our city that is working to make Geneva as green as possible and City Council support to ensure that this kind of work is best for Geneva. Our residents have been very clear that this is the direction that they would like to see the city move in. We also want to thank NYSERDA for their support and encouragement throughout the process.”

The \$16 million Clean Energy Communities initiative, launched by Cuomo in 2016, encourages local governments to implement energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable development projects in their communities. The initiative is part of Cuomo's goal of having 50 percent of the state's electricity come from renewable energy sources by 2030.

The region's state lawmakers lauded the city's designation.

“The city of Geneva has clearly worked hard to earn this Clean Energy Community designation with a well-thought-out plan to achieve goals in reducing energy use, cutting costs and developing clean energy,” state Sen. Helming, R-54 of Canandaigua, stated. “This designation shows the city's commitment to saving taxpayer money as well as being energy efficient.”

Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb, R-131 of Canandaigua, said the designation is a “tremendous recognition. Communities in the Finger Lakes understand that a healthy environment is critical to our industries, our economy and our quality of life.”

In July, the city announced that City Hall was 100 percent sustainable through the purchase of renewable energy tax credits that are designed to encourage the use of renewable energy.

Other sustainability initiatives in Geneva include a project to convert the city's streetlights to LED lighting, which uses much less energy than traditional high-pressure sodium street lights.

How city earned designation

The city of Geneva completed the following high-impact clean energy actions as part of earning the Clean Energy Community designation:

- Performed energy efficiency upgrades to the city's Waste Water Treatment Plant.
- Completed energy code enforcement training on best practices in energy code enforcement for code compliance officers and other municipal officials.
- Approved an energy benchmarking policy to track and report energy use in the city's municipal buildings.
- Established an Energize NY Finance Program that enables long-term, affordable clean energy financing for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects at commercial buildings and not-for-profits.

Source: Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office