

Cheshire Grows with Rebuild America

Every year, nurseries from Cheshire, Connecticut, sell 400 million bedding plants of about 300 varieties in the northeast-more than any other city in the region.

Many of the town's 25 nurseries are run by third-generation growers who are proud to continue this rich heritage. In fact, the town of Cheshire has been designated by the state as the "Bedding Plant Capital of Connecticut."

Just as the growers have been integral to its past, so too town officials view Rebuild Cheshire as a key to its future. "By promoting energy efficiency, we hope to plant seeds that will blossom into economic prosperity," says Randi Frank, Assistant to the Town Manager.

Getting Off on the Right Foot

Rebuild Cheshire has taken a critical first step toward energy efficiency and economic prosperity by drafting a comprehensive Rebuild America Action Plan. Cheshire officials seized the opportunity to plan a roadmap to success and spent nearly 60 hours researching and writing 40 pages of energy-use documentation and two case

studies that they used for a state grant. Now, their hard efforts are bearing fruit.

Next Steps

The Rebuild Cheshire partnership used the state funds as "seed money" to begin developing a municipal energy conservation strategy, according to past Cheshire Energy Commission Chairman Roger F. Waszmer.

Rebuild Cheshire hired an energy consultant who audited all municipal and school buildings (totaling 850,000 square feet) and their operations to determine the best method of long-term energy management and control.



The Doolittle School in Cheshire is one of the school buildings slated for renovation

PARTNERSHIP FACTS:

Targeted Buildings:

Retrofit of Cheshire Fire Department Headquarters.
Evaluation of all municipal and school buildings

Square Footage:

up to 1-2 million square feet

Estimated Energy Savings:

10-20%

Anticipated Cost Savings:

\$1-1.5 million over a 10-year period

New & Notable Innovations:

Outreach to bedding plant growers. Notable for interest-free energy efficiency loans and other financing packages from local utilities.

Completion date: June 2000

The planned upgrades in the municipal and school buildings will cut energy consumption by at least 8-10 percent annually. The town anticipates that, over a 10-year period, it will save between \$1- \$1.5 million.

Firehouse Gets an Upgrade

Rebuild Cheshire has begun to renovate the town's fire department headquarters. They have replaced the building's rooftop air conditioning unit and soon will finish retrofits of several windows. When the project is completed, about half of the fire department building will have been upgraded and will reap an annual energy savings of nearly 10 percent.

Getting the Word Out

The partnership began telling its story to the community in September 1999 by conducting a 'Power Expo' to introduce the Rebuild America program to local building and business owners to discuss related programs that might help them save energy and money.

Cheshire Power Expo participants learned about the many financing programs offered by utilities and local funders for energy efficiency improvements. Connecticut Light & Power (CLP) shared with participants that CLP provides interest-free loans of up to \$50,000 for energy upgrades by small manufacturers and loans are repayable over a period of up to 6 years, based on the energy savings realized

The president of Cheshire-based Sebago Energy Conservation Corporation explained that his company would help its customers implement energy upgrades and take payments from power bill savings.

Assistance for Bedding Plant Growers

The Power Expo focused particular attention on the needs of the community's bedding plant producers. University of Connecticut professor emeritus John Bartok and agricultural scientist Martin Gent of the state Agricultural Experiment Station discussed various methods for reducing fuel costs for greenhouse operations and the effect of energy-saving temperatures on plant growth.

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— Randi Frank
Assistant to the Town
Manager

Getting Ahead By Planning Ahead

Connecticut Rebuild America coordinator John Ruckes lauds the Rebuild Cheshire partnership for its progress in advancing from planning to implementation. Ruckes believes that Action Plans are critical to ensure Rebuild America successes. Rebuild Cheshire has been quick to follow this advice and has begun preparing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to be presented to several performance contractors.

Now that the 'seed' has germinated, with careful planning, the fruits of this labor are sure to come.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CITY OF CHESHIRE, CONTACT:

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Visit the Rebuild America Web site at: www.eren.doe.gov/buildings/rebuild
Or call the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Clearinghouse at: 1-800-DOE-3732

