



## Westchester Power Helps the County Go Green with Expansive Program

Sustainable Westchester's emPowering Green Energy campaign is helping locals switch to renewable energy, minus the headache.

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As technology progresses and Westchesterites become more environmentally conscious, the prospect of green energy looms increasingly large. Westchester Power, a Community Choice Aggregation program of Sustainable Westchester Inc., is helping locals take the next step in converting to sustainable power sources through an innovative initiative.

Composed of several local municipalities committed to lowering greenhouse gasses, Sustainable Westchester is working hard to help customers adopt green energy through Westchester Power. “Westchester Power’s mission is to create programs and systems to promote local, sustainable and competitively priced energy, and to give Westchester County consumers a stronger voice in creating the area's energy futures,” says Program Director Dan Welsh. “It is a natural outgrowth of what is now about eight years of commitment by participating municipalities to a shared service approach to addressing environment goals.”

Much of the organization’s work involves leveraging the tremendous number of regional customers to gain better deals from massive power companies. “We have the numbers and the ability to get the attention and response of huge investor-owned utilities, Public Service Commission, technology suppliers, etc,” explains Welsh. “As we continue to mature and enhance our programs, we will be looking to get even more from this advantage.”

In order to increase value to local customers, while adhering to the greater mission of Westchester Power, the ability for these customers to use green energy seemed like a no-brainer. This is where the empowering Green Energy campaign comes in, educating locals on how they can revert to green energy and aid the environment at the same time. The campaign also dovetails with New York State’s “50 by 30” campaign, in which 50 percent of all of the state’s energy is to be renewable by 2030.

“In simple terms we want to expand awareness of the cost and environmental benefits that come with our participation and increase engagement,” says Welsh. “When residents view and pay their bill, perhaps they’re saving a couple of dollars but there’s no indication of the positive environmental impact (cutting CO2 emissions) of those savings. We will be working with municipalities to prepare for the renewal of the contracts in Con Ed territory, and want to remind those residents and small businesses that opted for standard supply that they can easily switch to renewable energy.”

Westchester Power's renewable supply is secured with the purchase of renewable energy certificates — or "RECs" — issued by Green-E, which represent energy produced from wind power generators around the country. Welsh, for one, is excited about the program's bright future: "We have started working on ways to leverage this platform to create more activity in renewables and will be turning our attention to demand response and efficiency as well. These pieces will start to form a very different energy 'ecosystem' from what we have today."