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**County municipalities get “green” to go green**  
*County Council approves \$434,996 in energy grants to 31 municipalities*

Delaware County Council approved 38 grants to 31 municipalities for energy-efficient projects that include LED traffic lights, new heating/air-conditioning (HVAC) systems and indoor lighting upgrades that together could save over one million kilowatt-hours of electricity.

The grants, totaling \$434,996, are funded through a \$3.6 million Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) awarded to the County through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The County made \$700,000 of the grant funding available to municipalities to help them assess their energy needs and achieve energy-saving measures.

With guidance from the County Planning Department, municipalities were invited in March to submit grant applications for energy-saving projects. The 38 grants approved Tuesday, Aug. 2, are the first round of awards; additional grants will be awarded in the future.

Planning Director John Pickett said the total projected savings for the combined municipal projects is 1,199,202 in kilowatt-hours of electricity, 6,360 CCF (hundred cubic feet) of natural gas and 1.6 million pounds in carbon dioxide emissions.

The projects include HVAC-heat pumps in Brookhaven, a new boiler in Colwyn, parking garage lighting in Media, high-energy pumps for a pump station in Tinicum and LED traffic lights in Ridley Township. Brookhaven Mayor Michael Hess attended Tuesday’s Council meeting to thank County Council for the grant of \$15,000 being awarded to the borough.

“We really appreciate the opportunity to access federal dollars through the county to undertake capital improvements,” said Mayor Hess. “All municipalities are facing tough budget decisions and it’s critical that we partner with the county to achieve some of our goals. And, after this summer’s relentless heat, we’d all agree it’s important that we have an efficient HVAC system that does the job.”

*(more)*

*(Municipal Energy Grants continued)*

“This is a great partnership between the county and our municipalities where we can all achieve greater energy savings, which in turn saves tax dollars,” said Council Chairman Jack Whelan.

“We are pleased that so many eligible townships and boroughs applied for these grants and will put these dollars to work in conservation efforts,” said Council Vice-Chair Christine Fizzano Cannon.

The Municipal Energy Efficiency Grant Program is one component of an overall county initiative to increase the use of clean energy including solar power, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, educate county residents about smart energy use, and create jobs through energy-related projects.

County Council enlisted the help of Practical Energy Solutions, a West Chester-based energy management firm, to provide energy management services under the grant. This includes helping municipalities map out an energy-efficiency plan for their facilities. The municipal projects must be completed and funds must be expended before July 2012, when the federal EECBG program expires.

At the County level, several energy projects funded through the EECBG are moving forward.

The county is developing an Energy Plan and Action Strategy to provide an energy road map for the County facilities. The study is well underway and the plan is expected to be completed this fall with pilot projects starting in 2012.

On May 31, Council approved a \$1,296,120 contract with Vanguard Energy Partners for a 300-kilowatt solar installation at the Government Center.

In addition, an energy audit is being conducted of the George W. Hill Correctional Facility in Thornbury. Engineers have done a walk-through of the prison facility and have been provided with utility data and equipment information. Results of the audit will be shared with Council later this summer.