

Putting energy efficiency to work

Saving energy can do a lot more than reduce greenhouse gases and lower electric and gas bills. It can also put people to work and boost the economy at a time when New Jersey needs it most.

This month, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities gave the green light to New Jersey Natural Gas, South Jersey Gas and PSE&G to invest a total of \$225 million in energy efficiency programs – \$190 million by PSE&G alone – during the next two years. In doing so, the Board effectively authorized the creation of about 1,000 new jobs to install everything from weather stripping and attic insulation in homes, to more efficient lighting and heavy-duty chillers in hospitals.

The Board is still considering the proposals of four other New Jersey electric and gas utilities, so more job gains may be forthcoming.

PSE&G has already started to put energy efficiency to work for the benefit of its customers. Under an initial \$46 million program approved last fall, the company has been conducting whole-house energy audits in Trenton and Newark – with many homes receiving blower-door tests and air sealing. Nearly 3,200 customers have received programmable thermostats, and more than 36,000 compact fluorescent bulbs are lighting the way at less cost. Working with local community agencies, the utility has hired 18 workers so far to do the audits and make the efficiency improvements.

This is just the beginning. While the cur-

rent program will continue, the recent approval of \$190 million in additional PSE&G spending will bring the benefits of conservation to even more customers – especially our state's cash-strapped hospitals. Twenty-eight hospitals are interested in a soup-to-nuts energy audit that pinpoints specific areas where

efficiency upgrades will pay off. To date, about a dozen audits are in progress at hospitals that include University Hospital in Newark, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center in Paterson and Princeton Healthcare in Princeton. Another eight will be scheduled as soon as the additional funding becomes available. The hospital work is expected to create about 290 of the nearly 700 contractor and utility positions PSE&G believes will be needed.

During the next year, PSE&G and its contractors pledge to hire at

least 100 graduates of the state's Green Jobs Training Program, overseen by the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development. These expected new jobs are welcome news to the many New Jerseyans who are struggling in this unstable economy.

What's your view? Please let us know at Opinion@PSEG.com.



***A thousand jobs to
install everything from
attic installation to
efficient lighting***



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