



The Chairman's Corner

by

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EV CHARGERS, VEHICLES

With the news that Columbia County had been awarded \$337,000 in grant funding under the New York State Energy Research and Development (NYSERDA) Clean Energy Communities Program, I'm happy to be able to say the county has moved further along the road into reducing the carbon footprint in its day-to-day operations.

In November 2022, the county Board of Supervisors via resolution authorized the launch of a "Community Campaign for Clean Heating, Cooling, and Energy Efficiency in Columbia County." This helped pave the way for the purchase of EV chargers and electronic vehicles under the grant funding.

Recently, Climate Smart Coordinator/Senior Planner Don Meltz of the Columbia County Planning Department laid out how the grant funding will be deployed.

Four public chargers and one EV for use by county staff are planned for 401 State Street, while one EV will be used by the Department of Public Works, and another has been designated for use by the Office for the Aging. One EV will be assigned to the county Commissioner of Public Works. Finally, an additional four public chargers will be installed at the county courthouse at 401 Union Street, Hudson.

EV chargers are slated for installation at the county's recently purchased 11 Warren Street, Hudson, site. In addition, one of the EVs will be used by the district attorney's office at that location.

Livingston Energy LLC has been selected for the purchase, installation, and maintenance of the EV charging stations, while Hudson Motors Partnership has been selected to supply four 2024 Toyota BZ4X electric vehicles.

The EV chargers being installed are known as Level 2 chargers, explained Coordinator Meltz, are priced in the range of \$10,000 per unit and require six-eight hours to achieve a full charge. Level 3 chargers, aka fast chargers, can "charge you up to 20-80 percent within a half-hour to an hour, which can get you going." The latter run in the range of \$60,000-100,000 per unit." Currently there is one Level 3 charger in the county, solely for use by Tesla vehicles, located at a convenient store near the Rip Van Winkle Bridge. "The Level 3 chargers put a huge strain on the electric grid," he added.

Recent energy-related developments around the county include:

In late 2023, a 187kW solar installation at the county's main Department of Public Works garage on County Route 23B was completed. The project, which is part of the continuing effort to reduce taxpayer expenditures while simultaneously adding value to county infrastructure.

The installation included a much-needed new roof on the DPW garage. The solar installation will not only offset the electrical usage at the garage, but, through remote net metering, offset electrical costs in other county buildings as well. The useful life of the solar array is projected at 20 years.

Another major energy upgrade is underway at the Department of Social Services building at 25 Railroad Avenue, Hudson, which had already seen new boilers installed and go online prior to the 2023-24 winter heating season. This year, the project is set for completion as the roof is replaced, the remainder of the HVAC systems upgraded, and a 50kW solar array estimated to offset 50 percent of the building's electric costs installed.