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# Hicksville *Illustrated* News

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## News

### Hicksville Water Eases Power Demand While Increasing Revenues

Last week, as the mercury hit record-setting levels and consumers throughout the tri-state area suffered through hot days and nights marked by brownouts and blackouts, the Hicksville Water District helped ease some of the heavy strain placed on the area's electric grid, while generating income and saving money.

Through a recent lucrative contract with Energy Curtailment Specialists (ECS), the largest administrator of demand response programs in the United States, the water utility has signed a two-year agreement to operate on backup generators rather than electric energy, when requested, during periods of peak demand. For this, the district will be paid a fee of \$100,000 by ESC each year as well as receive reimbursement for the fuel used to run the generators, when they are operated. This also saves the public water supplier money on its bill from the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA), which runs in excess of \$750,000 annually.

"With the demand for energy on Long Island on the rise year after year and the supply of available power remaining virtually stagnant, the possibility of brownouts and blackouts during periods of peak use have become much more serious," said Hicksville Water Commissioner Karl Schweitzer, who has many years of professional experience and familiarity with the electric industry. "The New York Independent System Operator (NYISO), the administrator of the state's electricity grid, has become very concerned about the vulnerability of the situation and has emphasized the need for more demand response programs."

In past years, LIPA has offered minimal rebate agreements to area businesses for curtailing electric use by switching to alternative power when consumer demand became excessive. Through this program, Hicksville water received some rebates from LIPA for the times the utility was asked to operate well sites using backup generators, specifically during the summer when high temperatures or heat waves hit the area.

"More recently, as the electric market became competitive, I learned that a greater number of significant financial incentives were more available to larger power users such water utilities, through programs offered by the NYISO, which are willing to pay for standby power and load shedding," Schweitzer added.

On Long Island in particular, water purveyors categorically are one of the area's largest users of electricity, as they operate deep underground wells to pump the water from aquifers located far beneath the earth's surface to above-ground storage tanks that often stand nearly 200 feet high.

Typically, ESC participants are paid minimum guaranteed amounts to reduce electricity use for the few short hours that high demand causes the electric grid to become unstable. The fee, which is paid throughout the year, is determined by the number of kilowatts the water purveyor can commit to curtailing, either by shutting down plant sites to shed power or switching over to on-site emergency generators. Hicksville currently has eight backup generators at 10 plant sites.

Hicksville water commissioners recently worked cooperatively with the Long Island Water Conference, a professional association of Nassau-Suffolk public water suppliers of which Hicksville is an active longtime member. During the process, a committee was formed to seek proposals from qualified vendors with the best financial incentives for Nassau-Suffolk water utilities.

"When we learned about what ESC had to offer, we saw it as a tremendous opportunity to help ease the burden of rising costs and knew it would help us to keep tax and rate increases to a minimum," Schweitzer added. "Unlike previous agreements with LIPA, there are no fees attached, such as metering, enrolling or administration."

With more than 1,000 New York State facilities participating in its programs, ECS is one of the largest authorized administrators of electricity-reducing incentive options available through NYISO.



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