

CPWF Interviews: Green Team Chairman Jim Stratos

The Community Partners for Woodstock's Future (CPWF) continues its series of monthly interviews with community leaders. The purpose of these interviews is to achieve broader and deeper community awareness of the issues that face Woodstock and the surrounding area. Woodstock Green Team Chairman Jim Stratos responds to questions below.

CPWF: What do you see as the most urgent environmental and energy issues the town of Woodstock faces?

Stratos: We need to be more conscientious with our energy usage by following some very basic guidelines, which will reduce our carbon footprint.

CPWF: What do you think the community should know about the Woodstock Green Team?

Stratos: Our committee of seven members is town appointed and functions as an advisory to the town officials in making sure that Woodstock complies with the state mandates in reducing by 20 percent our dirty energy consumption by 2010. We also inform and work with the town officials in applying for state and federal green energy grants, which may become available from time to time.

Our efforts have made Woodstock the only town in the state which purchases 100 percent Clean Renewable Energy, while, at the same time, saving taxpayers over

\$20,000 a year.

CPWF: How can the town and community support the Woodstock Green Team?

Stratos: Members of the community can follow the example the town and schools have set and that is to learn about what you can do to save energy and save money at the same time. Their actions demonstrate to our community that Woodstock cares about the future of our environment.

Right now the Green Team is participating in the Connecticut Clean Energy Program in earning Photo Voltaic panels for our town. To date, we have earned four PV panels and a \$30,000 solar installation grant. We need more households participating in this program, which will help Woodstock earn even more panels and, at the same time, save them money.

We are planning free renewable energy giveaways, working with the PTO, Conservation Commission, and running ads to help educate households.

CPWF: What is your five-year vision for the town's environmental and energy impact?

Stratos: We would like to see more businesses and households participating in the programs offered by the Connecticut Clean Energy Program. These programs provide rebate incentives, energy saving ideas and grants to help consumers reduce their

energy consumption. If everyone took advantage of the ways they can save energy, they'll soon realize how much money they can save, and that alone can have a tremendous impact on our environment.

We would also like to pursue clean energy farming by helping local farmers implement new methods of conserving energy and by researching possible green energy related farm grants.

CPWF: Given the constraints of the current economy, what are some compelling cost/benefit analyses for green investments to the town and to individual households?

Stratos: Through the Green Team's efforts, we have helped the town acquire a \$48,000 Green Energy Grant, which will be used to improve the town's efforts to conserve energy. Some ideas are to improve on the town's energy producing equipment and controls and to possibly purchase additional PV panels to add to those already earned from the CCEF. Without Woodstock's participation in the CT Clean Energy Program, this would not have been available.

Households can also benefit from the incentives and rebates available in changing their heating systems, hot water systems and overall efficiency of their homes by applying for free home energy audits offered by the state.

Right now, they can sign up with us for Clean Renewable Energy (80 percent Wind-20 percent Hydro) and start saving on their utility costs.

CPWF: What do you hope your personal contribution will be to the town through your involvement in the Woodstock Green Team?

Stratos: To increase public awareness that energy conservation is the moral and ethical responsibility of each and every one of us for the protection of those future generations who follow. To show by example, that we care about providing clean renewable energy solutions and protecting our environment, as well as our most important resource — our planet.

This communication is not designed to influence or advocate a position or candidate in any pending election or referendum. Submitted by Becki Leavitt, deputy treasurer of CPWF. The mission of this non-partisan, newly formed PAC, is to promote the following: open local government representation that is for all citizens; smart investment in our nation's future through support of education; a responsible balance between financial conservatism and our citizens' needs for basic town services; thoughtful long-range planning for Woodstock's growth and development; and a long-range perspective in the allocation of town resources.

Stevens named hospital's February employee