



Town of Cheektowaga

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Supervisor Benczkowski announces Cheektowaga earns Clean Energy Community designation

Cheektowaga recognized for its commitment to cut costs and reduce energy consumption, eligible for \$250,000 grant toward additional clean energy projects

Cheektowaga, NY - Supervisor Diane Benczkowski announced today that the Town of Cheektowaga has been designated a Clean Energy Community by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) recognizing its leadership in reducing energy use, cutting costs and driving clean energy locally. In addition, the designation gives Cheektowaga an opportunity to apply for up to \$250,000 toward additional clean energy projects, with no local cost share.

Announced by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in August 2016, the \$16 million Clean Energy Communities initiative supports local government leaders across the State to implement energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable development projects in their communities. Clean Energy Communities advances the Governor's Reforming the Energy (REV) strategy by demonstrating the importance of communities in helping New York reach its Clean Energy Standard of 50 percent of the state's electricity coming from renewable energy resources by 2030.

"I am proud that Cheektowaga has been designated a Clean Energy Community and I am excited to see what our Town can do further to find real energy-savings that will not only benefit the environment, but our taxpayers as well," **said Cheektowaga Supervisor Diane Benczkowski**. "With this designation, Cheektowaga is leading the way for other communities across Western New York and New York State to reduce costs, adopt clean energy standards and reduce our carbon footprint. This was a team effort by all in Cheektowaga and I thank my fellow Town Board members for making the resources available and dedicating town-wide staff in pursuit of this designation."

"Congratulations to the Town of Cheektowaga on this important accomplishment and for its leadership in developing energy solutions to reduce costs and protect the environment," **said Alicia Barton, President and CEO, NYSERDA**. "Communities are vital to ensuring a cleaner, more resilient and affordable energy future, as the state advances Governor Cuomo's ambitious clean energy strategy."

Cheektowaga was competing against other large communities from across Western New York with two \$250,000 grants being made available to the first two communities to achieve this designation and two \$100,000 grants being made available to the next two communities to qualify. Cheektowaga is the second "large community" to earn this designation in Western New York and did so by completing four

of 10 high-impact clean energy actions identified by NYSERDA as part of the Clean Energy Communities initiative:

- Unified Solar Permit – adopted a standardized solar permit process on April 25, 2017 (RES 2017-282)
- Energy Code Enforcement Training – the Town’s code enforcement officers completed energy code training earlier this year
- Clean Energy Upgrades - made clean energy upgrades to town-owned properties that accounted for a 10% reduction in energy use, including the most recent renovation of the Kenneth J. Meyers Cheektowaga Recreation Center in 2016
- Clean Fleets - purchased a 2014 Smart Fortwo electric vehicle in July 2017

In addition, the Town of Cheektowaga will be installing an electric charging station with support from NYSERDA, which will be placed in a highly visible and highly trafficked area.

“I would like to thank Governor Andrew Cuomo for leading the way in clean energy and for offering this incentive to municipalities across New York State. Since my first day in office, I have made it my goal to explore every funding source available to Cheektowaga, especially when it comes to New York State funding,” **added Benczkowski.**

Since becoming Supervisor last year, Benczkowski has aggressively pursued additional funding for the Town of Cheektowaga through grants offered at the state and federal level. Since January 2016, the two largest grants received by the Town of Cheektowaga include a \$5 million clean water grant, which included a \$15 million interest free loan, and a \$250,000 Zombie and Vacant Properties Remediation and Prevention Grant.

Supervisor Benczkowski also pointed out that discussions regarding Cheektowaga’s energy usage and the impact on the environment began when resident Larry Snider spoke up at a Town Board meeting in December 2016. With the support of the Town Board, Camille Brandon of Bolton-St. Johns, Assistant Town Engineer Peter Johnston, Supervising Code Enforcement Officer Richard Coburn and Town Planner Daniel Ulatowski led internal efforts. This working group closely worked with Jason Kulaszewski, Clean Energy Coordinator at the UB Regional Institute, to receive this designation. Mr. Kulaszewski was able to develop and prioritize clean energy goals, access easy-to-use resources such as guidance documents and case studies, and take advantage of available funding and technical assistance opportunities.

Town Board members and the individuals of the Clean Energy Community working group will now begin the process of choosing a clean energy project to be completed within the Town of Cheektowaga. The Town must submit an application to NYSERDA within 90 days and have final approval to receive \$250,000 towards the project.

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