

N.Y. builder invents solar/wind power source for jobsites

The Rhode Island Builder Report rarely, if ever, prints information about new products, and the Rhode Island Builders Association does not endorse products. Nevertheless, we thought that this item would be of great interest to our readers, who are invited to judge for themselves.

By Paul F. Eno Editor

A Springwater, N.Y., builder has invented and placed on the market a jobsite solar/wind generator that, he says, is saving his company \$5,000 a year in gasoline and has banished his gas-powered generators to permanent storage.

Richard Gammell, president of Canadice Construction Corp., a 35-year builder and a longtime member of the Rochester Home Builders Association, said that gas prices through most of 2008 were rattling his bottom line.

"Combining wind and solar technology like this is saving us about \$5,000 a year in gasoline, and it's been more than adequate on the jobsite for our people and our subs too," Mr. Gammell told *The Rhode Island Builder Report*.

The generator, which weighs about 4,500 lbs. and generates up to 7,000 watts, is housed in an 8' by 12' structure that resembles a garden shed with solar panels, with the roof peak about 10 feet high. Extending 6 feet above that is a "tower" topped by a small wind generator. Inside are separate controllers for the solar and wind power, along with a battery bank and inverters. The device can supply gas-free electric power to a workforce of up to 15 people, according to Mr. Gammell.

"The larger SWG-615 model has replaced as many as four gasoline generators at our test site in Orchard Park, N.Y. Each trade saves approximately \$100 per week in gasoline."

The only time the device has been inadequate was on one occasion at a jobsite where the company was building a 48,000 square-foot apartment development, Mr. Gammell said.

"We had several days in a row where it was overcast and there was no wind. The generator still worked fine for our nine carpenters, but on one particular day, we had to ask our subs not to use it. Other than that, it's been completely adequate for anything we need."

Asked if local building officials had ever questioned use of the device, Mr. Gammell was candid.

"Actually, we've never asked. We just use it! And we've never been questioned about it. The generator is much quieter than a gas unit and is very much in the spirit of "going green." I can't see why anyone would question it."

Of course, Rhode Island isn't New York. *The Rhode Island Builder Report* contacted several Ocean State building officials to see if they would have a problem with any builder using the solar/wind generator on a jobsite in their communities.



"I would have to see it first," said South Kingstown Building Official Russell W. Brown.

When told that the inventor had used it on jobsites without any officials noticing it, Mr. Brown replied: "Officials might not have noticed, but abutters notice everything...especially if they don't like what's being built next to them."

He suggested that, if the generator stayed on a trailer rather than being placed on the ground, it might pass muster for jobsite use.

Ted Sarno, director of Warwick's Building Dept., said that OSHA might have something to say about the generator, particularly when it came to anchoring the structure against wind.

"But if this is just a temporary structure on a residential jobsite, I can't see any real problems with it at this point," he added.

For more information on Mr. Gammell's generator, visit www.canadiceconstruction.com/.

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