



## Clean Energy Coalition aims to help Ypsilanti businesses be energy-efficient

Posted by Khalil Hachem | The Ann Arbor News December 20, 2008 15:26PM

The Clean Energy Coalition has launched an effort to help Ypsilanti businesses become more energy-efficient.

The project, called Rebuild Ypsilanti, will provide free energy audits, technical guides, publications and financial strategies for energy-saving projects. The coalition, based at 124 Pearl St., also will provide grant-writing assistance for a fee, said project manager Greg Vendena.

The federally-funded effort is already working with several business owners in the city, Vendena said. Coalition representatives are scheduled to discuss the project during a public meeting Jan. 9 at the Ypsilanti District Library, 5577 Whittaker Rd.

Mayor Paul Schreiber said Ypsilanti has many older buildings that could use an energy upgrade.

Barry LaRue, facility chairman at the Riverside Arts Center, said he's working with the coalition to improve energy efficiency at the center. The center currently pays about \$10,000 for natural gas and electricity annually, and any money saved on energy could go to programs and staffing, he said.

Vendena said natural gas demand is projected to increase this year by 8.1 percent over 2007, and natural gas prices for the commercial sector increased 30 percent in the first six months of 2008.

Ypsilanti has 997 businesses, and savings from energy improvements will help business offset that increase in energy cost, Vendena said.

For example, the average commercial building can save up to 40 percent on lighting costs by switching to T8 fluorescent lights. Business owners can also save about 16 percent on natural gas by installing a programmable thermostat to automatically set back temperatures during unoccupied hours, Vendena said.

Details on the project are available by visiting [cec-mi.org](http://cec-mi.org) or calling 888-818-0987.

*Khalil E. Hachem can be reached at [khachem@annarbornews.com](mailto:khachem@annarbornews.com) or 734-994-6759.*

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