

Green briefs of the week

by Bernadette Starzee
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Partners in better energy use

About 1,000 people attended the 2008 Advanced Energy Conference, a two-day event produced by SUNY Stony Brook's Advanced Energy Research Technology Center, in association with National Grid and the Long Island Power Authority. Held in November at the Hyatt Regency Wind Watch in Hauppauge, the conference brought together industry, government, nonprofit and university representatives.

"We are very pleased with the outcome," said Yacov Shamash, dean of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences and vice president of economic development for Stony Brook University. "It was gratifying to see the attendance both days at maximum capacity, which demonstrates how people in the region, the state, the nation and around the world feel about the importance of solutions to the global energy crisis."

A partnership between the Long Island Power Authority, National Grid and IBM was announced at a press conference before the conference began. The three entities said they would work together to raise awareness of and increase the use of energy-saving options in their customers' information technology operations, in a program to be deployed in early 2009.

"The partnership is a great idea," said John Consoli, chief technology officer of AFCO Systems in Farmingdale, who made a presentation about green data centers during the conference. "IBM's technical expertise will allow the partners to give their clients a list of things they can do to improve their energy efficiency." Technical improvements can be suggested in conjunction with rebate programs and other incentives offered by the utilities.

Creating more efficient data centers will be one of the main areas of concentration for the partnership, and it was one of the major topics of the conference. "According to the Department of Energy, data centers consume 3 percent of all the energy consumed in the U.S., and that number will grow to 8 percent by 2010," Consoli said. "Anything we can do to reduce that number would be an improvement."

Other topics included renewable energy sources, the regulatory process with regard to advancing energy options and green building technology.

"We look forward to facilitating academic and industrial partnerships and playing an integral role in the research and commercialization of alternative energy technologies," Shamash said, adding that Stony Brook expected to host "a larger international conference next year, leveraging the tremendous support of other New York State institutions, entities and governmental agencies."