

Tompkins Cortland Community College Goes 90 Percent Solar

Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3), like other institutions around the country, faces the challenge of keeping education affordable, while staying abreast of the ever-changing needs of the global workplace. Administrators saw solar as the perfect way to serve their students while demonstrating leadership in a global community.



Each year, TC3 welcomes more than 4,000 students to its campus to pursue degrees or certification in more than 40 academic programs. As one of 30 community colleges in the State University of New York system, TC3's administrators strive to keep advanced education accessible to everyone, while staying current with the changing technology and educational requirements of the future workforce.

Ten Acres Yields Security and Savings for 25 Years and Beyond

By working with a wholly owned subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, TC3:

- » turned 10 acres of unused campus land into a 2.6 megawatt (MW) solar system with no upfront cost to TC3;
- » fulfills 90% of the campus electricity needs from an onsite solar facility;
- » expects to save \$30,000 in electricity costs in the first year alone;
- » secured affordable energy rates for 25 years;
- » has a more predictable budget, allowing them to better plan for their educational programs; and
- » has asserted its position as a leader in the global community.

The ground-mount installation was built under a 25-year Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), allowing the system to be installed at no upfront cost to TC3. Power from the system feeds into the local electrical grid, and the campus receives credits for purchasing the power back at pre-negotiated rates for the term of the PPA.

Operating since the summer of 2015, the system consists of three solar photovoltaic arrays with a total of 8,676 solar modules. It is projected to save as much as \$5 million over its lifetime.

"We're happy to be able to meet such a large percentage of our energy needs through this solar project. As a college we are committed to doing what we can to help the environment, both by our teaching and by our actions."

James Turner
Director of Facilities, TC3

Solar Initiatives

Support for this project came from Governor Cuomo's NY-Sun initiative, administered by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

Project Highlights

- » 2.6 MW system on 10 acres
- » \$30,000 expected savings in the first year
- » 8,676 solar modules
- Enough to power440 homes annually
- » The equivalent of 2,160 metric tons of carbon dioxide offset annually
- » The equivalent of taking 455 cars off the road