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GREEN LIGHTS

New codes to boost energy efficiency

By LOIS WEISS

THE city's new push for sustainable buildings is kicking in this year with the benchmarking of all city owned buildings. This means the city has to determine how its properties rank in energy usage compared to other buildings. Benchmarking for privately owned properties is required by May 1, 2011 before other work and audit requirements kick in.

"It's going to be a shock for people who aren't familiar with the requirements," said Robert Ragozine, president Donnelly Sustainable Energy Services. "But it will force people to think about their energy footprint and make decisions. Ultimately, there is a bottom-line benefit to the owners and tenants."

Buildings will have to benchmark electrical and water use by May 1, 2011, but certain buildings like TV studios will be exempt. The stricter New York State energy code will also apply to new construction, alterations and additions. Offices of more than 10,000 square feet will require the installation of electricity meters for each tenant and lighting retrofits by 2025.

Local experts are advising private owners to start the 2013 requirements of the energy audit

now, so any upgrade projects can be completed well before the benchmark filing date. Information from the US Energy Star form will be available publically.

"If you want to lease space and the building isn't energy efficient, and if you do benchmarking and get a low score, that's the only information that's available to the public," said Ragozine.

But if owners conduct an audit first and then make some improvements, the benchmarking will show a higher score.

"That's a strategy we are suggesting to building owners, but it means they have to move fairly quickly to get the audit done and implement the improvements and then benchmark," said Ragozine.

Similarly, David Bonifacic, co-founder and managing principal of WB Engineering, said: "Energy audits and retro commissions pay for themselves and there are NYSERDA (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority) rebate opportunities now."

As tenant spaces turn over, the experts advise building owners to start coming into compliance with the new city requirements for lighting and submetering. "While the year 2025 is way out there, by then, the entire building has to be up to the new code," said Bonifacic. "By the time you flip tenants, you will be almost there."

COUNTDOWN TO THE CODE

**MAY 1
2010**

City owned buildings begin annual energy and water benchmarking

**JULY 1
2010**

New York State Energy Code applies to all buildings

**MAY 1
2011**

Private buildings over 50,000 square feet begin annual energy and water benchmarking

**DEC 31
2013
TO
2022**

Energy Efficiency Reports (aka audits) due depending on tax block where located

**JAN 1
2025**

- Complete all NYC ECC lighting upgrades in commercial buildings
- Complete all submeter installations for tenants over 10,000 sq ft or per floor
- Begin issuing tenants monthly electrical use and charges statements

