



MicroTurbine just one way Salem Community College going greener

By Phil Dunn
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CARNEYS POINT TWP. - Salem Community College got a chance to show off its high-tech turbine generating system Thursday in an effort to educate local business leaders on the potential of the new technology.

The turbine system was installed in October of 2009 to help the college better serve the community as a Salem County Red Cross Disaster Relief Shelter.

"The genesis of the project was based upon Salem Community College's responsibility to Salem County to provide an emergency shelter if there was no back-up power," said Raymond Constantine, executive director of special projects at Salem Community College. "So in doing research, the solution we arrived at was to implement a turbine power plant."

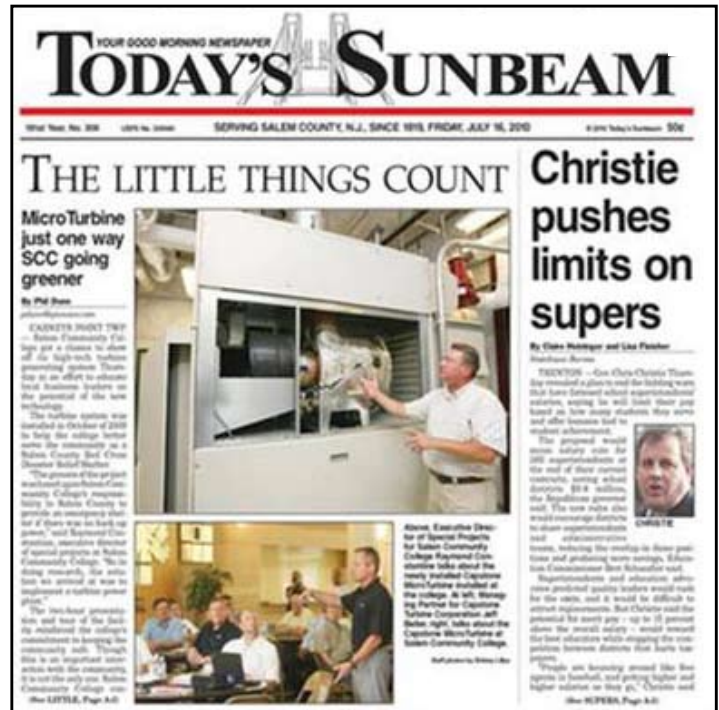
The two-hour presentation and tour of the facility reinforced the college's commitment to keeping the community safe. Though this is an important interaction with the community, it is not the only one. Salem Community College continues to work with local government, business, and school districts throughout the county.

"We have a partnership with the college that dates back many years and it is one of the largest shelters we have in the county," said Executive Director of the Salem County Chapter of the American Red Cross Joyce Skradzinski.

Skradzinski said they held a successful drill at the college in the fall. The college also houses a number of cots and blankets on site at all times in case of an emergency.

Along with the ability to produce a heating and cooling source without power, Constantine said there are other benefits to using the turbine system - which was installed by Capstone Turbine Corporation.

"We are getting all sorts of benefits for the environment, but we are also saving a tremendous amount of dollars," said Constantine. "We are decreasing the amount of energy that we need in the building and decreasing the cost to the taxpayers who supported the building."



With a total cost of \$2 million to complete the relief facility project, Constantine said these types of savings will be seen for the next 20 or 30 years.

"The return on the investment for the taxpayer in our eyes is phenomenal and it is indicative of where we need to go with investing dollars in public facilities," said Constantine.

In case of an emergency, Davidow Hall can host up to approximately 3,000 people. The building also has shower, bathroom and kitchen facilities.

"We can host up to 2,000 people in the field house, 400 people in the theater and probably another 300 people in the classrooms and keep them all cool and warm in the winter," said Constantine.

The system works in favor of the college as well just in case they experience difficulties with their power.



“To the college community on campus, they could come to this facility if there was a power outage or a hurricane-type storm,” said Constantine. “If the grid goes down and we know we are going to be down a few days to rebuild the infrastructure, this facility would stay alive on its own power totally operational and comfortable.”

Another unique part of the turbine system is its ability to slow down during the night hours when the system is not running at full capacity.

With the plant running 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, this allows the college to operate more efficiently.

Constantine said they have worked with emergency management groups all around the county to ensure when it’s time to react during an emergency there are no glitches in the procedure.

“The college values its long-term partnership with the American Red Cross Chapter of Salem County,” said SCC President Dr. Peter Contini. “The energy enhancements that enable Davidow Hall to generate its own power is a critical advancement since it allows the Red Cross to operate its shelter at any time. The college is ready to open its doors whenever the Red Cross calls.”