

# Energy-efficiency projects become popular money-savers in Binghamton area

BINGHAMTON -- More people in the Binghamton area completed energy-efficiency projects last year than anywhere else in New York except the Hudson Valley, a state agency said.

Southern Tier residents completed 73 percent more projects than in 2010 through the Energy Research and Development Authority program.

The 420 projects completed in the Southern Tier resulted in average annual savings of more than \$900 for each participating household.

Some of the credit for the savings should go to Tompkins County Cornell Cooperative Extension, which began an outreach program three years ago for homeowners looking to make their dwellings more energy-efficient, said Tarik Abdelazim, the City of Binghamton's director of planning, housing and community development.

Abdelazim said his department secured more than \$450,000 in grants over two years, working with contractors, work force agencies and community groups in Broome and Tompkins counties to help fund projects.

Under NYSERDA's Home Performance with Energy Star program, homeowners work with contractors trained in building science and accredited by the Building Performance Institute. The contractor looks at the entire house and recommends improvements for saving energy.

The assessment is free for most homeowners, because it is funded through Green Jobs-Green New York, a program created by New York to increase the number of energy efficiency improvements and create green jobs, NYSERDA officials said.

To help homeowners pay for improvements, NYSERDA provides cash-back incentives and low-cost financing. As of January 30, on-bill recovery financing also has been available. This allows homeowners to pay for energy-efficiency improvements through their utility bills, using the energy savings from the improvements to offset the cost of the work.

Homeowners with moderate to low-incomes (60 to 80 percent of the median) who participate in Assisted Home Performance with Energy Star can get grants of up to \$5,000.

For more information, go to [www.nyserda.ny.gov](http://www.nyserda.ny.gov).