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Top Summer Savers Award Winner Looks Beyond Immediate Returns to Achieve the Most Energy Savings

MAY 9, 2011, NEW BRITAIN, CONN. – Honored with an award for outstanding in reducing energy use and demand, General Manager Robert Niedermeier of Honey Cell, located in Shelton, attributes their success to looking beyond immediate returns. The company, a manufacturer of paper honeycomb, a recyclable, environmentally friendly material used in packaging and in products, ranging from panels to pallets, received the Platinum Award, the top honor, at the eighth annual Southwest Connecticut Summer Savers Awards ceremony held on April 28.

“Our commitment to the environment, energy savings and technological advances is an easily reproducible model,” said Niedermeier. “It simply requires companies to be committed to longer returns on investments than are typical in business, while still keeping cash neutral until the benefits are realized.”

In all, 20 facilities received accolades at the event, which took place at the State Capitol. The combined energy-efficiency measures implemented by these participants were credited by Department of Public Utility Control Chairman Kevin M. DelGobbo with having saved approximately 1,300 megawatt hours of electricity, reducing peak demand by 5.6 megawatts and carbon dioxide emissions by an estimated 725 tons.

“Their collective efforts have made a real difference in improving the air quality of our region, as well as contributing to the overall reliability of Connecticut’s electric system,” DelGobbo declared. “The positive example they have set should inspire other commercial and civic organizations to take similar steps to cut their energy use.”

Honey Cell’s energy savings were achieved by reducing wattage in lighting fixtures, installing motion sensors, and switching to high-efficiency air conditioning and compressor units through the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund programs. Honey Cell also leased solar panels with assistance from the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund. These measures resulted in a 38 percent reduction in consumption (representing 82,950

kilowatt-hours), a 25 percent (36 kilowatt) reduction in demand, and a carbon dioxide reduction of about 46 tons.

The awards program is designed to encourage energy efficiency and improve air quality in densely populated Fairfield and New Haven counties. To be eligible, an organization or facility must voluntarily reduce its consumption of electricity by at least five percent from the two previous summers without using a diesel generator and agree to monitor and report its power usage during the summer months when demand tends to be highest.

Like Honey Cell, participants often are able to defray their energy costs via one of several available financial incentive plans designed to promote such savings. These include the Small Business Energy Advantage, Energy Conscious Blueprint and Energy Opportunities programs supported by the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund in partnership with Connecticut Light and Power, United Illuminating and the state's natural gas utilities.

Three Gold Awards went to participants achieving a 20 percent reduction in both electric consumption, measured in kilowatt-hours, and demand, measured in kilowatts. The winners were:

- The U.S. Postal Service at 135 Grand St. in Waterbury, which utilized the Energy Opportunities program to replace older motors with premium efficiency units, as well as installed an energy management system and eliminate older, less efficient mail sorting equipment. The Postal Service also received the Outstanding Achievement Award for the greatest reduction in CO₂ of 206 tons;
- St. Onge Steward Johnston & Reens LLC, a Stamford law firm that utilized the Small Business Energy Advantage program to install an energy-efficient lighting system with occupancy sensors. The firm also replaced less efficient heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment in its three-story building with three high-efficiency 10-ton units, and
- The City of Danbury Rogers Park garage, where less efficient metal halide fixtures were replaced with more efficient fluorescent fixtures, also with support from the Small Business Energy Advantage program.

Nine facilities reduced their consumption and demand between 10 and 20 percent, receiving Silver Awards. Recipients included the Sears Roebuck store in Waterbury; North Madison Congregational Church; Redding Fire District #1; Route 7 Music LLC in Brookfield; Kohl's Department Stores in Ridgefield, Fairfield and Orange; the Vegetable Barn & Deli in New Canaan, and Alloy Engineering Co. of Bridgeport.

Bronze Awards for achieving a five to ten percent decrease in electric use and demand went to Taco Bell of Norwalk; People's United Bank of Stamford; the War Memorial Association of Danbury; Kohl's Department Store of Hamden, and the Island Avenue Elementary School of Madison.

In addition, Peak Performer Awards were given to Tilcon Connecticut, Inc., a major supplier of construction materials, which enrolled six of its facilities in the Independent System Operator-New England Load Response program last summer with a resulting decrease in peak demand of more than 5,000 kilowatts, and Seymour Middle School, which by participating in the same program, managed to cut its demand by 214 kilowatts, thus achieving nearly 100 percent of its load response goal.

Awards presentations were made by Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) Chairman Kevin M. DelGobbo, DPUC Vice Chairman Jack Betkoski and Commissioners Amalia Vazquez Bzdyra and Anna Ficeto; Raymond Wilson, Director of Energy Policy and Planning of the State Office of Policy and Management, and Air Management Bureau Chief Anne Gobin of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

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About the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund

The Energy Efficiency Fund promotes efficient energy use, helps residents and businesses save on their electric and natural gas bills, advances economic development, reduces electric demand, and helps reduce air pollution. Energy Efficiency Fund programs serve residential customers, including limited-and fixed-income customers, as well as business and municipal customers. Connecticut's energy efficiency programs are funded by a charge on customers' utility bills and administered by the state's electric and gas utilities including: Connecticut Light and Power Company, United Illuminating, Yankee Gas, Connecticut Natural Gas, and Southern Connecticut Gas. Additional information on Connecticut's energy efficiency programs can be found at www.ctenergyinfo.com or by calling 1-877-WISE-USE.