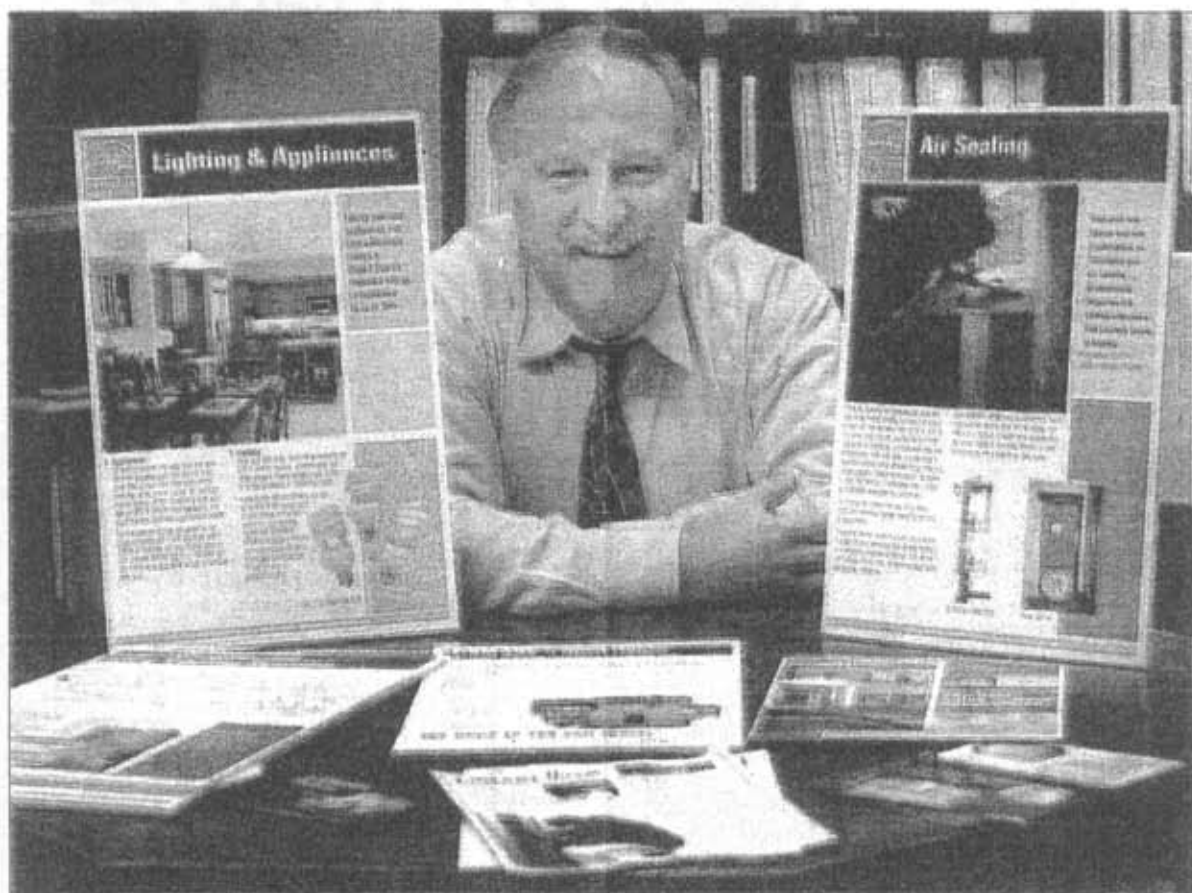


“The incentive program made it a great deal. I saved a ton of money.”

TELEGRAM & GAZETTE

WORCESTER, MA
TUESDAY 103.477
JAN 4 2005

SHAWN DOLAN OF STOUGHTON



T&G Staff/PAULA FERAZZI SWIFT

Conservation Services Group Inc. Chairman and CEO Stephen L. Cowell poses last month with posters detailing energy conservation measures.

Energy star

Cowell, CSG save money, aid environment

By Rushmie Kalke
SPECIAL TO THE TELEGRAM & GAZETTE

WESTBORO — Stephen L. Cowell, chairman and chief executive officer of Conservation Services Group Inc., has found a way to both run a business and make the world a better place.

Honored last September as a “Champion of Energy” by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, Mr. Cowell, 54, has dedicated most of his professional career to energy efficiency. “I wanted a career that meant something in terms of social change to make the world better for everyone,” he said.

After graduating from Brown University in 1972 with an urban affairs degree, his initial career interest was in developing low-

Conservation Services Group Inc.

Headquarters: Westboro
Chief executive: Stephen L. Cowell
Established: 1984
Employees: 250
Services: Energy efficiency and renewable energy services for utilities, public housing authorities, public agencies and private clients

On the Web: www.csgrp.com
Source: Conservation Services Group Inc.

T&G Staff

income housing, but he said the 1970s energy crisis made him realize energy was a major problem for the country.

Mr. Cowell worked as the director of the Massachusetts Office of Citizen Participation for several

years, where he designed and managed the Massachusetts Conservation Assistance Fund. The fund provided energy conservation services to 200,000 low-income households.

In 1984, Mr. Cowell founded CSG, a nonprofit corporation, to help utility companies, public housing authorities, private sector companies and residential customers lower energy costs through energy efficiency and renewable energy programs.

CSG Services Inc., an affiliated for-profit company, was co-founded by Mr. Cowell and President Adam Parker in 2000, expanding the company's opportunities to offer customized energy efficiency alternatives to customers.

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Energy savings a win for all

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Mr. Cowell said 2003 sales for both companies were a total \$40 million, in line with sales generated over the last four years. The companies netted \$500,000 in combined profits last year.

Over the last 20 years, CSG and CSG Services, through their energy conservation projects, have generated about \$1 billion in energy efficiency and renewable energy work, reducing pollution and demand for power.

Mr. Cowell said the success of building the company's energy efficiency efforts hinged on the cooperation of utility companies. He said there had been no institutions in place to ease energy conservation and his mission was to change the system.

One result of his vision is a successful partnership between CSG and Massachusetts Electric Co., which is part of Westboro-based National Grid USA.

CSG is one of several vendors hired by Massachusetts Electric to provide to customers energy efficiency services such as energy audits and incentives for building and installing Energy Star-rated homes and appliances, said Laura Goldberg McNaughton, a manager for residential energy efficiency at Massachusetts Electric.

"The energy efficiency programs have helped customers save considerable amounts of energy. There is significant participation in the Worcester area," she said.

Ms. McNaughton said about 65 percent of the company's Massachusetts customers participate in the energy efficiency program, resulting in annual savings of \$160 million in electricity bills. The program, in preventing the utility's production of that extra energy, reduced annual emissions by 1.2 million tons, or the equivalent of removing 150,000 vehicles from the roadways, she said.

"Steve Cowell is a real leader in encouraging energy efficiency locally, regionally and nationally," she said. "I give him a lot of credit."

Shawn Dolan, a Stoughton resident, called CSG to conduct

an energy audit after hearing a radio promotion about the services in October. The audit revealed that insulating his home would reduce energy costs, so he hired CSG to perform the insulation services. The Massachusetts Electric incentive program paid for 50 percent of Mr. Dolan's insulation services up to \$1,500.

"I have recommended this to other people," Mr. Dolan said. "The crew (members) who came out did a great job. It was done all in one day, which was terrific. The process was very easy and turnaround time from when I called them was quick. The incentive program made it a great deal. I saved a ton of money."

In addition to energy efficiency, CSG has been focused on promoting renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and hydropower.

CSG is involved with the Hoosac Wind Project, a 30-megawatt wind power facility to be located on two ridgelines in the northwestern Massachusetts towns of Monroe and Florida. The wind power generated by the project will be included in Greener Watts New England, a renewable energy program offered by CSG and the Pittsfield-based Center for Ecological Technology.

Greener Watts is one of the vendors offered through Massachusetts Electric's Green Up program, in which customers can elect to have all or part of their electricity generated from renewable energy sources while still keeping Massachusetts Electric as their electricity supplier.

Mr. Cowell said the project has strong support because of ongoing discussions with the community.

"If you have a commitment to dialogue and to win-win solutions, you have a better chance of success," he said.

CSG has also collaborated with corporations to improve energy efficiency with renewable energy sources. One such partnership, with BJ's Wholesale Club, turned its big-box store rooftops into solar electric power plants through use of photovoltaic units. Stores in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and New York have PV installations that have the capacity to generate an average of 50 kilowatts to 60 kilowatts.

The 65.5 kilowatt solar unit at the BJ's store in Deptford, N.J., generates about 73,750 kilowatt-hours of electricity per year, which is equivalent to the average amount of electricity consumed by 72 U.S. residents per month.

The PV installations decrease the amount of nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide and carbon dioxide released into the air, compounds that contribute to smog, acid rain and the threat of global warming.

Mr. Cowell credits state Rep. John J. Binienda, D-Worcester, who is House chairman of the Energy Committee, for advocating on behalf of energy interests in the community.

"We have looked to his leadership. Worcester has benefited from his pushing the envelope on energy concerns," Mr. Cowell said.

CSG and CSGS employ 250 nationally, including 100 at the companies' headquarters in Westboro. What makes the otherwise nondescript building special is that it embodies the principles of the organization through its use of solar energy, energy efficient lighting and environmentally friendly carpeting, paint and detergents.

Employees also apply energy efficiency to their personal lives. Diane Meador, director of corporate communications, said CSG is comprised of committed individuals who care deeply about energy conservation. Many employees own hybrid cars, conduct home energy audits and have built Energy Star-rated homes, she said.

For more information on home energy audits, call (800) 632-8300, or visit Massachusetts Electric's Web site to learn more about energy efficiency and renewable energy programs at www.nationalgridus.com/masselectric.