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Company looks at how to conserve energy, lower bills

By Kim Mikus | Daily Herald Staff

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A product designed to reduce electric bills and the carbon foot print is being tested at the Hoffman Estates village hall.

The Kilo Volt Amperage Reduction system, which is new to the suburbs, but has been used by businesses and homeowners in the South and West for years, was unveiled during a demonstration Friday. Scientists showed the system to a group of mechanical and electrical contractors and representatives from the village of Lake Zurich. Residential sales are expected to start this week.

The demonstration involved placing the KVAR equipment onto a control panel of a large fan that works to heat and cool village hall. The equipment, or capacitor, is designed to store unused energy. As the motor draws energy, it will take some of it from the capacitor instead of the power line.

“The KVAR unit acts as a mini power storage system,” said Art Arriaga, an Arlington Heights electrician, who helped run the meeting. It also makes the motor run more efficiently and decreases the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere, said Arriaga, who also sells the product. He added that the system includes patented products that allow the energy savings to be accurately measured.

In testing the equipment, Hoffman Estates officials saw an electrical savings of 40 percent.

“The results amazed me,” said Paul Petrenko, Hoffman Estates facilities manager. “We want to lower our energy footprint. Government has to set the example.”

Lake Zurich Public Works Director Dave Heyden said he plans to investigate how the equipment could work on the sanitation lift station motors in his town.

“It’s an interesting initiative. I think there will be a quick return on the investment,” he said.

The product is now being made available to the public. The cost to install a unit is about \$650. A \$500 federal tax credit is available over two years. The device that can be wired to a home’s breaker box saves about 10 percent on electrical bills, Arriaga said. He added that it also saves the environment and life of appliances.

Similar products are more common in homes in the South because their air conditioners are constantly running. Organizers warned that other energy reduction companies do not include the patented products that measure savings. Another aspect of the recent meeting was to educate legislators on the initiative and address how to obtain federal Department of Energy stimulus money to save on energy costs, which they say would create more jobs. Organizers say a portion of the \$40 billion in Energy Stimulus allocations will be released to the governors of each state some time in the next six weeks.



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“We want to educate the tax payers,” said Len Swanson, legislative liaison for KVAR Inc. He hopes that municipalities and schools can implement the energy saving technology that will allow tax dollars to be spent on teachers and services instead of energy costs.

Meanwhile, the inventor of the product, Scientist Greg Taylor, told participants that he invented the technology in 1978 when former President Jimmy Carter focused on the energy crisis. The Florida founder of KVAR gained the utility patent for the equipment in 1995.

“It’s all facts and science. It’s about optimizing the efficiency of power,” he said.

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