

Chattanooga: Environmentalist gives energy consultations

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By:
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An environmentalist has found a career as a consultant to help businesses conserve electricity and add to the bottom line.

"My heart is in the environment, but conservation and environmental responsibility in the end have to make financial sense," said Steve O'Neil, president of Applied Energy Conservation Systems.

Mr. O'Neil consults with businesses about their power use to find ways to conserve energy, he said, by installing devices to regulate power use. He makes a list of each appliance, air-conditioning unit and other machines and checks the manufacturers' specs to see how much power the devices use, he said. He even counts the number of light bulbs.

Then, Mr. O'Neil creates an electrical profile with charts and graphs showing how much energy each device uses, what it costs the business, how much power his devices can conserve and what the savings will be. The investment typically pays off in three to four years, he said, especially now with rising energy prices.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Applied Energy Conservation Systems is located at 3914 St. Elmo Ave., Suite J, on the second floor of a building that houses Mocha Joe's Bistro. The Web site is appliedenergyconservation.com

Applied Energy installs electric control devices and uses conservation techniques developed over the past 30-plus years by Energy Automation Systems Inc. in Hendersonville, Tenn., Mr. O'Neil said.

Energy Automation Systems makes a building's power system more efficient by reducing the amount of power lost from equipment and making equipment operate more efficiently without affecting the electric load, said Alvin Juma, an affiliate development manager with the Hendersonville company. Mr. O'Neil's company is a distributor for Energy Automation, Mr. Juma said.

Since Applied Energy launched a year and a half ago, Mr. O'Neil said his company is approaching \$300,000 in sales, has closed three deals, has done about a half dozen consultations and has two or three strong prospects. He just added a fourth worker, and has a salesman working the Middle Tennessee market, he said.

Mr. O'Neil said he moved to Chattanooga from New England in 1993 to work on a project to clean up Chattanooga Creek, he said. He later worked as executive director of SouthWings, an environmental aviation group, and at the Chattanooga Nature Center.

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