

Local Firm Getting U.S. Aid

Nxegen Inc. To Test Energy-Use System

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MIDDLETOWN -- A local energy services company is to receive \$2 million in federal money to test the use of "smart meters" that enable companies to regulate their own energy use.

The funding for Nxegen Inc., a 5-year-old company led by Erik J. Bartone of Glastonbury, was included in the \$27.3 billion energy and water appropriations bill that Congress approved last November, federal officials said.

The Nxegen project will install meters in 500 to 1,000 municipal, commercial and industrial facilities with high energy costs. The meters can provide real-time readouts of energy use, which companies can then use to alter use accordingly.

Nxegen believes the technology will help consumers reduce energy costs at a time when consumers' costs in southwestern Connecticut could collectively rise as much as \$350 million under a new billing system adopted by New England's power grid operator.

U.S. Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro, D-3rd District, announced the federal funding Wednesday morning at Nxegen's headquarters. DeLauro, a member of the House Appropriations Committee, took credit for securing the federal funding and praised Nxegen's work.

"The 'smart meters' will allow consumers to assess their energy needs in real time," DeLauro said in a written statement. "This technology works as a high-tech conservation program, providing lower costs to consumers and lower energy usage to Connecticut."

DeLauro predicted that the technology would ease the state's energy burden.

A 4 percent reduction in use could drive prices down 30 percent, she said.

Nxegen recently used a \$1.3 million grant from the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund to install a fuel cell at the New Haven Water Pollution Control Authority. The cell enables the plant to double the amount of grease, fats and oils disposed of each day.