

DeLauro announces \$2M in funds for Middletown company

By JOHN CHRISTIE
Middletown Press Staff

MIDDLETOWN — The computer screen listed government buildings throughout New Haven, detailing the electricity consumption of a soda machine in the Hall of Records and a water cooler outside the City Clerk's office.

From Nxegen Inc.'s second floor office at 362 Industrial Park Road, workers can monitor the electricity usage inside a school gymnasium or a Public Works garage and then remotely dim the lights, thus saving the city money on its electric bill.

Nxegen President Erik Bartone said viewing the city's energy consumption in real time allows employees to detect anomalies that can lead to big bumps in the city of New Haven's electricity bill.

"We monitor the lights and air filters in the tunnels on State Street," he said. "We discovered the city was spending \$60,000 a year on electricity there. We investigated and found that the air filters were triggered by carbon monoxide detectors. About five or six years ago, some of the those detectors failed. They bypassed the system so the filters were on all the time.

"They were spending \$5,000 a month on electricity at the tunnel, but by detecting the problem we helped cut that bill to \$200 or \$300 a month," Bartone said.

U.S. Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro, D-3, toured Nxegen's headquarters Thursday to announce \$2 million in federal funds aimed at helping the Middletown-based business develop new technology and expand its services in Connecticut.

"I think it's revolutionary," DeLauro said. "And there's a

willingness in Congress to look at new technologies on both sides of the aisle."

Formed in 1998, Nxegen moved to Middletown in 2001. The company specializes in monitoring and regulating the electricity load for businesses and municipalities.

To accomplish this, the company installs metering devices, similar to those used by power companies, to keep track of a facility's energy usage. Using a wireless transmitter, the meter sends out a message regarding the facility's present usage to Nxegen headquarters every 15 minutes.

By keeping track of a facilities electricity use on a day-by-day basis, Nxegen engineer Tim Smith said the company can inform its customers where and when peak electricity usage is occurring so city workers can take steps to conserve.

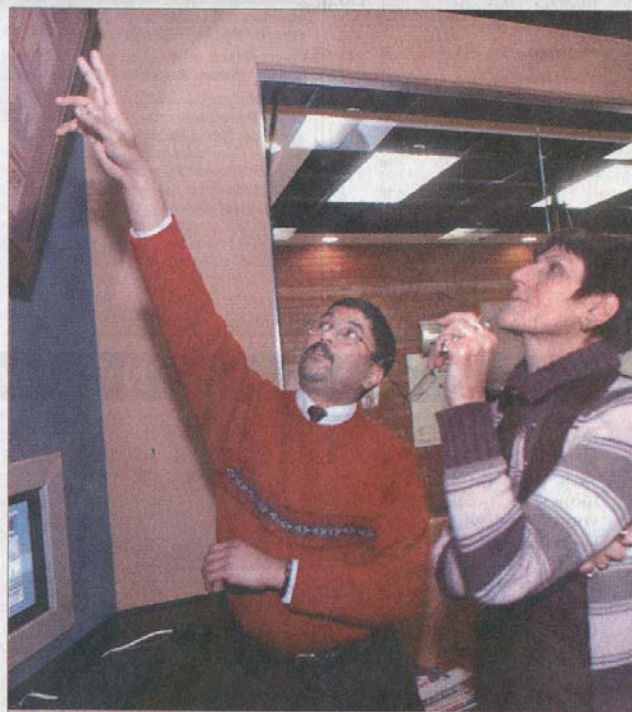
Smith said the company also installs wireless devices at customer's facilities allowing Nxegen employees to lower or increase electricity loads depending on when the greatest usage of the building is.

During the tour, Bartone pointed to a soda machine and said, "This thing costs \$700 a year to run. Businesses and municipalities can spend up to \$200,000 a year on these things.

"We can control the machine's compressor, which handles 70 to 80 percent of the load, during the peak times," Bartone said. "That can lead to substantial savings in the long run."

Bartone pointed out that "clipping loads" whenever possible is especially important now for municipalities, considering schools are being used more and more for community events.

"Schools are open more now



Tom Warren/The Middletown Press

Nxegen Inc.'s Suresh Menon takes U.S. Representative Rosa DeLauro on a tour of the Middletown company on Thursday after DeLauro announced \$2 million in federal funding to help the company expand its energy conservation services in the state.

at night, on weekends, and they have far more things eating up electricity like computers," he said. "The demand is rising ... and the bills are rising substantially."

DeLauro noted, with the federal and state governments facing huge deficits, municipalities need to look toward conservation to deal with a loss in revenues.

"With the pressure on cities and towns, conservation is one of the few tools they have to combat rising taxes," she said.

Right now Nxegen's biggest customer is the city of New Haven. The company started monitoring and managing the electricity loads at 60 city facilities in 2001 through a \$125,000 pilot program funded by the state Office of Policy and Management and U.S. Department of Energy.

Nxegen Vice President Gary Lane said during the pilot program, the company helped reduce the city's electricity costs by about \$300,000.

New Haven has since entered into a 10-year contract with the Nxegen whereby the company will start monitoring 35 more city facilities.

Bartone said the company will use the \$2 million in federal funds to expand its services to other areas of Connecticut and develop new technology for managing electricity loads.

"We hope to develop similar technology for managing loads in emergency generators and heating and cooling systems, which are tough to control," he said.

To contact John Christie, call (860) 347-3331 ext. 220, or e-mail jchristie@middletownpress.com.



BUSINESS
Middletown
company gets
federal grant
Please see Page B1

January 30, 2004

THE MIDDLETOWN PRESS

www.middletownpress.com www.cjcentral.com