

# Massena Electric Unveils Proposal for Grasse River Hydroelectric Project

## Revitalization plan will increase energy, economic, and recreation opportunities, and result in cleaner environment

**MASSENA, N.Y.**—The Town of Massena Electric Department (MED), a municipally owned electric utility serving over 9,000 customers, announced Board approval of further development and study of a proposal to construct a multipurpose hydroelectric facility on Massena's Grasse River. The \$10 Million dollar plan calls for replacing the breached dam with a concrete gravity dam and constructing a 2.5 Megawatt powerhouse. The new facility will provide renewable energy, improve the local economy and recreation opportunities, while reducing dependence on fossil fuels. The replacement facility would be 2/3rds of a mile downstream of the breached dam and the facility would provide unique ice management and flood control features.

According to Andrew McMahon, MED Superintendent, MED's proposal addresses MED's desire to create energy independence and lessen its dependence on fossil fuels which generate green house gasses. McMahon said "these goals are sought by the MED Board, the Governor of New York and the President of the United States. We need to develop more renewable energy sources to become less dependent on foreign and diminishing energy supplies."

MED's proposed project creates a new and reliable supply of renewable energy—enough, according to McMahon, to serve 800 homes on average. The project would give rate payers long term price stability and the ratepayers will not be required to subsidize project costs in excess of the benefits they receive. "Clearly MED has a history of adding value to the community, but MED is not going to pursue this or any other project unless it makes sense for our ratepayers, my board demands it and the PSC requires it."

The proposed project is also consistent with the community's desire to revitalize the waterfront. "In 1997 when the existing Grasse River dam breached, the Town and Village of Massena and the Town of Louisville issued a Joint Resolution calling for its restoration. As we evaluated this project, MED made sure the objectives of the Joint Resolution and the Local Waterfront Revitalization Committee were included in our proposal," McMahon said. "We think this is a well-balanced plan and we're very excited about the positive impact it will have on Massena, the Grasse River, and the surrounding area. This is something the community has been looking forward to for a long time." Because MED's proposal dovetails with local waterfront revitalization efforts, the opportunities for economic development and enhanced recreation are significant, according to MED Board Chair, James Shaw. "This project will go a long way toward enhancing downtown Massena, attracting future investment opportunities to our area, and creating good jobs in both the short and long-term," said Shaw. Shaw went on to say that under the plan, the upper river water elevation will be restored to previous levels and the pool surface area of the river will expand 51 acres—meaning more opportunities for recreation. "The Grasse River will be a real attraction for both residents and visitors who'll be able to participate in a variety of recreational activities."

The MED proposal requires approval by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. MED is embarking on the next phase of the project, which includes public input as well as technical and environmental studies.

James Shaw noted the public input is critical going forward. “Our ratepayers and community have quickly embraced this idea. We will need their strong support and endorsement for us to continue to pursue this project.”

**Picture Below: Massena's proposed Grasse River Hydro Electric Project**

