

# Green Partners

## Innovation Energy—Delivering Savings in New Ways

*Welcome to our Green Partners series, highlighting our partners in the community that help make Montgomery County Green Bank a success.*

*We talked with Jason O'Neill from Innovation Energy, to learn about its latest successes and why they are proud to partner with the Montgomery County Green Bank.*

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### Tell us about Innovation Energy and your work there.

**Jason O'Neill [JO]:** Engineered Services is a building controls firm, and my role is to run their Innovation Energy division. Innovation Energy is focused on any energy efficiency upgrade we can do, from LED lighting and controls to electric vehicle charging, smart power strips, solar installations, window tinting, and building analytics. We cover this breadth of solutions by bringing together expert partners to each of our projects.

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### What's something exciting you're working on now?

**JO:** There are always new things happening in the commercial building energy space. Recently, we were approached by one of our green building partners looking to do a direct current (DC)-to-DC solar and LED lighting project. By skipping the inverter and conversion, the set up can save 30%. We're vetting the opportunity with a combined engineering, solar, and lighting team, but the American Geophysical Union has done a project [just like this](#), helping them become DC's first commercial net zero energy project. Especially in urban areas, we need to find efficiencies in every part of the system. At Innovation Energy, we get excited about cutting edge solutions in new applications.

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### What are the top reasons your clients seek energy efficiency and/or renewable energy improvements?

**JO:** It's cost. Our clients are thinking about the future cost of energy. They see utility rates going up, and while Maryland doesn't have the highest energy costs, they also aren't the lowest. Everyone expects rates will rise in the future. Our clients are finding more ways to save money, and they know to do that by making their business as efficient as possible.

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*Engineered Services make their own offices shine bright with LEDs.*

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## Why do you choose to partner with the MC Green Bank as an Authorized Contractor with the CLEER program?

**JO:** What we like about the MC Green Bank is their work to make it possible to combine rebates and incentives from, say Pepco, with a finance option that allows no-cost out-of-pocket. All our clients know they need to go to LED lights and that their 30-year chillers need to be replaced. But the upfront cost is really challenging. CLEER helps solve this problem. For example, for a \$25,000 efficiency project, we can find \$8,000 in incentives, and then finance the rest with the MC Green Bank. This allows the customer to do a project, without an up-front cost. In fact, they may not even see the monthly payment since the savings can outpace the loan payments.

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## What do you find most surprising at the end of a project?

**JO:** Most surprising is how soon things become business-as-normal again. We come in and install solar, new highly efficient lighting, retrofit for energy efficiency, and then it quickly fades into the background. It's not so splashy, it's just how people just do business now. We think that's great. When you can do a great project and it becomes part of business operations and becomes part of and doesn't add to the daily routine of the workers, it's a sustainable solution.

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## How is CLEER a resource for your clients?

**JO:** I make sure my clients know about CLEER and include the MC Green Bank CLEER brochure in every proposal we send out. We use the financial modeling tool by Ascentium (hint: it's on their website!), where we can type in the capital need minus rebates, and it kicks out five different repayment options. We show this to the customer as well. It shows them that we've considered the whole cost, any rebates, and that we've already found financing for the project that keeps your savings lower or close to loan payments. We try to work it out so that customers will either will pay "nothing" or save more on energy costs than they pay in loan payments. CLEER opens up that possibility for us and our customers!

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May 2019