

Hoboken, NJ Embraces Electric Grid Pilot Program

HOBOKEN, N.J. (AP) — The city of Hoboken has agreed to be the guinea pig for a federal and state program to fortify its electrical system against storms like Superstorm Sandy.

Mayor Dawn Zimmer announced the agreement Thursday with the federal Department of Energy, state Board of Public Utilities, PSE&G and Sandia National Laboratories.

The project grew out of the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force headed by HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan. As a smaller urban area, Hoboken is seen as an appropriate testing ground that could serve as a model for other towns and cities.

The city suffered extensive flooding and power outages from Sandy at the end of October when a storm surge pushed the Hudson River over its banks. Zimmer said a "smart grid" system could keep power on at key locations such as emergency services facilities, hospitals and waste treatment plants. She and other officials said part of the plan could include backup generators powered by natural gas.

"This energy resiliency partnership is an essential component of a comprehensive approach designed to protect Hoboken," Zimmer said. Other plans include adding more flood pumps along the waterfront, developing green infrastructure to capture rainwater and installing barriers to protect against storm surges.

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