

# New Haven Register

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## Two Cities Seek an Energy Solution

Independent electrical grids may provide more reliable, cheaper power.

In Stamford last August, Connecticut Light and Power cut electricity to the business district to prevent a wider blackout after underground power cables failed during a heat wave. In Ansonia, rate increases by United Illuminating are expected to add \$200,000 to its municipal electric bill.

Both cities may have found a solution to the power problem, one that ensures reliable power that may come with a cost savings.

They are the first Connecticut cities to take advantage of a new state law that allows them to set up energy improvement districts with the authority to issue bonds to pay for the establishment of an independent electrical grid with its own power plants.

Stamford is already planning one for its government center that may also power nearby public housing. It may expand to nearby financial businesses, such as investment banks with trading floors, willing to pay a premium for reliable power.

Ansonia hopes to attract high-tech businesses to its old industrial plants with its own small, independent electrical grid.

The independent grid's value rises in areas of concentrated development where heat recaptured from electricity generation can warm and cool buildings. New buildings in such a district might no longer need their own heating and cooling units, instead relying on the independent power grid.

These micro power grids would benefit the rest of Connecticut that still relies on the major utilities for electricity. These small power grids increase the overall supply of electricity in the state.

The Stamford grid could potentially cut by an estimated \$300 million the federal congestion fee imposed on Connecticut because of the lack of adequate power lines.

The promise of these micro electricity grids has yet to be realized. But the need for them is clear. *Register]*