

CEO explains proposed lighting project

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During its April meeting, Avery County Board of Commissioners unanimously voted to allow Architectural Detail Group to pursue negotiations with TVA to determine the maximum possible rebate the county could receive from TVA by allowing ADG to convert many of the county's lighting fixtures to newer, more efficient models.

While the upfront cost to install the new systems could be high, rebates from TVA and reductions in energy costs of around 50 percent could see the county with a full return on its investment in only a few years. Once ADG has determined the possible rebate from TVA, Avery County Board of Commissioners will reexamine the opportunity and discuss contracting with ADG.

ADG CEO and Founder Gerald Olesker sat down with *The Avery Journal-Times* to answer a few key questions about the nature of its technology and what it could mean for Avery County.

First, Olesker clarified some of the immediate questions about what exactly would change within Avery government facilities.

"We use adaptive electronics, which allows us to lower the cost of production, have a better control unit and allow the energy to really just work better," Olesker said. "Fixture-based technology is key.

Not just the light bulb, but the fixture itself."

According to Olesker, the fixtures use induction lighting, a technology invented more than 120 years ago by Nikola Tesla, in conjunction with state-of-the-art electronics, to reduce energy consumption by improving lighting while reducing heat output from bulbs.

"Where there is the need and energy is being used in a lengthy period of the day, there is an opportunity to help reduce that load," Olesker said.

As far as appearance is concerned, Olesker said that the fixtures could be adapted to suit any style, antique or modern.

Avery County takes its history seriously, and one of the key features of that history lies in some of the architectural features of its oldest buildings. According to Olesker, ADG has already provided historically sensitive lighting fixtures for other towns, including Salt Lake City Hall in Utah and Washington, Penn.'s historic downtown.

"It may not look different in terms of how we touch the architecture. We don't want to just come in and make broad strokes," Olesker said. "We want as little impact as possible. Where you will recognize the difference is in the quality of illumination."

Olesker also pointed to large-scale projects that ADG has completed for hotel chains, high-end homes and the military.



Gerald Olesker, CEO of Architectural Detail Group, explains the process of updating lighting fixtures in Avery County government buildings, which he said could improve cost efficiency by 50 percent.

PHOTO BY MATTHEW HUNDLEY

As far as cost savings, Olesker claims that ADG clients typically find an aggregate savings of 50 percent on energy and maintenance.

Olesker explained that a team from ADG had already examined the needs in each building, from fire department to maintenance

facilities to schools to the courthouse itself.

The savings, Olesker said, come first from consuming less energy, but also from the reduced maintenance, as the products can last for decades depending on their use.

"When you have a product that lasts 100,000 hours; if you do the math at 12 hours per day, that is

almost 20 years," Olesker said, also noting that ADG would train county maintenance staff to maintain the equipment and replace parts if the need arose.

According to the report from the ADG team, Avery County government buildings would require approximately \$200,000 in improvements. However, TVA could, potentially provide rebates for as much as 70 percent of that cost.

Depending on the size of the rebates offered by TVA, the project could pay for itself in the first several years of the equipment's 20-year lifespan.

During the commissioners' meeting, Olesker also spoke of the potential for Avery County to serve as a home for a new ADG manufacturing facility depending on the opportunities and infrastructure available.

Avery County Economic Development Director Bret Gardella noted that he had done extensive research on ADG, and had found them to be an established company; even checking with the city government in Washington, Penn., where, according to Gardella, officials reported savings of closer to 70 percent and prompt service in response to damaged equipment during shipping.

The commissioners did not vote to contract with ADG, only to grant permission for the firm to begin negotiations with TVA regarding possible rebates.

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