



HCG

2018 HCG's Year in Review!

As the year comes to an end, we wanted to share some of our most memorable moments of 2018. It was a busy year at HCG, and we look forward to what we can accomplish in 2019.

Thank you to everyone who shares our community-driven mission.



January: Historic Courthouse Restoration

Our home, the Old Courthouse building in downtown Northampton, receives \$1.8 million in capital funding for a much-needed historic renovation. The work is set to begin in January 2019.



February: HCG launches Alternative Energy Credit Brokerage service

Homeowners investing in alternative heating systems maximize their clean energy investment, while keeping all of that savings in the Massachusetts economy. Owners of solar hot water, pellet central heating systems, woodchip boilers air source heat pumps, commonly referred to as mini-splits, and geothermal systems may qualify for this benefit.



March: Tobacco-Free education

Hampshire-Franklin Tobacco-Free Community Partnership leads the anti-vaping charge in Western Massachusetts, hosting numerous events for educators, parents, and legislators about the dangers of vaping and importance of vaping prevention for youth.



April: HCG opens Western Massachusetts OPEB Trust

Municipalities and regional school districts throughout Western Massachusetts are now addressing rising retiree healthcare liabilities. HCG launched a unique OPEB trust program designed exclusively for public entities in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, and Worcester counties to cost-effectively fund their retiree healthcare obligations. The Western Massachusetts OPEB Trust brings collective investment, compliance, and administrative economies of scale to participants.



May: Membership dues lowered to \$1

HCG reduces annual membership dues to \$1 to remove the financial barrier to participation. HCG encourages all Hampshire County communities to fully participate in the oversight and strategic planning of our organization.



June: Cow Power

Two local dairy farms provide new sources of clean, renewable electricity to towns and schools in Western Massachusetts through Hampshire Cow Power. Luther Belden Farm in Hatfield, and Rockwood Farm in Granville, have installed anaerobic digesters to convert agricultural and organic waste into renewable energy. HCG sells this energy as net metering credits to public entities throughout Western Massachusetts.



July: Solarize Hot Water Western Massachusetts

HCG wrapped up our pilot solar hot water program with Spartan Solar, through a grant from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center. We would like to thank the community support from Amherst, Pelham, and Williamsburg for leading their communities in the investment of clean energy.



August: HCG offers new Regional Financial Management Services program

In partnership with Baystate Municipal Accounting Group, HCG allows cities and towns to take advantage of combined municipal financial services. Through this regional program, cities and towns are able to save money and staff time by utilizing cloud-based technology and outsourcing financial management. Municipalities of any size may select some or all of the following services: finance director, accounting, collector, treasurer, and assessor.



September: RSVP volunteer recognition

RSVP of the Pioneer Valley recognizes the accomplishments of over 600 local volunteers for serving nearly 100,000 volunteer hours throughout the year. At the annual luncheon, a record 8 volunteers received a lifetime achievement award for serving 4,000 hours throughout their lives.



October: HCG Purchasing Co-op expands to Plymouth County

In a first of its kind partnership, the HCG Purchasing Co-op teams up with Plymouth County to offer access to its General Office Supply products bid. Schools, nonprofits, and municipalities are encouraged to sign up, with free delivery and no participation fee.



November: Peanut Butter and Jelly Jar Drive

HCG once again partners with Lavery Greenfield's Peanut Butter and Jelly Jar drive, and works with local Hampshire Power business customers to increase donations to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. This year's record-breaking collection was 1,865 lbs of peanut butter and jelly.



December: Community Solar projects expanded

HCG in partnership with Nexamp expands access to solar power in Western Massachusetts with 12 new community solar projects through Hampshire Renewables. The solar arrays provide 21 megawatts, enough to power approximately 4,000 homes. This project increases the opportunity for residents, businesses, and municipalities to save hundreds if not thousands on their annual electricity bills while supporting local, renewable electricity.



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