



## Powering New York City's Growth



By Richard T. Anderson

In its 2006 *Electricity Outlook* report, the New York Building Congress estimated that New York City will require up to 7,000 MW of new electric generating capacity over the next two decades to accommodate growing demand for power from new businesses and residents. That additional capacity would prevent the threat of rolling blackouts, keep rates from soaring and allow for the replacement of older, polluting plants.

The long-term outlook is only part of the story. Twice in the past few years, large segments of New York have endured extended periods without electricity. On numerous other occasions, large businesses and property owners voluntarily reduced their electricity usage during periods of high demand to prevent system overload.

While the circumstances in each instance were different, collectively, they speak to the City's vulnerability to potentially devastating power failures. This vulnerability will only intensify in the coming years as greater strain is placed on the power supply and the networks that distribute electricity into homes, businesses, subways, hospitals, schools and other facilities.

It is up to New York's political leadership to focus on a series of critical investments, including electric cables, substations, gas, steam, water and sewer mains, telecommunications cables and towers.

The most glaring need is the reauthorization of the Article X power plant siting law. With the long lead time needed for approval, planning and construction of new power plants, the opportunity for building adequate generating facilities is rapidly narrowing. The enactment of legislation needed to streamline the power plant approval process absolutely requires the cooperative efforts of New York's Governor and legislative leaders.

The Building Congress Energy Committee also has called upon government to:

- Create stronger incentives to promote energy efficiency, clean on-site generation, peak load management and high performance building design;
- Assist in strengthening the region's electric transmission and distribution infrastructure; and,
- Ensure that power producers can obtain financing necessary to build proposed plants once approved.

There is not a moment to lose. The time is now to make certain there is enough power to accommodate the City's planned growth.

*Richard T. Anderson is President of the New York Building Congress and a member of the Advisory Board of the New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance. The New York Building Congress is a non-partisan public policy coalition of business, labor, association and governmental organizations representing the design, construction and real estate interests of more than 250,000 individuals. www.buildingcongress.com.*

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The New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance (New York AREA) is a diverse group of business, labor, environmental, and community leaders working together for clean, low-cost and reliable electricity solutions that foster prosperity and jobs for the Empire State.

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