



Tuesday, November 20th, 2007

## Businesses going green to save green

**Fri Nov 16 2007**

By Martin Cash

REGARDLESS of the environmental consequences, businesses that do not try to save energy and reduce waste are leaving money on the table.

That was one of the messages at a half-day conference Thursday in Winnipeg on the economics of going green.

Organized by the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, the conference message was that reducing greenhouse gas emissions, using less energy and water and cutting back on waste are issues that are no longer the exclusive domain of only the most conscientious of corporate entities.

"We decided to organize this event because many of our small business members were saying they wanted to know more," said Chuck Davidson, a chamber spokesman.

There are now many places to find that information -- Manitoba Hydro's Power Smart website is a place to start -- and all sorts of financial subsidies and incentives from governments.

Building managers smart enough to try to make changes to achieve green certification through a program of the Building Owners and Managers Association can save a significant amount of money.

"We did an energy audit and identified \$60,000 of potential savings that did not require any investment, just some changes in operation," said Susan Ziemski, the president of BOMA Manitoba who manages the Royal Bank Building at 220 Portage Ave. for its owners, Canadian Real Estate Investment Trust. "We have already cut our operating expenses by 20 per cent."

It is one of 13 buildings in the province that have achieved BOMA's Go Green certification. Managers of those building have experienced close to \$1 million in annual savings by doing things like scheduling fans on a day/night schedule rather than have them run all night when no one is in the building. Those buildings have made a total of \$5.5 million in capital investments in energy-efficient technology and expect a payback in less than five years.

That is another area of the green revolution that has made it more accessible. The number-crunching has been done and the cost-benefit analysis is available.

Michael Benarroch, acting dean of the faculty of business and economics at the University of Winnipeg, said "It's not about how risky it is to make these changes. Now the risk is not taking action."

In the past, there was a general perception that using energy-efficient technology, for heating or lighting for example, was expensive. But not only have some of the capital costs come down, energy costs have gone up and so the savings are more substantial.

An energy-efficient light bulb and ballast costs \$90 and a regular incandescent fixture would be \$8. But over the course of five years, the more expensive fitting and bulb costs significantly less to maintain.

"There are real tangible savings out there," said Colleen Kuruluk, marketing programs manager for Manitoba Hydro's Power Smart program.

For instance, she said, geothermal technology has been around for more than 20 years, but in the past equipment and installers were hard to find. Now, it is less expensive and more available.

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### **The green plan at 220 Portage Ave.**

\* With 57 toilets averaging a 23-litre flush, the building could reduce its water by six million litres if it switched to 13.25-litre flush toilets or save 10 million litres with a six-litre flush. With 900 tenants using the washroom three times a day, 200 days a year at 17 litres wasted per flush, that's 9,180,000 litres of waste water going down the drain. The building would be saving \$11,000 to \$19,000 a year with smaller toilet tanks.

\* There are chilled water fountains in each of the building's 34 washrooms, but the majority of tenants had stand-alone bottled water coolers for their drinking water. There was no need to provide chilled water fountains and the building would save the cost of refrigerating that water.

\* Eliminating water-cooled rooms for local area network computer rooms now that servers are so much more compact will save about \$10,000 a year.

\* New domestic water pumps reduced water consumption by 24 per cent.

\* Schedule fans to a day/night cycle.

\* Set temperature back at night.

\* Boiler loop temperature reset.

\* Maintain minimum fresh air during unoccupied hours.

\* Recommended changes will save a total of \$54,000 a year, 20 per cent of the operating costs of the building.

-- *Source: BOMA Manitoba*

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