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DEVELOPMENT NEWS

2010 >

[June >](#)

[May >](#)

[April >](#)

[March >](#)

[February >](#)

[January >](#)

[2009 >](#)

[2008 >](#)

[2007 >](#)

[2006 >](#)

Oakland County Executive Office Building receives Energy Star rating; \$4M in savings

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Saving money is nice, but being green and being a leader are also behind the decision of [Oakland County's](#) government to invest in energy efficient methods and technology.

Actions such as reducing lighting, adjusting thermostats, and even using moisture sensors to prevent over-watering have earned the Oakland County Executive Office Building, on Pontiac Lake Road in Waterford, an [Energy Star](#) rating from the Environmental Protection Agency. Those actions have also reduced energy consumption on the government campus by 10 percent, saving about \$4 million.

Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson wants the energy consumption reduced by another 15 percent in the next five years, said Oakland County Director of Facilities Management Art Holdsworth; Patterson issued an [OakGreen Challenge](#) to all communities, businesses, and homes in the county to reduce consumption 10 percent by 2012.

"We've been doing things like this ... as a way of doing what we can to get our energy costs down and be more green," Holdsworth says. "All these things, in total, are a significant energy savings."

Years ago when the county bought the building from the [Oakland County Intermediate School District](#), it installed double-paned windows and other energy-efficient technologies during the building renovation, to the tune of several million dollars. So the green efforts aren't really a matter of making back its investment, but doing the right, and smart, thing.

"Oakland County always prides itself on being a leader, and leading by example, especially among local government, and demonstrate to the private sector it can be done," Holdsworth says.

The U.S. Dept of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program awarded the county \$4.8 million in November to use over the next three years for energy-efficient measures, he explains. "With \$4.8 million, we're able to do an awful lot of things over the next couple of years," he adds. Planned projects range from replacing old light bulbs to geothermal heat and photovoltaic solar energy panels.

Meanwhile, Oakland County will open its first [LEED](#) certified building in 2011 as it begins to construct Michigan's first green airport terminal. The new terminal at [Oakland County International Airport](#) in Waterford will feature sustainable options such as wind power generating technology, geothermal heat, and landscaping that uses rain water irrigation. A number of recycled materials will be used in the construction. The terminal will be smaller than the former building but the space will be used more efficiently. It will include airport offices, a U.S. Customs Service office, and a high-tech telecommuting meeting room to reduce travel time and costs.

Source: Art Holdsworth, director of facilities management for Oakland County
 Writer: Kristin Lukowski

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