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Documents (2)

1. *St. Cloud VA center to install wind turbine, geothermal heat*

   Client/Matter: -None-

   Search Terms: "St. Cloud VA Medical Center" AND "wind" AND "energy"

   Search Type: Terms and Connectors

   Narrowed by:

Content Type	Narrowed by
News	Geography by Document: North America; Location by Publication: Minnesota

2. *Green building in the public sector sustains jobs in construction in Minnesota*

   Client/Matter: -None-

   Search Terms: "St. Cloud VA Medical Center" AND "wind" AND "energy"

   Search Type: Terms and Connectors

   Narrowed by:

Content Type	Narrowed by
News	Geography by Document: North America; Location by Publication: Minnesota

St. Cloud VA center to install wind turbine, geothermal heat

Finance & Commerce (Minneapolis, MN)

July 8, 2009 Wednesday

Section: NEWS

Length: 348 words

Byline: Bob Geiger

Body

The St. Cloud Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center will become a laboratory of sorts for renewable ***energy***.

The 85-year-old facility has been selected as one of two VA sites in a pilot project supplementing traditional ***energy*** sources with a ***wind*** turbine; it will also install a geothermal heat and cooling source provided by federal stimulus funds.

Contractors expressing interest in the ***wind*** and geothermal projects face deadlines of Thursday and next Monday, respectively, according to information from the Brecksville, Ohio-based Veterans Affairs' National ***Energy*** Business Center, or VA-NEBC.

The ***St. Cloud VA Medical Center*** is one of two sites picked for a pilot ***wind*** ***energy*** project by VA-NEBC. The second site for the pilot ***wind*** project, which has a total budget range of $1 million to $5 million, is the VA National Cemetery in Bourne, Mass.

VA-NEBC eventually wants to supplement the ***St. Cloud VA Medical Center***'s ***energy*** supply with a ***wind*** turbine generating 300 kilowatts to 750 kilowatts - significantly less than tall white turbines designed to generate ***energy*** for utilities.

The Bourne, Mass. pilot project site is expected to generate 60 kilowatts to 100 kilowatt hours.

Wind-feasibility studies for turbine installation at both sites have been completed and will be provided when official requests for proposals are issued.

At that time, VA-NEBC officials will seek a single vendor to provide ***wind*** speed studies and analysis, design services and support services.

The geothermal project, which has a budget range of $2 million and $5 million, includes installation of a geothermal well field to support conversion of HVAC systems for a major VA Medical Center building.

Following a notice to proceed, the chosen contractor has 720 days to complete work installing the well field, installing a heat pump for ground water and upgrading electrical systems.

The ***St. Cloud VA Medical Center*** sits on a 200-acre site on the banks of the Sauk River. It serves more than 30,000 patients from the Upper Midwest each year in St. Cloud and community outpatient clinics in Brainerd and Montevideo.

Classification

St. Cloud VA center to install wind turbine, geothermal heat

Language: ENGLISH

Document-Type: General news

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: CONTRACTS & BIDS (76%)

Industry: NATURAL GAS & ELECTRIC UTILITIES (90%); ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTERS (90%); (89%); HEALTH CARE (89%); ***ENERGY*** DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS (78%); ALTERNATIVE & RENEWABLE ***ENERGY*** (78%); ***ENERGY*** SITING (78%); HVAC SYSTEMS (77%); BUDGETS (74%); CLINICS & OUTPATIENT SERVICES (73%)

Geographic: OHIO, USA (77%); MIDWEST USA (57%)

Load-Date: July 9, 2009

End of Document

Green building in the public sector sustains jobs in construction in Minnesota

Finance & Commerce (Minneapolis, MN)

September 29, 2010 Wednesday

Section: NEWS

Length: 1308 words

Byline: Jeremy Stratton

Body

Environmentalists and municipalities like two different things about sustainable design: The focus on ***energy*** efficiency reduces carbon output and it keeps utility costs down.

For those in the construction trades, however, there is another primary reason to champion the recent increase in green building projects in the government sector. It gets builders and contractors "off the bench and back to work," as Margaret Levin put it.

Levin is director of the Sierra Club North Star Chapter, which this summer released a comprehensive report highlighting sustainable-design projects in Dakota County. Spurred by the recent influx of federal stimulus dollars, cities and counties statewide are rolling out plans, breaking ground and cutting ribbons for ***energy***-efficient projects.

Harry Melander, president of the Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council, acknowledges the boost that federal stimulus and state bonding dollars have given local trades workers.

"Without those, we would be in a much deeper depression in our industry than we are," says Melander, who still cited unemployment rates of 30- to 50 percent. "We're thankful for everything the government has created. "

Though government grants are largely carrying the high upfront costs of the projects, trade workers, environmentalists and municipalities alike have reason to think the green-building trend is more than a flash in the pan that will disappear when the stream of federal funds dries up.

Minnesota's Office of ***Energy*** Security reports that $6.38 million in ***Energy*** Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants have been awarded statewide.

Dakota County's story

The Sierra Club's rundown of public projects in the southeast metro reflects the diversity of projects, design elements and funding mechanisms going on in the state as a whole.

From the installation of "six- and seven-figure dollar geothermal systems" to switching to a different kind of light bulb, federal stimulus grants, rebates, bonds and municipal funds are being leveraged for new construction, remodels, retrofittings and re-commissions. These upfront investments in sustainable design elements are expected to pay for themselves in lower ***energy*** costs in the long run.

Projects include new geothermal heating and cooling systems in six Dakota County cities, replacing incandescent with compact fluorescent lightbulbs, new lighting controls and mechanical systems, "high-performance windows" and reflective roofs, among many others.

Federal ***Energy*** Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants account for a large part of the funding for some projects. In Eagan, for example, the city hopes block grants will cover $657,000 of $714,000 in improvements to municipal buildings. Nearly $50,000 in rebates from utilities and foundations close the gap, leaving $8,407 as the city's investment.

In return, Eagan hopes to save $37,000 annually in ***energy*** costs. Similar savings on electrical and natural gas bills run in the tens of thousands of dollars from project to project. In the case of public-sector operations, those savings are in taxpayer dollars, Levin notes.

Statewide

While Dakota County is a standout, it's not the only place public-sector green building is flourishing - and creating jobs -in Minnesota. The Sierra Club is preparing a similar report, due in November, highlighting the broader work statewide.

Levin cited some projects in central Minnesota, like the city of St. Cloud's plans to upgrade its water-treatment facility, HVAC system and windows in its city hall; a new chiller system in Stearns County (with expected ***energy*** savings of 52 percent); and a geothermal heating and cooling system and a ***wind*** turbine at the ***St. Cloud VA Medical Center***.

In the Twin Cities area, the city of Minneapolis opened its new Hiawatha Public Works Facility in July, and Hopkins-based Best Power Int'l is building what is believed to be the largest solar array in the Upper Midwest atop the Minneapolis Convention Center. The $2 million project, funded with no capital investment from the city, is expected to create 30 jobs, according to a press release from Meet Minneapolis.

Back to work

Contractors on two of the Dakota County projects gave their take on the green-building phenomenon.

In Burnsville, Austin-based Harty Mechanical is putting the final touches on a $4.7 million geothermal system at the Burnsville Ice Center, which had been consuming a whopping 46 percent of all electricity used in municipal buildings. The city expects to save $77,000 a year.

The Burnsville installation is one of Harty's biggest projects to date, says project manager Patrick Harty. At peak construction, Harty had 12 to 14 employees on the job and another 20 to 25 subcontractors.

The technology is nothing new to the company, which has been installing geothermal systems, primarily in ice rinks, since 1999. Geothermal has steadily grown to account for 80 percent of the company's business, and it continues to climb, says Harty.

The project's full $5 million cost was covered by some creative financing, according to Dean Mulso, recreation facilities manager for the city of Burnsville. Because the majority of the facility's users are nonprofits, the city was able to finance the majority of the project with 501(c)(3) bonds. A $360,000 federal block grant made up the difference.

Meanwhile, Shaw Lundquist has just completed work on a public safety building addition to the existing city hall in Inver Grove Heights, which the company will now begin remodeling - in all, an $11 million project.

Shaw Lundquist project manager John Spiess says the two-year job brought out 50 to 60 workers a day at the peak of construction and 20 to 25 on average. The increase in public projects is not filling the void left by the housing industry's downturn, he says, but it's "providing some maintenance" in employment.

Is sustainable building sustainable?

The bottom line of ***energy*** savings, along with long-range commitments to sustainable practices, gives reasons to think that the green-building trend - which certainly predates the recession - will continue once the economy improves.

The Sierra Club is partnering with others, including trade organizations, to encourage initiatives, funding sources and legislation that will strengthen the foundation.

Rebates, revolving loans and the recently authorized Property Assessed Clean ***Energy*** (PACE) bonds offer incentives and funding for ***energy*** improvements to residential and commercial properties. Just this year, the state Of Minnesota kicked off the Public Buildings Enhanced ***Energy*** Efficiency Program (PBEEEP), intended to evaluate and perform the re-commissioning and retrofitting of public buildings across the state with a combination of stimulus funds and lease-purchase financing described as "budget-neutral or budget-positive" for the municipality.

Around the state, cities and counties are making long-term commitments to sustainability. The national Cool Cities Campaign, co-sponsored by the Sierra Club, tracks cities' progress, from initial resolutions to green-***energy*** implementation.

In the big picture, green building practices once considered add-ons have become industry standards, and Spiess expects the current recession will leave a lasting lesson. He cited changes in attitude and practice that came out of the ***energy*** crisis of the 1970s.

"The industry overall is very receptive - it always has been - to new technology, new methods," says Spiess.

Harty thinks the sea change reaches beyond builders and public facilities managers. Government-sector projects and stimulus funding have made green building more visible to the general public. "People are actually looking at spending more money up front, to save more money year-after-year for their utilities. "

Melander agrees. "I think that people are in a much different place now, and that it will continue, and continue to grow. "

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Document-Type: General news

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: ENVIRONMENTALISM (91%); ***ENERGY*** EFFICIENCY & CONSERVATION (90%); CRAFT & TRADE WORKERS (90%); GREEN BUILDING (90%); NATURAL GAS PRICES (89%); ENVIRONMENTAL & WILDLIFE ORGANIZATIONS (89%); CONSERVATION (89%); SUSTAINABILITY (89%); COUNTIES (89%); GRANTS & GIFTS (89%); ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES (79%); TRENDS (78%); SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (78%); SUSTAINABLE INVESTING (78%); LABOR UNIONS (69%); UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (52%)

Organization: SIERRA CLUB (57%)

Industry: ***ENERGY*** EFFICIENCY & CONSERVATION (90%); ***ENERGY*** DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS (90%); (90%); CONSTRUCTION (90%); GREEN BUILDING (90%); NATURAL GAS PRICES (89%); NEW

CONSTRUCTION (89%); ***ENERGY*** & UTILITY POLICY (79%); NATURAL GAS & ELECTRIC UTILITIES (78%); SUSTAINABLE INVESTING (78%); NATURAL GAS PRODUCTS (78%); HVAC SYSTEMS (77%)

Geographic: MINNESOTA, USA (92%)

Load-Date: October 6, 2010

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