



Rebuild America Success Stories highlight partnerships working to improve communities by practicing energy awareness and investing in energy-saving measures.

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Energy Improvements in Greenville County

Rebuild South Carolina Partner Invests in Energy Efficiency 'One Step at a Time'

Local officials in Greenville County, SC, are targeting county facilities for energy-efficiency projects, optimistic that those efforts will spread into the commercial sector and residential population. Working through a phased approach, the county expects that by investing in small, low-cost projects, funds will be available for larger, more intensive projects.

Through its relationship with Rebuild South Carolina, Greenville County became familiar with the benefits of energy-efficiency investments. The Greenville partnership is a model for simple steps counties can take to find additional fiscal resources.

The Challenge

Greenville County faced skyrocketing utility bills that prompted the county to find ways to ease those expenditures. This is a common problem for cities and counties across the country as services increase and facilities expand.

The county's government headquarters, known as Greenville County Square, is a renovated shopping center that was converted to offices in 1987. Greenville County redesigned the front entrance, greenscaped the parking lot, renovated the building and moved all government services into the new offices.

At the time, the county used top-of-the-line equipment. However, there had been technological improvements in the fields of lighting, HVAC and controls since the 1987 renovation. Additionally, as power demand increased over the years - due to computers becoming more widespread in the workplace - energy costs continued to be a concern. Further energy-saving improvements could reduce costs, but the county was challenged to find funding for the projects.

The Solution

The county turned to Rebuild America for help in exploring financing options. County Facilities Manager Ronnie Roberts consulted with the South Carolina Energy Office and requested authorization from the county to join Rebuild South Carolina.

After the South Carolina Energy Office conducted a free energy audit, the county implemented a lighting retrofit of Greenville County Square, with an internal financing arrangement that uses future energy savings to pay for the improvements. With cost-

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Partnership Facts:

Name of Partnership:

Rebuild South Carolina

Targeted Buildings:

Local Government

Space Completed:

293,000 square feet

Annual Energy Cost Prior to Project:

\$400,000 per year

Annual Energy Savings:

\$49,700

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saving projections showing a short payback period, the county's Capital Improvement Finance Committee showed interest in reinvesting the savings into more energy-efficiency improvements. This is the primary reason Greenville County chose to conduct lighting upgrades.

"It provides the quickest return and potentially some of the biggest dollar savings," says Charles Young, Rebuild America program representative. In essence, Greenville County is creating a perpetual stream of funds for energy upgrades in other county buildings.

Energy audits of the county's Law Enforcement Center and Detention Center were also completed. Lighting retrofits at the Detention Center - as well as upgrades of direct digital controls and heating, ventilation and air conditioning at Greenville County Square - will be financed with a ConserFund loan from the South Carolina Energy Office. ConserFund low-interest loans are designed exclusively for energy-efficiency projects. "We, at the South Carolina Energy Office, are pleased to be a part of the Greenville County success," notes Richard Baldauf, program coordinator with the South Carolina Energy Office. "Energy audits and a low-interest ConserFund loan provided under our Rebuild South Carolina program assisted them in identifying and implementing cost-effective projects."

What the Future Holds

Greenville County plans to continue with its phases for energy efficiency using the stream of funds generated by energy savings. The county expects to implement energy management systems in all county facilities and upgrade HVAC systems. Officials hope the money saved is allocated into more energy improvement projects - that would save Greenville even more money.

But the project is also part educational. The goal is for energy-efficient practices and technologies to spread throughout the community. It is possible that residents and businesses can make energy-smart decisions part of the local culture by looking to Greenville County as a model.

"The county leads by example. We expect big energy savings to alleviate the burden on our budgets, as well as encourage others in the community to adopt energy-saving measures," Roberts says.

To learn more visit: www.eere.energy.gov

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EnergySmart Schools is a part of Rebuild America, a U.S. Department of Energy program that focuses on improving communities through energy-saving solutions.



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