

## How the Colorado Springs Marriott Cut its Annual Electricity Costs by \$57,000 - By Glenn Hasek

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With zero money out of pocket and utilizing existing systems and equipment, the nine-floor, 273-room Colorado Springs Marriott reduced its electricity consumption by 18 percent from April 1, 2007 to April 1, 2008.

In kilowatt hours, the decline was 815,000, in dollars the savings was \$57,000-the equivalent of more than two months in electricity bills. How did they do it? By doing simple things such as turning lights and air conditioners off when they are not being used, re-calibrating thermostats, and emphasizing staff training.

When Brian Healy took over as director of engineering at the Colorado Springs Marriott more than a year ago, little was being done from a process standpoint to minimize energy consumption. About 75 to 80 percent of the time, even after guestroom attendants had cleaned a room, air conditioners were left running. Thermostats allowed guests to cool a room down to 60 degrees and heat it up to 90 degrees. In guestroom and meeting areas, lights were often left on. Proper preventive maintenance (PM) was not being done on energy-eating equipment.

Not liking what he was seeing, Healy reorganized the hotel's energy management program. He did not form a green team but began to push energy conservation at each department's regular staff meetings. Items discussed included conservation techniques, energy hogs discovered, successful new steps, failed attempts, and total conservation year to date. Housekeeping, banquet and engineering staff received particular attention. The new energy management program focused on three areas: building and equipment efficiency, meeting space lights and HVAC, and guestroom lights and HVAC.

### **Unbalanced Building Envelope**

Healy and his crew of seven engineers discovered that the entire building envelope was unbalanced. Through system restoration, air balancing and equipment PM, the problem was corrected. Routine PM of all HVAC equipment, including such steps as changing filters, and cleaning belts and coils, now allows the equipment to run at peak efficiency.

In meeting room areas, heating and cooling is monitored more closely to match times when the spaces are actually being used, and meeting space lights are checked upon completion of any event. In guestrooms, thermostats are set to allow only temperatures within a range of 67 degrees to 85 degrees. Healy started a contest and awarded guestroom attendants for turning lights, TVs and HVAC equipment off in un-rented rooms. Engineers make sure everything is turned off that needs to be turned off after room attendants are done with their work.

These efforts resulted in the dollar savings described above. Healy says the electricity saved by such simple steps is enough to power 885 average U.S. homes for an entire month. The savings is also equivalent to the amount of power needed to illuminate 10.5 million 75-watt light bulbs for one hour.

'Every watt counts,' Healy says. 'The management team here at the Colorado Springs Marriott is excited about this success. We also look forward to continuing improvement in our conservation methods in the months to come. We are proud to do our part to reduce carbon emissions by reducing our consumption.'

The Colorado Springs Marriott is proving that it does not have to take a huge investment to reduce electricity usage.

'You can make a big difference by dealing with what you have,' Healy says. 'Owners rely on us to do this.'

This article first appeared on the Green Lodging News website. To sign up to receive the weekly Green Lodging News newsletter, go to [www.greenlodgingnews.com](http://www.greenlodgingnews.com). Glenn Hasek can be reached at [greenlodgingnews@aol.com](mailto:greenlodgingnews@aol.com).

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