

The Fountains at Cedar Parke Saves Big With Energy-Saving Technologies

When Murphy Vandervelde purchased The Fountains at Cedar Parke, a 370-room Continuing Care Retirement Community situated on a 27-acre campus in Atco, NJ, he noticed right away that utility expenses were completely out of whack. It's no wonder as the 336,000 sq. foot building was equipped with original (outdated) 25+ year-old heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) and excessive, inefficient lighting.

To address this utility nightmare, Murphy looked into energy programs with the State of New Jersey and was referred to several contractors, including Hutchinson Mechanical Services. "I was impressed with Hutchinson's knowledge about the state's energy programs and credit and rebate offerings. It's clear that they fully understand the process."

When looking into phased upgrades for The Fountains, which is home to 350 residents and 240 employees, it was important for Murphy to keep safety, security and comfort top of mind. Hutchinson conducted an energy assessment and made recommendations that would reduce energy consumption and lower utility bills, without comprising safety and comfort.

Energy Efficiency Upgrades Generate Savings

The first order of business was upgrading the 1990s lighting technology from T12's to new state-of-the-art lighting. This one step alone reduced electric consumption by nearly 17 percent. Hutchinson also installed motion sensors in the three-story, six-wing building. Previously, hallway lights would stay on all night. "Now, the lights are turned off at night but if residents venture into the hallway, the lighting will automatically turn on, keeping them safe," says Murphy.

Hutchinson also converted HVAC equipment and hot water heaters in one of the building's wings – all three floors totaling 48,400 sq. feet – from electric to natural gas. "From the outset, we're seeing savings of 40 percent," says Murphy. HVAC systems, air handlers and controls were upgraded as well.

Tackling "Energy Hogs"

Murphy says the one piece of the puzzle that was missing was how to interpret the electric bill. "Even though usage was going down from the upgraded lighting and HVAC, we weren't seeing the proportionate monetary savings in other parts of the building as our peak demand was still high. Hutchinson determined the reason for this spike is The Fountains' energy "hogs" were running simultaneously during the highest capacity of usage or "peak time" when they were being billed for usage. To reduce energy usage, Hutchinson is installing a new control system so the spikes in demand will be dampened during peak usage times. As a result, The Fountains will realize even more savings.

Avoid Up-Front Capital with Financing

Thanks to Hutchinson's partnership with Constellation, a leading competitive energy company, The Fountains was able to start these projects sooner because they could finance over a few years, rather than pay upfront.

"Hutchinson made everything seamless and easy by taking charge and navigating the entire process," says Murphy. "It's daunting to figure out the rebates and credits and the overall process. I would have spent months trying to figure it out on my own. Working with Hutchinson enabled my team and me to focus on our business. Our biggest decision was deciding which project we should start first."

