

Shopping mall saves big on power

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Energy consumption is one of the highest variable costs of running a building. In a 203,000 square foot mall in a cold climate, those costs can be substantial. But for Primaris, which owns and manages Peter Pond Mall, all options for minimizing consumption are seen as opportunities.

Primaris owns and manages 17 regional shopping centres and 14 retail properties across Canada encompassing about 10 million square feet. Built in 1978 and purchased by Primaris in 2013, Peter Pond Mall sits in the heart of downtown Fort McMurray.

Always looking for areas of improvement, Primaris entered the mall into the Strategic Energy Management program. After completing an energy audit, they identified several energy-saving opportunities and set a goal to reduce overall electricity use by 10 per cent.

A large Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) project (replacing 40-year-old units with more energy-efficient equipment) at the end of 2018 kick-started their power savings and has since cut their electricity bills significantly. After this, they acted on many of the identified low and no-cost energy conservation measures like shutting off escalator motors at night and setting schedules for their HVAC system and for lighting in qualifying areas. They also replaced lighting with energy-efficient LED tubes and switched out electric heaters for natural gas heaters.

To date in 2020, Primaris has saved \$50,000 alone on electricity – a massive 15 per cent decrease in electricity usage. All told, since the program began, Primaris has saved 285,500 kilowatt hours of electricity.



A large HVAC replacement on the roof kick-started the mall's electricity savings.

Knowledge sharing takes it further

Picking up tips and learnings from other program participants has also helped Primaris find operational efficiencies along the way. Regular group discussions with energy management professionals and onsite property walk-throughs have helped them brainstorm different approaches for optimizing their energy consumption.

Going forward, Peter Pond Mall aims to leverage these learnings as it works towards achieving additional energy-savings goals. Their plans include installing a building management system, engaging with tenants, continuing with energy-efficient lighting replacements throughout the property and replacing HVAC units as they meet their life expectancy.

“Through the SEM program, Peter Pond Mall was able to identify areas of improvement and uncover new areas of costs savings. The program’s professionals bring an abundance of expertise and knowledge to the conversation or project, while also becoming your biggest cheerleader as you work through achieving the goals you have set out. The property has already seen vast improvements in our electricity consumption, which in turn, has resulted in cost savings for our tenants, as well as ensuring Peter Pond Mall remains a good energy-efficient community member.” – Julie Worrell, Property Manager



Low and no-cost energy conservation measures like shutting off escalator motors at night have helped lower power expenditures.