

VANCOUVER ISLAND HEALTH AUTHORITY: BIG ENERGY SAVINGS FROM ENERGY MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

A POWER SMART PARTNER SUCCESS STORY

Before the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) Central/North region went through its first BC Hydro Energy Management Assessment in 2006, says Energy Manager Nancy Gunn, “our energy management work was good, but it wasn’t focused.”

Now, after that first EMA, VIHA Central/North has completed a total of 13 energy-management projects that have generated a remarkable 2.973 gigawatts in energy savings – enough energy to power over 270 homes for one year.

“For us,” says Nancy, “this translates to a whole lot of financial savings that can be used to offset load increases from new medical equipment without compromising our budgets.” Another 14 or so projects are also in the planning stages, where “we’re aiming for an additional nine gigawatts of savings within the next two years.”

MOVING FROM AD HOC TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Before the EMA, Nancy says, “I just went and found projects without having a complete picture of where we were and what we needed to do.” And that kind of ad hoc approach is not unusual. A lot of organizations today approach energy management just like VIHA did: as the opportunity presents itself.

A BC Hydro EMA is an easy way to break out of that ad hoc model and pursue a much more integrated – and ultimately much more successful – approach to energy efficiency. It’s an approach based on continuous improvement, where the organization establishes a baseline and regularly assesses its energy management performance in order to develop sound action plans and continually monitor progress. With this approach, energy management can quickly become a fundamental part of an organization’s business practice – just like safety, supply chain management, financial controls and other essential programs – as well as a source of significant financial savings.

“Good energy management is just good business. Why not try and do things that make sense for the environment, but also allow you to fulfill your business mandate? The demand for health services, especially here on the Island where we have a significantly older population, is insatiable, which puts enormous pressures on the system. So any time we can save even five cents on the dollar, it’s five cents more we can spend on patient care – which of course is the reason we exist.”

Joe Murphy, Vice President, Operations and Support Services, Vancouver Island Health Authority

“Our EMA gave us recognition for what we had accomplished in energy management,” says Nancy, “and it showed us where we were in comparison with other health authorities. It also showed us where we needed to go next, what we needed to do to get to the next level.”

It was already apparent that energy efficiency is about capitalizing on new technologies but due to the results of the EMA, VIHA also started to focus on how people use the technologies in order to become more efficient. In addition, Nancy says the EMA “brought management fully into the loop. Now I’ve got full management support for my goals and we all sit down and decide what we need to do and how they can help me overcome obstacles. The EMA identified that we needed to have an Employee Conservation Awareness campaign, but it was not in my job description, so we actually changed my role and now I have the opportunity to take energy efficiency out to the staff, which is just great. There is only so much you can do on your own. Now, I can continue to do what I do well – controls and optimization, etc. – and our staff will come up with new and really brilliant ideas. It’s just amazing what they see, stuff I would never catch, and how much they can save if you give them the opportunity.”

HOW AN EMA WORKS

A BC Hydro EMA includes:

- a diagnostic workshop that brings together senior management from across the organization
- a benchmark analysis comparing the organization to others within the same sector, and
- a detailed report that rates the organization’s performance, identifies the five most critical areas for improvement, and recommends actions the organization can take to make those improvements.

BC Hydro also provides tools and resources to help implement the recommended actions, and holds follow-up diagnostic workshops once a year to track progress and highlight new opportunities for long-term savings.

To find out more about how your organization can benefit from an Energy Management Assessment:

- contact your BC Hydro Key Account Manager
- call **604 453-6400** in the Lower Mainland or **1 866 453-6400** elsewhere in BC, or
- visit www.bchydro.com/business.

VIHA EMPLOYEE CONSERVATION AWARENESS CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS

- The “Good to be Green VIHA” web site – which includes energy-saving tips, FAQs and surveys as well as monthly contests with great prizes – has received more than 600 practical and effective energy-saving ideas from staff.
- The first VIHA “Green Team,” at the Ladysmith Community Health Centre, has found so many ways to reduce energy use, the facility is now consuming about 23 per cent less energy.