



Business Program

Program of the Maine Public Utilities Commission

Corning Life Sciences Division Partners with Efficiency Maine
Company Implements Energy Efficient Upgrades at Kennebunk Facility

KENNEBUNK, ME, December 12, 2006 - In today's business climate, energy efficiency is the name of the game. At Corning's Life Sciences facility in Kennebunk, Maine, plant officials recognized that outdated electric equipment had become inefficient by today's standards. Much of the lighting throughout the building was original, more than 35 years old, dating back to the 1960s. Areas where employees seldom worked were brightly lit 24 hours a day. Electric Chillers were used to supply process-cooling water throughout the year.

Two years ago, two of Corning's facility engineers attended a Building Operator Certification (BOC) course offered through Efficiency Maine, and the knowledge they gained and applied led to a savings of 5 percent in electricity for the Kennebunk plant.

Efficiency Maine is a statewide program administered by the Maine Public Utilities Commission to promote the more efficient use of electricity, help Maine businesses reduce energy usage and costs, and improve Maine's environment. The program offers free advice and cash incentives for qualifying equipment purchases. The incentive is consistent with Corning's Global Energy Management Program, a global-wide commitment to reduce energy consumption by 30% within the next 5 years.

"The program raised our energy awareness," says Steve Vatcher, plant manager of the Kennebunk facility. "But the urgency increased in the fall of 2005 when local electric rates went up. Like so many other businesses, we felt we were facing an energy challenge. We knew we were moving in the right direction, but we asked ourselves 'How do we take it up a notch?'"

The next step involved the formation of an Energy Process Excellence Team, or PEX, an internal team of seven employees charged with identifying ways to make the Kennebunk plant more energy efficient, safer and a more enjoyable workplace.

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Dave Blunt, facility engineer and PEX team co-leader, says the team brainstormed hundreds of ideas. “We looked to identify those items that would give us both the quickest return on investment and the greatest impact towards energy reduction.” Blunt then contacted the Efficiency Maine program, which sent a technical expert to review the projects and offer free advice and suggestions. Soon thereafter, Corning decided to move forward with four projects which included a total overhaul of the facility’s lighting system; the installation of an ‘economizer’ to use cold outdoor air in the winter months in the cooling water processes; and the addition of variable frequency drives and optimized impellers on both the tower and chiller recirculation pumps to regulate motor speeds based upon need, maintaining a more consistent water pressure and using less electricity.

“Lighting was the most visible project we did,” explained Blunt. “We replaced the original lighting with High Efficiency T8 fluorescent lights and electronic ballasts, occupancy sensors and solid reflectors to direct light away from the ceilings and back down to the workspace.” In total, says Blunt, the company upgraded or replaced about 1,630 fixtures. Those improvements alone will save the company about 40 percent on its electricity usage for lighting, and reduce the emission of carbon dioxide from electrical generation by 798 tons.

Altogether, the four projects Corning has undertaken in partnership with Efficiency Maine will lower the plant's electricity usage by approximately 1.8 Million kWh per year annually, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over 1,300 tons.

The benefits are not only environmental. “Our employees have told us that they can do their jobs better now because of the improved lighting,” says Vatcher. “They can see what a difference it makes, and they come to us with ideas on how we can save even more energy. The changes have raised the energy awareness of everyone in the company. What we’re seeing here is a culture change.”

Under Efficiency Maine Program guidelines, all four projects qualified for total cash incentives of approximately \$59,000. These incentives, coupled with payback periods from 1.3 years to 2.8 years, were so compelling that Corning’s corporate office agreed to fund the remaining costs through its Global Energy Management (GEM) program. The corporate support left the Kennebunk plant facilities budget intact and allowed funding for even more improvements.

“The primary goal of Efficiency Maine is to help Maine businesses use electricity more efficiently,” explains PUC Chairman Kurt Adams. “Corning is a great example of how Maine businesses can partner with us to reduce energy use and improve the environment as well as their bottom line.”

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Blunt is enthused about learning additional steps that he and the PEX team can take as they continue with their goal of reducing electricity usage. He is currently enrolled in another Efficiency Maine BOC course that started in November.

“In this day and age, shareholders want to know what companies are doing to be energy conscious,” says Vatcher. “We feel good about telling them we are doing our part.” The Corning Life Sciences Division is a global leader in consumable glass and plastic laboratory tools for life science research. Corning Inc. is headquartered in Corning, New York. With 26,000 employees worldwide, the company is ranked 456 among America’s Fortune 500 companies.

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Efficiency Maine is a statewide program administered by the Maine Public Utilities Commission to promote the more efficient use of electricity, help Maine businesses reduce energy usage and costs, and improve Maine’s environment. Free advice and cash incentives are available for qualifying equipment upgrades. The program is funded by electricity consumers. For more information, call toll-free 1-866-376-2463 or visit the website at www.energymaine.com.

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