



Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

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Energy Efficiency Report for Illinois' Public Universities Released

\$18-25 Million Could be Saved Annually

CHAMPAIGN - The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) together with Representative Robert Flider, (D-Decatur) and Representative Naomi Jakobsson, (D-Champaign) today announced the release of the report, *Energy Costs and Energy Efficiency at Illinois' Public Universities*. The report was mandated by House Resolution 222, which was sponsored by Representative Flider and adopted in May 2003.

According to the report by DCEO's Division of Energy, Illinois' public universities could save between \$18 and \$25 million annually by implementing energy efficiency improvements at their facilities.

"Energy efficiency in our public universities can reduce costs and save money," said Governor Blagojevich. "We have been working with manufacturers and other businesses across the state on strategies to reduce their energy costs. Now universities, with this report, can take a page from the private sector playbook and cut their own energy costs with the same strategies."

Governor Rod Blagojevich, through DCEO, recently established a new Manufacturers Energy Efficiency Program. Through the program, senior business management evaluates its energy management strategies relative to other businesses, conducts assessments of its plant and equipment energy use, and sets clear goals for energy cost savings. The companies adopt energy information management systems, which allow them to track their energy usage and generate automatic red flags when problems occur. At Illinois universities, where many facilities lack energy meters and accountability for energy consumption is uncertain, systems generally do not exist to proactively identify energy waste. Furthermore, as the universities do not share an energy information management system, the universities cannot even compare the energy usage of similar facilities at different campuses.

"Energy efficiency is very cost-effective for university facilities," said Representative Flider, "and as universities find ways to be more efficient, they also find the path to avoid tuition increases." Representative Flider sponsored the House Resolution as a result of a visit to a campus with his daughter, now a student at Eastern Illinois University. "I sponsored this resolution to find out what actions have been taken to reduce energy costs at our state universities and to identify opportunities for further improvements," said Flider, "We've learned that while universities have done very successful individual efficiency projects, they have not standardized the process of consistently identifying and attacking waste. When you've got inefficient buildings, you've got money blowing out the door, uncomfortable buildings, and unnecessary pollution."

“DCEO has found potential savings of \$25 million. It is now up to the universities to set clear goals and establish a process, with accountability, to capture those savings,” said Representative Jakobsson. “Energy efficiency is responsible fiscal policy, improves the comfort and performance of buildings, and brings significant environmental benefits,” she said. “I am confident that university senior management, DCEO, faculty, and students can collaborate to reduce energy costs around the state.”

Energy efficiency projects not only improve building comfort, but also improve lighting and indoor air quality, increase employee awareness and student productivity, decrease unscheduled maintenance, create better preparation for changing needs in facilities management and make a positive contribution to the environment through the reduction of unnecessary pollution. The report highlights the benefits of energy efficiency improvements, documents improvements that have been made and provides recommendations to Illinois’ public universities that would allow for continuous identification of additional improvements at these state-owned facilities.

Principal Recommendation:

The report offers one principal recommendation: “Each university should establish a total utility management plan, and each of those plans should be established in coordination, utilizing a uniform shared energy information system.” These energy management plans will facilitate the capture of low-or-no-capital-cost savings, identify capital improvements that can bring positive economic returns, and eliminate billing errors while reducing personnel costs associated with utility billing systems.

Next Steps:

Representatives Jakobsson and Flider announced that they will be developing a new resolution based on the findings of the report. Per the new resolution, each of the public universities will be required to conduct a basic assessment of its energy management practices, to set clear goals for reducing energy costs and consumption over the next three years, and to report back to the legislature annually on progress made. The universities are to set those goals and develop the legislative reports in collaboration with DCEO’s Energy Division.

“Through collaboration with university administrators, the Illinois Legislature, Capital Development Board, Illinois Board of Higher Education, Central Management Services, the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, and private sector energy services companies, Illinois has the potential to serve as a model state for the energy efficiency of its university facilities,” said Hans Detweiler, Deputy Director for the Bureau of Energy and Recycling at DCEO, who spoke today on behalf of the administration.

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