

The Community Planner

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Planning, Financing, and Administration News

Building Improvements and Issues

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

With the cold weather upon us, local governments are noticing it takes a considerable amount of energy to heat and light their buildings. Local governments often have a series of buildings and facilities that can consume a considerable amount of energy and require ongoing maintenance. Following are a few considerations for operating and maintaining these facilities at peak efficiency.

B3 Benchmarking – The State of Minnesota has created a website for local governments to measure the energy efficiency of a building. The calculator requires you to input building and property information along with historic utility consumption and rates. The program will then evaluate your facility and compare it to what is considered normal energy use for a similar building. For a reasonable fee, I&S Group has assisted a number of communities with the B3 Benchmark process. Feel free to contact us to set up a meeting of how we can assist your community. See more at <http://www.mnbenchmarking.com/>.

Utility Companies Rebates – Your local utility companies offer a variety of programs and rebates for improvements.

Energy Audits – It is a great time of year to gauge where energy leaks are coming from to make energy envelope improvements. Utilizing tools such as infrared thermography and whole building energy models, our Mechanical

Engineers have performed numerous energy audits on buildings and can assist with in identifying potential problem areas and areas of potential energy efficiency improvements. In addition, utility providers may reimburse you for a portion of the energy audit.

Ice Dams – Another well documented issue with the winter weather are ice dams, which, if left unchecked, can lead to extensive water damage. The long term solution to ice dams is to correct the cause of the dams, which is a lack of insulation and poor ventilation. I&S Group has analyzed a number of buildings to provide solutions and designs that provide proper insulation location and necessary ventilation that will prevent ice dams.



Data Management and Retention

DIGITAL IMAGING ARCHIVING

Municipalities have many paper documents such as maps, construction plans, and old documents that would like to be retained well into the future. We have assisted a number of governmental agencies get organized through the use of our scanning equipment by scanning files to save space, provide the data in an electronic format that is easy to find and read, and provide for data security.

Upcoming Program Deadlines

March 4, 2011 – PFA Project Priority List

March 31, 2011 – DNR Trail and Park Grant Deadlines

April 1-June 1, 2011 – DNR Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants

May 1, 2011 – DEED Contamination Cleanup Grant

OFF-SITE COMPUTER BACKUP

While we visit and speak with municipalities across the State, we receive a lot of good input from people, particularly hard lessons learned. We had heard from a number of individuals their computers have crashed without a back-up system in place. Restoring data can be difficult and, if even possible, very expensive. A good, affordable alternative can be an off-site backup system such as Carbonite (www.carbonite.com) or a similar service which backs up the data on your computer off site at very reasonable costs.

Feel free to contact us with any questions.

Brad Potter, AICP
brad.potter@is-grp.com
507.387.6651

Bill Goldy
bill.goldy@is-grp.com
507.331.1500



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