

Category: Exemplary Service Provider

Winner: Connie Walsh, Ryan Companies at Grove Health

Location: 9550 Upland Lane North, Maple Grove

Key Personnel: Connie Wasley, senior property manager; Todd Johnson, chief operating officer and CFO, Medical Advance Pain Specialist; John Gorman, owner and vice president, Gilbert Mechanical Contractors; Barb Jeroff, Xcel Energy account executive, Xcel Energy.

Healthcare remains one of the strongest market segments in the commercial real estate business. But it's also an intensely competitive business.

That's why today's healthcare services providers must do everything they can to attract and retain customers.

The tenants of a Grove Health, a new state-of-the-art medical office building in Maple Grove, Minn., understand this. It's why they worked so hard to get the two-story facility, developed by Ryan Companies, built. The facility, part of the 157-acre mixed-use master-planned The Grove development, features high-quality architecture and both traditional and contemporary design elements. The facility's interior boasts rich woods, slates and a warm color palette.

Unfortunately, when the building first opened, the operational energy costs that some tenants, particularly Medical Advance Pain Specialist, were paying came in at levels that were far too high.

Tenants turned to the senior property manager to help reduce these costs. The property manager recognized the potential impact of the building's high carbon footprint and the negative impact that could pose to the environment. The property manager also considered the very real financial ramifications of the pending Cap and Trade Bill.

Facing these issues, the manager requested the assistance of Energy Technical Consultants to help allocate the energy costs to all tenants based on their actual operational requirements. This was an important step: The entire facility has just

one main utility meter for gas and electricity.

The Technical Energy Consultants helped to allocate the costs for 2009 and also undertook a study of the facility, one that was funded 75 percent by the local utility company.

The study turned in some amazing results. If property manager followed all of the recommendations in the report, energy usage at Grove Health would fall 20 percent each year, bringing with it a significant amount of cost savings.

By following the plan's recommendations, based on electrical savings the building would reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by 448,408 pounds each year, its sulfur dioxide emissions by 1,390 pounds and its nitrogen oxide emissions by 255 pounds.

Based on its natural-gas savings, the building would reduce its annual carbon dioxide emissions by another 58,879 pounds, its sulfur dioxide emissions by five pounds and its nitrogen oxide emissions by 88 pounds.

This is giving new hope to tenants that, once the energy efficiency project is completed in March of 2011, they'll see lower energy bills while the building in which they work becomes significantly more environmentally friendly.