



PEORIA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT EARNS A+ FOR EFFICIENCY EFFORTS

Helping students reach their full potential is the mission of the Peoria Public School District. Helping school equipment — from lighting to motors — reach its energy efficiency potential has become another worthy goal.

“The Peoria Public School District proves that it pays to educate yourself on energy efficiency,” says Ken Woolcutt, Energy Efficiency Manager at Ameren Illinois. “In an era of budget cuts, every dollar counts. And this district has improved learning environments while achieving significant savings.”

As Assistant Director of Facility Improvement and Energy Management, Jeff DeVore takes a strategic approach to energy efficiency endeavors at the District’s 28 K-12 schools — in addition to five other buildings.



“We try to tackle things on every front,” he says. “I started by looking at the buildings with the highest utility bills and went from there.”

Working with Ameren Illinois, DeVore and his team have tackled a wide range of projects — from low-hanging fruit to long-term strategies. Along the way, the District dramatically cut energy costs by thousands.

To add to those savings, Ameren Illinois provided incentives for projects ranging from lighting to motors.

“Incentives from Ameren Illinois make the administration a little more willing to invest in energy opportunities,” says DeVore.

Comfort at Less Cost

Inefficient air conditioning was one of the first projects to claim DeVore’s attention.

Incentives from Ameren Illinois helped replace ineffective window air conditioners with new, high-efficiency central air systems at two high schools. Meanwhile, boiler projects at these schools show that sometimes an upgrade involves downsizing equipment.

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Grade-A Savings

Ameren Illinois can help educational facilities — including universities, community colleges, and K-12 schools — cut annual energy costs and improve learning environments. Cash incentives are available for a variety of energy efficiency projects, including:

- No-cost/low-cost energy efficiency improvements
- Lighting upgrades
- Heating and cooling system improvements
- Commercial kitchen equipment upgrades
- LED exit signs and vending controls
- Motor upgrades
- Steam system improvements
- Custom projects

Add Energy Efficiency To Your Curriculum

Speed Up the Payback on Motor Projects

Typical motors have two settings: on and off. A variable frequency drive (VFD) controls the rotational speed of a motor by controlling the frequency of the electrical power supplied — without affecting the quality of the system. VFDs save energy by allowing the motor to work at a lower speed during less demanding times. Our incentives cover up to 75 percent of the cost to add VFDs to motors on fans or pumps, providing a quicker payback on projects.



Energy Efficiency: It's Good Business

Since 2008, the award-winning Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program has provided millions in incentives to help business, nonprofit and public organizations reduce their annual energy costs. Incentives are available for a variety of energy-saving projects, including lighting, heating and cooling, refrigeration, motors, steam system improvements, and compressed air.

"We had two boilers that were old, inefficient and oversized. We upgraded to smaller hot water boilers that better match our needs," says DeVore.

Better use of a building automation system has proven to be another powerful tool in the district's fight against energy waste.

"None of our buildings are occupied 24/7, but some of them were programmed as if they were — even on holidays," says DeVore. "We fine-tuned our building occupancy schedules, raising some set points and adding night setbacks in temperature."

In another school building — as well one of the swimming pools — variable frequency drives (VFDs) were installed to better match motor speed to need.

"We had air handlers and a pool filtration pump that ran at full speed 24/7 — and they didn't need to be," says DeVore. "The VFDs slow the air and water flow a bit and save us money."

And thanks to cash incentives from Ameren Illinois, five school buildings (and counting) now have new, long-lasting LED lighting that uses far less energy and provides a better quality of light.

Strategic Energy Management (SEM)

It's one thing to change a light bulb, and another to change an organization's culture.

Through Ameren Illinois' Strategic Energy Management offering, the district established a cross-functional team — including Ameren Illinois Energy Advisor Chad Whitehead — that meets monthly to identify areas of energy savings.

"SEM empowers organizations to create lasting change in awareness, attitudes and processes," says Woolcutt. "Ultimately, the goal is to make energy efficiency a way of life at an organization."

According to DeVore "The SEM program has helped us sit down as a team and figure things out together. Ameren incentives also help cover the cost of these planning efforts."

In addition, a performance incentive is awarded, based on energy savings achieved through measures with a one-year or less payback period.

"We're trying to change the culture and bring energy awareness to the surface".

To amp up that energy awareness, his team schedules an annual field trip to the Ameren Illinois Business Symposium. This free event teaches organizations about energy-saving strategies and cash incentives to implement them. Attendees also receive a 15 percent bonus coupon potentially worth thousands of dollars.

Just as a good education pays dividends for years to come, it pays to become a student of energy efficiency — and Ameren Illinois can help.

"Ameren Illinois programs provide more than rebates — they provide technical assistance and long-term solutions," says DeVore. "The way I see it, if you invest in energy efficiency now, next year you'll have money for that other project you've been wanting to do."

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— Jeff DeVore, Asst. Director, Facility Improvement & Energy Management

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