

Case Study: Balcomb & Green

Glenwood Springs, Colorado By Suzie Romig CLEER Correspondent







Office Manager Working to Cut Energy Costs in Downtown Building

With 12,500 occupied square feet, 36 workers with varying temperature preferences, seven tenants, and seven HVAC units, law office manager Don Gillespie has his hands full trying to save on energy costs.

Gillespie said Balcomb & Green law firm's circa 1900 building in downtown Glenwood Springs, which was once a horse-and-carriage operation, has been remodeled multiple times so that today it's a three-story labyrinth of offices with 12 thermostats and 300 lamps.

With all those challenges in mind, Gillespie called on the assistance of the Garfield Clean Energy Challenge for Business organized by Garfield Clean Energy and managed by Clean Energy Economy for

The Upgrades

- Improved attic insulation
- · Programmable thermostats
- Motion-sensor controls
- HVAC tune-ups
- LED lighting
- Lighting upgrade for ballasts, bulbs
- \$300 a month in savings

the Region (CLEER). Following a July 2010 walk-through energy assessment by CLEER and Schmueser Gordon Meyer staffers, the team created an energy action plan and budget. Work started with an insulation upgrade in the attic where fiberglass batting provided uneven R-30 coverage. The insulation was improved to full coverage at a level of R-49.

Gillespie said he was pleasantly surprised to track an approximate \$200 per month in savings in natural gas bills since the insulation was upgraded.

"The insulation in the attic really enlightened me," Gillespie said. "I didn't realize how much it would capture the heat. Employees noticed they didn't have to turn the heat up and that the building seemed to retain the heat."

Gillespie also began a systematic upgrade of old, inefficient T-12 lighting ballasts to more efficient electronic T-8 ballasts in all three stories. He said law firm employees and tenants have noticed an improvement in lighting quality, and he is seeing electrical savings of ap-



Attorney Scott Grosscup enjoys the clarity brought by new lighting installed in the building. Photos by Cam Burns

proximately \$100 per month.

Downstairs tenant and architect Rob Classen said good lighting is important for his business as employees spend the majority of their

Lessons Learned

- Energy savings can be used to motivate more savings via education
- There are numerous ways to trim lighting electricity use
- More efficient lighting is better for tenants, making offices more rentable
- Upgrades make the offices more comfortable





Left: Don Gillespie shows off the vast amount of insulation blown into the attic. Right: Balcomb & Green attorney Sara Dunn enjoys the improved lighting in her office.

time looking over drawings. He said the upgraded lighting no longer flickers and has better color.

"There's a great improvement in the light level. We don't have to use desk lamps anymore."

— Rob Classen, Balcomb & Green tenant

"There's a great improvement in the light level," Classen said. "We don't have to use desk lamps anymore."

The energy efficiency work was completed in December 2010 for \$9,550. Of that amount, Garfield Clean Energy provided rebates of \$5,000, and Source Gas rebated \$1,575.

Additional efficiency improvements funded by the firm include motion-sensor lighting controls in bathrooms, work with a local company to service and upgrade all the HVAC units, installation of programmable thermostats, and planned completion of lighting ballast retrofits on all floors. Other work included switching exit lighting to efficient LED bulbs and insulating duct work in the attic. More motion sensors will be added in storage, copy, and conference rooms as budgets allow.

Gillespie said that with the addition of programmable thermostats and training on proper settings, employees have become more conscious of energy usage. He plans to share the amount of money saved on energy bills with employees in order to further educate and motivate savings.

He advised other business owners to pay attention to rebate offers and expiration dates.

"Take advantage of rebates because in the long run you are going to be saving energy and money," he said.

Businesses across the county can still sign up for the Garfield Clean Energy Challenge. By participating you'll get access to CLEER Energy Coaches who will help make sure you maximize utility rebates and you'll get access to Garfield Clean Energy rebates. Go to www.garfieldcleanenergy.org for more information.

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