

# On-line Support for In-House Energy Champions

## Operational Adjustments Yield Energy Savings

By staff at BOMA Canada, BOMA BC and BOMA Toronto

**BUILDING OPERATORS** and engineers can now find on-line support for their efforts to cut energy consumption and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. e-Energy Training for Building Operations is a joint initiative of the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) of Canada, BOMA BC and BOMA Toronto in the convenient format of a 30-hour web-based training module that busy professionals can pursue as time allows, rather than having to commit to a rigid classroom schedule.

The course focuses on savings that can be achieved through operational adjustments, regardless of the vintage and performance capabilities of the plants and equipment building engineers and operators must work with. This includes lighting, HVAC and controls optimization, as well as strategies to influence building occupants' energy consumption behaviour and tips on how best to promote the benefits of capital projects, such as energy retrofits, to management.

"To get the most out of the building and an almost instantaneous return on investment, it's all about the people and the knowledge they have," asserts Chris Conway, President of BOMA Toronto. "While there is no question that design and equipment are important issues, new chillers or building envelopes can be sizeable capital investments that take time to plan and implement."

Between on-line sessions, which can be spread out over several months, operators are urged to put the skills

learned from the course into practice in their buildings. Indeed, the testimonials are already coming in.

"I've been a building engineer for a long while, but I still learned a lot from the course – like new ways to communicate with tenants about saving energy, tips on properly insulating boilers and steam valves, and new options in lighting," reports Gary Megson, Chief Building Engineer at a 30-storey office tower in downtown Toronto and a 22-year veteran with Oxford Properties Group.

He commends e-Energy Training's case studies and calculator programs that simulate the results of various adjustments, such as raising or lowering the building temperature by half a degree. "I have recommended the course to my four building operators and my electrician. It made a lot of sense and even sparked some new ideas, and because it is on-line I could take the course at my own pace" Megson adds.

Canada's more than 440,000 commercial and institutional buildings, comprising approximately 672 million square metres (7.2 billion square feet) of floor space, offer a lot of room for improvement. Between 1990 and 2005, energy use in the sectors increased almost 34% in Canada and carbon emissions increased 37%, despite the availability of more efficient technology. Commercial and institutional buildings also account for 14% of national end-use energy consumption and 13% of Canada's carbon emissions.

Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), the BC government, and provincial

utilities including the Ontario Power Authority are providing funding for the e-Energy Training, which is available in both English and French. The national rollout of the program follows a successful launch in British Columbia in 2007.

In the past three years, more than 100 BC-based businesses and organizations have subscribed – and have given the program a 94% satisfaction rating. Participants also report a 28% improvement in operators' ability to identify energy saving opportunities and implement energy efficiency measures.

"We are thrilled that, thanks to grants from NRCan and the Ontario Power Authority, this on-line training is being made available to businesses, organizations and agencies beyond our province. We believe it will increase competitiveness in the entire sector by helping to keep operating costs under control," says Paul LaBranche, BOMA BC's Executive Vice President. "We've found that those who've taken the course are eager to put their new skills into practice and quickly become energy champions in their organizations."

"In an economy where spending any more than absolutely necessary on comfortably heating, cooling and lighting your buildings is simply not an option, we believe that this training will provide solid value to our industry," concurs Michael Miceli, Chair of BOMA Canada.

The course fee is \$750. For more information and/or to register, see the web site at [www.bomalearning.com](http://www.bomalearning.com). ■■