



REBECCA OTTO
STATE AUDITOR

STATE OF MINNESOTA OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

SUITE 500
525 PARK STREET
SAINT PAUL, MN 55103-2139

(651) 296-2551 (Voice)
(651) 296-4755 (Fax)
state.auditor@state.mn.us (E-mail)
1-800-627-3529 (Relay Service)

*****PRESS RELEASE*****

State Auditor Otto Releases Follow-Up Report to National Award-Winning Report

Contact: Jim Levi, Office of the State Auditor, (651) 297-3683, Jim.Levi@state.mn.us

ST. PAUL (3/22/2010) – State Auditor Rebecca Otto today released the Follow-Up Report to the award-winning Best Practices Review on Reducing Energy Costs in Local Governments. The 2008 Best Practices Review received national recognition with the Excellence in Accountability Award from the National State Auditors Association in June of 2009.

Rising energy costs, tightening local government budgets, and increased public awareness of energy issues over the last several years have prompted local officials to implement various measures to reduce energy use and energy costs. Local governments can make various investments to reduce energy costs. These investments can be as small as a lighting retrofit and as large as a new construction Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified building.

The Follow-Up Report contains updated information on the case studies that were featured in the original Review. The updates detail the actual reduction in energy use and energy costs. In addition, the Report includes new financial resources that have become available since July of 2008. “One of the factors holding local governments back from making wise investments in reducing energy costs is the lack of financial resources,” said State Auditor Rebecca Otto.

“While there has been plenty of bad news out there, this Report is a bright spot. It shows that good things are happening in local government in Minnesota. When local government has the financial resources and the information to make wise investments to reduce energy costs, we all win. It saves taxpayer money, helps the entities’ budget long-term, and helps us meet our future challenges successfully. We must continue to innovate in government, and make government more efficient while still delivering public safety, maintaining our streets and highways, and keeping teachers in the classroom,” said Otto.

Case studies featured in the Follow-Up Report include:

- Lighting Retrofit Project in the City of Minnetonka Public Works Facility (cumulative energy savings of 145,427 kWh over two years reduced energy costs by \$14,898.96);

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- Lighting Retrofit Project in St. Louis County Parking Ramp (cumulative energy savings of 205,694 kWh over two years reduced energy costs by \$18,770);
- Lighting Retrofit Project of Washington County Traffic Signals (the County continues to save approximately 50 percent in energy costs due to the retrofit of traffic signals);
- An Active Solar Energy System in the of Minneapolis Royalston Maintenance Facility (see Report for detail);
- Geothermal Heating and Cooling System in the Watertown-Mayer School District (see Report for detail);
- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certification in the Watertown-Mayer School District Elementary School Building (utility savings of approximately \$10,000 per year due to the use of the LEED approach when compared to a similar code-based facility);
- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certification in the Blue Earth County Justice Center (the new Justice Center will save the County approximately \$142,353 in energy savings per year compared to a similar code-based building); and
- An Energy Performance Contract in Scott County (see Report for detail).

To view the complete report, which includes graphs and tables, go to:

<http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=20100322.001>.

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The Office of the State Auditor is a constitutional office that is charged with overseeing more than \$20 billion spent annually by local governments in Minnesota. The Office of the State Auditor does this by performing audits of local government financial statements, and by reviewing documents, data, reports, and complaints reported to the Office. The financial information collected from local governments is analyzed and is the basis of statutory reports issued by the Office of the State Auditor.

Rebecca Otto is Minnesota's 18th State Auditor. A high-resolution official photo is available for download at http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/images/otto_hires.jpg. To learn more about State Auditor Otto, see <http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=bio>.