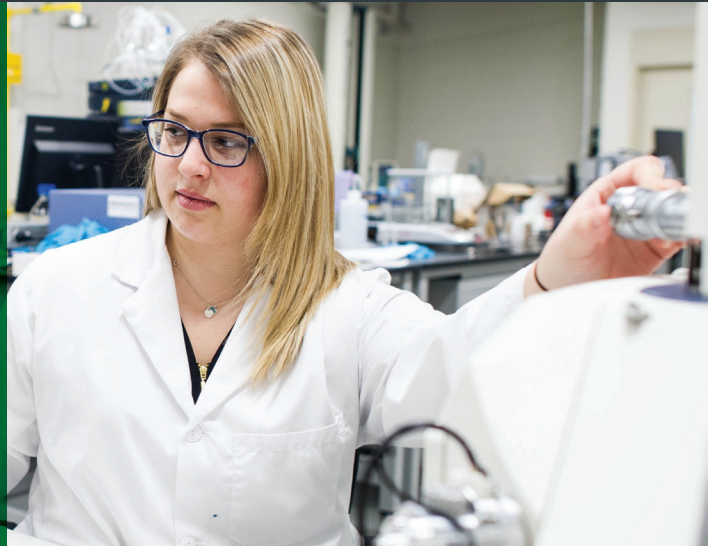


Energy upgrades help research park sharpen competitive edge



Ask Tom Strifler why new tenants come to the Western Sarnia-Lambton Research Park, and he'll tell you without skipping a beat it's because the facility boasts the best value and at the heart of this proposition is the one of lowest per-square-foot energy costs of all institutional/commercial users in the province.* It's a strong marketing advantage and for tenants as it turns out, a compelling one. For the past three years, the research park has boasted an occupancy rate of about 90 per cent.

"Quality facilities, exceptional client services and strong collaborative partners is our value proposition, and what sets us apart from other research parks in Canada," said Strifler, the research park's executive director. "Being able to deliver this vision comes down to square-footage costs. If it's too expensive, no one even takes a second look. Energy efficiency and energy conservation are a critical part of our business strategy."

To implement this part of their strategy, the facility's team began with a detailed energy assessment of the 300,000-square-foot facility, which is home to over 30 companies including start-ups. "Energy used to represent 30 per cent of our operating costs. The energy assessment pinpointed the areas where we could do better and provided a roadmap for how to move forward," said Dr. Aung Oo, director of consulting and strategic studies at the park.

Starting with new variable frequency drives (VFDs) on the facility's heating and cooling system, the team focused next on outdoor lighting in various parking lots, where LED lights now stand in the place of aging metal halide fixtures. Next up were upgrades to the complex's chiller system, which now has new damper controls, VFDs and a refurbished cooling tower. Dimmers and lighting controls were installed in four of five buildings (the other is already designated as LEED® Gold), along with 5,500 LED fixtures that also improve the quality of light. For all of these projects, the team reached out to local hydro company, Bluewater Power, for help. Bluewater Power was able to deliver \$194,000 in financial incentives through Ontario's Save on Energy programs.

AT A GLANCE

Industry sector:

Institutional

Save on Energy projects:

- Variable frequency drives
- Building automation upgrades
- LED exterior lighting
- Chiller optimization
- LED interior lighting

Benefits:

- 44% energy savings
- \$380,000 annual savings
- 2.4 million kilowatt-hours electricity savings
- Reduced maintenance costs
- Lower square footage costs
- Improved tenant satisfaction



“Energy efficiency and energy conservation are a critical part of our business strategy.”

Tom Strifler, Executive Director
Western Sarnia-Lambton Research Park



Save on Energy

programs offer financial support and technical expertise to help businesses across Ontario reach their energy management goals. Powered by the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) and offered by local hydro companies, Save on Energy supports businesses to realize the many benefits from using energy wisely.

As a result of these upgrades, the research park is now on track to realize energy savings of approximately 44 per cent, or just over 2.4 million kilowatt-hours annually. Energy costs are also down, accounting for roughly 22 per cent of the facility's overall operating costs.

“The facilities team at Western Sarnia-Lambton Research Park took a very collaborative approach right from the start,” said David Mackay, conservation and demand side management coordinator, Bluewater Power. “They were quite open about their goals, their metrics, and their expectations for any capital investments. They were also ready to partner with us throughout their planning process, as trusted advisors. We can all be proud of their success.”

In addition to delivering the results they hoped for, the team has also noted that maintenance costs are way down. The hassle of renting equipment and hiring special crews to change exterior lights every year is also a thing of the past.

To bring tenants into the fold, the facilities team distributes an energy conservation checklist every few months, reminding the 1,500 people who work on the premises of the small everyday things they can do to save energy.

“We specialize in innovation here, and that includes energy conservation,” said Dr. Oo. “I believe there are lots of innovative ways to conserve energy. Energy-efficient equipment has a role to play, but so does turning off the lights when you leave the room. We all can do our share.”

For more information about how energy efficiency can help your business achieve its energy saving targets, visit saveonenergy.ca/business or call **Bluewater Power** at (519) 337-8201.