

# CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION ENERGY PARTNERSHIPS

## CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

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## TOWN OF LOS GATOS

The Town of Los Gatos constructed many of its buildings between 1864 and 1973, including the Civic Center, Neighborhood Center, Forbes Mill Museum, Tait Museum, Corporation Yard and Parking Garage #4. In the early 1990s, the Town became concerned with the energy costs of these buildings in an environment of declining revenues. Like many older facilities, they had antiquated lighting and heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems that were inefficient and costly to operate.

The California Energy Commission helped the Town develop a plan for reducing its annual energy cost. The study identified several cost-effective lighting and HVAC projects. A year after the lighting projects were installed, the Town noticed about a 10 percent reduction in annual electricity costs, despite the addition of new computers and office equipment and the extended operating hours in many buildings. Susan Kautzer, project manager for the Town, states that "The Town's energy costs are lower today than they were in 1992. It's amazing that these projects have allowed us to better serve the public without causing us to spend more for electricity. These lighting projects are an excellent investment for our Town!"

### FINDING HELP

In 1993, the Town decided to take action to find ways to cut the operating costs of its buildings without sacrificing employee and public comfort. It teamed up with the Energy Commission's Energy Partnership Program. The Program provided a feasibility study that provided a plan for reducing energy costs while addressing the Town's comfort concerns. Both cost effective lighting and HVAC projects were identified in the study.

Due to the more attractive economics, the Town implemented the lighting projects first. The Energy Partnership Program helped with the installation by developing equipment performance specifications and providing a low-interest \$63,000 loan. A utility rebate reduced the project cost to about \$120,000 and the Town provided the balance of the project cost. The lighting projects were all installed by 1995.



*Council Chamber with new T8 lamps and electronic ballasts*

### PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED

The lighting projects installed to date include:

- Retrofitting inefficient fluorescent fixtures with new T-8 lamps and electronic ballasts
- Converting incandescent bulbs to compact fluorescent lights

(continued)

- Installing occupancy sensors
- Converting incandescent exit signs to those using light emitting diodes
- Converting exterior mercury vapor and incandescent lights to high pressure sodium.

**ENERGY SAVINGS**

To accommodate increasing public demand for government services, several departments have expanded and added employees, computers and office equipment. Some have increased their operating hours. All these activities contribute to increase energy use. Despite these increases, the \$13,000 in annual cost savings still allows the Town to recoup its \$120,000 project investment in about nine years. The following graph shows the electricity cost differences at all facilities as a result of the energy efficiency project installations, added equipment loads and extended operating schedules.



*High efficiency lighting systems installed at the Town Hall, Civic Center Complex, have lowered electricity costs.*

**IMPROVED COMFORT AND OTHER BENEFITS**

The new lighting projects also improved comfort for the Town employees and the public. The projects have resulted in improving lighting quality, and the higher efficiency of the lighting system has resulted in cooler buildings in the summer months.

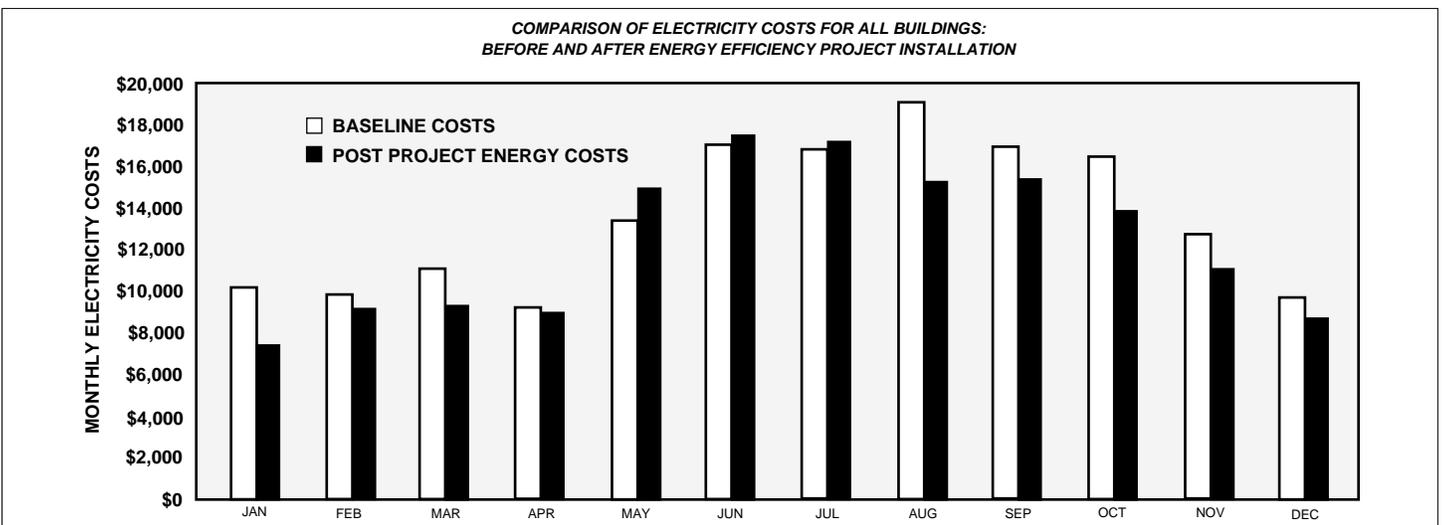
The savings due to energy efficiency have become available for other town functions. In a time of restricted municipal budgets, this allows the Town to improve services to its constituents.

**PERSPECTIVES**

The feasibility study provided the Town with a blueprint of what it needed to do to improve its facilities. With this blueprint the Town could plan and budget for projects based on funding and need. Bolstered by the positive experience gained from the lighting projects, the Town plans to pursue the additional HVAC projects recommended in the feasibility study.

Kautzer had these suggestions for others planning to implement energy efficiency:

- Take advantage of all incentives, grants, loans and funding available for energy efficiency projects from utilities and the State of California. Timing is everything.
- Have a comprehensive energy audit completed of your facilities so that you know how to prioritize projects and facilities.
- Don't procrastinate—don't be afraid to seek outside help to get the projects identified and installed. The faster the projects are installed, the sooner you can enjoy the energy savings.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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