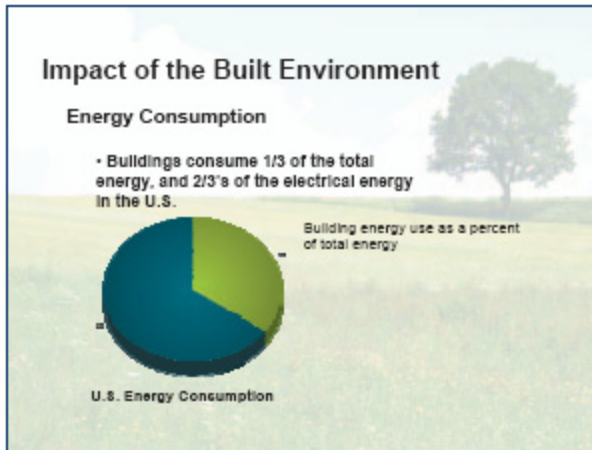


Chamber Energy Forum Asks: Are You Green?



In November, your Chamber of Commerce of Fargo Moorhead hosted a *Regional Issues Forum* focused on energy conservation for business.

Architects **Mark Lundberg** of *YHR Partners, Architects*, and **David Shultz** of *Shultz & Associated, Ltd.* provided a compelling reason for businesses to take a hard look at the energy picture. The “built environment” accounts for nearly one-third of total energy consumption nationwide. As a way to counter the negative effect this poses, the U.S. Green Building Council has developed LEED, the nationally accepted benchmark for sustainable building design and operation.

Rolf Nordstrom, executive director of the Great Plains Institute, provided a regional view, including a look at legislation and regulation being explored at nearly every level of government. Minnesota, with the passage of the “Next Generation Energy Act” in 2007, takes the lead nationally by focusing on three areas: more renewable energy, more energy conservation and less carbon emissions. North Dakota is moving forward with the “Empower North Dakota Commission,” a group tasked with enhancing the state energy policy.

According to Nordstrom, increasing energy efficiency represents the least costly option for meeting regional energy

demand and reducing CO2 emissions. For business owners and managers, increased efficiency also represents a potential cost savings in building operation. **Bruce Franz**, director of facility management at *North Dakota State University*, stated that through an increase of two percent on energy-efficient construction for the downtown campus, NDSU reduced energy costs by 30 percent in their facilities.

Does conservation really have an impact on energy demand? According to Nordstrom it does. He states that since 1990, Minnesota has saved 2,000 megawatts, the equivalent of two large coal or nuclear power plants, through improvements in:

- Energy codes
- Appliance standards
- Market transformation programs
- Programs that change customer behavior
- Green building, LEED

The forum helped to point out the many ways businesses can positively impact both the environment and the bottom line.

Loren Winters, vice president at *Ulteig Engineers, Inc.*, noted that “going green” can help small businesses make money through marketing to the energy-conscious consumer. Additionally, according to **Todd Philips** of

Advanced Manufacturing, going green can help your company recruit the next generation of workers, many of whom have a very strong connection to the environment.

The legislative agenda of the Chamber of Commerce of Fargo Moorhead supports efforts to decrease growth of energy demand through efficiency measures.