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NEEP publishes guide to help schools use green, energy efficient strategies

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Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP), a non-profit, is partnering with NStar and National Grid to participate in an exciting new pilot project for research into reducing energy use in office settings.

The Advanced Energy Office pilot project will monitor energy efficient technologies installed in NEEP's new Lexington office, to measure energy use compared to traditional less efficient technologies.

With guidance from NStar and National Grid, NEEP worked closely with property owner, Boston Properties, to develop an office design that is not only energy efficient, but that also improves the comfort and productivity of its occupants. AEO project researchers are particularly interested in looking at NEEP's efficient lighting system, which is 46% more efficient than what the Mass. State Energy Code requires. Additional energy efficiency measures have also been employed to the space to enable NStar and National Grid to identify opportunities to help raise energy efficiency savings in commercial office settings across the market.

"On top of saving energy and money, NEEP's office will provide NStar and National Grid with valuable data on lighting, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and plug loads, to see if the potential of saving 30-50% energy in a tenant fit-out space is achievable," said Michael McAteer, director of commercial operations at National Grid.

"The ability to achieve increased asset value to the landlord and energy savings beyond state code makes the Advanced Energy Office pilot an integral step to streamlining deeper saving initiatives in the future."

According to the U.S. DOE commercial buildings represented 18% of primary energy consumption in the U.S. and used 36% of the nation's electricity in 2006. Strategic energy management in office buildings can reap huge savings which is why NEEP chose to participate in the AEO pilot project, and bring attention to this issue.

"Part of NEEP's mission is to accelerate energy efficiency in buildings, so we are excited to learn what results arise from the study of our new office space as part of the AEO pilot," said Susan Coakley, executive director at NEEP. "Strategic energy management is the easiest, cheapest, and fastest way for building owners to save money, increase their competitiveness and reduce their carbon footprint. With tremendous growth in local and federal funding for such projects, property owners can take action now to see immediate reductions in operating costs and energy, for a relatively small investment."

Energy Efficiency incentives are available to property owners through their local utilities to help support energy efficiency retrofit initiatives. In the case of NEEP's office space, NStar offered Boston Properties a customized incentive to install the energy efficient lighting system into NEEP's space.

"Sustainability is a key initiative of Boston Properties and we know it is imperative for our current and potential clients," said Bryan Koop, senior vice president and regional manager at Boston Properties. "More importantly though in this market green retrofits and maintenance practices just make good economic sense. Measures such as reducing the light bulb wattage in all common areas, and employing a live energy management system have significantly positive impacts on our bottom line."

NEEP is participating in the first round of the Advanced Energy Office Pilot program throughout 2010.

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