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Cummings Properties receives 2010 MassSavers Business Award

November 23, 2010 - Green Buildings

On November 10, with Fenway Park's "Green Monster" serving as an appropriate background, Gary Gresh, sustainability manager, accepted a 2010 MassSavers Business Award on behalf of Cummings Properties.

The award ceremony honored businesses, municipalities, and public institutions for completing or undertaking energy efficiency improvements this year with the help of programs from Mass Save or for supporting energy efficiency initiatives through Mass Save - an initiative sponsored by Massachusetts' gas and electric utilities and energy efficiency service providers. Notably, Cummings Props. was the only real estate firm selected for the honor.

"We are thrilled to honor the winners today," said Robert Mahoney, chairman of the board at Cape Light Compact, one of the sponsors of Mass Save.

The award winners, sponsors from Mass Save, and other industry professionals received a behind-the-scenes tour of Fenway Park and a special meet-and-greet with Joe Castiglione, the voice of Red Sox Radio Network, WEEI.

Cummings Props. has earned the government's Energy Star rating for office buildings in Beverly, Marlborough, Medford, and Stoneham, and received LEED Gold pre-certification for the recently built TradeCenter 128 in Woburn. The company's most notable "recycled building" is the 2 million s/f Cummings Center in Beverly, former home of United Shoe Machinery Corp.

In addition to its environmentally responsible efforts with new construction, Cummings' green philosophy is reflected in its renovations of older properties, including a current project to retrofit approximately 35,000 light fixtures throughout its portfolio with energy-efficient replacements. When completed, this project will save more than 13 million kWh annually-enough to power 1,174 typical homes for one year. The bulbs, ballasts, and metal from the "old" fixtures are, of course, recycled.

Gresh said that Cummings Props.' motivation for its energy efficiency efforts stems as much from a desire to "do the right thing" as it does from potential cost savings, as evidenced by the company's decision to hire a sustainability manager. Cummings was, reportedly, one of the first area real estate companies to create a full-time, permanent position for this role.

Gresh said, "Cummings has emerged as a leader in sustainability among commercial real estate developers in New England—something our management, employees, and clients are proud of."

Gresh works closely with NStar, a Mass.-based electric and gas utility that assists companies in identifying and implementing initiatives to reduce carbon consumption, and also offers rebates and other incentives to encourage energy efficiency upgrades.

Dennis Clarke, president and CEO of Cummings, adds that his firm's environmentally friendly features have become a significant factor in attracting new clients, including clean energy companies. Businesses seeking to make a favorable impression on environmentally conscious

customers are also attracted to the energy efficient features of Cummings Props.' buildings.

According to Gresh, "A cost benefit analysis, factoring in the incentives and the savings over time, clearly shows that energy efficiency makes good business sense."

"The green movement has gained considerable momentum in recent years," said Clarke. "This public awareness creates a competitive edge for companies that keep the environment in mind when making important business decisions, such as where to locate an office."

Solar energy, while outside the realm of the MassSavers Award, is another major focus for Cummings Props. The company is on the verge of completing the last of a significant, three-phase solar installation project at TradeCenter 128.

Gresh called the 1,256 panel, 250 kW project, located atop the five-story parking garage, "one of the most ambitious solar ventures in the state by a corporation."

While the most recently installed, third-phase panels will be fully activated around November 17, much of the installation has been generating energy since late 2008.

In May 2010, Cummings installed a 120-panel, 30 kW photovoltaic solar panel array at its 8 Cabot Road locations in Woburn. While many of the panels are located on the roof, 20 panels act as awnings over the south-facing windows, further saving cooling energy and serving as visible reminders of the building's energy-saving features.

Gresh estimates that, in total, the Cabot Road array generates approximately 50% of the energy used by the building's common area systems.

Cummings Props., founded in 1969, is a full-service real estate development, property management, and construction firm with 83 buildings in 10 Boston area communities. It has a long history of green business practices including building renovation and reuse; energy-saving design, construction, and property maintenance; utilization of recycled materials and equipment; and reduction of waste through recycling programs.

Cummings Props. leases 10 million s/f of office space to 2,000 clients. Most Cummings Prop. buildings are owned by, and for the benefit of, Cummings Foundation, Inc.