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United Illuminating Company assists CT senior care facilities in identifying energy efficiency opportunities

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As an administrator of Energize Connecticut programs, The United Illuminating Company (UI) assists senior care facilities in identifying energy efficiency opportunities to reduce operational costs and increase sustainability. Long-term care facilities, senior living communities and adult day centers can tap the expertise and resources within their local utility to help develop a strategic plan and assess available financial assistance to support implementation of efficiency measures.

Between 2010 and 2025, the state's population of residents 65 years and older is estimated to increase by 63%, according to a 2013 Connecticut Long-Term Care Planning Committee report to the General Assembly. To help meet this anticipated increased demand, care facilities looking to expand and companies considering new construction can utilize sustainability initiatives to keep costs down.

As multiple-unit residential facilities, senior care communities have vast opportunity to implement energy-saving techniques. Efficiency measures can be incorporated into the maintenance, design and operation of any facility with cost-effective, energy-saving solutions including:

- * Energy-efficient lighting, such as LEDs and fluorescent fixtures, and occupancy sensors;
- * Upgraded HVAC equipment and programmable thermostats;
- * Kitchen and foodservice operational improvements encompassing refrigeration controls, exhaust fan, sink faucet aerators, and water-efficient spray valves; and
- * High-efficiency washers and dryers as part of laundry services.

UI partnered with Apple Rehab Laurel Woods, a short-term rehabilitation center in East Haven, on a recent energy efficiency project. Offering technical guidance, UI helped Laurel Woods identify several cost-saving opportunities to improve overall energy performance.

"We were slightly skeptical about the potential at the onset, but quickly saw how the savings we will earn through efficiency efforts will allow us to routinely assess and upgrade equipment and technology, which directly benefits patient care," said Ben Schiano, Administrator for Apple Rehab Laurel Woods. "By investing in energy efficiency now, we're positioning ourselves to best support the needs of the seniors we serve for years to come."

Through the Small Business Energy Advantage program, Laurel Woods upgraded fluorescent lighting to LED technology throughout the facility. They also replaced outdated motor controls for their walk-in freezer, cooler unit and kitchen fume hood with equipment designed for more efficient operation.

The efficiency improvements immediately reduced energy costs and streamlined maintenance, translating to an estimated \$38,000 in annual energy savings with only a two-year payback period for the upgrades. Laurel Woods also secured nearly \$76,000 in incentive payments through the Energy Efficiency Fund to help cover some of the project costs.

In addition to Laurel Woods, UI has collaborated with many other senior living and healthcare facilities, including Whitney Center of Hamden and Orange Health Care Center. UI also worked with Mary Wade Home, a non-profit senior care community in New Haven, on an \$11 million new construction project of its Adult Day Center and Skilled Nursing Facility, resulting in an annual savings of nearly \$30,000.

"We understand the priority of senior living facilities is maintaining the highest level of care for their residents," said Roy Haller, UI director of commercial and industrial energy service programs.

"As an energy expert, we can step in and steer energy efficiency initiatives in a feasible, cost-effective way, helping such facilities to focus on their core goals while experiencing the financial and environmental benefits of reduced energy usage."

Energize Connecticut programs help senior care communities and assisted living facilities save money and use clean, affordable energy. The programs are part of an initiative of the Energy Efficiency Fund, the Connecticut Green Bank, the State, and your local electric and gas utilities with funding from a charge on customer energy bills.

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