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12 fascinating facts about lighting upgrades

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The new year offers a great opportunity to significantly reduce your facility's energy consumption and costs and benefit the environment by investing in an energy-efficient lighting upgrade. For instance, did you know....?

*According to the EPA, lighting accounts for as much as 30-40% of the electricity used in the typical commercial building.

*The nation's 4-5 million commercial, industrial, and institutional buildings spend over \$35 billion a year in electricity bills to operate their lighting systems alone.

*Nearly 90% of the total cost to run a fluorescent lamp over its lifetime is accounted for by the electricity to operate it.

*A recent Energy Cost Savings Council analysis of lighting upgrade projects conducted nationwide found that the 1,000 lighting upgrades studied routinely paid themselves back within 2-3 years, delivering 30-50% returns on investment.

*Research shows that upgrades involving a comprehensive range of technologies - including lighting, HVAC, etc. - can save facilities up to \$1 per s/f in energy costs.

*Experts estimate that up to a third of the nation's electricity requirements could be met through "demand-side management" measures - activities that reduce energy consumption or modify patterns of usage (such as the installation of energy-efficient lighting products).

*According to a study conducted by the Association of Lighting Management Companies (NALMCO), you can save up to 10% or more on lighting costs simply by cleaning lighting fixtures regularly.

*As part of their efforts to promote energy conservation, utilities often encourage the use of energy-efficient lighting products by offering end users rebates on the purchase of these items. Check with your local utility to find out about cash incentives that may be available on the purchase of energy-efficient lamps, ballasts, and/or lighting controls.

*Studies show that improvements in the average office lighting system can make employees over 1 hour more productive per week - resulting in 3-5% gains in employee productivity.

*A recent national survey of chief financial officers found that the majority was either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the results of lighting upgrades they had managed or overseen in their facilities. The upgrades they witnessed had overwhelmingly delivered the energy and cost savings promised.

*The 3,000 - 4,000 organizations which are part of the EPA's voluntary Energy Star Buildings Program have cumulatively saved over \$3 billion in energy bills and prevented more than 50 billion pounds of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere as a result of the upgrades they have undertaken. In ecological terms, this is equivalent to the removal of over 2 million cars from U.S. roads or the planting of 2-3 million trees annually.

*There are several hundred energy service providers (ESCOs) nationwide who can perform a

low-cost or no-cost facility audit and manage an energy-efficient lighting upgrade. Many can assist with project financing or will agree to be paid out of the guaranteed cost savings.

Start off the new year by capitalizing on the tremendous financial, environmental, and aesthetic benefits that an energy-efficient lighting upgrade can offer your facility, and be aware that your upgrade could further qualify for tax deduction opportunities that were recently extended through 2013 as part of the Energy Policy Act of 2005!

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