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Press Release

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Energy-savings project completed at morgue

An energy-efficient facelift at one of the busiest morgues in America is expected to save Wayne County taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.

Improvements at the Wayne County Medical Examiner's Office completed this week include converting the primary source of heating and cooling from steam to natural gas and electricity. The energy savings project also features lighting upgrades and additional cold storage space.

The improvements, which cost \$3,285,000, will help reduce utility expenses by about 58 percent, county officials said. Annual savings of more than \$360,000 are guaranteed, according to the county's contract with Siemens Industry, Inc., the technical project manager.

Natural gas is 60 percent less expensive than steam and the new heating equipment is more efficient, officials said. Although electricity is more expensive than steam, electric chillers require 14 percent of the energy to supply the same cooling.

The nine-month project will be repaid in less than 10 years from energy savings.

"These improvements are good for the environment and save money at the same time -- that's the type of outcome everyone should be proud of," Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano said.

More than 3,000 autopsies a year are performed at the 50,000- square-foot morgue, located on East Warren in Detroit. The medical examiner's office also serves as a teaching facility and has the only toxicology laboratory in Michigan accredited by the American Board of Forensic Toxicology.

The project is part of the Wayne County's Green initiative, which won an energy award this year from the Engineering Society of Detroit and DTE Energy. The award recognized the county's energy-savings projects at the Medical Examiner's Office and the Guardian Building; its Green Schools Program, and the county's instrumental role in attracting alternative energy and battery technology to metro Detroit.

"Wayne County is in a position to lead the nation in green energy manufacturing and deployment of green technologies," said Ficano. "The project at the Medical Examiner's Office is a blueprint for what can be achieved throughout the county."

The project will significantly reduce carbon emissions. It will generate annual greenhouse gas emissions savings equal to removing 326 cars from the road, officials said.

"Mr. Ficano has a vision for Wayne County to reduce costs and energy use and Siemens Industry has the tools, experience and knowledge to deliver that vision," said George Taylor, Siemens Area Manager for Energy and Environmental Solutions.

Taylor called the collaboration with Wayne County a "win-win-win."

"Taxpayers win with lower costs and a tax-neutral solution," he said. "Wayne County wins with a more comfortable, energy efficient building and better control over energy expenses. And, everyone wins because the building will have a smaller carbon footprint – a net positive for the environment."

Siemens Industry, Building Technologies Division is a leading provider of energy and environmental solutions, building controls, electrical distribution equipment, fire safety and security systems solutions.

In addition to Siemens, county staff from the Medical Examiner's Office, Health and Human Services, DPS Buildings Division and Office of the County Executive assisted in the energy-savings project.

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Energy Improvements

- New chilled water plant converted from steam to high efficient electric. Although electricity is 50 percent more expensive than steam, electric chillers require 14 percent of the energy to supply the same cooling.
- New heating plant from steam to natural gas. Natural gas is 60 percent less expensive than steam.
- Added cold storage capacity, eliminating refrigerated trailer, saving \$23,400 a year.

- Lighting upgrade with compact fluorescent lamps, using less energy.
- Converted domestic water heater from steam to natural gas.
- Added reflective window film to reduce solar heat gain.
- New basement equipment room ventilation.
- Added electrical emergency generator connection supporting all operations.

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