

# Green Building

## ResourceSmart Colorado helps building owners get green

Dozens of water and energy audits are under way for commercial buildings throughout Denver as the result of a recent ResourceSmart Colorado meeting that brought together a group of building owners, Denver Water, Xcel Energy and NAIOP Colorado.

As a groundbreaking partnership among NAIOP Colorado, Denver Water and Xcel Energy, ResourceSmart Colorado strives to improve energy and water efficiency in Colorado's real estate sector. One of the first steps to improving efficiency is to better understand current usage and determine potential savings. Some 80 percent of the building owners who attended the recent meeting took this step by signing up for energy and water audits of their buildings.

"Denver Water and Xcel Energy offer tremendous, simple efficiency programs; however, the key decision makers are often unaware of these programs," said Kathie Barstnar, executive director of NAIOP Colorado. "ResourceSmart Colorado is tackling this challenge by arm-



**Joseph B. Dischinger**  
Of counsel, Fairfield and Woods PC, Denver. Dischinger also is co-chairman of ResourceSmart Colorado.

ing these individuals with the information they need to improve efficiency and reap the associated benefits."

During the meeting, building owners had the opportunity to learn about the numerous programs, rebates and incentives available for improving their buildings' water and energy efficiency. From earning up to \$40,000, or \$21.50 for each thousand gallons of water saved annually, by participating in Denver Water's Cooling Tower Incentive Program to earning up to 30 percent in bonus rebates by participating in Xcel Energy's Commercial Real Estate Energy Efficiency Assessment, building owners can and should take advantage of these easy opportunities.

"I am very interested in learning how we can improve our buildings' energy and water efficiency while potentially cutting our bottom line," said Jonathan Bush, principal at Littleton Capital Partners. "There are likely many other owners who, like me, were not previously aware of these programs. From both a business and an environmental standpoint, it makes sense to know where we stand and then determine how we can improve."

From the efficiency newcomers to the more seasoned green veterans, building owners are realizing that there are many benefits to going green. As a green building leader, Forest City is well aware of the advantages – financial, environmental and strategic – to implementing green practices. Forest City has not only committed itself to sustainability, but also it has made sustainability one of the company's core values.

"We are highly committed to sustainability and a key component of that is improving our buildings' efficiency," said Kem Blue, regional vice president

and general manager of Forest City. "We have found that high performance green projects and buildings usually result in lower operating costs, improved market positioning, increased tenant and customer satisfaction, and improved productivity. Efficiency is good for the environment, our business and our tenants. It's a win-win-win situation."

Forest City's Northfield Stapleton is just one of the many examples of the company's commitment to efficiency and sustainability. With LEED-CS Silver certification, Main Street at Northfield Stapleton boasts high-efficiency plumbing fixtures, daylight harvesting, evaporative cooling, high-efficiency irrigation and more. Collectively, Northfield Stapleton's high-efficiency plumbing fixtures reduce water usage by more than 645,000 gallons per year – enough water to fill a bathtub 18,000 times. The buildings' solar panels generate approximately 7,163 kilowatt hours annually – enough electricity to supply an average home for one year. Yet, Forest City is not content to rest on its laurels. Rather, the company con-

tinues to try to find new ways of improving its buildings' energy and water efficiency.

"We continue to foster our long-term commitment to positively affecting the environment," said Ryan Messerli, assistant general manager of Forest City Commercial Management. "As a result of our involvement in ResourceSmart Colorado, we have made water audits of several facilities a higher priority."

For those who worry about the upfront costs of some water- and energy-efficiency initiatives, Messerli offers words of encouragement.

"We believe the capital markets will likely put a premium on the overall value of any project that has been built green or undergone green retrofits," said Messerli. "Further, not only do we find value in efficiency, our tenants certainly do as well. Many companies and business owners have increased knowledge of energy efficiencies that result in reduced store operating costs."

To learn more about ResourceSmart Colorado, visit NAIOP Colorado's Web site, [www.naiop-colorado.org](http://www.naiop-colorado.org).▲