



## CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

# Henderson County, NC Wins Energy Award for Conservation Efforts

### CLIENT

Megan Piner, Environmental Programs Coordinator

### GEOGRAPHY

Henderson County, North Carolina

### VITALS

Population 107,927

### CHALLENGES

Mandate from the County Manager to lower energy use by 10%

### RESULTS

Saved 56% on natural gas at the detention center; made facility improvements to reduce energy use; working on behavior modifications



ENERGY

In 2008, Henderson County, NC was faced with rising energy costs and a mandate from the County Manager to reduce energy consumption by 10%. In an attempt to meet this goal, they introduced their Resource Conservation Plan. The plan paid off, and the county was recently honored with an award because of its efforts. Marcus Jones, County Engineer, and Megan Piner, Environmental Programs Coordinator, won the 2013 Utility Savings Initiative Leadership Award from the N.C. Energy Office.

The conservation plan focused on three major areas: facility improvements, vehicles and equipment, and behavior modifications. Improvements included changing to energy efficient light bulbs, installing LED exit signs, shifting from reactive to preventive maintenance, and reducing their fleet size. One project that was successful was their installation of a solar thermal water system at the detention center. The county has seen a drop (of approximately 56%) in the natural gas used to heat water.

The real challenge has been getting building occupants committed to behavior changes. “This is the part I battle constantly,” Piner says. She has worked to communicate the need to turn off lights in unoccupied rooms, shut down computers at night, and reduce the use of space heaters. She says behavior changes are difficult but are incredibly important to effectively reduce their energy use. She works to involve the department heads and shares data with them, such as their department’s energy use and cost. Piner hopes that by disseminating information, people will feel more responsibility to contribute to the county’s energy reductions.

An important part of the Resource Conservation Plan was to gather utility use data beforehand to establish baselines and better understand their usage trends. By thoroughly tracking their information, the county was able to set targets for reductions, gauge their progress toward goals, assess current and future usage trends, and communicate the pertinent information to stakeholders in the organization.

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The county has been using FacilityDude’s utility tracking software as a means to gather and analyze their utility spend and use. Piner says the tool saves her a lot of time because it’s easy to input their information and get a big picture view of what’s going on. She’s able to analyze their bills and found a few errors, such as where they were still being billed for meters on buildings the county no longer owned. She can easily share information with the County Manager and commissioners about their successes, which has been helpful in justifying their investments in these projects.



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Henderson County’s advancements in tracking their utility data and environmental stewardship are impressive, and the recognition they’ve received is well-deserved. They continue to strive to reduce energy use and are keeping a close eye on their progress.