

Green Movement Keeps Allen & Hoshall Busy

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ERIC SMITH | The Daily News

Energy audits are nothing new for Allen & Hoshall, the locally owned engineering firm whose roots date back almost 100 years.

As early as the 1970s, the Memphis-based company worked with the Tennessee Valley Authority on energy-related projects, and by the mid-1980s it was consulting U.S. Embassies around the world about their energy usage, helping them find ways to shrink their carbon footprints.

Business has continued to grow, and since the beginning of the green movement the firm has performed energy audits on 61 million square feet of buildings worldwide.

Not only does this process help businesses or governmental agencies understand ways to make their buildings more environmentally friendly, such as retrofitting their buildings with better mechanical systems, it also saves them money by slashing their utility bills.

“With the new technology of lighting and energy management control systems, you’re able to reduce your overall energy consumption and still maintain quality of light levels and temperature control of your buildings,” said company vice president [Jason Needham](#).

Keeping work coming

Moreover, a recent increase in energy audits – sparked by the stimulus act, which sent money to state and local governments for improvements in sustainability – has been a boon for engineering firms despite the overall economic slowdown.

The rise of energy audits has even allowed Allen & Hoshall to add specialty positions such as mechanical engineers to its staff while upholding a healthy workload.

“With regular building construction projects and the workload reducing, the energy projects have increased, so it’s allowed us to maintain our staff and add



GREEN WORK: Memphis-based engineering firm Allen & Hoshall has seen an increase in energy audits, including the Davy Crockett Park Energy Conservation Project in Lawrenceburg, Tenn. The firm recommended a geothermal lake heat exchange for the park. – PHOTO COURTESY OF ALLEN & HOSHALL

staff because of it,” Needham said. “It’s kept us steady.”

Most of Allen & Hoshall’s clients are state and federal agencies that are required to reduce their energy consumption, Needham said. The firm has been busy of late with projects at Fort Campbell along the Kentucky/Tennessee border, and also at Redstone Arsenal in Alabama, where Allen & Hoshall is working on 50 or so buildings, implementing the energy conservation measures it recommended about a year ago.

Bruce Fisackerly, senior project manager for Allen & Hoshall, said an energy audit can yield significant improvements – whether it’s retrofitting or conservation – that reduce a facility’s energy usage by up to 40 to 45 percent.



AWARD-WINNING WORK: Allen & Hoshall received the Energy Category Honor Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies of Tennessee’s 2009 Engineering Excellence competition for its energy related work with Davy Crockett Park Energy Conservation Project in Lawrenceburg, Tenn. – *PHOTO COURTESY OF Allen & HOSHALL*

“One of the quickest, easiest opportunities are lighting upgrades, lighting technologies or improvements,” said Fisackerly, who noted that light upgrades typically have three- to four-year paybacks.

Other improvements that can be made include more energy-efficient heating and air conditioning systems, as well as upgrades to a building’s envelope.

Allen & Hoshall has performed energy audits on everything from airports to VA hospitals, from college campuses to TVA power plants, and the firm recently was one of the

companies selected to perform energy audits for Mississippi’s state buildings.

“We’re branching farther out to maintain our workload,” Needham said. “There’s not as many projects locally as we speak.”

Saving tax dollars

One local project about to commence is an energy audit of buildings in the city of Bartlett, which received a \$193,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to improve the efficiency of some of its facilities.

Bartlett city engineer and director of utilities [Rick McClanahan](#) said the city is in the process of getting the final approval for Allen & Hoshall to begin an energy audit on City Hall and its police station.

“We chose Allen & Hoshall as having the best broad expertise in that particular area,” McClanahan said.

The flow of stimulus money should benefit the economy, McClanahan said, because it’s creating a need for more energy projects, which in turn creates a ripple effect.

“Our goal is to create jobs as well as save energy long-term for the city, whether it’s through more efficient heat and air-conditioning units or changing the light bulbs to more efficient units or control systems for the operations – whatever the outcome of that particular audit is,” McClanahan said. “Whatever that is, we’re hoping that will both save the taxpayers dollars as well as save the earth and be more green.”

Allen & Hoshall, which latched onto energy audits years ago, learned it’s important to be versatile, to offer a breadth and depth of projects in this slow economy. Needham said there’s no sign of that trend stopping.

“We don’t see a slowdown in energy audits. We see an increase in them,” Needham said. “We definitely don’t see a decrease in energy audits for the next couple of years.”