

Spokane Public Facilities District

When you're working with 100,000 square feet of space, energy efficiency matters. But it's not a goal you can achieve with window caulking and a ceiling fan.

It requires monumental effort, dedication and, in this case, a hand from some experts. Those elements all came together at the expanded Spokane Convention Center and delivered a landmark result: the first LEED certified building in Avista's territory, with Silver status.

The Situation

When Spokane County voters approved expansion of the existing convention center in 2002, project planners with an eye on economic reality and environmental stewardship made a commitment to energy efficient design.

"It only made sense to see what's going on in the green movement," says Dave Gebhardt, operations director for the Spokane Public Facilities District, "both for the health of the building and the health of the people in it."

But it soon became evident that a healthy building came with a price.

The Avista Solution

Who better to manage energy efficiency than the building's energy provider?

"We went to Avista. They got in early and often, clear back in design development," Gebhardt says.

Avista Account Executive Pat Ehrbar headed up the effort.

"I can't say enough about Pat. He's been fantastic. We're in this as a team," Gebhardt says.

One of Avista's most audacious ideas was LEED certification.

"It requires recycled material in the construction, reusing water, efficient design and more," Ehrbar says. "It's very difficult to get."

Still, Gebhardt was game — but only because of Avista's participation.

In addition to providing \$158,663 in incentives to support LEED certification and to purchase what Gebhardt calls "some of the most efficient equipment money could buy," Avista found other ways to help.

Rebates for chillers and variable frequency drives totaling more than \$43,000 helped the convention center prepare for the Spokane-hosted U.S. Figure Skating Championships in 2007, an event responsible for an approximately \$30 million economic impact on the community. An additional \$167,700 went toward a high efficiency heating and cooling system. Lighting retrofits throughout the campus delivered more than \$3,000 in annual savings. Across the river at Veterans Memorial Arena, Avista pitched in for efficient variable frequency drives, an energy-sparing LED reader board and updated HVAC equipment, bringing the Public Facilities District's total reduction in annual utility costs to \$106,738.

And that's not the only favor Avista's done for the Public Facilities District, Gebhardt points out.

"We've never had to cancel an event due to an outage. Not even during the ice storm."



Solution Overview

Company: Spokane Public Facilities District

Profile: Research demonstrated a market for expanded convention space in Spokane, and in 2002 voters approved a new 100,000 square foot facility to complement the existing 38,000 square foot one.

Challenge: Make the new building as energy efficient as possible, and find ways to increase efficiency throughout the district.

Solution: Avista consulted on new construction, analyzed existing facilities and contributed \$387,719 in efficiency incentives.

Result: Annual savings in excess of \$100,000.

"We wanted to get it done right the first time. Getting Avista's input really helped us."