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News Release

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Smith Federal Building Gets Rebate for Energy Improvements

DES MOINES, IOWA – Mid-American Energy has given the U.S. General Services Administration a \$73,000 rebate for making energy improvements at the Neal Smith Federal Building.

GSA, the agency responsible for maintaining the building, received the rebate after performing upgrades to the building's air conditioning system. In partnership with Nexant Incorporated, the building management team replaced two chiller units and added condenser water pumps last summer.

The project was part of an ongoing initiative to improve the energy performance of the building.

Doug Papineau, director of GSA's Iowa Field Office and building management team, says that office buildings account for about 39 percent of total energy use in any given city. They also account for 12 percent of water consumption, 68 percent of electricity consumption, and 38 percent of carbon dioxide emissions.

"If we can accomplish across the country what we're trying to accomplish here in Des Moines, we can literally shrink the government's carbon footprint by 25 percent and provide healthier workplaces for all civilian federal workers," said Papineau.

Several improvements to the Neal Smith Federal Building have led to Energy Star designations from the EPA in 2008 and 2009. Future projects at the building include installing lighting occupancy sensors and taking steps to increase the use of natural daylight in work areas.

In addition, funding made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will be used in the coming months to re-commission all of the building's operating systems.

"Sustainability, energy efficiency and environmental awareness have many advantages besides the obvious benefits to our health and the environment. Turning this into a green building helps to reduce our overall operating cost while opening up funding for more improvements and better amenities. It also helps the federal government attract new talent to the workforce," said Papineau.

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