



CALGARY • TELUS CONVENTION C • E • N • T • R • E

Report to the Community

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Marcia Lyons, General Manager of the Calgary TELUS Convention Centre

By **Tom Keyser**

It's not easy being green, as Kermit the Frog so memorably observed. But it's definitely worth the effort. Managers and staff of the Calgary TELUS Convention Centre (CTCC) represent a case in point. They'll tell you that heightened environmental awareness has been a key component of CTCC's operational game plan for years. They'll tell you that an aggressive commitment to energy conservation is good for morale, that it keeps costs down and pays cash dividends. They'll also tell you pro-active equipment maintenance schedules and strategic upgrades can accomplish near-miracles.

CTCC staff members prove it every day. "We've been going green ever since I can remember," smiles Marcia Lyons, CTCC general manager. "Environmental friendliness remains one of our core values. With us, it's a matter of culture." That's not mere lip service, either. Earlier this year, the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) backed up the GM's claim by issuing "Go Green" certification to CTCC, making it the first Canadian building east of the Rockies to earn the distinction. To get the green light from BOMA, an organization needs to do many things right in terms of waste reduction, energy consumption, recycling and tenant awareness while striving to limit fossil fuel emissions wherever possible.

In the words of BOMA Calgary executive vice-president Bill Partridge, "CTCC earned this certification. Not only did the Centre meet our standards, but it exceeded them in many areas." Naturally, CTCC employees from the maintenance crew to the operations group (and everyone in between) were gratified by BOMA's nod of recognition.

"If there's any way we can keep a discarded item from ending up in a Calgary landfill site, we'll do it," explains CTCC director of operations Jim Harvie, a staunch advocate of pro-green policy. "The more we can recycle, the better it is for all of us."

When it comes to Going Green, the CTCC staff and board are on precisely the same page. That's why intelligent use and re-use of energy and materials is built right into the Convention Centre's business

model. Maintenance superintendent Will Henderson and chief engineer Rene Roy, both long-time CTCC employees, round out the operations team and share Harvie's sense of responsibility. They have introduced high-efficiency T8 fluorescent light fixtures throughout both the north and south buildings and completed a major retrofit to CTCC boilers and ventilation chillers a few years back. It was a complex and expensive job but the "payback" in terms of ultimate cost savings has been significant. According to Harvie, installation of new burners and controls in three steam boilers cut natural gas consumption almost in half. (The boiler upgrade also reduced annual carbon dioxide emissions by about 525 tonnes.) So it's easy to understand why the Green Spirit has found its way into virtually every corner of CTCC operations. Meanwhile, the recycling bug has really taken hold in the two beautiful buildings that straddle Stephen Avenue Mall. Maintenance chief Henderson considers it his personal mission to squeeze maximum use from obsolete bits and pieces. Scrap stainless steel and slabs of unused plywood are taken to the CTCC workshop and re-fashioned into something useful. "Nothing is ever thrown out," he grins.

A few more environmentally friendly highlights:

- Variable frequency drive (VFD) escalators have become a huge hit within the Centre. They save on parts wear and tear as well as operating costs.
- A waterless urinal, installed as a test case, has passed with flying colours and Harvie says funding has been approved to add new units.
- Staff is moving away from the use of interior paints, which include volatile organic compounds, a source of potentially dangerous indoor pollution.

All such innovations mean a significant investment up front. As Jim Harvie points out, a number of proposed projects for 2006 carry a cost of about \$150,000, but have an estimated payback of only three years. It's no wonder the CTCC team feels so good about Going Green.



Calgary TELUS Convention Centre 'Green Team'



Terry Schmitt, President, BOMA Calgary, Mark Zivot, Chairman, Calgary Convention Centre Authority, Mayor Dave Bronconnier, City of Calgary, William Partridge, Executive Vice President, BOMA Calgary.