

Collier County saving green by going green

By ERIC STAATS

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NAPLES — Skips Camp's business card says he's Collier County Facilities Management Director.

Collier County government's energy czar would be more apt.

His mission: Cutting the county's power bill.

The payoff: More than 1.2 million kilowatt hours saved in the past 12 months compared to the same period a year earlier at the biggest meter at the county's government center at Airport-Pulling Road and U.S. 41 East.

Still, that one meter costs the county \$100,000 per month.

"We have real opportunities to make a change," Camp told a League of Women Voters of Collier County audience Monday afternoon. "We have to set the example."

He did not have figures available to translate the kilowatt hours saved to dollars or to track the county's 1,500 or so other electrical meters, but he said the county's efforts are paying off.

For example, after getting a \$6,000 power bill for the parking garage at the government center, Camp roped off the unused top deck and turned out the lights. The lights in the rest of the garage go out at 10:30 p.m. and don't come back on until 6 a.m. The changes helped cut the power bill to \$2,500 per month, he said.

The power bill for the North Collier Government Center on Orange Blossom Drive has gone from \$8,000 to \$4,000 per month, Camp said.

A decision to paint some county buildings' roofs white to keep them cooler earned the county an \$18,000 rebate from Florida Power & Light Co., Camp said.

Indoors, Camp has set county government thermostats at 76 degrees; he recently reset the heat to come on at 68 degrees instead of 74 degrees, he said.

Instead of four fluorescent bulbs in each hallway light fixture, there's only two, he said.

"If it looks a little dingy, it's just because we're saving power," Camp said.

The new courthouse annex has double-paned windows to save energy and the county is hoping to get a cut of the federal stimulus package for an environmentally friendly remodeling of two floors of the existing courthouse, he said.

Camp's miserly ways extend to his own office, where he's testing out a motion sensor that turns off the equipment in his office when he's not there.

"It's the greatest thing since sliced bread," Camp said.

Saving energy saves more than just money; it also helps reduce global warming, environmental consultant Cloe Waterfield told the League of Women Voters audience.

Waterfield is in the midst of an energy audit that will figure the county's greenhouse gas emissions and create a

tool to measure the county's progress in reducing its carbon footprint.

A similar audit at the city of Naples in 2008 prompted the city to convene a task force that is meeting monthly to find ways to save energy, Waterfield said.

The task force is on track to issue its report, including possible recommendations to consolidate city offices to save energy, this spring, she said.

"I'm glad to say the next step — implementation — is moving forward," Waterfield said.

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