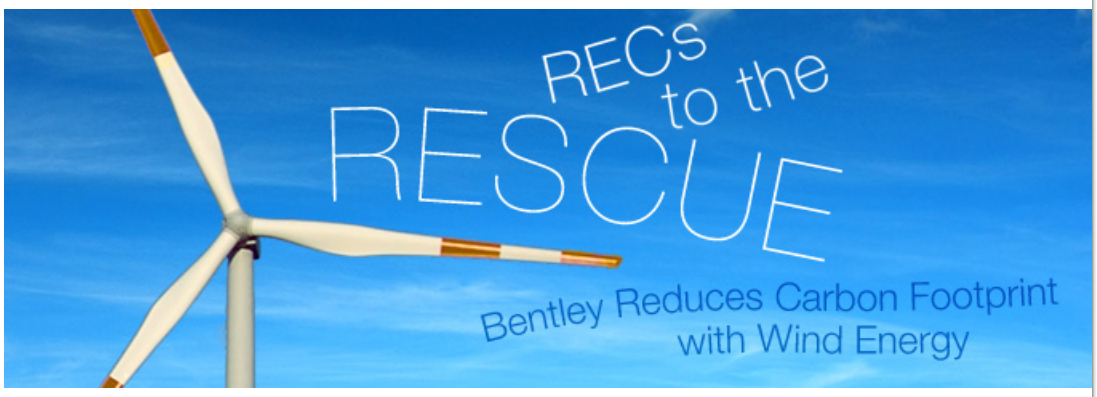

RECS TO THE RESCUE

Bentley Reduces Carbon Footprint with Wind Energy

When it comes to sustainability, Bentley has raised the bar high.

By setting aggressive goals to reduce its carbon footprint 50 percent by 2015, 70 percent by 2020, and achieve carbon-neutrality by 2030, Bentley is keeping in step with the rest of academia, which collectively has reduced carbon emissions by 25 percent over the past five years. That's more than any other industry in the United States.

Bentley is following a strategy propelled by a 2010 analysis that found the most effective plan for achieving its goals included projects such as the expansion and continued operation of its energy management system; retro-commissioning buildings; and buying renewable energy. The university installed high-efficiency heating and cooling equipment, energy-efficient windows, and LED lighting on all walkways, roadways and parking lots.

"The LED project alone will save $70,000 per year over five years," says Amanda King, Bentley's director of sustainability and special advisor to the president.

Putting Our Money Where Our Mouth Is

Despite the headway Bentley made in reducing its carbon footprint, the university still won't reach its target reduction goals through energy efficiency alone. The next step is investing in renewable energy by purchasing renewable energy certificates (RECs) from Renewable Choice, using the savings realized from the efficiency projects.

Renewable energy certificates are the way industry accounts for renewable energy. They represent the environmental benefits of generating electricity from renewable energy sources. A wind farm, for example, is credited with one REC for every 1,000 kilowatt hours of electricity it produces. Each REC has a unique identification number so it isn't counted twice.

Bentley came in $360,076 under its electricity budget for fiscal year 2012, due to sound energy management and an unseasonably warm winter. It invested $25,000 of that savings — 14 percent — into the certificates, which enabled the university to cut its carbon footprint in half and help increase the amount of U.S. wind power on the electricity grid.

"Our REC purchase supports domestic renewable energy generation, energy security, and the further development of the renewable energy market and products in the United States," says King.

And that's not all. As a result of these efforts, the Environmental Protection Agency has named Bentley a Green Power Partner, which recognizes organizations for their use of renewable power.

For King, reducing carbon footprint isn't about achieving conservative goals, and then patting yourself on the back. "It's about setting the bar high, then having the room to play with ways to reduce energy use," she says.

Investing the savings from energy efficiency programs has enabled Bentley to stay on track for achieving its aggressive goals for attaining carbon neutrality.

And the efforts continue. This month, residential students are competing in the Blackout Challenge to help reduce wasted electricity in residence halls. Money

saved will be put toward residence hall improvements and renewable energy investments.

King reminds us that this is a community-wide effort. To keep up with ongoing sustainability efforts, visit the Bentley Office of Sustainability.

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