

Local Government Case Study:  
*City of Atascadero*

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### **Background**

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- Location: San Luis Obispo County
- Population: 26,000
- Size: 100 full-time employees, 96,289 square feet (buildings in question)
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### **Summary**

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In response to the Governor's call to reduce energy use by 15 percent in government buildings, the City of Atascadero launched Phase I of a two-part energy conservation program that included no- and low-cost efforts in its six facilities. The city spent roughly \$1,600 on improvements, which resulted in energy savings of 18,474 kWh per month or a 30 percent reduction when compared with usage in 2000. Atascadero also began investigating potential projects for Phase II, including solar and wind power and new roofing.

Referenced in Local Government Guides:

- #1, "Reduce Energy Use in Local Government Facilities Through Conservation Measures"

### **Plan**

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City staff compared monthly kilowatt readings for each facility over the previous three years to establish a baseline amount for all city-owned and city-operated buildings. City staff then prepared a cost/benefit report, which was revised by an external consultant, on various potential energy-saving solutions.

Atascadero city council delegated staff from the building maintenance division to plan and implement conservation measures. Atascadero consulted with PG&E and used them as a resources for the audits and some changes, including rates. The plan was as follows:

The targets of the city's plans were five buildings (two fire stations, one police station, one community center and one

city administration building) and city personnel behavior. The square footage of the five buildings was:

- Atascadero Lake Pavilion: 14,798 sq. ft.
- City Hall: 44,893 sq. ft.
- Police Station: 11,814 sq. ft.
- Printery building/recreation: 19,354 sq. ft.
- Fire Station #1: 5,430 sq. ft.

Long-term objectives were: Research solar, wind and new roofing project; and consider replacing and upgrading wastewater treatment equipment, which was the city's biggest energy user (representing approximately 47 percent of the annual kilowatt usage.)

### **Programs: Conservation**

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#### ✓ HVAC:

- Set all thermostats to 78 degrees F in the summer.
- Opened windows and vents on the upper three floors of City Hall (four-story building) at night to cool the building. On some cooler days, used prevailing winds to cross ventilate certain buildings.
- Purchased and installed sun-block exterior window screens on city administration building, for both west and south sides.
- Installed block-out interior window shades in south and west sides of city administration building.

✓ **Office equipment:** Turned off PCs, printers and monitors when not in use.

#### ✓ **Other equipment:**

- Shut down city's nonessential features, such as a fountain in the downtown park.
- Reserved use of elevator in a five-story building for disabled users and delivery purposes only.

#### ✓ **Employees:**

- Trained custodians to turn off lighting and equipment when not in use.
- Distributed Flex Your Power flyers and window clings to employees.

- Sent general e-mails about energy conservation to employees.

✓ **Work schedules:** Changed workweek in July and August to four days, 10 hours each day. There were a few problems and/or minimal complaints due to the hours change. The city returned to normal hours when school resumed due to child care issues.

✓ **Weatherization**

- Caulked all windows and window seals.
- Replaced weather stripping.

**Programs: Efficiency**

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✓ **Lighting**

- Replaced all incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient bulbs. All T12 fluorescent lighting has been replaced with T8s. All standard incandescent

light bulbs have been replaced with low-watt compact fluorescent bulbs.

- Replaced traffic signals with LEDs.

**Budget and Finance**

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The low-cost efforts (lighting, caulking, shading and weather stripping) cost \$1,600. Building Maintenance Fund financed the improvements.

**Results**

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In July 2000, city used 61,971 kW compared with 43,497 kW in July 2001, a 30 percent reduction.

Electric bills were higher in 2001 as a result of PG&E rate hikes, but the city used fewer kW overall.

Between July and December 2001, Atascadero reduced energy use by approximately 17 percent in its six buildings compared with July-December 2000.