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Going green to save Oceana $4 million a year

By Cathy Heimer, Jet Observer

091119-N-2365J-001- VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (Nov. 19, 2009) - Helping to break ground Nov. 19 on the Oceana 2 Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC) are (left - right) Jim Wells from Public Works Department (PWC) Oceana; PWC Oceana Construction Manager Greg Hedley; PWC Oceana Assistant Publics Works Officer Lt.j.g. Patrick McCullough; Oceana Deputy Public Works Officer Andrew Porter; Naval Air Station Oceana Commanding Officer Capt. Mark Rich; NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic Executive Officer Capt. John Heckmann; Trane Company Federal Sector Executive David Hayden; Trane Oceana 2 ESPC Construction Manager Eric Snyder; Roger Shull from Damuth Trane; and Jody Wilkens from Trane. Oceana 2 ESPC replaces the aging heating and air conditioning systems throughout the base and will save more than $4 million in energy and water consumption. The $44 million project is scheduled to be completed in June 2011. Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class (AW/SW) Jamica Johnson

Ground was broken at Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana, Nov. 19, for Phase 2 of the Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC), which is expected to save the Navy more than $4 million each year in energy costs when completed in 2011.

The contract partners Oceana, Naval Engineering Facilities Command Mid-Atlantic and Trane to replace the aging heating and air conditioning equipment with a state-of the art heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system. Attendees at the ground breaking included Virginia Beach Mayor William Sessoms and a representative from Rep. Glenn Nye's office.

By replacing the aging, above-ground steam pipes and boiler plant with a state-of-the-art HVAC system, the project will not only save needed money on maintenance costs, but also allow NAS Oceana to exceed federal energy reduction goals several years early. The goals were set by the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Construction on the $44 million project is scheduled to begin immediately and expected to be completed by June 2011.

"When this performance contract is complete, we will accomplish 100 percent of NAS Oceana and Dam Neck Annex's mission, using less than 50 percent of the energy used per square feet per building than we used in 2003," said Andrew Porter, Oceana deputy public works officer.

The extensive project "physically impacts almost all the buildings on Oceana," explained NAS Oceana Commanding Officer Capt. Mark Rich.

The project includes five bachelor housing buildings, six hangars, the galley, seven maintenance facilities, eight office buildings, the chapel, three aircraft simulator buildings, along with many other buildings, for a total of 42 buildings on Oceana.

The changes at Oceana include installing ground source heat pumps in three buildings, decentralizing the heating system, adding digital control systems allowing temperature fluctuations to receive the maximum efficiency from the system, lighting retrofits to maximize lighting and water conservation measures.

Rich sees several benefits for those who work and live on Oceana. "We're getting a state of the art HVAC system put in for the majority of our buildings that right now are on an old steam system, have old conventional air conditioning systems in them as well. These are unreliable, they're expensive to maintain and they break a lot," he said.

Rich explained the new, efficient and effective systems will be much more reliable than the old system, which dates back decades. He said the project also gives Oceana the ability to identify how much electricity and water each building is using, something they have not been able to do under the current system.

The other advantage for the base is that as part of the contract, Trane is now responsible for repairing the system, Rich added.

Phase I of ESPC was completed last year at Dam Neck Annex. "Because of some great work done by our partners, Trane, we are meeting those goals," having already saved nearly $3 million for the Navy, said Rich.

Because of ESPC, NAS Oceana was one of only two Navy installations to earn the 2009 Presidential Award for Leadership in Federal Energy Management, which recognizes federal agencies for their support, leadership and efforts in promoting and improving federal energy management

Capt. John Heckmann, NAVFAC executive officer, said the project at Oceana is one of a number of such projects throughout the Mid-Atlantic Region, aimed at improving the quality of life for those who work and live on base, as well as conserving energy and saving much needed dollars.

"They're growing more and more everyday as we get more pressure to try to reduce our energy consumption," explained Heckmann about the projects.

Heckmann explained the "unique financing" that has resulted in the contracts with Trane. Prior to 1992, he said, "We had to really scrape our budget hard to do any energy conservation projects and it was hard to actually justify that with all the other priorities."

But with the legislation enacted to allow the financing based on savings, "we are now able to finance projects off of that expected savings we will get from these projects. It's just a tremendous boon for us to finance these projects without having to sink into our budget," said Heckmann.

"Our goal is to perform the full Navy mission using less energy, using renewable energy and using energy from alternate sources. The important part is performing the Navy's mission. Energy consumption can be reduced by reducing operations and mission but we can never forget the Navy's mission is our number one goal," said Porter.

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