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Officials at Sierracin/Sylmar Corp. saw the light with an energy conservation project that cut electrical use nearly two-thirds. The company also made back its investment in less than a year in energy cost savings, achieved unexpected energy savings for other operations, and created a brighter workspace. The project was one of the top 20 energy-efficiency programs recognized by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

Sierracin/Sylmar replaced 2,463 lighting fixtures, cutting electrical use from 2.1 million kilowatt-hours per year to 780,000 kwh per year, saving more than \$132,000 annually, according to lead industrial engineer Sam Gupta at the Sylmar site. The fixtures have improved lighting and generate less heat, saving an additional \$21,500 annually on air conditioning costs, Gupta says.

Gupta formed a team in 2006 to develop a plan for reducing energy costs at the 300,000-square-foot aerospace transparencies facility by retrofitting lighting fixtures. Their first task was to inventory the ceiling lights in the high-bay manufacturing area and offices.

"We did an assessment involving some 4,000 lighting fixtures," Gupta says "We then broke those down into similar types and counted 49 groups, or line items."

Gupta and the team then ranked the 49 line items according to the cost-to-benefit

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ratio, and identified the top nine components that would generate more than 80 percent of the energy cost savings.

The project, from assessment and design to scope definition and implementation, took eight months, according to Gupta.

"The extra effort and vigilance on our part increased our annual rate of return on this project investment from 50 percent to 125 percent. In the first year, we have already saved more than the project cost," he adds.

The lighting retrofit has had other benefits, according to Maintenance Coordinator Bobby Jensen, who carried out field supervision of vendor activities guided by Maintenance Manager Frank Carrasco.

"The new lighting has also provided better illumination for the work areas and boosted employee morale," Jensen says.

"In the case of lighting, there are no ifs, ands, or buts about cost savings," Gupta concludes. "When you replace a 160-watt light fixture with a 43-watt fixture, you are guaranteed a 73 percent energy cost saving."

Sierracin/Sylmar Corp. is a subsidiary of PPG Industries. PPG Aerospace is the aerospace products and services business of PPG Industries. PPG Aerospace-Transparencies is the world's largest supplier of aircraft windshields, windows and canopies, manufactured at its Huntsville,AL, plant and by subsidiaries: PPG Aerospace-Ampaspace at Casaletto Vaprio, Italy, and Sierracin/Sylmar Corp. at Sylmar, Calif.

PPG Aerospace-PRC-DeSoto is the leading global producer and distributor of aerospace coatings, sealants, and packaging and application systems.

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