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Learn how an over-55 oriented strata community stretched their financial resources.

With a mechanical system upgrade they reduced their gas use by 20%!



Energy profile

Abbotsford strata puts 20% natural gas savings in their pockets!



The strata council at “Panorama Terrace” in Abbotsford were looking for ways to reduce the impact of natural gas price increases on their operating budget. The council was equally concerned about protecting their mostly retired, fixed-income tenants from large increases in strata fees necessary to cover rising natural gas costs.

With the help of their property manager, Donna Smith of TeamWork Property Management Ltd., and their mechanical contractor, Suburban Mechanical Systems, the council began a thorough analysis of the building’s main heating system. The 55 condominiums in the block shared a combined space and domestic water heating plant and it was clear there were problems. The central boiler required constant maintenance, and was significantly oversized for the complex. The instantaneous hot water system in the boiler was prone to unstable delivery and temperature swings. And, without any hot water storage, the boiler would fire for even the smallest demand and could not accurately match the load. Furthermore, mechanical room piping was installed in such a way that while the boiler piped hot water through the building in the summer months, it also piped unnecessary space heating water at the same time, making indoor temperatures oppressive!

Actions

The strata council considered everything from minimal equipment upgrades, to a complete boiler room revamp. To their credit, they opted to stretch their capital budget to install a system that promised long term benefits.

Keeping to the idea of a combined space/hot water heating plant, they installed a new 1.5 million Btu/h cast iron power burner boiler coupled to two 450-litre stainless steel indirect (heat exchanger) storage tanks. They added an integrated boiler and DHW tank control to manage the entire system. The strata now has better load matching ability: the space heating system responds to outdoor temperature input and thus shuts the space heating portion of the building off in the summer. Domestic hot water is now stored in highly insulated tanks to handle peak and low demand without firing the boiler unnecessarily.

Results

“Panorama Terrace” reduced their natural gas consumption by 20%, saving the strata corporation approximately \$5,000 on their annual gas bill (based on 2002 rates). Strata president, Harvey Fleming, and vice president, Gene McNally, are delighted – and so are the retiree residents of their community.

Conclusion

The strata corporation at “Panorama Terrace” together with TeamWork Property Management stretched their capital budget, installed more reliable equipment and saved money for their residents. Their success could work for you too.

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