

Capitol's green efforts save state some green

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Cutting off the lights that shine on the Capitol rotunda at night, turning off lights in the parking lots and changing to high-efficiency lightbulbs are helping the state reduce energy usage.

The changes produced savings and helped the state agency that manages the Capitol and other state-owned buildings absorb budget cuts brought on by a decline in state tax collections. The energy saving plan was put in place two years ago, said Mike Enneking, director of facilities management for the Department of Central Services.

State officials are awaiting confirmation from the Environmental Protection Agency that the Capitol is a certified "Energy Star" building, meaning it meets standards for energy and cost efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions.

Small changes have cut energy use at the state's Capitol building from 7.9 million kilowatts to 6 mil-

lion kilowatts, Enneking said.

In 2008, the annual cost of electricity at the Capitol was \$469,368. In the 2010 fiscal year, that cost was \$409,389, Enneking said.

"It's my job to be a good steward of the taxpayer's money," Enneking said. "Why spend taxpayer money on electricity when we can do something else with it?"

For more than a year, outdoor lights that shine on the Capitol dome have been dimmed about 11 p.m. Parking lot lights also are turned off in the middle of the night when the Capitol is closed. Lightbulbs in hallways and committee rooms have been changed to high efficiency fluorescent bulbs. In some cases, not every light fixture has a light bulb in it.

High-efficiency toilets and faucets have been installed, cutting water usage in the Capitol complex from 55 million gallons in 2008 to 37 million gallons in the 2010 budget year, Enneking said. The state also saves by not heating or cooling the Capitol rotunda and hallways.