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Assembly Passes Two Energy-Saving Initiatives
Focus on sustainable buildings, more efficient street lights

The Anchorage Assembly last night unanimously approved two energy-saving initiatives that will make Anchorage a more sustainable community. Introduced by Mayor Begich, the initiatives address sustainable building practices and more efficient street lights, which will use 50 percent less energy and save the city \$360,000 annually.

“Theses two initiatives prove that we are serious about reducing energy usage in our community,” said Mayor Begich. “Our efforts not only improve our bottom line, but will also create a healthier environment for our citizens.”

The Sustainable Building Ordinance requires all publicly funded buildings in Anchorage to meet high performance building standards known as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). It also provides a fee-reduction incentive for private construction that meets LEED or National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) standards.

“In the U.S., buildings account for 39 percent of energy usage. The adoption of this ordinance moves us closer toward constructing our buildings to a standard of high performance,” said Peter Briggs, local landscape architect and chair of the Sustainable Building Initiative steering committee. “This standard will not only result in lower energy bills, but will contribute to healthier working and learning environments, and the preservation of our unique Alaskan ecologies.”

(more)

The streetlight initiative will retrofit all 16,000 Anchorage roadway lights with high-efficiency LED fixtures. The Assembly approved an appropriation of \$2.2 million enabling the city to purchase enough LED fixtures to change out roughly one-quarter of Anchorage's streetlights. After studying new lighting technology extensively, the city conducted a lighting conference and public survey in March of this year to determine the best lighting application for Anchorage's roadways.

Once installed, the LED lights use 50 percent less energy than current streetlights, saving the city \$360,000 annually at today's energy prices. The LED fixtures also last up to seven times longer than high pressure sodium fixtures, allowing the city to better allocate maintenance resources.

Anchorage is leading the way for communities across the country to upgrade streetlight technology, and many communities around the state and the nation are watching closely to follow Anchorage's lead.

The Sustainable Building Ordinance takes effect July 1, 2009. New LED streetlight fixtures should start going up in October.

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