

## NEWS

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### Erie 2030 District Properties Announce 2023 Progress Toward Energy and Carbon Reduction Goals

***Participating Erie Properties achieved \$4.2 million in energy cost savings in 2023***

August 20, 2024 (ERIE) – The Erie 2030 District, a project of the Green Building Alliance (GBA) that comprises 20 property partners with 173 buildings representing 9.4 million square feet, today released its *2023 Progress Report*, revealing that District property partners **reduced energy demand 17.5% against baseline** in 2023 and **saved \$4.2 million in energy costs**. Partners also achieved a **35.3% reduction in carbon emissions, avoiding 30,500 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions against baseline**, the equivalent of six million car trips around Presque Isle State Park.

The Erie 2030 District is pursuing a target goal of 50-65% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and zero carbon emissions by 2040. The built environment accounts for approximately **37% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** and **40% of all U.S. primary energy use**.

“With Erie ranked among the top 10 fastest warming U.S. cities, the resulting weather patterns are impacting energy demand and utility costs, increasing the risk of flooding and grid outages, and placing stresses on Erie’s buildings and facilities,” says GBA Chief Operating Officer Chris Cieslak. “Many existing buildings in Erie are older, with leaky building envelopes that may include single paned windows, old roofs, and a lack of insulation. GBA works alongside 2030 District Partners to support and guide them through the process of improving the performance of their buildings.”

Erie 2030 District partners receive the following services at no cost:

- Initial and ongoing energy and performance assessments of individual properties, allowing owners to identify areas of improvement and track progress in reducing energy demand
- Personalized recommendations for improving operations and maintenance, and guidance on capital investments to reduce energy and water demand and reduce utility costs
- Support in identifying and applying for federal and state energy grants, tax credits, and other funding opportunities
- Review of building plans, designs, and requirements
- Personalized connections to renovation, maintenance, retrofit and operations service providers and subject matter experts to help property owners achieve building performance goals

In addition to utility cost savings, property owners have a range of financial incentives to reduce emissions. Through IRA tax credits, solar energy investments can receive tax credits ranging up to 30 percent, depending on use of prevailing wage and apprenticeships. Additional percentages can be earned if the project uses domestic sourcing or is located in a historical energy community and/or a low-income community, with the potential of reaching up to 50 percent. Energy efficiency projects can get tax credits of over \$5 per square foot based on similar criteria.

Action steps for improving building performance and impact include:

- Changing lights to LEDs
- Installing occupancy/vacancy sensors in building spaces to reduce electricity use
- Adding insulation to walls and roofs; sealing air leaks
- Replacing single pane windows with double or triple pane windows

- Reducing fossil fuel use, including replacing furnaces and boilers that run on natural gas with ground- or air-source heat pumps
- Producing carbon-free energy by installing solar panels
- Reusing building materials and designing for deconstruction
- Selecting building materials with low embodied carbon and that are locally produced
- Addressing refrigerant leaks in HVAC systems and ensuring proper disposal
- Pushing for policy change that enhances building energy codes + performance standards

Erie 2030 District partners have made a number of energy efficiency investments in their properties and building systems. Examples include:

- **Erie Art Museum:** improvements include HVAC repairs, and recalibrating and improving HVAC control system.
- **Gannon University:** recently implemented summer utility savings initiative by scaling down buildings' operations to reduce energy use throughout the summer months.
- **Erie Insurance:** facade renovations at **Perry Square Building**, including new windows and brick repointing, and mechanical retrofits, including new AHUs (air handling units), new VAVs (variable air volume boxes), intelligent lighting, and variable speed pumping and motor control. Erie Insurance's **Thomas B. Hagan Building** is LEED certified and uses less electricity per square foot than any of the other buildings on the company's campus.
- **Benedictine Sisters/Emmaus Ministries, Inner City Neighborhood Art House:** facade renovations, including new energy-efficient window replacements have resulted in significant drop in heating needs.

To learn more, log on to [www.gba.org/initiatives/erie-2030-district](http://www.gba.org/initiatives/erie-2030-district).

*Carbon emissions goals were set in response to urgent developments in climate science indicating that [for the world to meet the 1.5°C carbon budget set forth in the 2015 Paris Agreement, countries must reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the entire \[existing\] built environment by 50-65% by 2030 and reach zero carbon by 2040.](#)\**

*\*The carbon budget is the amount of greenhouse gas emissions, evaluated as the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> or equivalent that humanity can emit while still having a chance to contain global warming within 1.5 degrees Celsius compared with preindustrial levels. A zero-carbon building is highly energy efficient, and all of its energy needs are supplied with renewable (carbon-free) technologies. Zero-carbon buildings also take into account embodied carbon in construction materials by reusing materials and reducing and sequestering carbon.*

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#### **About Green Building Alliance:**

Green Building Alliance (GBA) positively transforms the world through the built environment to create a sustainable, healthy, and just future for everyone. As Western Pennsylvania's authority on sustainable design, GBA drives the market for healthy communities while equipping designers, manufacturers, developers, and policymakers to catalyze systemic change. GBA manages the largest 2030 District in North America (the Pittsburgh 2030 District), and in 2019, established Pittsburgh as the 2nd International Center of Excellence on High Performance Building in the world. GBA partners across Western Pennsylvania, with strategic alliances including the 2030 District Network, United Nations, and International Living Future Institute.

#### **About GBA's Erie 2030 District:**

The Erie 2030 District is a member of the 2030 Districts Network, which connects more than 20 cities across North America. Launched in 2019, the Erie 2030 District comprises 20 property partners with 173 buildings totaling 9.4M square feet.