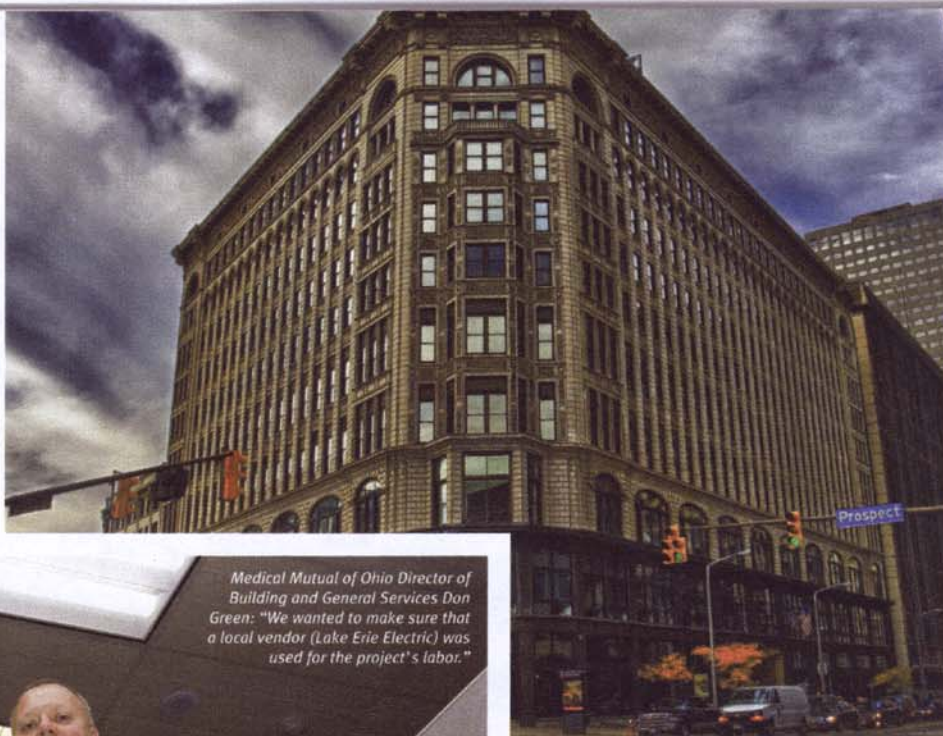


cbc

LIGHT DONE RIGHT



Medical Mutual of Ohio Director of Building and General Services Don Green: "We wanted to make sure that a local vendor (Lake Erie Electric) was used for the project's labor."

MEDICAL MUTUAL OF OHIO BRIGHTENS EVERYONE'S DAY WITH A LIGHTING RETROFIT INSIDE THE ROSE BUILDING

BY NATALIE R. SCHRIMPF | PHOTO BY MCKINLEY WILEY

Medical Mutual of Ohio is “shedding new light” on one of downtown Cleveland’s historic landmark office buildings. The health insurance company recently completed a comprehensive, energy-saving lighting retrofit throughout its corporate headquarters within the 10-story Rose Building and six-story adjacent annex on the corner of East Ninth Street and Prospect Avenue.

The undertaking encompassed 381,000 square feet of space between the two buildings and is indicative of MMO’s commitment to reducing its carbon footprint and increasing its greening efforts, according to Don Green, the company’s director of building and general services.

Launched in October, the project consisted of installing new retrofit kits into the company’s existing light fixtures from the buildings’ top-to-

bottom floors. The kits have replaced the old, magnetic ballasts and t12 light bulbs with new, more energy-efficient electronic ballasts and t8 fluorescent bulbs. The new bulbs not only reduce wattage but also exude a softer light that is akin to natural daylight.

“One of the reasons this route was so attractive to us is because we’re actually improving the lighting in the workplace for our employees with a more soothing light that eliminates some of the glare we had with the old t12 direct lighting. At the same time, we’re also maintaining the integrity of the existing fixtures,” Green says. “We sort of viewed this as a turnkey project – as soon as they’re installed, they’re ready to go.”

The company has installed one kit per light fixture, which translates into approximately 10,800 new t8 bulbs and 6,875 new electronic ballasts. An additional green aspect of the undertaking is the fact that all materials that were removed in the retrofit process were recycled. Moreover, MMO has a proactive recycling program in place to recycle all new light bulbs when they eventually burn out.

“A main driver for us was the intent to reduce our energy consumption, which would in turn reduce our utility/electrical expenses and have a

direct result on our bottom line," he says. "In fact, we're projected to save approximately 1,352,988 kilowatt hours per year related to just the lighting alone. We also anticipate reducing our air conditioning load in summer, because we're going to generate much less heat and electricity, which will impact our cooling numbers."

A main driver for us was the intent to reduce our energy consumption, which would in turn reduce our utility/electrical expenses and have a direct result on our bottom line.

The project, with a six-figure estimate, will have paid for itself in three years, Green says, and will instantly reduce electrical demand and result in significant energy cost savings.

Medical Mutual of Ohio contracted with Cincinnati-based ECO Engineering, a company that it was introduced to through its long-standing business partnership with the Council of Smaller Enterprises.

ECO Engineering subcontracted all of the project's labor and supervision to Lake Erie Electric in Westlake, which utilized Local 38 Union workers.

"We wanted to make sure that a local vendor was used for the project's labor," Green says. Acuity Brands, Inc. in Atlanta supplied the retrofit kits which included the ballasts, light bulbs, and new reflector covers on the fixtures.

The health insurance company has called the Rose Building "home" since 1948, when the facility housed its predecessor companies – Medical Mutual of Cleveland and Blue Cross of Northern Ohio. In 2000 MMO sold the facility to BentleyForbes, a California-based real estate investment firm. Medical Mutual of Ohio has approximately nine years remaining on its 20-year renewable lease with the owner, which mandates that MMO be responsible for the building's general maintenance, upkeep and operations, Green says.

One of Cleveland's premier steel-frame buildings, the Rose Building was completed in 1900 and spanned one acre of land. Once the tallest office building between New York City and Chicago, it was built by Cleveland merchant Benjamin Rose, who pioneered the method of shipping meat in refrigerated railway cars. He operated his business, The Scott-Griggs Company, in the building until his death in 1908. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Its adjacent annex, formerly the Sloan Building, was constructed during the 1940s as an apartment building that was eventually converted to office space. At one point it was occupied by Chef Hector (Ettore) Boiardi, for whom the Chef Boyardee brand Italian canned food is named. ■

For more information: medmutual.com