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City of Orange Cove Discovers the Benefits of Cool Roofs

Local governments are always looking for ways to reduce cooling and other operational costs. This laudable goal has become even more crucial in these times of volatile energy prices and tight local government budgets.

With assistance from an innovative state rebate program, local governments throughout California are saving money by installing light-colored, energy-conserving cool roofs.

Among the first local governments to take advantage of the "Cool Savings with Cool Roofs" rebate program is the City of Orange Cove, located in the Central Valley just southwest of Fresno. Public Works Supervisor Gabriel Jimenez found out about the cool roof rebate from Jose Ramirez, Orange Cove's city administrator – who read about the rebate program in Currents.

Jimenez was attracted to the "Cool Savings" program because of its simplicity. "All you needed to do was use a certified product and contractor," he said. He received four different offers from roofing contractors to cover the Victor E. Lopez Rural Economic Development Center, which featured a roof that measured more than 14,500 square feet. The best proposal came from B&R Roofing of Fresno, which offered the City of Orange Cove three different products.

"We decided to go for the highest quality product," said Jimenez, noting that the Benchmark white acrylic top coating manufactured by Conklin Company was selected for the cool roof. The City received a rebate check from the State for \$2,956 to help cover the modest installation costs.

Benefits of the City's Cool Roof

Jimenez is confident the investment will pay off well for Orange Cove.

"Since we have data on energy costs for the rural economic development center for the past few years, we will be monitoring energy costs to verify savings. Of course, given the change in PG&E rates last year, we will take those increases in account when calculating net savings over this period of time," he said.

Jimenez noted the Cool Savings program is opening his eyes to the very tangible benefits of saving energy. "This is our first energy efficiency program. We are already looking at the possibility of a new lighting system. Hopefully, this cool roof project will perform well and give a major boost to our efforts to further cut energy use."

"Just being up there on that roof, in the blazing sun, makes you realize how much sense the cool roof, duct sealing and other energy efficiency projects make. Every local government should be looking at their roofs and contacting the Cool Savings program," Jimenez said.

Cool Cash for Cool Roofs

Funded by the California Energy Commission, the "Cool Savings with Cool Roofs" program offers rebates to encourage the installation of cool roofs on existing and new buildings.

An incentive of 15-20¢ per square foot of eligible roofing is available through the program to qualifying applicants. The application deadline is November 30.

For more information about California's "Cool Savings with Cool Roofs" Program, visit <http://www.coolroofs.info/>, or call (888) 891-2665. Details on eligibility requirements and the application process are available on the web site.

What Makes A Roof “Cool”

Cool roofs are based on simple science: dark materials absorb more heat than light materials. Most traditional dark-colored roofs absorb 70% or more of the solar energy striking them – resulting in peak roof temperatures of 150° -190° F. By comparison, white, reflective cool roofs are 50° to 60° F cooler on hot days – resulting in cooling cost reductions as large as 40%.

In addition to energy savings, cool roofs offer local governments many other benefits:

- Decreased long-term roofing maintenance and replacement costs.
- Improved comfort for workers.
- Reduced air temperatures surrounding the cool building.
- Reduced electricity demand at times when prices are high.
- Less solid and hazardous waste.

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1303 J St., Ste 250, Sacramento CA, 95814 | 916-448-1198 voice | 916-448-8246 fax