

UAE schools taught how to cut carbon footprint

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Schools are showing a leading example in helping to reduce the ecological footprint of the United Arab Emirates - one of the highest in the world - as well as cutting costs, say leading facilities management industry experts.

Louisa Theobald, Group Exhibitions Director of Streamline Marketing Group, organisers of FM Expo, the Middle East's leading facilities management event, said:

'Energy audits are identifying dramatic reductions in energy consumption by UAE schools leading to huge savings in both costs and carbon emissions.'

The recently published World Wildlife Fund's Living Planet Report 2008 revealed that the UAE tops the list of countries with the highest ecological footprint per person. Ecological pressure is also increasing with total electricity demand in the UAE expected to rise from approximately 15,000 megawatts to 42,000 megawatts by 2020.

'A number of schools have seen a clear need to create awareness about environmental challenges and help build a more sustainable community in the Middle East,' Theobald added. 'At the same time, they are saving costs which can be reflected in keeping school fees to a minimum.'

'For example, energy saving modules installed at Jumeirah English Speaking School (JESS) in Dubai earlier this year are now projecting dramatic reductions in carbon emissions of 440,000 kilos and reduced energy costs totaling Dhs172,000 within 12 months,' said Theobald.

The energy saving modules were installed on the school's swimming pool chillers along with an insulated pool cover by Farnek Avireal, a leading UAE-Swiss facilities management services provider which maintains over 500 buildings.

JESS Director Robert D. Stokoe said that as a result of these simple measures, 'We should exceed our carbon dioxide reduction by 140,000 kilos and we have estimated that we will recover 84% of our installation costs in the first year. These savings will undoubtedly encourage our students to be even more vigilant when it comes to energy usage.'

A number of other schools in the UAE are currently in consultation with Farnek Avireal on reducing their carbon footprints and, consequently, their energy bills. 'JESS has set the precedent for carbon and energy cost savings and other schools in Dubai are now examining their own energy consumption more closely,' said Markus Oberlin, General Manager of Farnek Avireal.

'There are around 250 private and government schools in Dubai alone. If only a fraction of them adopted the same kind of energy saving systems, it could have a significant impact on the UAE's carbon footprint,' Oberlin added.

Farnek Avireal, which has been advising international hotels, building owners and major companies as well as educational establishments on how they can dramatically cut their utility bills, will be an exhibitor at FM Expo which takes place from 24-26 May 2009 at the Dubai International Exhibition and Convention Centre.

'The facility management industry is evolving rapidly in the region as improving investment returns become even more crucial in a tight financial market and improvements in energy efficiency are high on the agenda,' said Theobald.

'The initial development cost of a facility represents only 20% of the total spent across the lifetime of a building with facilities management and maintenance making up the remaining 80%. These kinds of figures are critical to building owners whether it is an office, hotel, hospital or educational establishment,' Theobald added.

The regional property and facilities management industry is estimated to be worth \$704 billion over the next 25 years. In addition, new building standards, including green building and energy management codes are being introduced, all of which are part of the facilities management profession. Both Abu Dhabi and Dubai are preparing green building codes and are expected to start implementing them in 2009.

FM Expo is the leading event in the region dedicated to property and facilities management. Running in parallel is the Property and Facilities Management Conference with local, regional and international industry experts identifying trends and debating industry issues.

Platinum sponsor for the 2009 event is Etisalat Facilities Management, who is also supporting the Property and Facilities Management conference which runs in parallel with the exhibition.

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