



Dallas County is leveraging a multiphase performance contract with Schneider Electric that will use energy savings to fund countywide facilities improvements and support sustainability efforts — all without raising taxes.

## The Challenge

Founded in 1846, Dallas County is the ninth largest county in the U.S. and the second most populous in Texas. More than 2.3 million people reside within the county's 909 square miles. A five-member Commissioners Court, led by a County Judge, sets tax rates, adopts the budget, and oversees administration of the county government.

Competing in a global marketplace, county officials knew they had to deliver what it takes to attract businesses of all sizes — workplaces with clean air and a vibrant economy. And they understood that change had to start with county buildings.

In 2011, the Commissioners Court approved an aggressive efficiency program with a positive, far-reaching, sustained impact on the regional environment and economy.

After conducting a nationwide search, Dallas County officials chose Schneider Electric from among 10 companies

competing for an energy performance contract. (The contract guarantees an amount of savings, and Schneider Electric agrees to pay the difference if Dallas County does not realize that amount.)

Dallas County's "big picture" included upgrading various mechanical systems (e.g., rooftop units, chillers, pumps) and automating other systems to improve comfort levels throughout county facilities. Improving water efficiency, upgrading lighting, and adding motion sensors were also on the list.

County officials told Schneider Electric that it was important to leverage local talent by subcontracting to area firms and engaging local craftspeople. That way the performance contract would ultimately benefit not only the county, but also local businesses and constituents.



## Customer Benefits

- Lower operational costs
- Decreased energy use
- Increased sustainability measures
- Enhanced public image

## The Solution

The multiphase project aligned with Dallas County's strategic plan to enhance the local economy, provide a healthy environment for employees and visitors, and improve facilities throughout the county. The phases also corresponded to the needs of specific groups of buildings (e.g., downtown complex, county jail, outlying facilities).

Each building group has its own dedicated maintenance team. The four teams collaborated to prioritize rolling out the phases and projects.

Interior comfort levels and operational efficiency improved when Schneider Electric replaced some building automation systems (BASs), chillers, and boilers that had reached their end-of-service life. Upgrades to mechanical and electrical systems included replacing obsolete air handling units (AHUs) and modifying others with variable fan drives (VFDs) to optimize energy performance.

Schneider Electric retrofitted the interior lighting in some buildings with reduced wattage (28 W) bulbs and installed LED lighting in parking garages and exterior wall packs. Motion sensors installed in offices and parking garages also save energy and money. Lights now go off in offices if the sensors don't detect movement. In the parking garages, lights dim when no one is under them.

Water conservation controls and fixtures (e.g., low-flow sinks, showers, urinals, commodes) enable county buildings to optimize water resources. At the county jail, Schneider Electric also installed controllers to limit the number of flushes in order to prevent abuse of the equipment.

## The Bottom Line

The environmental impact of Dallas County's performance contract will reduce carbon emissions by more than half a million tons, which equates to removing nearly 85,000 cars from the roads or planting 125,000 trees to restore the environmental balance.

Sustainability efforts will create more than 400 jobs, drive an additional \$58M in business sales, and give the county a positive cash flow for other initiatives. Moreover, it will allow Dallas County to address deferred maintenance projects in buildings throughout the county.

Officials would like the county's sustainability program to serve as a model for other municipalities nationwide. Closer to home, they want Dallas County employees to lead the way by practicing sustainability at home and in their communities.

When Dallas County signed the performance contract, it had been spending more than \$1 million a month on its utility bills. Officials expect this project to reduce the county's utility spend by 31 percent, which equates to \$73 million in guaranteed savings over the life of the project.

In addition, Dallas County was able to leverage historically low utility rates to lock in a more beneficial rate that will save the county an additional 30 percent over the savings generated by the performance contract. Guaranteed utility savings associated with the performance contract serve as the county's hedge against future increases in the utility rates.



## Project at a Glance

Location	Dallas, TX
Project type	Energy Savings Performance Contract
Property	54 buildings (6 million sq.ft.)
Funding	\$600,000 in total collective utility rebates and tax credits
ECMs	Lighting w/occupancy sensors BAS Boiler system Upgrades to chillers, mechanical systems, and electrical systems Water conservation controls/fixtures
Guaranteed savings	\$73 million
Payback	10 years
Installation	All phases completed 2013 – 2015

*“Since we are trading the money that we are spending on utilities to complete the work, our citizens are not burdened with a tax increase.”*

Judge Clay Jenkins  
Dallas County

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