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UNL plans energy saving projects

By Jim Faddis

The Nebraska Energy Office has recommended that UNL receive \$284,284 in federal grants for energy saving projects.

State Energy Director Bill Palmer said that \$250,000 would go for construction work at Hamilton Hall, while the remaining \$34,285 will go for energy efficiency studies of 12 UNL buildings.

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UNL is required to match the federal funds, Palmer said, so the total cost of the project will be \$568,568.

But the university should make back the money it spends on the projects within two to three years through energy savings, he said.

The Hamilton Hall project includes installing a modified ventilation system, more energy-efficient entrance lighting, capacitors in motors, and light switches that will allow part of a room's lights to be turned on, instead of all of them. The project also calls for reducing the lighting in restrooms and stairways and disconnecting and air conditioning and heat switches from the light switches.

These measures would reduce energy costs \$132,491 a year, Palmer said.

The 12 buildings to have energy efficiency studies are Cather-Pound, Harper-Schramm-Smith and Abel-Sandoz food service buildings, Behlen Lab, Brace Lab, Avery Hall, Burnett Hall, Richards Hall, Andrews Hall, the 501 Building, the Nebraska Union and the Ross McCollum Law College.

These 12 buildings were chosen from a number of applications because they use the most energy, Palmer said. Hamilton Hall was chosen for construction work because the work there will save the most energy per dollar invested, he said.

Palmer said he expects the Department of Energy to approve the grants within a month.

"They have never turned us down before," he said. Rising energy costs have helped put a strain on UNL's budget in past years and the university is looking for ways to reduce the costs, Palmer said.

Harley Schrader, UNL physical plant director, said UNL is pleased to get any financial help it can in reducing its energy budget, which is \$4.9 million this year.

Although UNL is looking for ways to reduce its energy budget, Schrader said it has already reduced its energy consumption 30 to 40 percent in the last few years, so energy consumption can't be reduced much more.

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