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**INNOVATION 2004**


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**Demand Side Energy Consultants**

The Federal Government's Energy Innovator Initiative is meant to encourage commerce and industry to focus on becoming more energy efficient. The first step in that process for many companies is to call in Demand Side Energy, a national leader in innovative energy efficient solutions for business.

Until recently, notes Alex Fleming, Demand Side Energy's President, only companies with energy costs of more than \$100,000 a year were eligible to participate in the government's Energy Innovators Initiative. Now the program is open to businesses of all sizes. Under the terms of the program, the Feds will contribute 25% of the cost of making your building more energy efficient—to a maximum payout of \$250,000.

Demand Side Energy, however, doesn't do the retrofitting for its clients. The company (which was started in Vancouver in 1990 by Fleming) serves strictly in an advisory capacity recommending how you can make your building more energy efficient and save tens of thousands of dollars a year or more in energy costs.

"We offer a benchmark service," Fleming says. "We have the best data base in Manitoba for comparing building energy-efficiency ratings. If the average cost for energy is, for example, \$1.50 a square foot for commercial buildings and our client is spending \$3 a square foot, then we know there is a good opportunity to save money by investing in measures to make the building more energy efficient. In almost all cases, there is some room for improvement."

Demand Side's service starts with an on-site energy audit—the federal government will pay 50% of the fee, Fleming points out—detailing the building's energy systems' (air conditioning, heating, lighting and ventilation and process) costs.

Demand Side staff then build a computer model and finds ways to cut down on those system operating costs.

"Our Energy Action Plans are designed to be road maps intended to reduce energy costs through retrofits done over a certain period of time," Fleming says. "We recommend customized low and medium cost



**Alex Fleming (left) and George Andrich conduct a detailed energy review on the Birk's Building renovation.**

solutions. Not only will we suggest replacing old boilers and heating systems where necessary, but we will also help select the most energy efficient and cost efficient alternatives. To our knowledge, we are one of a handful of firms in Canada providing this service who are strictly consultants. We have no stake in installations or implementation of systems."

Demand Side Energy has done extensive work for federal, provincial and municipal governments as well as a dozen electric and gas utilities across Canada. Two Winnipeg-based organizations have been recognized with Gold Medal Awards for their Energy Action Planning submissions by Demand Side's capable Winnipeg staff, Fleming reports.

Alex Fleming, a University of Manitoba engineering graduate, has been working in energy conservation since the early 1980s. "The energy business was really good in the 1980s," he recalls. "I was involved in hundred's of energy audits here. Then energy prices fell."

Much of the 1990s were a lost decade for energy conservation and efficiency experts in Canada, he notes. Throughout the decade, most of his work for Demand Side Energy was overseas in developing countries for clients such as the World Bank and major international firms in places like Brazil, Malaysia, Jamaica and Slovakia.

"Demand in Canada started to pick up again in the late 1990s as a result of the Kyoto Accord and resulting federal government incentives," he explains.

Fleming came back to Winnipeg to open Demand Side Energy's office here in 2001. The office has a staff of five.

"The first step was to get the word out that we are here," Fleming says. "Saving energy not only saves money but is also the right thing to do. And it helps that the government is picking up part of the tab for assessments and retrofits."

Fleming believes that there is the potential to save \$200 million to \$300 million in energy costs a year in

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Manitoba by making buildings more energy efficient. "That's a huge economic benefit," he states. "At Demand Side Energy, we believe that dollars saved on energy costs are equal to dollars earned."

[www.demandsideenergy.com](http://www.demandsideenergy.com)