

CPD's zero-energy District 3 building is already paying off

'City should construct every building this way'

Andy Foltz, WCPO contributor, Mar 23, 2016



CINCINNATI -- The new net-zero energy Cincinnati Police District 3 building has been a positive for the city and the department so far.

After opening in July 2015 to replace the old Warsaw Avenue building constructed in 1907, the new \$15 million headquarters are showing positive results across multiple fronts — even sparking interest in a documentary that will air later this year on PBS.



Net-zero energy means the building, replete with solar panels, produces enough energy that it isn't pulling any power from outside sources. Although it hasn't been quite a year since the Ferguson Road facility has been open, and it takes a full year to get firm numbers, the station is living up to expectations so far.

“The utility use was estimated based on the equipment installed and predicted use by CPD and average temperatures,” said Joel Koopman, Cincinnati’s facilities manager. “So far we are 20 percent below that estimated use from July 1, 2015, to March 16, 2016.”

District 3 serves the western side of the city, covering about 20 square miles. The district has about 95,000 residents in 14 neighborhoods, including the Price Hill neighborhoods, North and South Fairmount, Riverside, Sedamsville, Sayler Park and Westwood.

Although the energy portion of the new building is important, it is turning out to be a positive in other areas as well.

“We were in a building built for 30 people 108 years ago, and also we were renting another building. Our communication was not as good as it could’ve been,” said Sgt. Sal Tufano. “With the new building, we’re all together. It functions well, and it flows well.

“This facility allows us to be more efficient, both with energy and functionally,” he said. If there is extra energy generated that the station doesn't need, it goes back into the energy grid, and the city would get a credit for that.

Certain amenities in the new building, such as a designated eating area, enough phones for each desk, locker rooms for female officers that are designed for them, not just converted from old men’s facilities, and a community meeting room that can accommodate more than 50 people make the building an asset to police work. In the past, such meetings required logistical coordination, and that meant sometimes they just didn’t happen.

“Communication is improved both internally and externally,” Tufano said. “If people have a problem, they can come here, and we now have a space to meet with them.”



In addition to the practical additions to the station, there are some impressive artistic ones as well. A three-dimensional representation of District 3 hangs in the main entrance.

There are 14 decorative posts outside the main entrance, representing the 14 neighborhoods served by District 3. Another part of the building has three more columns, with the words “Serve. Honor. Protect.” They represent the three officers from the district who gave their lives in the line of duty. “Those columns are really important to us,” Tufano said.

The building is also the subject of a documentary by Laure Quinlivan. Part of what makes the building special is that, while there are other net-zero energy buildings, this is the first police station built to be net zero.

“Lucky for us, PBS executives are quite intrigued that little ole Midwestern Cincinnati beat out cities on either coast with the first net-zero energy police station,” said Quinlivan, a former Cincinnati City Council member.

“PBS has committed to airing a full half-hour documentary, once we raise funds for production.”

“Net zero is a national achievement for Cincinnati and surprising since we are a fiscally conservative city with an abundance of natural resources. It’s inspirational,” she said. “Viewers of the documentary will understand that if Cincinnati can do it, their city can too.”

The documentary, which can be seen in its current form [here](#), will air this year on PBS stations, including WCET locally, but still needs funding.

“Cincinnati’s new FOP president, Dan Hils, came from District 3 and has also volunteered to help raise funds to make this positive CPD show a reality,” Quinlivan said. “We still need a \$20,000 Presenting Sponsor and \$10,000 Gold Sponsor.

“This design/build construction model with community engagement in public art and goal for the highest sustainability possible has resulted in a fantastic final product in CPD District 3 Police Station,” she said.

“The city should construct every new building this way. However, many people simply don’t know the story. That’s why this documentary is so important ... for the West Side, Cincinnatians, and the rest of the country.”