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Audit identifies energy waste at library

By Tim Simard
Observer staff

Dorothy Alling Memorial Library Director Marti Fiske knew parts of the building were a little drafty, but she had no idea just how much energy is lost daily. But as Fiske and about 20 Williston residents discovered on Sunday morning, infrared cameras can show just how inefficient a structure can be.

An energy audit was conducted at the library Sunday, hosted by the community action group Williston Green Initiatives. Conducted by Williston-based Building Energy, the audit looked to find problem spots where energy escapes, and explain how to cut down on electricity consumption.

The auditors, using the cameras

and other high-tech equipment, found that the most recently built portions of the library were actu-

ally the source of the most energy leakage. That information surprised Fiske.

"I was pretty horrified," Fiske said, laughing. "I kept thinking, 'I'm glad it's not my house.'"

Much of the audit's work was done by Williston Green Initiatives volunteers, who crawled through attics and tight spaces to find energy leaks. According to group member Mariana Lamaison Sears, everyone had fun.

"The library could be looking at some significant savings, so it was good to do it," Lamaison Sears said.

The library's energy audit was the second one to occur in Williston. Last year, Building Energy studied Town Hall and discovered Williston could save thousands of dollars a year with better insulation and improved lighting systems. With the success of the Town Hall audit, Williston Green



Courtesy photo by Mariana Lamaison Sears

Scott Gardner (left), owner of Building Energy, conducts an energy audit at Dorothy Alling Memorial Library on Sunday while Williston Green Initiatives volunteer Linda Birkenbach holds an infrared camera.

Initiatives sought to do another one this year and are planning on a third audit next year.

Scott Gardner, owner of Build-

ing Energy, said much of the library's insulation is substandard, especially in the attics and crawl spaces. Auditors also discovered

that many of the building's ducts are not sealed properly, allowing for energy loss.

"Basically, the building sees heat loss in the winter and (air conditioning) loss in the summer," Gardner said.

Most of the energy inefficiency was found in additions built over the past 25 years. In 1986, Fiske said, the library built an addition that includes the adult reading section and the front entrance. The children's reading rooms were added in 1998, she said.

"(The library) has been winged and added to death," Gardner said. "In each of those connections, the construction didn't address energy efficiency at all."

Gardner, who is currently writing a report on the audit that he'll deliver to the library later this week, found other ways the build-

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ing could cut energy and electricity consumption. He said the building consumes a lot of electricity — about 10 times more than a single-family home in Williston. He said lighting controls and alternative energy devices might reduce the library's high kilowatt-hours.

Fiske said she looks forward to reading Building Energy's report. She said it would be brought to the library trustees and Town Manager

Rick McGuire, who would then help determine what must be addressed first. She said the library may be able to apply for state and federal grants for energy upgrades.

"It looks like we'll have some work to do," Fiske said.

In connection with the library audit, Williston Green Initiatives is hosting an energy fair on Saturday, Oct. 24 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The fair, which will include energy exhibitors and seminars, will take place at Town Hall.