



## **Here's Another Way to Save – Interview with Luci Smith, EastGroup Properties, Inc.**

From the BOMA Legislative Committee, Subcommittee on Sustainability

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EastGroup Properties, Inc. is a \$3-billion owner/operator of industrial properties located in major Sunbelt markets including Florida, Texas, Arizona and California. One of the company's key attributes is a sharp focus on efficiency. This is evidenced by the fact that the entire organization is run by a team of only 72 associates. Senior Property Manager Luci Smith is well-known across the company and all of Central Florida as a property manager with deep experience in energy efficiency and sustainability.

In a recent interview Luci shared a few ways that EastGroup is reducing consumption to increase savings and efficiency. As a starting point she noted that common sense can lead to significant savings. Examples she cited include replacing inefficient exterior and interior lamps with more energy efficient models; re-roofing (when it becomes necessary) with white TPO (Thermoplastic polyolefin) materials that reflect heat more effectively, and requiring audits of irrigation systems every two years by her landscape contractors to ensure water waste is being kept to a minimum.

Reduced consumption results in lower operating costs. One example given was lighting retrofits that are paying for themselves within 24 to 36 months. Ratings for sustainability awareness also add value. Luci stated that nine of 12 buildings at their Southridge Commerce Park development are currently ENERGY STAR rated, and they expect the remaining three to achieve that goal by end of this year. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov), ENERGY STAR certified buildings are more marketable, command higher rental rates and thus have increased asset value.

Luci noted that rebates and incentives are additional, important benefits of sustainability-oriented thinking. For example, Duke Energy offers incentives ranging from rebates for annual recommissioning (servicing) of HVAC systems, to subsidies for re-roofing when energy-efficient materials are used.

There are lots of ways to save money, reduce our carbon footprint and run our facilities more intelligently. What ideas do you want to share?!