

Energy Use Profile for THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Benchmarking 2016



Strategic energy management presents a significant opportunity for campuses throughout Connecticut to improve building energy performance, save money and reduce carbon emissions.



Benchmarking is the process of comparing current energy usage data to previous years' energy usage data for the same facility or to the energy performance of comparable facilities. Benchmarking provides an opportunity to stimulate conversation and deeper inquiry into energy use, opportunities for savings and optimizing building performance.

MANY OF CONNECTICUT'S HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS HAVE MADE BOLD CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITMENTS. Higher education, the only sector with a coordinated organizational commitment to carbon neutrality, provides a model for setting and tracking climate targets and accountability in meeting climate commitments.

In Connecticut, 27% of colleges and universities have made commitments to become carbon neutral and have developed greenhouse gas inventories and climate action plans for their campuses. These commitments impact over 44% of the full-time students enrolled at higher education institutions in Connecticut.

Accordingly, Connecticut's higher education institutions will provide a strong contribution to meeting Connecticut's goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050.

Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) campuses - 12 community colleges and 4 state universities - provide opportunities to

approach sustainable energy management systematically and make significant contributions toward the state's 20% energy reduction goals. Moreover, the CSCU campuses comprise 18% of the total square footage of all state agency buildings and 30% of all higher education students in Connecticut.

This report analyzes energy and water use and benchmarking data for **Three Rivers Community College**. It was produced with companion reports for each of the 11 other community colleges in the CSCU system, with the goal of providing data and analysis to inform the CSCU Energy Master Plan and to improve energy management at Three Rivers Community College specifically.

KEY FINDINGS

84%



of Three Rivers Community College annual total energy cost in 2016 was for electricity.

10.2%

less energy (as measured in site energy use intensity) is being used by Three Rivers Community College in 2015, as compared to 2013.

\$79,000

in annual potential savings could be realized if Three Rivers Community College reduced its building energy use by 10%.



Three Rivers Community College is comprised of one main campus building that has multiple wings. It is a 2-story building that includes, classrooms, labs, full-service dining room, and a fitness center. Its existing gross area is 295,644 square feet.

Finding 1

Between 2013 and 2016, energy use decreased by 10.2% for Three Rivers Community College.

The energy performance of a building is a reflection of the building's design, systems, equipment, and operating and maintenance practices, as well as the behavior of those using the building. Site energy is the annual amount of all energy a property consumes onsite, as reported on utility bills. Site energy use intensity (EUI) is the site energy use per square foot of property.

The current average site EUI for community colleges in Connecticut is

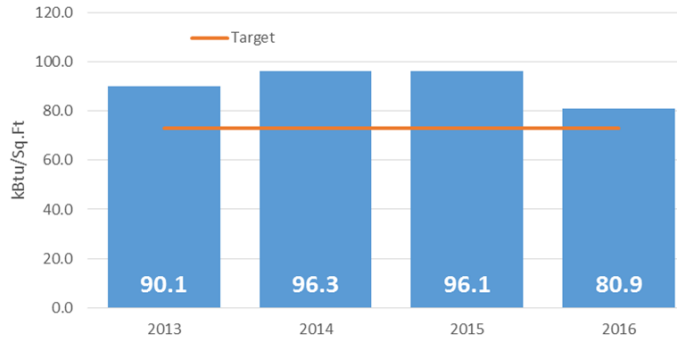


Figure 1. Building energy performance (site EUI) by calendar year from 2013 to 2016 (in blue) and a proposed energy use target (in orange) for Three Rivers Community College. The target reflects a 10% reduction in energy use from 2016 use.

101 kBtu/ft² (See **Methods** for source). Three Rivers Community College's site EUI is currently below the Connecticut average, at 80.9 kBtu/ft, indicating better than average energy performance among Connecticut community colleges. Additionally, from 2013 to 2016, site EUI decreased from

90.1 to 80.9 kBtu/ft² (see **Figure 1**), representing a 10.2% decrease, despite an increase that occurred from 2013 to 2014 and largely persisted into 2015. This report sets forth an additional 10% reduction in energy use as an attainable further target.

Finding 2

Electricity accounted for 53% of Three Rivers Community College total energy use and 84% of its total energy costs in 2016.

From June 2015 to May 2016, Three Rivers Community College's total campus energy consumption was split between electricity and natural gas (see **Figure 2** for energy consumption by energy source). However, due to the relatively higher cost per Btu of electricity during this period, electricity costs were significantly higher at 84% of the total compared to natural gas (see **Figure 3**). In order to optimize cost savings, the college might consider

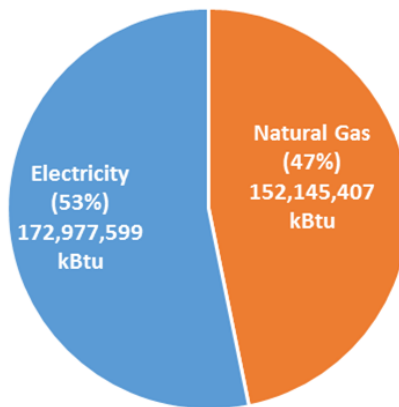


Figure 2. 2016 energy consumption by energy source for Three Rivers Community College.

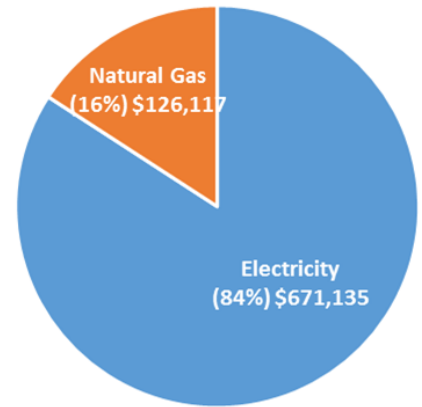


Figure 3. 2016 energy costs for Three Rivers Community College.

prioritizing actions that save electricity use (see **Next Steps** in this report), with the understanding that energy prices

vary over time and that both electricity and natural gas prices may vary year to year.

Finding 3

Three Rivers Community College has the potential to save up to \$79,000 per year, if building energy use is reduced by 10%.

In 2013, Three Rivers Community College spent \$2.35 per square foot on its total energy costs (including electricity and gas) versus \$2.67 in 2016 (see **Figure 4**). If Three Rivers Community College reduced its 2016 energy use by 10%, which is approximately the amount of energy used in 2013. The cost

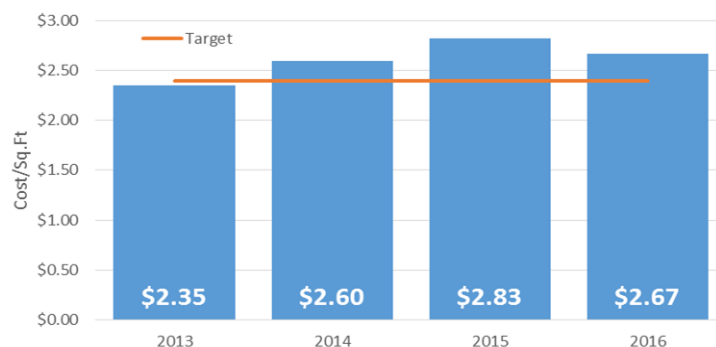


Figure 4. Energy cost per square foot for Three Rivers Community College from 2013 to 2016 (in blue) and a proposed target (in orange) that assumes a 10% reduction in energy use.

per square foot would drop to \$2.40 resulting in potential savings up to \$79,000

per year, assuming energy prices remained constant.

Finding 4

Electricity use at Three Rivers Community College varied between 287,000 kWh and 520,000 kWh, though it is relatively steady over time.

Detailed electricity use data is available for Three Rivers from January 2013 to May 2016 (see **Figure 5**). Over that time frame, electricity use was lowest in December (with an average December use of 327,346 kWh) and January (with an average January use of 318,195 kWh).

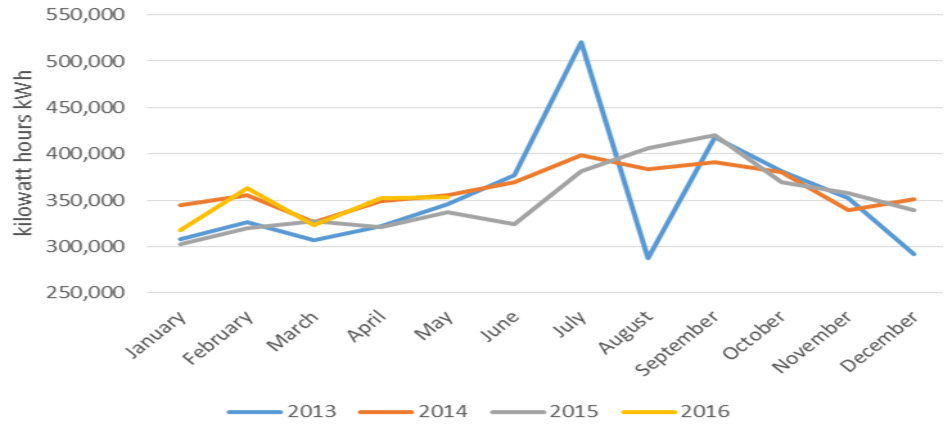


Figure 5. Monthly electric energy use (in kilowatt hours) for Three Rivers Community College from January 2013 to May 2016.

Finding 5

Natural gas use and cost at Three Rivers Community College varied seasonally, with lowest use in the summer months and use peaking in the winter months.

Detailed natural gas use data is available for Three Rivers Community College from January 2013 to May 2016 (see **Figure 6**). Over that time frame, there is little natural gas used between June and August each year. Annually, natural gas use steadily climbs through the fall peaking between 21,000 and 32,000 ccf in February each year and steadily declining through late winter and early spring. Cost data trends mirror usage data, with the greatest cost reflecting peak use in the winter months.

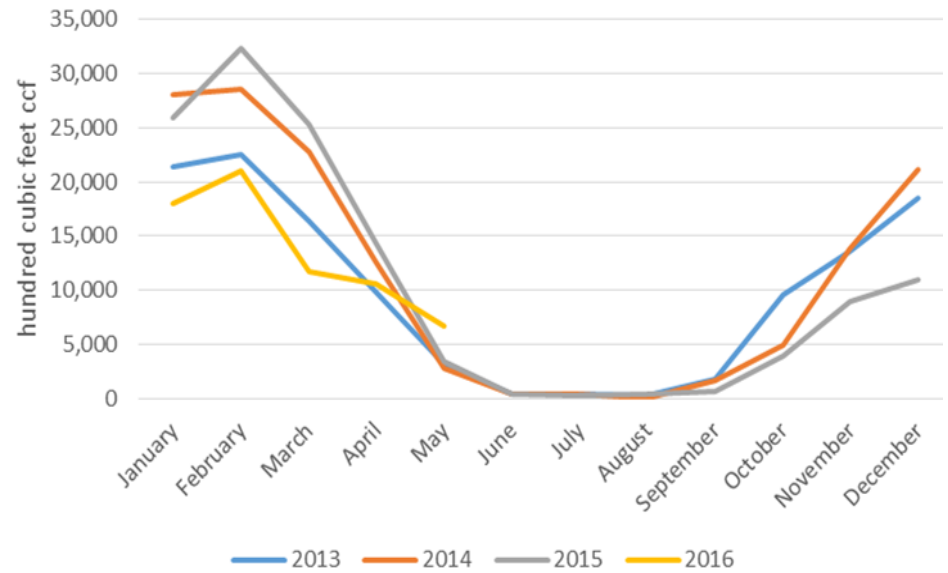


Figure 6. Monthly natural gas energy use (hundred cubic feet) for Three Rivers Community College from January 2013 to May 2016.

Finding 6

Water use at Three Rivers Community College varied between 70,000 gallons and 350,000 gallons over the course of each year, with peaks in August and October.

Detailed water use data is available for Three Rivers Community College from January 2013 to June 2015 (see **Figure 7**). Over that time frame, water use was lowest in February, annual use averaging 91,500 gallons per month each year. There were peaks in water use in August and October, with the annual high of around 300,000 gallons occurring in October. Notably, in October of 2014 the peak reached 350,000 gallons. Annual water cost was around \$34,000.

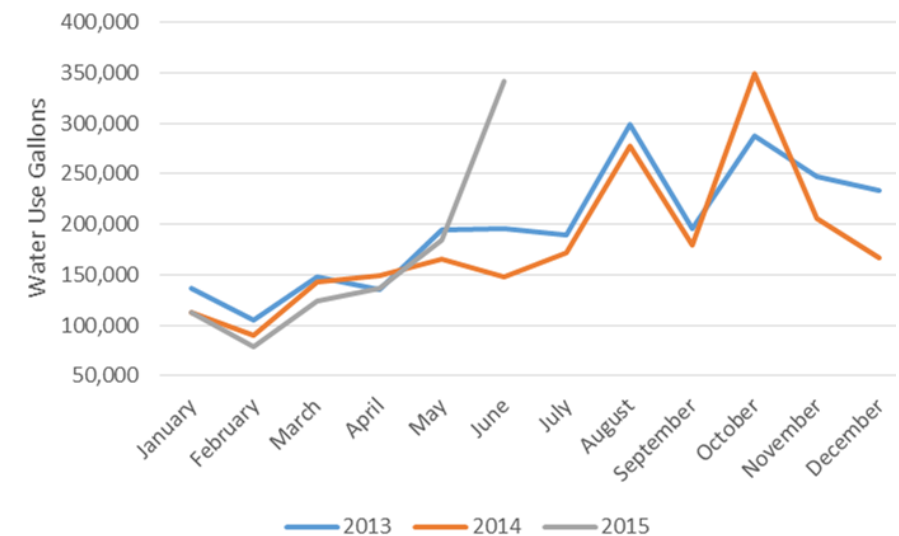


Figure 7. Monthly water use (in gallons) for Three Rivers Community College 2013-2015.

Next Steps

Energy and water use and benchmarking data provide a critical foundation to understanding building energy performance and tracking changes in energy and water use over time. While data alone cannot identify why a building is efficient or inefficient or what is causing a change in energy or water use, the data and graphs in this report are very useful tools in identifying the areas of further inquiry. For example:

- Although Three Rivers Community College saw a decrease in energy use from 2013 to 2016 (see **Figure 1**) there are still significant opportunities to save energy and costs. Discussion with building operations staff and an on-site energy audit, available through the EnergizeCT program, would identify specific energy saving measures.
- The peaks of electricity use in the summer months (see **Figure 5**) and natural gas use in the winter months (see **Figure 6**) suggest opportunities to explore heating and cooling efficiencies to optimize seasonal variations in energy use, relative to building use.
- Three Rivers Community College should consider adopting building energy performance targets, beginning with a 10% reduction in

energy use. Many resources are available to help identify, finance and implement reductions.

- Three Rivers Community College should explore opportunities for solar energy, which could further reduce energy costs.
- Three Rivers Community College should also continue to track water use and identify opportunities for efficiency.

The CSCU Energy Master Plan (2016) provides additional detail on current operations and energy management practices and recommendations for improvement. The Energy Master Plan will provide a useful roadmap for coordinated, system-wide energy savings initiatives.

In addition, there are many resources available through EnergizeCT and the Connecticut Green Bank to help implement energy saving actions. These include energy audits, retro commissioning, equipment financial incentives, and financing. Information on these programs is available through utility account representatives and at www.energizect.com.

Additional Background and Methods

Benchmarking Experience and Value

The Institute for Sustainable Energy has benchmarked over 900 buildings in Connecticut using Energy Star Portfolio Manager. This benchmarking work has helped building owners understand energy use and take the next steps to identify opportunities and implement actions to save energy. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, buildings that were benchmarked consistently in Portfolio Manager over a 3-year period reduced energy use by an average of 2.4 percent per year, for a total savings of 7 percent.

Data Sources and Energy Target

In 2015, Eversource launched an online, interactive data tool, known as the Eversource Customer Engagement Platform (CEP). In partnership with Eversource and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system office, the Institute for Sustainable Energy helped pilot the use of the CEP to obtain monthly electricity, natural gas usage, and cost data for this report. Water data was self-reported by Three Rivers Community College and obtained by the Institute from the CSCU System Office.

This report suggests an initial energy savings target of 10%. This report further references an average site EUI of 101 kBtu/ft² for community colleges in Connecticut. This figure was calculated by consultants Woodard & Curran for the 2016 CSCU Energy Master Plan using aggregate 2014 fiscal year energy data for all 11 community college campuses in Connecticut.

Energy Star Portfolio Manager

Energy Star Portfolio Manager is an online tool created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, designed to track and assess energy and water use across multiple buildings. Portfolio Manager controls for key variables affecting a building's energy performance, including climate, hours of operation and building size, allowing for meaningful comparison of buildings within the same building type. In addition to energy use and cost data, Portfolio Manager analysis relies on building demographic data, such as the number of kitchens, walk-in freezers, pools, and other building features.

Currently, Portfolio Manager does not include "Community College" as a building

type. Data for all 11 community college campuses in Connecticut were coded as the "K-12 School" building type because community colleges, as non-residential centers of education, often function most similarly to this type of building. This coding enables appropriate comparisons between community colleges but should not be used to determine an Energy Star building score.

The Energy Star Portfolio Manager benchmarking account prepared for Three Rivers Community College is available to authorized users, who have been provided the username and password to the account by the Institute for Sustainable Energy.

Time Period Covered

Unless otherwise indicated in this report, data is substantially complete from January 2013 to May 2016, and annual data is reported by calendar year.

Process and Quality Control

Source data were entered into Microsoft Excel before being uploaded to Energy Star's Portfolio Manager. Two independent reviewers cross-checked data to verify the accuracy of the data input.

AUTHORS AND PARTNERS

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This report was prepared by the professional staff and student interns of the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern Connecticut State University. For over 15 years, the Institute has provided technical support to Connecticut's colleges and universities, state agencies, municipalities, K-12 schools, and others to implement practical solutions that increase energy efficiency, sustainability and resilience. www.easternct.edu/sustainenergy



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