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## Energy Audits

### Reserve Study Companies Can Save Associations Big Money

Many reserve consultants recommend that association undertake a low-cost energy audit in conjunction with their periodic reserve studies. The reserve study would review all the physical components of a community as well as the relationship between the replacement costs, the maintenance cost and the energy cost. Often components can be replaced with those that are more efficient and require less maintenance, which saves money in the long run.

In some cases state, federal and local rebates may be available to help offset costs for replacement with energy efficient components.



A new trend for some condominiums is the use of energy services contracts, which include the audit, upgrades and a written guarantee that the energy savings can offset a project's financing.

To learn more about energy audits, energy service contracts and how they help associations save money, [click here to read Power Play](#), used by permission of Community Association Institute. This article appeared in the September/October 2012 edition of CAI's Community Manager newsletter.



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## CMA'S LEADERSHIP ADVISOR



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### Special Edition: Energy Savings

## Power Partnerships

*Judi M. Phares, President and CEO, RTI/Community Management Associates, Inc.*

You can count on it—energy bills in Texas spike as the summer heat takes hold. That's why we couldn't wait to tell you about great ways that HOAs can reduce their energy costs and recover dollars they thought were lost.

CMA actively seeks out qualified vendors with the highest standards of service. If your association chooses the right partners, we hope you'll enjoy savings comparable to

these communities.

Sincerely,

**Judi M. Phares, CMCA®, PCAM®** Publisher

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION

### Secret to Saving on Electric Bills

#### Choose the Right Partner

A flamenco-dancing armadillo is clever advertising, but it doesn't ease the sting of high electric bills. With a utility management service, no fancy footwork is needed to save on Common Area HOA electric bills.

A case in point, the energy bills for Timber Lake HOA in Southlake had climbed to more than \$1600 monthly and covered amenities such as landscape lighting at two entrances, and two fountains, as well as a tennis court with timed lighting.

Association Manager Denise McCormick searched for a ways to save on electric bills and suggested the board get a quote from a utility management company.



#### Apples to Apples Comparison

Denise provided recent electric bills to Kilowatt Partners, one of several companies which would make an "apples to apples" comparison with rates from other energy providers. Kilowatt Partners obtained energy rates through a bidding

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process with many different energy providers. The company analyzed each meter on the bills. They presented their analysis to the Timber Lake board, along with a chart showing terms and rates they had negotiated with several electric vendors.

Drum roll! The association could pay about 6.5 cents instead of 7.5-11 cents on those five meters. The board chose a new provider from the array of different energy providers and contracts and let Kilowatt Partners handle the switch for them. (Rates will vary with the market).

## More Savings, Plus a Tax Refund

The bill analysis also included a review of potential overcharges (sales tax) that could be recovered. The board signed a simple one page agreement for the recovery of bill overcharges. "The decision was a 'no brainer' because if Kilowatt did not recover funds, there was no cost to the community," said the Timber Lake Board President. "The board received a check for nearly \$3,000 recovered funds and reduced their energy costs about \$550 per month, an overall savings of 34%."



Not only does their new provider save them money on electricity. "Instead of receiving one bill of 4-8 pages for each meter, we receive one succinct bill listing each meter on two pages," said Denise. "This will save time in processing invoices and checks if more HOAs use these new vendors."

Denise's clients are seeing their savings mount up, as attested by another association she manages. "Chisholm Ridge has experienced significant savings on our electric bill by using Kilowatt Partners," said John Swann, HOA Board President of Chisholm Ridge. "Using this service costs nothing except the percentage of the recovery! With the money we saved, we can invest in things to

improve the value of our community!"

Hmm, the secret is out! Saving on electric bills is possible without dancing armadillos!

For information about getting a quote from a utility management service, please contact your association manager.

HOAs served by electric Co-Ops are not eligible for the service.

"Our homeowners and board members were pleased with our e-voting experience, and we'll definitely use it again for next year's election," said SRCA Board President Jon Dell'Antonia. SRCA implemented e-voting with advice from their legal counsel to ensure they complied with criteria established by Texas statute.

A leading management company for HOAs, CMA offers convenient technology solutions to boards and homeowners. For more information, contact your association manager.

## VENDOR INFORMATION

### What Does a Utility Management Company Do? A Deregulated Market

Utility management companies help clients understand the utility cost structure in Texas' deregulated market. Their service includes data gathering, monitoring, analysis, recommendations, and negotiations. In other words, they do the math, deal with the red tape and do all the paperwork.



According to Kilowatt Partners, since deregulation, the way power is generated and delivered has been broken down into three components:

- **Generation** is producing energy through various sources, whether it be fossil-fueled, nuclear or solar power plants.
- **Transmission and Delivery (TDSP)** is getting the power delivered to your home or business. Companies, such as Centerpoint and Oncor, make sure you are getting power delivered to your home. The TDSP takes care of you when you have a service problem. They do not care who you buy your power from.
- **Retail Electric Provider (REP's)** are the "gas stations" you buy your power from. Most people do not know that

the company who maintains the power lines is not the company they buy power from. There is no added physical safety or reliability by staying with the old REP.

In Texas, HOAs can be exempt from sales tax on energy depending on the purpose for which it's used. The company can look back up to four years to recover sales taxes paid by the association.

[Visit the CMA Blog](#) to read more about utility management services.

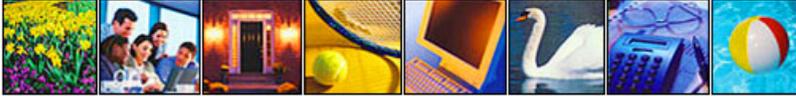
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