

ENERGY STAR® Clothes Washers Save Money, Please Residents



It's a smart business trifecta: the property manager trims costs while making the building owner look good—and drawing praise from residents. What's the key? ENERGY STAR qualified clothes washers.

Why does Colesville Towers, a high-end apartment building in Silver Spring, Maryland, feature 14 brand new energy-efficient LG washing machines—installed three years before the route operating contract came up for renewal? Depends who you ask.

The **laundry operator**, Coinmach, saw an opportunity to provide residents with an environmentally friendly, cost-saving solution.

The **property manager**, Realty Management Services (RMS), was lured by lower utility bills, less maintenance, and the market appeal of a greener building.

The **owner** liked the face-lift to the laundry facility, as well as the building's new environmental credibility.

At the center of the deal is the **ENERGY STAR** brand: the new washers are 50% more water and energy efficient than standard commercial units, and are expected to save Colesville Towers about \$2,600 a year on its utility bills.



The ENERGY STAR qualified *LG High-Efficiency Front Load Washer* consumes 50 percent less water and energy than conventional models.

The LG model offers a range of benefits that appealed to the property manager. With no belts or pulleys, the machines vibrate less and are therefore quieter. With fewer parts and less vibration, maintenance requirements shrink. The machines have a longer life and larger capacities, and offer superior cleaning performance using less water and detergent. Because the washers get clothes dryer in the final spin cycle, the dryers don't have to run as long, which boosts the energy savings. The LG model also has enhanced security to protect against theft and vandalism.

A change out of an entire laundry facility doesn't happen every day, especially in the middle of a contract.



An upscale residential property built in 1966 with 272 apartment homes, Colesville Towers is located in downtown Silver Spring, MD. The building is just five minutes from the Silver Spring Metro, a lively pedestrian mall, restaurants, and shops. Realty Management Services, established in 1988 and headquartered in Bethesda, MD, has managed the property since 1998. Ross Development & Investment, also in Bethesda, owns the building.



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It took the vision of several key players to move the project forward. Together they considered concerns about cost, maintenance, disruption to resident schedules, and the residents' reaction to the new machines.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) manages the ENERGY STAR program for appliances. DOE contacted Coinmach—an especially active partner in the ENERGY STAR program—about conducting a case study. “Very few apartment buildings have ENERGY STAR qualified washers, but these machines offer 50% savings in energy and water,” says DOE’s Rick Orrison. “Imagine the impact if every property switched to ENERGY STAR washers.”

Timothy Seitz, Senior Vice President, Coinmach, championed the project. Coinmach approached Beth Ross, president of RMS and a long-time customer, with the idea. For the sake of utility bill savings—and the opportunity to make the building greener—Ross was willing to renegotiate the contract with Coinmach early.

“In this kind of economy, savings are paramount,” says Ross. “All the owners of the buildings we manage are expecting expense reduction. If we can show energy efficiencies, that will be huge. And the opportunity to pilot something [green] was really exciting.”

Scott Ross, one of the building’s owners, was also pleased that the change out included credit card readers and the Check My Wash program. This Web-based service allows residents to determine when washers and dryers are available and find out how much time is left before cycles end.

“The old machines consumed massive amounts of energy and water,” he notes. “With all the concern about energy, we can’t afford to not recognize these opportunities. The payment mechanism is also safer, so we have the opportunity to replace the old machines with systems that won’t be abused or fail. If these new machines increase safety, security, and efficiency for our residents, we will have done our job.”

THE CHANGE OUT

Coinmach installed all of the LG washers, as well as 14 new Speed Queen dryers. Beth Ross also decided to take the opportunity to overhaul the laundry room, a renovation that helped sell the project to the owners. The renovation included painting, cleaning the terrazzo floors, and installing new blinds and clothes folding areas, which put the room out of service for 5 days. During that time, residents were able to use the laundry facilities at another RMS building across the street.

LAUNDRY 101 FOR RESIDENTS

To ensure that residents understand the benefits of the washers and that they know how to operate them properly, Coinmach worked with RMS to explain the new machines. Efforts included door hangers, signs in the laundry room, a letter to residents, and a ribbon-cutting event.

“We wanted to be sure that everyone understood the motivation for the change and was completely satisfied with the results,” said Ned Tintendo, Regional Manager for RMS.

Residents were told that they will have to pay higher vending fees to do a load

Benefits of ENERGY STAR Qualified Washers

- ENERGY STAR qualified clothes washers deliver superior cleaning performance.
- The machines are environmentally friendly, cutting energy and water use by 50%.
- The machines’ larger capacities allow residents to reduce the number of loads of laundry they have to wash each week. Large items, such as comforters, also fit.
- The machines are gentle on clothes, which means clothes last longer. The machines can even handle hand-washables.
- Residents need use only one-quarter cup of high-efficiency detergent per load.
- The machines require less maintenance and are quieter than conventional models.
- The design meets ADA accessibility guidelines.

of laundry, but that the washers have much greater capacity, so they can do more laundry at once. Residents can also use significantly less detergent, as ENERGY STAR qualified clothes washers require no more than one-quarter cup to get clothes clean. This is a crucial detail, since too much detergent can cause the machine to overflow.

To get the point across, Coinmach distributed laundry cups at the ribbon cutting. Residents also received samples of high-efficiency detergent, which the machines require to achieve the best cleaning performance. The evening

event, which included residents and speakers from RMS, Coinmach, ENERGY STAR, LG, and the local government, emphasized the new washers' superior environmental performance, the Check My Wash program, and proper operation of the machines.

A REPLICABLE SUCCESS

Both Scott Ross and Beth Ross are interested in changing to ENERGY STAR qualified washers in their other properties if these machines deliver the savings they expect, and if residents and maintenance staff are satisfied with them.

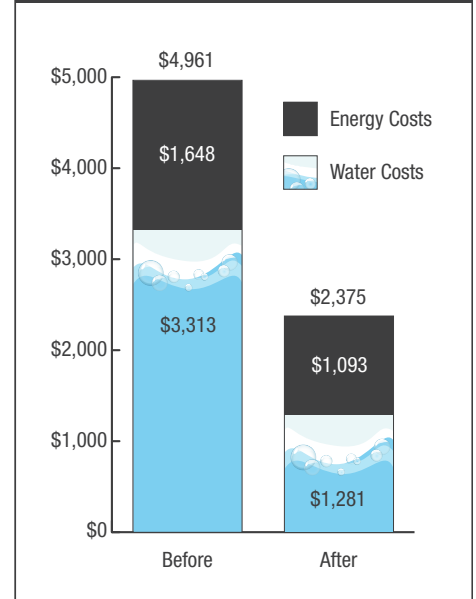
The company did receive a lone complaint from a resident who felt the change out only benefited the building owner, in the form of lower utility bills. However, Property Manager Dana

Green reports that most residents have stopped by to say that they are pleased with the change.

Long-time resident Janice Vaughan finds a lot to like in the new machines. "They're quieter and they're user friendly. You don't have to use as much detergent, which is nice. And I think they get the clothes cleaner."

The efficient washers and the new laundry center also draw the attention of prospective renters. "It has been a definite plus when we're touring," Green says. "You'd be surprised. A lot of people are going in the direction of green."

The switch to ENERGY STAR clothes washers is expected to shave about \$2,600 off the property's utility bills each year.



By the Numbers		
Number of Apartments	272	
Water Rate	\$6.21 per 1,000 gallons	
Gas Rate	\$1.29 per therm	
Electric Rate	\$0.1375 per kWh	
	Before	After
Washers	14 Speed Queen Washers (7 years old)	14 LG High-Efficiency Front Load Washers
Water Consumption per Load	33.5 gallons	12.9 gallons
Washer Capacity	2.69 cubic feet	3.52 cubic feet
Dryers	14 Speed Queen Gas Dryers (7 years old)	14 Speed Queen Commercial Gas Dryers
Number of Cycles per Washer per Year	1,138	
Energy and Water Cost Savings*	\$2,600 per year (projected)	

*Projected cost savings include energy savings from both washers and dryers and assume utility rates don't change over time. Savings could be higher if residents wash fewer loads of laundry due to larger washer capacity or if utility rates increase.

Key Factors of Success

- Start educating residents about the new washers as soon as possible and highlight the benefits to users.
- Overcome objections to higher vend prices by encouraging residents to take advantage of the larger capacity washers and do bigger loads.
- Remind residents to use just one-quarter cup of high-efficiency detergent per load to ensure that the machines operate properly.

PARTICIPANTS

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) manages the ENERGY STAR appliances, windows, and lighting programs. DOE also heads the ENERGY STAR for Institutional Markets Program, which helps multifamily building owners, public housing authorities, state and local governments, and colleges and universities save money and energy using ENERGY STAR qualified products and practices.

D&R International is an energy and environmental consulting firm dedicated to helping its clients increase the resource efficiency of homes, buildings, schools, and businesses. It implements a wide range of programs and projects on behalf of DOE, including the ENERGY STAR programs for lighting, windows, and appliances.

Coinmach Service Corporation is the leading provider of laundry equipment services in North America. The company's route customer base includes owners of rental apartment buildings, property management companies, condominiums and cooperatives, universities, and other multi-family housing properties.

Realty Management Services (RMS), established in 1988, manages 31 residential properties in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC. RMS is one of the most active multifamily property management companies in the Washington metropolitan area.

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