



Tom Costello



AXA Goes All-in for Energy Savings at 787 Seventh Ave.

When it came time to upgrade their aging HVAC system in the building that bears their name at 787 Seventh Avenue, AXA Equitable went “all-in.” Rather than making incremental improvements to improve efficiency and cut costs, AXA / Equitable and their CBRE Building Management replaced

the building’s entire HVAC system.

In partnership with the Trane Energy Services Team an entire new HVAC system was designed and installed over the course of four-months during the winter of 2011. The original 4,000-ton central plant was replaced with two 1,400-ton high efficiency Chillers, a

1,540-ton Dual Duty electric Chiller and a 45-tank thermal storage system.

“They swung the first hammer in January and the first chiller went on-line on April 7,” said chief engineer Erik Fisk. “The three individual pads that held the old chillers were removed and made as a single pad. We even had to cut out a wall to bring in the new chillers.”

Outside that wall alongside the loading dock are the storage tanks which provide 9,000 ton hours of thermal storage. “We keep them iced all year,” said CBRE General Manager Beck Papraniku. “The tanks have been very effective so we are looking at adding five more.”

Along with installing the new chillers and tanks were three new 200 hp chilled water; and three condenser pumps, two glycol pumps; all new piping and valves, Variable Frequency Drives, and state-of-art BMS.

Fisk beamed when he told a visitor that in the first year of operating the new equipment the Local 94 team of assistant chiefs Ralph Price, and Joe Woodward; lead engineer Ray Torres; engineers Glenn Orgen, Dennis Weinhard, Chris Dadah, Benny Gorenca, Sam Tonuzi, Chris Woods, Martin Byrnes; and helpers Steve Minolts, Eric Silvestri and Kenneth Kaul ran everything manually.

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Back row from left, Beck Papraniku, Joe Woodward, Chris Dadah and Dennis Weinhard. Front row from left, Erik Fisk, Ray Torres, Steve Minolts, Ralph Price and Rosemarie Krol.

“And the fact that everyone was involved and wanted to be involved was very gratifying. It made me very proud,” he said.

The project also provided major savings in energy consumption and costs.

By producing ice at night for daytime use, the system reduces peak-demand utility rates. And according to Papraniku, the building saved 2.5 Million kwh of electricity during the first year of operation.

Overall the new plant increased overall capacity by 340 tons while maintaining the same electrical and machinery footprint. The energy conservation provided is estimated to help reduce the building’s carbon emissions by 2.4 million pounds per year, which is the equivalent of removing 220 cars from the road annually or planting 325 acres of trees.

Located on the east side of Seventh Avenue between 51st and 52d Streets, 787 Seventh Avenue is a 1.8 million square-foot, 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a week building. The 754-foot tall, 54-floor tower is home to several restaurants and banks, features a large atrium as well as an athletic club and 499-seat auditorium.

Known as the AXA Equitable Building it is home to numerous banking, investment and law firms including BNP Paribas, Citigroup, Keefe Bruyette & Wood, Willkie Farr & Gallagher and Sidley Austin.

