



## Green Building in Arlington

By Dean Amel

The Arlington Initiative to Rethink Energy (AIRE), part of the county's Department of Environmental Services, recently produced a new report on the development and benefits of green office, apartment, and hotel buildings in Arlington. The first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) office building in Arlington was completed in 2006. Since then, 31 more buildings in the county have achieved LEED certification and two others received similar certification by Earthcraft.

Arlington has added more than 20 million square feet of new buildings and 20,000 new residents since 2006 but, partly as a result of the green building program, the county's use of energy and water have both **decreased** in that period. This was accomplished through the use of things like better insulation, high efficient HVAC (heating and air conditioning) systems, and greater use of daylight for interior lighting. Annual energy savings from these green buildings is equal to the power used by 1600 single-family homes. In addition, these buildings have saved water equivalent to that used for 2 million showers.

Other benefits that come out of the green building certification process include reduced construction material taken to landfills from demolition of existing buildings and other construction waste, greater recycling after occupancy, and a reduction in the urban heat-island effect through green (planted) or white (painted) roofs and through planting of other vegetation. Check out the [complete report](#) on the AIRE web site.

The work of this part of Arlington's county government is now threatened by deep proposed budget cuts. Please see the article elsewhere in this newsletter on the County Manager's recommendation to reduce funding for AIRE by 25% and how you can act to encourage the Arlington County Board to continue to fund this valuable program.

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