



## RETRO COMMISSIONING PROVES BLESSING TO QUINCY HOSPITAL

By all accounts, the folks at Blessing Hospital in Quincy, Illinois, run a tight ship. So, they were understandably skeptical when Sitton Energy Solutions, an independent energy management and consulting firm, proposed a retro commissioning survey of the 307-bed facility.

“We were tentative at first — it seemed like spending dollars in the hopes of saving dollars,” says Jerry Melching, Project Specialist for Blessing Hospital. “And we had already taken care of the low-hanging fruit.”

That skepticism did not deter Erik Merker, Director of Energy Services at Sitton Energy Solutions.

“We hear that all the time — that ‘there are no opportunities here’ — but why not have an expert validate that when the initial survey doesn’t cost the owner anything?” he says. “There are golden opportunities in retro commissioning — and Ameren Illinois incentivizes it very well.”

In fact, the cost of that initial survey is free to customers that qualify, thanks to the Ameren Illinois Large Facilities Retro Commissioning Program. It was an offer the hospital could not refuse.



Retro commissioning begins with a pre-screening process that establishes an ENERGY STAR® rating of that particular facility compared to similar buildings. Blessing Hospital was initially rated at a 38. This means it is in the 38th percentile of comparable buildings based on energy usage per square foot.

If energy-saving opportunities are identified — and they almost always are — the screening is followed up with a site visit where the Program Ally, a specially trained contractor familiar

with Ameren Illinois’ programs, looks at equipment, talks to staff, and identifies potential opportunities with a payback of less than one year.

“Retro commissioning focuses on measures that have a quick payback — a year or less — not big capital projects,” says Merker. “Retro commissioning involves tweaks and programming changes — it’s like a tune-up rather than an overhaul.”

Still, retro commissioning surveys often identify larger capital improvement projects that may qualify for additional incentives from Ameren Illinois.

*(continued on next page)*

*“We have an exceptional maintenance staff that allowed us to do 30-plus retro commissioning projects in house — and that greatly reduced our costs and payback period.”*

— Jerry Melching,  
Blessing Hospital Project Specialist

### Ameren Illinois Large Facilities Retro Commissioning

The Large Facilities Retro Commissioning program can defray a large percentage of survey phase costs for qualifying customers. In addition, Ameren Illinois offers implementation incentives for energy efficiency measures with a payback period of one year or less.

“Throughout their life cycle, buildings get out of balance. The retro commissioning survey is an excellent tool to bring in a fresh set of eyes and get them back into balance,” says Mark Steinmetz, Energy Advisor with the Ameren Illinois energy efficiency program. “Where else can you invest and get a payback in less than a year?”

Learn more at:  
[AmerenIllinoisSavings.com/Retro](http://AmerenIllinoisSavings.com/Retro)

# Improve the Health of Your Bottom Line with Energy Efficiency



## Does My Business Qualify?

The Large Facilities Retro Commissioning Program is available to Ameren Illinois customers with facilities of at least 100,000 square feet with an energy management system in place.

## Healing the Planet

By reducing its annual energy use by more than 1.9 million kWh and nearly 148,000 therms, Blessing Hospital's energy savings are equivalent to eliminating greenhouse gas emissions from 443 cars for an entire year!

## Did you know?

A large facility in Ameren Illinois service territory can expect to achieve an energy savings of 10 to 20% as a result of the retro commissioning process.

Ultimately, Sitton Energy Solutions identified more than 100 retro commissioning measures that could help Blessing Hospital save energy and money.

"We were definitely surprised, but we made them work for it," says Melching. "Our system is not run-of-the-mill — we have multiple buildings dating back to the 1920s that share systems — and Sitton spent time evaluating our system to a T."

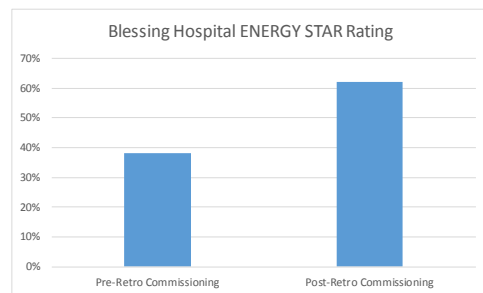
Ameren Illinois provided incentives of 2 cents per kWh saved and 40 cents per therm saved to help the hospital implement the no-cost, low-cost measures identified in the retro commissioning survey. Working with ENTEC, an Ameren Illinois Program Ally, hospital maintenance staff implemented those measures over a six-month period in 2014 and 2015.

Measures implemented included more sophisticated programming of the hospital's energy management system, optimal room-by-room scheduling of HVAC equipment, as well as adjustments to air volume, pressure controls and motor speed, and the installation of occupancy sensors.

"People assume hospitals are 24/7 operations, but a lot of areas are not," says Merker. "Most equipment is designed for worst-case scenarios such as the hottest summer day or coldest winter day, but you don't need it running at maximum capacity all of the time."

While original estimates put the payback period for the entire retro commissioning project at eight months, Blessing Hospital recouped their costs after just two and a half months.

While the retro commissioning measures were relatively small, the savings they created were anything but. In fact, the hospital cut its electricity use by nearly 10% and gas use by almost 17%, boosting its ENERGY STAR® rating from 38 to 62. Blessing Hospital will save more than \$176,000 every year in energy costs thanks to retro commissioning alone — freeing up funds that will ultimately benefit patients.



"That money means we can buy more new equipment — and recruit more doctors and nurses," says Melching. "We're trying to be proactive and maintain quality without increasing budget — the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program is one very good way to do that."

"There is so much opportunity to use these programs to make money for your business," says Merker. "People think energy efficiency is about big capital dollars, but most of the time, tweaks and small inexpensive things will make a building more comfortable and save money. And when you throw in Ameren Illinois incentives, it's a no-brainer."

No longer skeptical, Melching agrees.

"Ameren Illinois offers fairly substantial incentives and the payback on retro commission is incredibly fast," he says. "I highly recommend going through your facility with qualified people."

By taking advantage of Ameren Illinois' Large Facilities Retro Commissioning Program, Blessing Hospital is doing more than meeting its mission to improve the health of the community — it is improving the health of our planet.

**READY TO BEGIN?**

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