

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Achieving sustainability goals without compromising the care and services provided to Minnesota's Veterans.

Questions? Contact mnsustainability@state.mn.us



Residents grow and harvest veggies for meals

OBJECTIVES

Embedding sustainability into operations and programming and fostering a culture of sustainability among staff.

SOLUTIONS

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) is committed to sustainability because sustainability practices often have long-term cost savings while improving the quality of life of MDVA's Residents and staff.

To uphold this commitment, MDVA incorporated the Enterprise Sustainability Goals into the MDVA's Strategic Plan. Even though MDVA's footprint will double to serve Minnesota's Veterans, MDVA will continue to research, fund, and implement strategies to meet their sustainability goals.

MDVA's sustainability team facilitates bi-monthly meetings with staff in a myriad of positions, like finance, dietary/nutrition, facilities, central office, and anyone who plays a role in the sustainability program. These meetings keep staff and leadership informed and engaged in sustainability initiatives and funding opportunities.

To involve staff sustainability is now a core component of new employee orientation, so new staff are introduced to their role in sustainability at the onset of their employment. To continue sustainability outreach, the sustainability team regularly provides educational materials and trainings for staff and Residents.

RESULTS

- Added a sustainability module to New Employee Orientation that **296** employees completed in a year and a half.
- Provided recycling education and workshops with **~111 staff and Residents**.
- Created '**Waste 101**', a video to help staff recycle right.



Staff promoting electric equipment



*Rooftop solar panels on the
Montevideo Veterans Home*



The Preston Veterans Cemetery

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Reducing reliance on fossil fuels through vehicle consolidation and vehicle purchasing standards.



OBJECTIVES

Reduce fossil fuel use in fleet vehicles 30% by 2027 compared to a 2017 baseline.

SOLUTIONS

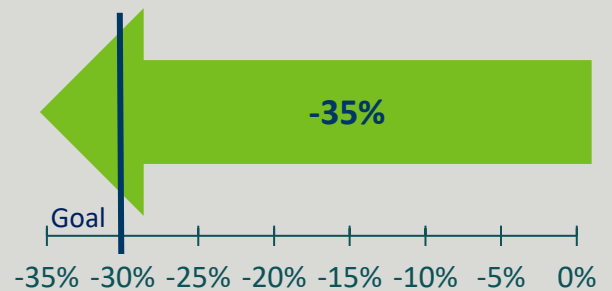
The Department of Health (MDH) is reducing fossil fuels used in fleet vehicles by implementing a Green Fleet Program that has an electric-first mentality. The Green Fleet Program requires all new vehicles purchased be electric vehicles (EVs) or have an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) greenhouse gas emissions rating of at least seven out of ten. The buyer can only opt-out of an EV if they submit a detailed explanation for why the EV doesn't fit the business needs for approval. Hybrid vehicles are the second choice and gas-only models are approved only in specific situations.

Reducing the number of fleet vehicles avoids new purchases and related costs. To do this, MDH staff monitor vehicle mileage and flag underused vehicles. If staff decide that the vehicle is no longer needed because it is underutilized, it is reassigned to a unit that is seeking a new vehicle.

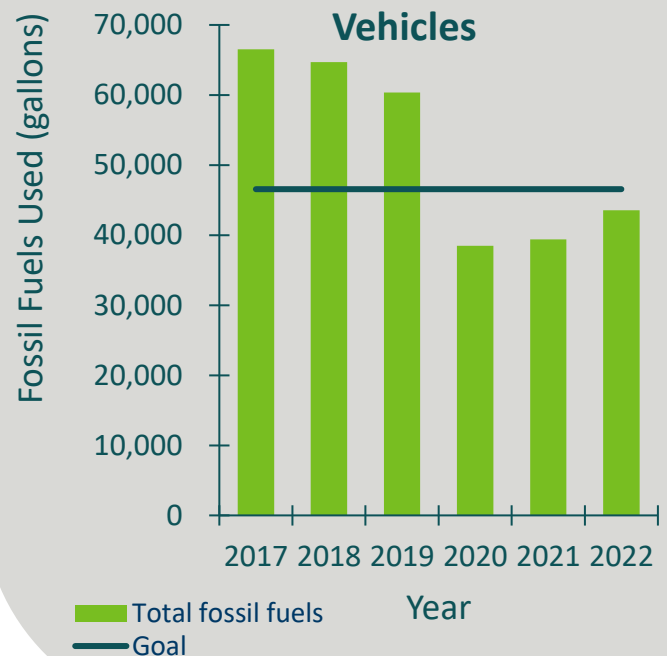
RESULTS

- In 2022, **25,275** fewer gallons of fossil fuels were used compared to the baseline – a **30%** drop, achieving the state goal!
- Reduced greenhouse gas emission related to fleet vehicles **32%**.
- In 2022, **12** vehicles were reassigned because of underutilization, instead of buying new.

Reduction in fossil fuel use (2022)



Total Fossil Fuels Used in Fleet Vehicles



DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

Enabling Army readiness through energy efficiency and renewable energy



Solar panels at DMA's Camp Ripley Training Center

OBJECTIVES

Reduce energy use per square foot 30% by 2027 from a 2017 adjusted baseline.

SOLUTIONS

The Department of Military Affairs (DMA) is committed to improving the resilience of its facilities through renewable energy generation, energy conservation initiatives, and sustainably designed construction projects.

DMA partners with local utility companies to conduct environmental assessments at its facilities to take a holistic look at building energy use. The assessments also provide recommendations to conserve energy along with the cost of implementation and estimated energy saved for each recommendation.

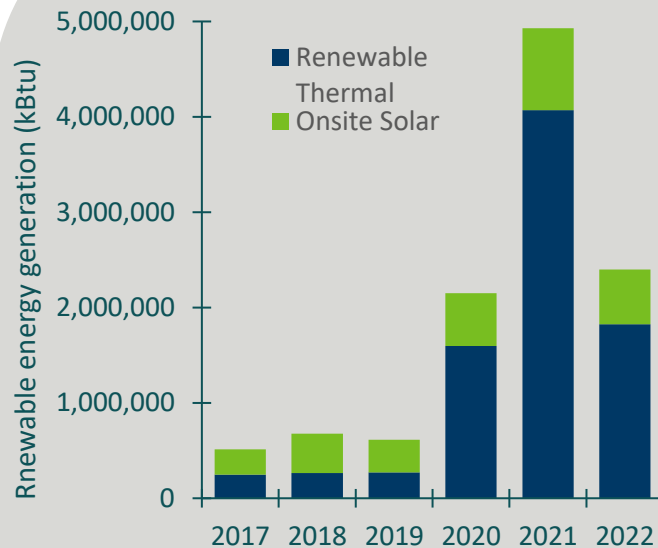
New DMA buildings are designed and constructed considering the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver criteria and the Buildings, Benchmarks, and Beyond (B3) Sustainable Building 2030 (SB2030) Energy Standard. Meeting the SB2030 standard ensures energy used from carbon producing fuel is 80% lower than an average building.

RESULTS

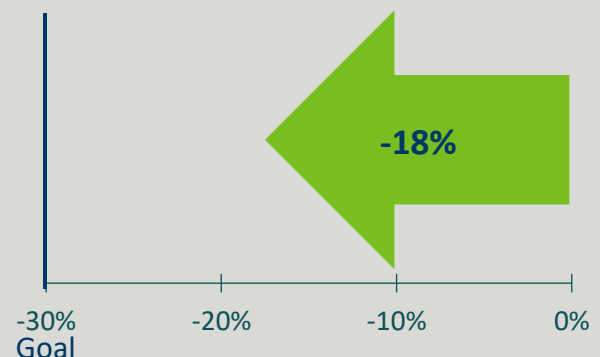
- **400 kilowatts** of solar installed at DMA locations.
- Camp Ripley hosts a **10-megawatt** solar power plant that generates **17,000 MWh** of electricity every year.
- **Nine** energy audits were conducted in 2022.
- **Seven** renewable or alternative energy analysis were conducted in 2022.

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Total Renewable Energy



Reduction in energy use (2022)



DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

Engaging staff and Soldiers on recycling

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OBJECTIVES

Divert 75% of waste to recycling and organics.

SOLUTIONS

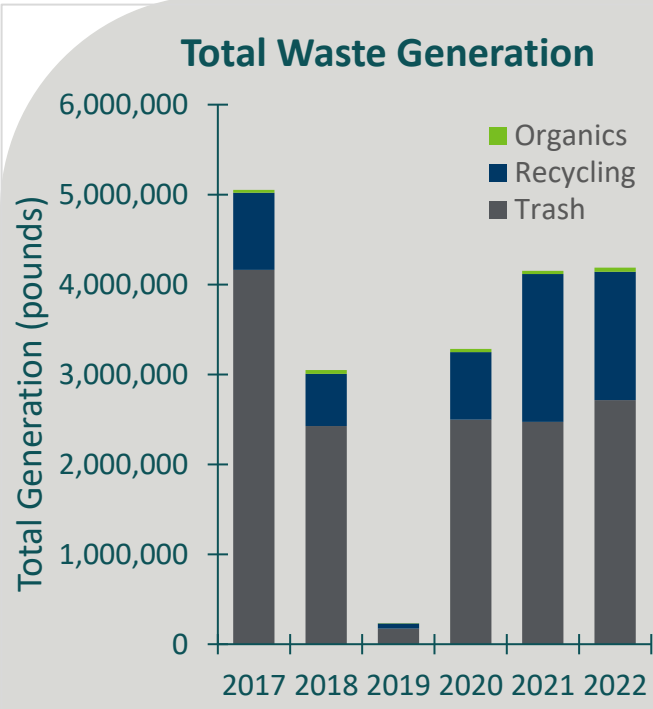
The Department of Military Affairs (DMA) uses best practices and innovative methods to educate and motivate staff and Soldiers on waste diversion.

At the Camp Ripley Training Center, Soldiers participate in a Recycling Challenge to measure improvement in recycling and composting over the month-long challenge. To monitor progress, sustainability staff conduct waste audits and check-ins regarding each building's diversion every weekday. Sustainability staff use their observations to create educational materials and host tailored trainings to help Soldiers recycle more and decrease the amount of trash in the recycling.

To help Soldiers, staff, and visitors at the Camp Ripley Training Center understand which bin their waste should go in, all trash, recycling, and organics bins have labels that meet best practices like being color-coded (blue for recycling, green for organics, and black for trash) and the labels have images instead of text.

RESULTS

- The 2022 Recycling Challenge improved diversion **5.1%** compared to 2021 and **12.4%** compared to the months immediately prior to the challenge.
- A **30%** decrease in overall waste generation from 2017 to 2022.
- A **69%** increase in diversion rate from 2017-2022.



Recycling + Composting Rate (%)

