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Monroe County Community College wins First Place Education Category in the Michigan Battle of the Buildings, a competition held by the US Green Building Council of West Michigan, for its campus-wide conversion from traditional heating and cooling to geothermal and its achievement of 15% energy savings in 2018.

Grand Rapids, Michigan: USGBCWM announced the winners of the 2018 Michigan Battle of the Buildings, with Monroe County Community College taking First Place in the Education Category at its annual Michigan Energy Summit held in Grand Rapids, Michigan on April 25, 2019. In 2014, its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, the College made a bold decision to convert from traditional HVAC to geothermal. Driving the decision was a business vision that the College wasn't merely replacing mechanical equipment (an 800-ton boiler and absorption chiller for the 210-acre campus in Monroe County, Michigan), it was providing infrastructure that would be used by the College for another 25-50 years. Rather than simply evaluate the replacement cost, Vice President of Administration, Suzanne Wetzel, chose to evaluate the cost to procure AND the annual cost to operate the equipment for 25-50 years.

In 2014, leading the project was Diane Mills CEM, serving in the role prior to working for Occupant Care, Inc. The team embarked on an integrated design approach, whereby together engineers and subcontractors worked to achieve a financially attractive solution that was energy efficient and affordable to procure, install, and operate. "This process involves not only designing a project; it includes working and teaming with subcontractors to fully evaluate alternative solutions and the costs of installation and operation not losing sight that the decision is ultimately a business decision not just a technical solution," says Diane Mills CEM, now President, Occupant Care.

At the USGBC conference, Jack Burns Jr., NCARB, Director of Campus Planning and Facilities, stated that over 50 miles of underground piping was installed in addition to drilling about 288 wells about 350 feet deep. In addition, spline ceilings were replaced, electrical upgrades installed, and asbestos abatement was required.

The Michigan Battle of the Buildings is an awards and recognition program for energy use reduction open to all Michigan area commercial, industrial & multi-family buildings.

About ...

Monroe County Community College is a comprehensive, two-year college located in Monroe, Michigan committed to enriching the lives of the community it serves through instructional excellence, transformational learning, the cultivation of informed and participating citizens, entrepreneurial and responsive leadership, cultural enrichment, affordability, accessibility, diversity, ethical integrity and accountability.

The U.S. Green Building Council mission is it to transform the way buildings and communities are designed, built and operated, enabling an environmentally and socially responsible, healthy, and prosperous environment that improves the quality of life in one generation.

Occupant Care, Inc. provides energy services ranging from consulting and owner's representative to turnkey projects with a focus on commercial building energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades. Occupant Care has experience auditing over 4.2M square feet of commercial buildings including office buildings (private and public), college buildings, historical buildings, recreational buildings with pools and gyms, medical buildings, low income housing, performing arts theatres, K-12 schools, and a Michigan ski and golf resort involving nearly \$90 million in energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades. [www.occupantcare.com](http://www.occupantcare.com)