



BY BOBBY HART

PHOTOS BY  
MARSHALL  
FRANKLIN LONG

GR

GR

# GREEN IN THE ROVE

MAPLE GROVE HAS BEEN PLANTING ECO-FRIENDLY SEEDS FOR YEARS. NOW THEY'RE BLOSSOMING.

Maple Grove is a miniscule piece to a very large puzzle. From a global perspective, the approximately 36 square miles and 60,500 people in the city are a tiny pinpoint. But that doesn't mean local city officials, policy makers, businesses and residents don't think big. In fact, Maple Grove has taken several steps in recent years to improve energy efficiency and sustainability in order to save the Earth and its resources. "We've been proactive in energy efficiency before 'green' became the buzzword," says Al Madsen, city administrator. "I've always taken energy efficiency very seriously. It's something we all need to do."





## “WE’VE BEEN PROACTIVE IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY BEFORE ‘GREEN’ BECAME THE BUZZWORD.”

—Al Madsen, city administrator

### Recycling for Dummies

Maple Grove’s recycling provider Allied Waste started a single-sort program in February 2009, distributing new recycling containers (32, 68 and 95 gallons) to all residents, who no longer have to sort paper, glass, cans and plastics.

According to Ken Ashfeld, Maple Grove’s director of public works/city engineer, there has been a 20 percent increase in tonnage with the new program. “We do have a very high participation,” he says.

Maple Grove was also the second city in the state to provide an incentive program, which awards points to residents who hit certain recycling goals. The points can then be redeemed for voucher coupons to local businesses such as Cub Foods and Target. (All residents who recycle can sign up for this rewards program through RecycleBank by calling 1.888.727.2978).

### Get Well, Go Green, Go Home

The Maple Grove Hospital was designed and built according to the Green Guide to Healthcare (GGHC), a reference and self-

## PONDS TO PUMPS

Maple Grove City Hall, Maple Grove Library and Great River Energy all use geothermal pumps that are connected to neighboring manmade ponds. The pumps use the constant temperature at the bottom of the ponds to control its heating and cooling.

City Hall started using this method in 2001. “With the City Hall, we made up for the extra cost of installing that in savings in three to four years,” says Peter Vickerman, assistant city planner. “It was a really quick payback, and we’re operating more efficiently.”

certification that has very similar criteria to LEED, according to executive director of patient services Eric Nelson, but is altered to fit the unique requirements of health-care facilities. It’s also a cheaper option than LEED, Nelson adds, so the hospital executives decided to use those certification savings on other sustainable practices, purchasing more than 12,000 pieces of medical equipment through environmentally preferred vendors.

For example, the exterior paneling of the hospital is made from a high-effi-

ciency glazed metal, which was the first exterior envelope product to earn Cradle to Cradle certification—a multi-attribute eco-label that assesses a product’s safety to humans, and the environment and design for future lifecycles. High-efficiency equipment such as boilers, air conditioners and HVAC systems were installed, and the design of the building uses the maximum natural light.

### H<sub>2</sub>O Purified and Preserved

The water treatment plant started using a

lamella water recovery system in 2007. The system cleans the contaminants from the backwash instead of discharging that water directly into the sanitary sewer system.

The city used to pump anywhere from 10–15 million gallons of water per year down the sewer, according to Ashfeld. With this new filter system, only about 10 percent of that water goes into the system. “It’s been an excellent system for us,” he says. “We preserve that natural resource, for one, which is what going green is all about. But we also save a considerable amount of money on treatment costs.”

### The Shoppes Don’t Waste

The Shoppes at Arbor Lakes launched a new energy-saving waste management program throughout the entire property last summer. They replaced their old open-top Dumpsters with six solar-powered trash compactors. The Shoppes became the first local retail mall to add six single-stream, solar-powered recycling units, which store up to four times the volume of the old Dumpsters, reducing the amount of pick-up times from five times a week to twice a week. The mall also added a BigBelly solar compactor, which has a larger capacity for waste and also cuts down on emissions of gases and pollutants.

### Raise the (Green) Roof

The Maple Grove Library, built in 2010, is the most recent local example of a building constructed to include energy-efficient features. The most noticeable can best be seen from a bird’s-eye view—its green roof, covered in low-maintenance vegetation to prevent huge amounts of water from going into the stormwater system. The roof helps insulate the building and also helps reduce infrastructure costs because large pipes aren’t needed to account for extreme water flow after major rainfalls.

### Going Green, Saving Green

Maple Grove residents are bringing a whole new meaning to the term “greenhouse.” Mark and Alison McPhail of

## GREAT RIVER ENERGY LEEDS

The wind turbine marks the spot of one of the most energy-efficient buildings in Minnesota. There’s no larger or perhaps more recognizable landmark in Maple Grove since the Great River Energy headquarters erected this 160-foot, 225-kilowatt renewable energy source in 2007.

Renewable energy from the turbine and rooftop solar photovoltaic panels provides up to 15 percent of energy needs at the Great River building, which is a big reason it was LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) platinum-certified by the U.S. Green Building Council. LEED platinum is the highest designation available to buildings that demonstrate energy-efficiency and sustainability, and the Great River Energy headquarters was the first building in the state to achieve this certification.



We just **remodeled**  
your neighbor’s home.  
Are you ready?



Kitchens  
Baths  
Basements  
Additions  
Design/Build

MN LIC #20216525



Trust the experts.  
Join us at our showroom for  
a free consultation or call  
for an appointment.



20 Years  
in Business

Come see what we can  
do for you!

**SCC Kitchen·Bath·Home**  
explore endless possibilities

763.493.2230  
14140 Northdale Blvd., Rogers  
**SCCremodels.com**

MAPLEGROVEMAG.COM / 23