

Hospital's green theme earns kudos

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National | Special certification given to upper river facility

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WATERVILLE - The Upper River Valley Hospital in Waterville is the only full-service hospital in Canada to achieve a special environmental certification.

The facility has been recognized by the Canada Green Building Council with a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.

Executive director Dean Cummings said the hospital's design allows it to consume 34 per cent less energy than a similar building with normal design standards.

He said the certification process will allow the hospital to gain recognition for its green design efforts and help it qualify for environmental reward programs.

Cummings said that's quite an achievement for a full-service hospital.

"Of those 146 (buildings), 10 of them are health-related facilities and of those 10, there's one full-service hospital and that's the one here," he said.

The hospital was designed to rely heavily on natural light, use high-performance windows, collect rainwater and store it for use in the facility's toilets, and a number of other green features were also implemented.

He said those features are a source of pride for staff and a great selling point for the region's recruitment teams.

"The staff are very pleased to be in this type of facility - a green building," he said.

"There are a lot of benefits for our staff, and in particular, our patients here in the hospital. It certainly helps with recruitment, being able to work in a new facility with these features."

Cummings showed the facility off to members of Regional Health Authority B's board of directors before a Thursday night meeting.

CEO Donald Peters said the certification of the Upper River Valley Hospital will likely influence future construction projects throughout the region.

"I would say it would be very hard when we look at building new facilities like that to not focus on the LEED principles," he said.

"In this day and age, with everything we're trying to deal with, and the fact that you can literally save 37 per cent of your energy costs is a real wake-up call that we've got to start (thinking about those options)."

There are only five facilities in Atlantic Canada to receive a similar certification - two in Nova Scotia and three in New Brunswick, including the hospital and office buildings in Bathurst and Florenceville.