

Oceans on the Web

The following ocean-observing Web sites illustrate how multiple data-provider difficulties can be solved to deliver data to a wide range of users:

- **www.carocoops.org.** The Carolinas Coastal Ocean Observing and Prediction System represents a collaboration between North Carolina State University, the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, and the University of South Carolina, which is heading the effort.
- **www.cormp.org.** With some overlap with South Carolina, the Coastal Ocean Research and Monitoring Program Web site covers the North Carolina coast. Its information management technology was supported by the University of South Carolina.

- **www.seacoos.org.** The Southeast Atlantic Coastal Ocean Observing System is another effort in which the University is heavily involved.

These programs are now evolving collectively into a larger regional system represented by the Carolinas RCOOS program (www.carolinasrcoos.org).

“We’re going to build on that coastal-system experience,” Fletcher said, “and expand it into the Center for Integrated Information Systems to deal with a larger assemblage of environmental data that will serve a larger number of potential users.” ■

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High-rise sustainability

Helping commercial property owners cut energy costs and go green

Just about every month, a glitzy office tower rises somewhere in the country, boasting the latest in “green” design and technology. For many people, that’s an encouraging trend, especially considering that commercial buildings account for more than 60 percent of the nation’s electricity consumption and generate 30 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions.

Yet these new “towers of green power” represent a small fraction of the nation’s estimated 4.5 million commercial properties, many of which were erected decades before sustainability or green designs became de rigueur.

“The vast stock of older buildings presents a much bigger opportunity to cut down on energy consumption and carbon emissions that contribute to the warming of the planet,” said **Jennifer Kearney**, a 1990 Carolina graduate and cofounder of a full-service energy and sustainability consulting company.

Kearney has long been active in the energy management field. In the 1990s, after an initial foray in corporate finance, she found work with an energy consulting firm and negotiated some of the first deregulated energy purchases for large consumers. Today she manages Gotham 360, the company she cofounded in 2007, and advises a range of clients in health care, higher education, and the corporate world on how to build, renovate, and operate buildings for greatest energy efficiency and least harm to the environment.

Who knew a retail management undergraduate degree, an interest in the environment, and the courage to run off to New York City would produce a leader in energy management?

“I left campus as a new graduate with no prospects or connections,” Kearney said. “My transition out of banking, into energy purchasing, then into energy conservation and sustainable building might seem a little disjointed, but I feel it was the right way to go if I wanted to make a difference.”

Indeed it was. Under her guidance, New York-Presbyterian Hospital won the Environmental Protection Agency’s coveted Partner of the Year Award four years in a row. In 2007, Kearney oversaw innovative upgrades



Energy consultant Jennifer Kearney works with clients in major cities across the country.

at New York-Presbyterian Hospital that not only targeted greenhouse gas emissions but also cut the hospital’s energy use by 7.5 percent for an annual savings of \$2.16 million, the equivalent of generating \$43 million in new revenues.

“Energy management is a peculiar blend of finance and engineering,” Kearney said.

Kearney has the necessary boardroom acumen as well as considerable boiler room know-how. She was a corporate finance analyst before signing on with a major energy management consulting firm. Then, as director of energy programs at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, she oversaw an annual energy procurement budget of \$70 million and learned the energy infrastructure of more than 14 million square feet of health care real estate.

Today, as managing partner of Gotham 360, Kearney helps firms across the country find affordable energy contracts, identify technologies and practices that can reduce consumption, and implement cost-saving green initiatives, including solar, wind, and even tidal power.

Tracking the escalating issue of energy consumption and costs takes resolve, and it helps to have a full-time expert on your side, Kearney said.

“There are exciting advances in renewable technology on the horizon,” she said. “But if you’re doing something green and it’s costing you money, it’s not going to last. The ultimate green is the dollar bill. The more of those you save, the more you’re going to have to invest in a brighter future.”