

# You Can't Afford Discomfort

Designing predictable energy efficient buildings with detail to occupant comfort

Dan Int-Hout  
Chief Engineer, Krueger  
Richardson, Texas



**KRUEGER**  
Excellence in Air Distribution

# Where We Are Today:



# **So You Want To Save Money?**

**Things to consider:**

- 1. First Cost**
- 2. Energy cost**
- 3. Occupant Salary costs**
- 4. Life Cycle Costs**

# First Cost

- Today's typical first cost for HVAC is at or exceeding \$35/Square Foot in a high end open office.
- Costs are much higher for HealthCare facilities
- Even strip malls and low end offices are costing over \$25/sf



# Energy Costs

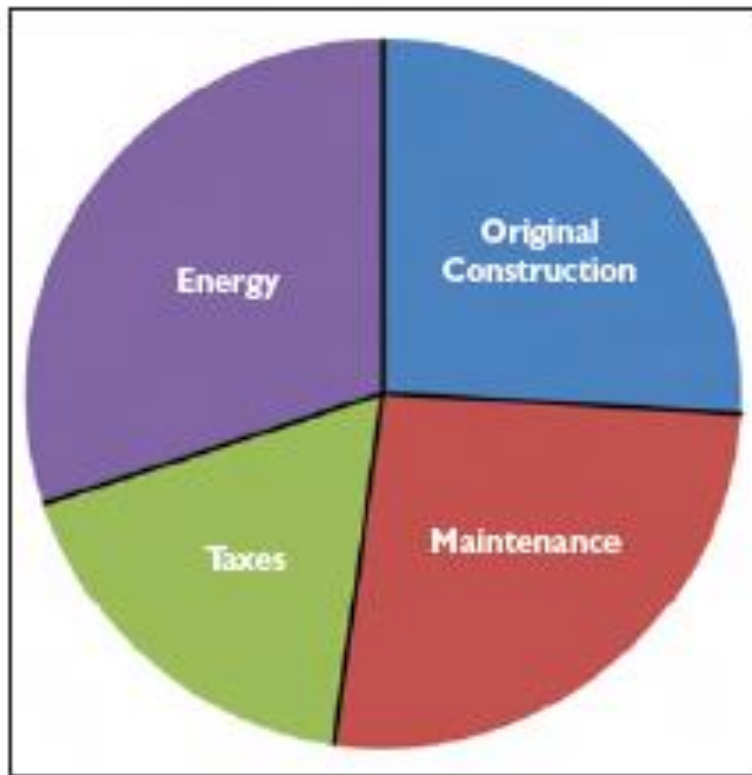
- A typical office building in the US costs about \$2/square foot/year to heat and cool.
- It is of course higher in places with high utility rates (like New York City!)
- It is lower in places where economizer can be utilized a significant part of the time.

# Occupant Salary Costs

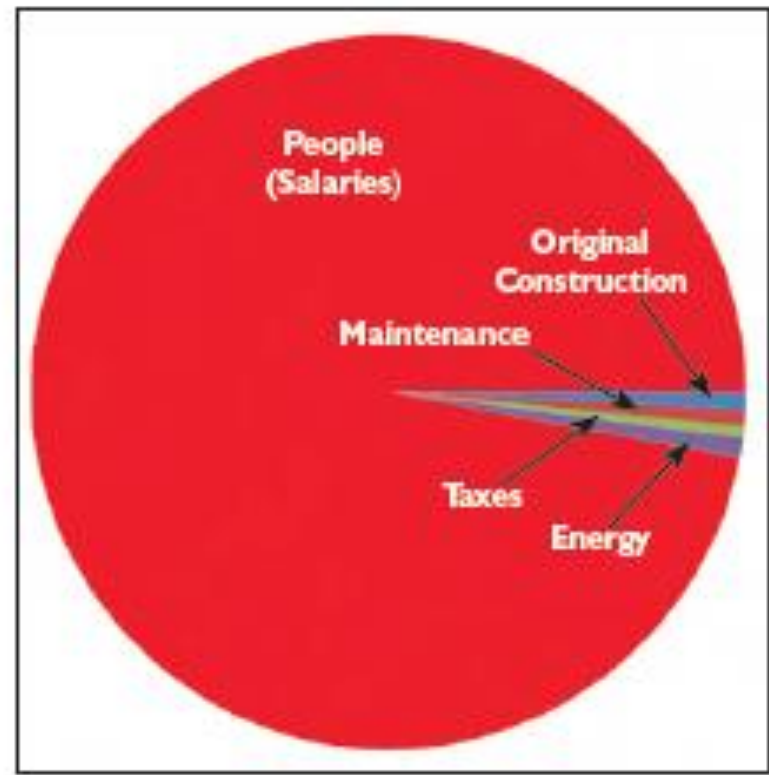
- On average, assuming about 150 sf/occupant, salary costs no less than \$200/sf/y, as much as \$500/sf/y
- With higher occupancy, this can be much more.
- Health Care is even higher.

# Thermal Comfort Economics

- ASHRAE Journal, June 2008



*Figure 1: Life-cycle building costs breakdown.*



*Figure 2: Life-cycle building costs breakdown with people (salaries).*

# What is the reality?

- Energy costs are often much higher than predicted.
- BOMA (Building Owners and Managers Assn) once reported “Occupant dissatisfaction with the thermal environment” is the #1 reason for not renewing the lease in high rise buildings.
- Renovation costs aren’t always considered when spaces are designed.



# So what about energy cost predictions?

- Loads are not what engineers think they are.
- Energy use computer programs don't have inputs for many emerging technologies.
- Validation of energy models is seldom accomplished
- Building operators have no clue how the system is supposed to operate to ensure both comfort and energy efficiency.

# **So What is the result?**

- **Spaces are often too cold**
- **Acoustics are poor (typically too quiet)**
- **Energy bills are higher than predicted**
- **Productivity suffers.**
- **Tenants don't renew the lease.**

# **Spaces are often too cold**

- **In order to control humidity, and still meet minimum ventilation requirements, spaces are often sub cooled.**
- **Reheat, while a solution to the comfort issue, is expensive.**
- **Perimeter zones, in winter, are often severely stratified, with it being very cold near the floor and near exterior walls.**
- **All too often, space heaters are found throughout the interior, increasing loads significantly.**

# Acoustics are poor

- In order to achieve a good acoustical environment, it is almost always necessary to add background sound masking.
- Asking the HVAC system to provide that noise is very expensive.
- Poor acoustical treatment of surfaces compound the issue. Open ceilings, while often desired by architects and owners, often result in poor acoustical privacy.

# **Energy bills are higher than predicted**

- **Systems have difficulty controlling humidity at low loads**
- **Poorly adjusted or selected air outlets don't allow thermostats to sense room temperatures correctly**
- **Operators don't know how to run the system efficiently**
- **Opportunities for free cooling or heat removal aren't utilized.**



# **Productivity suffers**

- **Occupants have high absenteeism from poor environmental controls**
- **Lack of Acoustical Privacy reduces ability to concentrate**
- **Inability of management to provide comfort reduces employee morale**
- **Increasing ventilation is proven to improve productivity (and can gain a LEED point).**
- **See my ASHRAE Journal article(July '13)!**

# **Let's look at some of the issues:**

- **Interior loads: the reality vs the “rule of thumb”.**
- **The cost of comfort**
- **The need to select and adjust air outlets properly**
- **Designing for low interior loads**
- **Taking advantage of “free cooling”**
- **Making overhead heating work. (and meet code)**
- **Predicting and Controlling Acoustics**

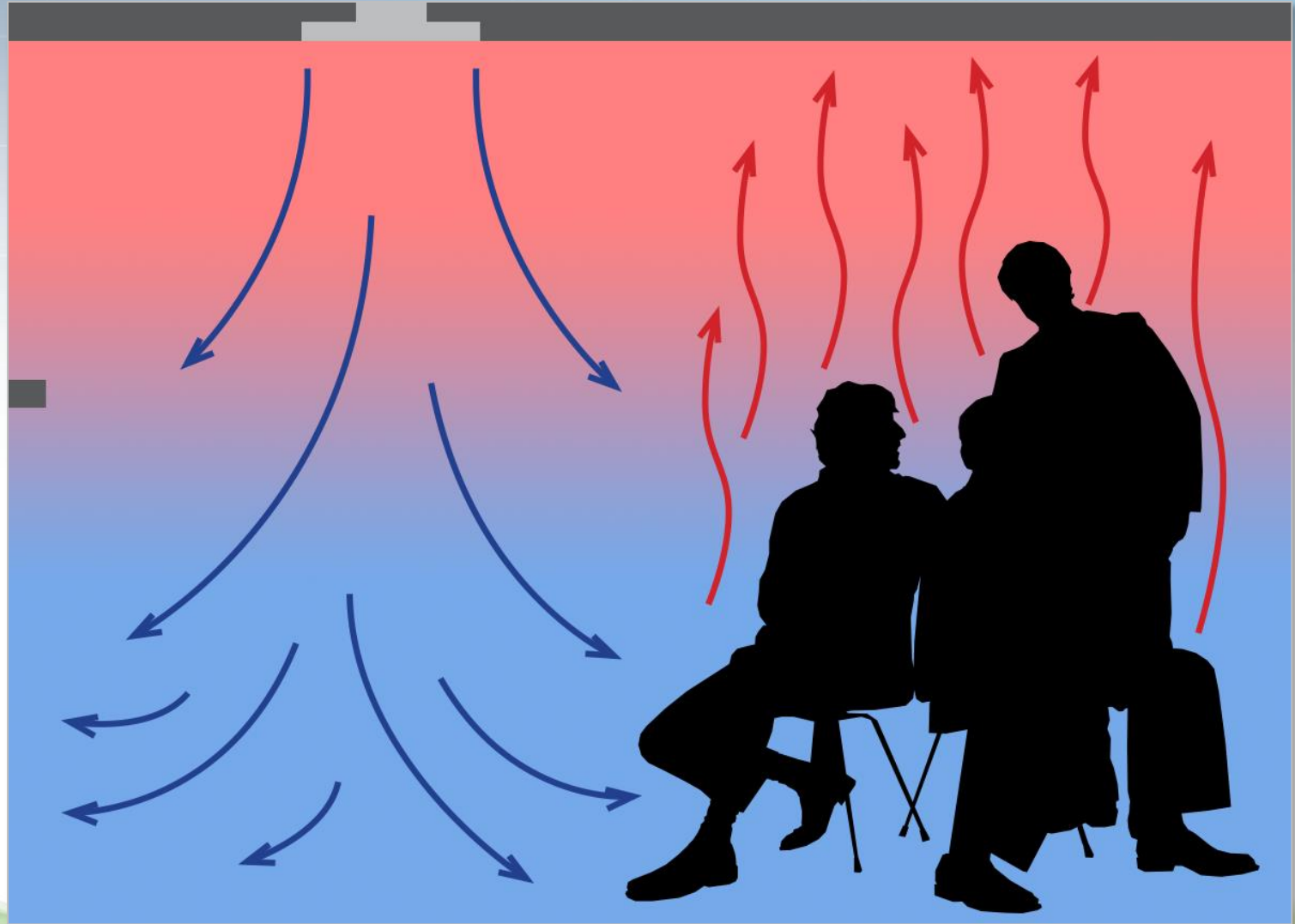
# **Interior loads: The Reality vs the “Rule of Thumb”**

- **I find almost all interior designs assume 1 cfm/sf (23BTUH/SF) for the air loading.**
- **Actual loads, as we have seen in many research projects, is closer to 0.3cfm/sf (7 BTUH/sf)**
- **When asked, many engineers respond with “I’ve never been sued for having too much capacity”.**

# **The need to properly select and adjust air outlets**

- **The ASHRAE handbook suggests selecting diffuser to achieve an 80% ADPI at all air flow rates.**
- **Most diffuser layouts have diffusers too close together, resulting in drafts at full flow**
- **Some diffuser designs work better than others at low flows – a plaque-type is a good choice. Perforated and swirl diffusers not so much.**
- **The new ASHRAE Standard 55 Users manual says compliance can be proven using ADPI.**
- **ASHRAE RP1515 proved high occupant satisfaction can be proven at 0.25 cfm/sf, as predicted using ADPI.**

# Air Distribution, Poor Pattern





# Designing for low interior loads

- The default minimum ventilation rate in offices is 17 cfm/person. With 150sf/person (per above example) that equals 0.22 cfm/sf
- A person generates about 350BTU of cooling demand (100w).
- At a supply air temperature low enough to provide latent heat removal ( $<55^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), the minimum ventilation rate provides 370 BTUH of cooling.
- Not much more is required for today's laptops and flat panel monitors.
- 1 cfm/sf is probably 5X too much cooling after morning cool down, even on a design day!

# **Taking advantage of “free cooling”**

- **Where is the highest cooling demand load found in most offices?**
- **At the perimeter, of course.**
- **Locate a return opening above the window. Warm air will pass into the plenum without any work by the HVAC system (hot air rises!)**
- **At low loads, most of the air in the plenum is discarded (to maintain building pressures) taking perimeter heat with it.**

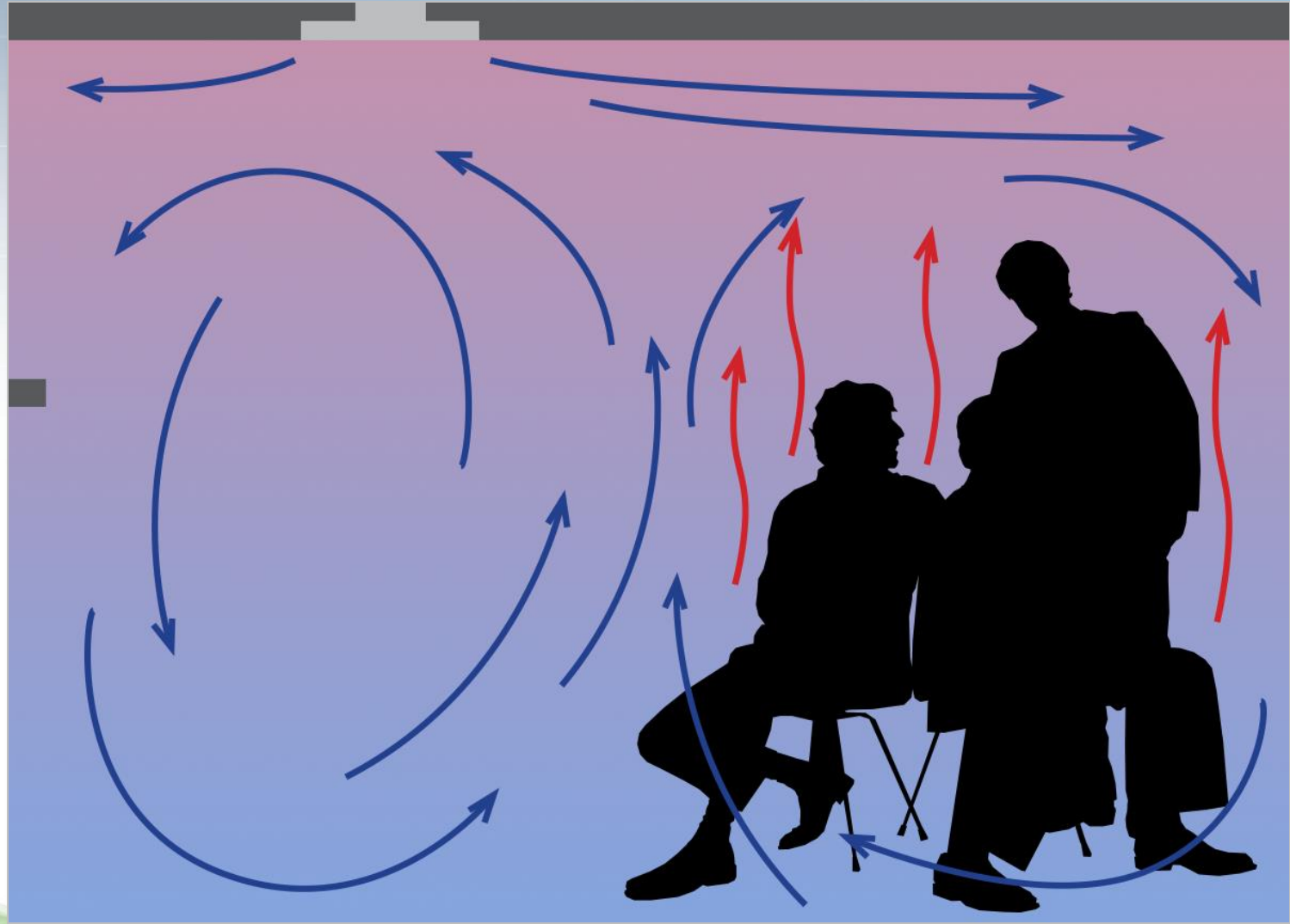
# **Making overhead heating work. (and meet code)**

- **Overhead heating is the most popular means of heating an office space.**
- **A number of technical papers were presented in the late 70's outlining the relationship between diffuser location, outlet temperature and perimeter heat loss.**
- **The results were included in the 1981 ASHRAE Fundamentals handbook.**
- **They were also included in ASHRAE Standard 62.1, table 6.2.**

# Overhead Heating Perimeter Considerations:

- Maximum temperature difference between supply air and room temperature for effective mixing when heating, per ASHRAE handbook = 15°F (90°F discharge), continuous operation.
- 150 FPM must reach 4.5 feet from the floor or less.
- ASHRAE 62.1 requires that ventilation be increased by 25% when heating, if the above rules are not followed.
- ASHRAE Handbook says that one should use linear diffusers, with throw toward and away from glass, to get acceptable performance in both heating and cooling.
- Put a return slot above the window to carry away solar heat gain.

# Air Distribution, Good Pattern





# Predicting and Controlling Acoustics:

- **AHRI 885 acoustical application standard.**
- **AHRI 880 air terminal test standard.**
- **AHRI 260 ducted equipment except air terminals.**
- **ASHRAE 70, air diffuser performance.**
- **Acoustical quality suggests the use of RC (or newer measures) rather than NC. Many acousticians are heading back to dBA!**
- **LEED V4 includes acoustical credits and requirements.**

# Indoor Air Quality

- Standing Standard Project Committee 62.1
- Residential Committee is 62.2
- Current Standard is 62.1-'16
- Several addenda for the '16 version have already been approved

# Minimum Ventilation Rates

- At a recent ASHRAE meeting, an interpretation request discussed ventilation rates. It was stated that there are actually three rates:
  1. Occupied Minimums are the sum, of occupant and floor area
  2. Unoccupied (but available) is just based on floor area
  3. Not Occupied means “off”.
- So, we need to have three ventilation rates, not one.
- When one zone changes, all the others need to adjust, suggesting the need for pressure independent, measurable ventilation rates for all zones.
- Washington State just passed a code requiring direct injection of outdoor air (DOAS) into every occupied space.

# So, What Can We Do?

- The “Rules” are becoming code, or at least the “Acceptable Standard of Care”.
- Loads are dropping as Ventilation rates are increasing.
- Perimeter loads are becoming less.
- Ventilation rates are not constant.
- The solution starts at the input of outside air.

# **Dedicated Outdoor Air Delivery Systems**

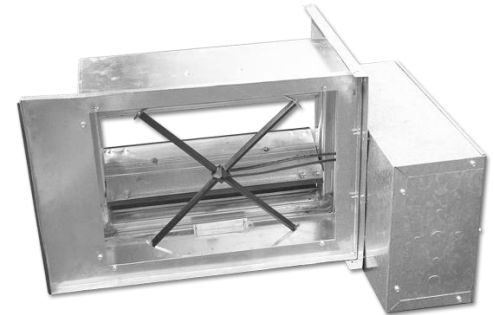
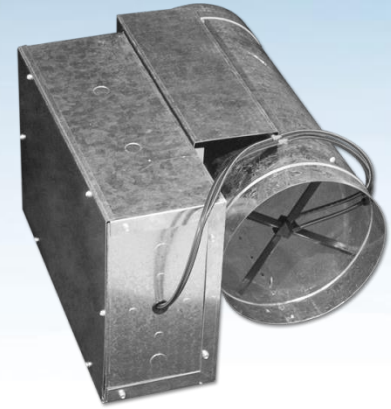


# Measurable and Controllable Ventilation Supply is Required

- Ducted ventilation to every zone is a requirement of 62.1 (code in most places)
- Ventilation rates vary depending on several factors
- Changing airflow rate on one zone affects all the others
- Pressure Independent Ventilation supply is a practical and effective strategy.
- Existing solutions include:

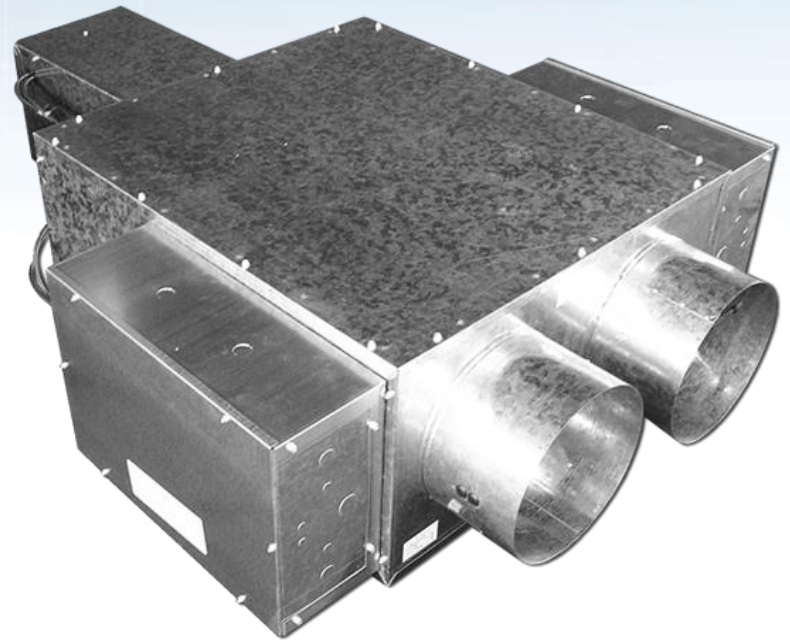
# Pressure Independent Ventilation Dampers

- Round VAV dampers with flow sensors
- Square “slip-in” dampers with flow control
- Electronic actuators with flow transducers
- Analog signals to control ventilation rates



# DOAS Dual Duct

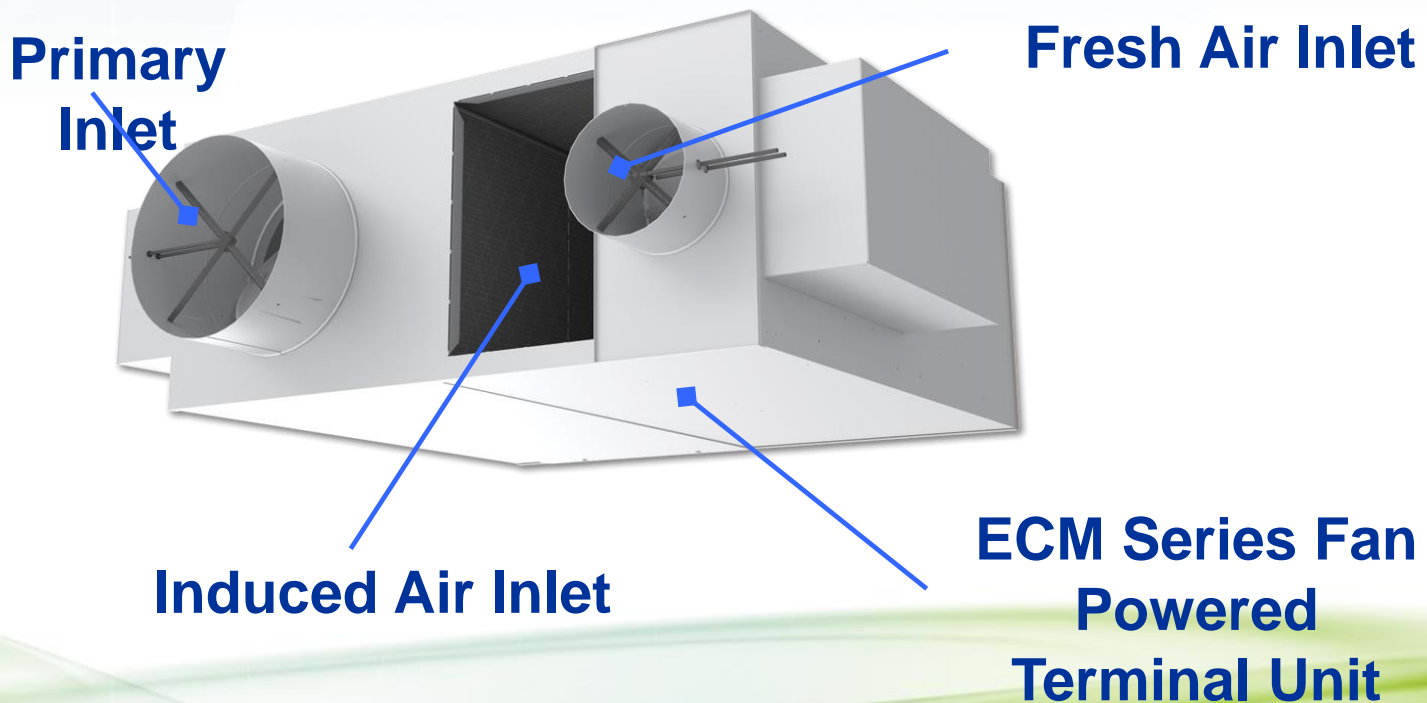
- ❑ One inlet provides 100% outside air, dehumidified, typically cold.
- ❑ Other duct provides 100% return air, either warm or cold, depending on the season.
- ❑ Supplemental reheat coils and even a sensible cooling coil have been considered
- ❑ A good mixing baffle should be employed (20:1 Mixing Ratio recommended)



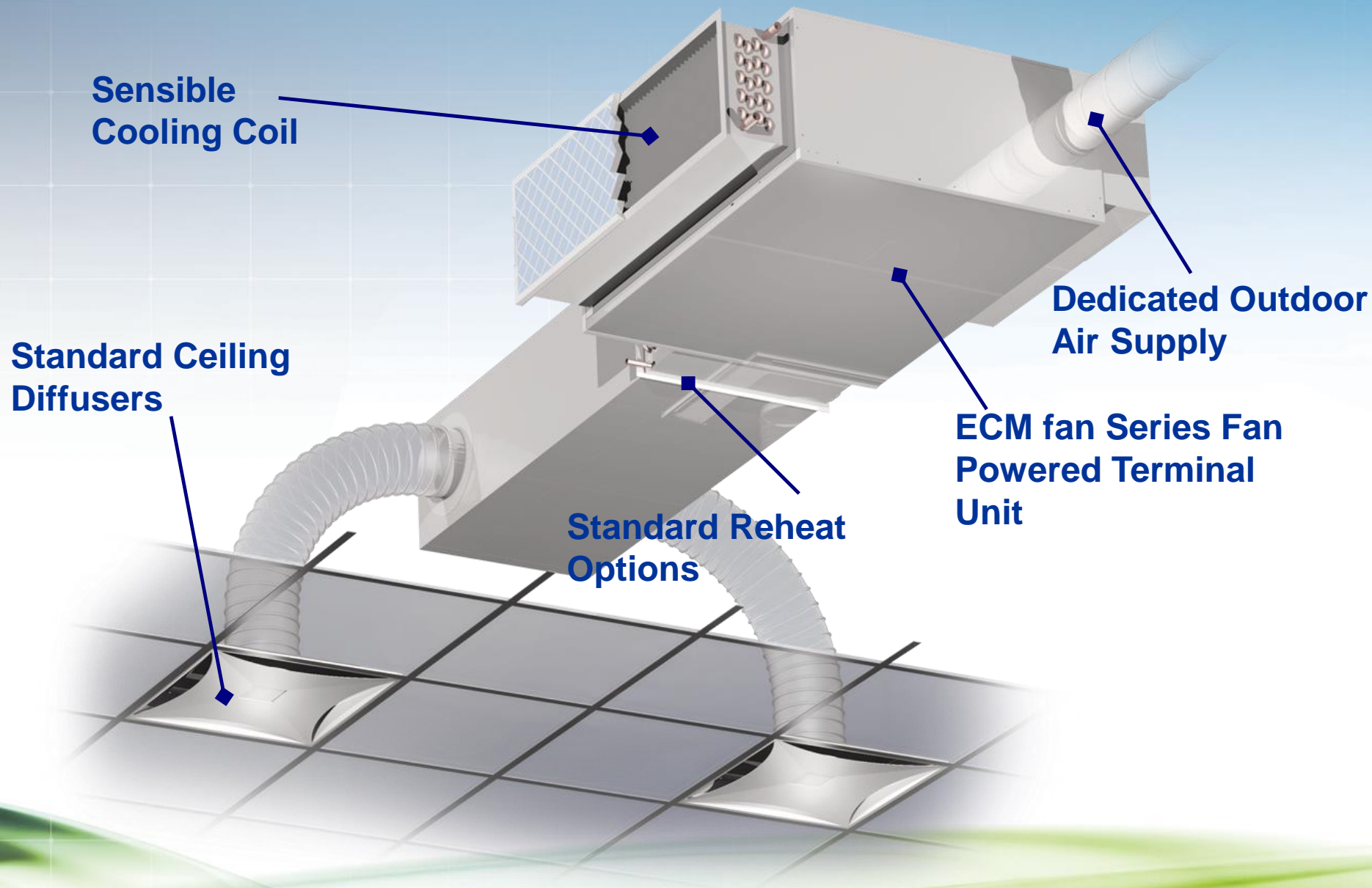
**Mixing Dual Duct**

# Fresh Air Terminal Unit

- Outside air can be supplied to a Series Fan Terminal through a second ducted system.
- This requires two duct systems, but separates ventilation and recirculated air.
- The system allows monitoring of ventilation rates into each zone.



# The Chilled Box





# VAV Series Flow Chilled Box Control Strategies

- Take advantage of the ECM Pressure Independent Variable Volume capability, maintaining as low a total flow as necessary (but always greater than primary inlet air flow rate).
- DOAS Ventilation air should typically be as cold and dry as possible.
- Increase fan CFM slightly to bring in warm plenum air as required to avoid sub cooling while maintaining ventilation rates and humidity control.
- Increase primary (ventilation) air during periods of high perimeter cooling demand.
- Run in economizer mode whenever possible



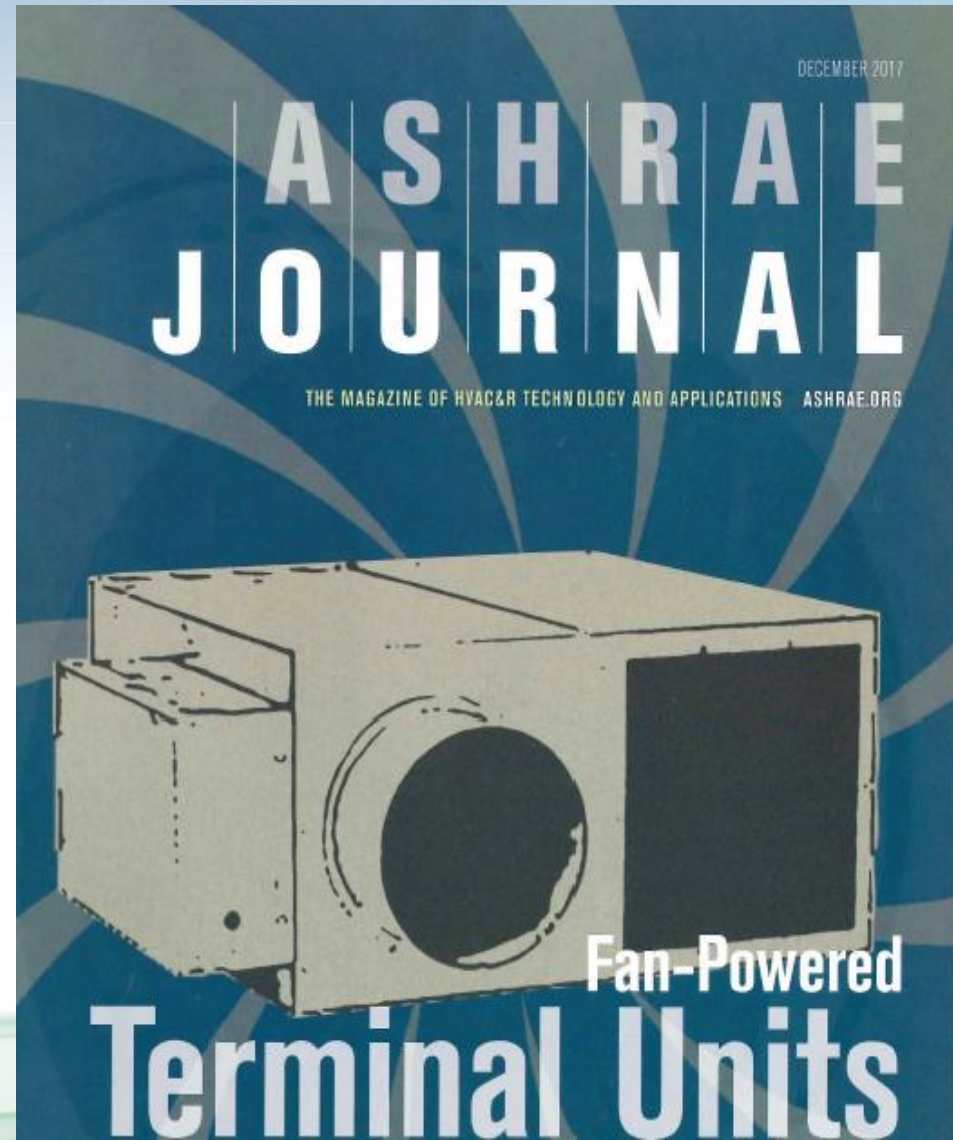
# Validation of Energy Use

AHRI and ASHRAE sponsored research will allow accurate and validated energy use calculations:

- ASHRAE Research Project 1292 was conducted at Texas A&M
- A project has started (AHRI 8012) to input the results of this research into Energy Plus, Trace and HAP, as well as several other energy calculation programs.
- This will allow engineers to accurately predict the savings from using the turn down feature of the Chilled Box.

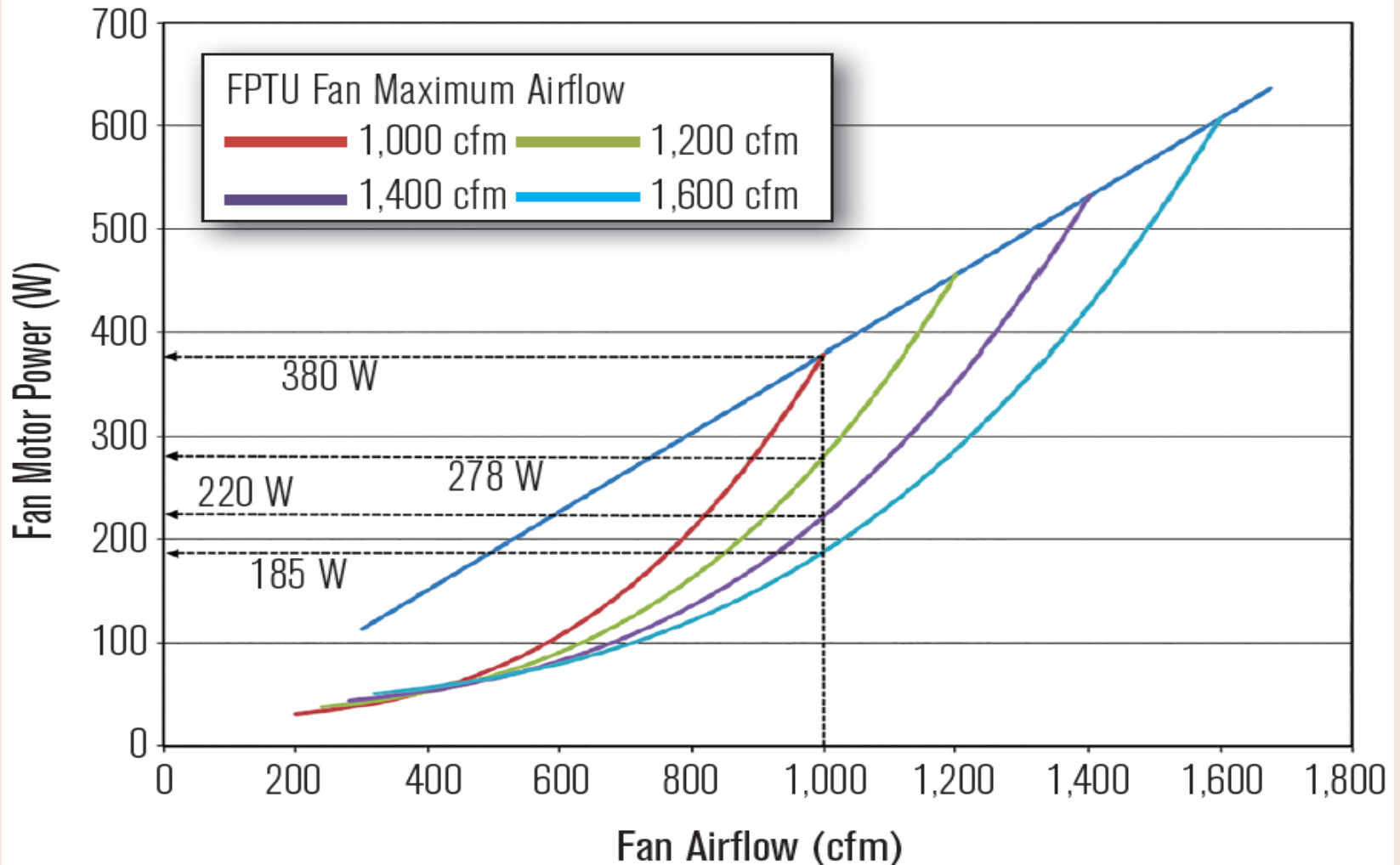
# ECM System Energy Use

- Three ASHRAE Journal articles have been prepared on the A&M Research
- Part 1 (Oct 2017) described the purpose of the research
- Part 2 (Nov 2017) summarized the findings
- Part 3 (Dec 2017) covers what's wrong with Energy Plus and other energy models



# Measured Energy Consumption

**FIGURE 4** Sample plot showing how sizing ECM FPTUs affect fan power.



# Chilled Box Unit Features

- Unit can be located in non-critical area (away from potential condensation damage).
- Unit can supply 1500 sq.ft. or more, resulting in significant first cost savings over some other systems (not counting cost of additional heating system).
- Replacement parts are readily available.

# So What have we learned?

- Spaces are often too cold because of vertical stratification (hot air rises!) and/or poor humidity control. Adjustable diffusers need to be adjusted! (who knew?)
- Acoustics are poor (typically too quiet), but we can predict HVAC noise, and manage the acoustical environment.
- Energy bills are higher than predicted because prediction software needs to be validated, and designs don't take advantage of the low loads and free cooling opportunities.
- Productivity can be increased, likely saving both time and money.
- Systems should be operated at as low an airflow as possible, while meeting minimum ventilation rates.
- Designs and products are available that can manage loads, provide ventilation and run in economizer mode.
- And of course....

- **You Can't Afford Discomfort:**

- Building occupants are unhappy
- New construction payback is longer as occupants move out
- Energy bills are likely higher than “predicted”
- Building Owners are dissatisfied!

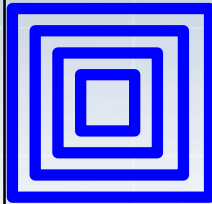


# Net Zero Energy Building





# Contact



***KRUEGER***

EXCELLENCE IN AIR DISTRIBUTION

**dint-hout@krueger-hvac.com**

**[www.krueger-hvac.com](http://www.krueger-hvac.com)**

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