



Continental Automated  
Buildings Association

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**North America's  
Home & Building  
Automation Association**

1173 Cyrville Road, Suite 210  
Ottawa, ON K1J 7S6

Tel: 1. 613.686.1814  
Fax: 1.613.744.7833  
US/Canada: 1.888.798.CABA

Web: [www.caba.org](http://www.caba.org)  
E-mail: [caba@caba.org](mailto:caba@caba.org)

## **CABA AND RSMEANS DEBUT LIFE-CYCLE COST CALCULATOR**

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The Continental Automated Buildings Association, in partnership with RSMeans, a Reed Construction Data company, announced an industry-wide test of its life-cycle cost calculator.

The Web-based tool enables building owners, architects, designers, contractors, and others within the building system integration industry to obtain unbiased, third-party confirmation of the life-cycle costs of an integrated, intelligent, automated building, as compared to buildings that are either not automated or not integrated.

The tool makes extensive use of RSMeans databases, including: the RSMeans Square Foot Models for initial construction costs; RSMeans Facilities Maintenance & Repair and Preventative Maintenance & Repair databases to determine operational costs; and the RSMeans Assembly databases which determine efficiencies from the use of intelligent building automation systems. The tool also includes usage guides from the U.S. Department of Energy to calculate average energy costs.

"Users of this tool will be able to look at the different degrees of intelligence and integration of a variety of automated building systems," said Tim Duggan, Senior Consultant with RSMeans Business Solutions. "The final calculated results created by the tool will provide a report outlining assembly costs and a 10-year costs analysis for return on investment applicable to fully intelligent and integrated automated building controls."

The creation of the tool has been an involved process that first emerged in 2004, when CABA undertook an industry-wide survey to aid in the development of a parametric model that would analyze the life-cycle costs of buildings. CABA developed the survey based upon a white paper that argued that by utilizing life-cycle costing methodology, owners and operators could estimate the total cost benefit of deploying integrated and intelligent building technologies over the lifespan of an entire building.

Driven by CABA's Intelligent & Integrated Buildings Council, industry initiatives continued through 2005 to develop methods to evaluate intelligent and integrated building systems in order to actually monitor operating and maintenance costs and verify holistic cost reductions.

With support of the U.S. Department of Energy and other industry members, CABA then contracted with Reed Construction Data/RSMeans to develop an in-depth assessment of best practices for buildings with full or partial building control integration. The purpose of the study was to apply best practices information for new buildings to define life-cycle costs. Office buildings were chosen as the primary building type for the assessment. The assessment found that owners were primarily concerned with first costs and building appearance as well as operating costs. The reality however is that over a 30-year period, initial building costs account

for only two per cent of total building costs, while operations and maintenance costs equal six per cent and personnel costs equal 92 per cent. CABA's study conclusively found that office buildings of 50,000 to 100,000 square feet demonstrated the best return-on-investment for integrated systems, but that there was a lack of tools to evaluate the overall life-cycle costs of implementation. As a consequence, CABA undertook the development of a life-cycle analysis tool with RSMMeans to provide detailed cost models and associated life-cycle costs assessments based upon specific geographic location factors.

"RSMMeans has gathered all of CABA's research, combined it with their experience in the building industry and their vast database of square-foot costs, and have produced an online software tool that will be extremely beneficial to industry," stated Ronald J. Zimmer, CABA President & CEO.

Thomas M. Keel, Chair of CABA's Intelligent & Integrated Building Council's Life-Cycle Costs Task Force, added: "We are pleased to see this tool come to fruition. To make its continuing development effort a success, the Council encourages end-users such as engineers to beta-test the calculator and provide feedback so that it can be publicly launched in the near future."

To participate in the beta test of the life-cycle cost calculator please go to [www.caba.org](http://www.caba.org).

### **About CABA**

The Continental Automated Buildings Association (CABA) is a leading industry association that promotes advanced technologies in homes and buildings in North America. More information is available at [www.caba.org](http://www.caba.org).

### **Media Contact:**

Rawlson O'Neil King  
Communications Director, CABA  
king@caba.org  
613.686.1814 x225  
888.798.CABA (2222)