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## Finding Better Uses for Our Energy

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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



## Finding Better Uses for Our Energy

**08.31.2010 | Campus and Community, Energy and Environment**

A series of green initiatives last year helped the University of Dayton save hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The University helped reduced its natural gas use on main campus last year 5.7 percent and electric energy use 4.8 percent by upgrading lighting systems, even removing lights without compromising brightness in some places; installing occupancy sensors, closing buildings not used as much during the summer, and programming thermostats and heating and cooling systems to optimize savings. In all, the University saved \$612,329.

Residences in the student neighborhoods, College Park Center, ArtStreet, the University of Dayton Arena and 1700 S. Patterson were not in this phase of the program.

Jim Blevins, University of Dayton director of general maintenance and energy management, believes the University can shave 10 percent, or \$1 million, off its total energy bill after working through some of the first-year challenges and bringing the rest of the campus buildings on board.

"Through our new preventative maintenance program, we are uncovering problems that negatively affect our overall energy efficiency — motors not being aligned or lubricated adequately, dampers not operating properly and older systems that have gone out of calibration. Other challenges include finding the limits of what customers will accept for heating and cooling offices, effectively maintaining electric demand limitations, and the practical challenges associated with calibrating hundreds of thermostats on campus for systems of all ages and design," Blevins said. "With much of this groundwork completed, we look forward to being able to hit the ground running in year two. When we get into a full cycle and bring all of our buildings on board, we should be able to get to \$1 million in savings."

While administrators have a better feel for energy consumption fluctuations, some students may not realize how small steps can save big bucks — and help the environment. This academic year, the students in the University's more than 600 units in the student neighborhoods will receive statements showing electric, gas and water usage; how it compares to the residence's historical data and what the bill would be if the cost weren't already included in the housing fee.

School of Engineering students compiled the last six years of energy data for the University-owned houses, taking into account anomalies in temperatures. The students estimated the University could save another \$142,000 a year if students adopted more conservation measures.

"We will be providing data to our students in response to concerns they raised last year. Many students said they were not too concerned with the amount of energy they used, in part because they had no access to this information," said Kurt Hoffman, University of Dayton environmental sustainability manager. "We are hoping knowledge really is power, and once students become aware of their energy use, we can start to engage more of them in conservation campaigns and behavior assessment."

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