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Learn. Lead. Conserve.

07.23.2009 | Energy and Environment When University administration called for a 10 percent reduction in utility use this fiscal year, it had both environmental and fiscal stewardship in mind.

Besides expending fewer natural resources, such a reduction will save the University approximately \$1 million, said Jim Blevins, director of general maintenance and energy manager in facilities management. It's critical during these economic times when maintaining staffing is so important, he said, so he's asking his colleagues around the University to do their part.

Hitting the goal, Blevins said, will require at least two things: technology and cooperation.

Several technology components are already at work:

- Occupancy sensors switch off lights and shift climate-control settings into reduced-power mode when buildings and rooms are not in use.
- Automated controls on the central boiler plant ensure optimal performance.
- Aggressive preventive maintenance keeps equipment operating at optimal efficiency.
- A proposal is being developed to eliminate nearly half of Roesch Library's 10,000 light fixtures, cutting electrical usage in half without compromising lighting levels.
- Academic units are looking at ways to use classroom space more efficiently during low-occupancy periods such as summer so the University does not have to light and air-condition entire buildings for only partial or occasional use.

These strategies are making a difference, but they're not enough, Blevins said. That's where individuals come in. They can make a critical difference during the periods of highest electrical demand — between noon and 5 p.m. weekdays.

The electric bill, he explained, is calculated not just on the total amount the University uses in a given month, measured in kilowatt hours, but also on the rate in which electricity is consumed. That second component is known as demand, Blevins said, and it represents about 55 percent of the electric bill.

Some strategies for reducing peak demand call more for conscientiousness than for sacrifice. For example, when sunlight pours through the windows, lights could be turned off, Blevins said. Using natural light, could cut costs significantly during peak demand hours. So could shutting down a computer or other electrical device before a two-hour afternoon meeting.

But the most significant reduction will come from establishing reasonable limits on space temperatures, Blevins said. The target temperature in the summer will be 74 degrees Fahrenheit, he said; in winter, 70 degrees will be the target. The implementation of these standard temperature parameters has already begun; it will take six to nine months.

"It's hard to get the usage numbers down," he said, citing an industry maxim — "'Up like a rocket, down like a feather.' But it can be done if everyone helps."

For information, contact Blevins at 229-4952 or via e-mail (url: [mailto:james.blevins@notes.udayton.edu?subject=Energy Use%3A Questions%2FComments&body=Name%3A %0APhone%3A %0AQuestion%2Fcomment%3A](mailto:james.blevins@notes.udayton.edu?subject=Energy%20Use%3A%20Questions%2FComments&body=Name%3A%0APhone%3A%0AQuestion%2Fcomment%3A)) .