Introducing…

Hello! Welcome to the first issue of the newsletter dedicated to promoting resource conservation in Olympia School District. Every other month this space will bring you highlights and superstars from the district, as well as educational resources and everyday tips to help our schools become resource conservation leaders. It will strive to share success stories among the unique roster of schools in OSD. It will also act as bulletin board for resource conservation related opportunities in the local and regional community. I hope you will find the articles informative, timely, inspirational and, quite possibly, entertaining. Read on and enjoy!

Winter Break Shut Down Procedures

Winter break is a great opportunity for the school district to save energy costs. With everyone’s help we should be able to easily and efficiently incorporate energy reduction measures into preparations for winter break, and save utility dollars in the process. The following is a checklist of items individuals should consider when closing up their work spaces:

In the office, classrooms, shops and labs:
- Turn off ALL computers, monitors, speakers and printers. (The file server should remain on in case staff should work in the building over break.)
- Turn off copiers, fax machines and any other office equipment.
- Unplug and remove space heaters.
- Check to make sure all unnecessary electric appliances (TVs, radios, task lights, water coolers, mini refrigerators, compressors, etc.) are turned off.
- Switch off display and decorative lighting.
- Close blinds and curtains.
- Turn off all overhead lights.

In common areas and halls:
- Turn off kitchen appliances (except refrigerators and freezers). If possible, consider consolidating items from multiple refrigerators into one, and turn the others off.
- Turn off all overhead lights.
- Unplug vending machines.

Please note that the heating systems in school buildings will be programmed for “night setback” for the entire duration of winter break. This means the indoor temperatures will be 55°F throughout the building, 24-hours per day. Some exceptions will be made for facility use events and team practices. If staff members choose to work during the break, please be sure to dress appropriately.

On the Web at:
http://osd.wednet.edu/departments/facilities/resourceconservation

Contact:
Olympia School District
1113 Legion Way SE
Olympia, WA 98501

Brittin Witzenburg
Resource Conservation Manager

PH: 360-596-6112
FAX: 360-596-8561
EMAIL: bwitzenburg@osd.wednet.edu
In the Know with RCM

What is RCM? Well, first of all, it’s a much easier way to say Resource Conservation Management. RCM is a tool that helps organizations reduce operation costs, increase energy efficiency, and promote environmentally friendly ways of operating. An effective RCM program requires coordinated efforts by many different people. And in fact, in a school district, all students, teachers and staff can participate and contribute positively to RCM!

An RCM program helps to reduce the resources and services used by schools and other facilities. For OSD, operational resources include electricity, natural gas, propane, water, sewer, garbage, recycling, and, of course, human power & dollars. A large part of an RCM program involves careful tracking and analysis of utility use. Here, we can see how resources are used in the schools and can even spot unknown leaks or broken timers that might be causing overcharges. Sometimes mistakes are found in bills that when corrected, can save a school district many hundreds (even thousands!) of dollars.

Another piece of an effective RCM program is identifying ways to implement cost-effective energy efficiency measures into capital improvement projects. This might include designing or retrofitting buildings that maximize daylight, use light sensors instead of switches or incorporate more efficient heating systems. Thinking about RCM in the planning process of capital projects can help reduce resource consumption on a long term basis.

Education is also an important part of RCM. The well-known mantra, “think globally, act locally,” applies here. The things we do on a daily basis impact our level of resource consumption. It’s easy to get caught up in the busy routine of school/work/playtime/ errands/practice schedules/bills/friends/family life and never think about the amount of energy we are using and what we are using it for. But it’s also easy to practice resource conservation every day. An effective RCM program will help spread awareness about resource use, as well as promote methods to minimize consumption in ways that keep us comfortable in our busy lives.

While the RCM program is “new” to OSD, many of you have been incorporating conservation principles into the school community for a long time. Keep up the great work! Now is the time to coordinate efforts and bring the entire district on board. School participation and student involvement will play a key role in successful RCM in the Olympia School District. By working together, OSD is destined to become a top leader in sustainable school operations.

Name the Newsletter Contest!

Send your title suggestions, along with:

Your Name  
Grade or Title  
School or Department

Before January 5, 2005, to:  
bwitzencburg@osd.wednet.edu

Some of you may already be thinking, “Gee, I could jazz up that newsletter title.” Well, let’s hear it! Everyone in the school district is welcome to contribute ideas that could lead to the catchy new title for the RCM newsletter. And if your title is chosen, a resource conservation prize will be awarded to you! (Not to mention the vast fame and fortune that will follow.)
Happy & Sustainable Holidays!

The holidays are a time for celebration, excitement, fun and good cheer. And for many of us, a time of year that opens our pocketbooks a little wider than usual. While there are plenty of ways to keep our expenses in check, resource conservation can help the budget and the environment. Consider the following measures for your holiday season:

**Decorations**
According to a local utility company, festive holiday decorations can add $100 or more to a power bill. Yikes! What can you do to keep your electricity costs down during the holidays? Here are some things to think about as you plan your holiday lighting:

**Energy Efficiency** - Using the right fixtures and limiting the time the lights are on can save you big this holiday season. The following list is designed to help:

- **Bulb Wattage**: The large, traditional bulbs (may be labeled C-7 or C-9) use 4-10 watts per bulb. Mini-lights use about 0.4 watts per bulb, and the new LED lights use only 0.04 watts.
- **Bulbs per String**: The larger bulbs are usually sold 25 to a string, while the smaller bulb sets may have 35 to 200 bulbs per string. Icicle lights have 100 lights per 10-foot string. LED lights have 35-100 bulbs per string.
- **Strings per House**: The more lights you use, the more power you’ll use. But whether you use only one light string or many, you’ll be rewarded with a lower power bill if you use energy-efficient lights.
- **Timing & Special Effects**: You can reduce your energy use by running your outdoor lights on a timer pre-set for three to five hours and by using mirrors and tinsel around indoor lights to increase the lighting effects.
- **Cost Savings**: The comparative cost for a season of holiday lighting (based on ten strings of lights burning 8 hours a day for 30 days at Puget Sound Energy’s 2nd block residential rate of 7.95 cents per kilowatt-hour) is $33.42 for large lights, $6.61 for mini lights, and $0.66 for the new LED lights.

**Gift Giving**
Having trouble coming up with gifts for those who have everything? Get creative! These tips are less expensive, use less natural resources and are a great way for children to get involved in holiday cheer without a checkbook.

**Services over Goods**
Gifts of service require little or no use of natural resources, and are very personal and memorable. The gift of You - your time, energy or expertise are as ‘gift-worthy’ as anything you can put in a box. Foot massage, music lessons, childcare, car wash, dog walk, lawn care, tutoring, cooking, gardening.....what are your talents?
Edibles
Homemade is heartfelt. Your time and energy, and culinary creativity, are just as valued as that store-bought gift. Your time spent in the kitchen is probably no more than the time spent gift-hunting online or at the mall. The result is most personal, and easy on the environment.

Antiques, Collectibles & Found Objects
Value and appeal don’t always have to mean ‘new and shiny’. Antiques and collectibles have the added appeal of history and sentimental value. Personal gifts tell a story. And because they’re ‘re-used’, there’s no impact on the environment.

We all have our little treasures or discoveries from nature. An unusual shell, crystal, wood burl, arrowhead, bone, shark tooth...... Over time we get used to seeing them and our interest wanes. Pass them on as a gift with a memory and they’ll be ‘rediscovered’ with enthusiasm, and be a reminder of nature’s wonder once again.

“Used” Gifts
It’s time to look at “used” in a new light. Used gifts are the kindest of all to the environment, as no energy or resources are spent. There are some areas where used items can be appropriate as gifts. Used computers, for example, can be refurbished and upgraded. Or consider vintage clothing, books and CD’s, bikes, sports equipment, tools, cameras, children’s toys and clothes.

Donations
Make a donation in the name of your gift recipient to support their favorite charity or non-profit group. These gifts are the ultimate way to show holiday spirit and to be a sustainable shopper. Gifts of donation produce no waste, provide a service to the world, and show someone how much you care this holiday. These truly are “gifts that give twice”.

After the Party
Love the party, but hate the clean up? Holiday time is notorious for creating increased amounts of waste...the wrapping paper, the tree, the leftovers, the present packaging. Suddenly we are surrounded by holiday fallout and are left wondering where to put it all. There are many ways to reduce the impact on our natural resources, lighten the garbage load and minimize holiday headaches.

Be a Wrapping Superstar
So maybe you don’t have a flair for making perfect corners, but using recycled wrapping tools will win you points (and reduce waste after opening presents). Try using alternatives such as:

- catalog or magazine pages (think about those great photos in LIFE, gardening or outdoor publications presenting your gifts)
- old maps & atlases
- cereal boxes or plastic containers
- last year’s ribbons and bows
- tie on interesting trinkets from the junk drawer
- make gift bags out of old shirts – and use them again next year!
- choose wrapping paper made with recycled content
- what else do you have around the house or classroom?

Food Composting
Don’t forget your wormy friends this holiday season! Give them the gift of pre- and post-consumer food waste, and they will return the favor with nutrient rich fertilizer. If you are new to food recycling, now is a great time to start a worm bin. Check out this composting guide from Thurston County Department of Water and Waste Management: http://www.co.thurston.wa.us click “Free Guides” and see “Composting” in the list. Who wants a pound of red wigglers in their stocking? ☺

Tree Recycling
Avoid the sadness of seeing your arbor altar on the curbside… recycle it instead! Your local waste hauler may have special pick up days for tree recycling. The City of Olympia will be distributing their schedule to customers the week of December 6, or call 360-753-8430 for more information.

And for those of you who are interested in the full meal, holiday deal, check out “42 Ways to Trim Your Holiday Wasteline” at http://www.use-less-stuff.com/ULSDAY/42ways.html .

Donations
Make a donation in the name of your gift recipient to support their favorite charity or non-profit group. These gifts are the ultimate way to show holiday spirit and to be a sustainable shopper. Gifts of donation produce no waste, provide a service to the world, and show someone how much you care this holiday. These truly are “gifts that give twice”.

Have a wonderful winter break and holiday season!