

Electric Energy Conservation



Over the past few months our new *Maintenance Coordinator/Electrician* **Tom Stinson** and I have been working on a comprehensive plan to reduce our total electric energy consumption for our entire organization (no small feat!). It is amazing how some small changes in behavior and up-upgrades to our systems can have such an enormous effect on energy use. For example, one preliminary calculation that we came up with suggests that by retrofitting our Grandville operation lighting system we can reduce annual kilowatt consumption by around 51,000 KWH per year... to put that into a dollar value we are looking at an annual savings of around \$16,000.00! The total expense to do this project would be recovered in our energy savings within the first year of the retrofit. This is a huge step towards organization wide energy consumption reduction... but there is a lot more that you can do in your office to help.

Some tips to conserve electrical energy in your office:

- You have probably been told this since you were five years-old, but "Turn off the lights when you are not using them!" for every

hour you leave a standard 60 watt light bulb on you are spending 1.2 cents. This may not seem like a lot, but when you look up at your lights and see that you are running around 12 lights in your office that runs up to about 14.4 cents/hour. Multiply that by all our facilities and offices you are looking at nearly \$7.40/hour! That's one participant that we could have put to work! When you are not in your office simply turn off the lights... even if it's for a short period of time... the savings could really add up across the organization!

- Take a good look at your computer... are you using an old CRT monitor or a newer LCD screen? The difference can be enormous! According to a CNet article "...the approximate cost of using the LCD 24 hours a day is \$3.74 per month. By comparison, if you had a CRT device consuming 90 watts with the same usage requirements, its monthly power consumption would be \$6.48." If all of our computers were CRT's and not LCD's we would be spending an additional \$16,440 per year to use out-dated material! Most of our computer screens are LCD's but if you happen to have an old CRT lying around you may want to budget for up grades! LCD's are pretty affordable and our IT department is more than willing to help get you the best bang for the buck.
- Use your energy wisely by distributing power. Make sure that you are not running extension cords with power strips from another power strip. By overloading any one circuit you are setting your breakers up to fail. Be sure to distribute the power to ensure that you are balancing phase currents.
- Encourage your staff to be energy conscious and our entire organization will benefit!

Nick Carlson
Goodwill Industries of Greater Grand Rapids
Director of Environmental Sustainability
Office: (616) 532-4200 x 1121
Mobile: (616) 893-1119
ncarlson@goodwillgr.org