



Greening Headquarters Update

APRIL 5, 2012

Greening Updates:

Office of Operations

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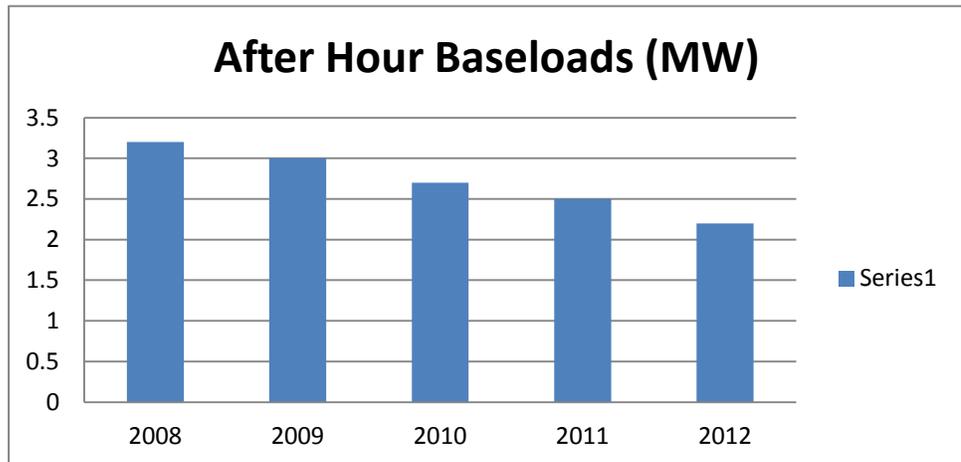
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Energy Updates

Outstanding stewardship and unusually warm weather have helped Operations staff at Headquarters to reduce our steam and electrical usage in the first two quarters of FY 2012 compared to past years. Over the past several years, the Office of Operations (OO) Energy Team has greatly reduced steam usage and cost. This effort has not only helped USDA meet its energy reduction goals mandated by the President, but it has also helped OO greatly reduce our operating costs without affecting the USDA mission.

Our electrical use also continues to decline. There are many reasons for this decline. First, the completion of two major energy conservation projects earlier this year helped reduce electrical use. Second, one project that upgraded our chilled water plant and a second project that retrofitted lights in many of the offices along C Street were major contributors to our electrical use reductions. The implementation of the OCIO's Green IT Plan has also resulted in significant electrical savings. Finally, with more staff teleworking, there has been a reduced demand for electricity in the offices.



Our "Afterhours" electrical use shows the impact of reduced IT load (a major electrical user after-hours). Since FY 2008, our electrical usage after-hours has fallen by 1 MW, enough electricity to power hundreds of typical homes.

Waste Minimization & Recycling Updates



**Remember to
always
recycle!**

In March, the HQ Green team conducted its **yearly trash sort**. During the trash sort, the Green team separated about 400 pounds of office trash. The intent of this exercise was to provide a snapshot of how well our waste diversion program is working. During the sort, the Green team removed recyclables and compostable materials from the office trash and weighed them.

During the March trash sort, the Green team found approximately 78 pounds of recyclable materials in the 400-pound sample of office trash. This represents approximately 20% of the waste from USDA offices. The positive news is that there were relatively minor amounts of high-grade office paper and cardboard in the office trash. The bulk of the 54 pounds of paper found in the office trash also contained paper like magazines, unwanted mail, etc. The results of the trash sort indicate our recycle program is diverting nearly all the office paper and cardboard and most of the newspapers



Plastic and glass bottles represented a significant percentage of our office waste: 6%. This number has remained steady for the past several years. Many of the water and soda bottles still had liquids in them, which represented another 3% of the waste by weight, making a total of 9% of our waste bottles and liquids. Many of the bottles still had their caps screwed on which makes them difficult



Remember to uncap plastic bottles when recycling!

Capped bottles trap air and don't compact!

to compact and reduces the volume of trash that our compactors can hold. **As a result, our trash hauler is hauling a lot of air.**

There was a modest reduction in compostable waste in the trash. Approximately 8% of the waste was compostable (plates, trays, cups, banana peels, etc.). Recently completed was an installation of sixty compostable collection containers throughout the HQ complex. These compostable collection containers have already resulted in a reduction of compostable waste compared to last year.

Overall, the results of the trash sort help show that we are improving our recycle and waste diversion rates. This trend supports the President's mandate through E.O. 13514 that federal facilities divert at least 50% of their waste by 2015. This effort also supports our efforts to have Headquarters' operations reflect USDA missions and initiatives (natural resource conservation and use of bio-based products.)

A major element of our waste minimization program is the diversion of compostable waste from our trash stream. **What is and is not compostable?** Most of the cafeteria-wares in the South and Whitten Building cafeterias are bio-based and compostable. This includes the plates, bowls and clamshells. Once the collection and processing of compostable materials is completed, the materials are transported to a commercial compost facility. Unlike home composting, it is acceptable to include meat products in our compost collection containers.

Unwanted Mail:

A simple way to reduce your environmental impact and to help the HQ Mail Center is to reduce the amount of unwanted mail you get. Your office may be getting mail for employees who retired years ago, or maybe you somehow got on an office furniture catalogue mailing list. While recycling unwanted mail helps some, getting off the mailing lists helps far more. Each day our Mail Center gets thousands of pieces of unwanted mail. This takes time and money to manage. Reducing your waste is the most effective way to reduce your environmental impacts related to unwanted mail. The Office of Operations is ready to help you get off these mailing lists. The Office of Operations recently installed three new Unwanted Mail Boxes. These are located at Wing 1 and 3 on the first floor along Independence Avenue and in the basement of the Whitten Building A Section. You can place your unwanted mail in these boxes, and we will get you off the mailing lists.



**Remember to
stop unwanted
catalogues to
reduce our
wastes!**



One of our new "Unwanted Mailboxes" is shown in the picture. You can help the Mail Center while reducing your environmental footprint by getting off unwanted mail mailing lists.

Green Building Updates

Model "Green" Conference Room:

The Office of Operations has recently completed a model conference room that highlights green building practices. While the conference space in Room 0204 may look like a traditionally constructed space, it is anything but traditional. The carpet has high-recycled content. The mastic for the carpet and the wall paint has low Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) content. Low VOC products are important for good indoor air quality. The lighting all uses high efficiency Light Emitting Diode (LED) technologies. Finally, the supplemental air conditioning is Energy Star rated. This is all part of our effort to conserve natural resources and demonstrate commitment to the President's E.O. 13514 "Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance."



Teleworking!



A picture of a remodeled conference room.

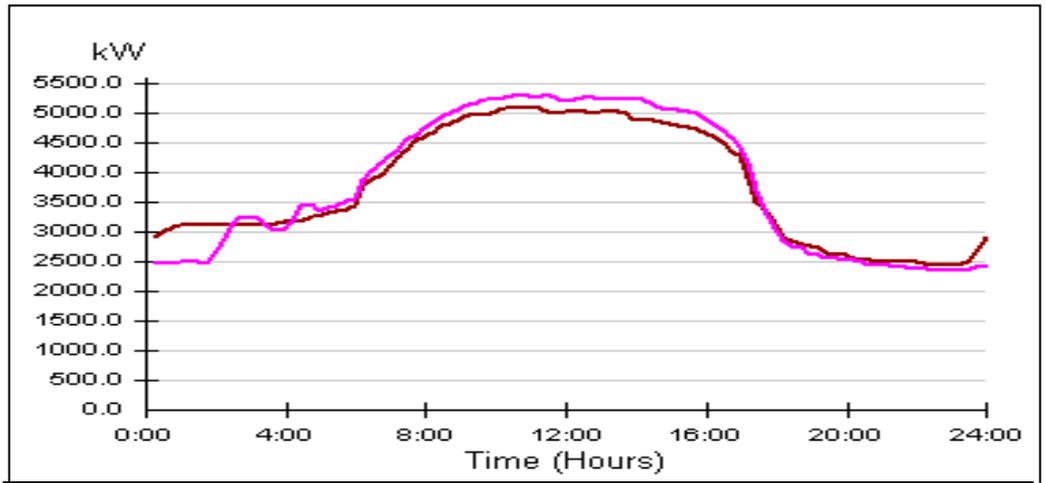
Telework/Hoteling

Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 is changing the way we work at USDA. The law requires government agencies to establish telecommuting policies in which employees may be authorized to telework. These policies must ensure that telework does not diminish employee performance or agency operations, and each teleworker's position must be outlined by a written agreement between manager and employee. Employees whose performance does not measure up with the agreement are excluded as are those whose duties require daily direct handling of secure materials or on-site activity (except in emergencies). All of this must be incorporated as part of the agency's continuity of operations plans.

What are the potential environmental impacts of implementing this Act at USDA? According to Mika J. Cross, USDA Work/Life and Wellness Program Manager, it could be significant. Last month more than 7,500 USDA employees across the Department and around the world pledged to participate in Telework Week 2012 (March 5 -9). Based on the 2012 pledge data from the Telework Week participants, USDA Teleworkers reduced over 934,400 pounds of pollutants during that week, while saving over \$1,000,000 in commuting costs. At Headquarters we saw a modest reduction in electrical use. We are projecting very significant utility and leased cost savings if we also implement "hoteling" practices, or office sharing.



**Saving
Electricity!**



HQ Electrical Graph above compares March 6 (red line) with February 28 (pink line). Both days were Tuesdays with similar outdoor temperatures. There was approximately a 250 KW power reduction, enough power for 200 homes.

Green Purchasing

On February 21, 2012, the President executed a Presidential Memorandum that will be driving innovation and creating jobs in rural America through biobased and sustainable product procurement. The President is issuing rules to expand the emerging market for biobased products. The memorandum will require, among other things, that the federal government track and increase its purchases of products made from plants and other renewable agricultural materials — products such as housekeeping cleaners, cafeteria-ware, and solvents. The Office of Operations is already a model organization for the use of biobased and sustainable products at the USDA Headquarters Complex. More information about this memorandum and what it will mean can be found here:

<http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/environment/story/2012-02-21/biobased-products-government-boost/53181882/1>



The new label for biobased products.

FY 2011 USDA Scorecard on Sustainability and Energy Performance Update.

The yearly Sustainability and Energy Performance Scorecards provide a useful snapshot of how well USDA is doing overall in reducing its environmental impact. In FY 2011, USDA met or exceeded our mandated requirements in five of the seven sustainability areas covered by the scorecard. USDA met goals to decrease energy use per square foot; decrease potable water use per square foot, incorporate sustainable building practices, and increase renewable energy use. Using the scorecard as a benchmark, we are identifying and tracking opportunities to reduce pollution, improve efficiency, and cut costs. Under Executive Order 13514, President Obama directed federal agencies to lead by example in clean energy and to meet a range of energy, water, pollution, and waste reduction targets. Based on scorecard benchmarks, the USDA Facilities Working Group is now updating the USDA Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan (SSPP), which is required by EO 13514, by June.



**Protecting our
World!**

The main area that needs improvement is decreasing fleet petroleum use. USDA's Greenhouse Gas emissions related to our Cover Federal Fleet increased by 30% in FY 2011 compared to FY 2008. EO 13514 directs USDA to decrease our fleet petroleum use by 2020. USDA's target for FY 2020 is a 28% decrease in greenhouse gas emissions related to petroleum fleet use compared to the baseline year of FY 2008. One issue appears to be that as time goes on, USDA agencies are getting more accurate information about fuel used compared to the data that was available in FY 2008. The result is that USDA's fleet petroleum use may be significantly understated in our FY 2008 baseline year and needs further examination.

Sustainable Landscaping

Trees provide a lot of beauty and environmental benefits. Proper mulching helps keep trees healthy. Mulching helps keep soil moist and keep roots cool, helps suppress germination of weed seeds, and looks aesthetically pleasing! Improper mulching, on the other hand, can kill trees. One common improper mulching technique is the use of "mulch volcanoes." Mulch should be at least 3" away from the trunk. Mulch volcanoes can create an environment that encourages tree trunk rot and disease.



Sustainable
Landscaping



Mulch against the trees encourages rot and disease.



Correct placement of mulch

Proper tree mulching. Think donuts when mulching trees. Keep mulch 3" away from tree trunk.

USDA Works to Reduce Its Environmental Footprint – Here's How (USDA blog)

Last month USDA blogged about how USDA is reducing its environmental impact. See [USDA Works to Reduce Its Environmental Footprint – Here's How](http://blogs.usda.gov/2012/03/28/usda-works-to-reduce-its-environmental-footprint-heres-how/)
<http://blogs.usda.gov/2012/03/28/usda-works-to-reduce-its-environmental-footprint-heres-how/>