Greening Headquarters Update

JANUARY 20, 2011

Greening Updates:

Office of Operations

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Greening the Federal Government Updates

All our building managers will now have to get "green" training. On December 14th, President Obama signed into law legislation that intends to provide federal building managers the knowledge required to oversee the government's portfolio of energy-efficiency buildings. Under the 2010 Federal Buildings Personnel Training Act, the General Services Administration will have 18 months to identify the key skills required to manage a federal building. GSA must also develop or identify certification courses designed to build skills that include understanding building performance measures, such as energy and water conserved, as well as energy management, sustainability, water efficiency and electrical safety.

Greening throughout USDA

Substantial greening efforts are occurring throughout USDA. Recently, Dr. Anna Jones-Crabtree, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, received the Sustainability Hero Award, a . GreenGov Presidential Award. Dr. Anna Jones-Crabtree of the U.S. Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region catalyzed an interagency effort in sustainable practice at the U.S. Forest Service's facilities and fleet and in its purchasing and waste processes. Her projects have saved 964 billion BTUs and nearly $10.1 million in energy costs, reduced fleet miles-driven by approximately 720,000 miles, increased annual biodiesel and E-85 use by 12,800 gallons and 90,800 gallons, respectively, and

saved more than 970 million gallons of water.

Photo of Anna with certificate and the rest of the Forest Service Sustainability Team.

New Master Gardener Class offered this Spring!

Headquarters People's Garden

The first USDA Executive Master Gardener (EMG) class wrapped up its first year with an impressive list of accomplishments. Early March will be the registration for the Class of 2011 EMGs. The People's Garden staff is planning to expand the use of sustainable landscaping practices in 2011.

Purchase bio-based products!

On October 18, 2010, USDA's BioPreferred program finalized its 6th round of item designation. This round added more than 500 bio-based products to the approximately 4,500 bio-based products already eligible for Federal environmentally preferable procurement. By law, Federal government agencies, contractors and the military must give products in these categories preferred purchasing preference as of October 18, 2011. USDA Headquarters continually works with employees, vendors and contractors to maximize product awareness and use. Did you know that we use bio-based cleaning fluids as part of our "green cleaning" program? For example the hand soap in the restroom is made from bio-based ingredients. Therefore, every time you use the hand soap, you are not only cleaning your hands, but also supporting USDA programs and initiatives.

What type of ice melt are you using this winter? Lately we have been seeing cold weather and ice on your sidewalk and driveway can be a big problem. How do you manage the icy conditions with harming your plants, children, pets and the environment? First, do you really need to remove the ice or do you only need traction? If you only need traction, you can use biodegradable kitty litter or sand to help you get a good grip while you are on the ice. If you have to remove the ice, there are many eco-friendly options of ice melt available. At USDA Headquarters, we a bio-based eco-friendly ice melt made from corn- based liquids. Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) is another option. CMA is a more eco-friendly alternative to road salt (Sodium chloride.)

South Building Modernization Updates

The South Building Modernization project is approximately 85% complete. Most of the major work is completed. Furniture is being delivered to the newly modernized Wing 5. The furniture is also eco-friendly and helps us earn our LEED green building certification for the South Building. Wing 5 should be starting to re-open this spring.

Bahn Lam in his office

Green buildings do not just happen; trained certified professionals need to oversee this effort. Several professionals trained and certified as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Accredited Professionals (AP), are overseeing the modernization of the South Building.. Bahn Lam, a professional engineer, is certified as a LEED AP. One of his responsibilities is construction management of the South Building modernization project and ensuring that we stay on track to obtain LEED certification for the South Building.

What is LEED Certification?

LEED stands for Leadership and Energy Design

LEED is an internationally recognized green building certification system

Energy Management Updates

Due to the unusually cold weather in December, our steam usage for heating surged, but other than that, our energy usage continues to drop. We are steadily working to reduce our energy usage and our greenhouse gas emissions related to building operations. For example, we have recently completed the conversion of elevator lights to energy efficient LED lights. Not only will the new lighting save energy, it will help alleviate the problem of overheating that w were experiencing in many of the elevator especially at the Carver Center.

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You may be wondering about all the recent construction related activity in the East Wing Whitten parking lot along Independence Ave. This project is the replacement of Chiller #1 in the Sub-Central Chilled Water Plant. This project will not only help us reduce energy and operating costs, but it will also enhance our ability to participate in the "smart grid." The new chilled water plant will provide us the capability to reduce electrical loads used for cooling without reducing our cooling capacity. This project is scheduled for completion this summer.

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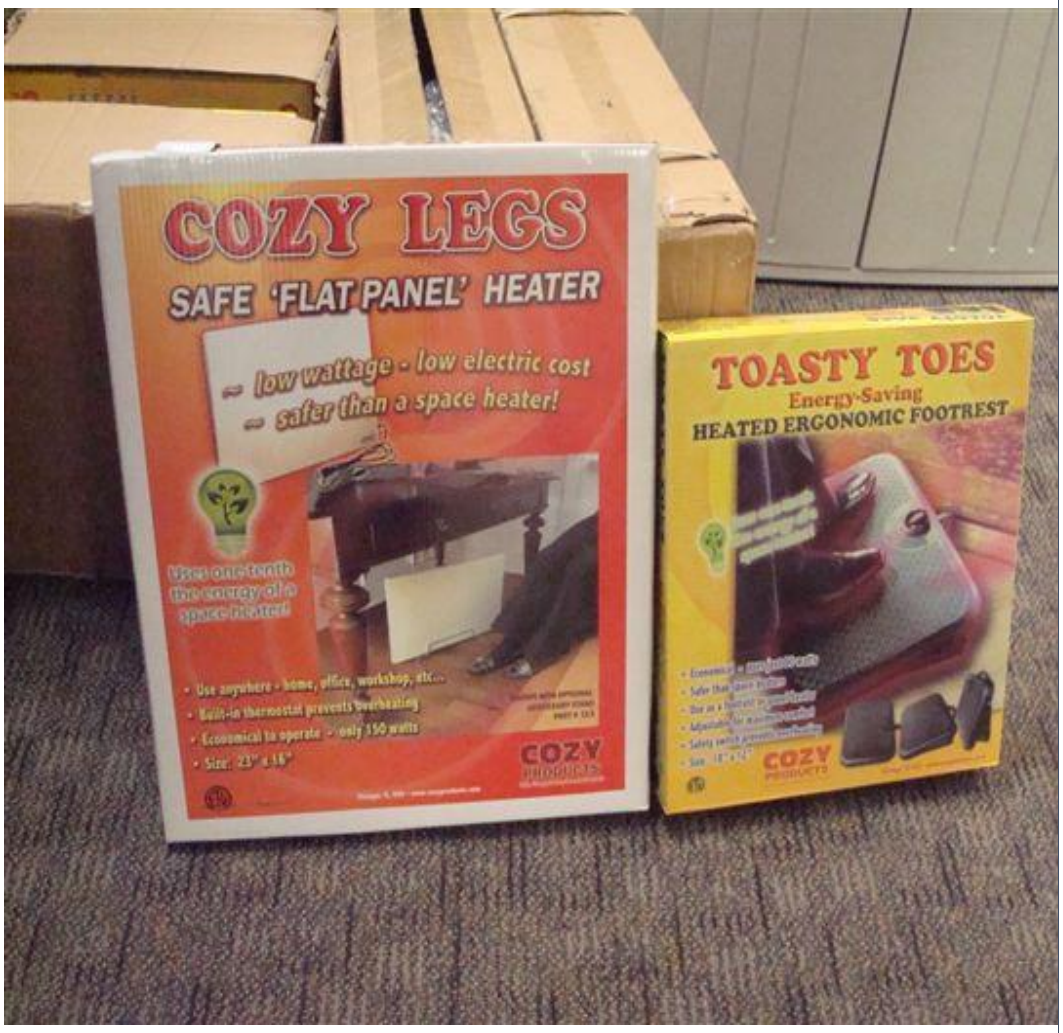
Space heaters are a big problem in the headquarters complex. Not only do they waste a lot of energy, but also they are a safety concern. Operations staff reports that space heaters

Remember to shut off your lights when you leave the room!

Stay warm this winter!

heat up the space that warms up the thermostats. This can cause the building heat in the surrounding offices to shut down, or even activate the air conditioning to activate, resulting in discomfort for your co-workers. Space heaters also cause numerous local power outages all over the complex. For these reasons, space heaters are not permitted in the facility. If you are cold in the office, there are options that will provide you warmth, without wasting a lot of energy, and cause operational and safety problems. Dressing appropriately for the weather is one obvious solution. If that is not enough, there are personal heating equipment items that use a fraction of the power due to their design to heat the person and not the surrounding office. Cozy Products will soon be available at the Paperclip Store in the Ag Promenade.



Waste Minimization & Recycling Updates

Why Food Waste?

Food waste is the third largest waste stream in the United States (after paper and yard waste). In 2008, 32 million tons of food wastes were generated. Of that, 31 million tons (97%) were thrown away into landfills or incinerators. When excess food, leftover food, and food scraps are disposed of in a landfill, they decompose and become a significant source of methane — an extremely potent greenhouse gas. Much of this "waste" is not waste at all. Excess food, leftovers and scraps that are not fit for consumption or donation can be used to feed the soil by recycling (composting) food waste into a nutrient rich soil amendment. For more information, visit the EPA Food Waste site for more information.

What is USDA Headquarters doing to reduce the amount of compostable waste in our trash stream? Over the past few years, we have been collecting food scraps from the cafeteria kitchen and the compostable trays. We have recently completed the installation of a pulping machine that allows us to start collecting and grinding the compostable cafeteria-ware that is used in the South and Whitten cafeterias. Our efforts to collect compostable materials will be increasing over time as we start providing collection containers for compostable waste.

Remember to Recycle!

Items that can be recycled:

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Telephone Books
- White & colored Paper
- Computer Paper
- Shredded paper
- Paperback & hard cover Books
- Staples & paper-clips
- Catalogs
- Envelopes & boxes with plastic "windows"

CCCCC

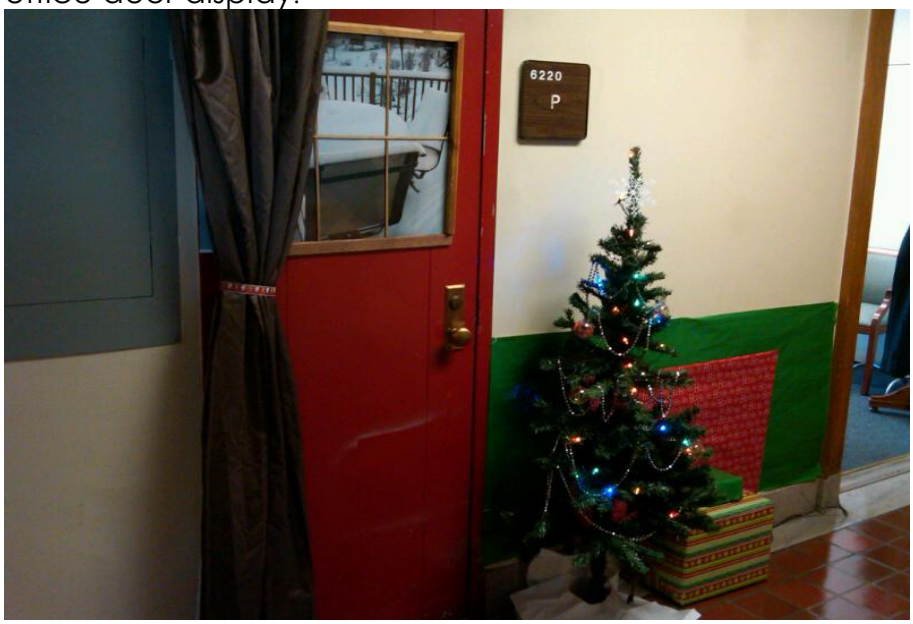
Composting helps grow new plants.

Our new SOMAT Pulper

The pulper will grind up and de-water organic and compostable waste. The organic waste is then sent to a compost facility in Maryland and turned to compost

Holiday Door Decoration Contest

In the spirit of the holiday season, Departmental Management hosted an eco-friendly holiday display competition. There were dozens of interesting eco-friendly displays. Displays were judged on environmentally conscious creativity. Displays using no electricity were given more merit. The 6200 corridor had the best overall corridor decoration, and Room 6110 had the best office door display.



6200 Corridor had the best overall holiday decoration. Photo above is decoration on one of the Plumbing Chases.

Happy New Year!

There were displays with "Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle" theme. Below are two of our favorites:

Did you know carpets can sometimes be recycled?