

Energy Efficiency and Air Quality

October is Energy Awareness Month in Alaska. What has Anchorage been up to?

Municipality of Anchorage

Facilities Lighting Project

The MOA Department of Neighborhoods is retrofitting the lighting in three public facilities -- the Egan Center, the Animal Control Center and the Spenard Recreation Center -- using federal stimulus dollars. Changes will include switching T-12 fluorescent lamps to more efficient T-8 lamps, changing old outdoor lighting to LEDs, adding automatic controls and reducing light levels in overlit areas. When the projects are done, total estimated annual cost savings (energy and maintenance costs) will be close to \$84,500. The retrofits will reduce kWh usage by an average of about 70% across the three facilities. Factoring in the estimated cost of the retrofits, the average payback period for all three facilities is projected to be just over seven years.

Parking Garage Lighting Retrofit

The MOA Department of Neighborhoods also will retrofit lighting in four downtown parking garages using federal stimulus dollars. In an agreement between the Anchorage Community Development Authority (ACDA) and the Department of Neighborhoods, ACDA will oversee the grant to retrofit four parking garages with energy efficient lighting. ACDA also agreed to pay back up to \$500,000 of the grant, from the actual electrical energy savings, to the MOA, so that the payback can be used to perpetuate energy efficiency programs in the MOA.

Based on the proposals recently received for this project, the Municipality anticipates that total electrical utility savings in the four garages will amount to more than \$600,000 over a five-year span of the project. Electricity use reductions will be more than 1.17 million kWh/yr.

The lighting upgrade will provide long-term energy conservation and energy cost reduction as well as improve the quality of light in garages to increase use of parking spaces.

Anchorage School District

The school district's annual electric and natural gas bill is \$15.5 million. A program to reduce energy use began in 2007 with just eight schools, primarily older schools and those with higher energy expenditures. ASD saved more than \$114,000 with minimal expenditures. In 2009 and 2010, 27 schools participated in the program, implementing simple, low- and no-cost techniques.

ASD threw in the incentive to each participating school that they would receive a no-strings-attached check for 25% of any savings they achieve. So far, checks have ranged from \$56 to \$8,426.

This year's savings are expected to be more than triple that of the 2007 program. Just a few of the things that schools have done to save money and reduce energy use include:

- Closing entryway doors, which are often propped open;
- Turning off room lights when not needed;
- Using desk or floor lamps instead of overhead lights when possible;
- Unplugging unneeded electronics;
- Shutting off computers and electronics when not in use;
- Running high-energy-use appliances like laminating machines on specific days rather than having them on every day;
- Reprogramming heating systems to turn heat down earlier in the day;
- Reprogramming lights so they don't all turn on when someone enters the building after hours;
- Closing classroom blinds after hours;
- Fixing heating problems quickly rather than using space heaters or opening windows; and
- Consolidating excess appliances, such as refrigerators, that are underused.

AIR QUALITY CORNER

Plug@20°

Snow and cold weather – you know they're coming! To reduce engine wear and ensure your car will start in the cold, get ready to use your engine block heater.



- Do you have a block heater? If not, get an estimate from your garage or dealer. For most vehicles, installation is less than \$200.
- Shopping for a new car? The window sticker lists block heaters among the vehicle options, if installed. On a used car, the electric plug to the heater often hangs from the grill.
- Do you always plug your car in? Find your timer and outdoor extension cord, and mount the timer near an outdoor outlet above snow level. Instructions for setting the timer are on the Plug@20 page at www.muni.org/health. Information about this winter's timer distribution also will be posted there.

The best use of block heaters is prior to the daily commute, when the engine is coldest. Plugging in cuts carbon monoxide and other vehicle emissions by nearly 60%. Set the timer just two or three hours before departure to reduce electrical costs.

Bike to Work

Biking to work isn't just a summertime activity. Winter biking is becoming more popular.



- Visit www.bicycleanchorage.org for information about biking in Anchorage, tips for dressing properly, the best routes, and how to take action to help make Anchorage more bicycle friendly.
- Visit www.rei.com/stores/16 for a list of classes hosted by REI for bike commuters.
- Contact Green Star at info@greenstarinc.org if you'd like to schedule bicycle training classes for your group or workplace.

Take the Bus

More reasons to ride People Mover (www.peplemover.org) to ride:



- Bus Tracker lets you see in real time where your bus is. Some features work on smart phones too.
- ePay lets you purchase bus passes online.
- Fifteen new buses have larger bike racks, among other convenience, safety and security features.
- Plus People Mover is still cheaper than a gallon of gas, convenient, healthy, stress reducing, fully accessible, and environmentally friendly.