UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

Fact Sheet

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University of Denver environmental sustainability efforts

Wind Power

In 2006, the University of Denver agreed to purchase 15 million kilowatt hours (KWh) of wind power a year for two years. This amount represents 28 percent of the university's overall energy use and is sufficient to power the Ritchie Center, Sturm Hall and the Driscoll Center. During the 2004-05 school year, students petitioned to have a wind power initiative placed on the student senate ballot and in the spring of 2005 they voted to financially support wind power on campus. The $81,000 per year cost is met by DU's undergraduate student body through an increased student activity fee. DU made the purchase through Community Energy, Inc. (CEI), a wind-energy generation marketer and developer.

This is the largest wind-energy purchase of any college or university in Colorado. It is the fifth largest wind purchase in Colorado overall, and one of the top-10 purchases of a 100-percent wind energy product by a university in the United States.

15 million KWh is equivalent to powering 2,000 homes, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 25 million pounds, planting 3,500 acres of trees or reducing the number of automobile drivers by more than 10,000.

Resource Conservation Program

As part of an effort to reduce energy consumption on campus, the University signed a contract with Integrated Energy Solutions of Fort Collins to create a Resource Conservation Program. Campus Energy Manager Ryan Johnston is working directly with faculty, staff, and students to raise environmental awareness and pinpoint ways to save energy. In 2006, the program reduced campus-wide utility expenses by $289,000 by turning off lights in unoccupied areas and in spaces with abundant natural lighting. In 2007, DU's goal is to reduce electric consumption by 10 percent. In the first six months of fiscal year 2007 (July-December), consumption has been reduced by 9 percent , netting a utility-cost savings of $176,000.

The company works with large institutions throughout North America to identify energy-savings opportunities. One of only two companies nationwide to offer these services, Integrated Energy Solutions has worked with the University of Utah, the University of Northern Colorado, the Colorado State Capitol building, and school districts across the country.

LEED Certification

The Frank H. Ricketson Jr. Law Building received the Gold Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification by the U.S. Green Building Council. It is the nation's first law school building to be certified "green."

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To become LEED certified, buildings must meet 26 of 50 standards under the categories of site sustainability, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality and innovation. The 181,000-square-foot Ricketson Building, home to the Sturm College of Law, meets 39 of the standards, qualifying for the highest certification level. The $64 million building, which opened in August 2003, uses 40 percent less electricity, gas and water than a conventionally built structure. Recycled materials were used in the roof, carpet and ceilings and recharging stations in the parking garage accommodate electric automobiles.

The University evaluates each new campus building to identify energy-saving possibilities and determine LEED certification opportunities.

Recycling Program

The Facilities Department coordinates the University's recycling efforts. The university recycles mixed office paper, plastic, aluminum, toner cartridges and cardboard. Unwanted electronic and computer equipment is either sold to University employees for home use, given to other campus departments, donated to a non profit organization or recycled. Students have helped expand the program in recent years.

The Sturm College of Law also maintains its own recycling program.

Other environmentally-conscious efforts at the University of Denver:

- DU provides RTD Eco-passes without cost to all students, faculty and staff to encourage use of public transportation.
- Light fixtures in DU facilities are regularly upgraded as new energy-saving technology is developed.
- The university encourages procurement specialists to practice "green procurement," the purchase of supplies and items that are durable, reusable and recyclable.
- Residence hall clothes driers have been converted from electricity to natural gas.
- DU's campus land-use plan encourages pedestrian and bicycle access.
- The university drilled water wells to keep the arboretum and athletic fields healthy without putting a drain on municipal supplies. The campus irrigation system is designed to use recycled water when it becomes available from Denver Water in the future.
- At DU's historic Chamberlin Observatory, astronomers use a special high-efficiency red fluorescent lighting that allows them to see their work as they gaze at the stars without losing their night vision by exposing themselves to bright lights.
- Over the past decade, DU has expanded its central plant facility for heating and cooling by 55 percent. Central plant operations are traditionally 25-30 percent more effecicient than stand-alone operations.
- Each time a piece of equipment needs to be replaced on campus, the Facilities department looks for the most energy-efficient system available.
- DU continues to evaluate geothermal and solar systems for installation