

12-6-2007

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Recommended Citation

Cleaves, Sara, "UNH Fall Initiatives Save Energy, Money, Emissions" (2007). *UNH Today*. 914.
<https://scholars.unh.edu/news/914>

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UNH Fall Initiatives Save Energy, Money, Emissions

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December 6, 2007

Student Waste Watch Challenge, Thanksgiving "Powerdown" Save \$52,000; Reduce CO2 Emissions by 140 Metric Ton Equivalents

DURHAM, NH – University of New Hampshire faculty, staff, and students saved approximately 279,400 kilowatt-hours (kwh) of energy, \$52,000 in energy and water costs, and 140 metric ton equivalents of carbon dioxide emissions through the University's third Student Energy Waste Watch Challenge and annual Thanksgiving "powerdown" initiative.

These energy and emissions savings are the equivalent of 326 barrels of oil or not driving 30 passenger cars for one year.

Hunter Hall won the Student Energy Waste Watch Challenge, which rewards the top three residence halls or apartment complexes that reduce their per capita energy and water consumption by the largest percentage compared to their building's average usage from the past three years during the same time period. Hunter lowered its energy and water consumption by approximately 27% over its average October/November usage. Randall and Hitchcock Halls tied for second due to their high water savings. The two halls share a water system, and combined they saved an average of 71% over their three year baseline water use. Gibbs Hall won third place, having reduced its energy use per capita by approximately 22%.

By "powering down" – turning off computers, lights, office equipment, and electronics – for the Thanksgiving holiday break, UNH faculty, staff, and students saved more than 51,800 kwh, more than \$7,000 in energy costs, and emissions reductions equivalent to 53 barrels of oil or not driving five passenger cars for one year. Electronic equipment and appliances can draw 30 percent of their total energy use even when they are turned off but still plugged in.

"The powerdown campaign built off the momentum and positive energy of the Student Energy Waste Watch Challenge," said Tom Kelly, UNH's chief sustainability officer. "Once again, our sustainable learning community teaches that by working together we can save energy, lower energy costs, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That is an important lesson for all of our students as well as faculty and staff."

In total, all UNH residence halls and apartments saved a combined 227,600 kwh and 1,669,000 gallons of water during the four-week fall Challenge, which ran October 24 to November 21. These savings translate into \$45,000 less in energy and water costs and emissions the equivalent of 272 barrels of oil or not driving 25 passenger cars for one year.

"Not only is it exciting to see the physical impact of the Challenge on campus in terms of

carbon reductions and water and energy savings, but I'm most pleased to see students taking action and getting involved," said Erin Thesing, a UNH sophomore and president of the student group that runs the Challenge, the Ecological Advocates. "The ultimate goal of the Challenge is to promote these positive behavioral changes, which in turn have provided emissions and cost savings. The Ecological Advocates are pleased with the student action on campus, as the university promotes a culture of sustainability."

"It is exciting to see students actively helping reduce energy costs in the residence halls and apartments. As you can imagine, utility costs are a huge line item on the budget. Our hope is that students will continue their efforts to make an impact on the entire year," said David May, assistant vice president of business affairs, which oversees the department of housing.

The powerdown campaign this year included a relatively new effort by UNH Computing and Information Services Academic Technology to create an automated Thanksgiving-holiday specific script that shut down 475 public cluster and departmental computers and restarted them after the break. The emissions reduction from this simple measure alone is equivalent to four and half barrels of oil.

"UNH is a national leader as a climate protection campus," said Taylor Eighmy, interim vice president for research and chair of the UNH Energy Task Force. "Our conversion to renewable landfill methane gas to power our on-campus cogeneration plant next winter will make an immense impact on our carbon footprint. However, we can continue to lead by being energy smart in how we power down over breaks --- every bit makes a difference."

UNH is a leader in conserving energy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and integrating sustainability throughout its curricula, operations, research, and engagement efforts. Committed to being a climate protection campus that pursues a sustainable energy future through emissions reduction policies, practices, research, and education, UNH has earned several awards for its sustainability initiatives, which range from composting and supporting local, sustainable agriculture to using compressed natural gas- and biodiesel-powered vehicles and being the first in the nation to receive an EPA Energy Star building rating for residence halls. Discover the sustainable learning community at UNH at www.sustainableunh.unh.edu.

