

Conversations With Jeffco

You are viewing a feed that contains frequently updated content. When you subscribe to a feed, it is added to the Common Feed List. Updated information from the feed is automatically downloaded to your computer and can be viewed in Internet Explorer and other programs. [Learn more about feeds.](#)

 [Subscribe to this feed](#)

Jefferson County- Embracing the Green Revolution

Thursday, August 26, 2010, 2:01:18 PM | Julie 

by Wade Yates, Special Projects Coordinator, Jefferson County Facilities and Construction Management
comments open from August 26 until September 14



More and more companies are going green everyday. So what is Jefferson County doing? A lot actually...With funds received from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act and rebates from Xcel Energy, Jefferson County is changing the way we use energy.

The Facilities and Construction Management Division has concluded the lengthy process of evaluating county buildings for energy efficiency and construction is set to begin to initiate the changes. The county can leverage longer payback from renewable energy technologies into the project by a combination of rebates, grant funds and low interest financing. The net affect is a robust energy conservation project to save money for years to come that includes renewable technologies, all within a 10-year payback.

Evaluation of our buildings showed us that taking steps like switching to a more energy efficient lighting system reduces our utility cost. This monthly utility savings can then be used to pay for the new lighting system over time.

New lights are just part of the story. Solar photovoltaic arrays will be installed at the Laramie Building on the Jefferson County Government Campus, the Evergreen Road & Bridge shop, Central Road & Bridge/Fleet facility north of Golden, the Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport and the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. Additionally, new parking lot lighting for the campus overflow lot will consist of off-grid solar poles with small wind turbines. The Laramie Building will also receive two small wind turbines located on the northwest side of the building.

The Administration and Courts Facility will be home to a demonstration solar photovoltaic array which can be

viewed up close and personal by residents and visitors. Additionally, there will be a kiosk in the main atrium which will monitor and provide feedback on the systems installed so you can see the renewable energy being produced in real time.

Beyond the financial benefits, the county can expect to see a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂) roughly equivalent to 4,000,000 lbs/year. It makes compelling, realistic business sense to go green in the office and also helps in our battle to save our environment.

From recycling to renewable energy, Jefferson County is uniquely positioned to play a key role in the community by enhancing our facilities – leading by example and embracing a sustainable work place.

CSU Extension's Green Energy Programs

Friday, January 08, 2010, 2:32:50 PM | Julie →

by Rusty Collins, Jefferson County CSU Extension Director
comments open from January 8 until January 27



What's green, clean and read all over? CSU Extension's new Energy Efficiency and Clean and Renewable Energy programs!

Green—because these programs are friendly to the environment; **clean**—because they help decrease our use of fossil fuels; and **read**—because if you haven't learned about it yet, you can read all about it now on our [Web site](#).

You may already be familiar with some of these ideas to promote energy efficiency and conservation in your home:

- Lower your thermostat at night
- Insulate your hot water heater
- Install storm windows
- Remember to regularly replace your furnace filter
- Wash your clothes in cold water
- Apply caulking around doors or windows to reduce airflow

These are simple techniques that all of us can do every day. But we know there's much more we should do to reduce our energy consumption.

That's why CSU Extension in Jefferson County is partnering with the Governor's Energy Office and Energy Outreach Colorado to roll out many more energy-related programs in 2010.

We are also collaborating with Jefferson County Public Schools and Warren Tech to create unique ways to teach upcoming generations how to conserve and protect our environment.

If you are involved in Renewable Energy or Energy Conservation and are looking for information, partnerships or project assistance, feel free to contact Rusty Collins at 303-271-6620 or via [email](#).

Check out our new “green” fact sheets by visiting our [Energy page](#).

Jeffco BCC Unveils First Hybrid Snowplow

Monday, January 04, 2010, 8:55:22 AM | Julie 

by Public Information

comments open December 11 to December 30

Jefferson County’s new hybrid snowplow, believed to be the first in the nation, may be plowing its way down unincorporated county roads as soon as next week, following the County Commissioners’ unveiling this morning in front of the Jeffco Administration and Courts Building.

Some companies have used the 2009 International Model 7300 Hybrid as a delivery truck, but Jefferson County is the first to have outfitted the hybrid truck as a snowplow. The truck has been shown to reduce hydrocarbon emissions by as much as 65 percent.

Jefferson County will learn more about the truck’s energy efficiency as a snowplow as it begins to use it this winter. If the \$162,240 hybrid snowplow performs well, the county may decide to add more to its fleet of 130 snowplows and 12 hybrid vehicles. It will join a fleet of 82 Road & Bridge plows and graders that deploy countywide during a snowstorm.

To find out more about the plow and the County County Commissioners’ Renewable Energy Initiative, [read the full release](#).

You can also check out the [Energy Efficiency](#) category of blog postings.



Jeffco to Save Energy and Money through Energy Audit

Wednesday, December 23, 2009, 12:24:11 PM | Julie →

by Todd Leopold, Administrative Services Director
comments open from December 23 until January 11



Next time you visit a Jefferson County building, you may see workers installing new compact fluorescent light bulbs, notice reduced water flow on faucets, or see solar photovoltaic collectors on rooftops – all the results of an energy audit that identified ways for the county to save energy and money.

According to the audit, Jefferson County stands to reduce its CO₂ emissions by 5.4 million pounds and save 15 percent to 18 percent in annual utility expenditures, or roughly \$280,000, a year. At a November Staff Briefing, commissioners adopted a resolution accepting Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) funds and directed staff to begin pursuing some energy-conservation projects.

Those projects include:

- **Lighting:** Replacing incandescent lamps with compact fluorescent; installing, LED exit signs, occupancy/daylight sensors and high-efficiency T-8 lighting.
 - o Cost: \$530,000

- o Cost Savings: \$54,000 a year with a project payback of 8.6 years
- o Energy Impact: CO2 reduction of 1 million pounds a year

- **Water Conservation:** Installing low-flush valves on urinals and toilets and low-flow aerators on faucets.

- o Cost: \$200,000
- o Cost Savings: \$17,000 a year with a project payback of 12 years
- o Energy Impact: Water savings of 170,000 gallons a year

- **Policy Changes:** Automating the nightly shut-down of computers; reducing small appliance usage by employees; setting building temperature at 75 degrees in the summer and 68 degrees in the winter.

- o Cost: Staff time to implement
- o Cost Savings: More than \$60,000 in the first year
- o Energy Impact: CO2 reduction of 2.7 million pounds a year, which is equal to planting 31,570 trees or eliminating 165 cars from the roads

The county also plans to investigate several renewable technologies, including installing solar photovoltaic collectors on the Laramie Building on the main Jeffco campus and the Evergreen and Central Road and Bridge Shops.

In total, the county's energy savings would equal planting 63,140 trees or eliminating 330 cars from the roads. The plan also has the potential to create and/or retain 44 jobs.

Projects would be self-financed with the \$1.8 million in EECBG funds, \$250,000 in utility rebates and \$55,000 a year in renewable energy credit payments from Xcel Energy, low-interest Qualified Energy Conservation Bonds, and other grants, possibly from the Governor's Energy Office.

McKinstry, a Seattle-based company with offices in Conifer, conducted the energy audit. McKinstry will begin preparing detailed scopes of work for priority projects and will work with County staff on creating financing plans.

Check out the [Energy Efficiency category](#) of blog postings to learn more about what Jefferson County is doing.

Traffic & Engineering Division Testing LED Traffic Signals

Thursday, December 17, 2009, 3:47:45 PM | Julie 

by the Traffic & Engineering Division

comments open from December 4 until January 13



The Traffic & Engineering Division is planning to continue its efforts to convert more of the signal indications at its traffic signals to LED bulbs from incandescent bulbs. LEDs provide a longer life (5+ years vs. 1 year), and lower power consumption (10-12 watts vs. 116 watts).

The solid state nature of LEDs provide greater reliability and less need to have a technician service the signal heads. LED indicator lights cost more initially, but the power savings and reliability can reduce the life cycle cost to that, and less, of incandescent bulbs.

Traffic & Engineering is currently testing LEDs from two different manufacturers in two signal heads at the intersection of Bergen Parkway and Sugarbush Drive in Evergreen (the westbound heads that you see as you drive toward the Bergen Park roundabout).

We're asking for your feedback on several items:

- Which of the indications look better both at night and during the day?
- How do the LEDs compare to the adjacent signal heads with incandescent bulbs?

The LEDs will be in place until at least early January 2010. Please let us know your thoughts by taking this [short survey](#).

Five Tips for Cutting Energy Costs

Tuesday, December 08, 2009, 10:40:15 AM | Julie →

by Public Information



More and more Jeffco residents are looking for ways to "go green," and in today's economic climate, they are

extra motivated because of the financial savings that can go along with it.

If the average Jeffco residential customer reduced home electricity use by 15 percent, the annual savings would be \$80 in electricity costs, a 500-pound reduction in the amount of coal burned, and a decrease in CO₂ emissions equal to the amount emitted by a car driven 1,400 miles. For more information, visit Xcel Energy's Web site for the [Smart Energy Guide](#).

To help you get started, here are five easy tips for reducing the amount of energy you use (and pay for).

1. Turn off your computer at night

A recent [Alliance to Save Energy study](#) found that half of the 108 million office computers in the U.S. are not properly shut down at night. The result is \$2.8 billion a year spent in unnecessary electric costs and emissions of about 20 million tons of carbon dioxide — roughly the equivalent of four million cars.

You can make shutting down your computer and peripherals easier by using a power strip/surge protector. When this equipment is not in use for extended periods, turn off the switch on the power strip to prevent them from drawing power even when shut off.

For more information visit:

The U.S. Department of Energy's [Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy page](#)

The [Alliance to Save Energy Web site](#)

2. Unplug electronics, turn off lights, use energy efficient lighting.

Electronics that are plugged in still draw some electricity when they are turned off (such as your cell phone charger, stereos and TVs). A typical home has about 20 of these devices and they are responsible for 5–10% of total household electricity use. Easily unplug electronics when not in use by plugging them into a power strip.

You can also save money and energy by turning off lights when you leave a room. Just one 75-watt bulb turned off for one extra hour a day can save \$2.15 a year. Multiply that by several bulbs for several hours a day, and your savings start to add up. ENERGY STAR qualified light bulbs are a great value. They use 75% less energy, last up to 10 times longer, and produce about 75% less heat than traditional incandescent models.

Installing compact fluorescent (CFL) bulbs can save approximately \$40 over the life of the bulb. Just a handful around the house and you could notice a difference in your energy bills. They cost a bit more, but you'll change them less often and they produce little or no heat.

Install dimmers and motion sensors where possible. Dimmer switches can extend bulb life up to 20 times if dimmed to half the brightness.

And, finally, install motion detector lights for outdoor lighting. Motion detectors put light where you want it for brief periods of time to provide safety and security for your property.

For more information visit:

Xcel Energy's Web site for the [Using Electricity at Home packet](#)

3. Use a programmable thermostat, seal and insulate, check your air filter, plant trees and use passive solar.

As much as half of the energy used in your home goes to heating and cooling, but you can save about \$150 every year by using a programmable thermostat. And, if your home has central air conditioning, you can save \$100 or more during the summer by raising your thermostat's temperature from 72 to 78 degrees. Reduce thermostat temperature from 72 to 68 degrees during the heating season to save 5 percent on heating costs.

Sealing and insulating your home can improve the efficiency of your heating and cooling system by as much as 20 percent — and sometimes much more.

Dirty air filters make your system work harder to keep you warm or cool. Check your air filter every month, especially during heavy use months (winter and summer). Your central air conditioner's condenser works more efficiently in a cooler environment. Provide shade around your air conditioner to reduce your cooling costs by nearly 3 percent.

Planting trees around your home can also provide shade and thus lower air-conditioning needs. Deciduous trees – those that produce leaves in the spring and lose them in the fall – shade your house from the sun during warmer days and let the sun warm your house on cooler days. Shading your home could save up to 8 percent on cooling costs.

Use passive solar heating on sunny days. Open drapes on south-facing windows when it is sunny. At night, close drapes to retain heat. Close drapes to provide insulation where windows receive no direct sunlight. Up to 15 percent of your heat can escape through unprotected windows.

For more information visit:

Energy Star's Web page on [Heating and Cooling Efficiently](#)

The National Association of Home Builders Web page on [Top 10 Energy Wasters and Savers](#)

Xcel Energy's brochure on [60 Simple Ways to Save Money on Your Energy Bill](#)

4. Use water more efficiently: run full loads, fix leaky faucets, and adjust water heaters.

A family of four uses approximately 400 gallons of water every day. By making just a few simple changes to use water more efficiently, you could save as much as \$170 per year.

Run full loads in your dishwasher and washing machine. Fix leaks -- a leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons of water per day; and one drop per second from a leaky faucet wastes up to 400 gallons of water a year.

Set your water heater at 120 degrees. Overheating your water, beyond 120 degrees, can be wasteful and unsafe. By lowering your water temperature to 120 degrees or less, you can save up to \$25 annually if you use an electric water heater (\$18 annually if you use a gas water heater).

5. Set your refrigerator at the right temperature, clean coils and replace old appliances with energy-efficient products.

Your refrigerator should be set between 34 and 37 degrees and your freezer at 5 degrees. These are the safest temperatures for food storage, and most refrigerators operate most efficiently at these settings.

Once a year, you should pull out your refrigerator and clean or dust the coils on the back. Clean coils help the

compressor cool faster and run less frequently, which extends the life of your refrigerator and reduces energy use.

When purchasing appliances, cooling equipment, lighting or home electronics, choose energy-efficient products that will save you money in the long run and help to preserve our natural resources. Look for the ENERGY STAR and/or WaterSense labels on appliances, faucets, toilets and more.

To begin shopping for water-saving products and appliances visit:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [WaterSense Web site](#)

The [Energy Star Web site](#)

When it comes to saving energy, individual efforts really do add up. If you conserve energy by using less fuel, heat, light and water, then you are saving not just time and money, but also natural resources. These five tips should get you started in the right direction.

Jeffco Fleet Working with Hybrid Power

Tuesday, December 08, 2009, 10:39:44 AM | Julie →

by Todd Leopold, Administrative Services Director



As hybrid automobiles become more popular, we often get questions about whether Jeffco uses energy-efficient vehicles such as hybrids. The answer is yes. Jeffco currently has ten hybrid vehicles, and we continue to add them to our fleet.

As a county, we support energy-efficient vehicles because of the financial and environmental benefits they provide. In fact, Jeffco has a long tradition of supporting these vehicles. We were an early adopter of hybrid technology (starting back in 2002), and we have worked to integrate them into our fleet as technology and production advancements have been made.

But we aren't content to sit back and wait for the technology to evolve. Jeffco's Fleet Services division actively works with a variety of truck manufacturers and their engineering divisions, as well as with a hybrid electric system manufacturer, in an effort to improve the technology and expand their use to heavier-duty equipment. We are also working toward being able to serve as the first entity in the country to utilize some of the heavy-

duty hybrid technology in a Jefferson County snow plow! Watch for announcements in the coming months.

New Online Hiring Process at Jeffco

Tuesday, December 08, 2009, 10:39:04 AM | Julie →

A new online recruitment process and applicant tracking system, NeoGov, has been implemented at Jefferson County. The new system became live as of Monday, June 22. The application will automate the entire recruitment process from the creation of the position requisition to the completion of the hiring.

By eliminating the former manual and paper intensive process, the new system will save the county time and money. It is estimated that the time it takes to fill job openings will be cut by 33 percent. Freeing up HR staff will mean more time for other issues.

"All employment candidates now will be able to utilize a comprehensive, centrally located online recruitment site to apply for jobs in any of the county's departments - including the Library; eliminating thousands of paper documents and dramatically reducing processing time," explained Jeffco HR Director Pat Maher.

Applicants will use this new system much like many of the other job search sites, by creating a user profile with all their relevant information and work history. Because of the secure server, information can be saved at any point and retrieved later, right where the user left off in the process. Another benefit of NeoGov is that applicants can not only use this same information to apply for jobs with Jefferson County but also with more than 425 other jurisdictions nationwide.

Functions include:

- >> Online application process for job seekers
- >> Automated/online posting of open Jefferson County positions
- >> Acceptance of applications online
- >> Automatic minimum qualifications screening
- >> Automation of the process and information flow between HR and hiring managers

In the initial phase, the system will be administered by Jeffco's HR department and the Sheriff's Office. The DA, Public Health and Library have all committed to using this system to recruit for positions as they become available.

Power IT Down

Tuesday, December 08, 2009, 10:38:25 AM | Julie →

by Public Information

comments open from August 26 until September 15



On a single day this summer, county governments across the country could dramatically slash energy consumption costs with the flick of a switch! **On August 27, the National Association of Counties is encouraging all county organizations to power down computers, monitors, printers and any other electronic devices at the end of the workday** in an effort to reduce consumption and cut energy costs. Jefferson County has joined the effort and is challenging their employees and citizens to do the same.

Last year, more than 2,800 government and industry employees pledged to power down their computers, printers and monitors on Power IT Down Day – *a one-day savings of over 37,000 kilowatt-hours*.

For the second year, many major IT companies, such as Citrix, Hewlett-Packard, Intel and Microsoft, have committed to switching off personal computers and peripherals when leaving the office for the evening on August 27. If only one percent of county governments' 2.9 million employees participated in Power IT Down Day, more than 380,000 kilowatt-hours could be saved. That comes to an energy cost-savings of more than \$38,000 in a single night.

Power IT Down Day encourages government to embrace responsible energy usage at the individual level. We can all make a difference, not just on August 27, but every day.