



PORTLAND VA
 MEDICAL CENTER
 YOUR GEMS
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SUMMER/FALL 2012

GEMS Newsletter



A Message From the GEMS Coordinator

Yeah! Summer has finally arrived, and I hope everyone is having a chance to get out and enjoy the outdoors and our beautiful Oregon landscapes.

The GEMS Committee was busy this spring visiting every department and tallying environmental aspects and impacts. We always learn a lot from this process, including best management practices, which are listed on Page 6. Thanks to all for your cooperation in completing this requirement. It really helps us learn your work areas and put things in perspective.

Also, we had another very active earth week with results listed on Page 2. We had an art workshop and recycled contest, a sustainability fair with OHSU, office supply swap, and shoe and cell phone recycling. These events continue to be a fun and innovative way for staff, visitors, and patients to get involved and helps the environment along the way.

This newsletter focuses quite a bit on energy as we are working on an educational campaign to get employees involved in doing their part. See Pages 4 and 5 for more information on what you can do to help.

As everyone is increasingly busy this time of year, please remember small changes can add up to big savings. Please consider doing your part to be "green" in your daily routines. Take re-usable shopping bags to the market, enjoy fresh fruits and veggies from the farmers market, conserve water, turn off equipment and lights when not in use; just to name a few ideas.

Enjoy the summer as it goes quickly. I see school supplies already on the store shelves. Before you know it, Halloween and Christmas will be here again. So get on that sunblock and get outside and have some fun!

Wendy Trapp
 GEMS Coordinator

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If you are interested in becoming a GEMS Committee Member, please contact Wendy Trapp at ext.55417 or email: wendy.trapp@va.gov

EARTH WEEK A HUGE SUCCESS

Earth week continues to be successful at the Portland and Vancouver campuses. This year, our week long schedule included many events: spinning wheel with earth day giveaways, shoe and cell phone recycling, pollution prevention campaign, recycled art workshop and contest, popular office swap; and the sustainability fair. Vancouver also participated in tennis shoe and cell phone recycling, an office swap and had local vendor's sharing information.



Earth Day Statistics:

Sustainability Fair	35 Tables with Community Information
Cell phones	54 Items
Shoes	200 Items
Paper Shredding	600 lbs.
Office Swap	500 lbs.
Art Contest	6 contestants



Each event was well attended and very successful with nothing but positive feedback.

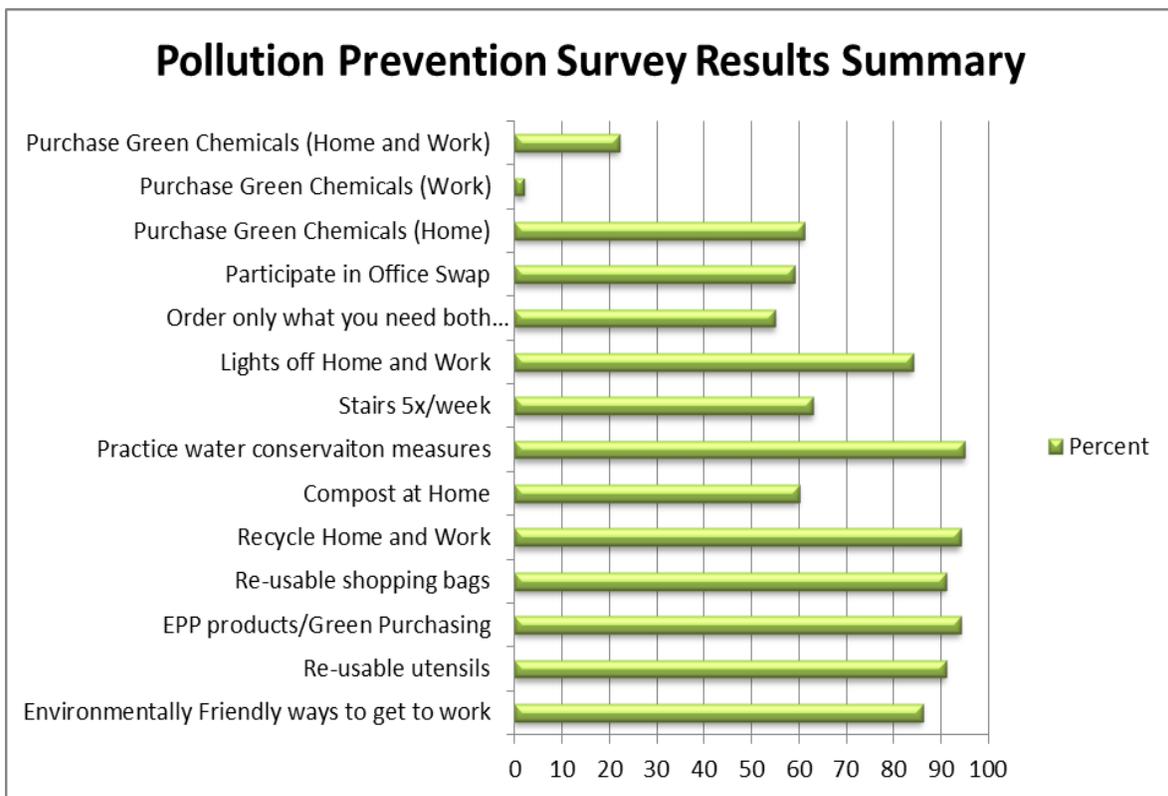


POLLUTION PREVENTION

GEMS Committee Goal: Establish a current pollution prevention plan with specific goals and objectives and develop a campaign that receives an 80% response rate.

Pollution Prevention Survey

A total of 186 employees completed the survey from January—June of 2012. The results are shown in the table below.



Based on the results of the survey, it looks like buying green chemicals, participating more in the office swap, taking the stairs, and limiting ordering are the best options for improvement. Composting is as well, but work area composting is not yet available in all areas. The GEMS Committee should take these results into account when making decisions for FY 2013 Objectives and Targets.

Top 10 Tips to Stay Cool and Save Money

Easy and inexpensive solutions for business or home.



Maintain air filters and HVAC equipment: Well-maintained equipment runs more efficiently, so replace or clean filters as needed and have your air conditioner unit serviced annually.

Set your thermostat as high as is comfortable: The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill will be. Running the AC at 78°F instead of 72°F can save 6%-18% on your cooling bill.

Draw your drapes: Keep your blinds, shades and curtains closed on south and west-facing windows during the day to block the heat of direct sunlight.

Stop cool air from escaping: Cool air can go right out the window. Add weather stripping on doors and windows and caulk the cracks to keep cool air in and hot air from leaking into your home.

Properly insulate your attic: Install modern insulation to lower heating and cooling costs. On warm days, attic temperatures can get up to 140°F. In high cooling climates, a radiant barrier installed under the roof deck and/or a continuous ridge and soffit vent can effectively lower attic temperatures.

Plant trees or shrubs for shade: A good landscaping plan can do wonders. For instance, properly placed trees around the house can save between \$100 and \$250 annually.

Install ceiling fans: A ceiling fan can make a room feel 6 or 7 degrees cooler while using less energy than a 100-watt light bulb. Run fans only when people are in the room.

Go oven-less at meal time: Use the microwave, toaster or a counter-top grill, all of which use less energy than a full-sized oven, when you need to prepare small portions of food.



Unplug electronics and appliances when not in use: Use multiple-outlet strips so you can turn everything off with one flip of a switch. Leaving a computer on all day can cost about 21 cents per day, or about \$75 per year.

Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs): Lighting makes up about 10% of home energy costs, and CFLs can save up to 75% of that energy. They also last longer, saving money on replacements.

Energy Conservation is a Journey—Not a Destination



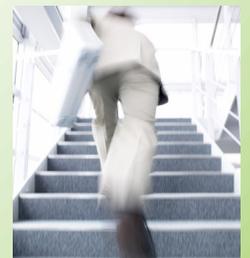
✓ Unplug electronic chargers, personal fans and air purifiers when not in use. *Only 5% of the power drawn by a cell phone charger is used to charge the phone; the other 95% is wasted when left plugged in!*

✓ Use communal refrigerators instead of a personal one at work. *Mini-refrigerators can consume over 680 kwh of electricity per year and costs over \$50 a year in electricity costs.*



✓ When the coffee is done, turn off the pot. *Coffee pots use an average of 900 watts of electricity and can cost over \$200 a year if left on continuously.*

✓ Take the stairs, instead of the elevator. *Saves elevator use and it's a good healthy choice! Yearly savings can equal the energy to power seven homes. Wow!*



✓ Personal fans and air purifiers can use 25 to 200 watts depending on the speed setting. *If left on continuously it would amount to an energy use of over 1300 kwh of electricity or \$100 per year.*

Let's step in the right direction.



Environmental Tips—What is Our Facility Doing?



Here are some best practices ideas.

Reducing the amount of packaging and ordering only what they need – Canteen

Reducing fuel usage by better coordination of shuttles-Transportation

Reducing outside pesticide use to “warning” labeled pesticides and eliminating organophosphates – Grounds

Participating in medical plastics recycling – Specialty Care, Inpatient Wards, Operating Room, Pharmacy, Dental, and Lab

Shutting computers and equipment down when not in use and keeping windows shut – Fiscal and Business Office

Using the new “faxcom” system to reduce paper – Some CBOC’s, Business Office

Composting – Nutrition and Food Service, Canteen, Research and FMS Offices

Reusing linens for rags, reducing chemicals in the washer process – Laundry

Reusing paper for scratch paper or note taking – Education

Pharmacy waste collection program – Operating Room, Pharmacy, Inpatient Wards, Specialty Care, Primary Care and Women’s Clinic

PVAMC Employees, want some more green? Visit the [GEMS Sharepoint!](#)