

LET'S SAVE ENERGY

School Energy Efficiency News

KSBA-SEMP ... Cultivating energy efficiency, best practices in Kentucky school districts



July 2015

Muhlenberg County Schools

leaders are convinced that energy management is worth the effort

When the last Energy Management Report showed that Muhlenberg County ranked 145th out of 173 districts Eric Bletzinger, the district's finance officer and energy manager, took action. He saw that his district was well above the state Energy Utilization Index* (EUI) average of 60, which translated into significant opportunity for dollar savings. As finance officer, Bletzinger also knew the significant financial issues the district was facing and was looking for any way to reduce district costs.

In February 2015, Bletzinger attended his first SEMP training session and learned one of the most efficient school districts in the state was right next door – Butler County Schools. As he listened to discussions about building a successful Energy Management Plan and ways to maximize building automation systems, he wanted to learn more from Butler County Energy Manager and Chief Information Officer Jimmy Arnold. That is where a new partnership began.

Bletzinger and Arnold agreed to walk through the Muhlenberg County buildings on a Saturday to see how the control system was working. "You can have the best systems in the world, but nothing replaces seeing for yourself if the controls were overridden," Arnold said. As the two continued their work together over the next weeks, they talked with custodians, principals and maintenance staff to identify how the buildings were being used.

From there they adjusted the buildings' controls schedule, and recognized how to "ramp-up" the



Eric Bletzinger, Finance Officer & Energy Manager, (right) and Jimmy Fleming, Maintenance Director, review the HVAC controls schedule for Muhlenberg County to ensure efficient schedule for summer maintenance.

building in stages. With those initial steps, they were able to eliminate over 32,000 hours of HVAC runtime, which over a three-month period translated into a savings of over \$60,000.

Those initial results sold Bletzinger on the idea that time spent on energy management will provide an opportunity for saving dollars that can be used for the classroom. On opening day August 5, he plans to ensure that new procedures are in place for scheduling the control system in each building. "Our goal is to seek ways to
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SEMP expanded services provided by KSBA



In 2008, state leaders saw nearly a 90 percent increase in non-transportation energy costs for Kentucky public school districts over an eight-year period. House Bill 2 (2008) led to KRS160.325, which supported the Governor's Intelligent Energy Choices for Kentucky's Future. That statute and Board Policy 05.23 have led to a new way Kentucky school districts think about managing their energy usage and associated costs.

In 2010, KSBA plunged into energy services, with ARRA (the federal economic stimulus package) funding to assist districts in hiring and supporting local energy professionals. KSBA's School Energy Managers Project (SEMP) has been instrumental in edu-

cating school board members, providing professional development for district personnel and continued funding for local energy professionals.


With recent utility rate cases, KSBA again was a voice for local school boards in those rate proceedings. An understanding of how and when schools use energy has become a factor in communicating with utility companies, as well as the Kentucky Public Service Commission. Partnering with these key stakeholders to find ways to reduce peak electrical demand becomes a win for all parties.

The result of the KSBA intervention in the just-concluded Kentucky Power Company (KPC) rate case on behalf of 23 districts in that service territory, meant a 35 percent reduction in the rate requested. More importantly, KPC is establishing a "pilot rate" for schools. Because data shows that most school buildings peak at a different time than the utility company's system peak, KPC agreed to support the school rate, as well as provide \$200,000 a year to support school energy managers in the affected districts.

Similarly, KSBA intervention has resulted in public schools served by Louisville Gas and Electric in six districts seeing no increase in rates, avoiding a requested \$500,000 in additional utility costs. Further, the 78
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NEWS RELEASE

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PSC Approves Settlement in KU, LG&E Rate Cases
No increase in LG&E electric rates; LG&E gas, KU electric rate hikes reduced

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PSC Approves Settlement in Kentucky Power Rate Case

In the past month, the Kentucky Public Service Commission has approved settlements in two rate cases that KSBA intervened on behalf of school districts.

SEMP expanded services

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districts affected by a Kentucky Utilities rate increase will see that increase reduced by \$1 million, down to \$3.5 million. In addition, unspent funding for energy managers from the current LGE-KU school program will be extended through FY2016. Following PSC approval of a subsequent request, LGE-KU will make available \$2.5 million for school energy managers and projects in FY2017 and FY2018.

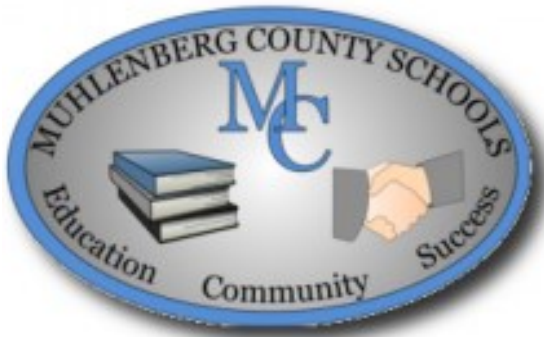
Ron Willhite, director of the KSBA SEMP program, said the outcomes in these rate cases underscore the importance of the financial contribution that local

school boards made to finance the intervention.

“Because of the school boards’ partnership, we were able to bring expert testimony to the table during the PSC proceedings, not only in terms of the impact of the original rate proposal on school budgets, but also about the cost efficiency work that’s already taking place in schools,” Willhite said. “Both the reduced rate impact and efficiency improvements make available funds needed for classroom resources to serve the Commonwealth’s students.”

Muhlenberg County Schools

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achieve savings without impacting the teaching and working environment. We will communicate the successes we are having, to help faculty and staff understand the need for scheduling,” said Bletzinger. “We may even consider some friendly competition between the schools to increase the interest to conserve.

“Through our recent performance contract we were fortunate to have had the building automation systems in place. However, because we were operating outside of the recommended parameters, we were not utilizing the systems we had. That resulted in overspending by our district in a time where we couldn’t afford to overspend,” added Bletzinger.

Plans for the partnership continue to evolve. Because energy management requires a hands-on process, Arnold will monitor electric usage with Bletzinger over the next few seasons. In looking to other significant opportunities, limiting electrical demand is a future goal.

Students at Muhlenberg County Career and Technical Center build skills not only in Health Services and Automotive Technology, but also in energy related careers of Industrial Maintenance, Electrical Technology, and Coal Technology.



Superintendent Energy Management Reporting Packet to be sent in August

For most Kentucky school districts, August signals a start to the new school year. This is just a reminder that districts should be tracking all of the non-transportation energy used in the district, as well as the progress on the district's Energy Management Plan, to be reported by October 1st. This report is required by KRS160.325 and Board Policy 05.23.

The actual FY2015 EMR report form, and reporting information, will be included in a Superintendent Packet and available online. Webinars will be held in late August to answer questions about completing the form.

Kentucky Ranks Second for Percentage of ENERGY STAR Schools

Over the past two years, KSBA-SEMP has been tracking the number of ENERGY STAR Schools in the nation, and comparing that with data from the U.S. Department of Education on the number of school buildings. In 2013, Kentucky was fifth in the nation in percentage of ENERGY STAR Schools. As of June 19, 2015, Kentucky has moved to second in the nation. This proves that Kentucky Schools are becoming more energy efficient.

Top Ten States: Kentucky Ranks Second for Percentage ENERGY STAR Schools of Total Schools

June 19, 2015

