

MUNICIPAL PARTNER

KITSAP COUNTY, WASHINGTON



COMMUNITY SIZE

Large Suburban

GOAL

Increase awareness of and participation in County energy conservation efforts by both employees and constituents

BARRIER

Energy is not viewed as a core business element & management priority

APPROACH

To encourage employee energy awareness and conservation, Kitsap County engaged in a County to County Courthouse Energy Challenge with neighboring Pierce County to see which courthouse could decrease energy use the most

INITIATIVE LAUNCHED

May 2013

Overview

Kitsap County is working to reduce energy use and save taxpayer dollars as part of a cohesive effort to improve energy efficiency in County facilities while raising energy conservation awareness throughout the community. In October 2011, the Board of County Commissioners adopted an Energy Efficiency & Conservation Plan which calls for a 30 percent reduction in all energy use – including electricity, natural gas, propane, gasoline and diesel fuels – across the entire portfolio of County operations and facilities. In addition to building and facility retrofits, the County is implementing a behavioral change strategy focused on employee education and outreach to reduce energy consumption. As part of this strategy and to help achieve the 30 percent reduction goal, Kitsap County worked with neighboring Pierce County to develop an innovative Courthouse Energy Challenge. This County to County challenge was aimed at increasing the awareness of county energy conservation programs, plans and policies among employees and the public.



Policies

Prior to the Challenge, Kitsap County had an [Energy Conservation Policy](#) and a Space Heater Policy in place.

The Energy Conservation Policy outlines standards for operations and maintenance at County facilities related to lighting, heating and cooling, the use of personal appliances, and best practices for employee conservation. This policy targets conservation actions within County buildings including best practice employee behavior changes and standards for operations and maintenance.

The Space Heater Policy outlines minimum energy efficiency and safety criteria as well as an approval process for the use of personal space heaters. Both policies were advertised and reinforced during the Challenge. Reminding employees what they can do to stay cool without wasting energy and perhaps get them to take space heaters home while they are not needed was seen as an effective strategy to reinforce existing policies.

- **Tools:**

- [Space Heater Policy](#)



Process

The Kitsap County and Pierce County Resource Conservation Managers (RCM) have quarterly meetings to share information on new projects and share best practices. As the result of one of these meetings, the RCMs discussed the joint idea of challenging one another on energy use and then briefed their respective executive leadership teams. The executive leadership in both counties agreed to participate in the Challenge once they knew what participation would entail and how results would be measured. Once leadership was on board, Pierce County sent Kitsap County a letter officially challenging them to the competition.

The first step in determining the feasibility of the County to County Courthouse Energy Challenge was to determine if similar buildings with similar functions existed to compare between counties. The Courthouse was selected as the target building for the Challenge as the hours and types of operations were similar in this building for each county. The Kitsap County and Pierce County RCMs spent a month collaborating and developing a framework for the Challenge and associated educational materials.

Education of courthouse staff was the primary Kitsap County activity for promoting the no-cost, energy saving Challenge. The Challenge promoted simple, no-cost conservation actions that employees can take at work, such as keeping windows closed, turning off computer equipment at night, and conducting work station energy audits. Pierce County focused efforts on operations and maintenance opportunities for energy savings, such as turning off the boiler earlier in the spring than was usually done. While the primary focus of energy conservation education and outreach associated with the Challenge was for internal staff, the counties also included some public outreach to reiterate that the steps taken to save public dollars through efficient operations in county buildings can be replicated in individual homes and businesses.

County staff developed displays outlining Challenge goals and actionable steps employees could take to conserve energy, which were placed in the main floor hallway in each Courthouse. The Challenge was advertised to employees via emails and e-newsletters as well as to the public with an article on each County's website. Specifically, Kitsap County encouraged education on energy efficiency measures through weekly messaging highlighting one specific no-cost conservation behavior:

- Week 1: Conduct a simple energy audit to identify potential savings. A checklist was provided to staff with instructions on how to conduct a simple work station energy audit.
- Week 2: Reevaluate your use of personal appliances. Specific employee actions in the 2011 Energy Conservation Policy were highlighted.
- Week 3: Turn off equipment for the holiday weekend. Employees were reminded to shut down for the Memorial Day weekend.
- Week 4: Keep windows and doors closed for energy savings. The RCM worked with the Sheriff's Office to halt the practice of having Security guards keep building doors open for ventilation on warm days.

One of the key challenges Kitsap County faced was communicating internally across departments and engaging a contracted custodial crew. To address this, Kitsap's RCM partnered with departmental Conservation Champions to share weekly email tips and communications regarding conservation practices. Security officers were also educated about keeping front doors closed on warm days, and custodial staff was educated about turning off lights and assisting in conservation efforts. Pierce County's RCM also met with Facilities Department staff to review building HVAC schedules and equipment energy saving opportunities. Both counties developed public displays and press releases advertising the Challenge goals and results.

Kitsap County received historical data from the local electric and natural gas providers by calling each provider for the 2013 billing data. Staff was then able to assess both energy usage and cost data for tallying results and evaluating performance. The County wanted to make a quick connection between employee behaviors and resulting energy billing information by avoiding the typical lag of 2-8 weeks between the billing cycle end date and the date when data is available for download by the RCM. The electric and gas companies agreed to provide data immediately after meter reads to provide Kitsap County access to billing data well in advance of the normal billing timeframe. This allowed the County to provide a summary of results to participants within two weeks of the Challenge ending while momentum and enthusiasm were still high.

- **Tools:**
 - [County Courthouse Energy Challenge Summary](#)
 - [Conservation Champion Role Outline](#)
 - [Office Energy Audit Checklist](#)
 - [Employee Conservation Tips](#)
 - [Custodial Staff Courthouse Challenge Flyer](#)
 - [Courthouse Security Office Flyer](#)



Tools and Resources

Developing the framework for the Challenge and the educational materials took approximately five hours of staff time as well as the paper and printing resources to produce the education materials. There were no capital outlays for either county as all of the conservation steps were done at no cost to the counties.



The Challenge took place over the month of May 2013. Each County compared the May 2013 courthouse energy bills with the average May billing for 2009 to 2012 to measure improvement. The County with the greatest percentage of savings was deemed the “winner” of the Challenge. Even with an unseasonably warm May, at the end of the Challenge, Kitsap County had a May energy savings of 39,527 kBtu, or 6% energy use savings resulting in a cost savings of \$983 for the month. The energy savings is equivalent to amount of energy needed to power 22 homes for a full year. Pierce County, with the strategy focused on equipment changes rather than just employee behavioral changes, won the challenge with a 31% decrease in kBtu consumption and a savings of \$3,705. Results can be viewed kind of at the [Pierce County website](#).

■ **Tools:**

- [Kitsap County May 2013 Courthouse Energy Challenge Results](#)
- [Courthouse Challenge Results Poster](#)
- [Press release](#)
- [Kitsap, Pierce courthouses compete to cut energy use](#)
- [Pierce, Kitsap counties compete to cut costs in Energy Challenge](#)
- [Pierce County challenges Kitsap County to energy reduction competition | Pierce County News](#)



Outcomes

Both counties saw energy and cost savings through the implementation of no-cost energy savings measures. The magnitude of results varied but demonstrated the value to both engaging employees in conservation and working with facilities staff to address operations and maintenance opportunities for conservation. Overall, the Challenge was a one-time snapshot of energy use, but Kitsap County used the results to promote the magnitude of savings that can be achieved with no-cost conservation measures and reiterated the importance of making these actions habits. Local media in both counties had interest in the Challenge and highlighted the initiative in local newspapers.