



# Energy and Environment Quarterly Newsletter

U.S. Department of Commerce; Office of Administrative Services; Office of Real Estate, Policy, and Major Programs; Energy, Environmental, and Transportation Division

## DOC Honors Environmental Stewardship Award Winners



### Did you know...

The Herbert C. Hoover Building's quarterly average for electric consumption this past quarter was 2,094,936 kilowatt hours, costing on average \$291,686.00 a month.

One way you can help lower our energy use is by turning your monitor off every night before you leave. If you are the last person to leave the office, be sure to turn off the lights.

The Department of Commerce recognized the 2009 Environmental Stewardship Award winners in a ceremony on April 22, 2009. The Environmental Stewardship Award program recognizes outstanding achievements of Department employees or organizations for efforts that significantly contribute to or promote environmental stewardship within the environmental, energy, or transportation programs.



*Fred Fanning with NIST award winners Todd Snouffer, John Bollinger, Bob Hellmuth and Mike Hatch.*

The awards program is authorized in Executive Order 13423, *Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management*.

NIST was selected for their water conservation project that allows for the reuse of approximately 33 million gallons of water a year by piping waste water from one building to be used in the cooling of another, saving the Department \$128,000.

NOAA's National Center for Coastal Ocean Sciences (NCCOS) received the award for their Environmental Management System (EMS) encompassing five main organizational research centers geographically distributed from South Carolina to Alaska. The



*NOAA award winners Dr. Gary Matlock, Jean Durosko, and Bernie Gottholm*

NCCOS EMS was audited and found to be in compliance with all 17 elements of the international standard ISO 14001.

Both award winners exemplify environmental stewardship within the Department. Nominations will be accepted for the 2010 awards in December of this year. ☺

## Digital Television Conversion

Many television sets stopped receiving broadcasts June 12, 2009, due to the conversion from analog broadcasts to a digital format. Converter boxes are available that allow analog television to continue to receive broadcasts. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (a Department Operating Unit) administered a coupon program that allowed those affected by the change to obtain up to two coupons, each worth \$40, that can be applied toward the cost of eligible converter boxes. The converter boxes made it possible to continue to receive regular broadcasts even if an analog television set is owned.

The coupon program ended on

July 31, but converter boxes are still available without government subsidy.

For those who have chosen instead to replace existing television sets, please dispose of them in an environmentally responsible manner. Most municipal landfills in the area accept "e-waste" on specific days to allow old television sets (and computers, monitors, printers, etc.) to be recycled. Recycling keeps these items out of the landfill where they can leach toxic chemicals into the ground.

Please check with your local recycling center to determine when you can drop off used electronics. ☺

## Energy Workgroup

The Energy, Environmental, and Transportation Division initiated an Energy Workgroup on July 24, 2009. The intent of the group was to help promote communication in energy related matters between the Department and the Operating Units. Future meetings will be scheduled on a quarterly basis, or as necessary.

Workgroup topics will include the latest news on Federal energy mandates, agency updates, presentations, and open discussions. Details will be sent to various staff/energy managers throughout the Department prior to the next meeting. If you are interested in joining the Energy Workgroup please e-mail Bob Scinta at [rscinta@doc.gov](mailto:rscinta@doc.gov). ☺

### Inside this issue:

A Message from Our Director	2
BEA Wins Cell Phone Collection Drive	2
Efficient Lighting Saves Energy	2
Green Tips	2
DOC Celebrates Earth Day 2009	3
PTO Holds First-Ever Green Fair	3
Alternative Fuel for DOC Fleet	4
Getting to Know...	4

## A Message from Our Director

I am very excited that this issue of the Energy and Environment Newsletter highlights some of the activities of our HCHB Green Team. Our Green Team has over 100 volunteers who promote energy awareness and environmental stewardship throughout the HCHB through such activities as a cell phone drive to benefit a local charity, participating in the Department of Commerce's Annual Earth Day Fair, and actively helping re-shape the way our employees think about the environment.

Due in part to their activism, the Department is evaluating "greening" the HCHB cafeteria operations, encouraging employees to bike to work, purchasing and placing recycling bins, and reporting needless water and energy usage to help conserve our natural resources. Recently,

members of the Green Team have also volunteered to assist with the Feds Feed Families campaign to help the local DC Food Bank with meeting their needs.

Moving forward, the HCHB Green Team is planning exciting events for America Recycles Day and Energy Awareness Week. If you would like to join the HCHB Green Team, please just send an email to [gogreen@doc.gov](mailto:gogreen@doc.gov) and we will contact you about our next meeting. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this issue of the Newsletter! ☺



Douglas F. Elznic  
Acting Director, Office of Administrative Services

## Efficient Lighting Saves Energy

Did you know that in 2005 the Department of Commerce completed a detailed feasibility study, including a room-by-room count, identification and analysis of the existing lighting fixtures of the Herbert C. Hoover Building (HCHB)? The study, completed in two stages, determined the building had approximately 1.9 million square feet. The total number of lighting fixtures tallied during this survey was 16,015.

PEPCO recommended replacing all existing T12 and T8 lighting components and standardizing the DOC inventory to one lamp type and one ballast type. Each ballast and lamp would be replaced with an equal number of new generation T8 lamps and the appropriate number of electronic ballasts.

Within a 22 month span the Department retrofitted or replaced lighting fixtures for the office spaces, conference rooms, mechanical spaces and most common areas. The reduction in kilowatt hours or usage per year through this project was 4,390,486, which provided for a

projected energy related savings of \$580,091.00 per year.

The new T8 lighting ballasts are dual voltage, and consume 29% less electricity, as compared to T8 ballasts from just one year ago. ☺

## Green Tips: Ideas for Improving Your Ecological Footprint



The bottled water industry sold over 26 billion liters of water in 2004, producing more than 28 billion plastic bottles a year and 250,000 tons of carbon dioxide. Seventeen million barrels of oil are used to manufacture this amount of plastic bottles, the equivalent of fueling 100,000 cars for a year.

Extreme temperatures, such as leaving a bottle of water in a hot car, also cause the plastic bottle to leach Bisphenol-A (BPA)

## BEA Wins Cell Phone Collection Drive



On the heels of a successful drive by the Environmental Protection

Agency to keep used cell phones out of the landfill, DOC's Green Team sponsored their own cell phone collection competition for the Herbert C. Hoover Building. During the month of May, employees were to bring old, unwanted, personal cell phones, PDAs, and pagers to their Operating Unit's Green Team representative for donation. The team that collected the most donations would win the opportunity to decide what charity would receive the donation.

During the drive, 128 cell phones were collected. The winning operating unit, donating one-third of the total phones, was the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). BEA has chosen the charity, Doorways for Women and Families, to receive the donation on behalf of the Department. Doorways for Women and Families strives to end homelessness and family violence by offering safe shelter

and housing, life changing support services and community advocacy to women and children. Not only did this drive keep 128 phones from ending up in the landfill, but now they will help women and children in need.

Congratulations BEA and thanks to all of you who contributed to the competition! ☺

### Special points of interest:

- Carbon Capture and Sequestration Conference, Washington, DC, September 14-15. To register go to [www.platts.com/Events/2009/pc919/](http://www.platts.com/Events/2009/pc919/).
- October is Energy Awareness Month. Broadcast emails will be sent detailing how to participate in Energy Awareness activities.

into the water. More than 200 independent scientific studies have linked BPA to brain development and behavioral problems in young children, early puberty and the eventual onset of some types of cancer. Even if, as a consumer, you avoid leaving your bottled water in places that may cause the plastic to heat, you cannot be sure the BPA has not leached into the water. Distribution of water to the consumer through shipping and trucking also exposes the water to extreme temperatures.

Reducing the amount of bottled water you consume helps Mother Earth, your health and

your wallet. Bottled water, at an average of \$1.50 a bottle costs more than 1,900 times the price of tap water. Consider switching to filtered water at home and reusable containers while on the go. If bottled water use is unavoidable, always recycle. Of the 28 billion plastic bottles consumed for bottled water, 86% end up in landfills.

For more information, visit the following websites:

[www.bisphenol-a.org](http://www.bisphenol-a.org), and/or <http://earth911.com/plastic/plastic-bottle-recycling-facts>.

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## DOC Celebrates Earth Day 2009

The Department of Commerce celebrated Earth Day on April 22, 2009, with an Environmental Fair held in the lobby of the Herbert C. Hoover Building. Commerce employees and contractors were able to visit booths where they could learn about the environmental activities of the Operating Units and about innovative products from a variety of vendors.

Several Operating Units and facilities that could not make it into DC that day held their own celebrations. NIST volunteers participated in the Gaithersburg City Clean Up Day by removing trash and debris from Muddy Branch Creek. The National Weather Service in Hanford, Calif., planted a Ginkgo tree, selected for its ability to thrive in poor air quality, in honor of this year's Earth Day. NOAA offices in Seattle, Wash., got together during lunch to discuss how to green their office.

Earth Day 2009 was a major success, culminating in the awards ceremony for the forward-thinking environmental projects honored by the Department. ☺



## U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Holds First-Ever Green Fair

In celebration of Earth Day 2009, and to encourage its employees to adopt more sustainable lifestyles at both work and home, the U.S. Patent and Trademark

Office held its first-ever "Green Fair" on April 21 at the agency's headquarters in Alexandria, Va.

The event was overwhelmingly successful as approximately 1,000 employees came out to learn green practices and tips from representatives from a broad range of local and federal organizations with expertise in energy efficiency and conservation. Participants included Dominion Virginia Power, EPA Energy Star, City of

Alexandria's Department of Transportation and Environmental Services, Telework Exchange, Commuter Connections, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, General Services Administration, Sodexo, and others.

Based on this year's success, the agency certainly looks forward to continuing this effort in future years! ☺



## Alternative Fuel for DOC Fleet

*Eston Lewis, Office of the Secretary, Fleet Manager*

The Department of Commerce (DOC) is developing a pilot program in conjunction with the Native

American Bio-Fuels International (NABFI) for E85 refueling at different points within Washington, DC, and Arlington, VA. This action is to assist the Department with meeting the established goals associated with Executive Order (EO) 13423, *Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management* and the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) of 2007.

EO 13423 requires that Federal agencies with 20 or more vehicles decrease petroleum consumption by 2 percent per year

through fiscal year (FY) 2015 compared to the FY 2005

baseline. Federal agencies must also increase alternative fuel use by 10 percent each year compared to the previous year (starting at the FY 2005

baseline).

EISA 2007 includes similar petroleum reduction provisions, requiring each agency to reduce its annual petroleum consumption by 20 percent in FY 2015 compared to the FY 2005 baseline. EISA requires agency fleets to increase alternative fuel use by 10 percent annually between FY 2005 and FY 2015.



*A tanker, similar to this one, would supply alternative fuel to participating Federal fleets.*

In order to comply with these Federal requirements, the Department has partnered with an outside vendor. NABFI is working hard with the DC Government as well as private rental spaces to provide areas for wet housing opportunities. Wet housing is a mobile process where alternative fuel trucks will go to different sites in town to refuel vehicles. This makes using alternative fuel easier and more convenient to federal agencies in the Washington metropolitan area as currently there are only two locations (near the Pentagon and in Georgetown) where E85 can be purchased. Wet housing is a mobile solution that enables the government to receive fuel more conveniently.

NABFI is also developing a "spill plan" in the event of an emergency. Participation and support from INTERFUEL members, a working group com-

prised of various Federal agency Fleet Managers, and DC regional fleets is essential to make this pilot program a success. Although negotiations are underway, there is no firm date for the start of the pilot program. Despite this, INTERFUEL members and Federal fleet managers should start thinking about which vehicles would be available during the day or possibly during the evening (i.e. the Post Office who may benefit by refueling at night) for refueling. Fleet Managers will be available to refuel at different times during the business week.

Many different fueling sites have been proposed and maps of these locations are available by request. For further information, please contact Eston Lewis at [elewis3@doc.gov](mailto:elewis3@doc.gov). ☺

## Getting to Know DOC Energy Manager—Bob Scinta



*Mr. Bob Scinta, DOC Energy Manager.*

Mr. Bob Scinta joins us as an environmental engineer (licensed in Virginia) with a background in energy and environmental matters. This includes regulatory compliance, multimedia (air, water, and waste) auditing, environmental management

system implementation, sustainable design, water conservation and a variety of energy savings performance contract project experience.

Prior to coming to DOC, Bob served as the Environmental Programs Manager and the Acting Energy Programs Manager for the Facilities Branch of the Department of Justice/Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP). Highlighted projects include a 750 kW wind turbine that was installed at an institution in California and a project in Pennsylvania where the FBOP worked directly with a local county to purchase electricity produced from a landfill operated by the county on FBOP property. He has also served as a project engineer for an environmental consulting firm in Virginia where

he specialized in landfill design, landfill gas mitigation, and landfill gas-to-energy projects throughout the world.

Bob is looking forward to focusing his efforts on energy and sustainability. He hopes to assist DOC, as well as its diverse Operating Units, in meeting ever-expanding federal energy mandates and improving overall energy awareness. He also hopes to perform as many site visits as possible in order to get a better understanding of each facility's needs. As funding and technical expertise typically pose the main challenges for energy project implementation, one of Bob's goals will be to present alternative financing options and technical resources for those interested in pursuing such projects. ☺



*U.S. Department of Commerce; Office of Administrative Services; Office of Real Estate, Policy, and Major Programs; Energy, Environmental, and Transportation Division*

1401 Constitution Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Phone: 202-482-3580  
Fax: 202-482-1969  
E-mail: [gogreen@doc.gov](mailto:gogreen@doc.gov)

[www.osec.doc.gov/oas/ore.htm](http://www.osec.doc.gov/oas/ore.htm)