



Sustainable Operations

In the News

“USDA Unplugged” Saved Enough Electricity in One Weeknight/Weekend to Power Three Homes for a Year


WASHINGTON, Nov 20, 2007 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Office of Departmental Administration (DA) embarked on an Energy Reduction Challenge to bring about additional awareness of energy usage among USDA employees during the month of October. One of the activities, “USDA Unplugged,” was designed to educate employees on energy usage that occurs at the Headquarters Complex during the evenings and on weekends.

In addition to awareness, DA encourages energy conservation since electricity costs are paid directly out of the Department’s repair and maintenance account. This means that any cost savings can have a direct impact on the quality of the workplace.

After just one week night and weekend, the Department saved enough energy to power three homes for a year. If those savings were annualized, the Department could realize savings as high as \$330,000 per year.

Sample of Departmental Administration outreach efforts for “USDA Unplugged”.



USDA
USDA UNPLUGGED 

USDA Headquarters
Energy Reduction Challenge
Wednesday, October 17, 2007 and
Friday – Sunday, October 19-21, 2007

Save Energy, Get Unplugged!
At the end of your work day

Turn Off:	Unplug:
Overhead Lights	Cell Phone Chargers
Desk Lamps	Blackberry Chargers
Monitor	Radios
Computer	TVs
Printers	Speakers
Scanners	Microwaves
Copiers	Coffee Makers
A/C Units	
Space Heaters	

Departmental Administration
www.greening.usda.gov



Results:

The “USDA Unplugged event” successfully demonstrated that USDA employees can make a significant difference in reducing electric consumption and costs. Departmental Administration

energy managers found that employees in the South, Whitten, and Yates Buildings¹ were able to reduce electric use by:

- 9,000 kWh in the 24 hour period of October 17th; and
- 24,000 kWh over the weekend during the “USDA Unplugged” challenge.

To put this all in perspective, 11,000 kWh is enough electricity to power an average U.S. home for a year. In only one weeknight/weekend, USDA saved enough electricity to power approximately 3 homes for a year.

Such savings could fund such priority items as:

- The Whitten A Section roof replacement;
- Renovation of 10 or more South Building restrooms;
- 20 office heating and cooling unit replacements, thereby further reducing energy costs; and
- Other needed maintenance items, ranging from window repairs to carpeting and painting.

Weekday Results Chart

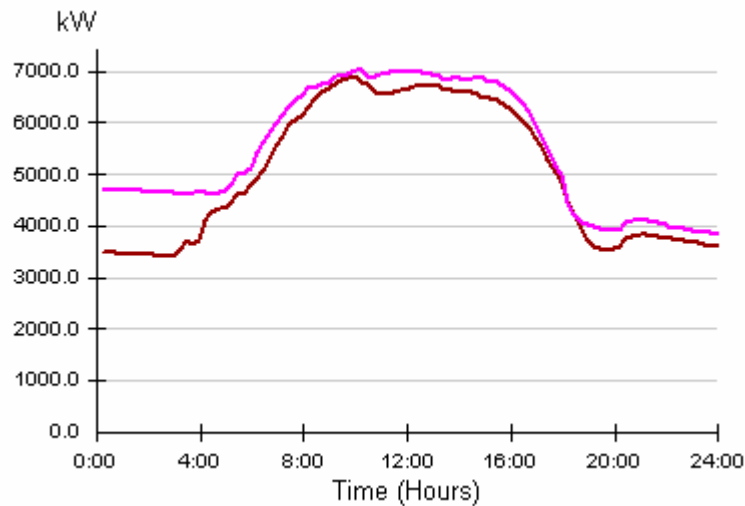


Chart shows comparison of electric usage on October 10th prior to outreach activities (pink); and during the challenge on October 18th (brown).

Weekend Results Chart

¹ Additional electric savings are anticipated in the George Washington Carver Center, but are not included in the results above.

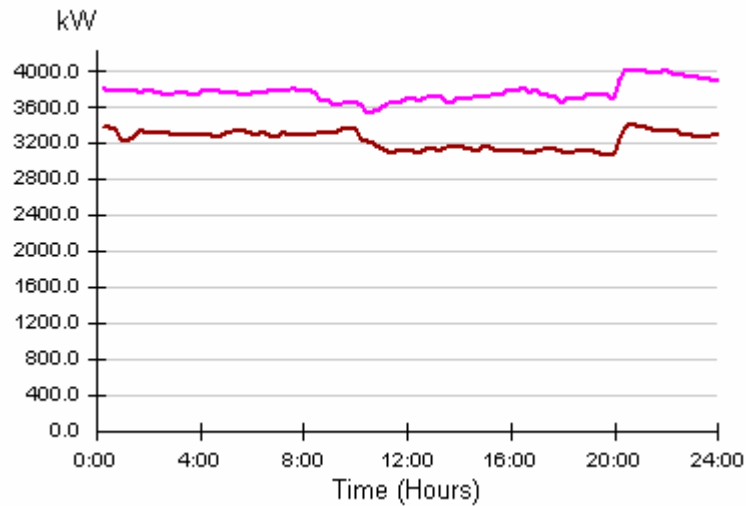


Chart shows comparison of electric usage on the weekend of October 6th prior to outreach activities (pink); and during the challenge event weekend on October 20th (brown).

Next Steps:

The success of this effort has demonstrated that simple steps of shutting off non-essential electrical equipment before leaving the workplace can have a significant impact on energy conservation, thereby allowing resources to be directed to other priority areas. Our challenge is to continue the success of “USDA Unplugged” and make the actions taken by our Headquarters Complex personnel a standard practice both in Washington and in USDA facilities nationwide.

During FY2008, Departmental Administration staff will continue to work to eliminate energy waste in our facilities and increase energy efficiency. We ask all USDA employees to assist us in this effort. If USDA is able to sustain the efforts realized during the “USDA Unplugged” challenge, we could save enough energy in one year to power the equivalent of 220 homes.

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