



## USDA Headquarters Energy Reduction Challenge aka “USDA Unplugged” was a Success!

### USDA Unplugged Campaign and Outreach Efforts:

Departmental Administration embarked on a project and campaign to bring awareness to USDA employees of the energy usage and waste that occurs at the Headquarters Complex during the evenings and on weekends. As energy expenses are paid out of the Department’s repair and maintenance account, any cost savings can have a direct impact on the quality of the workplace.



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

### 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 Buildings<sup>1</sup> 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! USDA saved enough electricity to power approximately 3 homes for a year, and that is based only on one weeknight/weekend!

If those savings were annualized, the Department could realize savings as high as \$330,000 per year. Such savings could fund such priority items as:

- The Whitten A Section roof replacement;

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

- 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:**

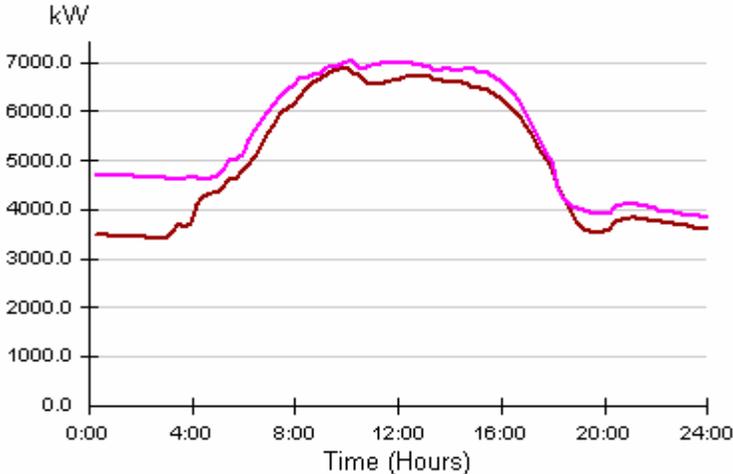


Chart shows comparison of electric usage on October 10<sup>th</sup> prior to outreach activities (pink); and during the challenge on October 18<sup>th</sup> (brown).

**Weekend Results Chart:**

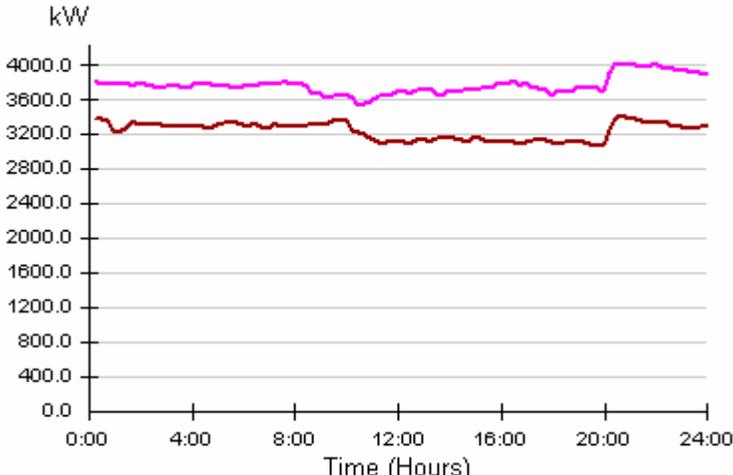


Chart shows comparison of electric usage on the weekend of October 6<sup>th</sup> prior to outreach activities (pink); and during the challenge event weekend

on October 20<sup>th</sup> (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.

Thank you for making “USDA Unplugged” a success!

Boyd K. Rutherford  
Assistant Secretary for Administration  
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