

GOING FROM
THINKING
ABOUT ENERGY
CONSERVATION
TO ACTUALLY
DOING
IT DOESN'T
REQUIRE
ELABORATE
STEPS

En route to energy savings

If you're anything like me, you probably haven't thought a lot about energy conservation. Sure, you might subconsciously subscribe to it, as I do when I ask my three-year-old to get me the remote rather than getting up and changing the channel myself. ("Conserving energy," "being lazy"—hey, different people call it different things.) But to proactively manage and conserve energy use in your facility? Chances are, it wasn't on your to-do list in 2001 and didn't make it into your resolutions for 2002.

Yet even those that weren't affected by California's energy crises last year or Erron's failure a few months ago should start thinking about conservation. PIA (Alexandria, VA) noted this past summer that its

members were paying on the order of 31 percent to 50 percent—and in some instances, 200 percent—more in fuel and utility costs than before.

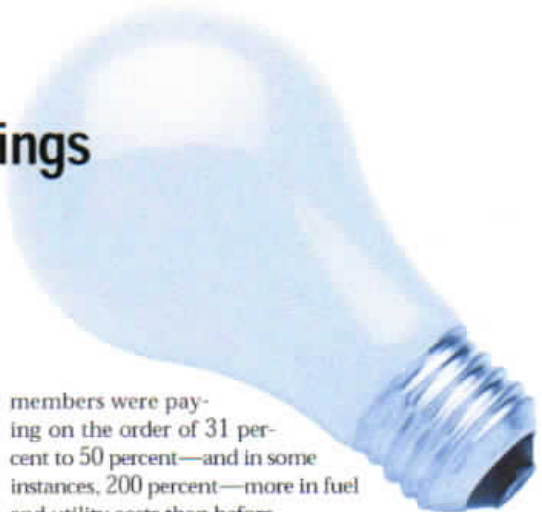
"Energy use is growing twice as fast as production," says Wendy Lechner, senior director of federal policy at PIA, noting that energy use is up 30 percent since 1972 while production has only increased 14 percent. "Printers and other manufacturers are bearing the brunt of increased prices, which will have a tremendous negative impact on our economic well-being." (PIA favored a national energy policy, and applauded Congress' July decision to create a national energy policy aimed at developing sustainable energy reserves and improving infrastructure for commercial enterprises and their customers.)

Steps to save energy

Interested in saving energy, but not sure where to start? Here are some helpful hints from the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Network of the U.S. Dept. of Energy:

1. Gather and total all your energy costs. Pull together the past year's bills and total these costs. Be sure you're adding all the bills from different energy sources.
2. Get a professional energy audit or do a self-audit. Contact your local utility, municipal services department, or local university for technical or financial assistance.
3. Enlist the aid of staff members.
4. Develop a list of best options. Use cost and ease of implementation to rank choices.
5. Implement your plan and take action.
6. Track savings and energy use. Evidence of tangible rewards can help improve staff morale and encourage cooperation.

—From www.eren.doe.gov/energytips/organized.html



WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT?

Going from thinking about energy conservation to actually doing it doesn't require elaborate steps. Ace Printing (Palm Springs, CA), a 38-employee commercial printer that does a lot of four-color work for local resorts and hospitals, received notices of rising rates from its electric company last summer. "Since we use a lot of electricity, we realized we needed to do something about it," says Heather Ernst, human resources manager and "energy czar" for Ace. "We did what we could."

That meant replacing all manual thermostats with electronic, programmable ones. Employees in the general office area were instructed to turn off their computers, printers and copiers at night and on the weekends.

"They might be little steps, but they made our employees more aware and conscious of saving energy," Ernst relates.

The Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Network (EREN) of the U.S. Dept. of Energy has a website (www.eren.doe.gov) that offers resources as well as suggestions on how to start saving energy. Many of these action items can be accomplished without spending a dime. Programmable thermostats, like the one Ace installed, are typically inexpensive, according to the EREN website, but if you don't want to go that route, you can always adjust your thermostat manually. If you're not a 24-hours-a-

Energy resources

■ While not specific to printers, the website for the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Network of the U.S. Dept. of Energy, www.eren.doe.gov, offers general energy-saving tips and resources.

■ The seventh annual National Environmental, Health and Safety Conference for the Graphic Communications Industries, March 17-19, in Raleigh, NC, will address reducing energy cost through pollution prevention programs, as well as other aspects of environmental health and safety compliance for printers. Registration costs \$695. Registrants from plants with one to 20 employees are eligible for a special small printers' reduced registration rate of \$250. To register, contact GATF at (800) 910-GATF ext. 200.

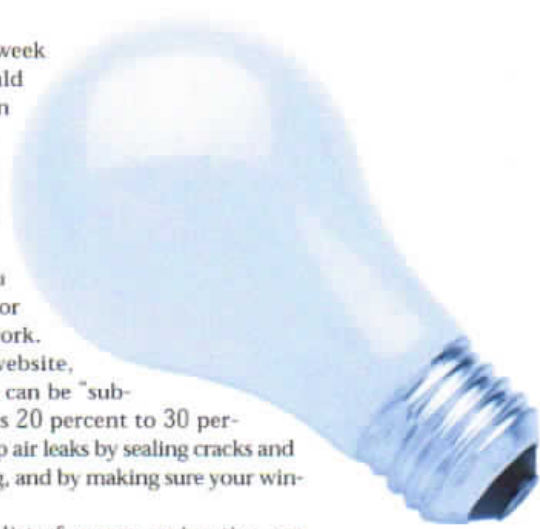
■ MEGTEC Systems (De Pere, WI) has expanded its engineering services group to include energy-management services. MEGTEC experts can analyze current process-energy usage and recommend methods to reduce energy consumption. For a free copy of the Energy & Engineering Services brochure, call (800) 862-6943.

■ The January issue of *PFFC*, AMERICAN PRINTER'S sister magazine, includes articles on energy conservation. See "Optimizing energy use," *PFFC*, January 2002, p. 40, and "What you can do," *PFFC*, January 2002, p. 41.

day, seven-days-a-week operation, you could feasibly turn down your facility's heating thermostat and turn up its cooling thermostat when no one is there.

In addition, you can use duct tape or caulk to seal ductwork. According to the website, leakage from joints can be "substantial, as much as 20 percent to 30 percent." Similarly, stop air leaks by sealing cracks and holes in the building, and by making sure your windows close tightly.

For a complete list of energy-saving tips, see www.eren.doe.gov/energytips/handidea.html.



BLACKOUT CONTINGENCIES

Finally, as part of its energy-management goals, Ace came up with an action plan in case of blackouts. Some steps are pretty simple, like calling the power company to see how long the electricity is expected to be out. Procedures in prepress, press and postpress get more specific. Ernst gave department managers a guideline of what to cover in their blackout plans, and each then wrote department- and equipment-specific procedures.

Pressroom instructions, for example, for Ace's five-color, 28-inch Komori sheetfed press include what to do:

■ **AS SOON AS THE POWER GOES OUT** | "Shut off main power at the electrical cabinet; shut off infrared dryer on the console... Hand-crank any sheets through the press..."

■ **AFTER 10 MINUTES** | "Clean pan, metering and applying rollers... Dilute coating in pan with water and ammonia..."

■ **AFTER ONE HOUR** | "Spray ink and water rollers with anti-skin spray... Remove ink and clean ink fountains..."

■ **WHEN THE POWER COMES BACK ON** | "If needed, rinse ink and water rollers; drain coating/water solution from pan into a bucket and not the drum; clean coater pan."

INVOLVE EVERYBODY

Ernst suggests involving all employees in the process, rather than laying out management decrees. "Even just getting suggestions makes everybody feel more involved. They feel like they need to save," she says.

And that is probably the best way to make energy conservation a proactive activity rather than a subconscious philosophy. ♦