

News Release

For Immediate Release
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NISD Saves More than \$4.8 Million Thanks to Energy Management Plan

“A dollar wasted on energy is a dollar lost to education,” declares Northwest ISD Energy Manager Charles Ashby. In December 2008, Charles Ashby was hired as the district’s first Energy Manager. Ashby developed and implemented an energy management plan including an awareness program and written regulations for energy usage. For the past seven years, Northwest ISD has:

- saved \$2,581,067.51 in utility costs (from January 2009 through December 2014) while opening and maintaining five elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school and making additions to eight existing buildings.
- been able to return approximately \$2 million to the budget which means Northwest ISD has saved more than \$4.8 million.

In 2013, NISD participated in an “Energy Benchmarking Program” sponsored by Oncor. As one of the 24 local school districts participating, Northwest ISD was ranked number one, having the best overall Energy Use Index (EUI) indicating lower energy use/better performance. “The district believes prudent and practical use of energy and natural resources affords the opportunity to be environmentally and fiscally responsive and responsible,” Ashby said. “It is important for us to celebrate accomplishments by looking back while planning for our future by looking forward.”

Northwest ISD staff members play a significant role in reducing energy costs across the district’s 234-square miles, 14 communities, and three counties. With an energy management program in the school district, future energy costs are the largest controllable area of expense in the district’s budget. At the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year, Energy Manager Charles Ashby challenged staff to embark on the new school year with a renewed commitment and determination to energy management.

“With this school year coming to a close in the next month, it is exciting and refreshing to think about the new year,” Ashby said. “Our challenge remains simple – reduce energy consumption.” Staff members are doing this by turning equipment, such as computers, monitors and printers, off at the end of the day, turning off lights and copying machines. “Lighting is as much as 30-40 percent of the total electrical funds in most school buildings,” said Ashby. NISD launched a campaign several years ago called ‘Give a Flip’ reminding employees to turn things off when they leave a room. “It is an awareness and an influence that starts from the top down,” Ashby explained. “As we move in to the next school year, it is important to reflect and renew our commitment to energy savings.”

With a bright future ahead, Northwest ISD is setting the groundwork for all 28 campus buildings to become “Energy Star” rated buildings. This assessment identifies top performing, cost-effective buildings. This summer and next school year, the district will begin transitioning to LED lighting (beginning with the lighting in parking lots). LED lighting is known as highly energy efficient and uses at least 75% less energy, lasting 25 times longer than incandescent light, according to Energy.gov.

Additionally, campuses are establishing Recycling Teams, Green Teams, and Wattstoppers with a focus on conserving energy and natural resources. In 2014, NISD’s Roanoke Elementary School was named an official Green Ribbon School for their environmentally-friendly efforts at their campus and in their community. Additionally, Energy Manager Charles Ashby speaks to classrooms across the district to discuss the importance of management and conservation of energy.

“We believe an awareness and practice of wise energy management is beneficial for Northwest ISD residents and can enhance the learning environment,” Ashby said. “We have had a successful start. We plan to approach the 2016-2017 with a deeper understanding and pledge to our awareness program as we conserve and preserve the future.”

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