From the Program Manager: Can You Afford Not to Have an Energy Plan?

By Fred Byrd
KEEPS Program Manager

What is the worth of having an energy plan for your school district? Just ask your district's chief financial officer (CFO). The KEEPS team did just that at the recent Kentucky Association of School Business Officials (KASBO) spring conference, which was held in Louisville. We sponsored a vendor booth and hosted a break-out session, where we shared information about how KEEPS isn't merely an environmental initiative, it's also a fiscal initiative.

KEASBO has more than 350 members whose primary responsibility is the business management of their school districts. These are the district CFOs, accountants and others who figure out how to pay the bills with tight budgets. We were clearly speaking to the right audience. Our break-out session was almost to capacity, and representatives from 31 school districts visited our booth.

Energy costs are the largest operating expense for school districts after salaries and benefits. Many district CFOs have the difficult task of weighing a teacher’s salary against the district's other fiscal demands. For those who live in a world of checks and balances, using KEEPS - a free resource - to help reduce energy costs, which in turn could make it easier to keep teachers in the classroom, certainly sounds appealing.

When I think of successful energy teams, districts such as Mercer County and Larue County come to mind. In both instances, the district CFO is an active participant. Why? Because a district's CFO provides the financial guidance needed to help the team prioritize energy initiatives and investments which will yield the biggest return.

See our Web site for more information about establishing your district's cross-functional energy team.

Many thanks to KASBO for allowing us to participate in the spring conference. We look forward to working with the organization again in the near future.

Also, special thanks to Mercer County Schools CFO Joy Campbell, who leads her school district's energy team. Joy was kind enough to share her district's experiences with KEEPS in our break-out session. Given the fact that Joy was also involved in so many other facets of the KASBO conference, her willingness to participate in our break-out session means a lot to us.

Send your questions and comments to KEEPS@kppc.org.

Find KEEPS on Facebook

In an effort to facilitate communications to and among Kentucky school districts, KPPC has established a Facebook page for KEEPS. The page offers KEEPS members and others the opportunity to share insights, ideas, ask questions and participate in discussions about how best energy management practices reduce operating costs for Kentucky school districts.

Wall postings, discussion threads, photos and links are among the networking mechanisms featured on the page.
"The KEEPS Facebook page provides a great networking venue for school districts to learn from one another's challenges and share news about their energy-saving accomplishments," says KPPC Executive Director Cam Metcalf. "It also provides an even higher level of service to KEEPS members."

To view the page, log onto your Facebook account and type "KEEPS Kentucky" in the "search" box at the top of your Facebook home page. Become a KEEPS Facebook fan, or include the page as one of your Facebook favorites. Don't forget to suggest the page to your Facebook friends who might be interested in learning more about KEEPS.

The KEEPS page and other KPPC-sponsored Facebook pages currently under development will not replace the information found on KPPC's Web site. Those interested in KEEPS or KPPC's other programs should log onto www.kppc.org to find information, tools and other environmental sustainability resources that the center offers.

**KEEPS in the News**

Kimberly Joseph, Regional Coordinator for KEEPS Region 2, is featured in the April 2010 issue of the *Energy at Work* newsletter. *Energy at Work* is published by the Kentucky Department for Energy Development and Independence (DEDI) and highlights how American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds benefit Kentuckians.

[Read about Kimberly's work with KEEPS](#), and call (502) 852-0965 to schedule a meeting with your school district's regional coordinator.

**KEEPS Kudos To ...**

**Bracken County Public School District**

Bracken County Middle School played host to Energy Conservation Night on April 30. The event featured demonstrations about energy conservation from Bracken County Middle School students. Faculty, staff, students and parents from the school district attended the event. Representatives from KEEPS, the Kentucky chapter of the National Energy Education Development Project and Kentucky Utilities also participated.

Lila Brindley, an eighth-grade science teacher at Bracken County Middle School, says that the event provided a great opportunity for students and their families to learn more about how energy conservation helps the environment and reduces the cost of living.

"This topic is at the forefront of discussions in our world today with inevitable increasing prices of fuel and utility costs," says Brindley. "If students are able to learn how energy transfers from one state to another, then they are better able to understand the best possible ways to conserve energy as well."

**Mercer County Public School District**

The Mercer County Public School District passed its energy management policy on April 16.

**Danville Independent School District**

The Danville Independent School District passed its energy management policy on April 26.

*See the "Energy Management Policies" page on the KEEPS Web site for more information about policy development and implementation as well as policies passed by KEEPS members.*

**KEEPS Tip of the Month: Add Energy Curriculum to Your Classrooms**

An effective energy management plan will help foster interest in the importance of energy conservation, not just to school district faculty and staff, but to students as well. School district energy teams should consider including a teacher to help develop curriculum that illustrates the importance of energy conservation to students at all levels of learning.

Resources are available to assist with curriculum development. As a KEEPS partner organization, the Kentucky Chapter of the National Energy Education Development (NEED) Project receives funding from a variety of sponsors who support making energy education and curriculum materials readily available to schools throughout Kentucky. Programs include: K-12 energy education materials that have been correlated to Kentucky Core Content standards; professional development workshops for teachers; energy management programs for schools; and workshops for school operations and management staff.

To learn more, call Kentucky NEED at (866) 736-8941 or e-mail kreagor@need.org.
Energy Saving Resources

- Energy Hog provides energy conservation information developed for children and adults by the Alliance to Save Energy and the Ad Council.
- The Arizona State University Campus Metabolism is an interactive web tool that offers a snapshot of energy consumption in ordinary home and work environments.
- The U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Savers Home Page provides energy efficiency tips, resources and other information.

Employment Opportunities

- Shelby County Public Schools has a position open for a teacher to help implement and facilitate the Pathway to Engineering Program at Martha Layne Collins High School. Contact Barbara Allan at (502) 633-2375 for more information.

Training Opportunities

KEEPS Reporting and Tracking Webinars - June 2010
Pursuant to Kentucky Revised Statutes 160.325, Kentucky public school district boards of education are required to report data on school district energy use, costs and savings measures to KPPC through KEEPS. To facilitate the reporting process, KPPC offers free webinars that provide guidance on how to complete the KEEPS Energy Management Report. The webinars also demonstrate how the KEEPS Utility Tracking Tool can help school districts better understand their energy consumption and organize information requested in the KEEPS Energy Management Report.

Space is limited for each date, so please register early to ensure you attend the webinar of your choice. One person per district should register, but each registrant can have several people listen in. School board members, district energy team members and energy managers are encouraged to attend.

Select one of the dates below to register and for more information. After registering, unique webinar log-in information will be e-mailed to you.

- June 1, 10 a.m. EDT
- June 3, 2 p.m. EDT
- June 7, 2 p.m. EDT
- June 9, 10 a.m. EDT

For questions about the webinars, send an e-mail to KEEPS@kppc.org.

Kentucky NEED 2010 Kentucky Energy Conference for Educators - June 14-18, Eastern Kentucky
The conference will provide teachers with up-to-date information on all aspects of energy including the science of energy, sources of energy, transportation, consumption, electricity, efficiency and environmental and economic impacts. Participants will travel via tour bus to energy sites in Eastern Kentucky to meet with energy professionals and receive materials necessary to implement innovative, hands-on energy units for the classroom, multi-disciplinary teams and other programs. Information and registration are available on the Kentucky NEED Web site.

2010 Kentucky Association of School Superintendents Summer Institute - June 21-23, Bowling Green
KEEPS regional coordinators will be among the many exhibitors at the event, which will provide information, resources and networking opportunities for Kentucky school district superintendents. Details are available on the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents Web site.

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