Homer Sewer Wins Great Alaska Energy Challenge

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Homer sewer reduced energy usage by 16% last year, that is enough to power more than 8 homes a year!

Winners of First Ever Great Alaska Energy Challenge Announced
Palmer Junior Middle School, Homer Sewer among the biggest “energy losers”

Anchorage, AK - Four winners from Cordova, Homer, Palmer and Anchorage claimed victory during the first ever Great Alaska Energy Challenge, a contest which pitted teams from around the state against each other to see who could save the most energy. Ten teams participated in the six-month long inaugural Challenge. In the process, they saved an impressive amount of energy and money and educated students about energy.

Combined energy efficiency and conservation efforts helped participants shave over $40,000 compared to last year , and avoided emitting over 500,000 lbs. of CO2. The City of Homer’s sewer treatment plant alone cut their energy use by nearly a sixth over the last year, saving enough electricity to power more than eight homes for one year.

“There is no quicker, easier way for businesses, schools, and homeowners to save money than to use energy efficiency and conservation,” said Alaska Housing Finance Corporation Energy Specialist Scott Waterman. “By sparking a little friendly competition, we hope to get everyone thinking about ways to use less energy at work and home.”

“Alaskans pay some of the highest energy costs in the nation, and a large amount goes to pay to heat and light our buildings,” added Shaina Kilcoyne, Renewable Energy Alaska Project (REAP) Energy Efficiency Director. “Simple changes such as turning off appliances that are not in use, installing more energy efficient appliances, and building more efficiently to begin with can add up to huge savings.”

The Challenge was organized by Renewable Energy Alaska Project (REAP) and sponsored by Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), and ran from October 2011 to March 2012. The Challenge also received support from Brown’s Electric and Alaska Business Monthly. It focused on public facilities, with the goal of raising awareness about energy efficiency and conservation, and saving the state and municipalities money. The Challenge is also part of a broader statewide effort to reduce energy costs by improving energy efficiency 15% by 2020 per capita and mandating energy efficiency retrofits on 25% of the state’s public buildings.

Winners were picked on the basis of four different categories: those who had the lowest heat and electricity use overall and those who showed the biggest change in heat and electricity use. Winners of the four categories were:

• Biggest Change – Heat: Alaska Energy Authority
• Lowest Use – Heat: Palmer Junior Middle School Energy Dawgs
• Biggest Change – Electricity: City of Homer Sewer
• Lowest Use – Electricity: Cordova High School

Throughout the contest period, participants were encouraged to identify leaders in the building to take charge of the campaign. Energy data was analyzed per square foot with heat energy normalized by heating degree days to account for differences in building size and climate.

Commercial building owners typically use energy mostly for heating, ventilation, lighting and office equipment. You can start making a difference in your building today by doing the following:
• Track your energy usage and costs
• Get an Investment Grade Energy Audit for your facility to identify real savings
• Ensure all building occupants and visitors are aware of energy saving efforts
• Turn off lights, office equipment and appliances when not in use and use natural daylight when possible
• Lower the building's thermostat when the building is not in use
• Let sunshine warm your office during colder months by opening blinds; close them at night to retain heat
• Clean and maintain equipment routinely for more efficient operation

Everyone wins by learning about energy efficiency and conservation. Find out more about the Great Alaska Energy Challenge (including 2012 Challenge details) and energy saving tips for home and work at www.akenergyefficiency.org/energychallenge.

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