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Pine Hall wins UMM Campus Energy Wars 2008

Summary: Winona State University triumphed as the winner of the first National Campus Energy Challenge (NCEC). Following in second and third place, respectively, are St. John's University of Collegeville, Minn., and Swarthmore College of Pennsylvania. UMM hosted its own dorm-wide energy war.

(April 18, 2008)-by Mike Stammer, University Register -- Winona State University has triumphed as the winner of the first National Campus Energy Challenge (NCEC). Following in second and third place, respectively, are St. John's University of Collegeville, Minn., and Swarthmore College of Pennsylvania.

Sponsored by the Minnesota Public Interest Research Group (MPIRG), the challenge focused on comparing current energy consumption data to data from year's prior in an effort to increase awareness of resource consumption. The parameters used for testing were reduction in heating and reduction in electricity. St. John's winning numbers were reductions in heating by 29 percent, and reduction in electricity by 26 percent.

In addition to the national competition, the University of Minnesota, Morris hosted its own dorm-wide energy war. Besides competing via heat and electricity consumption, UMM also added water consumption as a competitive measure.

The winner overall in all categories was Pine Hall. The efficient dorm took first in water consumption with an average 135 cubic foot consumed per person. Even though this value represents a 13 percent increase from the previous year, Pine's numbers were still better than second-place David C. Johnson-Independence Hall, which consumed 138 cubic feet per person. Netting third place and the Most Improved title was Clayton A. Gay Hall with 142 cubic feet of water consumption per person.

Water consumption numbers for the on-campus apartments increased by 91 percent from the previous year with 416 cubic feet per person.

Pine was also the champion of all things electronic with a campus-wide minimum of 109 kilowatt-hours per person, a five percent decrease from 2007. Blakely Hall captured second place with 145 kilowatt-hours per resident, and Independence Hall claimed third place and the Most Improved slot with 149 kilowatt-hours. Spooner Hall, despite the intense devotion of its Resident Advisors to conserve electricity, came in last place with 232 kilowatt-hours per resident. Spooner Hall was the only dorm to have a net increase (14 percent) in electricity consumption since 2007.

Though the numbers may seem high in comparison with each other, they are dwarfed by the per capita monthly consumption of electricity in Minnesotan homes: 325 kWh (provided by the Department of Energy).

Overall, total campus electricity consumption was down three percent in 2008. Additionally, UMM's heating needs were four percent less than expected, based upon current technologies.

The data for NCEC and the local Dorm Wars were collected and compiled by Campus Sustainability Coordinator Troy

Goodnough and processed by volunteers at Macalester College.

Goodnough views NCEC and Dorm Wars as a two-pronged contest: data collection for the competitive aspect and creating awareness about energy consumption on a broad level.

“We are building an institution that emphasizes the importance of both big changes in policy and the value of personal responsibility in energy conservation,” explained Goodnough.

The month-long energy competition showcased many events designed to help the public understand energy conservation. Besides having themed weeks such as “Do it in the Dark” and “Roughin’ It” week, MPIRGers throughout UMM organized diverse activities.

The recent environmentalism film, “The 11th Hour,” was shown to a packed audience one week while a web cast discussion about sustainability and values was held another week. Floor programs were held throughout the month regarding campus sustainability, energy, and local foods as part of the Resident Hall Association’s ongoing commitment to increase environmental awareness in both students and staff.

Jenna Sandoe, the Environmental Task Force Leader of MPIRG, regards the 2008 NCEC and Dorm Wars as a success for UMM. “People are a lot more aware this year,” she said.

Photo: Chancellor Jacquie Johnson and Troy Goodnough took the Campus Wars’ pledge during the 2007 Campus Energy Wars.

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