Conservation Vacation

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The holiday break presents an incredible opportunity for WKU to rack up huge energy savings.

Amy Bingham has more on the sixth annual “Conservation Vacation” in this week’s View from the Hill.

Turn off, shut down and unplug. That’s what faculty, staff and students did before leaving for the holidays.

“We’ve been pleased with the results the data shows, it’s well worth our effort.”

VP of Campus Services and Facilities John Osborne issued a conservation challenge back in 2008 to see exactly how much energy could be saved.

“What we said was if you are willing to help us conserve energy, we can extend the Christmas holiday period and we didn’t have any difficulty in getting people to go along with us that year.”

Sustainability Coordinator Christian Ryan Downing says the savings have continued to climb.

“Financially we’ve saved the university about 260 thousand dollars”

The shutdown mentality has been used in WKU residence halls for decades, since Osborne served as Director of Housing.

“Every hall director would go through the building and make sure everything was turned off, unplugged and we had lights out and we did a complete shutdown.”

Now the practice extends throughout campus.

“That’s the culture you want to have. A culture of conservation and this holiday break helps us establish that.”

Ryan-Downing says other universities are following WKU’s lead.

“I’ve been contacted by all sorts of campuses who’ve heard of our conservation vacation and are asking how’d you do it, how’d you communicate it and what all did you turn off?”

It’s kind of a no-brainer to turn those things off yet on most campuses it’s still not happening.”

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

Ryan-Downing says during the winter break, LED lighting will be added to campus parking lots which will reduce energy usage by 56 percent.

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