

# NEWS

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For Immediate Release  
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## **Roseburg Urban Sanitary Authority captures energy and dollar savings from the sewer**

*Energy-efficiency projects are expected to save ratepayers an estimated \$28,670 annually*

ROSEBURG, Ore. — December 12, 2011 — After participating in a 13-month energy training for Northwest wastewater utilities, Roseburg Urban Sanitary Authority, RUSA, is implementing several energy-efficiency projects that are trimming the utility's operating budget at a time when every public dollar counts.

As a result of the training, RUSA made several operational adjustments, such as programming the plant's controls so blowers in its aeration basins can be turned down to match changing daily flow. RUSA is exploring turning off blowers during off-peak times for additional savings. Implementing those steps together with other no-cost changes will save an estimated \$23,000 annually, without compromising treatment or water quality. In addition, RUSA is upgrading lighting at the wastewater treatment plant, a project that is expected to save another \$5,670 each year.

Oregon Sustainable Energy Management Systems Training, which was attended by 12 wastewater utilities from Oregon, Idaho and Washington, included seven day-long workshops spaced at intervals that allowed time for plenty of "homework." The training was organized by Oregon Association for Clean Water Agencies, ACWA, which brought in experts from Energy Trust of Oregon, Zero Waste Alliance, Bonneville Power Administration and consulting firms to teach the utilities how to identify energy-efficiency opportunities. Funding was provided by Energy Trust, Bonneville Power Administration, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the participating wastewater utilities.

RUSA's first task was to establish an energy goal, which the utility set as reducing energy use by 10 percent by the end of the 2011-2012 fiscal year. RUSA also learned how to receive a no-cost energy study from Energy Trust, which identified potential lighting energy savings and Energy Trust cash incentives to help pay for improvements. The utility formed an energy team, made energy an agenda item at managers' and staff meetings, identified and implemented savings projects, explored ways to generate electricity from renewable resources, tracked progress and reported back to decision makers and plant staff.

"Our involvement in this process helped bring energy from the back burner to the top of our work load," said Jim Baird, engineering and operations manager, RUSA. "Today, our staff members are much more aware of the plant's energy use. We also became more aware of available services such as those from Energy Trust. At the end of day, it means lower fixed costs, which is better for our ratepayers. It's our responsibility to minimize those costs."

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Kim Crossman, industrial and agricultural sector lead at Energy Trust, applauded the efforts of utilities such as RUSA as well as the foresight of ACWA. “Lighting and operations and maintenance improvements are often the most cost-effective first steps to take in reducing energy use. Combining these types of practical steps with new, cutting edge strategic energy management practices offers the potential for continuous energy improvement,” said Crossman. “ACWA did an excellent service to utilities and ratepayers across the region by recognizing the need for this training and pulling it all together.”

RUSA is also evaluating how to make better use of the plant’s biogas, which is a byproduct of the treatment process. Right now, the plant uses about one-third of its available biogas to provide heat for the plant’s buildings and treatment processes. The rest they flare off — a waste of available energy.

“Something we learned from other wastewater utilities who participated in the training is that it might now be cost-effective for RUSA to generate electricity from that biogas,” said Baird. “The technology recently has improved, and we’d like to put that energy to work.”

Janet Gillaspie, ACWA executive director, said the exchange of information between utilities was an important part of the learning process. “Each day-long session included at least one tour of a participating utility’s treatment plant,” she said. “We saw first-hand how utilities are putting energy savings into practice, including the hurdles they’ve overcome. It was inspiring for all of us that some plants have set a goal to become energy independent within five years — to generate onsite all the energy that they use in the treatment process. Energy independence is becoming an attainable goal for many wastewater treatment plants.”

Energy Trust of Oregon is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to helping utility customers benefit from saving energy and tapping renewable resources. Our services, cash incentives and energy solutions have helped participating customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, NW Natural and Cascade Natural Gas save nearly \$800 million on energy bills. Our work helps keep energy costs as low as possible, creates jobs and builds a sustainable energy future. Learn more at [www.energytrust.org](http://www.energytrust.org) or call 1-866-368-7878.

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