

## Environmental Resource Center

### Destination Conservation

Destination Conservation (DC) is a school retrofit program that demonstrates a clever formula for energy and water savings. The program engages school principals, custodians, students, faculties, and their communities in a cooperative effort to gain incremental dollar savings which can then be used for more and more sophisticated retrofit measures. Conceived in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, by staff at the non-profit Environmental Resource Center, the program is based on a three-year staged approach whereby no and low cost retrofits in Year 1 create savings that can then be applied to progressively more comprehensive efficiency measures in Years 2 and 3. Basic "lifestyle" changes in Year 1, such as turning off unneeded lights, create savings that can be applied to low cost retrofits, such as purchasing and installing occupancy sensors to control classroom lights, which in turn can create revenues for more capital intensive retrofits such as replacing incandescent lamps with compact fluorescents.

The DC "formula" for savings utilizes the abilities of three key players: DC, which facilitates the process and provides the expertise; the school district, which harnesses the collective energy of students and staff alike; and a corporate sponsor, which provides early capital for audits and trainings, and then later provides additional capital for comprehensive retrofits. Corporate sponsors, which to date have primarily been utilities, recoup all their money over time. A new program track, begun in early 1994, allows schools to move directly to capital intensive retrofits, which are generally subcontracted to regional firms, with their commensurate dollar savings in Year 1. In both tracks, the program enables schools to retrofit their facilities without any cash outlay and then provides schools with positive cash flow since their loan repayments are structured to be less than their monthly bill savings.

To date, 24 school districts in Alberta with over 220 schools have participated or are currently participating in the program. In Ontario and Saskatchewan, three school districts are participating, while British Columbia and New Brunswick each have two school districts involved in the program. In terms of savings, the DC program promotes comprehensive retrofits and works with schools to get systematic retrofits done at the lowest possible cost. The 87 participating schools in TransAlta Utilities' service territory, for example, have saved an average of approximately 25% of their baseline utility bills. And while these energy savings are financially attractive to the schools, Destination Conservation also plays an important role in teaching schoolchildren about their role in protecting the environment and sustainable development by getting students integrally involved in the process.

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#### **ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE CENTER Destination Conservation**

**Agency:** Environmental Resource Center, Alberta, Canada

**Sector:** Schools

**Measures:** A wide range of customized efficiency measures ranging from low and no cost to capital cost measures addressing electricity, fossil fuel, and water use

**Mechanism:** Technical and behavioral audits identify savings opportunities. Students and staff are involved to capture low cost savings; later supported by sponsor-provided capital loans for more sophisticated retrofits

**History:** Began in 1987 in Alberta, Canada, and has since spread to six other provinces

**Participation:** 34 districts, 297 schools

#### **SAMPLE SCHOOL DISTRICT CUMULATIVE THREE-YEAR SAVINGS**

Electricity: 1,485 MWh

Gas: 9,617 million Btu

Water: 2.78 million gallons

Financial: \$148,347

The Results Center produced 126 profiles of the most successful energy efficiency and renewable energy programs in the United States and around the world in the early and mid 1990s. With the support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ted Flanigan directed a research team at Colorado-based IRT Environment to produce and distribute these exceptional examples. Thanks to strong demand for solid case studies, The Results Center was supported by dozens of major utilities and energy associations worldwide. Today, The Results Center is managed again by Ted Flanigan, now at California-based EcoMotion Incorporated, a firm focused on strategic consulting, information dissemination, program design, outreach services, and aggressive implementation. To nominate highly successful programs, contact: The Results Center, c/o EcoMotion, 15375 Barranca Parkway, F-104, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 450-7155, or [TFlanigan@EcoMotion.us](mailto:TFlanigan@EcoMotion.us)