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## Energy conservation

# Earth Hour to darken Paris, Sydney, JBLM

By Jake Dorsey/Northwest Guardian

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Base commander Colonel H. Charles Hodges Jr. is so notorious for turning off unnecessary lights in Joint Base Lewis-McChord's headquarters building, he has earned the nickname of "Col. Net Zero."

Now he's turning lights off across the entire base.

"I want to make people realize, 'I should turn that light off,'" Hodges said.

In the name of energy conservation and Sustainable JBLM, lights at landmarks around the base will be shut off for one hour starting at 8:30 p.m. Saturday. The landmarks include the Family Readiness Center; "The Infantryman" statue, also known as Iron Mike, off 41st Division Road; Heritage Hill on McChord Field and the historic main gate presentation near Liberty Gate on Lewis Main.

Putting those landmarks in the dark is JBLM's contribution to Earth Hour, a worldwide project that encourages people to create a sustainable world. Hodges said he wants people to go beyond the environmental aspect of energy use and think of what really counts for a nation so far in debt: the money.

"It's dollars going away from training our men and women in uniform," Hodges said.

The colonel said he regularly drives around the base at night and sees office lights left on for no reason. Those are the lights he really wants to see turned off on Saturday. He said he wants people to think about that when they go home for the night.

JBLM burns through \$74,000 a day just to pay its electricity bill, Hodges said. It's easy for people to not think of it when "someone else" is paying the bill, Hodges said, but that someone else is taxpayers.

It's simple logic to Hodges: If you wouldn't allow the lights to be left on at night after going to bed in your own home, why would you allow it at work?

For that matter, Hodges also wants people to save energy and money by turning off their lights at home.

The event is connected to Earth Hour to give it that extra sustainability boost, said Miriam Easley, sustainability outreach coordinator for the Directorate of Public Works. That project, supported by the World Wildlife Fund, has participants across the world turning out the lights at their landmarks. Those include the Eifel Tower in Paris and the Sydney Opera House of Australia.

"This is the first time we've done this," Easley said, "but we'll have somewhere to start with to motivate other people to help too."

Hodges needs no extra push. He said he'll be driving through the base Saturday, seeing how many people are as motivated as he is to save money and energy.

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