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Public Works wants folks to turn it down, or plain off

By Somer Breeze-Hanson
Northwest Guardian

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Two simple actions can be taken to reduce Joint Base Lewis-McChord's energy use: turn it down and turn it off.

The Directorate of Public Works is spreading the word this month as part of Energy Awareness Month. To reach the JBLM community DPW launched an Energy Expo Saturday outside the McChord Field Exchange to share ways to reduce energy use.

JBLM's annual energy bill is about \$24 million, said Sakhawat Amin, DPW energy program coordinator.

"If we turn the lights off at the end of the day and the thermostat down, that will save a lot of money," he said.

DPW is making a big push this month to raise awareness with the new campaign, "12 Months of Sustainability." Each month will be a new focus on sustainability with this month's focus on energy awareness. Next month is recycling and December is green holidays.

"We're going to do a big concentrated push on each topic," said Miriam Easley, sustainability outreach coordinator.

The Energy Expo is one of many events taking place this month. JBLM building occupants were invited to attend energy conservation classes Tuesday conducted by the JBLM Energy Program. An EcoBike, a stationary bike that produces electricity, is touring the JBLM fitness facilities this month. A second Energy Expo will take place Oct. 19 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. outside the Lewis Main Exchange, with the same vendors as the first, including Tacoma Public Utilities, Puget Sound Energy — featuring electric vehicles and the EcoBike.

With heater season coming soon, DPW is spreading awareness of energy use in JBLM facilities to make sure heat is kept down and not wasted in vacant spaces. Per Army Regulation 420-1, each building requires a designated Building Energy Monitor, who serves as the point of contact for the building and DPW.

If lights are left on in a building at night, or if a unit is gone for two weeks for training and the lights and heat in the building are left on, the BEM can contact DPW and they will turn it down and turn it off. Every little bit of conservation helps cut down the \$2 million monthly energy bill.

"If we can lower that a little bit, that is huge," Amin said.

The Energy Expo also included a family-friendly scavenger hunt. Nine products inside of the Exchange that were conservation related were a part of the hunt to educate about the products.

Second Lieutenant Caroline Milam, 62nd Aerial Port Squadron, was present at the Energy Expo with the JBLM sustainability team. She liked the idea of an expo because it reached a wider audience.

"For Energy Awareness Month to be successful it's getting the word out to military members and their families. At an event like this you're talking with everyone who touches the military. You're getting the community involved, too."

Go to the Sustainable JBLM Facebook page at facebook.com/SustainableJBLM or call 253-966-9011.



Scott Hansen/Northwest Guardian
John McGowan, right, of the Tacoma Electric Vehicle Association, shows a visitor his 2001 Dodge Dakota pickup truck, which he recently converted to electric power, during Saturday's Energy Expo at the McChord Exchange.

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Public Works wants folks to turn it down, or plain off

If you go:

What: Energy Expo

When: Oct. 19, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Where: Lewis Main Exchange

What: Learn energy saving tips

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