

ShopTalk

Plant Operations Support Consortium

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Spring 2011

2011 Energy/Facilities Connections Conference... Tailored to a Variety of Learning Styles

By Phil Partington, Consortium staff

Training and travel are typically the first to fall victim to agency budget axes during crunch time. Just when facility and energy professionals need the most innovation and creativity to cope with dwindling resources, facility leaders are forced to prioritize what events they can partake in, and what opportunities to pass over. It is a vexing dilemma when so many changes in technological advancement, state and federal government mandates, codes, and financial opportunities make training and networking so important.

The Washington State University Extension Energy Program and partners of the conference planning team address that dilemma with the *Energy/Facilities Connections Conference* (EFC), being held May 11-13.

Why EFC?

(Now... More than Ever!)

The theme – *Now... More than Ever!* – reminds us that now is the



The Energy/Facilities Connections Conference includes trainings by renowned facilities leaders who have proven their worth time and time again.

time to act, whether the issue is maintenance, custodial, leadership or a technical process. As a keynote presenter at EFC 2011, Alan Bigger will address this need, noting that the cost of doing nothing these days may be dire for any organization.

EFC 2011 presents in-depth technical trainings from those who best know the ins-and-outs of various technologies available. The event also includes trainings by renowned facilities leaders who've proven their worth time

and again. These sessions focus on practical applications of those technologies, even while surviving in the "facilities trenches" amid hard economic times.

Why Leavenworth?

With so many great locations for training, Leavenworth may not be the obvious choice for some. However, consider that it is central to attendees on the east and west sides of Washington state, and also central to attendees traveling from Canada and Oregon. In

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PlantOps@energy.wsu.edu.

Archived issues of *Shop Talk* are available at:

www.energy.wsu.edu/PublicFacilitiesSupport/PlantOperations/ShopTalk.aspx

Consortium contacts:

Bob MacKenzie (360) 956-2055
bobmac@energy.wsu.edu

Phil Partington (360) 956-2057
phil@energy.wsu.edu

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Shop Notes

By Bob MacKenzie,
Consortium Manager

One could argue the stakes have never been higher for public facilities managers and associated professionals. The tanked economy has sent the federal government, states, local governments and educational institutions scrambling for resources to maintain even basic mission-essential services. Doing a lot more with a lot less is not just the norm these days; it is going to be the way of the future. Within this welter of change and development, the facilities manager must resolutely accomplish tasks and manage resources with more creativity and persistence than ever before.

The upcoming *Energy/Facilities Connections* event will bring together professionals of varied stripes to tackle the tough issues facing us. Our expressed goals for the conference are:

- Learn from nationally-renowned experts and each other,
- Broaden our professional networks, and
- Bring back to our organizations new and innovative ways of doing business.

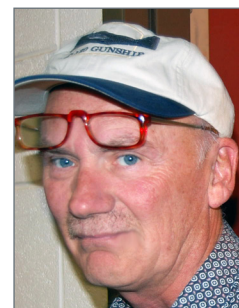
Practically speaking, there are two ways to deal with the somber economy and greatly reduced resources. We can do business as usual, cutting professional development and travel – and embed our collective heads in the sand. Or, we can rise above the din to seek the sunlight and learn how to refine and streamline our operations through innovation,



Bob MacKenzie

new technologies and creative approaches.

Bryan McGeachy, operations director of Camas School District, contends that attendance at a previous Energy/Facilities Connections conference saved his district more than \$200,000. At the event, Bryan learned of an incentive program being offered by Chelan PUD to Wenatchee School District. Bryan took that case study back with him and presented the program to his district's energy provider, who embraced the concept and enacted key provisions. The result was a credit of more



Bryan McGeachy

than \$200,000 to the Camas School District after just one year. Also since that conference, seven out of ten schools in the Camas School District have become ENERGY-STAR-rated, and one more is on the way. Now, that's what we're talking about!

Join us in May in Leavenworth and let's make great things happen...together. ✖

Bob

EFC Assembles Sterling Keynote Crew

By Heather Lenox, Shop Talk guest contributor

The top names at this year's *Energy/Facilities Connections Conference* (EFC) are poised to set an unbeatably high bar. Lauded in national and international circles, the 2011 EFC keynote speakers bring expertise ranging from higher education and energy efficiency to management and engineering in the private and public sectors.

This year's all-star team includes Alan Bigger, APPA past president and APPA fellow; Bob Cowan, director of Facilities Engineering for the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center; John Lee, director of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs; Lander Medlin, executive

vice-president of APPA; and Mike Weedall, vice-president of Energy Efficiency at the Bonneville Power Administration. The EFC staff recently caught up with several of these superstars.

When asked to reflect on the conference theme, *Now... More Than Ever!*, **Lander Medlin** conveyed her belief that each individual facilities professional is accountable for how they collectively get through these challenging times. "We need to have a positive outlook and not give in to the 'doom and gloom'." Medlin's conviction and optimism come from a genuine place, as APPA mirrors its membership. When their members have to trim back, so do the folks at APPA, and they are feeling exactly what their members are feeling today. "We're past cutting flesh and now are cutting bone. That's just nightmarish," she said, "And the community is less educated about energy issues and operations. The impetus is on us to demonstrate our importance."

Bob Cowan emphasized that in times like these "It's good to be lean!" However, making cuts that won't be deeply regretted down the road is crucial. He explained that facilities tend to spend about the same amount of money on personnel as they do on energy consumption, while management typically uses a meager two percent of their time focusing on energy issues. A small shift in management focus can bring incredible savings. "You can reduce energy cost by ten percent

seamlessly, without impacting anybody, if you do it right," Cowan said. "Try doing that with personnel cost."



Mike Weedall also has a clear and proven vision of what energy conservation looks like in action. "The popular perception of energy conservation is doing without," he said. "To me, energy efficiency has always been about how to get the most out of each unit of energy, often with the resulting benefit of increasing productivity." Weedall's success



in this arena is tangible. "I can cite many, many projects where the energy use per unit of output went down, but overall

production and benefits actually increased. These are true 'win/win' situations."

These keynote presenters raved about the overall value of building professional relationships and of the EFC Conference in particular. Lander Medlin stressed that connecting with regional and national colleagues is imperative and hopes that folks will consider

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“



The only way we're going to get through this is to get smarter.

Lander Medlin,
APPA
Executive Vice-President

”

Keynote Crew

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events like the seventh annual EFC conference and APPA gatherings as essential to survival. "This is a hazardous time to isolate ourselves," she said. "The only way we're going to get through this is to get smarter."

Alan Bigger echoes a similar sentiment and considers learning from peers critical. "The value lies beyond simply who is at the front of the room,"

Alan said. "It's the folks at your tables, networking and casually learning small things that will save heaps



back at home." Bob Cowan sees this same value in terms of benchmarking, which "... isn't just looking at numbers, it's looking at processes and procedures and taking the absolute best available. Networking at the EFC conference is benchmarking at the ultimate level."

The Consortium staff wishes to thank this sterling array of professionals for making time to share their extensive wisdom and talents with eager EFC conference attendees this May. These leaders truly encapsulate what it means to act "now more than ever." ❄

Heather Lenox is a guest contributor and temporary staff member with the Washington State University Extension Energy Program in Olympia.

Conference

Continued from page 1

addition, while an event such as the EFC Conference might seem appropriate for a big-city setting, the intimacy of Leavenworth enables attendees to more easily continue networking after hours, while experiencing all the joys the town has to offer. It is also ideal for attendees who want to meet up with their families for the weekend after the conference. Check out www.leavenworth.org for things to do in Leavenworth.

People Learn in a Variety of Ways

Sessions are tailored to a variety of learning styles. Aside from the conventional classroom setting, including keynote presentations and collaborative workshops, EFC includes interactive hands-on training opportunities with the Hot Shop sessions. There are also structured networking opportunities, such as the after-hours Networking Connections gatherings, that enable professional relationship development in comfortable, welcoming environments.

Hot Shop: Diagnostic Tools for Effective Operations

Attendees have stressed in the past that one of their favorite things about the conference is

that it is **not** a trade show. Hot Shop sessions feature energy and facilities experts showcasing innovative equipment and technologies in a training structure. There is no pressure to purchase products, no sales pitch to sit through. Hot Shop is designed for attendees to experience hands-on learning with experts nearby to answer questions and provide support.

Energy/Facilities Connections – the Training Series

The reach of Energy/Facilities Connections goes beyond just the conference. While the conference headlines the training series, other opportunities (including webinar trainings and one-day workshops) continue to be introduced. Be on the lookout for upcoming EFC training opportunities, and check out the video recording of the most recent EFC webinar, *Key Facilities Solutions in the Great Recession*, available online, <http://www.energy.wsu.edu/PublicFacilitiesSupport/PlantOperations/OnlineTrainings.aspx>.

For more information about what to expect or how to register for the Energy/Facilities Connections Conference, contact Bob MacKenzie, (360) 956-2055, or e-mail bobmac@energy.wsu.edu.



ENERGY/FACILITIES CONNECTIONS

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION ENERGY PROGRAM



From Surviving to Thriving

"Making the Most of Lean Times"

By Heather Lenox, Shop Talk guest contributor

The question of how to survive lean times is an indigestible entree heaped onto everyone's plates these days. There is a real temptation to hunker-down and not spend a penny, but inaction carries a tremendous risk with potentially devastating long-term impacts. Consortium staff recruited help to break down this quandary from presenters for the upcoming Energy/Facilities Connections (EFC) conference. The 2011 presenters hail from every nook of the energy and facilities fields and they all agree on one thing – doing nothing, especially in times such as these, is a sure ticket to regret.

Larry Price is the director of facilities planning and construction at Bellevue College in Washington. He will present two



conference sessions, including *How to Stretch Resources and Achieve Major Cost Reductions*. The greatest challenge

affecting facilities at Larry's organization is downsizing through retirements of staff members who are not being replaced. "We're going to have to figure out what to do; now all that wisdom and expertise is walking out the door," Larry said.

Rich Prill, building science and indoor air quality specialist for the Washington State University (WSU) Extension Energy Program, pointed out that not keeping facilities current is another high risk that businesses are taking.

"Too many sites have been operating in deferred-maintenance mode," he said.

"Oftentimes, folks think they can get by without fixing things, but we don't want to do breakdown maintenance where people's health is concerned." And if the negative impact to health and productivity isn't motivation enough, Rich said, "It usually costs more to fix it later."



Cost is also a big motivator for **Layne McWilliams** of the Bonneville Power Administration's Energy Smart Industrial Program. He cautions there is real urgency for facilities professionals to move forward in developing energy-saving water and wastewater infrastructure.

"Historically, power has been very inexpensive in the Pacific Northwest," Layne said. As



the amount of energy released to other regions increases, the more this region will be competing to purchase power in that open market. He advised, "If you do nothing (about energy conservation) right now, eventually you're going to find yourself in that higher rate bracket competing with regions already accustomed to those higher rates." Layne is optimistic, however, because his program's services are in ever-increasing demand. "People are deeply concerned about their bottom lines and energy is a big cost center for most municipalities," he said. "This economy is motivating folks."

Phil Lou, solar energy specialist for the WSU Extension Energy Program, is also experiencing an upturn. Phil hails from the installer

side of solar energy, rather than the policy side, and emphasizes implementation. He sees a

rapidly growing consciousness about energy issues and a real thirst for information. "If it's true that people spend according to their value systems, the growth in our sector may be an indication that many people agree [clean



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Surviving

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energy] is good for their lives and good for the country as a whole." Photovoltaic (PV) systems and wind power are now accessible to all who want to participate and, as Phil sees it, "Investing in clean energy now is a hedge against future rising energy costs."

Greg Jourdan, HVAC professor at Wenatchee Valley College, voiced that in addition to clean energies, "...real savings is going to come from updating what we already have." Greg's advice to people who think they can't afford retrofitting and upgrading is, "We have access to rebates, stimulus money and incentives from energy providers."

Phil Lou agreed, pointing out that "The technology exists. The financial incentives are in place. And myths are just that – myths." Phil encourages anyone wanting to thrive down the road to get informed now and break their myths about conservation and

clean energy.

Rich Prill noted that these hard times have become an opportunity for people to get out of "business as usual." As resources and appetites for new building projects wane, facilities and energy folks' thoughts turn to taking care of their existing structures in lieu of new building projects. Rich will provide tactical insight about how to advance preventive maintenance and energy-efficiency in his session *Maintenanceland Defined – Why Don't New Buildings Perform as Expected?* "The ability to make a case for your sphere of responsibility really depends on having measurable goals and outcomes," Prill advised. "We advocate measurement because it is the way to more effectively secure the necessary funds, resources and staff time," he said.

Facilities leaders often emphasize "where the rubber meets the road," craving concrete and immediate solutions for the

projects at hand. To their own hazard, industry folks sometimes overlook the human side of what they do, forgetting to evaluate their own skills and effectiveness as leaders. EFC remedies this unintentional gap by providing a leadership track to balance the outstanding technical training also provided. According to **David McCuiston**, supervisor of custo-



dial services for Mukilteo School District, roughly half of the top 100 companies in the U.S., including Southwest

Airlines and John Deere, use the Servant Leadership model which he will be presenting at this year's conference. David maintains that in order to thrive in tough times, true leaders must be willing to "meet every need that your workers have – teaching, listening, involving, giving them authority to answer as much as possible on their own."

The keynote speakers and session presenters converging on Leavenworth in May are guaranteed to deliver the most unique and powerful EFC conference yet. This year's attendees will gain a clear idea of how to access and fund the most cutting-edge best practices and technology available in their field. ✕

The Consortium extends their gratitude to everyone who provided information for this article, including those whose contributions do not appear above. For a full list of the 2011 EFC presenters and more of their stories, contact Consortium staff at (360) 956-2055 or email plantops@energy.wsu.edu.



Greg Jourdan (right) explains HVAC unit renovation options to a student.

Why Custodial Connections? Fifteen Years of Change in the Custodial Industry (Part Two)

By Sue Brown and Phil Partington, Consortium staff

Some may find the combination of energy and facilities topics in a training venue unusual enough, but the inclusion of a custodial component may be just plain weird. While the lay person might lump maintenance and custodial together, those in the facilities industry know how different they really are. That raises the question: why host a training event that combines energy with facilities, and includes custodial?

Why Custodial Connections?

The *Energy/Facilities Connections Conference* caters to those seeking specific training in their field, whether it be facilities, energy or custodial. Yet, the conference is also designed to provide attendees with unique networking opportunities. The diversity of



Gene Woodard

EFC sets it apart, and the structure of the event enables folks to take advantage of that opportunity to the fullest.

For instance, how often do maintenance and custodial staff

members really talk to one another? How can similar challenges affect the different groups? What happens when a building designer creates plans without communicating with maintenance to find out if the designs are easily maintainable, or with custodial to find out if they're easily cleanable? These are some of the issues EFC networking focuses on addressing.

Gene Woodard, director of facilities services in the Custodial Service Division at the University of Washington, is a major figure in the janitorial industry. He brings over 28 years of custodial operations experience and leadership to the 2011 EFC Conference, specifically to *Custodial Connections*. Woodard will host a two-part presentation, *Do Your Custodial Operations Measure Up?*

Woodard spoke with Consortium staff member, Sue Brown, about the changes that have occurred in the industry during the 15 years the Consortium has been in operation. The first segment about Woodard's answers appeared in the Winter 2011 *Shop Talk* <http://www.energy.wsu.edu/Documents/ShopTalk-Winter-Feb2011.pdf> beginning on page 7. Part Two continues below.

Improvements in Cleaning Products

Higher expectations pertaining to what is released into the environment have fueled healthier cleaning chemicals on the market today. They are also better for the health of the building occupants and the custodial workers. Consumers are factoring more than just the cost of cleaning products when making their selection, and are discovering that there is no reason not to go with green products that have a third-party certification.

In addition to cleaning products, cleaning tools have changed over the past 15 years. For example, string mops most commonly used in the past with traditional metal or plastic mop buckets/wringers could weigh 50 pounds or more when filled. These mops required quite a bit of physical exertion to maneuver. Mop heads are now being made from microfiber materials that are light weight, highly absorbable, washable and durable. Lightweight metal and plastic are being used to make mop handles, vacuum cleaners and other custodial equipment. The combination of lightweight mop heads and mop handles can make a big difference in the physical strain placed upon the worker.

Another redesigned tool is the vacuum cleaner. Unlike heavier and bulkier vacuums of the 1990s, the newest backpack vacuums are light weight, easier to maneuver, have more powerful suction ability and better filtration systems. These enhancements have greatly enhanced the overall indoor air quality in buildings where they are used.

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Change*Continued from page 7*

Custodians in hallways with mops and buckets of water splashing everywhere are a thing of the past. Now there is a wet mop that does not even require a bucket. This mop has a bottle of cleaning solution attached to the top of the handle, as well as a hose that disperses solution in front of the mop head. When the mop head becomes dirty, it is replaced with a clean one. The mop heads are washable and there is no dirty cleaning solution dumped down

the drain and into the water system.

"We have used this product for a while now" said Woodard. "It has not only helped us use less water and put less water into the sewage system, but we are now always applying fresh solution onto the floor surface which does a much better job of cleaning."

Touchless bathroom faucets and automatic flushing toilets have also helped address health concerns, because it means fewer surfaces that people have

to touch and spread germs to. New automatic hand dryers are becoming much more effective at drying hands quickly, reducing the amount of paper towels being used – a definite plus to sustainability. ✖

Contact Gene Woodard, (206) 543-7831, or e-mail gwoodard@u.washington.edu for more information about UW Custodial Services. Contact Sue Brown, (360) 956-2058, or e-mail browns@energy.wsu.edu, to find out how the Consortium can assist with your custodial needs, or to learn more about the Custodial Connections Training event May 12-13, 2011.

Consortium Members

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College
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Community Colleges of
Spokane
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Health Department
Thurston County
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School for the Deaf
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Transportation
Veteran's Affairs
Washington State Patrol

*Our warm welcome to new members in **bold blue** type. We look forward to serving your facility and operations needs.*