

# Warm and windy alternatives are powerful

■ The United States consumes 26 percent of the world's energy, but there are some less wasteful solutions

By Eleanor Pierce  
for the Emerald

Because of the impact traditional sources of energy such as oil, coal and nuclear power have on the environment, many eco-conscious individuals and organizations are practicing and encouraging energy conservation as well as a shift to renewable energy sources.

Energy usage accounts for approximately 80 percent of air pollution, according to the Alliance to Save Energy. The 1996-1997 American Almanac states that while Americans account for only 5 percent of the world's

population, we consume about 26 percent of the world's energy.

Renewable energy sources receive praise because they have a much lower environmental impact than coal, oil power, hydroelectric power or nuclear power plants, according to the ASE. Two sources of renewable power that consumers in Eugene can use in their homes are solar power and wind power, according to the Eugene Water and Electric Board.

One way in which people use the sun's energy is by building structures that use the sun to heat water for bathing and laundry. Commonly, a solar collector plate placed on the roof of the home heats water, which is then stored in a well-insulated tank.

Because these systems can't work when the sun is not shining, most homes installed with solar water heating systems also have backup systems, according to

EWEB.

The energy of the sun can also be made into electricity by using photovoltaic cells, also known as PV cells. PV cells are used in calculators and watches, but can also be used on a much larger scale for business and personal use. PV power is most commonly used in remote locations where power is not readily available.

The alternative power source is also limited by the fact that it cannot work when the sun is down, according to the American Almanac.

Wind power, however, is not as limited as solar energy. In addition, wind power is not produced at individual homes, and therefore does not require any special equipment at the home of the consumer. For that reason, wind power could be classified as a more viable choice for consumers than solar energy, according to the ASE.

EWEB offers its customers the

option of requesting that a percentage of their electricity be provided by wind power generated in Wyoming.

Individuals can reduce their energy consumption in a number of ways without changing to a renewable energy source. For college students in particular, a solar panel may not be an option.

Simple changes such as turning down heat at night, however, and making sure lights are off in rooms not in use can make a difference in the amount of energy that is used, according to EWEB.

For people who are concerned about energy consumption, there are volunteer opportunities available for students who wish to get involved. One avenue for involvement is the Solar Information Center, which is focused on alternative forms of energy use. The SIC is also useful to people who are just looking for information about

renewable energy.

"We're actively seeking volunteers," SIC co-director Benjamin Gates said.

The SIC is a student group funded primarily by the ASUO and EWEB. The SIC is associated with the University's school of architecture, and functions as a research, education and information center on solar and alternative energy sources.

The SIC sponsors a number of speakers and events regarding alternative energy throughout the academic year. These events are generally held on Tuesdays.

More information is available in the Winter/Spring 2000 SIC newsletter, which can be found outside the SIC, located in 219 Lawrence.

Energy use decisions "definitely fall on the individual consumer," said Stacey Weinkauff, the SIC's educational outreach coordinator.

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## Center rejuvenates awareness

■ The Recycling Center now collects 40 percent of campus waste, making UO one of the nation's most active

By Alana Lynn  
for the Emerald

Recycling is one of the best methods for waste management that is simple and affordable for students. Recyclable goods can be plastic, paper, bottles, cans, metals, cardboard, batteries and even food.

The University's Recycling Center is responsible for the more than 1,500 recycling collection points located around campus. Oftentimes, it is easy to forget that the green bins

strategically placed around campus are not there for efficiency but rather in an effort to control our waste stream.

The Recycling Center was founded by a group of students in 1991 who were adamant about controlling the waste stream on campus.

"People have taken ownership of this program," program manager Karyn Kaplan said. "This program is built on the energy of the students."

The Recycling Center is funded by student incidental fees, the University administration, University Housing and the revenue generated from recycled paper.

In 1991, the Recycling Center was collecting 10 percent of the University waste stream in recyclable goods, now the program is recovering 40 percent, Kaplan said. This increase can be attributed to the increase of recycling points around campus, and the increased awareness of the impact that we have on the preservation of the earth.

Currently, Americans throw away 260 million trees worth of paper every year, she said. The need to change our habits about environmental awareness is being addressed.

"People are becoming more progressive and are noticing their impact on the earth," said Pete Chism, student recycling coordinator. By simply recycling paper and other recyclable goods, we can save energy and cause a reduction in acid rain, global warming and air pollution, he said.

Kaplan says that while recycling does help to curb the problem of the increasing waste stream, it is not the only solution

"There are many ways that we can reduce our waste," she said. Some small ways that can add up big are to buy packages with minimal packaging, use cloth bags when at the grocery store and avoid products that are not recyclable.

"One of the biggest contributors to waste that I see on this campus is coffee cups that are left on the ground," said Dylan Darling, a junior journalism major.

The Recycling Center stresses that student involvement in the recycling program offers tremendous job and leadership opportunities.

"This job offers students not just a job but learning opportunity," Kaplan said.

The Student Recycling Program offers an array of opportunities for students and employs a student staff of 45 to collect the recycled material. Jobs, internships, and volunteer opportunities are all available through the Recycling Center.

The recycling program is involved in the University Recycling Council, which was organized in 1992 as an information exchange between universities in the Northwest quadrant to learn more about waste reduction, recycling and waste management issues.

Through this council, the Student Recycling Program has expanded its knowledge to help the University become one of the most active recycling campuses in the United States. Darling emphasized that everyday changes can make a significant difference

“One of the biggest contributions to waste that I see on this campus is coffee cups that are left on the ground.”

Dylan Darling  
junior, journalism major  
coordinator

in the recycling effort.

"The key is to learn the guidelines and rules of recycling," Darling said. "By simply using a refillable coffee cup and recycling the paper we use on a daily basis, we can help control the waste stream"

With Earth Day arriving Saturday, the Recycling Center is working in a joint effort with the Survival Center to help stress the importance of recycling.

The theme of this year's Earth Day celebration is "Solutions" with an emphasis on sustainable living and presentations on recycling and reducing consumption.

## Free Trees

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