



SUSTAINABILITY

Annual Progress Report

July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004

Section I: Agency Information, Policy and Goals

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Policy Statement:

The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under Executive Order 02-03 and will strive to model the principles of sustainability in its operations, fleet management, procurement, and building construction.

WDVA recognizes:

- The importance of planning for future generations and setting long-term planning horizons in order to leave future generations a legacy of sustainable resources
- The imperative of changing business practices over time in order to reverse trends of natural system decline that threaten the economic health and social vitality of our state
- That each agency and each individual can make a difference

Long Range Goals:

- Institutionalize sustainability as an agency value
- Raise employee awareness of sustainability in the workplace and in their personal lives
- Minimize energy and water use
- Shift to clean energy for both facilities and vehicles

- Shift to non-toxic, recycled and remanufactured materials in purchasing and construction
- Expand markets for environmentally preferable products and services
- Reduce or eliminate waste as an inefficient or improper use of resources
- Investigate and adopt new methods for sustainable practices as they are developed and become available
- Become a model agency of environmental consciousness coupled with good business practices and outstanding performance

Section II: Reporting on Objectives

Objective #1: WDVA will construct a new, 240-bed facility utilizing natural ventilation, environmentally friendly products, recycled materials and achieve LEED Silver certification.

The agency continues to pursue Silver LEED certification in the construction of the new, 240-bed nursing facility at Retsil. The use of renewable products, natural ventilation, local suppliers and the recycling of old materials and waste have been the key components.

Success: The construction project is on target for Silver LEED certification.

Barriers and Challenges: Loss of some local suppliers and the inability to incorporate some of the sustainable design features, due to cost constraints, as the project progressed. The use of reclaimed water was cost prohibitive.

Objective #2: WDVA will reduce the use of virgin and chlorine-bleached paper as well as reduce overall consumption.

Historical data was collected for paper purchases and baselines established. Research was conducted and a list established of all 'green' paper products available for purchase through GA.

Success: One hundred percent of the white, 8.5 X 11 paper purchased by the agency is recycled. No virgin paper is purchased. Many staff are conscious of, and put into practice, making two-sided copies of documents, the use of the 'draft' setting and black and white for internal copies.

Barriers and Challenges: Current requirements for back-up documentation and audit trails have inhibited reduction of paper usage. A significant audit project occurred in this time frame that required an unusually high volume of copied materials. Staff are still in the process of learning to accept change as it relates to sustainability. The move to electronic archiving and systems such as the Travel Voucher System will alleviate paper usage.

Objective #3: WDVA will reduce miles traveled and fuel consumption.

Baselines figures were compiled for tracking of vehicle miles traveled and fuel consumption. Teleconferencing is the preferred meeting method for meetings. The agency is investigating the use of hybrid vehicles in replacing vehicles in the agency's fleet as needed.

Success: Staff are cognizant of, and strive to coordinate, carpool options for travel to the other agency facilities and off-site meetings. The added benefit is the opportunity for staff discussion en route.

Barriers and Challenges: Temporary unavailability of video conferencing options due to network conversion to DIS. Limited agency vehicle fleet. Hybrid vehicles will be purchased as the budget allows.

Other Programs and Initiatives:

Sustainability is a key initiative in the agency's strategic plan. The goal for the first quarter of FY05 was to pilot green cleaning products at the Western Washington veterans homes.

CLEANING PRODUCTS:

In accordance with Executive Order, 04-01, the agency piloted a green cleaning products program at the Washington Soldiers Home in Orting. That pilot produced unanticipated and exceptional results. The Custodial Department replaced thirty-three toxic chemicals with nine 'green' products, which resulted in reduced costs and reduced use in the amount of standard disinfectant product by one-third.

In addition, the reduced number of products resulted in the reduction of necessary storage space and reduced the number of chemicals the staff needed to be trained to use. As a result of the research around green cleaning products, the department also replaced their standard rags with micro-fiber rags that reduced the cost of laundering by one-fifth. The standard, heavy, cloth mop heads were replaced with micro-fiber products that reduced staff time used to clean floors by 20%, and significantly reduced custodians' back strain. In addition, the reduced number of wash loads necessary to clean the mop heads cut laundry costs for this equipment by 50%.

Infection control was monitored with no negative impact on the number of infection control issues. As a result, the Food Service Department at Orting adopted the products and mops in their area.

The department heads in conjunction with the agency's supply officer will continue to research the availability of additional green cleaning products to include a disinfectant.

The other two veterans homes are in the process of adopting these products.

SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITY:

The responsibility for agency lead on Sustainability was assumed by the assistant director's executive assistant resulting in no additional FTE usage.

Section III: Communication and Education

Success factors:

Agency staff was receptive to the sustainability concept and, in fact, contributed their own personal sustainable practices which were shared with the agency through e-mail and on the internal website. Training was conducted specifically for staff that were not aware of electronic capabilities in storing files, thereby reducing number of documents printed. Other staff dedicated themselves to consistent sustainable practices in reducing the number of copies printed, the quality of internal copies, the choice of black and white versus colored copies and two-sided copies.

Significant focus has been placed on staff awareness of, and education on, sustainable practices. Agency-wide E-mails, weekly updates on the agency's internal website, continued discussion at staff meetings, and articles in the agency's newsletters, *Veterans Voices* and @WDVA, have kept Sustainability at the fore-front in employees' minds. The use of tools and practices, learned in the three sessions of training provided by Governor's office, has aided in the success of these efforts.

Current staff are trained in scheduled sessions and attendee numbers documented to track goals. The training presentation is incorporated into New Employee Orientation with number tracked and incorporated into total number trained, the goal being 100%.

Section IV: Statewide Performance Measures

- A. Copy paper used
 - a. Quantity
 - b. Type
- B. Vehicle Miles Traveled
- C. Fuel Purchases:

- a. Gallons
- b. Type

D. Average Fuel Efficiency of Vehicles: 25 mpg

Section V: New or Updated Goals and Objectives

1. Inventory currently owned equipment using toxic chemicals. Research availability, quality and price of green replacement equipment. Develop a replacement schedule for identified equipment.
2. Research availability, quality and price of green products and supplies to replace replacement products containing toxic chemicals.
3. Do an analysis on feasibility of recycling food waste at the veterans homes.
4. Reduce the amount of office paper used by 5% in FY2005
5. Recycle 100% of office paper.