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NEWS

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Klamath County School District makes the grade in energy efficiency

Lighting renovation cuts costs and improves learning environment

KLAMATH COUNTY, Ore. – June 14, 2012 – Students at Brixner Jr. High in the Klamath County School District are getting a better look at their class work thanks to a school-wide lighting upgrade that replaced outdated, inefficient lights with energy-efficient lights that consume less power and light the space properly.

Brixner is one of three schools in the district, including Chiloquin Elementary, Chiloquin, Ore., and Lost River Jr./Sr. High School, Merrill, Ore., to undergo a comprehensive lighting renovation. Together, the projects are expected to save more than 659,000 kilowatt hours of electricity annually and more than \$49,000 in annual utility costs. Energy Trust of Oregon provided the district with cash incentives of \$129,180 toward the overall project.

Like school districts across the state, Klamath County School District must balance its commitment to a strong educational environment with the pressures of decreased funding and tight budgets. With 21 schools scattered across the county's mostly rural communities, the district is challenged by an inventory of older buildings and dated equipment, which consumes enormous amounts of energy and creates a backlog of repair and maintenance projects.

"We selected these schools for the upgrade because they needed the most help," said Ken Hadlock, business manager, Klamath County School District. "These buildings are more than 40 years old and were equipped with older lighting technologies that consumed more energy than necessary, and cost us thousands of dollars in operating costs. Plus, our facilities staff had to maintain many different types of outdated fixtures that took their time and attention away from more pressing maintenance issues. All this at a time when we are trying to use our dollars as efficiently as possible."

There are now no more incandescent bulbs in these schools. In all three properties, the district converted from older, inefficient fluorescent T12 lights to energy-efficient fluorescent T8 lights, installed LED exit signs, used compact fluorescent light bulbs where needed, and added occupancy sensors to control lights in spaces that were seldom occupied.

Fluent Engineering, an Energy Trust Development and Design Ally located in Salem, Ore., worked with the district to devise a new lighting strategy that relies on a short list of five to 10 standardized fixtures. This approach allows the district to improve maintenance efficiencies for the future, meet new recommended lighting standards for schools, save energy and utility costs with more efficient lights and reduce purchasing costs.

In addition to the Energy Trust incentives, the school district received loans from Oregon Department of Energy's State Energy Loan Program, which allows Oregon schools to take advantage of long-term, low interest rate loans for energy-efficiency projects.

"We had an unusual opportunity to start fresh with brand new lighting," said Hadlock. "It is a double bonus that we can reduce our costs and at the same time provide a better learning environment for our students."

Energy Trust of Oregon is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to helping utility customers benefit from saving energy and tapping renewable resources. Our services, cash incentives and energy solutions have helped participating customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, NW Natural and Cascade Natural Gas save more than \$1 billion on energy bills. Our work helps keep energy costs as low as possible, creates jobs and builds a sustainable energy future. Learn more at www.energytrust.org or call 1-866-368-7878.

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