



# PENDLETON SCHOOL DISTRICT ROUNDS UP ENERGY SAVINGS

Like many small school districts across Oregon, the Pendleton School District was no stranger to aging facilities with a backlog of deferred maintenance. So how did a rural school with nearly \$100 million in capital needs find the means to invest in new schools? School district leaders achieved the impossible by launching a comprehensive strategy to upgrade facilities, lower costs and improve the classroom learning environment.

“We’ve struggled with declining enrollment, which has had an impact financially and hampered our investment in properties,” said Michelle Jones, director of business services, Pendleton School District. “It was clear we needed to look at every resource available to rethink how we manage our facilities more efficiently.”

District leadership developed a plan to leverage a local bond measure with cash incentives and assistance from multiple Energy Trust of Oregon programs, and SB 1149 funds from the Oregon Department of Energy. Community support helped the district pass a \$59.4 million bond measure to design and build two new elementary schools, fully renovate a third and implement energy-efficiency improvements at several others.

“The bond measure was the catalyst,” said Scott Rogers, project manager, Wenaha Group, a consulting firm advising the district. “Energy Trust was at the table from the beginning to advise us on pragmatic and cost-effective solutions to improve schools and keep future costs under control.”

## PROJECT-AT-A-GLANCE

### Project benefits

- Improve classroom learning environment
- Save energy and reduce operating costs
- Reduce maintenance backlog and future equipment repair needs
- Earth Advantage® certification

### Financial analysis

- \$1,636,841 in project costs
- \$330,415 in cash incentives from Energy Trust

### Estimated annual savings and generation

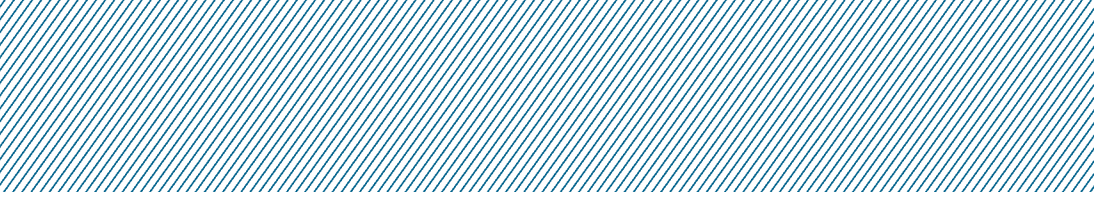
- 664,000 kWh saved
- 38,700 therms saved
- 228,000 kWh generation
- \$93,000 saved in energy costs



**Our community has been very supportive of these investments because they have long-term value. Now we can redirect our energy cost savings into strategies that help us maintain, and even improve, our services to students.**



**Michelle Jones**  
director of business services  
Pendleton School District



### One design for two schools

Two new 64,000-square-foot elementary schools were built to replace outdated and inefficient buildings causing safety concerns. Washington and Sherwood Heights elementary schools were designed by Bend-based BBT Architects, using one set of plans to streamline costs and construction. Architects consulted with Energy Trust to align energy-efficiency features, which included interior and exterior LED lighting and an advanced variable refrigerant flow mechanical system to heat and cool classrooms more efficiently.

A former elementary school, used for an alternative education program and a nonprofit preschool program, was renovated and converted into the Pendleton Early Learning Center. Taken down to the shell, the 50,000-square-foot historic building was completely renovated from a new roof to new mechanical systems.

Solar arrays were installed at all three locations, and together, are expected to produce an average of 227,988 kWh of electricity annually. Investing in renewable power is allowing the district to generate its own energy and achieve sustainability goals. High-efficiency domestic water heating systems, low-flow plumbing fixtures and ENERGY STAR appliances were also incorporated into the projects.

### Existing facilities earned an energy upgrade

The existing middle school and high school also gained an energy reboot. Mechanical and lighting systems were upgraded at Pendleton High School and Sunridge Middle School. In the 1980s, a passive solar heating system was installed at Sunridge but it never functioned properly, creating a host of building condition issues. With technical help from Energy Trust, the entire system was upgraded to working order for the first time.

### Investments reap long-term rewards

“When you consider the amount of work accomplished with the funds available, it shows we took our time and got the most for our money,” said Jones. “Energy Trust was able to come in, and at no cost to the district, help us develop an action plan that would touch every school, provide efficiency across the district and support student achievement.”

Pendleton School District earned \$330,415 in Energy Trust cash incentives toward its energy saving and renewable energy improvements, which are estimated to save more than 664,000 kilowatt hours of electricity and 38,700 therms of gas, and generate more than 227,900 kWh of energy. This results in annual energy cost savings of \$93,000.



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