

The Miami Herald: BCC goes green, dodges red

FROM WATERLESS URINALS TO DIGGING ITS OWN WELLS, BCC IS TRYING TO SAVE MONEY AND AID THE ENVIRONMENT AT THE SAME TIME

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April Johnson studies by natural light beaming into BCC South Campus library.



Environmental engineer David Fowler is a major contributor to BCC's effort to go green and save money in the process.

Broward Community College, with its 60,000 students and eight locations, is going green to help save the environment -- and save the school some greenbacks.

Among the changes: waterless urinals, drilling wells, self-contained water heaters and fewer printers. "The green movement on campuses is exploding," said Judy Walton, acting director of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, which promotes green campuses.

The catalyst for the explosion is making sure the college is a good environmental steward, but also, saving money.

BCC, like most state-funded entities this year, is feeling the budget crunch. Already, the school has cut over \$4 million from its \$82.8 million state-appropriated budget during the 2007-'08 school year. The college may have to cut more for next year, officials say.

Because of the weakening economy, leaders say that the school's belt tightening probably won't stop until 2010.

"The budget cuts this time around are deep and more painful and lasting longer," said J. David Armstrong, BCC's president.

The college is seeking permission now to drill wells on its three major campuses in 2008. For years,

the college has used municipal water for the cooling towers, which costs the school \$300,000 a year in water fees. The new wells costs \$60,000 each. Using well water at the three major campuses will save \$150,000 annually because the college won't have to pay municipal fees for processing the water. The college will drill deep wells on all of the campuses, pump water out of the aquifer and use it in the cooling system.

"We are using drinking water now, which has chlorine and is bad for the atmosphere and depletes the ozone," said David Fowler, BCC's environmental engineer.

BCC is getting rid of its hot-water boilers and replacing them with high-efficiency, self-contained water heaters. The high-efficiency units only run when people are using water. The school anticipates saving \$30,000 per year when the heaters are installed over the next 60 days.

Furthermore, the college plans to reduce personal printers, opting to rig about several computer stations to one printer, saving costs.

Broward Community College thinks that waterless urinals will bring relief to the school's financial coffers.

The new, waterless urinals, are cropping up across Broward Community College as part of the school's mission to go extreme green.

By replacing flush valve urinals with waterless ones, saves the school \$88,000 per year.

Student Robert Charles, 21, is a fan of the waterless urinals. "What's good about them is that they seem more hygienic because you don't have to use your hand to flush," Charles said. "It's easy access."