

## **Climate Action Campaign Messages contributed to E-files, 2008-09**

Did you know that Mason spends millions of dollars heating and cooling the buildings at our three main campuses? No wonder Virginia's governor recommends setting thermostats at 68 degrees in the winter. Just 3 degrees lower on the thermostat can save about 10 percent in heating costs. For Mason that means savings worth hundreds of thousands of dollars!! Do your part to help Mason reduce costs and carbon emissions by dressing for the season. To learn more about Mason's energy management initiatives see <http://masonenergy.gmu.edu>

Did you know that livestock production is responsible for about 18% of greenhouse-gas emissions? The meat industry contributes to global warming with emissions of methane gas and also with land and water degradation. Instead of ordering a burger, have a peanut butter & jelly sandwich and save as much as 2.5 pounds of carbon dioxide. Reducing your consumption of meat is an easy way to reduce harmful emissions; and Mason is providing more vegetarian options these days. To learn more about Mason's sustainable dining initiatives see <http://dining.gmu.edu/sustain.html>

Interested in meeting others who care about the earth? Mason has more than 125 classes related to climate change or the environment – free for faculty and staff. From Climate Dynamics to Environmental Science and Policy to Climate Change Communication Campaigns or Energy Economics, it's likely that Mason has a course that's right for you. Turn over a new leaf and get involved by signing up for a class on the issues that concern you.

Did you know that more than 600 colleges and universities nationwide, including Mason, have committed to climate neutrality? This spring Mason's Sustainability Office will develop a plan to eliminate or offset all CO2 emissions associated with the university's electricity use, heating, commuting, and air travel. Achieving climate neutrality will require the efforts, large and small, of the entire community. Facilities is already taking big steps to put our campuses on the road to high energy efficiency. But simple steps like turning out lights when leaving a room, powering down computers when not in use, and recycling cans, bottles, and paper also make a real difference. Make yourself a part of this important effort. Showing support for climate action by talking to others – in the classroom and the workplace -- is another way that everyone can help.

Did you know that recycling reduces carbon emissions? Producing goods from virgin materials requires energy for extraction, refining, transportation and processing – much more than producing goods from recycled materials. Recycling paper cuts energy usage in half. To reduce carbon emissions, pressure on forests, and landfill wastes, Mason has shifted to paper with 30% post-consumer content. That's progress, but the average U.S. office worker goes through 10,000 sheets of copy paper each year! Reduce the paper you use by printing on both sides and reading documents online. Reuse the backside of old documents for faxes, scrap paper, or drafts. It's good for the earth and your departmental budget. Learn more about recycling at Mason at <http://facilities.gmu.edu/physicalplant/recycling>

You may be familiar with the traffic problems associated with the Central Plant Expansion project at Patriot Circle and Rivanna River Lane. But are you aware of the benefits in energy efficiency? The central plant at Mason's Fairfax campus heats and cools our buildings much more efficiently than individual systems for each building could. New more efficient equipment will be installed during the expansion. Since this equipment is shared in the central system, these efficiency improvements will pass through to all buildings on campus. It's something to cheer about!!

Have you considered the savings of using public transportation? Mason offers its employees \$115 *per month* in Commuter Choice benefits. That's \$1380 a year! With this benefit and the free Mason Shuttles and Cue buses, you might even eliminate the cost of commuting to Mason. Meanwhile, even though the price of gasoline has fallen, car payments, insurance, maintenance, and filling the tank still add up to big bucks. See <http://transportation.gmu.edu> for more information on how you can save money while reducing carbon emissions.

Did you know a roundtrip flight from Dulles to London produces more CO<sub>2</sub> emissions *per passenger* than traveling the same distance by car? Faculty and staff travel adds substantially to Mason's carbon footprint. Take the train to that meeting in New York. Reconsider the conference travel, participate via the web-conferencing option, or buy carbon offsets to "make up for" the emissions from air-travel. While cutting back on air travel is a better way to reduce emissions, offsets (like TerraPass) are easy to buy through online travel services like Expedia. Such offsets provide incentives for reductions in emissions elsewhere. See <http://www.cleanair-coolplanet.org/> for a Consumers Guide to Carbon Offsets.

Have you noticed the Siemens trucks around campus? Siemens began working with Mason in 2005-2006, switching to energy-efficient lighting, installing water-saving devices, and upgrading boilers and chillers. The energy management system was also upgraded so that inefficient buildings can be more easily targeted for improvement. The result is much lower utility bills – *savings of about a million dollars every year* – under a contract guaranteed to work for Mason. The relationship has continued as Mason keeps working to reduce utility costs and carbon emissions. So when you see those trucks – Cheer for Climate Action!! See <http://facilities.gmu.edu/physicalplant/energy> for more information about energy management at Mason.

You know that Mason is under construction, but did you know that Mason has green buildings under construction? The Volgenau IT&E building at Fairfax and the new building at Arlington will be the first green building completed; others are in the pipeline. Mason's goal for all new buildings is "LEED Silver." (LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – a certification system set up by the U.S. Green Building Council. The silver ranking is one step up from the minimum for green certification. See <http://www.usgbc.org/>.) LEED buildings are typically 50% more energy efficient than standard buildings. This reduces greenhouse gas emissions and saves Mason money.