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# Sustainability

Monthly Newsletter

[sustainability.wustl.edu](http://sustainability.wustl.edu)

Washington University in St. Louis  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

## Environmental Health & Safety: Minimizing the School of Medicine's Footprint

### New EH&S Facility on WUSM campus



Washington University's School of Medicine campus will soon have a new Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) facility, located at 4522 McKinley Avenue. Designed by HKW Architects, the one-story building will be used for accumulating, packaging and preparation for shipment of chemical, medical and low level radioactive waste. It will also include offices for some EH&S staff. Completion of construction is expected in June 2015.

EH&S is dedicated to providing compliance oversight and consulting by continuously reviewing the University's impact on health and safety and seeking innovative ways to prevent environmental pollution. At the School of Medicine campus, staff members help large research, clinical and operations programs safely recycle and dispose of the hazardous chemical, biological, medical/infectious and radioactive waste, and regulate equipment, in a manner that meets all federal, state and local requirements. Their program ensures that the institution is protected against future environmental liabilities. Staff members conduct audits and are selective on which end-sites are used for recycling and disposal. In addition to recycling of certain materials (including fluorescent lights and ballasts, regulated equipment, lead, batteries with heavy metals, and solvents), they do decay-in-storage of short half-life radioactive materials, which results in significant cost savings for the institution.

## WUSM NEWS

- [Solar Progress at WUSM on a June Day](#)



### History of the WUSM Farmers' Market



The WUSM Farmers' Market began in August of 2009 and has been running continuously ever since. It takes place every Thursday, 10am to 2pm.

April through early November, the market is located on Hope Plaza. During inclement weather and from late November

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## SCHOOL OF MEDICINE NEWS

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## ENERGY

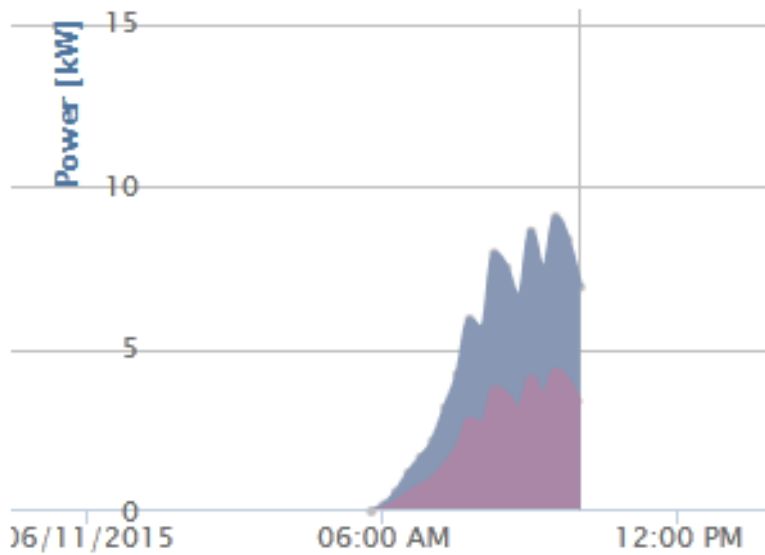
### Solar Progress at WUSM on a June Day

through March, it moves indoors to the McDonnell Pediatric Research atrium.

There are guidelines set in place and a committee that makes decisions on whether vendors can participate in the weekly market. The concept is to offer fresh and locally made/grown items to the WUSM campus population, including visitors and patients. Items include fruit, vegetables, preserved goods, herbs, cheeses and yogurt.

According to Betsy Snyder, Employee

Wellness Coordinator at WUSM, "We believe the market is a great benefit to our employees and neighboring community. Offering fresh and local items is essential to better health. Having an onsite weekly market is unique to our University. I do not know of any other workplace that has their own market. In addition, it makes less of a carbon footprint by only using local items. If you have people shopping at our market, there are fewer



people having to make a trip to the grocery store."

On Thursday morning, June 11, 2015, it was cloudy and hot in St. Louis. According to Accuweather, it was 81 degrees with 90 percent cloud cover. Despite the cloudy conditions, solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays are generating electricity to support operations at WUSM. In the month of June, solar PV arrays are capable of maximum production because sunrise is early and sunset is late. The arrays could be producing electricity for over 14 hours a day while offsetting purchased electricity when the electric rates are at the highest for the year.

The graphic above shows the production for one 25 kW PV array as of around 9:30 am on June 11 despite the cloud cover. Jim Jackson, Project Manager in the Capital Projects Group, oversees the solar PV installations and reports that the 25 kW systems are running at both 4488 Forest Park and 222 S. Newstead. At 4480 Clayton and 600 S. Taylor, the arrays have been delivered and are being installed. By the end of June, WUSM will have 100 kW of solar PV equipment installed and operational.

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## RECYCLING AND WASTE

### Recycling Efforts at WUSM Medical Library



This spring, the WUSM Becker Medical Library undertook a major effort to reclaim floor space that was formerly occupied by bound journals. A significant portion of the print material on its 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors has been eliminated, freeing the space to be used for other purposes. To ensure that important information is not lost during the reclamation project the library created a comprehensive de-accession plan based on factors including subject relevance, years held, online availability, usage and historical significance. Much of the content previously shelved on these floors is available online to the WUSM community or is easily available via interlibrary loan. The reclaimed space will be converted to open study and collaborative space as planning begins for its eventual repurposing.

Since much of the material is outdated, donating it is not appropriate, although a few dozen volumes have been accepted by the National Library of Medicine to fill gaps in its historical collection. Recycling the remaining books was an important goal from the very beginning of the project.

Rose Kettler, Administrative Assistant to the Library, coordinated this effort by arranging for the volumes to be picked up by Progressive Waste Company and recycled by Central Paper Stock. The Facilities Management Department added crucial support by providing four maneuverable bins and a regular slot at the dock for the special dumpster. Because this project was so extensive, it was done in several stages, with each phase lasting from one to two weeks. Library staff removed the selected journals from the shelves and transported them in wheeled bins to the loading dock. A designated dumpster from Progressive Waste Company gathered the volumes and took them to Central Paper Stock, where the paper could be properly recycled.

The project involved many people and resulted in impressive numbers: 50,000-65,000 bound journal volumes were recycled, filling a 10-yard dumpster 17 times and diverting 114.36 tons of waste from the landfill. This is a team sustainability effort that should be applauded for its great planning and execution.

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## **Fostering Sustainable Transportation Practices**



Washington University's School of Medicine seeks to encourage and foster sustainable transportation practices. Staff support and assist those looking to commute using public transit, shared vehicle programs and more active forms of transportation.

One of WUSM's most successful efforts is the U-Pass program. In fiscal year 2015 alone, U-Pass requests increased by 1,200 users. Over 8,000 community members choose the Metro system for some of their transportation needs. The Metro's Central West End station is the quickest method for entering and leaving campus.

Staff also continue to revise vanpool and carpool programs to make them more attractive and to encourage community members who find driving to be the best option to travel together.

Biking to work is another viable option. Bike racks are staged strategically throughout campus to make biking more convenient. When parking a bike on campus, staff recommend securing it to a rack with a "Bike Club" U-Lock. Cable and other locks are easily compromised and increase the risk of theft.

Whether you choose the Metro, vanpooling, carpooling, biking or other alternative transportation methods, we thank you for your effort in creating

less pollution and consumption of fossil fuels.

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## Backyard Gardens Growing in Popularity



Backyard gardens are becoming popular once again as more people learn about the food they eat, how it is grown and where it comes from. Gardens have many sustainable benefits. For example, they prevent rainwater runoff from entering sewer systems. This is important because natural aquifers are drying up across the United States. Gardens also provide a natural habitat for wildlife such as bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, earthworms and garden snakes. Native plants make the gardening process easier since they can handle the clay soil and natural weather patterns and can resist disease and harmful insects common to the region.

Wanda Haertling, Purchasing Supervisor for the School of Medicine's Facilities Management Department, is an avid backyard gardener. She and her husband purchased a vacant lot next to their home from the City of St. Louis and have turned it into the aptly named Haertling Gardens.

"We have a variety of gardens," she commented. "They include a butterfly/bee garden, vegetable garden, sunflower garden, and mum garden for the fall. We are in our second year of growing grapes, and we are currently in the process of a rain garden/bioswale project."

Wanda's vegetable garden provides enough produce for the family's winter

needs, as well as crops to share with others. "This year we should have enough tomatoes to take to the neighborhood yard sale that is every Saturday on the nearby church lot," she noted. "I have even sold some of the herbs and tomatoes to the local restaurants. In the evening when I get home there is nothing more satisfying than a walk in the yard to see what new things happened during the day!"

To learn more about starting a garden of your own, contact Wanda at [haertlingw@wusm.wustl.edu](mailto:haertlingw@wusm.wustl.edu).

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## Banding Peregrine Falcons on Campus



The West Building on South Euclid Avenue is one of the School of Medicine's oldest structures. It is also home to one of seven known peregrine falcon nests in the St. Louis area.

Sheri Palmer is a Public Safety Officer at WUSM, and since 2003, she has led workers from the [World Bird Sanctuary](#) to the nest. The sanctuary works to tag and take blood samples at the nest.



According to Jeff Meshach, Director of the World Bird Sanctuary, it's important to monitor this bird of prey because of its troubled history. "It took years of research to conclude that the pesticide DDT had ravaged the peregrine falcon population," he said. The peregrine falcon was put on the federal endangered species list in the 1970s and was removed in 1999.

Meshach said by tracking and taking blood samples, researchers can better determine the root of any problems that arise within the population.

To read more about the falcon nest at the West Building, click [here](#).

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## LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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### Norway's Divestment from Coal



Europe has seen great progress in the climate change movement as Norway's \$890 billion government fund, one of the largest funds of its kind,

will be selling off its investments related to coal. One of the biggest institutional divestments to push against climate change, this shift is especially impactful given that Norway is a major producer of oil and gas. Parliament voted this past Friday to shift its holdings out of businesses that rely on coal for 30% or more of their energy needs.

This push has not been an isolated one. The Church of England is also moving to divest from companies that are involved with coal or oil sands from its \$14 billion investment fund, and the French insurance firm AXA said it would cut \$560 million of coal-related investments. Having such large institutions push openly against coal will significantly impact this environmentally harmful fuel's use internationally.

To read more, click [here](#).

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## Amazon Announces Renewable Energy Projects



Up until now, Amazon has been far behind other tech companies in the renewable energy shift. However, just recently, Amazon has announced its largest renewable energy project yet. The tech giant will be building an 80-

megawatt solar farm in Virginia to help power its Amazon Services data centers. This will be the largest solar array in the state and will be named Amazon Solar Farm US East. The project will be in partnership with Community Energy and will significantly impact Amazon's carbon emissions since the state of Virginia is largely powered by coal.

Amazon has also announced its plan to build a 150-megawatt wind farm in Benton County, Indiana, to be named Amazon Web Services Wind Farm. This wind farm should be able to generate energy equivalent to that used by 46,000 homes. The company is dedicated to moving toward 100 percent renewable energy and says it is currently at 25 percent and hopes to be at 40 percent by 2016.

Until Amazon's renewable energy projects break ground, it is hard to speculate on their success. Hopefully, such large institutional change can bear fruit in the next few years and set a precedent for other firms worldwide.

For more, read [here](#).

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### **Green Homes Festival**

Saturday, June 20, 9a-4p

Butterfly House and Faust Park

15193 Olive Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63017

Join us for a hands-on, day-long festival of learning, playing and engaging with people of all ages and backgrounds with an interest in sustainable, healthy lifestyles. Explore the links between sustainability, energy efficiency, conservation at home and a healthy environment. Talk with green product and service exhibitors, learning more about home improvement and healthy homes. The Festival features and highlights local foods and spirits, live music and sustainable and handmade shopping at a Green Marketplace. Children and families can enjoy hands-on activities. Presentations and demonstrations throughout the day share the many ways that plants, air, water, soil and energy sustain our homes, our health and our living Earth.

For more information, click [here](#).

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**Preserving Herbs for Culinary Use**  
Saturday, June 27, 10-11a  
The Carriage House at Bell Garden  
3815 Bell, St. Louis, MO 63108

Join [Gateway Greening](#) for a community education workshop on preserving herbs. Bruce Chalker, member of the St. Louis Herb Society's Horticulture Committee, will present a beginning-to-end demonstration of drying herbs for culinary use, followed by a brief discussion of freezing herbs and preserving herb flavors through simple syrups and herbal vinegars.

Participants will receive a folder of educational handouts and are asked to contribute \$5 each to offset the cost of hosting the workshop.

RSVP to Hannah at 314-588-9600, ext. 104.

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*The Office of Sustainability newsletter is intended as a clearinghouse of sustainability-related news and events at the university, in the region and around the world. Listings in the newsletter do not*

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