Conservation measures saving money, resources

Chino Valley Unified School District has saved more than $760,000 in electricity and natural gas costs this school year when compared to a baseline of utility costs set in 2008 when the district began conservation measures.

As of March, the district is using 18% less electricity and has saved more than $660,000 in electricity costs when compared to that baseline year, according to Carla Kleinjan, sustainability coordinator for the district.

As of March, the district is using 22% less natural gas and has saved about $100,000 in natural gas costs when compared to 2008's costs, Ms. Kleinjan said. The gas savings is particularly notable because there was no Chino Hills High pool to heat in 2008, Ms. Kleinjan said.

"With the drought getting worse, we will continue to try to conserve water," she said. "We are using about 25% less water so far this year, compared to our baseline year."

Even though the district is using less water, it still has to pay more because the cost of water has gone up 70% in the last five years, Ms. Kleinjan said.

"We ask all sites, and especially school Green Teams to be on the lookout for irrigation leaks or problems and to report them to their site administration so that a work order can be generated," she said. "Irrigation is our biggest consumer of water at the district."

In 2010, the district encouraged students and staff at local schools to form Green Teams and receive incentives for their school by cutting down on electricity and other conservation measures. This year, all but three school sites have Green Teams, Ms. Kleinjan said.

She offers the following energy savings tips:

-Keep the doors closed when the air conditioning or heat is running

-Turn off lights when you leave your classroom or workspace, even if there are motion sensors in the room

-Don't use screen savers on computers as they keep the computer awake and using electricity. Remove all screen savers (in your power settings), and make sure the sleep settings are set to make your computer go to sleep or hibernate after 30 minutes without usage. Make sure your settings for your monitor are also set to have the monitor go to sleep after 10 to 15 minutes without usage.

-Always turn your computer and monitor off at the end of the day

-Use half of your lights if there is adequate daytime light in your room