

Friday, January 25, 2008

## Students Go Green for Annual Residence Challenge

Ohio University students are trying to conserve water and energy for Ohio University's Residence Challenge, which kicked off Sunday, January 20.

The competition is open to students living in all of the university's residence halls and encourages them to conserve with a little incentive: a trip to Cedar Point Amusement Park in Sandusky, Ohio, on May 11.

The challenge started some five years ago, according to Sonia Marcus, sustainability coordinator at Ohio University. At the start of the competition, each residence hall is given a "baseline" or average energy/water usage based on the data from the previous three years. The competition, which ends March 8, pits the residence halls against one another as they try to lower their consumption below the baseline by the largest margin. A hall from each green will be declared a winner.

The challenge is coming off of its most successful year, and the stakes just keep getting higher. Last year, the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that were avoided due to energy conservation efforts totaled 106.6 tons, which Marcus estimates is equivalent to taking 6,250 cars off the road for an entire day. Two hundred and ten students went on the Cedar Point trip. It works as an incentive because students know every bit of their personal effort counts, Marcus said.

Each winning hall selects the top participating students for the trip. The more energy and water saved, the more students who can qualify to go.

The residence halls find creative ways to conserve as much as possible, Marcus said. Students reported to her that they created the "Power Shower Relay Races," and some overzealous residents even posted "out of order" signs on water fountains to save on water usage. "Not that I encourage that," she said laughing.

