



# POWER *Vine*

SMC's Energy Newsletter



## NEW BEGINNINGS

*Shaping challenges into opportunities*

Campus life has resumed, albeit in an unconventional way. As a community, we have shown we are capable of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic through our responsibility to care for each other's welfare. This is the story of public health, and it bears a striking resemblance to the story of environmental stewardship. Both realms demand that in times of crisis, we act out our values to address the social, economic, and environmental inequities that have been exposed by the disruption of everyday life. With infectious disease as well as with climate change, we have the opportunity to ask ourselves what we can learn from the challenges facing the global community and how we can commit to mending society's fractured systems. Executing our Continuous Energy Improvement (CEI) program is one way to address energy overconsumption in the context of the College's mission for every member of campus to do well and do good.

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# ENERGY USE AT ST. MIKE'S

## *An inside look*

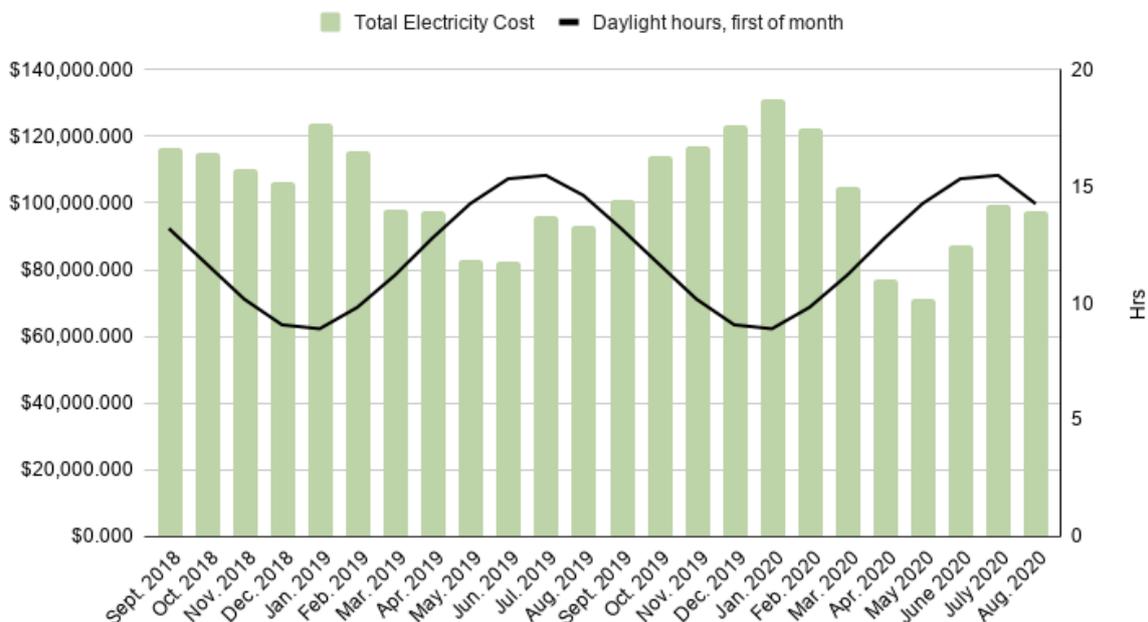
Few of us realize just how pervasive energy is to our lives. Put simply, it is what keeps us warm, clean, entertained, and connected through communication technology and travel. This has proven to be especially true in this time of limited in-person contact. More classes than ever have an online component, and extracurriculars must find creative ways to abide by COVID-19 protocols while still maintaining student interest.

So how much energy do we use on campus? Well, energy sources can be divided into two distinct categories, namely fuel and electricity. Below is a visualization showing the cost of electricity on main campus, representing only the raw cost without any additional fees or the credits generated by on-site solar generation.

Several intersecting factors bring about the fluctuations in usage and cost over the course of a year. The most influential variable is the presence of students on campus during the fall and spring semesters. Additionally, the hours of daylight, shown in black, helps determine the demand for electricity. Shorter days mean that lights are turned on earlier in the morning and the evening compared to the summer months. Finally, the seasonal demand for electricity makes each kilowatt hour (kWh) more expensive during the winter months. In the last two years, the price has ranged from about \$0.09 to \$0.13 per kWh. Although this difference seems negligible, it is multiplied on a scale of hundreds of thousands of kWh, making it a sizeable factor in this discussion.

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### SMC Electricity Cost for Main Campus



# 2020 ENERGY COMPETITION

*Lyons and Alumni will go head-to-head to curb consumption*

How much electricity can YOU save in three weeks? This is the question that residents of Lyons and Alumni Halls will face beginning on October 11. Students will identify opportunities to unplug, turn off, and turn down their electronics to address the issue of overconsumption. Meanwhile, they'll be reducing the College's footprint and playing games to rack up participation points. The building that saves the most compared to the baseline period will win a pizza-making party using veggies from the campus farm!

Each student will receive weekly feedback regarding their building's energy trends and how it compares to their competitor building. This will enable them to visualize their consumption, which ordinarily lies beneath our everyday perception. Every action counts, from doing only full loads of laundry to taking the stairs instead of the elevator! These new energy-using habits, however small, can accumulate quickly over three weeks when everyone is on board.

We all use energy, and the environmental ethos at St. Mike's is stronger than ever. Giving students the opportunity to explore the components of energy systems and how they interact with them will provide a strong basis to evolve the culture of sustainability on campus. If you would like to participate but do not live in Lyons or Alumni, you can still make a difference! To receive energy-saving tips and tricks, follow @smcgreenup on Instagram.



*Students will identify opportunities to turn down, unplug, and turn off their electronics to address the issue of energy overconsumption.*

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# MEET THE TEAM



Joel Ribout

Senior Associate Director of Facilities



Al Sutton

HVAC & Technical Trades Supervisor

*Meet the dedicated members of our facilities team! Not only are they essential for the success of our CEI program, but their work behind the scenes keeps campus running smoothly year-round.*

Joel is a self-described "facilitator for facilities." Most of his work at St. Mike's in the five years since he arrived has consisted of planning, billing, and managing construction and renovation projects across campus, as well as general grounds and building upkeep. This work was a natural progression from his 16 years in the realm of architecture, especially as the first big project on his plate was the construction of Res Hall 4. He also managed the conversion of the Alumni basement for use by the Adventure Sports Center. Needless to say, we have all benefited in some way from his work.

Although he is the Senior Associate Director of Facilities, Joel sees himself not as the lead, but as an equal member of the CEI Energy Team. In his eyes, the single most important understanding for the campus community to have is this: "Energy is not free." While the energy we use is largely invisible to most of us, its cost is still factored into each student's room and board fees. Many of us already seek out ways to save money; with energy, however, we generally don't have the same awareness of the cause-and-effect of our choices. Energy conservation, Joel points out, is the connection between our everyday behavior and the bills that come across his desk.

There are few people who have been at St. Mike's longer than Alan Sutton. He arrived here in 1981 - a time when Durick Library was circular and there were only a handful of computers on campus. In those days, most of his time was committed to cleaning boilers, as the College was dependent on oil and had only just begun to switch over to natural gas for energy generation. This proved to be a full time job since there were over 30 on south campus and more than a dozen on north campus!

Today, Al monitors the energy management system to ensure that everyone on campus is comfortable. This involves bringing fresh air into buildings, controlling building temperature, and adapting to the nuances in energy needs across campus. It's a role he grew into over time, and one that has seen several positive changes. Both the conversion to natural gas and the installation of geothermal energy systems under the library lawn and the field near Merrill Cemetery have decreased maintenance costs and reduced our carbon footprint. And although there has been a noticeable increase in energy awareness within the campus community, much work remains to be done to encourage more mindful energy-using habits on campus.

*This project is possible due to essential partnerships with TCV, EVT, and VEIC.*

