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# Thomas More gets award for going green

## State honors efforts in energy efficiency

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### CRESTVIEW HILLS -

Thomas More College was one of five schools recognized at the Governor's Conference on the Environment earlier this month for its efforts to conserve energy.

The award, given by the Kentucky Environmental & Public Protection Cabinet, is for schools participating in the Kentucky Energy Efficiency Program for Schools (KEEPS).

Thomas More's director of facilities, Jeff Kordenbrock, said the award is the culmination of a year's worth of work. In August of 2006, he was named the school's energy manager.

"We formed an energy committee that meets once a month with the KEEPS representatives," said Kordenbrock. "The committee developed and instituted an energy policy for Thomas More College. Me and my HVAC technician have attended a few training programs and the KEEPS representatives have done energy audits on two of our buildings over the last year."

Thomas More has also started several initiatives to support going green. The school is participating in the Kentucky Pollution Prevention Center's programs and a Kentucky Office of Energy Policy pilot program. It is conducting a campus-wide program called "Be a Saint" to highlight everyday things that can be done to lower energy consumption. The college is also systematically replacing existing lighting with more energy-efficient alternatives.

One factor in "going green" is cost. Being environmentally sensitive doesn't mean inexpensive.

"Currently, the cost of being green is expensive, so it is not economical in many areas," said Kordenbrock. "Use of green cleaning products is good for the environment, but it costs more money to use them. Building green buildings is also more expensive than building a traditional-type building. Hopefully these premium costs for going green will begin to come down in the near future."

One way to drive down those costs is to have more people trained in environmental issues. Thomas More led on that front by launching an environmental sciences degree last year.

There are eight students in the program, but the school expects 25 to 30 students within the next five years.

"The ES curriculum provides a strong base in the natural sciences and is closely related to a conventional degree in biology, with a few notable exceptions," said Dr. Chris Lorentz, who heads up the program. "It is designed to attract students who were planning to major in science, but also attract those students who are interested in environmental issues involving politics, cultural studies, economics, management, engineering and others."

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