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Update on Kent Schools' finances

Purchasing energy from cooperatives saves money

By taking advantage of energy purchasing cooperatives, the Kent City Schools saves taxpayers money. Cooperatives negotiate better pricing for their members by offering vendors high-volume sales. Purchasing through cooperatives also helps districts accurately forecast budgets and provides oversight of energy trends.

For example, Kent uses the Power4Schools program, which offers electricity generation savings for Ohio school districts in partnership with an energy supplier. The Power4Schools program is a collaboration among the Ohio Schools Council, Ohio Association of School Business Officials, Ohio School Boards Association and the Buckeye Association of School Administrators.

Since 2001, Power4Schools has collectively saved local school districts more than \$52 million in electricity costs. Kent Treasurer **Debbie Krutz** estimates the district will save an average of 16 percent on electric bills over the next three years under Power4Schools.

Kent Schools also benefits from the Ohio Schools Council natural gas program, which partners with Constellation New Energy. Along with nearly 160 other school districts, Kent receives an economical price for natural gas and a level billing system for budgeting. Krutz says this program offers significant group buying power in the energy marketplace.

Did you know? Geothermal saves energy costs at Stanton

Despite its size, Stanton Middle School is the least expensive building in the entire Kent district for natural gas costs. When Stanton was built in 1999, a geothermal energy system was installed in the ground under the athletic field, which allows us to heat and cool the building using heat pumps, a distribution system and an underground reservoir of piping filled with environmentally friendly, glycol-based fluid.

The underground fluid gets heated to the earth's temperature and then heat pumps in the school's classrooms and hallways extract that heat and dispense it via air ducts. The cooled fluid is returned to the well system and re-warmed.

In warmer months, heat pumps reverse the process and pull heat out of the building for cooling in the earth. By using geothermal technology, our students and teachers can be comfortable all year long.

