

August 20, 2022

ENERGY & COMFORT @ WSU

WSU Tenant Engagement Program Newsletter for French Administration, Lighty Student Services, and Smith Center for Undergraduate Education building occupants.

BACK TO SCHOOL!

The fall semester is set to begin! As spaces on campus become packed once again with staff, students, and faculty, being cognizant of new COVID strains is key to staying out of quarantine. As we work our way toward the cooler autumn months, don't hesitate to stay home if you are feeling sick. All WSU faculty, staff, students, and visitors are to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms, diagnosis, and/or exposure on a daily basis before entering a WSU location. Please go [here for the COVID-19 Work Plan](#).

OUR FALL SEMESTER UPDATE!

The team at the Integrated Design and Construction Lab (ID+CL) is moving on to the second phase of our Smart Power Strip (SPS) research study! This means we are maintaining the departments we've connected with the past two semesters within French Administration, Lighty Student Services and the Smith CUE, while also expanding to new departments within Johnson Tower, Todd Hall, and the Todd Addition! This expansion is only possible because of the support we've received from all of you so far and we really appreciate your help in making campus more sustainable: one office at a time.

During the Spring Semester the ID+CL facilitated two in-person activities to celebrate the Spring Equinox, in March, and Earth Day, in April. In March, we passed around wildflower seeds while sharing information on the transition from winter to spring weather and the dangers of excess moisture, space heaters, and the overcast sun. In April, we distributed baby tomatoes and talked about the value of getting outside, getting active, and eating local produce as the weather improves and we continue to come out of winter hibernation.



With that said, we are striving to make more installations for our SPS research study in all of the aforementioned buildings as we chase new milestones. If you're interested in learning more about the study and supporting our efforts, please reach out to **Zachary Colligan** at Zach.Colligan@wsu.edu or **Shelby Ruiz** at Shelby.Ruiz@wsu.edu. If you feel your workstation is being overcooled, reach out to Facilities Services at (509)-335-9000 to report a cold-call. This helps make a paper trail of uncomfortable conditions across campus and diagnose system issues.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMFORT AND SMART STRIP SURVEY!

Please fill out our Qualtrics survey to help us uncover comfort related issues within French Ad, Lighty Student Services, and the Smith CUE. This is an opportunity to communicate potential discomfort to Facilities Services. If applicable, this survey will also serve as an opportunity to mention any challenges you are facing with the **Smart Power Strip** installed in your WSU office space.



CLICK FOR SURVEY

WILDFIRE SEASON + AIR QUALITY

Thanks to the grey skies, chilly evenings, and dewy mornings of May and June, the 2022 wildfire season was delayed substantially! In 2021 Washington State had 200 minor fires before April but 2022 has seen only 300 minor fires before August—this is significant. 2022 has been marked with late moisture and cool temperatures. So, while the cool summer has been hard on the growth of our tomatoes, it has kept our air fresh and breathable.



The moisture, however, has enabled unchecked growth and as temperatures rise and areas dry out, that growth becomes fuel for future wildfires. Like in years past, heat waves moving across the region, high winds, and extended periods without moisture lead to fires quickly spreading overnight. The effects of smoke in our air have been noticed a little throughout the summer so far, but we all need to prepare for prolonged poor air quality. Due to an increase in wildfires over the past decade, WSU has installed a **Beta Attenuation Monitor** on campus, this information is accessible to students, staff, faculty, and the public and provides high-frequency, accurate data on the quality of the air around us.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a tool used to assess the safety of the air based on airborne particulates. According to AirNow.gov, the higher the AQI value, the greater the level of air pollution and the greater the health concern. Typically, with higher temperatures comes a higher AQI value, in fact, the value fluctuates throughout the day as the temperature drops in the evenings. When particle levels are high outdoors, they can be high indoors, as well, which is why air filtration is so important. At home, you should be routinely changing your air filter; however, during the spring and summer with increased particles due to the dry weather, increased pollen, and other seasonal challenges, it would be advisable to invest in higher quality filtration that sports a MERV rating of 13 or higher or a HEPA filter if your home's HVAC system is compatible.



COMFORT & WELL-BEING

AIR QUALITY ON CAMPUS

WSU Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) will issue a notification if the air quality deteriorates to airborne PM 2.5 concentrations of 20.5 micrograms per cubic meter (ug/m³) (AQI 69: moderate). In the case that air quality deteriorates to 35.5 ug/m³ (AQI 101: unhealthy for sensitive groups), departments must offer employees working outdoors N95 respirators for voluntary use. While the air quality indoors is maintained by a building's HVAC system and airborne particles are captured with built-in filters, it is important to use WSU resources to stay informed about the air quality outdoors and it is advisable to have a N95 respirator on-hand for traveling between buildings. During a time with consistently poor air quality, you should also consider swapping your residential air filters with a higher quality option to keep harmful particulates from entering your home. To learn more about air quality standards go [here!](#)

A slower start to the wildfire season has enabled Washington's emergency professionals to rest and prepare for future potential fires of August and September; our state in fact has more emergency personnel this year than 2021 and our extra members have been used to support our neighboring states in cases of emergency. With plenty of recourses, supplies, and energy, our firefighters can jump on reported wildfires the moment they occur and keep the air quality from further deterioration.

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR FALL 2022!



CLEAN-UP-THE-WORLD!

(September 17-18, 2022)

Gather some friends for the weekend to cleanup your favorite trails! Can you all go the weekend discarding only recyclable material and composting food waste?

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

(September 26th, 2022)

Be sure to celebrate the day by exploring nearby public lands such as Kamiak and Moscow Mt.! Enjoy a local hike before the weather turns brisk and frosty!

ENERGY EFFICIENCY DAY!

(October 5th, 2022)

Celebrate the day by turning off your electric lights when not in use to take advantage of the natural light. Make sure you have a Smart Power Strip installed in your office!

STILL MORE SMART POWER STRIPS TO INSTALL IN THE COMING ACADEMIC YEAR:

As we move through this most recent milestone we look forward to doubling our quota and expanding our study! This means that we need a **Smart Power Strip in every office of every department of French Administration, Lighty Student Services, and the Smith CUE!** We are also pushing to install strips in kitchenettes and other shared workspaces with shared electronic devices. If you already have a strip installed, spread the word! Otherwise, reach out to **Zachary Colligan at zach.colligan@wsu.edu** to learn more about our study and to participate in making campus more efficient.