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Zero Emissions Road Trip
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Barbara Sirmans
Director, Birmingham Public Library
2100 Park Place
Birmingham, Alabama 35203

Dear Ms. Sirmans,

The Birmingham Public Library has made visible and commendable efforts to reduce energy use and protect the environment, including its use of compact fluorescent lights and information on how to recycle inkjet cartridges. The attached document is intended to help you do more.

The attached document includes suggestions for library purchasing and policy to reduce energy use. Though some require a small initial investment, all of these suggestions would save the library money. This document is part of a project titled the Zero Emissions Road Trip. More information can be found on the web at

<http://zeroemissionsroadtrip.com>

I would appreciate hearing from you, to discuss this plan and answer any questions you might have. I also would like to gauge whether this is helpful and know to what extent it might be implemented. I can be reached by phone at 757 561 8625 or email at zeroemissions@gmail.com.

I appreciate your time and hope that you find this document useful.

Sincerely,

James Rosenthal

AN ENERGY SAVING PLAN FOR THE BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY

Prepared by James Rosenthal, ZERO EMISSIONS ROAD TRIP
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Introduction

Energy use costs money and impacts the environment. The Birmingham Public Library already has taken some measures to save energy and the environment, with compact fluorescent lights and instructions for recycling inkjet cartridges. Because the library is a center of information for Birmingham and one of the largest public libraries in the Southeast, the library can become a model for sustainable practices. The following suggestions can save the library money and reduce its environmental impact:

1. Lights

- **Compact fluorescents.** Though most lights in the library are fluorescent, some are not, in the Popular Reading section and by the elevators. These could be replaced by compact fluorescents that output the same amount of light.
- **Turn lights off.** Staff could be instructed to turn off lights when a room is unoccupied, including staff spaces and the conference room.

2. Electronics

- **Energy efficiency.** All electronics could be chosen for energy efficiency, including Energy Star models. The flat screen monitors in the library are more efficient than old cathode ray tubes, but more energy could be saved with laptop computers, which use 25% as much energy as desktops.
- **Laptop checkout.** Replacing desktop computers with laptops increases both energy efficiency and convenience. The library could replace some public desktop computers with a program allowing patrons to check out laptops for use within the library.
- **Printers.** Inkjet printers and fax machines produce the same quality as laser printers and fax machines but use a fraction of the energy. Printers could be chosen for their ability to print double sided, which could be set as the default.
- **Turn computers off.** If a computer won't be used for ten minutes, it should be put to sleep. If it won't be used for an hour, it should be shut down. This could be done with public and staff computers. All could be programmed to automatically shut down after the library closes.
- **Power strips.** Even when shut down, computers and some other electronics continue using energy. To save that energy, they can be connected to a power strip that is turned off when the computer or other device is off.
- **Photocopiers.** Photocopiers are one of the greatest energy users in the library. Photocopiers could be chosen for the option to revert to standby mode when not in use. All photocopiers could be turned off at the end of the day.
- **Good working order.** Maintaining equipment in good working order helps keep up its efficiency.

3. Education

- **Advertise efficiency.** Since the mission of the library is educational, it should make public any efforts to reduce energy use, through its website and publications. Because the library is one of the largest in the Southeast, it can influence not only its patrons but also other libraries in Jefferson County, Alabama, or the country.
- **Provide information.** As a center of information, the library can provide patrons with information on how to reduce energy use at home. An example half-sheet flyer is attached.
- **Communicate Electronically.** The library could consider what information in its print publications could be offered electronically instead.

4. Future Goals

- When the time comes, the library could become a model for energy efficiency and environmental responsibility by seeking LEED certification for renovations (www.usgbc.org) or purchasing energy from clean, renewable sources.

This is a project of the **Zero Emissions Road Trip**.
For more info, please visit <http://zeroemissionsroadtrip.com>

