

BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCY: RURAL ENTREPRENEURS CUT COSTS, LEAD ON CLIMATE

Investments in renewable energy and efficiency provide opportunities for business owners to reduce costs, improving their bottom lines. Additionally, when commercial energy users cut usage and invest in efficiency, emissions reductions can be achieved. Here are some measures entrepreneurs can take:



Energy efficiency

- > Manage heating and cooling systems. Turn the thermostat up or down by one or two degrees—depending on the season—to reduce energy demand. Set the thermostat up or down by 10 to 15 degrees at night when no one is around.
- > Insulate workspaces with energy efficient windows and doors.
- > Install energy efficient lighting (LED or other energy saving light bulbs). Switch off lights when not in use either manually or through automatic sensors.
- > Encourage everyone to switch off all of their equipment at the end of the workday. Plug desk equipment into power bars, which makes it easier to turn off everything at once.
- > Keep all equipment well maintained and at its highest efficiency.

You can save as much as 10 percent per year on heating and cooling by turning your thermostat back 7 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit for eight hours a day from its normal setting.¹



Administrative

- > When providing retirement benefits to your employees, provide options of investment funds that are for fossil fuel-free funds.
- > Develop a rewards system for climate-smart behavior in the office.



Waste reduction

- > Analyze your waste to identify opportunities for cost savings and emissions reductions.
- > Review your company's presentation of products to determine if items are over-packaged.
- > Convert paperwork to digital and only print documents if necessary. When printing, use recycled paper and the two-sided and save-ink functions on your printer.
- > Create a recycling program for cans, plastic, and glass.
- > Donate used office equipment, such as old computers and furniture, to nonprofit organizations.



Fuel/travel

- > Encourage employees to bike, walk, or carpool instead of driving their own vehicle.
- > If the workplace has a fleet of vehicles, use the most energy-efficient models possible, such as electric cars or hybrid vehicles.
- > Work with local vendors to minimize fuel usage, or partners who utilize fuel-efficient vehicles.
- > Allow employees to work remotely from home occasionally or when it makes sense.
- > Reassess business travel requirements and consider video conferencing instead of air travel.

For entrepreneurs whose businesses rely on transportation, alternative fuel sources and innovative travel practices could help reduce your carbon footprint.

Sources

- 1 "Energy Saver: Thermostats." U.S. Department of Energy, energy.gov/energysaver/thermostats. Accessed November 2019.

