

## SUSTAINABILITY TEAM

January 2012



City of Burnsville

### Sustainability Tip of the Month

#### Vampires, Phantoms, Idlers & Warts

What is vampire power, phantom loads, idling standby current, and wall warts? They all basically refer to the same thing: electronic devices with two sharp, pointy teeth that latch into your wall sockets and suck blood...err...electricity all day, all night, whether on or "off," whether charging batteries or not. These devices include TV's, VCR's, DVD players, answering machines, iPods, cell phones, stereos, laptops, desktops, anything with a remote, anything with a charger, anything with a clock display. They are everywhere. Lurking. You can tell that they are sucking energy by the little red, orange or blue glow near the power button.



On a random evening the Facilities staff took a leisurely stroll through city hall looking for Vampire Eyes. See if you can match the phantom power offenses on the left with the number found on the right:

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. Offices with lights on                             | A. 95 |
| 2. Items left on like radios, fans, calculators, etc. | B. 3  |
| 3. Computer monitors left on in sleep mode            | C. 36 |
| 4. Pairs of speakers left on                          | D. 3  |
| 5. Monitors left on, fully powered                    | E. 12 |

Answers: 1. B (3); 2. E (12); 3. A (95); 4. C (36); 5. D (3)

#### Top Five Ways You Can Fight the **Vampires**:

1. Turn off the monitor instead of letting it set in sleep mode;
2. Remove chargers from the wall when you're not charging. Your cell phone charger, iPod charger, laptop charger, etc. keeps drawing electricity even if they are not charging. So if your phone says "charge complete" (or worse, isn't even attached to your charger), pull out the charger.
3. For various computer accessories at home, try a smart strip. These work really well when it's not feasible to be constantly unplugging your devices. Be sure to first properly shut down any computers plugged into the power strip.
4. Unplug your devices. It's as simple as that. Pull the stereo/sewing machine/etc power cords out of the outlet. If they're not in use or if they are totally unnecessary (are you really going to ever use that VCR player again?), unplug.
5. If you are in the market for new electronics, buy Energy Star qualified. Energy Star takes standby power into account and their qualified devices draw less than the average when in their "off" mode.