

YSU undertakes energy conservation projects

by John Celidonio

Energy conservation projects for four YSU buildings are in the works. Those targeted for improved efficiency are the School of Education, Bliss Hall, Maag Library and the Engineering Science Building.

Donald Minnis, director of parking and assistant dean of administrative services, said YSU had applied for funds for the projects under the federal program that provided funds for

energy conservation in schools and hospitals.

Under the program, the federal government pays half the cost of approved work, with the state expected to fund the rest.

He said the Ohio Department of Energy approved the projects and a Cleveland engineering firm was contracted to do the technical reports.

Minnis said work on the project in Education, involving setting back thermostats by YSU

employees, is already underway. He said YSU is using its own labor as the matching part of the grant.

He said the University is ready to let out the contracts for work in Maag and ESB and estimated the cost at \$50-55,000. The work in both buildings includes replacing some lights and environmental controls.

Also changed will be the system used to draw in outside air, which Minnis said will make the buildings more comfortable in

the spring and fall, while using less energy.

The Bliss project, which Minnis described as the most important, is on "hold" because bids received - about \$350-360,000 - have exceeded the estimates. He also said the state portion of the funds is "tied up" in the state Capital Improvements Bill, which has not yet been passed by the legislature.

He said if state funds are not available, the University will have

to decide whether to provide matching funds to the federal grant - about \$170,000 - for the work. Minnis noted that the "payback" (the period after which savings equal cost) on the work in Bliss is less than 5 years.

Dr. William R. McGraw, dean of the College of Fine and Performing Arts, said the work in Bliss is needed to solve problems caused by fluctuations in the buildings' humidity, which have

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damaged a number of musical instruments, especially keyboards. He said that students' voices also suffer in the "extremely dry" conditions of the building in winter.

The work in Bliss was originally planned for this summer, because it would have taken three to four months to complete, McGraw said, and may "very possibly have to be put off until next summer" for that reason, he said.