

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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Retrofit program will help schools save water and money

LIVE OAK, FL, February 7, 2012 – Representatives from Suwannee, Hamilton, Columbia, and Gilchrist county school districts visited the Suwannee River Water Management District’s headquarters on Feb. 2 to hear about how their schools can save water through a facilities retrofit program that the District is offering, in partnership with the Florida Rural Water Association (FRWA).

The FRWA will conduct a water audit at participating schools to identify leaks in bathroom and kitchen facilities and to evaluate landscape irrigation systems, drinking fountains and other equipment. They will determine how much water each school can save, as well as recommend water conservation practices and water efficient upgrades to indoor plumbing fixtures and outdoor equipment.

District Executive Director David Still called the program a win-win.

“You can save money, and we can save water,” he said. “If you’re spending less money on water, you can spend more on education.”

Brian Kauffman, District senior professional engineer, said the District’s retrofit program saved one school in the City of Cedar Key nearly 32,000 gallons of water per month through a similar program last year.

“Their water use was reduced by 48 percent, saving taxpayers about \$2,200 annually,” Kauffman said.

The District will pay for the water audit and provide a matching grant of up to \$10,000 per school district to pay for the upgrades. Through the grant program, the District will reimburse school districts for the cost of the water saving devices, and school districts will pay installation costs or install the equipment themselves.

Kauffman told school representatives that their investment should pay for itself within a few years.

The program is offered to schools within the District's 15-county region. Schools must sign up for the program by the end of February. For more information, call the District at 386.362.1001 or 800.226.1066 (FL only).

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