The Stanwood Energy Challenge pulls together 16 Stanwood businesses, in 2 teams of 8, in a competition to see which team can save the most energy. The Challenge began February 3 and runs five months, through June 2014. Each team is equipped with a real-time energy monitor, an energy assessment, and energy-saving ideas they can use right away. Snohomish PUD sponsors the Challenge; PECI coordinates it. This is the sixth of 16 participant profiles.

Profile: Pelletier + Schaar
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Spokesman: Pearl Schaar

Why did your business decide to participate in the Stanwood Energy Challenge?

“First, we were invited! But, secondly, green technology and helping our clients build homes that take advantage of all the newest technology in terms of keeping their homes cost-effective is part of what we do. We actually put on several seminars starting about six years ago to introduce energy conservation to the area. We worked with realtors, builders and others to give presentations about energy conservation and that we need to address it as quickly as possible. It seemed only natural that we would also participate in the Stanwood Energy Challenge.”

What are your biggest energy users in the store?

“Equipment! We have a large format plotter that prints 42” wide that is used for typical blueprints. We are the only business in town that has this capacity, so we print large format for both our clients and others who may need a large print.

“We didn’t even realize how much energy the equipment consumed until we got a call from one of the fellows working on the Stanwood Energy Challenge team. He said, “This month you have really shown a difference; what
have you done differently?’ Well, we brought in two new pieces of equipment, and they significantly reduced our energy usage. When we switched out the previous equipment, it was primarily because it was old – five or six years old. Technology keeps changing so rapidly, and this new equipment uses so much less energy. Although it’s an investment to replace equipment, when you see savings on your energy costs, it helps to offset the investment.”

**Have you learned anything else unexpected or surprising?**

“They did replace the light bulbs in our bathroom to make a difference in our energy use.”

**Are there other things you hope to get out of participating in the Stanwood Energy Challenge?**

“It’s an opportunity for us to talk about these kinds of things with our clients. We can tell people we’ve done these things, we’ve participated, we’ve learned. It gives us credibility because we’ve had hands-on experience.”

**Any comments from customers or community about your participation in the Challenge?**

“We’ve had a few people who have asked about the screen on the counter. They’ve been intrigued.”

**Any energy-saving advice for other businesses in the community that may not be part of the Energy Challenge?**

“It’s worth investigating, especially if you’re planning to update equipment. I’m sure there are many businesses who have postponed equipment upgrades because of the recession. As we’re coming out of the recession and people are wanting to update, it’s really critical they look at energy issues when buying equipment. It certainly makes a difference.”

**Any parting thoughts?**

“This is a great service that Snohomish PUD has offered to the community. It’s a huge effort for companies to take this on, but ultimately, it does have an impact. It’s important for the community to embrace it when it’s offered.”