

ENERGY NEWS AND NOTES

Need Energy Advice? Plug Into Your Electric Company

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(NAPSA)—For expert, customer-focused information and help on using energy in your home more efficiently, consider your electric company.

For years, electric companies have been helping their customers get more value from every electricity dollar. When you use electricity more efficiently, you help take control over your energy bills and protect the environment.

Encouraging you to use electricity efficiently also helps your power company improve the reliability of the electric system. More energy-efficient electricity customers help defer the need for new power plants and electricity transmission lines.

Electric companies offer a variety of convenient and easy-to-use programs. For instance, online energy audits are a new way many power companies help customers save energy right from their own personal computer.

Doing an online energy audit of your house lets you find out where your home uses energy, and where you might be using too much. You then get specific energy-saving recommendations.

Another type of program gives customers a credit on their monthly electric bill for letting their electric company briefly cycle the air conditioner or other large energy-using appliances on-and-off during peak demand periods.

A new program beginning to get some attention is "real-time pricing." The cost of electricity varies depending on the demand for it. For example, the demand for electricity is usually highest during the afternoons, especially during a hot summer day. Consequently, the cost of electricity goes up during these times. At other times, the price for electricity drops.



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Through a real-time pricing program, a special electric meter or thermostat will tell you the current price of electricity. You can then adjust your energy usage accordingly, perhaps by raising or lowering the thermostat a few degrees, or delaying an energy-intensive task such as dishwashing until the lower electricity prices come into effect during the evening hours. You use the same appliances, but pay less.

Many electric companies also offer incentives to their customers to buy high-efficiency appliances. These appliances may include compact fluorescent light bulbs that use about 75 percent less electricity than a standard incandescent bulb and lasts up to ten times longer.

Your electric company can also be counted on for no- or low-cost tips and ideas to save energy. For instance, raising a thermostat three degrees during the summer or lowering it three degrees during the winter can help save up to nine percent on cooling or heating costs.

For more information on how your electric company can help, give them a call or log on to their Web site.