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# **Power Pointz**

news from  
**Garland Light & Power Co.**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## **Invest in Energy Efficiency & Save**

It is the middle of summer, temperatures are rising and so are your electric bills. It might be time to make a big investment, an investment in energy efficiency.

Making your home more energy efficient is still one of the safest investments you can make. Try employing these energy saving measures to collect major returns on your investments:

- Install a programmable thermostat
- Install a hot water heater “blanket”
- Change your shower heads
- Upgrade appliances like your clothes washer or your refrigerator
- Replace old windows with energy efficient ones
- Install water efficient toilets

Making all of these changes at once could be difficult, if not impossible, but investing in just one of these measures can yield a significant return on your investment.

For example, installing a new, energy efficient clothes washer can yield around a 24 percent return on investment. Do your research, and make sure you are purchasing the right size appliances. A small, energy efficient washer will save you money, but if you have a larger family, washing multiple loads could negate your energy savings.

Multiple energy efficient upgrades will help you save no matter where you live or what time of year it is, but upgrading to efficient home cooling systems will help lower energy costs significantly during the hotter months of the year.

Six percent of American energy consumption goes toward space cooling and it costs \$11 billion per year for homeowners to power their air conditioners. You can reduce your energy use by 20 to 50 percent when you upgrade to an energy efficient home cooling unit. One option is to install a split unit air conditioner and heating unit, they can be more expensive, but they are highly efficient, especially in homes without ductwork. Another option is to invest in an Energy Star approved air conditioning unit, which can be 15 percent more efficient than a standard unit.

If buying a new cooling unit isn't in the cards for you this summer, don't worry. Replacing appliances isn't the only way to lower energy costs. Sealing and insulating your home are the most important energy improvements you can make during the hot summer months. By adding insulation in attics, floors over crawl spaces and accessible basement rim joints, you can reduce your heating and cooling costs by an average of 15 percent and lower your overall energy costs by an average of 11 percent.

You can also lower your air conditioner's energy consumption by 5 to 15 percent by cleaning your air ducts. Or, simply turning on a ceiling fan will allow you to raise your thermostat by 4 degrees, without impacting your comfort.

Investing in any of these energy efficient improvements will keep you cooler in the summer, warm in the winter and improve your energy bills.

## Knowing the difference between CFL and LED light bulbs

Incandescent light bulbs, the ones we screwed into table lamps and overhead fixtures since the beginning of electricity, have become relics since the U.S. government ordered manufacturers to stop making most of them in 2014. Is the compact Fluorescent light bulb next?

The twisty CFL bulbs, which can last up to five years are much more energy efficient than the old incandescents, were once hailed as the latest and greatest energy and money savers for household lighting. But LED's which come in light bulb form and also are build into many light fixtures, so you'll never have to change a light bulb again, have proven to be a better energy value.

Both CFLs and LEDs use up to 75 percent less energy than incandescents. But LEDs last much longer than CFLs, up to 25,000 hours compared to 10,000 or so.

Here's why LEDs re quickly becoming America's favorite light bulb:

- LEDs don't get hot to the touch while they burn. Incandescents release about 90 percent of their energy as heat, while LEDs waste little heat and CFLs release about 80 percent of their energy as heat, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.
- Unlike CFLs, LEDs contain no mercury, so LEDs leave a minimal impact on the environment.
- The Department of Energy has said LED lighting "has the potential to fundamentally change the future of lighting in the United States."
- LED bulbs are available for purchase, but an LED fixture has the light bulb built right into it, so no bulb is visible and no bulb will need changing.
- The price of LED bulbs has dropped from about \$100 a bulb five years ago to about \$5 today.

As the popularity of LEDs grows, could the CFL, like the incandescent, become a museum piece, a relic of a bygone and less energy efficient era?



LED

## Leave Utility Poles Alone

Drive down the road and you'll see utility poles covered with a wide range of signs. You'll see everything from no parking to directions to a graduation party, balloons or a local yard sale. You think to yourself, "What's the harm?" because you plan to take the sign down after the event is over. While we all have good intentions, it's obvious that many signs have been left attached to poles not just for a few days, but months, perhaps years! Staples or nails can snag climbing equipment, causing linemen to fall or tear their high voltage gloves, leaving them useless. In addition, to signs, poles have been found to have bird houses, satellite receivers and even deer stands attached to them. Anything attached to a pole can hold water, increasing rotting time on the pole. Bird houses can house bees, resulting in a possible sting area. Help keep our linemen safe by not attaching anything to our poles.



## School Bus Basics

The thing about school buses is that they're carrying, picking up, or dropping off children.

And there's almost nothing more unpredictable than a child.

The U.S. Department of Transportation says that the most dangerous part of a trip to school is when a student approaches or leaves the bus.

And the thing about children is that thinking about safety and being aware of their surroundings and watching out for cars is probably pretty far down their list of concerns on any given day.

That leaves it up to drivers to be prepared for almost anything when a school bus arrives.

So being alert, with or without that first cup of coffee is a top priority.

Yellow flashing lights mean that the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload students.

Motorists must slow down and prepare to stop.

Red flashing lights along with the mechanical stop sign means that kids will be getting on or off the bus, perhaps crossing the street.

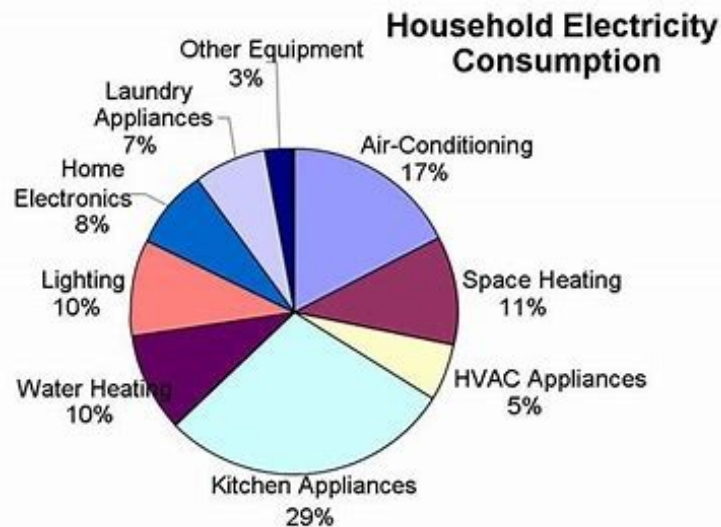
Vehicles must wait until the red lights are turned off, the sign pulled back against the bus and the bus begins to move.

Many of us live in neighborhoods with an abundance of children; it's why we live there.

When it's back to school, it's important to watch for kids walking or bicycling to school.

School zones require heightened attention, as there are parents dropping off children, who may decide to dart in front of the vehicle, and the parents may be distracted with last minute instructions and concerns.

Getting kids off to school generally is controlled chaos, and it's up to all drivers to be on our toes and to help keep everyone safe.



## Baby, it's hot outside! Stay Cool Strategies To Help You Save

Simple and inexpensive actions can help you save energy and money during the warm spring and summer. Here are seven tips to help you save energy when the weather is warm and you are trying to keep your home cool:

1. Make sure your central air-conditioning system and/or window unit are operating efficiently by giving them a tune up.
2. Set your thermostat to 78 degrees while you're home, and higher before you leave the house for the day.
3. Turn ceiling fans on when you enter a room and off when you leave for the day.
4. Close your drapes or blinds when it's sunny outside to block the heat from entering the home.
5. Avoid cooking in your kitchen on hot, summer days. Instead, grill outdoors, serve cold dishes or heat food up in the microwave oven.
6. Run the dishwasher and laundry at night when its cooler, and only run full loads.
7. Use bathroom and kitchen fans to remove heat and humidity produced by bathing and cooking.

Find more summer savings energy-saving tips, articles, videos and more at:  
[www.touchstoneenergy.com/together-we-save](http://www.touchstoneenergy.com/together-we-save).



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