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# Power Pointz

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

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Teaching Energy Efficiency Lessons

Consumer electronics coupled with myriad smart home appliances have impacted our homes and lifestyles. With our reliance on technology and in turn, energy consumption, teaching youngsters to save energy is an important life lesson.

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**The Why-**Before parents can teach their children how to save energy, they must first address, “What’s in it for me?” It’s hard to convince kids to care about energy efficiency. They need to know how it benefits them, otherwise they will not be motivated to change their habits. In terms children relate to: less money spent on an electric bill can mean more money used for fun.

Less tangible, but just as important; using less energy conserves natural resources and helps the environment.

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**Learning by Doing-**Because “saving energy” is an abstract concept for children, be specific about energy efficiency actions and set an example. When you turn off the lights when leaving a room or unplug the phone charger once the device is charged, they will notice.

Make learning about energy efficiency fun for greater impact. For younger kids, turn energy efficiency into a treasure hunt, locating items in your home that use electricity. Depending on their age, challenge kids to count and categorize the items: electronics, appliances, lights, etc. Ask which gadgets and appliances could be turned off or unplugged to save power.

For older children, teach them to program the smart thermostat and appliances. Shop with them for LED lights and discuss ENERGY STAR-rated appliances. Show them the electric bill so they can see energy use and how their actions impact the bill. Kids of all ages can learn these simple energy-saving habits that can last a lifetime.

- ◆ Turn off lights, computers and video consoles when not in use.
- ◆ Open blinds and curtains during winter to let sunlight in and close them during summer to keep your home cooler.
- ◆ Teach children to run the dishwasher and washing machine only with a full load and during off-peak energy hours.

### Rewards

Offer rewards for agreed upon milestones to provide positive reinforcement on energy-saving actions. The idea is to create a habit of being energy efficient. For parents, this could mean less nagging about turning off the lights!

Teaching your children about saving energy instills good habits and is a creative way to spend time with them while creating a more energy efficient home.

## Run full dishwasher to save water and energy

Chances are you'll run your dishwasher several times on Thanksgiving Day: after breakfast, after you clean up your prep mess and after dinner.

Each time, stuff it as full as your turkey. If you run your dishwasher when it's loaded to capacity instead of washing a half-load at a time, you'll use way less water and electricity.

Here are five other energy-saving dishwasher tips:

- ◆ Stop rinsing. You've been doing it for years, but newer dishwashers do such a good job that you're wasting water and time if you're still washing the dishes before you load them. A surprise: Loading unrinsed dishes could save you up to 55,000 gallons of water over the life of your dishwasher.
- ◆ Air dry: Selecting the "heated dry" option is unnecessary. If your dishwasher doesn't have an "air dry" option, prop open the door once the cycle completes and let the load dry naturally.
- ◆ Afraid of spots during an air dry? Use a rinse aid. It will speed drying time and prevent spots on glasses.
- ◆ Run the dishwasher after dark. Just about everyone washes dishes right after dinner, so the demand on your electric cooperative is the greatest then. Also, after a long day of cooking and a house full of company, the last thing your kitchen needs is the heat your dishwasher produces while it's running.
- ◆ Finally, get your dishwasher away from other appliances like the oven and refrigerator. Because all of those appliances emit heat, they force each other to work harder and wear out faster when they are too close together.



## Shop Early For LED Holiday Lights

Artificial Christmas trees pre-strung with LED lights have become so popular that many stores sell out of them every year long before Santa's big day.

Same goes for LED icicle lights and other indoor and outdoor lighted decorations, so if you're switching from incandescent to energy-efficient LED's this year, start shopping now. The rush to decorate with long-lasting LEDs is no surprise, given their benefits.

- LEDs are designed to operate for thousands of hours and over dozens of holiday seasons before running out, so you'll replace them less often and rarely suffer the frustration of half-dark strands as you pull out last year's lights.
- LEDs are cooler to the touch than traditional tree lights, so they are unlikely to catch your live tree on fire.
- As LED decorations have become more popular, their price has dropped significantly.
- And these energy-efficient decorations use up to 90 percent less electricity than your old, traditional strands of lights.

## Tips to save energy this winter

Few people like to admit it, but winter is on the horizon. While only some people look forward to winter, most people notice their energy bills go up in the winter. Here are some tips to help save energy as it gets colder.

### **Take advantage of heat from the sun.**

- Open curtains on your south facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your home and close them at night to reduce the chill you may feel from cold windows.

### **Cover drafty windows**

- Use a heavy-duty, clear plastic sheet on a frame or tape clear plastic film to the inside of your window frames during the cold winter months. Make sure the plastic is sealed tightly to the frame to help reduce infiltration.
- Install tight-fitting, insulating drapes or shades on windows that feel drafty after weatherizing.

### **Adjust the temperature**

- When you are home and awake, set your thermostat as low as is comfortable.
- When you are asleep or out of the house, turn your thermostat back 10 to 15 degrees for eight hours and save around 10 percent a year on your heating and cooling bills. A programmable thermostat can make it ways to set back you temperature. If you have a heat pump, maintain a moderate setting or use a programmable thermostat designed to use with heat pumps.

### **Find and seal leaks**

- Add caulk or weather-stripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows.
- Seal the air leaks around utility cut-throughs for pipes (plumbing penetrations), gaps around chimneys and recessed lights in insulated ceilings and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.

### **Maintain your heating systems**

- Schedule service for your heating system.
- Replace your furnace filter once a month or as needed.
- On wood and pellet burning heaters clean the flue vent regularly and clean the inside of the appliance with a wire brush periodically to ensure that your home is heated efficiently.

### **Reduce heat loss from fireplace**

- Keep your fireplace damper closed unless a fire is burning. Keeping the damper open is like keeping a window wide open during the winter; it allows warm air to go right up the chimney.
- When you use the fireplace, reduce heat loss by opening dampers in the bottom of the firebox (if provided) or open the nearest window slightly, approximately one inch, and close doors leading into the room. Lower the thermostat setting to between 50 and 55 degrees.
- If you never use your fireplace, plug and seat the chimney flue.
- If you use the fireplace, install tempered glass doors and a heat-air exchange system that blows warmed air back into the room.
- Check the seal on the fireplace flue damper and make it as snug as possible.
- Purchase grates made of C-shaped metal tubes to draw cool room air into the fireplace and circulate warm air back into the room.
- Add caulking around the fireplace hearth.

### **Lower your water heating costs**

- Water heating accounts for about 18 percent of the energy consumed in your home. Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting. You'll not only save energy, you'll avoid scalding your hands.

Following these tips won't make winter any warmer, but they can help keep you from losing your cool over higher seasonal energy bills.

Garland Light & Power will be closed on November 22nd and 23rd for Thanksgiving.



## LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE

This program provides assistance for winter heating bills. It is available for the months of November through May. The State of Wyoming accepts applications from October 1st through February 28th each year. Benefits are based on household size, income and type of fuel used as the primary heating source.

Crisis Assistance-This is a one time per program year benefit available to persons who are facing an energy emergency. The benefit amount is based on the amount needed to resolve this crisis, up to a maximum of \$400. Crisis funds can be used for deposits on new accounts, LP tank sets, and back bills. Crisis assistance is available from October through the middle of April. Back bills prior to October 1st are the clients responsibility.

For a LIEAP application, call 1-800-246-4221.

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