

Beat the heat and save money with these common sense steps

As the summer temperature climbs so does demand for electricity. Electricity used at times of peak demand costs more than in times of moderate demand. This means higher energy use often means higher electric bills. Here are some simple tips to stay cool, use electricity wisely and help keep a lid on electric bills.



- If you're not using it, turn it off. This includes TVs, computers, lights and everything else. Is that cell phone fully charged? Unplug it. It may pay to use dimmers, timers and/or motion detectors on lighting.
- Especially during the hottest weather, delay using appliances not needed at the moment until later in the evening or earlier in the morning.
- Use a programmable thermostat to comfortably cool your home when you are in it, not when you are at work. Consider also that raising your thermostat from 73 to 78 degrees can save up to 15 percent in cooling costs. Use fans to help cool.

- Keep the sun's heat out by closing blinds, shades and drapes.
- Incandescent bulbs consume more electricity and also produce more heat than compact fluorescent bulbs. Replace 100-watt incandescent bulbs with 23-watt compact fluorescent bulbs. This will save you money.
- Good weather-stripping and proper caulking around doors and windows will save you money both winter and summer. If you use a window air conditioner, check for air leaks where the unit is placed in the window. Seal any leaks you find.



- If you don't use a room often, close the vent and the door. If you are not going to use it, don't cool it.
- If you don't need the central air, use fans to draw cooler air inside during the night and use fans to circulate the air in the house during the day. If the central air is on, many people are comfortable with a higher temperature setting if they also use fans. This reduces costs.
- Wise placement of shade trees saves energy and improves comfort. See your favorite nursery or stop by our office for information.
- Find more energy saving tips and ways to save energy at saveenergyinpreston.com

The Connector

Princeton Public Utilities

Wise energy use in our interest

In addition to providing reliable, affordable electricity, we also work with you to use energy wisely.

From high-efficiency lighting like compact fluorescent lamps to an energy-efficient air compressor at your business, our rebate programs help you invest in products that reduce your energy usage without compromising comfort or performance.

It goes beyond just getting more for less. As a municipally-owned utility, we understand the need for stewardship that protects our energy resources and the economic well-being of our community.

To learn more, stop by our office at 907 First Street, or go to saveenergyinprinceton.com

More coming next month!

We will have a 'bonus' newsletter next month, including information on our 'well-head' water source protection program and "Watts in the Kitchen" recipes.

Radiant barriers bad deal here

SAINT PAUL, MN – The Minnesota Department of Commerce has issued an alert to consumers who are considering the purchase of radiant barriers for their attics. The Commerce Department warns consumers that radiant barriers are not a cost-effective way to reduce heating or cooling loads in Minnesota.

“Radiant barriers in attics may be valid for homes in southern states,” said Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman, “but they save very little energy in Minnesota homes.”

Radiant barriers consist of a reflective film, usually aluminum, laid over the top of attic insulation in existing homes. Their potential benefit is primarily in reducing air-conditioning cooling loads in warm or hot climates and in buildings with little or no insulation.

The U.S. Department of Energy reports that the benefits of radiant barriers decrease significantly as one travels north. In colder climate states, such as Minnesota, savings drop to only \$10 to \$40 a year. If there are no ducts or air handlers in the attic, the savings are much less.

So, consumers need to be aware that with the price of \$2,000 or more for installation of a radiant barrier and savings of \$20 per year, it would take 100 years to pay back the investment.

We have a number of concerns with ‘carbon pollution’ directive

President Obama June 25 said he is directing the Environmental Protection Agency to work expeditiously to complete “carbon pollution” standards for both new and existing power plants. He has directed EPA to issue final rules or guidelines for existing plants by June 1, 2015.

The majority of power consumed in the Midwest comes from coal-fired power plants, the likely target of any upcoming EPA regulations.

Municipal electric utilities across the country have significant concerns with several aspects of the President’s proposal.

- We are concerned that rules will outlaw the development of any new coal-fired power plants. We urge EPA to set a standard for coal that can be achieved using current commercially available technology.
- Of even greater concern is how EPA will address emissions from existing power plants. Under the relevant Clean Air Act authority, EPA is to set broad national guidelines and allow the states to develop programs to implement those guidelines. Since there is no commercially available technology to control greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, state programs will likely vary depending on a number of factors. Thus, if done correctly, GHG emissions programs for

existing coal plants would not necessarily prohibit their operation.

- We also want to keep electricity affordable. The shift from coal to natural gas for electric generation is already creating issues including fuel price volatility and the need for more gas pipeline capacity and storage.
- It is not clear that the President’s proposal recognizes that wind and solar energy must be backed up on a one-for-one basis by another resource, usually natural gas. This substantially increases the overall costs.

Finally, the Administration’s repeated proposals to severely limit the ability of state and local governments to issue tax exempt bonds is inconsistent with his call for increased investments by public power utilities, the hardening of public infrastructure against the effects of climate change, and the call to lower consumers’ utility bills.

We offer rebates for many new central air conditioning units

Replacing that old central air conditioning unit could reduce your cooling costs by 30 percent. We make it easier by offering rebates for qualifying central air conditioners, and air- and ground-source heat pumps. For more information, visit us on the web or call 389-2252.