

EAU CLAIRE ENERGY COOPERATIVE

Wisconsin

# ENERGY COOPERATIVE

MONTHLY SINCE 1940

JULY 2008

News



## Cash Back Rewards for ENERGY STAR Appliances

from Eau Claire  
Energy Cooperative

*See page 29 for more details*

**Eau Claire Energy  
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# Our Energy, Our Future

Pressure is mounting in Congress to do something about climate change. And while political debates in Washington, D.C., may seem far away, the outcome will have a direct impact on Eau Claire Energy Cooperative—and on you, the cooperative member and other electric consumers.

Climate change is but one aspect of a looming energy crisis created by increasing demand and decreasing capacity to meet that demand. Experts now say some areas of the country will be short of power within one or two years.

And yet energy supply isn't an issue our elected representatives are spending a lot of time on. These forces, the desire by government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions quickly and the growing demand for power by consumers, are about to collide.

Some people say we can meet demand through efficiency and renewable energy. The reality is we need all the efficiency and renewable energy we can get, but that will not be enough.

To avert an energy crisis, the federal government must exercise true leadership, the same leadership that got Americans to the moon in the

1960s. Without that leadership—without a sound, responsible plan—government risks not only the reliability of our electric system, but literally the ability of many Americans to be able to afford to pay their electric bill.

We, as electric co-op members and constituents, must call on elected officials to provide this leadership. That's why we want to encourage you to contact your elected officials. We are asking you to contact your elected officials NOW!

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***We are asking you to contact your elected officials NOW! To make things easy, we have a web site that will send an e-mail for you. Go to [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) and plug in your address.***

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You don't need to be an energy expert to ask questions. Asking questions helps find the answers to solve the problem of balancing climate change goals with keeping your lights on and your electric bills affordable.

Right now, members of Congress as well as state elected officials are hearing from lots of different interest groups who have ideas about how to address climate change. No one is talking to consumers, however. We need a plan people can live with today while we deal with the climate change problem of tomorrow.

To make things easy, we have a web site that will send an e-mail for you. Go to [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) and plug in your address. There you'll be able to ask a series of questions of your representatives in Washington. We're kicking this effort off with a basic but critical question: What are they doing to make sure we'll have the power we need in the future? Don't be concerned about your personal information—it will never be sold or shared with anyone else.

Far too often questions don't get asked by policy-makers until plans go wrong. We believe it makes sense to know the answers before the laws are passed. You can help your elected officials and yourself by having this conversation. The electric bill you save will be your own. ■



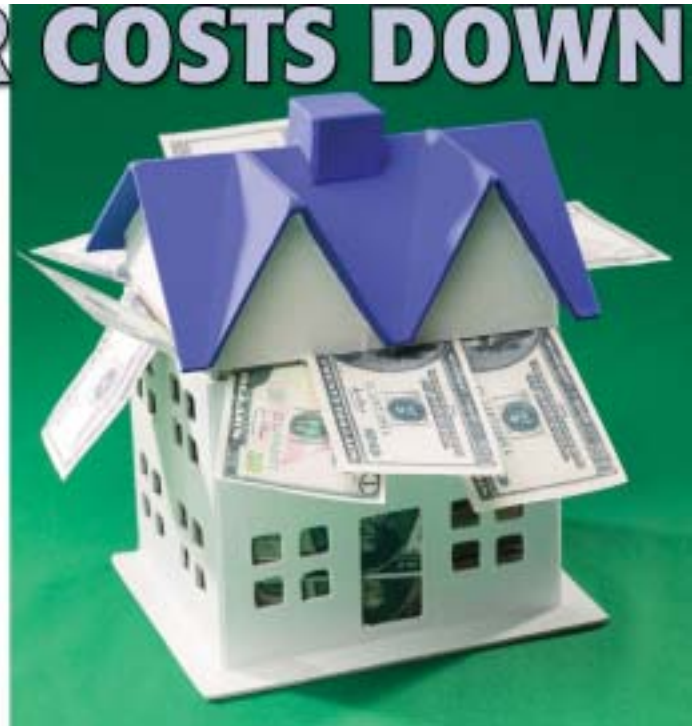
# KEEPING YOUR COSTS DOWN

## Tips for Saving Energy Dollars in Your Home This Summer

As energy costs continue to rise this summer, consumers are looking for ways to reduce their energy use. There are lots of good ideas for saving energy, but there are misconceptions as well about what is really effective. Here are a few common myths and the facts to set you on the right path to energy savings:

**Myth:** Computers, monitors, and other office equipment will use less energy and last longer if they are left running all the time.

**Fact:** Turning computer equipment off overnight does not shorten its life, and the small surge of power that occurs when some devices are turned on is much smaller than the amount of energy used by running equipment when it's not needed. In fact, leaving computers on overnight and on weekends wastes significant amounts of energy and also adds to the wear and tear on the equipment. In general, turn off equipment you are not using or make sure that energy-saving features on networks or individual machines are enabled. Some equipment, including printers and scanners, features small transformers that use energy even when the equipment is turned off. Plug all such devices into a power strip so they can be shut down completely with one flick of the switch.



**Myth:** I should run my air-conditioning system 24/7 to avoid an increased demand charge from the “spike” that occurs when the equipment starts.

**Fact:** Although turning on air-conditioning equipment will cause a power spike of fractions of a second, this period is not long enough to have any impact on demand charges. Not only are there no significant demand savings from running your air conditioner continuously, but there is a significant downside as well. Equipment life can be considerably shortened, and unless the equipment is designed to operate at continuously variable capacities, it likely will not be able to properly match the cooling load and will waste energy and decrease comfort.

**Myth:** When leaving a room for a short period, it's better to leave lights on than to turn them off.

**Fact:** For incandescent bulbs, it's always better to turn the lights off. For fluorescent lights, there are some trade-offs. Fluorescent lights use slightly more energy on start-up, but the light needs to be off for only about a second to make up for that surge. The life of a fluorescent light is also shortened by frequent on-and-off switching. A good guideline for fluorescent lighting is as follows: unless you're switching the lights every few minutes, it is generally cost-effective to turn the lights off whenever you leave the room. Another bonus: Fluorescent bulbs produce significantly less heat than incandescents, so your house will stay cooler if you switch to fluorescents.—Source: ©2007 E Source Companies LLC ■

### FREE CFLs Available at ECEC Office

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative Members are invited to pick up FREE compact fluorescent light bulbs at the co-op headquarters on highway 12 between Eau Claire and Fall Creek.

Stop in when you are in the area,  
Monday through Friday from 7:30  
a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Each member

who stops in will be given two free CFLs in addition to the two that were mailed to each member in April. Hurry because quantities are limited. ■



# Play it Safe During Electrical Storms

In the United States, lightning kills an average of 66 people per year and injures another 300, according to the National Weather Service.

“If thunderstorms and lightning are approaching, the safest location is indoors away from doors and windows,” says Molly Hall, Safe Electricity executive director. “Avoid water, electric appliances, and other objects that could conduct electricity, and use only cordless or cell phones to make emergency calls.”

Phone use is the leading cause of indoor lightning injuries in the United States. A direct strike is not necessary for lightning voltage to enter your home through phone lines, electrical wires, cables, and plumbing.

Other recommendations to avoid lightning shock and damage indoors include:

- Turn off and unplug appliances well before a storm nears — never during.
- Stay away from electrical outlets, appliances, comput-



ers, power tools, and TV sets. Take off headsets and stop playing video games.

- Avoid water and contact with piping, including sinks, baths, and faucets. Don't wash dishes, shower, or bathe during a thunderstorm. Also, avoid washers and dryers since they not only connect with the plumbing and electrical systems, but also contain an electrical path from the outside through the dryer vent.

- Do not lie on the concrete floor of a garage as it likely contains a wire mesh.
- Basements typically are a safe place to go during thunderstorms, but avoid concrete walls that may contain metal rebar.

Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from the area in which it is raining. This means if you can hear thunder, you're within striking distance. A good idea is to use the “30-30 Rule.” According to this rule, if you count less than 30 seconds between a lightning flash and the thunder following it, you should seek shelter from the storm. When the storm is over, wait 30 minutes after the last lightning strike you see before going back outside.—Source: *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Safe Electricity* ■

## Take Charge of Your Electric Use With Kill-A-Watt

Take charge of your electric use with Kill-A-Watt Electricity Usage Monitor. It's a unit that you plug directly into the wall. Then you plug your 120-volt appliance into it. The monitor will help show you which appliances and equipment are consuming more power and draining more dollars. You can calculate your electrical expenses by the day, week, month, or year. Start making decisions about your lifestyle and save on your energy bill.

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative has some of these units in stock that you can check out so you can test your appliances. Place a security deposit of \$10 and you will receive your deposit upon its return. To reserve your Kill-A-Watt monitor, call us at 715-832-1603 or 888-832-1604 (toll free). (ECEC also has 240-volt monitors — call for more information.)

The Kill-A-Watt monitor can also be purchased at Eau Claire Energy Cooperative for \$24.95. ■

### Eau Claire Energy Cooperative

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**Office Hours:** 7:30 a.m.–4 p.m. Mon–Fri

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Toll FREE 888-832-1604

**Emergencies & outages:** Toll FREE 800-927-5090  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**Diggers Hotline:** 1-800-242-8511  
Call 3 working days before you dig.

**Eau Claire Energy  
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



# CASH BACK REWARDS

## for ENERGY STAR Appliances from Eau Claire Energy Cooperative

### Cash Back Rewards available NOW!

Get cash back from Eau Claire Energy Cooperative when you purchase any qualifying ENERGY STAR appliances. You are not limited to any brand you purchase as long as it carries the ENERGY STAR label. You not only save money on your new appliance, but you'll reap the benefits of lower energy use when you use your new ENERGY STAR appliances. Any of the following qualifying ENERGY STAR appliances purchased between January 1, 2008, and December 31, 2008, qualifies.



#### How much can you earn?

ENERGY STAR clothes washer .....	\$50.00
ENERGY STAR refrigerator .....	\$25.00
ENERGY STAR room .....	\$25.00
air-conditioning unit	



#### How to qualify:

To qualify for these cash back rewards, you must be a member of Eau Claire Energy Cooperative. That means you purchase the electricity for your home or business from Eau Claire Energy Cooperative.

#### How to get your energy incentive:

To qualify and obtain your energy reward you must:

1. Be a member of Eau Claire Energy Cooperative (purchase your electricity from ECEC).
2. Go to [www.ecec.com](http://www.ecec.com) and print out the Rewards Form. Mail it to Eau Claire Energy Cooperative with a copy of your sales receipt and a copy of the ENERGY STAR label.
3. Qualifying ENERGY STAR appliance must be purchased between January 1 and December 31, 2008. All forms must be received at Eau Claire Energy Cooperative by January 31, 2009.
4. Appliance must be an ENERGY STAR rated appliance.
5. Reward will be credited to member's energy account at Eau Claire Energy Cooperative and will be described on your monthly statement.

#### Looking for additional rewards?

If you are looking for additional cash back incentives, check out the Focus on Energy web site at [www.focusonenergy.com](http://www.focusonenergy.com), or call them at 800-762-7077. A listing of ENERGY STAR rated products is available online at [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

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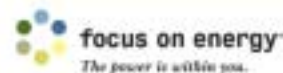
# Everyone wants to save energy. We want to help.

## Call Focus on Energy for expert advice on saving energy and possible Cash-Back Rewards when:

- Replacing your appliances
- Making home improvements
- Choosing efficient lighting
- Building a new home
- Utilizing renewable energy
- Upgrading heating & cooling equipment

Income-eligible customers may qualify for financial assistance to complete energy efficient home improvements.

Contact us today.  
800.762.7077 [focusonenergy.com](http://focusonenergy.com)



## Call 800.762.7077 or visit [focusonenergy.com](http://focusonenergy.com) for details.

Focus on Energy works with eligible Wisconsin residents and businesses to install cost-effective energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Focus information, resources and financial incentives help to implement projects that otherwise would not be completed, or to complete projects sooner than scheduled. Its efforts help Wisconsin residents and businesses manage rising energy costs, promote in-state economic development, protect our environment and control the state's growing demand for electricity and natural gas. For more information, call 800.762.7077 or visit [focusonenergy.com](http://focusonenergy.com).

Cash-Back Rewards available to participating utility customers.



## Home Performance with ENERGY STAR®

*Protect your home. Protect your investment.*

Buying your home was a major investment. Home Performance with ENERGY STAR helps you care for that investment by making energy-efficiency improvements that save you money and increase the comfort, safety, and value of your home.

### Isn't your home worth the investment?

Call 800.762.7077 to arrange a home energy evaluation today, or to find a consultant partnering with Home Performance with ENERGY STAR in your area.

Contact us today.  
800.762.7077  
focusonenergy.com

