

Interested in saving energy
but not sure where to start?

Try this list of energy-saving
tips. Conserve energy, use
it wisely and learn how even
small changes can make a
big difference.



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Be sure to visit our Brighter Ideas site at
www.mnbrighterideas.com
to find out more ways to conserve energy,
save money and recycle safely.

GREAT RIVER ENERGY®

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR
28 MEMBER COOPERATIVES

Agralite Electric Cooperative • Arrowhead Electric
Cooperative • BENCO Electric • Brown County Rural
Electric Association • Connexus Energy •
Cooperative Light & Power Association • Crow Wing Power
• Dakota Electric Association • East Central Energy
• Federated Rural Electric Association •
Goodhue County Cooperative Electrical Association
• Itasca-Mantrap Cooperative Electric Association •
Kandiyohi Power Cooperative • Lake Country Power •
Lake Region Electric Cooperative • McLeod Cooperative
Power Association • Meeker Cooperative • Mille Lacs
Energy Cooperative • Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative
• Nobles Cooperative Electric • North Itasca Electric
Cooperative • Redwood Electric Cooperative •
Runestone Electric Association • South Central
Electric Association • Stearns Electric Association
• Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric •
Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative
• Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association

ten bright ideas
for saving energy



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start here



lighten the load

Any electronic item that has a clock, a light or feels warm when turned "off" could actually still be using 40% of its "on" power. Common sources of this phantom load include: VCRs, TVs, CD players, cell phone and battery chargers, microwave ovens and coffee makers. Consider plugging these items into a power strip so you can cut power to several units at once.



turn it off

Every time you walk out of a room, turn off the lights, music, TV and other unused electronics. TVs alone account for 4% of the nation's annual residential electricity consumption, and plasma TVs can use as much electricity as a refrigerator in a year.

Turning one 75-watt bulb off for one hour a day can save \$2.15 a year.



get some shower power

Conserve water and the energy used to treat, move and heat it by installing a low-flow shower head. Low-flow doesn't mean you have to sacrifice pressure. Thanks to some smart engineering, manufacturers now make low-flow shower heads that deliver satisfying showers.



set it + forget it

Manual thermostat adjustments can waste a lot of energy. Programmable thermostats are easy to install, easy to use and can easily pay for themselves. Look for models that let you set daytime, evening and overnight temperatures. For every eight hours that you roll back 1°F, you'll save 1% on your energy bill.



get an AC checkup

Like your car, a central air conditioner (AC) needs a tune-up every three years. Check with your local cooperative about maintenance programs available in your area. In the meantime, visually inspect your unit, hose it off regularly and clear away debris or overgrown shrubs to maximize performance. If your unit is more than 15 years old, then it may be time for a new one. Look for ACs with a SEER* rating of 13 or greater and arrange for proper installation to maximize energy efficiency.

*Home air conditioning uses nearly 5% of all the electricity produced in the U.S.
- U.S. Department of Energy*



make your furnace functional

Are you more likely to go to the dentist than to maintain your furnace? An annual inspection of your furnace will improve its efficiency while also assuring you of its ongoing safety. Between checkups, change dirty furnace filters monthly to prevent strain on the system.



get a smarter bulb

Compact fluorescent lights (CFLs)** use 75% less energy than regular bulbs, last 10 times as long and generate 70% less heat. Today's bulbs deliver warm, inviting light and come in all shapes and sizes to match your existing fixtures – indoors and out.

If every U.S. household replaced six 60-watt incandescent bulbs with CFLs, it would be equivalent to taking more than 8 million cars off the road.



make your holidays brighter

Decorate with LED lights this holiday season and you'll be using only 1% of the energy required for your old, standard string of bulbs. They're available in a wide range of shapes and colors and last about 20 years.



run the numbers

Most energy companies offer energy audits as do the Minnesota Building Performance Association (www.mbpa.us) and local Community Action Partnerships. A home energy auditor will evaluate your insulation and then plug or caulk holes that may be causing air leaks through windows, doors or outlets. Next, an inspection of heating and cooling equipment will help ensure its safety and energy efficiency.



be an ENERGY STAR

When you buy new appliances and electronics, choose ENERGY STAR appliances. By using less energy, ENERGY STAR products can save you money. Also, check for rebates from stores, manufacturers and your local co-op. For more guidance and guidelines as well as a complete list of ENERGY STAR products, visit www.energystar.gov



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For more great energy saving tips + facts, visit www.mnbrighterideas.com

* The efficiency level of a central air conditioner is determined by its "seasonal energy efficiency ratio" (SEER).

** Because of the presence of mercury, CFLs must be recycled. In Minnesota, it is illegal to place them directly in the garbage.