

MPUA PUBLIC OUTREACH RESOURCES
NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2013
Tipsheet: ENERGY EFFICIENT HOLIDAYS

Tipsheet: Energy Efficient Holidays
Holiday Energy-Saving Tips

Some people may think saving money on their energy bill during the holidays makes them a 'Grinch' or a 'Scrooge'. To that idea, we say "bah, humbug!". Here are some good ways to extend your holiday merriment, and keep a little more of it in your pocket all-year round.

LIGHTING AND DECORATING TIPS

Buy LED Lights

- Those old strings of incandescent holiday lights you may have been putting up forever are really inefficient, and despite careful storage, often emerge only halfway lit with many bulbs being tossed in landfills. Instead, save energy for many holidays yet to come, by replacing them with ENERGY STAR® qualified LED light strands. In addition to using 70 percent less energy than traditional bulbs, they're brighter, eco-friendly, and are safer, as they are much cooler than incandescent lights.
- In addition, they are easier to install—up to 24 strings of LEDs can be connected end-to-end without overloading a wall socket. They last ten times longer, have no filaments or glass to break, and costs are similar to the age-old standard. If you prefer white lights with the look of incandescent lights, look for "warm" white on the label.

Save the lights for when everyone is looking

- You can save by keeping your light displays on only during the hours of the evening when you and others will see them. Set timers for lights to automatically turn on when it gets dark and off in the middle of the night, depending on your preferences.
- If you don't use timers, unplug your lights when you go to sleep or leave home. If you still use traditional incandescent bulbs, this tip is even more important to cut down on energy costs and reduce possible fire hazards.

Creative and Reflective Decorating

- Not everything is about strands of lights. Reflective ornaments and tinsel are just as bright at night, so getting creative with your lighting display can multiply your resources for shine. Don't forget the ribbons, wreaths, garland, and reflective menorahs, for electricity-free age-old traditions that still bring holiday cheer.

COOKING AND ENTERTAINING TIPS

- Cook as many dishes as possible in your microwave over the holidays. While it may not be practical for browning the turkey, it gets the job done for many other dishes. Because microwaves cook food so quickly, the typical model uses as much as 75 percent less energy than a conventional oven. When using your oven, check cooking progress by looking through the window. Opening the oven door for even a few seconds lowers the temperature inside by as much as 25°F. If your stove doesn't have a window, try not to open the door to check your food until it's as close to the expected finish time as possible.
- Turn off your oven several minutes before your food is fully cooked. As long as the door remains closed, enough heat will be stored inside to finish cooking your meal.
- If you use glass or ceramic pans, try turning your oven temperature down 25°F. Your dish may cook just as quickly.
- When cooking on your stove top, match the size of the pan to the heating element. More heat will get to the pan and less will be lost.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer well stocked. A full refrigerator or freezer saves energy by reducing the recovery time when the door is opened.

GIFT BUYING TIPS

This holiday shopping season, consider gift options that continue to save energy and money for family and friends, long after the holidays are over.

- If a television, DVD player, stereo, cordless phone or office product like a computer, monitor or fax machines is on your list, looking for the ENERGY STAR is the surest way to get the most energy efficient product models.
- Today's ENERGY STAR qualified TVs meet new, stricter requirements and offer up to 30% energy savings over standard models. If you are in the market for a digital picture frame, consider one that has earned the ENERGY STAR — it uses 25% less energy than non-qualified models.
- Over the lifetime of ENERGY STAR qualified products, a household equipped completely with ENERGY STAR labeled electronics, appliances, lighting, and other home equipment may save up to \$10,000 in energy costs, when compared to a home using less efficient products.

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NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2013:

Op-Ed template: *BEING THANKFUL FOR CITIZEN SUPPORT, AND DEDICATED CITY WORKERS*

[Utility Name] is Thankful for Community Support

A trend this time of year for many who write letters to editors or post their thoughts on social media like Facebook or Twitter is to make short declarations of thankfulness and support for things that make our lives brighter and easier.

To that big list of things for which we're thankful, we'd like to share our thanks for the way the citizens of **[COMMUNITY]** support **[UTILITY]**.

It takes friends and neighbors working together to make any town a good, healthy place to live, work, and raise a family. Schools, businesses, community groups, places of worship, health care facilities, emergency services, and all other kinds of community efforts are part of the fabric that is woven into a good community.

[UTILITY] is one part of that fabric here in **[COMMUNITY]**. Providing safe, reliable, affordable [electricity, water, wastewater] is part of what makes **[CITY]** a good place, but we couldn't do that without the support we receive from you, our neighbors and friends.

At this time of year, it's also worth adding that we're especially thankful for the kinds of dedicated workers who, when a storm or accident causes an outage, have to be ready to get out in all kinds of weather just to get **[lights back on, water lines repaired, etc.]**.

[COMMUNITY] is a great place. We're thankful for all the good things and good people that go into that.

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NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2013:
News release/story template: COMMUNITY HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

[Utility Name] Workers Deck the Streets
City utility crews install holiday decorations

Holiday decorations add to (CITY'S) charm, help set a festive mood for the season, and may encourage people to shop locally. To make that happen, people in the community need to step up and do some decorating.

Enter the hard working people down at (UTILITY NAME). (UTILITY) staff [WERE/ARE] out this week [PLACE: DOWNTOWN, ETC.] using [EQUIPMENT: BUCKET TRUCKS, ETC.] to [DESCRIBE WORK: HANGING LIGHTS, GARLANDS, BANNERS, ETC.].

[Quote from utility representative: example: "There are many benefits to having our own hometown utility," said (NAME, TITLE at UTILITY). "On top of providing reliable/ safe (electricity/water, other services, etc.) all year, this time of year our workers enjoy helping make (COMMUNITY/AREA) a more scenic and fun place to [VISIT, SHOP, LIVE. ETC.]. It's one of the many hometown contributions that a utility like ours makes."]

[Quote worker, example : "Making (CITY) more beautiful over the holidays is a great part of our job," said (worker name and position). "We hope it adds a lot of cheer to the holiday for neighbors, friends and the whole community."]

[Insert: describe any other seasonal/community/holiday activities utility will participate in. (examples: food or toy drives, parades, festivals etc.)

The decorations will stay up through [APPROXIMATE DATE].