



**Richland Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

FIND OUT WHAT FOCUS ON ENERGY CAN DO FOR YOU!



focus on energy™

Partnering with Wisconsin utilities

Occasionally, while scrolling through news or social media, you might come across a Focus on Energy advertisement. Now, if you're anything like most of us, you just turn the page or keep scrolling down because of the constant advertisements that are virtually taking over your news. However, I urge you to stop and take a moment to see what Focus on Energy has to offer. You'll likely find that you're eligible for free packs of energy-saving products that will help you save money.

Focus on Energy is a Wisconsin utilities' statewide energy efficiency and renewable resource program funded by participating municipal and electric cooperative utilities as well as investor-owned utilities. The program empowers people and businesses of Wisconsin to make smart energy decisions with enduring economic benefits.



Most recently Focus on Energy had a flash sale on LED light bulbs. Members had the opportunity to purchase up to 30 light bulbs for \$30. It is a fantastic deal that only lasts for a brief period; however, we do our best to keep our members informed of such sales.



In the meantime, members have access to free energy efficient products from focusonenergy.com. These items come in different packs, and they currently include lightbulbs, fixed showerheads, hand showerheads, and other items.


But Focus on Energy is about much more than just giving away free items. The program was created to help the member. Another way Focus on Energy can help you is by doing an energy assessment of your home. Home energy assessments help address concerns of high energy bills, comfort concerns (drafty rooms), or even mold and moisture issues.

The program was created to assist businesses as well.

Services include:

- Agriculture, Schools and Government
- Business Incentive Program
- Renewable Energy Options
- Design Assistance – Commercial & Multifamily
- Emerging Technologies
- Large Energy Users Program
- Multifamily Energy Savings Program
- Multifamily New Construction
- Small Business Program
- Strategic Energy Management

So as you can see, there are a multitude of different options from Focus on Energy. Richland Electric Cooperative, Richland Center Utilities, Alliant Energy, Muscoda Utilities, and Madison Gas & Electric are all participating utilities of Focus on Energy. You can go to the Focus on Energy website, focusonenergy.com, for a list of all participating utilities.

We greatly encourage you to take a look at the Focus on Energy website to see what the program can offer you. If you have any questions about Focus on Energy, please feel free to contact the REC offices. 



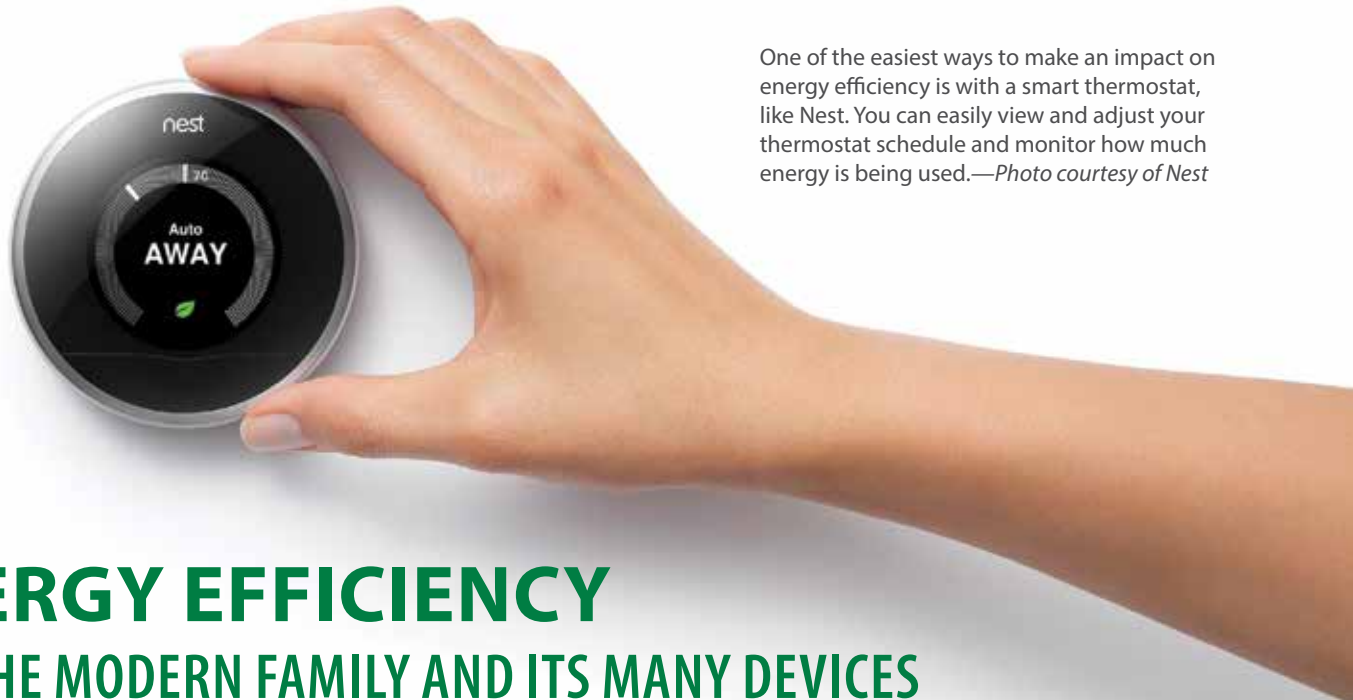
GET PAID FOR RECYCLING YOUR OLD REFRIGERATOR!

*Upgrade your refrigerator or freezer?
Don't know what to do with the old one?*

You can get \$35 for your old refrigerator or freezer! Focus on Energy will pick up your old, working-condition refrigerator for FREE and responsibly recycle it. Plus, you will get \$35 in return. Recycling your old refrigerator or freezer can help you save up to \$150 per year in energy costs and reduce energy waste. You can schedule your free pickup by visiting the Focus on Energy website, focusonenergy.com, or by calling 800-354-1898.

Eligibility

- Standard-size refrigerators and freezers are eligible – 10-30 cubic ft.
- Mini refrigerators are not eligible.
- Appliances must be in working condition.
- Two appliances may be recycled per household, per year. Participants will receive \$35 per qualifying appliances.



One of the easiest ways to make an impact on energy efficiency is with a smart thermostat, like Nest. You can easily view and adjust your thermostat schedule and monitor how much energy is being used.—*Photo courtesy of Nest*

ENERGY EFFICIENCY FOR THE MODERN FAMILY AND ITS MANY DEVICES

By Anne Prince

If you are struck by the amount of screens, remotes, gaming controls, charging stations, and cords that have become fixtures in your home, you are not alone. The typical American family is well connected and owns a variety of electronic devices. According to the PEW Research Institute, 95 percent of U.S. families have a cell phone and 77 percent of Americans own a smart phone. Nearly 80 percent of adults own a laptop or desktop computer, while approximately half own tablets.

Consumer electronics coupled with the growing array of smart home appliances and technology have slowly but steadily changed our homes and lifestyles. The increased reliance on our many devices has new implications for home energy use and efficiency.

Using smart technology to manage energy savings

So how can we save energy when we are using more electronic devices than ever before? The answer may lie with some of those same electronic devices that have become indispensable to modern living. In many cases, energy savings is a touchscreen away as more apps enable you to monitor energy use.

From the convenience of your mobile device, smart technologies can maximize your ability to manage electricity use across several platforms—controlling your thermostat, appliances, water heater, home electronics, and other devices. One of the easiest ways to make an impact on energy efficiency is with a smart thermostat, like Nest models. Using your mobile device, you can view and edit your thermostat schedule and monitor how much energy is used and make adjustments accordingly. For example, program your thermostat for weekday and weekend schedules so you are not wasting energy when

no one is home. Check and adjust the program periodically to keep pace with changes in household routines.

You can also ensure efficiency by purchasing ENERGY STAR-certified appliances. Many new appliances include smart-technology features such as refrigerators that can tell you when maintenance is required or when a door has been left open. New washers, dryers, and dishwashers allow you to program when you want the load to start. This means you can program your task for off-peak energy hours—a smart choice if your electric rate is based on time of use.

“Old school” energy savings for new devices

Of course, there are the time-tested “old school” methods of energy efficiency that can be applied to the myriad of household electronic devices and screens. Computers, printers, phones, and gaming consoles are notorious “vampire power” users, meaning they drain energy (and money) when not in use. If items can be turned off without disrupting your lifestyle, consider plugging them into a power strip that can be turned on and off or placed on a timer.

While modern life involves greater dependence on technology, your best resource for saving energy and money remains your local electric co-op.

Regardless of your level of technical expertise with electronic devices, Richland Electric Cooperative can provide guidance on energy savings based on your account information, energy use, local weather patterns, and additional factors unique to your community.

Anne Prince writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus electric cooperatives.



SKIING INTO WINTER

When I was a kid, we had a lot of winter in our part of Wisconsin, usually settling

in around the middle of November and often staying with us into early April. Winter sports were important to my brothers and me. We skated, built snow forts and snow caves, organized snowball fights, and made snowmen. At school recess, we played fox and geese, a game of tag with paths formed in the snow. I tended to my trap line each morning on skis, and of course, we downhill skied for the sheer fun of it.

When I was four or five, Pa made my first pair of skis out of barrel staves, the curved slats from wooden barrels that were about three feet long. He nailed a thin strip of leather onto each stave for my rubber boots to fit into. I didn't mind much that my barrel-stave skis were clumsy and performed poorly on hills. They served just fine on level ground, sort of like snowshoes.

A couple of years later, my grandfather Witt made me a pair of skis from two five-foot strips of birch wood that he steamed over a teakettle until he could bend up the front ends. He also nailed a strip of leather across the middle of each of them to accommodate my four-buckle rubber boots. They were wider than barrel staves, and with the turned-up ends, I could sail down the hills as well as any kid with store-bought skis. Unfortunately, the skis Grandpa made did not have grooves cut in the bottom to keep them going straight. With hard, packed snow I would as likely go sideways as straight ahead—an added benefit that I pointed out to my friends who had “better” skis.

When I was 10, I received a pair of factory-made skis for Christmas. Pa bought them at Hotz's Hardware in Wild

Rose. They were seven feet long, with a strip of leather to hold my now six-buckle rubber boots. These skis had two grooves on the bottom of each for superior control and steering. Each ski, somewhere along the way, had lost its mate. One ski was black, the other brown. Dad painted the brown one black to make the two discarded skis into a pair. With my new skis, I skied to school, skied my trap line each morning, skied to the neighbors, and skied at skiing parties the neighborhood kids organized. Somewhere in the shed at my farm, I still have one of these old skis. Its mate broke years ago when I hit a stone, or maybe it broke when I got tangled up in a wire fence I tried to cross. The remaining ski, alone again, has many stories to tell.

It was years later that I had a pair of “real skis” with fancy boot bindings. I still fondly remember the days when my skis were homemade, but served me well.

Check out Jerry's newest book, “Simple Things: Lessons From The Family Farms.” Go to www.jerryapps.com for ordering information.



Go to www.jerryapps.com for more information about Jerry's writing and television work. Contact Jerry at jerryappsauthor@gmail.com with questions or comments.

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