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## Community News

# A conservative approach to lower energy bills



By Eric Winslow  
*President and CEO*

Whether you are buying groceries, clothing, or fuel for your car, you are paying more for just about everything these days.

And just about everyone I talk to expresses concerns about rising energy costs and the overall state of the economy, both locally and nationally.

By now, we've all heard how growing worldwide demand for energy, much of it fueled by China's rapid expansion, is one of the main drivers behind today's rising prices. Despite the fact that crude oil prices seem to hit record highs on an almost daily basis, the global thirst for energy to fuel our vehicles, heat our homes and power our manufacturing plants continues to grow.

While petroleum products are not typically used to fire electric generation plants in this country, that doesn't mean we're off the hook. The price of natural gas and coal, two of the main power plant fuels, have also risen dramatically in recent years, and you've seen the impact of these higher energy prices reflected in your electric bills.

Unfortunately, with the demand for energy expected to continue growing, we aren't likely to see relief from higher energy costs anytime soon. That means it will be up to consumers to take matters into their own hands in order to save on their energy bills.

There are two ways you can reduce your home energy use: through conservation and efficiency. Conservation occurs when you reduce the total consumption of electricity. This is often achieved by simply turning off anything that uses electricity when not needed.

Practical energy conservation measures include:

- running a full load of dishes or clothes
- turning off lights when leaving a room
- setting your thermostat comfortably low in the

winter and comfortably high in the summer

- air drying dishes instead of using your dishwasher's drying cycle
- turning off your computer when not in use
- lowering the thermostat on your hot water tank
- taking short showers instead of baths

Energy efficiency occurs when we replace or upgrade the essentials in our lives — appliances, lighting, insulation — in a way that enables us to realize the same benefit with less energy.

One of the simplest efficiency measures you can do is as easy as screwing in a light bulb — specifically a compact fluorescent bulb, which uses about one-third of the energy as traditional incandescent bulbs and provides the same amount of light.

If you want an even bigger bang for your buck, you need to look to the largest user of electricity for the standard household: the hot water tank. You can reduce consumption by wrapping your electric water heater with fiberglass insulation, or you can upgrade to an energy-efficient water heater.

When you are in the market for a new appliance, be sure to look for one that is Energy Star-qualified. These appliances incorporate advanced technologies that use 10 to 50 percent less energy than standard models.

And if you are going to be installing a heating and cooling system, consider a geothermal heat pump, the most energy-efficient system on the market, or an air-source heat pump, which is slightly less efficient than geothermal but cheaper to install.

You can find a wealth of information on the Internet that will guide you as you make conservation and efficiency part of your daily routine. I highly recommend the U.S. Department of Energy's "Energy Savers" website, [www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov).

With conservation and efficiency information in hand, it's up to you to help yourself to lower energy costs. Don't be fooled into thinking high energy prices are going to begin a rapid retreat. With global energy demand growing rapidly, it's hard to envision a return to the days of low-cost energy anytime soon.

## Please give to \$1 Energy Fund

Consider signing up for Citizens' Electric's \$1 Energy Fund. By simply adding one dollar to your electric bill each month, you can help neighbors right here in the Buffalo Valley.

Your donations are matched by Citizens' Electric. This means that every \$1 donated becomes \$2, and 100 percent of those contributions are used to provide energy assistance grants to needy families in Citizens' territory.

With your help, the fund provided over \$5,500 to 35 customers last year.

To participate, simply designate your tax-deductible, monthly contribution amount on the return stub of your electric bill. You may stop your donation at any time simply by notifying us in writing.



## Call 8-1-1 before you dig

Planning excavation work? Get your project off to a safe start by calling 8-1-1 before you dig.

8-1-1 is the abbreviated national telephone number homeowners and professional excavators can call to contact their state's One Call center.

State law requires that anyone doing excavation work of any kind is required to notify the Pennsylvania One Call System three days before digging.

Property owners and contractors can still call the long-time Pennsylvania One Call number, 1-800-242-1776, prior to performing excavation work.



## 'The Lights of Lewisburg'

To commemorate Citizens' Electric's pending 100th anniversary in 2011, we've commissioned a full-color poster depicting scenes from downtown Lewisburg by artist William John Christian.

Each photo-illustration in "The Lights of Lewisburg," a limited edition, full-color poster, features the distinctive three-globed street lights for which Lewisburg is known. The posters are available from Lewisburg merchants and interested none profits seeking fund raisers for \$12.50. Proceeds from the sale of these posters will be donated to



*A photo-illustration by artist William John Christian featured in "The Lights of Lewisburg" poster.*

local charities. Additional information is available at [www.TheLightsOfLewisburg.com](http://www.TheLightsOfLewisburg.com).

## Tree pruning, pole inspections to begin

Citizens' Electric will be resuming its annual pole-inspection and tree-trimming programs this month.

Utility Pole Technologies has been contracted to inspect and treat Citizens' Electric utility poles, primarily within Lewisburg Borough and along Route 15 south of Lewisburg.

Poles deemed to be structurally sound will be treated with an environmentally friendly wood preservative by the contractor.

The treatment is a cost-effective way to extend the life of utility poles.

Citizens' has also contracted with Asplundh Tree Experts to carry out our system-wide vegetation management program.

This work focuses on pruning trees within our rights-of-way that have the potential to come into contact with electric lines, causing power interruptions.

Employees for the right-of-way and pole inspection contractors will carry identification cards and operate out of vehicles clearly marked with their company's logo.

Representatives of the companies will attempt to contact property owners before beginning work on their properties.

## Let budget billing even out payments

You can avoid seasonal fluctuations in your electric bill by participating in Citizens' Electric's budget billing plan.

Budget billing allows you to level out your monthly payments throughout the year, eliminating seasonal spikes as well as billing fluctuation caused by changes in your electric use. The plan is entirely voluntary and available to all customers on our residential rate schedule.

There is no cost to participate in the plan, nor are there any

savings. It is simply a convenience that levels out your monthly electric bill throughout the year. Your payment amount is calculated based on the average of your electric bills for the previous 12 months and may be adjusted periodically to reflect changes in your electric use, weather and other factors.

If you are interested in setting up a budget billing plan for your account or to learn more about how the plan works, visit our office or give us a call at (570) 524-2231.