



Give Efficiency This Holiday Season

There are many options when you start looking for green gifts. Get creative, and remember that what you give impacts future electric bills. So give the green light for energy-smart gifts this year!

- **For Decorators:** LED Christmas lights (\$15-\$35) - These energy-efficient lights are becoming easier to find. They save on high holiday electric bills and stay cool to the touch. For a festive complete package, wrap in a decorative stocking.
- **For Gardeners:** Solar garden lights (\$15-\$50) - Available in endless colors, styles, and sizes, solar garden lights can be a lovely addition to your favorite green thumb's garden. To up the green quotient, wrap in a burlap bag.
- **For Cooks:** Toaster oven (\$60 - \$140) - Especially great for the empty nester or those only cooking for one or two, toaster ovens are a good choice to save energy as an alternative to heating a large standard oven.
- **For Movie Buffs or Sports Fans:** ENERGY STAR-rated TV (price based on size)-Televisions are getting bigger and better. But before you give something that uses as much electricity as a refrigerator, look for the ENERGY STAR label. It will offer the smallest impact on your electric bills possible.



- **For Techies:** Smart strip (\$20 - \$40) - This new cutting-edge technology is great for plugging in electronic gadgets. Not your average power strip, smart strips sport designated outlets that make it easy to power down certain devices to save energy while not affecting others plugged into the same strip.
- Solar cell phone charger (\$55 - \$100+) - Help unplug energy-sucking chargers from the wall; solar chargers can be placed in a window to charge a cell phone or other devices like a GPS unit or even MP3 players anywhere the sun shines, even in a car on-the-go!
- For everyone else: A Linn County REC gift certificate!

New Online Bill Payment Benefits Members

Linn County REC will be upgrading our online bill payment to an automatic web based system. The switch is scheduled for December 15th.

What does this mean? Lots of new benefits for our members. By switching to a new vendor, online bill payment is even easier.



- select to pay any or all of your account(s) directly from the list provided
- make full or partial payments to any or all accounts
- payment transactions are updated to your account immediately
- store your bank account or credit card number for future payments
- lower credit card transaction fee

Visit our website or contact our office on December 15 to receive the new phone number and/or information on how to make your Linn County REC bill payment quick and easy!



Storm Safety Tips

During this time of year, power interruptions can occur with ice and snow storms. In the event of a power outage, contact Linn County REC right away. Don't assume that someone has already called. Every call helps determine the location and extent of an outage.

When a storm or extensive outage occurs, Linn County REC enables its automated phone outage system (PORCHE). PORCHE allows us to track the outages and helps prioritize restoration efforts.

When a call is placed, the PORCHE system can immediately recognize where the call is coming from using caller ID. Please make sure to enter the telephone number of the Linn County REC account where the outage is occurring, NOT the cell phone or other phone number you are calling from.

Storm Safety Tips:

- Have emergency numbers, including Linn County REC's, posted by the phone
- Keep a battery operated flashlight, radio, clock, and extra batteries on hand
- Disconnect electronic equipment and as many appliances as possible.
- If a generator is going to be used on your property, please notify us so we are aware of your location. Make sure to disconnect from Linn County REC prior to use.

Know The Facts About Space Heating

Linn County REC has received member inquiries about portable electric space heaters as a way to reduce heating costs. Some manufacturer's even claim that their electric space heater can cut a home's heating bill significantly. However, these savings generally come from behavioral changes and usage patterns, not in efficiency.

Space heaters do have their place in warming a house, but they simply cannot replace energy-efficient central heating or weatherization improvements to the home. All electric resistance space heaters produce 1 unit of heat for every 1 unit of electricity consumed; in other words, they are 100% energy efficient. In comparison, geothermal heat pumps can produce more than 3 units of heat for every unit of electricity consumed, making them 300 - 400% efficient.

As with any technology, before purchasing a space heater, you should understand how the device is to be



used to achieve the energy claims of the manufacturer.

- Space heaters don't reduce utility bills on their own. They can only save you money if you reduce consumption somewhere else. Also, the cost of operation is directly related to the number of heaters you have and hours of operation.
- Space heaters are designed as a supplemental heating source, not permanent. They are intended to raise temperatures slightly to add to consumers comfort.
- If the savings on a promotional offer seem to good to be true, read the fine print. If you still have questions, call Linn County REC.

Source: Cooperative Research Network

12 Days of Holiday Safety

It's easy to make safety a part of your holiday with these tips. Tackle one a day and you're well on your way to a safe New Year!

ESFi

Day 1 What's that noise? Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Make sure everyone knows what to do if they hear them.	Day 5 Ouch! Prevent trips and falls by keeping cords safely along walls and out of doorways and high traffic areas.	Day 9 Nice and warm. Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn—decorations, trees, gifts, and curtains.
Day 2 What a shocker! Before use, inspect all electrical lights, decorations, and extension cords for damage.	Day 6 Kids eat the darndest things! Avoid putting lights, metal hooks, breakable ornaments, and other small decorations within reach of young children.	Day 10 Can't touch this! Consider installing tamper-resistant outlets/receptacles to prevent kids from inserting objects into the slots.
Day 3 Two's company, three's a crowd. Do not overload outlets with too many decorations or devices.	Day 7 Thirsty? Keep your Christmas tree stand full of water. A fresh, green tree poses less of a fire hazard than a dry tree.	Day 11 Escape Route: Share your family fire escape plan with overnight guests.
Day 4 Is it working? Test your ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) to make sure they're protecting you.	Day 8 Make a wish! Blow out the candles before leaving a room or going to bed.	Day 12 Hot stuff! Keep children away from cooking areas; use back burners and turn pot handles in away from little hands.

There's no greater gift you can give your family than a safe and happy holiday! Learn more at holidaysafety.org.

Incandescent Bulb Phase Out Begins In 2012 Shedding Light On The New Standards



Starting in January 2012, 100-watt incandescent bulbs must become more energy efficient.

New lighting standards, established by the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, say that light bulbs, including incandescent bulbs, need to use 25% less energy by 2014.

Therefore, as of January 1, 2012, traditional 100 watt incandescent light bulbs will no longer be manufactured. This does not mean that consumers will be unable to buy incandescent light bulbs or that they must purchase compact florescent (CFL) bulbs. Stores will not remove incandescent bulbs from shelves come New Year's Day. Current inventory will still be available for sale until exhausted.

Similar standards will phase in for other types of light bulbs over the next three years. Traditional 75 watt incandescent light bulbs will no longer be available as of January 1, 2013. Traditional 40 and 60 watt incandescent light bulbs will no longer be available as of January 1, 2014.

The improved efficiency requirements only apply to screw-based lightbulbs; specialty bulbs for appliances, heavy-duty bulbs, colored lights, and three-way bulbs are exempt.

So how do you benefit? Manufacturers have responded to the law by increasing research and development and speeding new products to market. In fact, we now have more lighting options than at any time in the past.

The new energy-saving light bulbs—incandescents, CFLs, and LEDs—are available today and could save you about \$50 per year when you replace

15 traditional incandescent bulbs in your home. The newer bulbs provide a wide range of choices in color and brightness, and many of them will last much longer than traditional light bulbs.

Such a massive product change means consumers must also switch from thinking about lightbulbs in terms of watts (amount of energy used) to lumens (amount of light produced).

Beginning in 2012, labels on the front and back of lightbulb packages will emphasize a bulb's brightness in lumens, annual energy cost and expected lifespan.

The consumer-focused Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has designed a "Lighting Facts" label and shopping guide that compares a bulb being purchased with traditional incandescent lightbulbs based on wattages and equivalent lumens.

The brightness, or lumen levels, of the lights in your home may vary widely, so here's a rule of thumb:

- To replace a 100-watt incandescent bulb, look for a bulb that gives you about 1600 lumens. If you want something dimmer, go for less lumens; if you prefer brighter light, look for more lumens.
- Replace a 75W bulb with an energy-saving bulb that gives you about 1100 lumens
- Replace a 60W bulb with an

What to Look for When Purchasing Lightbulbs

Instead of shopping for watts, look for lumens. Here's a helpful comparison chart.



Estimates based on typical incandescent bulbs.
Source: U.S. Federal Trade Commission

energy-saving bulb that gives you about 800 lumens

- Replace a 40W bulb with an energy-saving bulb that gives you about 450 lumens.

For more information on lighting and our lighting incentives, go to www.linncountyrec.com.

Source: US Department of Energy



Submit Incentives Before Year End



If you have installed equipment that qualifies for a 2011 energy efficiency incentive from Linn County REC, send in your application form by December 31, 2011. Linn County REC has not been notified of any changes to our incentives, however, be advised that all applications received after January 1, 2012 will be evaluated by 2012 incentive plan criteria and incentive levels.

To receive an incentive you must:

- Download the incentive form with all pages
- Fill in ALL required information fields
- Provide a copy of the receipt
- Provide ALL additional required verification
- Must be received within 6 months of installation

Incomplete forms will not be accepted. Linn County REC will deduct 10% from the incentive amount for incomplete forms that are returned without all required information.

For a complete list of our incentives, criteria, or to download forms, visit www.linncountyrec.com.

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| 3/4 cup butter, softened | 1 cup packed brown sugar |
| 1 egg | 3/4 cup molasses |
| 4 cups all-purpose flour | 3 tsp pumpkin pie spice |
| 1-1/2 teaspoons baking soda | 1-1/4 tsp ground ginger |
| 1/4 teaspoon salt | M&M's mini baking bits |
| 3/4 cup vanilla frosting | 1/4 cup confectioners' sugar |
| Green food coloring, optional | |

In a large bowl, cream butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg and molasses. Combine the flour, pumpkin pie spice, baking soda, ginger and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours or until easy to handle. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to 1/8-in. thickness. Cut with a floured 3-in. tree-shaped cookie cutter. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Gently press baking bits into half of the cookies. Bake at 325° for 8-10 minutes or until edges are firm. Remove to wire racks to cool completely. In a small bowl, combine frosting and confectioners' sugar until smooth; tint green if desired. Spread over the bottoms of plain cookies; top with decorated cookies. Store in the refrigerator. Yield: 2 dozen.

What's YOUR Incentive?

Whole house indoor air quality is not only a question of being efficient, it has become a major health concern for many people. Even in new homes built today, they are constructed with tighter windows and doors to save energy, but they also keep the fresh air out. Without adequate indoor air circulation, pollutants can build up over time, leading to poor indoor air quality.



Linn County REC offers a \$50 incentive for permanently installed air quality units that improve the conditions in homes including electronic air filters, radon abatement systems and UV air purifiers. We also have an incentive of \$125 for the purchase of heat / energy recovery ventilators.

Visit www.linncountyrec.com to download our appliance recycling incentive form with complete criteria.

To receive an incentive from Linn County REC:

- Must be or have been a member at service location
- Complete ALL fields on incentive form
- Provide a copy of the sales receipt
- Provide ALL additional required documentation (i.e. Energy Star® verification)
- Must be received within six months of installation

Incomplete or unsigned forms will be assessed a 10% reduction of incentive amount. Need help filling out an incentive form? Visit the video center on our website for a step by step tutorial or contact our office.



Office Closed

Linn County REC offices will be closed on December 23, 26 and January 2 in observance of Christmas and New Years.

A bill payment drop box is available 24 hours a day at our Marion and North Liberty offices.

