



## New Energy Star® Standards Begin Rolling Out This Summer

Public awareness of the ENERGY STAR label grew to more than 80% in 2010, an increase of 45 percentage points over the past decade.

The goal of the Energy Star® program is to promote energy efficient products that are at least 10% more efficient than the market standard.

Energy Star® is now raising its standards to continue to meet this goal. The new requirements reflect an acceleration of pending changes made possible by a rapid market response to the current Energy Star® requirements, continued consumer demand and strong retailer support for the program. This will benefit consumers as it encourages manufacturers to continually increase their product lines' efficiency levels.

Energy Star® will be updating its standards for many products in the coming months. Effective September 2011, televisions and cable/satellite

boxes must be 40% more efficient than conventional models in order to qualify for the Energy Star® label.

Also, effective October 1, 2011, light fixtures will need to increase efficiency 30% above currently qualified fluorescent-based fixtures to qualify for the Energy Star® label.

These updates are the first of more than 20 revisions to product requirements the Energy Star® program is expected to complete this year. Dishwashers, refrigerators, freezers and dehumidifiers will all have new label requirements.

These changes now make it even more important for Linn County REC members to be sure to include Energy Star® label verification when filing



for our appliance incentive. We will honor the incentive if you provide this verification. If you do not, we have to go to the Energy Star® website to confirm. If the criteria has changed, your product may no longer qualify.

For more information on our incentives and Energy Star® verification, visit our website at [www.linncountyrec.com](http://www.linncountyrec.com).

## Avoid Seasonal Ups and Downs with Budget Billing



Looking for a way to avoid the seasonal ups and downs on your utility bill? Know what your bill is going to be every month with budget billing. This plan allows you to pay in equal monthly installments so you know how much to budget for your Linn County REC bill.

Monthly payments will be equal to 1/12 of your estimated annual billings based on your usage history. To

reduce the possibility of overpayment or underpayment, periodic reviews ensure that payments are adequate to cover usage.

Members can go on budget billing at any time. If you would like to set up budget billing on your account or would like more information, please call our office to speak with a Consumer Services Representative.



### Stake Energy Vampires with Smart Strips

In an average home, 5 percent to 8 percent of electric use stems from "energy vampires"— devices that use power even when turned off. Smart power strips help you unplug energy-draining devices when not in use easily.

There are typically three different types of outlets on a smart strip:



The blue outlet serves as a control plug (ideal for a TV or computer).



Devices plugged into red outlets stay on—electricity to these receptacles never cuts off, making them perfect for satellite boxes and other items that need constant power.



Remaining outlets, often green or neutral in color, are sensitive to current flowing through the blue outlet. Turning off a device plugged into the blue outlet cuts power to items connected to these outlets.

Smart strips are available online or at specialty electronic retailers and generally cost \$20 or more depending on their size.

Source: Cooperative Research Network, Bits Ltd.

## Iowa City Parade Of Homes Model Home Showcases Geothermal

Learn the benefits of having the most energy efficient heating and cooling system available on the market today by visiting the Linn County REC geothermal model home. The model home is currently under construction at 2970 Diamond Mil Lane in Coralville and will be showcased during the Iowa City Parade of Homes June 4, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 12.

General Contractor Aaron Klosterman Construction designed and built the home with energy efficiency in mind. The 4,400 square foot house features a 5 ton Bosch geothermal heating and cooling system that was installed by J and S Plumbing and Heating. Geothermal is the most efficient heating and cooling system on the market today. It is 350% efficient and provides free hot water for your home.

The home also has the newest technology in water heating, an integrated Bosch heat pump water heater. They are 235% efficient compared to a standard 50 gallon electric water heater that is 92% efficient.

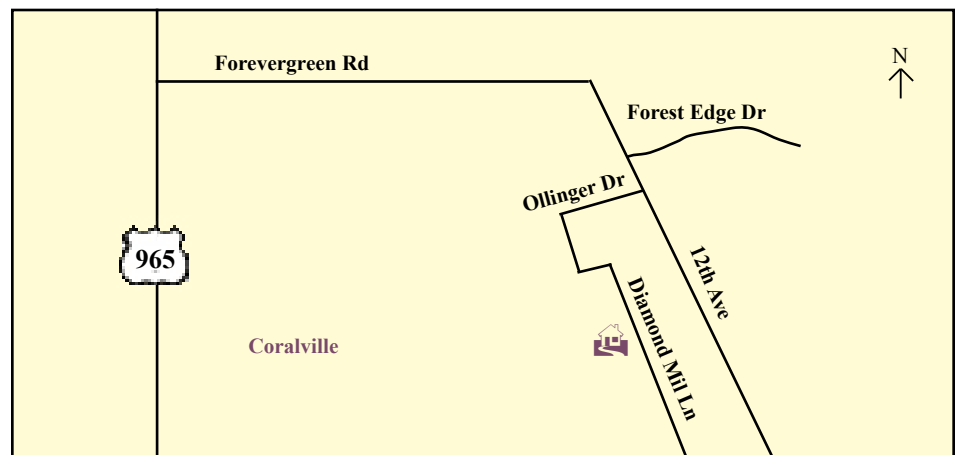
All the appliances in the home are ENERGY STAR® rated. ENERGY



STAR® appliances, are 15% more efficient than standard appliances.

This all electric home scored a five star plus HERS rating. A five star plus is the highest HERS rating a home can score. A home energy rating involves an analysis of a home's construction plans and on site inspections. This determines a score, or HERS index, that allows you to compare the efficiency of home construction and equipment.

Our Linn County REC Energy Advisor will be available during the parade of homes to answer questions that you may have. Please note that a parade of homes ticket will have to be purchased in order to view the Linn County REC geothermal model home. Tickets are \$7.00 per person and may be purchased at the model home.





# Energy Efficiency

## How To Reduce Your Summer Energy Use

A typical household spends almost 20 percent of its electric bill on cooling. By taking steps this summer to improve energy efficiency you can save energy, save money and help the environment.

There are many low to no-cost energy-efficient cooling tips to beat the heat this summer. Reduce your summer energy use with these tips.

### No Cost

- Program your thermostat to work around your family's summer schedule—set it a few degrees higher (such as 78 degrees) when no one is home, so your cooling system isn't cooling an empty house. With proper use, programmable thermostats can save you about \$180 a year in heating and cooling costs.
- Check your HVAC system's air filter every month. Change the filter at least every three months. A dirty filter will slow air flow and make the system work harder to keep you cool, wasting energy.
- Run your ceiling fan in occupied rooms to create a cool breeze. If you raise your thermostat by only two degrees and use your ceiling fan, you can lower cooling costs by up to 14%. Remember that ceiling fans cool you, not the room, so when you leave the room make sure to turn off the fan.
- Pull the curtains and shades closed before you leave your home to keep the sun's rays from overheating the interior of your home.
- Closing air conditioning vents in unoccupied rooms may save up to 10% on your cooling costs.

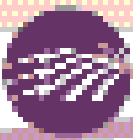
### Low Cost

- Remember to have your HVAC system serviced annually to ensure it's running at optimum efficiency for money and energy savings.

- Seal your air ducts. As much as 20% of the air moving through your home's duct system does not reach its destination due to leaks and poor connections. Seal duct work using mastic sealant or metal tape and insulate all the ducts that you can access (such as those in attics, crawlspaces, unfinished basements, and garages).
- Consider installing a whole house fan. Attics trap large amounts of heat; a well-placed and sized whole-house fan pulls air through open windows on the bottom floors and exhausts it through the roof, lowering the inside temperature and reducing energy use by as much as a third compared with an air conditioner. Cost is between \$150 and \$400 if you install it yourself.
- Caulking and weather-stripping will keep cool air in during the summer.

### Other Tips

- When buying a room air conditioner, look for one that has earned the Energy Star® label.
- Add insulation to your attic to keep cool air in and make sure your attic is properly ventilated. Reducing the attic temperature may help lower your cooling costs.
- If your central air conditioning unit is more than 12 years old, replacing it with a model that has earned the Energy Star® label could cut your cooling costs by 30%.



## Board Election Reminder

The Linn County REC annual meeting will be held on **Friday, September 30, 2011** at the Local 238 Union Building located at 5000 J Street SW in Cedar Rapids.

Districts 2, 3 and 7 are up for election at this year's annual meeting. **District 2 is an open seat.** The nominating committee will meet on Tuesday, June 14, 2011.



- 1 tube (18 ounces) refrigerated sugar cookie dough, softened
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1/3 cup confectioners' sugar
- 24 small fresh strawberries, thinly sliced
- 4 large kiwifruit, peeled and sliced or 1 cup fresh blueberries

In a small bowl, combine cookie dough and flour until combined. Roll on a lightly floured surface to 1/4-in. thickness. Cut with a floured 3-in. star-shaped cookie cutter.

Place 1 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until edges are golden brown. Cool for 1 minute before removing to wire racks to cool completely.

For frosting, in a small bowl, beat cream cheese and confectioners' sugar until smooth. Set aside 1-2 tablespoons. Spread remaining frosting over cookies. Place five strawberry slices on each cookie. Using reserved frosting, attach one kiwi slice or 4-5 blueberries to each. Store in the refrigerator.

Yield: 2 dozen.

## What's YOUR Incentive?



Linn County REC has an incentive of \$25 per unit on ENERGY STAR® rated dehumidifiers.

Did you know that an average ENERGY STAR® qualified dehumidifier can save consumers more than \$20 per year. That's more than \$230 in savings over the life of the unit.

ENERGY STAR® qualified models have more efficient refrigeration coils, compressors, and fans than conventional models, which means they use less energy to remove moisture. In fact, the energy saved by an ENERGY STAR® qualified dehumidifier could power your refrigerator for 6 months!

Visit [www.linncountyrec.com](http://www.linncountyrec.com) to download our appliance incentive form with complete terms and conditions.

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

Members contacted for additional information on incomplete/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 on the filing process. Questions about our incentive program? Contact our office to speak with member services.

