

Tapping the power of the sun

The headquarters of our wholesale power supplier, Wisconsin Public Power Inc., are now powered entirely by renewable energy.

This power is generated from renewable resources such as biogas and wind. Now, solar power has been added to the equation.

WPPI has installed two photovoltaic (PV) panels that move and tilt in relation to the position of the sun. As a result, the panels can produce electricity year-round.

The new PV solar panels will provide more than 9,000 kilowatt-hours per year of green, emissions-free renewable energy, or about three percent of the energy required by the facility.



Teachers from several WPPI communities gather beneath one of the new PV panels. The teachers attended an energy education class to learn about incorporating renewable energy into their curriculum.

The WPPI solar panel project is just one of several solar panel installations by WPPI member utilities. For additional information, including a view of the "real time" performance of these solar projects, visit www.wppisys.org.

Save energy and money this fall

- Schedule an annual maintenance and safety check of your heating system.
- Keep curtains and blinds closed at night to keep cold air out. Open window coverings on the south side of your home during the day to let the sun warm the rooms.
- Dry loads of clothes back to back to take advantage of heat built up in the dryer.
- Check refrigerator and freezer door gaskets. If gaskets are worn, dirty, cracked or poorly fitted, the appliance must operate longer to maintain cooling temperatures.
- Use timers or motion detectors on outdoor lamps that are used for security lighting.
- Vent your dryer outside to reduce excess heat and moisture inside the home.
- If your home has a fireplace, keep the damper closed when you're not using it and use a glass screen to minimize heat loss.

Mow down your carbon footprint

Going green is the newest trend in lawn care, as consumers are taking a greater interest in electric and rechargeable lawn mower technology.

Electric mowers plug into a standard 120-volt outlet and are ideal for smaller yards. Rechargeable mowers are equipped with a removable, rechargeable battery that traditionally charges in 8 to 12 hours by plugging into a standard outlet. Most rechargeable mowers will run for about an hour depending on grass conditions. With proper care, rechargeable batteries will last 5 to 7 years and over 95% of the battery components are recyclable.

Both electric and rechargeable mowers offer the power and performance of gas-powered mowers without the toxic emissions and are 75% quieter than traditional mowers. Depending on the model, the mowers cost approximately \$5 per year for electricity and eliminate the expensive costs associated with replacing spark plugs, air filters, clogged carburetors and general maintenance.

With an electric or rechargeable mower you will reduce your carbon footprint and enjoy a more pleasant mowing experience.





Go online for energy savings

Ever wonder what you could save by changing your thermostat setting or adding storm windows? Now you can find out with just a few clicks of a mouse.

The new HomeEnergyCalculator is available 24/7 in the comfort of your home. The calculator's quick, one-screen form asks about a dozen questions about your home. Simply click to indicate your home's approximate square footage, age, number of occupants, fuel type and more. Then hit "Calculate" to get an estimate of the monthly and annual energy use and costs for your home.

Next, determine what changes you would like to consider. One easy step might be to reduce the temperature on your water heater. Make that change and click "Calculate" again to see what you might save. Then try something else like adjusting heating settings down, tightening up your home by reducing air leaks, or installing storm windows. Click "Calculate" after each change to see the difference in your monthly energy bill.

Once you've gotten a feel for your home's energy costs and what various changes might save you, take a look at your overall home energy usage by clicking "View Report." From there you can print, download or email your report.

The HomeEnergyCalculator is one more way we're working to help you manage your home energy costs. Check it out at www.wppisys.org/homeenergy.

Unplug everything & save

Your mother always told you to turn the lights off when you leave a room. Add your TV, computer and cell phone charger to that list.

Your electronic gadgets guzzle less electricity when they're turned off than when they're turned on. Yet most appliances still use electricity when they're turned off. Even "standby mode" requires most appliances to leave some circuits on, waiting for the command to activate.

In fact, as much as 13% of home energy use might be from electronics on standby, estimates one study. Even more is wasted on devices like stereos, cell phone chargers and kitchen appliances that are turned off but still plugged in. Some people call this waste of energy "vampire power."

Your best bet for energy savings – unplug everything when you're not using it. For more information on appliances and energy use, visit www.energystar.gov.

Need energy assistance?

The Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) is a federally funded heating assistance program that can help ease the energy burden facing customers with limited financial resources. To qualify, you must verify that your gross household income from the previous three months falls within certain guidelines.

For information on how to apply, call 1-866 HEATWIS (432-8947). If you are approved for WHEAP, you will automatically be approved for our Customer Credit Program without having to complete any additional paperwork.