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ENERGY EXTRA

The Grand Valley's Energy Newsletter

Give Thanks to a Reduced Energy Bill

Thanksgiving is a time for gathering, giving thanks, and eating. While Grand Valley Power may not be able to help you become a better cook, we can help increase the value of every dollar that is spent for electricity. As you gather around the table during this holiday, be thankful that your electric cooperative is looking out for you.

Thanksgiving may not be the only time to focus on energy efficiency, but with more people at home the increase in electricity demand shouldn't directly correlate to an increased electric bill. By following these nine tips, you will not only control electric costs but be on your way to creating habits that can be passed down from generation to generation.

Creating an energy-efficient Thanksgiving:

Lower your home's thermostat setting a degree or two. As more guests begin to arrive and more food is prepared, the house will become too warm, which is a waste of electricity and natural gas or propane.

Preheat the oven for only the time that it takes to reach cooking temperatures. Do not preheat the oven for 30 minutes when it has reached its cooking temperature in 5 minutes. There is no need to preheat the oven for broiling or roasting. Electric ovens cost an average of \$0.60 for every hour of operation.

Once the oven has reached cooking temperature, cook as much of the meal in it at one time as possible. Foods with similar cooking temperature can be cooked at the same time due to variations in oven temperatures of 25 degrees in either direction. An additional 10 minutes of cooking time for a casserole at a lower temperature will only add \$0.10 in electric costs while waiting to cook it separately for an additional 30 minutes will add \$0.30 to your electric bill.

Use microwaves whenever possible. Microwave ovens draw less than half of the energy compared to a conventional oven. Microwave ovens also reduce the amount of time required for cooking which reduces electrical consumption.

When using the stove-top, always cook on the highest heat until the liquid begins to boil. Once the liquid begins to boil reduce the heat setting and allow the food to simmer until fully cooked.

Use lids whenever possible. This will contain the heat within the pot or pan, thereby reducing the amount of time required for cooking.

Allow hot foods to cool before placing them in the refrigerator. Warm food placed in a refrigerator will increase the internal temperature of the refrigerator causing the refrigerator to run longer to bring the temperature back down.

Check the condition of your refrigerator and freezer gaskets to ensure a proper seal. This can be done by placing a dollar bill on the gasket and closing the door. Then tug on the bill and gauge the amount of tension required to pull it out. If the bill comes out very easily or even falls out, then the gasket should be replaced.

Finally, after the meal is served and the company has left, don't use the oven's self-cleaning cycle unless a major spill has occurred. Using the self-cleaning cycle for a couple of minor spills will require the oven to operate for 3-4 hours, increasing electric costs by as much as \$3.

Before taking the time to give thanks, have a plan in place to save energy.



Brought to you by:

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