

ENERGY

CONNECTIONS

NorthWestern[®]
Energy

APRIL 2013

Delivering a Bright Future



Celebrate Earth Day EVERYDAY

"We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children."
~Native American Proverb

The celebration of Earth Day, annually, on April 22, began in the United States in 1970. Here are simple ideas that you could perhaps incorporate into your day-to-day life to mark the occasion.

1. Recycle, reuse, repurpose.
2. Plant a garden at school or home.
3. Bring your own reusable bags to the store.
4. Turn the water off while brushing your teeth or shaving.
5. Wash all clothes in cold water.
6. Donate hand-me-downs and items you don't use.
7. Convert household bulbs to compact fluorescent lights (CFLs).*
8. Unplug appliances when not in use.
9. Pick up litter.
10. Learn more about the environment.

*If you live in Montana, watch your mail this month for an instant in-store coupon offer for discounted CFLs. Offer available to qualified customers through the Efficiency Plus (E+) programs.

Calling all photographers!

Stay tuned for an Earth Day contest through which you'll have the chance to win great prizes from NorthWestern Energy. Check our website for details beginning on Earth Day – April 22.

Plant a Tree

Earth Day also coincides with U.S. Arbor Day. National Arbor Day is the last Friday in April.

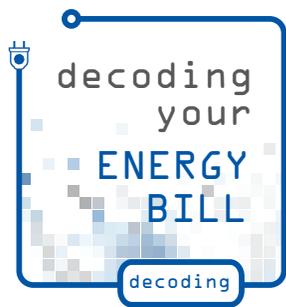
There are many ways you can celebrate – you can make a donation to the National Arbor Day Foundation, you could plant a tree around your home or in a lasting memorial for loved ones, or find out about a local tree planting event and volunteer.

When planting trees, you want to pick a tree that you know can survive in your climate. In Montana, the state tree is the Ponderosa Pine, South Dakota has the Black Hills Spruce and in Nebraska, it is the Cottonwood. If you're unsure about what kind of tree you should get, ask an employee at your local garden shop or inside the garden department of a store.

Before you plant a tree, get the facts. Find out how the tree will look in 5, 10 or even 50 years. Knowing the height the tree will reach at maturity can help you make smart decisions now.

Carefully planted trees stay clear of power lines while retaining their natural beauty. Trees with a mature height of 20 feet or less fit comfortably under power lines. It is unlikely they will ever need trimming to protect public safety and electric reliability. Trees with mature heights of 30 to 40 feet should be set at least 15 to 20 feet from the outside of a power pole.

And remember, anytime you are digging or planting – always call 811 at least two working days ahead of time for identification of underground utilities.



Your energy bill has quite a few elements to consider. At first, it might seem overwhelming, but once you understand what each element means it all comes together. Starting this month, we will feature a detailed explanation

of one element of your bill. If there is something you are curious about and would like to see featured, we encourage you to email your suggestion to: news2@northwestern.com.

Total Amount Due and Due Date

The total amount due is the amount you are expected to pay by the due date. If you misplaced your billing statement and are unsure about when your payment is due or the amount to pay you have a couple of options. You can access all your billing information online, by logging into "My Energy Account" at www.northwesternenergy.com. You can see

the amount due, the due date and even pay your bill online. You can also access your billing history, which can be handy information to have when filing taxes. Don't worry if you don't have internet access, telephone assistance is available by calling our Customer Contact Center, Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. – 6 p.m.

9 Ways To Lower Your Monthly Power Bill

Understanding how you use energy, makes you a smart energy consumer. Many ways are available to reduce your energy use, but some methods save more power and money than others. Most of us know to turn out the lights when we leave a room, but according to the U.S. Department of Energy, lighting accounts for only 10 percent of the average electric bill. By focusing on your top energy expenditures, you can make 10 big changes that, taken together, could keep more money in your pocket instead of going to your monthly energy bill.

- 1. Eliminate Standby Power Consumption:** Plug home electronics, such as printers, computers, game consoles and TVs into power strips that you can switch off when the items are not in use.
- 2. Insulate Your Attic:** Heating is the biggest contributor to the average power bill, typically responsible for about 31 percent of your home's energy needs. Adding insulation to your attic can be one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce the heating portion of your energy use. (Rebates for insulation available in Mont. through the E+ programs – learn more on our website.)
- 3. Replace Your Old Air-Conditioner:** Along with heating, space cooling is a major component of power usage for households. If you have an air-conditioner that's more than a decade old, you could save significantly by replacing it with an ENERGY STAR®-qualified model.
- 4. Optimize Your Hot-Water Heater:** If you have an older, standard electric water heater, you could save almost \$300/year by switching to an ENERGY STAR-qualified heat-pump water heater. If you already have an efficient water heater or aren't ready to make a switch, you can still reduce the amount of energy used by insulating it or turning down the temperature to 120 degrees max.

- 5. Keep Your Refrigerator Well-Maintained:** Your refrigerator tops the list of energy-consuming appliances. See if your fridge seals tightly by closing the door on a piece of paper. If you can easily pull the paper out of the door, the door needs to be repaired.
- 6. Wash Clothes in Cold Water:** After the refrigerator, your washing machine is probably your most energy-intensive appliance. Since about 90 percent of that energy used goes toward heating the water, washing clothes in cold water uses much less power – even using warm instead of hot will make a difference.
- 7. Air-Dry Dishes and Laundry:** When possible, allow your dishes to air-dry inside the washer instead of running the dry cycle and hang clothes on a clothesline.
- 8. Program Your Computer for Savings:** Computers that run all the time use a lot of energy, but shutting down your system every time you step away isn't always realistic. As a compromise, the U.S. Department of Energy recommends turning off the monitor if you step away for more than 20 minutes, and turning off both the CPU and monitor if you'll be away for more than two hours. In addition, enable all of your computer's energy-saving functions.
- 9. Seek Professional Advice:** A professional energy auditor can analyze your home and identify poorly insulated areas that are costing you money, plus make recommendations for other cost-effective changes to your home that could add up to big savings. NorthWestern Energy's E+ Energy Audit program is available to qualified customers in Montana and our online Calc-U-Pal tool is always a good option.



It's Pipeline Inspection Season

Each year, NorthWestern Energy employees and contractors perform physical checks of natural gas pipelines and related equipment. They look for possible leaks, note repairs needed and perform minor maintenance. On occasion, inspectors may need to access your property to complete the survey. They drive clearly marked vehicles, wear clothing that identifies them as NorthWestern Energy employees or contractors and carry appropriate identification.



Contact...

MONTANA

Customer Contact Center (888) 467-2669
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F
Emergency 24/7 Service
Call Before You Dig 811
Energy Efficiency (800) 823-5995

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