

Public Utility District No. 1
of Okanogan County
PO Box 912
Okanogan, WA 98840
509.422.3310
800.922.7011
okanoganpud.org

Watt's Up

At Okanogan PUD

ISSUE 08-05

SNAP Producers supply Okanogan PUD customers with 20,470 clean, renewable kilowatt-hours this past year.

On the Back Side:

How can an electrical appliance be using power when it's turned off? See the **Energy Ghost Load** article on the back page.

Has your electricity bill gone up for no apparent reason? Read the **What's Happened to My Electricity Bill** article for possible answers.



SNAP PROGRAM UPDATE

It was *payday* July 3, 2008, for our seven producers generating renewable solar or wind energy and participating in the Sustainable Natural Alternative Power (SNAP) Program. Together they generated 20,470 kilowatt-hours of electricity. Each producer received a check respective to the amount of kilowatt-hours generated by their system and the voluntary customer contributions collected. The good news is that we gained four more producers from last year; however, our contributions have remained relatively the same over the years. As a result production payments to our producers were down from last year.

Through SNAP, the PUD is making small-scale solar and wind power more cost-effective for customers. The program simply connects customers who want to produce solar and wind power with other local customers who want to support the development of new, renewable energy. Customers who support SNAP are helping to build a base of renewable energy in Okanogan County.

We would like to take this opportunity to say *THANK YOU* to both our *Producers and Purchasers*. You are helping diversify our energy resources as well as our economy.

You too can be part of this by signing up at any of the PUD offices or by going to our website. Potential producers may pick up SNAP information packets at the Okanogan PUD office. More information is available by calling (509) 422-8427 or 422-8428.

FURNACE TUNE-UP

Now would be the perfect time of the year to get your furnace or heat pump tuned up for winter. Your HVAC contractor is probably getting caught up from the summer cooling season rush and has time to work on your system! Wouldn't it be reassuring to know that your system is ready to keep you warm this winter! Don't forget to change those filters every month too. Dirty filters reduce air flow causing your system to work all that much harder to heat and cool your home or business.

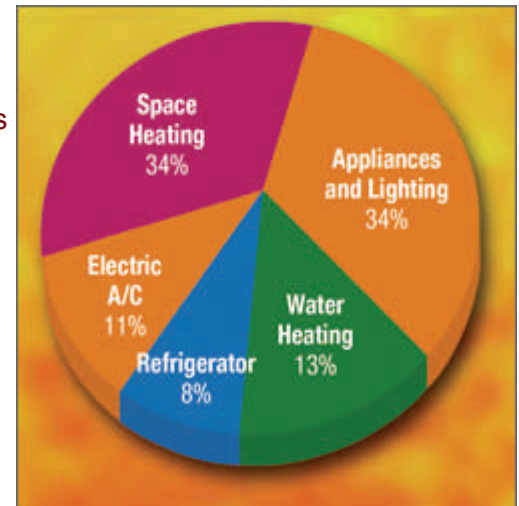
Electric Bill Sticker Shock

What's happening to my power bill? I haven't done a thing different, yet my bill went up last month. Ever had those thoughts? Has it happened to you?

Perhaps this article can help make sense of it all. Here are a few things to consider. Has it been hotter or colder than usual? Heating accounts for the biggest chunk of a typical utility bill at 34% & air conditioning accounts for 11%. Almost half of your power bill goes to these two items!

Did you just buy a new hot tub, big screen TV, extra refrigerator or freezer? Do you have a new baby in the house? Does the water heater, refrigerator or air conditioner run all the time? Do you leave your computer(s) on all the time? Did the in-laws come to visit or heaven-for-bid move in with you? Did your kids come home from college or did one of them just turn into a teenager? It's been scientifically proven that teenagers need at least 2 one-hour showers per day and at least four change of clothes just to exist! All kidding aside; all this increased activity leads to higher electric usage which in turn drives up your electricity bill. More people in the home can lead to increased usage of lights, appliances, water heating and cooking and an increase in cooling costs (too many people at 98.6 degrees makes a house warm). Water heating alone accounts for 13% of a typical power bill.

Did a heat generating device, such as a lamp or computer get placed near the thermostat or was the ther-



mostat recently moved? Maybe its located too near a drafty window. The A/C or furnace might be trying to compensate for this change.

Have you or someone else in the home been sick lately? Most of us feel cold when we're not feeling well so we naturally turn up the heat.

All of the above mentioned items can lead to an increased use of electricity. Take a little time and do some detective work. You might discover for yourself the cause of the larger electric bill.

Still can't figure it out? Give us a call. We're here to help. Maybe we can help sort it all out.

ENERGY GHOST LOADS

When you turn something off, it might not be off. *Say What?* Many of our electronic appliances and toys are actually in standby mode when we turn them "off". This is a design feature to provide us the convenience of time—the time of not waiting for internal components to warm up. This convenience costs us money. Also known as "phantom loads", ghost loads are the sneaky devices that constantly consume small amounts of electricity 24 hours a day—even when they're not actually doing anything useful. Electronic devices with clocks, instant-on features, and indicator lights all consume electricity when turned off. These ghost loads can draw from 2 to 10 watts per item. But there are more out-of-sight ghost loads, which appear to be completely turned off. These include your TVs, DVD/VCRs, stereos, cell phone chargers, answering machines, computers, printers, cable/satellite receivers, or any other device with an AC adaptor or transformer (that small plastic box attached to the plug). Some of these ghost loads can be using up to 30 watts. What to do? For sensitive electronics, purchase a surge protected power bar with a toggle switch. When you are planning not to use the devices for a few days, turn the switch off. Unplugging an electronic device may not be a viable option so be practical. Be aware that unplugging certain devices may reset programmable options and timers and we all know how much a pain it can be to reprogram! Next time you're shopping for a new electronic device or appliance, look for ones with energy-saving features and marked with an Energy Star label. These are your best bet for reducing ghost loads and saving electricity.