

# Energy Education Program Winter 2006 Newsletter



## Decorating & Energy Efficiency

This is the time of year to put up festive holiday lights both inside and out. The downside happens when the electric bill comes in and ends up being higher than usual. You don't need to have a darkened Christmas tree in order to afford to put presents under it though. Try out the new LED ("Light Emitting Diode") Christmas lights this holiday season.



LEDs are constructed from tiny solid-state chips similar to the chips in computers. These chips directly convert electricity to light without the use of a filament or glass bulb. Instead, the chips are encapsulated in solid plastic that can be made into a variety of shapes and sizes.

These lights are available for purchase at most stores that carry the old fashioned lights, and the cost is comparable. LED lights last much longer, don't get hot, are harder to break and save energy and money. The Department of Energy estimates LED lighting could reduce U.S. energy consumption for lighting by 29 percent by 2025!

## Seasonal Energy Tips

The largest user of energy in the average Northwest home is heating, so during the cold Oregon winter it is harder to keep your energy bills manageable.

"Passive Solar" heating takes into account your window positions and manages them to keep the cold out and the heat in. On sunny winter days, open curtains and blinds on south-facing windows. The sunshine will warm up the room and reduce your need to heat the house. East and west facing windows both gain and lose heat depending on the time of day. North facing windows always lose heat and you might consider thick heavy curtains to help keep northern windows from making the house as cold.



And remember...for every degree you turn down the heat you save \$3-\$5 a month.



## Dear Mr. Duct Tape Head Man...

We would like to welcome our new energy expert, Mr. Duct Tape Head Man, to the north coast. Mr. D.T.H.M. used to work for MacGyver Inc., but after an injury involving a very sharp paper clip and a flimsy sock he had to retire from such antics.

Mr. D.T.H.M. is an expert in keeping people warm on bitter cold days (but his cousin Mastic is a lot better at sealing ductwork). He is so knowledgeable that we have hired him here at the Community Action Team to answer your questions about saving energy while staying comfortable. Send in your questions and Mr. D.T.H.M. will know the answer!

Write Mr. Duct Tape Head Man at:  
364 9th Street Suite A.  
Astoria, OR 97103



## Upcoming Events

The Community Action Team Energy Education Program is in the process of ordering energy saving kits. When these come in, items people didn't receive previously at their energy education visit (low-flow showerhead, faucet aerators, water thermometer...) will be available. Items will be distributed via mail or drop-off.

## Seasonal Safety Tip

A Christmas message from the program: happy decorating, with just a word of caution. Wash your hands after installing your Christmas lights because the green cords contain minute amounts of lead.

## Product Testing: Shower Timer



The shower timer works like this: you put it in your shower with a little suction cup, and turn it every time you start a shower. When the sand in the little hour glass is finished falling, it means your energy efficient five minute shower is up. (Remember, if you take a bath instead you should try using 3 inches of water or less). But before I even took it to my house I thought I would try to suction cup it to the office refrigerator. The little hour glass had leaked out some sand and that had stuck to the suction cup, so the suction didn't work. The shower timer fell and broke. Therefore, this product testing didn't go well and the timer was destroyed within about 5 minutes of me experimenting with it. However, I am still convinced the theory is sound, especially if you have a family member that tends to lose track of time while in the shower. I am giving the product 3 stars for a great idea and theory, but it loses 2 stars because the particular timer we had was not built to withstand dropping it repeatedly.



★ Housing Rehabilitation & Weatherization: 1-800-955-1675 ★  
★ Energy Education: 1-800-325-8098 ★  
★ Energy Assistance Toll Free Number: 1-866-722-4951 ★  
★ [www.cat-team.org](http://www.cat-team.org) ★



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