

SECO News

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

How to lower your power bill

The best ways to cut energy consumption and save money

Adjust the thermostat —Thermostat settings are the primary cause of higher electric bills in Florida. Keep them lower in the winter and higher in the summer. For each degree above 68° F in the winter, and below 78° F in the summer, the energy usage is increased by as much as 10–12%. Thermostat settings should be 78° to 80° F for the A/C in summer and 65°–68° F for the heat in winter. Installation of digital programmable thermostats to regulate the temperature will greatly reduce the amount of energy used in the home because they allow you to set it and forget it. Heat pumps, in particular, will use more energy if the thermostat is raised in increments of more than 3° at a time in the winter because it will activate the back-up heat strips to bring up the temperature quickly.

Repair Leaky Ducts —Leaks in the duct work are amongst the largest energy wasters in most Florida homes, both in site built and mobile homes. Leaks are also prevalent in most homes over 10 years old. Leaks in the return duct work will pressurize the home and raise the supply temperature as well as introduce higher humidity into the system, cutting the energy efficiency rating by as much as 50%. Supply system leaks will send conditioned air outside and depressurize the home through the infiltration routes. These pressure differences increase both positive or negative air changes in homes and will extend the unit's running time, causing an average 22% increase in energy usage. New methods of sealing the duct connections with masking material are not expensive and will greatly reduce leakage and higher energy use.

Caulk & Weather-strip —The older a home gets the more the caulking and weather-stripping need attention and maintenance at least annually. Infiltration areas around doors, windows, and electrical outlets can work in conjunction with pressure changes inside the home to extend the heating and air conditioning unit (HVAC) running time and increase energy usage.

Open interior doors (if only one air return) —Most homes built prior to 1995 have only one air return duct, usually in the main part of the home. If internal room doors are closed during HVAC operation, those rooms will be pressurized from the fan force and the main part of the home will be depressurized, creating an imbalance in the system. The result is longer running time for the system and higher cost. Closing interior doors can increase the energy usage by 35–45%. Opening interior doors when the HVAC is in use preserves the HVAC balance. ■

CFLs save energy on lighting

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL) are significantly more energy efficient than incandescent light bulbs because they require less energy to provide the same amount of light. If every home in America replaced just one incandescent light bulb with an ENERGY STAR qualified CFL, it would save energy, save you money and, they last up to 10 times longer than incandescent light bulbs.

Plan to attend your Annual Meeting!
Saturday, March 27, 2010

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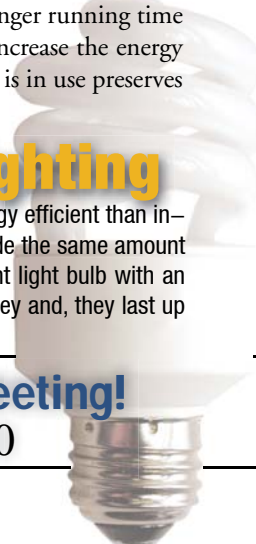
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Jim Duncan

CEO & General Manager



SECO's Board of Trustees will meet on Monday, February 22 at 2:00 p.m. in the Corporate Offices located at 330 South US Highway 301 in Sumterville, FL. A Trustees' meeting will also be held on March 29, 2010.





Notes from the Members:

GOD BLESS AND THANK YOU for your insert and information regarding this climate change hoax! I hope it will result in people letting their representatives hear from them loud and clear that cap & trade must not be passed and that the EPA must be reined in!

Lynn Barry

The Villages, Florida



I'd like to commend the management and staff at SECO for their always exemplary service and performance, something we've been able to rely on year after year.

I was especially moved this month however after reading the *SECO News*, to congratulate you for the honest and brave reporting on the terrible initiatives being forced on the American people by our destructive and calculating political leadership. Your reports on Copenhagen, Climategate and Cap and Trade are right on the mark and much to our dismay some 70% of the people in this country allow themselves to remain uninformed about these Freedom stealing lies.

Regretfully we'll have to wait until enough Americans figure out that these fallacies, and efforts like the Stimulus Plan and Health Reform are nothing but payoffs to politicians, lobbyists, special interest and entitlement groups that our Republic will be appreciated and restored. Sadly with the right initiatives we could have had this economic crisis well behind us by now but the villainization of capitalism and the refusal to grow the real economic stimulus of this country, like small business, continues to drive us to ruin. Your newsletter articles cut to the chase and provides the education on these issues that the mainstream media refuses to report, it's only by getting the truth out to the American people that we can save our great country. WELL DONE!

Tim Lafferty

Senior Vice President of Operations
DECCA at Oak Run
Ocala, Florida



Dear Sandi [Staton]: I just wanted to drop a note about the article and image you have in the recent SECO newsletter which came in the mail with my bill today. I have noticed over the last few years that SECO has a commitment to the environment and awareness to that environment...I applaud your efforts...Keep up the great writing.

Many thanks,

Doni Keene

Clermont, FL

tips & quips
about our
environment
and its
inhabitants

NATURE'S
reflections



BIRD WATCHING

America's favorite hobby


Americans enjoy watching birds. In fact, studies show one third of all adults in this country take time out of their busy lives to watch the birds. Although most bird watching is done from home, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports that more than 20 million of us travel at least a mile out of our way during the year to see them, and spend \$40 billion annually on gear, services, and trips related to the hobby of bird watching.

Birds contribute to our economy in more subtle ways, too. They eat up to half their weight each day in rodents, insects, weed seeds, and other pests. They also distribute beneficial plant seeds and pollinate flowers as they go about their daily activities. When forces begin to upset the environmental balance, they serve as important indicators that something should be done to correct it.

Florida is a bird lover's paradise. With more than 800 bird species in the nation, most of those are either native to Florida or visiting species that come here for the winter, or pass through our state on their way to points farther south – this is a great place for bird watching.

Our Great Florida Birding Trail, a 2000-mile, self-guided highway trail that unifies hundreds of birding sites throughout Florida adds to the possibilities for fantastic bird watching. Free guide booklets contain site descriptions, directions, and maps showcasing many wonderful birding opportunities. Even birds on the endangered, threatened or list of special concern are often spotted by amateurs. Information is available online at: www.floridabirdingtrail.com or by phone at (850)922-0664.

A field identification guide on Florida's birds makes them easier to recognize and identify. Many books are available to provide information specific to Florida, including historical anecdotes, photographs, illustrations and identification tips. In addition, a pair of binoculars enhances bird (and wildlife) watching and are necessary if you want to enjoy a closer look.

Whether you are visiting Florida or live here year round, take advantage of Florida's many unique opportunities to view different species of birds in their natural habitat and enjoy the rewarding hobby of bird watching. It's one hobby almost everyone can enjoy. 

– photo and column by Sandi Staton – sandi.staton@secoenergy.com