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1st Light Energy Offers Spring Energy Saving Tips for Consumers

Plainfield, NJ (March 21, 2011) -- With spring upon us, it's time to not only start enjoying longer periods of sunlight but also to start taking steps to conserve energy. 1st Light Energy, one of the leading solar energy firms in the country, knows full well that installing a solar energy system is a big step in offsetting energy costs, but also recommends steps consumers should take now to cut their energy bills and reduce their carbon footprint.

Following is a list of 10 steps consumers can take immediately to help lower their energy costs.

1. Get outside... and check on your house.

After a winter of hibernation, everyone is anxious to get outside. Make the most of the changing weather conditions by closely monitoring the exterior of your home. Most of New Jersey saw record-breaking snowfall this winter, and all of that snow can take a toll on your house. Look for anything that may need repair, including siding, windows, doors, gutters, foundation, and locations where wires, pipes, etc., enter the walls. Take note of anything that is chipped, cracked, broken or separated.

Small cracks or other holes that may have formed over the winter can be costly on many fronts – a one-inch crevice allows up to 30 quarts of water vapor to enter your home over the course of a season. Effectively sealing up and insulating your home will save you upwards of 30 percent on annual utility bills.

2. Adjust the thermostat before leaving

Turn down the thermostat 10-15% when no one is home. A heating or cooling unit running at full

capacity when a home is empty increases electric bills and wastes power. When no one is home, turning back the thermostat 10-15% will reduce heating and cooling bills by at least 10%.

3. Service heating and cooling units regularly

Routine servicing of units and air filters, conserves energy and extends the life of units. Changing dirty filters preserves nearly 5% of the overused energy and 175 pounds of CO₂ each year.

4. Wash your clothes in warm water

Washing clothes in warm water instead of hot, just twice a week saves about 500 pounds of CO₂ each year with an electric water heater and 150 pounds with gas.

5. Replace lanterns or other outdoor lamps with outdoor solar lights

You can purchase a variety of solar lights at your local hardware store, from lanterns to torches to ground lighting. Lights on a timer, floodlights or other types of common outdoor lighting can consume enormous amounts of energy – particularly if they're left on unnecessarily. Solar lights require no electricity to operate.

6. Tip: Install ceiling fans

Ceiling fans provide additional circulation in the summer and winter allowing heating and cooling units to consume less energy by enabling thermostats to be adjusted several degrees.

7. Regulate the temperature of your refrigerator

Refrigerators consume close to 20% of the entire electrical use in a home. Refrigerators should be set to 37 degrees and freezers at 3 degrees. Some models are equipped with energy saver switches which should be used for maximum power conservation. Additionally, always make sure the door is tightly shut and not left open when pouring drinks or opening food.

8. Plant trees to provide shade

Shade trees can significantly reduce temperatures around property and should be planted near windows when possible. Each tree is able to absorb close to 25 pounds of CO₂ directly from the air each year.

9. Reduce Leaks in windows and doors

Weather stripping in doorways and caulking around windows can reduce the occurrence of air leaks,

which can be costly. Most energy companies offer home energy audits to locate spots that are not properly insulated or energy efficient.

10. Install double glazed windows

When you replace older windows, use double glazed windows instead to protect the inside of a home from outside temperatures.

For more information on how solar energy can eliminate your electric bill call 1-866-83-SOLAR or visit: www.1stlightenergy.com for details.