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ENERGY AWARENESS BEGINS AT HOME

October is Energy Awareness Month and Frederick County Office of Environmental Sustainability has a number of activities to guide local residents. Recently I attended their monthly environmental awareness event and learned about the Watt Watchers rebate programs.

The office has a booth displayed in the Winchester Hall lobby, open M-F from 8:00am-4:30pm.

One easy and often overlooked way to save energy is to use small kitchen appliances. According to the U. S. Dept of Energy and Allegheny Power the typical wattage of various appliances is:

- Coffee maker = 900–1200
- Microwave oven = 750–1100
- Range = 12,000
- Toaster = 800–1400
- Toaster oven = 1225

For those not listed you can find the wattage stamped on the bottom or back of the appliance, or on the nameplate. I randomly checked various appliances and found the wattage to be:

- Blender = 330
- Crock pot = 215-250
- Electric skillet = 1400
- Kitchen Aid mixer = 300
- Quesadilla Maker = 900

The higher the kilowatts the greater the cost to operate. For appliances that have a range of settings, the power used will depend on the setting used. For instance, the higher the setting or temperature, the greater the wattage required.

Looking at these numbers, you can easily see it makes more sense to cook a casserole or roast a chicken in the toaster oven instead of the oven. That one behavior change results in 90% less energy use. Another is heating up water in the microwave. You can turn on the stove to heat water in that beautiful teakettle or you can use the microwave for one-tenth the energy. With energy bills at an all time high, it is wise to find new ways to prepare meals and drinks.

Take for example, the plug-in electric skillet, my personal all time favorite small appliance. Years ago, I invested in a high quality stainless steel model that I use practically every day. It is perfect for making eggs,

French toast and pancakes; toasted sandwiches, sautéing vegetables, a pot of soup or stew; and even baking a meatloaf. The plug in receptacle allows me to regulate the temperature more closely than the electric stove. An added bonus, it is simple to operate, so my sons can learn to cook. I am all in favor of an equal opportunity kitchen!

NOW is the ideal time to replace old appliances. Rebates are available for buying Energy Star models. Every Allegheny customer received a booklet in the mail, *13 little ways that add up to big savings for your home*. If you missed it, go to the Watt Watchers website link at <http://www.alleghenypower.com/EngConserv/MD/WattWatchers/ResEECMd.asp> to print rebate coupons. Potential savings - refrigerators \$50, freezers \$25, dishwashers \$25, clothes washers \$75, electric clothes dryers \$25, and air conditioners \$25.

IN ADDITION, rebates are also available for recycling old refrigerators and freezers, \$35 for each. To schedule pick up, call Allegheny Power at 1-877-270-3521 and they will have your old model hauled away and pay you for it. There is not a deal any sweeter than this and you have not even factored in the money you will save on your electric bill with your new energy efficient appliance.

Looking at appliance usage is just one way to save energy. Before winter is here, call Allegheny Power at 1-877-928-8928 and schedule a free home energy audit with a professional certified auditor. You will receive a free energy efficiency kit that contains compact florescent light bulbs (CFL's), a low flow showerhead, and a faucet air eater.

During these challenging economic times, every dollar counts, so replace large outdated appliances and use small appliances to prepare these delicious recipes.

CROCK POT BEEF VEGETABLE SOUP

1 pound round steak
2 cans beef broth
1 can tomatoes
1/2 cup diced carrots
1/2 cup diced celery
1/2 cup chopped onion
1 cup frozen green beans
1 cup frozen corn
1 cup canned pinto beans, including juice
2 bay leaves
1/2 teaspoon basil
1 tablespoon parsley

Place round steak in *Crock Pot* and cook for 4 hours on high temperature. Remove from Crock Pot and let cool. Chop steak into small pieces using knife or hand held food chopper. Wash and cut carrots, celery and onion. Place steak, beef broth, tomatoes, green beans, corn and pinto beans into electric skillet. Add diced fresh vegetables and bay leaf. Heat at 350°F or until boiling. Lower temperature to simmer and cook for 1 hour. Add basil and parsley the last 20 minutes of cooking.

To decrease sodium use no-salt added pinto beans and low sodium beef broth.

SPICY SALSA CHOPS

2 medium tomatoes, chopped
1/4 cup sliced red onion
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons lime juice
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
4 (1/2-inch thick) boneless pork loin chops

In large nonstick *electric skillet*, combine tomatoes, onion, brown sugar, salt, lime juice, garlic and crushed red pepper; mix well. Cook over medium heat until mixture comes to a boil. Add pork chops; spoon sauce over chops. Cook over medium-high heat for 5 minutes. Turn pork chops; cook an additional 5 minutes to 10 minutes or until pork is no longer pink. Yield: 4 servings.

BLENDER COLE SLAW

1 medium-sized cabbage
1 carrot, peeled
1/2 green pepper
1 slice of onion
3 tablespoons salad oil
1/3 cup vinegar
2 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1/2 teaspoon dry mustard
1 teaspoon celery salt

Quarter & core cabbage. Cut cabbage, carrot & green pepper into chunks & place in *blender* container. Cover with water & turn blender on High for about 5 seconds. Drain off water. Repeat until all ingredients are chopped. Combine remaining ingredients & blend until thoroughly mixed; pour over vegetables and toss. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

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