

COLUMBUS'S CURRENTS

Energy-Saving Projects for the Weekend Warrior

By Abby Berry

Are you a weekend warrior? If you're considering home improvement upgrades that save energy *and* money, we've got a few project ideas for you—all of which can be completed in a day or less!

Here are three energy-saving projects that you can easily tackle whether you're a weekend warrior pro or a DIY dabbler.

Get smart about home cooling and heating.

Cooling and heating your home typically account for a large portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats can help keep your cooling and heating costs in check, with ENERGY STAR®-certified models saving about 8% on annual energy costs.

Now that smart thermostats are more affordable (as little as \$70!), this simple upgrade makes for a fun, efficient weekend project. Smart thermostats offer a variety of bells and whistles, but the average model will allow you to set custom temperature schedules, adjust the settings from anywhere (from your phone), and over time, learn your cooling and heating preferences.

Your new smart thermostat will come with step-by-step instructions, but this project typically involves shutting off your HVAC at the breaker panel, disconnecting/removing the old thermostat, installing the new smart thermostat and connecting it to your home Wi-Fi.

Play it safe: remember to carefully read the installation instructions before you get started.

Go green and boost your greenery with a rain barrel.

If you've got a green thumb, you already know that rainwater is the best water for your outdoor plants. Rainwater is free of minerals, salts and treatment chemicals found in tap water or groundwater. It also contains helpful macronutrients to foster healthy plant growth.

Installing a rain barrel is an easy way to harvest large amounts of rainwater and reduce home water use—it's a win-win. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one rain barrel can save a homeowner 1,300 gallons of water annually.

Most residential rain barrels range in size from 50 to 90 gallons, so the size you purchase will depend on your watering needs.

The simplest way to install a rain barrel is positioning a plastic or wooden barrel directly under your gutter downspout. Basic piping may be required, but this is an easy way to harvest rainwater, and the barrel won't take up much space. Consider a cover for the top of your rain barrel to keep insects and small debris out of your harvested water.

Create fresh savings with a DIY clothesline.

If you have enough outdoor space available, installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs—in the summer, you can also save on cooling costs since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home (which makes your air conditioner work harder). Additionally, air drying is much gentler on fabrics and will keep your clothes and linens looking fresh longer.

You can create your own clothesline with two T-posts, wire and hook-and-eye turnbuckles. Depending on your soil, you may need a small amount of Quikrete to set the posts. Another option is installing the line between two trees. A typical load of laundry requires about 35 feet of line, so keep this in mind as you're determining the best location.

If an outdoor clothesline isn't an option, no sweat! You can easily create an indoor drying rack that folds to save space. Home improvement websites like thespruce.com and hgTV.com offer step-by-step tutorials for a variety of indoor clothes racks.

These are just a few simple ideas to help you save energy and money. So, get out there, roll up those sleeves and tackle a few projects.



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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



We're Concerned for Our Community

Cooperatives around the world operate according to the same set of core principles and values. One of these seven cooperative principles is “Concern for Community”. Putting this principle into action, we recently participated in a local high school career fair. We also helped provide financial support to a local cancer support group. The organization offers support to patients and their families facing cancer.



Pictured above: Joanna Costilla-Patient Advocate and Stephanie Pacheco-Board Member, Cancer Support of Deming and Luna County



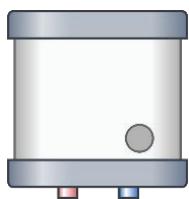
Pictured above: Lineman Apprentice-Frankie Gonzales and Porter Howard sharing information with students at Cesar Chavez Charter School.



Save big with our Water Heater Rebate Program

As a member of CEC, you can purchase a brand new 40- or 50-gallon water heater through our water heater program at a discounted price of \$50 for 40 gallons and \$60 for 50 gallons.

For more information about the program call 1-800-950-2667 or visit columbusco-op.org/rebates.



Our office will be closed
Tuesday, July 4th in
observance of
Independence Day!



Board Highlights

The Board of Trustees approved the various financial and operational reports for the month of April. Trustees reviewed and listened to reports on preliminary information related to the Cooperative's next four-year construction work plan. The work plan will provide us with estimated construction costs, as well as an overall construction program through the planning period. The plan will recommend changes that are necessary in order to provide continued efficient and adequate electric service to all the Cooperative's consumers. The work plan will also provide basic data for use in the preparation of the annual budget.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Looking for additional ways to save energy this summer? Your laundry room is a great place to start. Wash clothes with cold water, which can cut one load's energy use by more than half. Your washing machine will use the same amount of energy no matter the size of the clothes load, so fill it up when you can. When drying clothes, separate the heavier cottons. Loads will dry faster and more evenly if you separate heavier cottons like linens and towels from your lightweight clothing.

Source: Dept. of Energy



Emergency Response Number
1-800-228-0579

Toll-free Office Number
1-800-950-COOP (2667)