

Water Conservation

The EQ Committee is continuing to focus on the steps each of us can take in our lives and in our homes to protect our environment. The committee's goals this year are to provide current and accurate information, offer ideas and measures you can adopt in your home, and provide informed answers to questions regarding energy saving measures. **Last month the focus was on energy, this month we will look at water use in the home.**

1. Water can be conserved by merely using less water. The rate at which we use water is faster than nature replenishes it in the Ogallala water Aquifer which serves Missouri to the Rocky Mountains and Canada to Mexico.

*Older shower heads use 3-4 gallons of water a minute. Replacing shower heads and sink aerators with low flow units will reduce water consumption by half. Careful! Not all products that call themselves energy efficient are. Shower heads should be rated 1.5 psi.

*Use a shower timer and take a shorter shower.

*Place a tank balloon or other object in the toilet tank to reduce the amount of water flushed each time it is used. When replacing a toilet – select a water efficient model.

*Install a rain barrel to catch roof water for watering plants.

Hot water heaters waste a lot of energy in your home! Maintaining hot water wastes the greatest amount of energy in your home aside from heating and cooling. This is due to the standby losses, losses created as the water heats and cools all day, everyday even while not in use.

*Place an insulating blanket around the existing hot water heater, and insulate the hot water pipes along with 10 inches of the cold water pipe starting at the hot water heater is an extremely beneficially option.

* Set your hot water heater to maintain a water temperature of 120 degrees which is adequate to run all appliances in the home.

* Choose the highest efficiency hot water heater you can afford when replacement becomes necessary.

As we work to save energy and conserve there is some confusion on labels and logos.

What is Energy Star? The government created the Energy Star Label to enable the consumer to easily recognize products that meet or exceed government standards for energy efficiency.

* Choose Energy Star appliances. Be careful – not all Energy Star appliance wattage ratings are the same. Compare product stats.

Which appliance aside from the hot water heater is the worst energy efficiency offender? Older non-energy star refrigerators are particularly wasteful and require substantially more energy than newer ES models.

* It is a wise choice to send an older refrigerator to its early grave and replace it with an ES model. This will save you energy and money in the long run.

What is the most important home repair I can make to create an energy efficient house? Don't begin with window replacement - close them!

*There are many hidden air leakage paths in a typical home that equate to having a window standing open 24/7. Adding insulation alone does not

solve the problem. It simply places an air filter of sorts over the opening in which the cold air will still pass through. Air seal first and then insulate your home. Proper air sealing and insulating will greatly improve energy conservation by creating an envelope of protection around your home.

This article was written by league member and energy auditor **Kellye Markowski**. You are encouraged to contact her at **314-255-9922** with your questions regarding the state incentives. Please submit your home energy conservation topics for discussion or your energy conservation questions to the League office and we will address them in future ILR's.