



ENERGY SPOTLIGHT®

December 2009

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STAY COZY AND SAVE MONEY with our energy-saving tips

Heating and cooling account for about 56% of the energy use in a typical U.S. home, making it the largest energy expense for most homes.* By following some low-cost and no-cost tips, you can save energy and save on your gas bills this winter.

Install a programmable thermostat



Why heat your home when you're not there? You can save around 5-10% a year on your heating bill by simply turning your thermostat back 10°-15° for eight hours a day*, while you sleep or are away from home. You can do this automatically without sacrificing comfort by installing an

automatic setback or programmable thermostat. Programmable thermostats come with a variety of energy-saving features, most are easy to install and they are readily available at your local hardware store.

Upgrade your insulation

Insulation levels are specified by R-Values. In our region, ENERGY STAR® recommends that an attic's insulation has an R-Value from R38 to R60. Floor insulation should have an R-Value from R25 to R30 and wall cavities should have an R-Value from R13 to R15. Additional information on insulating your

home can be found at energystar.gov, under "Home Improvement."



Plug up the leaks

Your home is leaking energy which can end up costing you more to heat your home. Your local hardware store carries a selection of caulks, sealants and weather stripping that can help you fill in leaky gaps where heat continually escapes. Check your attic for holes around recessed lighting, electrical wiring and chimney chases.

In your basement, look for gaps around ductwork and plumbing pipes. On all levels of your home, check window and door frames, as well as electrical outlets and switches. By air sealing and adding adequate insulation to your home, you can expect to save 20% on your heating and cooling costs.**

Take good care of your furnace

With new furnaces costing \$2,000 or more, it makes good sense to schedule an annual "clean and check" inspection of your heating system with a qualified heating contractor to ensure your furnace is running properly. Replace air filters in your furnace every one to three months.

Clogged filters make the furnace work harder, wearing it down. Keeping a well-maintained furnace also ensures that harmful levels of carbon monoxide gas won't build up in your home, which can become a life-endangering situation if left unchecked.

For additional tips and to download our energy conservation guide, "Keeping the Warmth In and the Cold Out," visit nicorgas.com and click "Energy Efficiency Tips."

*Source: energysavers.gov **Source: energystar.gov

Serious about energy conservation?

Energy Depot is our free online home energy audit that will provide you with a comprehensive energy profile for your home. You can also try the Appliance Calculator that estimates the costs to operate various appliances and systems. Finally, the Energy Library is a comprehensive online resource designed

to provide you with home energy information using easy to understand terms and illustrations. You can easily access Energy Depot at nicorgas.com and then click "Home Energy Audit."



Help a neighbor in need stay warm this winter



We are in the third month of our Sharing Program "\$5 for 5" Campaign, asking our customers to commit to helping those in need by donating \$5 per month for 5 months. As we approach the coldest winter months, the need for home heating as well as the need for your donation is greater than ever. Administered by The Salvation Army, the Sharing Program provides one-time annual grants of up to \$450 to qualified

residential customers, which is used to assist them with paying their natural gas bill. In addition to donations received, Nicor Gas contributes \$175,000 to the program. Please help bring the gift of warmth to those in need. Simply check a contribution option on your bill stub and add the amount to your total bill for the remaining four months of the campaign.

Thank you for your generosity!

Energy By Design A Visual Arts Contest for Students

Calling all teachers! Are you interested in teaching your students about energy efficiency while competing for valuable prizes? If so, then Energy by Design is for you!

Energy by Design is a poster contest developed by Nicor and the National Energy Foundation for children grades K-8 designed to combine students' artistic talent with the ability to portray how to use energy efficiently. There are three grade categories – K-2, 3-5 and 6-8.

Nicor provides the materials – your job is to direct and motivate the students to produce a beautiful, unique interpretation of what energy efficiency means to them. Entries will be judged on the students' ability to clearly and accurately communicate an energy efficient/green message.

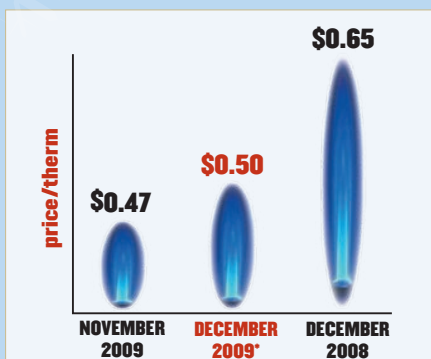
The student grand prize winners will get a \$1,000 savings bond, pizza party for their class and a

prize pack filled with fun, age-appropriate prizes. Teachers of the grand prize winners will receive a \$1,000 classroom grant!

To enter, visit energybydesign.org where you will find information on eligibility requirements, how to order materials and judging criteria. Entries must be postmarked before February 5, 2010, so be sure to get started today!



December Natural Gas Cost



Every month, Nicor Gas files a gas supply charge with the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC). It is the price customers pay for gas purchased from Nicor Gas during that month. As a regulated utility, Nicor Gas does not profit from the sale of natural gas. The price we pay for gas is passed on to our customers without markup. Visit nicorgas.com/gascost for energy efficiency tips, historical natural gas price information and home energy audit tools that will help you manage your natural gas usage and keep your costs down.

*At press time, this was the price Nicor Gas filed with the ICC. Under ICC rules, the price may be changed up until the first of the month in which it is effective.



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