

Enright Ridge Eco-Village Ridge Runner

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Winter Money and Energy Saving Measures by Beth O'Hara

These are all measures I've used to help save money and energy. I'm sure at least some of them will be useful to others in the neighborhood. I've divided them into free and low cost suggestions.

Free

Move furniture and other items away from furnace vents and return air vents so that heat can circulate and the room feels warmer.

Open the curtains and blinds on the south and west sides of the house on sunny days to allow the sun's heat into the house and then close the curtains and blinds after sunset.

Set the water heater to 120 degrees. Lower is even better. For each 10 degree reduction, you'll save 3-5% on water heating energy.

Use cold water to wash clothes and rinse dishes. Only run full loads so you don't waste energy.

Use the energy saver settings on the refrigerator and dishwasher.

Turn off lights when leaving a room.

Set the thermostat to 68 degrees when you're home and 55 degrees when you go to bed or are away. 65 degrees when at home is even better.

Use cold water as often as possible to avoid causing the water heater to run unnecessarily.

Air-dry clothes when possible.

Close the heating vents in unused rooms.

Check the dryer vent. Mine was full of lint, making the dryer work harder. I just opened the vent on the outside and pulled the lint out.

Low Cost

Clean the furnace filter each month so that the furnace doesn't have to work as hard. If your furnace uses replacements, you can get replacement filters fairly cheaply. Be sure to check the size before you go to the hardware store. This is a very easy way to have a more efficient furnace.

Put a water heater blanket on the water heater. This is simple. You just wrap the blanket around and tape it in place. They cost about \$15. This will save you 4-10% on water heating costs.

Install fluorescent light bulbs in the light fixtures you use the most. The bulbs cost about \$6 for one, or \$10 for a pack of 4. They have improved greatly in the last few years, and seem much like regular bulbs. I don't notice a difference. This can save you up to \$90/year in electricity per bulb.

Keep the thermostat turned back and use a space heater in the area you will be in. This is nice when I am sitting in the living room and feel chilly. Space heaters are available for around \$30. Be sure to turn the heater off when you leave the room.

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Enright Energy Group by Deborah Jordan

The Enright Energy group (we haven't settled on another name yet) would like to help everyone on Enright save money by reducing energy consumption. In order to do this, we are focusing on:

1. Sharing information and support for home energy goals such as efficiency, use of alternatives (eg. solar hot water), grants, audits
2. Encouraging and supporting Enright Ridge residents through a newsletter, neighborly sharing, and presentations. One goal would be to help all residents insulate their houses.
3. Possibly organizing some demonstration workshops.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 4th, at 7pm at 601 Enright Ave. (Deborah and Bill's) Join the fun!

Coffeehouse by Lydia Stec

The committee working on purchase of the building at the end of the street (what has been dubbed the anchor building) has met with the realtor and owner. This meeting resulted in a walkthrough, revealing a building in good condition. I'd like to say, based on what we saw, "Hey, we are so doing that coffeehouse!" The next step is to meet with a contractor to determine the approximate costs to renovate, a process we are hoping to begin soon.

The next meeting date has not been scheduled. For more information, please contact Lydia Stec.

Hilltop Co-op by Beth O'Hara

The Hilltop Co-op purchases items in bulk through United Natural Foods. This is the same company Wild Oats orders from, and many items are less expensive through the co-op. We order once every 4 weeks. The next order date is January 16.

If you would like to join or for more information, contact Deborah Jordan or Beth O'Hara.

Preserving and Improving Housing by Jim Schenk

The committee for the preservation and improvement of housing recently met with a contractor regarding the cost to repair and upgrade the foreclosed properties on the street. They are also currently in negotiations to purchase these homes. As this is a work in progress, there is not necessarily a significant amount of information to share at the current time. Look to future newsletters for more information.

The next meeting date has yet to be decided. For more information, please contact Jim Schenk.

Promoting the Street by Eileen Schenk and Lydia Stec

The committee assigned the task of promoting the street has had a few events in the works.

First, there was an event celebrating Winter Solstice held Wednesday, December 21 from 6-7:30 PM. This involved carolers and luminaries. The luminaries were provided for free (thanks to Lydia Stec) and distributed by the families who were hosts for the collage project. The luminaries were lit between 6 and 6:15 and caroling began at 6:30. Because of the large group of carolers, the celebration ended at around 7:30 with hot chocolate and cookies at the Earth Center.

Secondly, there are continuing plans for creating a progressive dinner, tentatively scheduled for February 11. This event, which will have a Valentine's Day theme, is one in which someone volunteers to provide space and/or food for each of a variety of meal courses. If you are interested in hosting for a main dish, dessert, or other portion of dinner, please contact Eileen Schenk or Lydia Stec.

The next meeting will be held sometime in January. For more information, please contact Eileen Schenk or Lydia Stec.

As with any ongoing project, the Enright Ridge Eco-Village can only benefit from having more participation and input. Even if you haven't been involved before now, you are welcome and encouraged to come to any meetings or join any committees which interest you and share your views of how to improve your neighborhood.