

Daily Southtown

Being 'green' saves 'green'

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There was a time when most people thought “being green” was something you did on Earth Day. That was long before we got slammed by record-high heating bills, electric rate shock, and \$3-plus per gallon prices at the pump.

Now, it’s clear that simple steps such as using energy-efficient light bulbs and turning them off when you leave the room—the kind of stuff frugal parents taught us—are not just nice thoughts. They’re necessities to help all homes save money.

That’s why CUB has launched a “Get Green” pledge campaign to get Illinois households to promise to use at least one Compact Fluorescent Light bulb (CFL), the corkscrew bulbs that use 75 percent less energy. You may have heard of similar pledges, but the payback for this one goes beyond cutting your electric bills.

Take CUB’s pledge and you qualify for quarterly drawings to win up to 50 energy-efficient bulbs for your home. Even better, the community or Chicago neighborhood with the largest percentage of pledging households will win 10,000 bulbs. To pledge, go to our new “Get Green” webpage, at www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org, which is loaded with money-saving energy-efficiency tips.

One CFL may not seem like a big deal. However,

the federal government estimates that if every American home used one such bulb, it would save enough energy to light more than 3 million homes for a year and prevent the amount of pollution released by 800,000 cars—not to mention cut annual energy costs by some \$600 million.

CUB’s “Get Green” page features a “CFL Calculator” that can show you just how those national savings translate to your own home. For example, our calculator shows that replacing 10 energy-guzzling incandescent bulbs with CFLs in light fixtures you use about four hours a day could save you between \$95 and \$114 a year. It also would reduce the amount of pollution created by driving your car about four to five times between Rockford and Cairo.

Figures like that aren’t lost among more than 1,500 people who have taken CUB’s “Get Green” pledge since it started just two months ago.

“It doesn’t take a rocket scientist...to figure out that deciding to replace standard bulbs with CFLs is the smartest thing to do,” wrote Michael in a testimonial to CUB. “It saves money, it saves money, it saves money!!!”

Sandy adds: “This should be a no-brainer for everyone. To be able to help the environment AND save money is wonderful.”

As pundits discuss recession and our power companies push for rate hikes, we’re all reminded how much we need to invest in energy efficiency. CUB’s pledge is one more way to protect the green on our plant as well as the “green” in our pocketbooks.