

ComEd users save energy, win points on CUB site

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ROCKFORD — An new online application can help consumers take the shock and awe out of their electricity bills.

Citizens Utility Board, an Illinois watchdog group, recently unveiled its Energy Saver program. Consumers can use the free site to find specific ways to curb energy costs, from installing solar panels and painting roofs white to changing light bulbs and drying clothes in cold water.

Consumers can also link the site to their ComEd account to track monthly progress and win rewards for cutting their bills.

“CUB Energy Saver is like having an energy specialist working for you 24-7,” spokesman Jim Chilsen said. “CUB has always argued that energy efficiency shouldn’t be about sacrifice. That’s a myth. It’s about doing the same or more and using less.”

CUB launched a pilot version of the site a few months ago, and users have seen an average of 6 percent — or \$200 a year — in savings on their electricity bills.

Around 50 users in Rockford so far have saved more than \$5,000 so far, CUB says.

The program is a partnership between CUB, software and marketing firm Efficiency 2.0 and RecycleBank, which rewards users with points to redeem for consumer goods.

The rewards program is only open to ComEd customers and limited to the first 10,000 registered users.

Communities and groups can also register and compete with one another to win prizes for the best energy savings.

CUB has long made a name for itself fighting utility rate hikes, but it also tries to help consumers with tips for lowering their phone, gas and electricity bills. The online program is the next step, Chilsen said.

“In about a year, we’re going to be able to say how much we’ve cut electric bills,” he said. “It’s good for the planet, it’s good for your pocketbooks.”

ComEd customers need to be registered on the utility’s site and use that name and password to get the full benefit of the CUB service. But those who don’t want to link to their ComEd account can still get a range of suggestions.

ComEd is not officially a partner in the program, but spokesman Jeff Burdick said it supports all efforts to reduce energy use.

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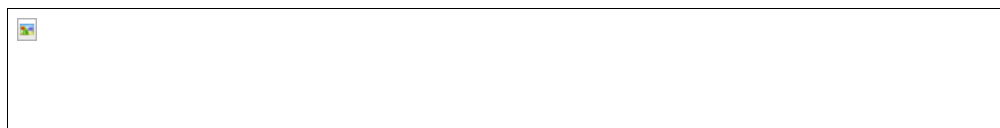
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