

Bart Skalsky Wins Biggest Saver Grand Prize

Fifty Crow Wing Power members participated in our Biggest Saver Contest this summer. The contest was open to all residential cooperative members with a goal to reduce electric use and bills. The winner was determined by the highest percentage of electricity saved this summer versus last summer. We're pleased to announce, Bart Skalsky from Pine River was the winner, reducing his electric use by 56% over 2008 summer use.

Bart resides alone and through a combination of simple changes and some careful investments, turned his home into a model of energy efficiency. He was able to reduce his average electric usage by 56%. Here are some of things he did:

Inventory

Bart made a list of everything on the property that uses power. From this, he made a plan to address the “energy hogs” he found. As an example, he unplugged the extra refrigerator in the garage and moved its contents to the house refrigerator. He also disconnected seldom-used appliances, like the computer and the entertainment center to reduce “stand-by” power.

Changed Habits

Bart put a lot of thought into changing his daily routine to use the least amount of energy whenever possible. He would try to cook more than one meal at a time since the stove was already hot. When cooking, he kept lids on pots to hold the heat in, and didn't open the oven too much to check on the food. And, he used the microwave or the barbeque grill whenever possible.

The cool summer helped everybody lower their air conditioning cost, but Bart did more. He closed the window shades during the day to keep out the sun and ran the ceiling fans instead of the air conditioner. For the few days he needed the air, he adjusted the thermostat higher so it ran less.

Water Savings

Bart also realized that using water also consumes energy, so he went on a water saving campaign. He tried to think of each drop of water as precious, to be used as efficiently as possible. He took shorter showers and installed a water-conserving shower head. He added an insulation blanket to his existing water heater and adjusted its temperature down. He installed a water-conserving toilet and a larger pressure tank so the pump now runs less.

Bart showed us that a common-sense approach of tweaking wasteful energy habits and some targeted upgrades can be a winning combination in dramatically reducing your energy consumption.

Even though Bart was the \$200 grand prize winner, all fifty contestants are winners. As a group, they reduced their electric use by over 20,000 kWhs. We encourage all cooperative members to conserve energy. Together we can make a difference in that conserving energy is the best way to avoid added power plants and reduce your ever-increasing costs.

Go to www.Togetherwesave.com for helpful tips on saving energy in your home.