

ENERGY Connection

October 2010



Beware Of Energy-Eating Phantoms And Vampires In Your Home

Take a look around your home; you may have vampires and phantoms lurking right around the corner taking a bite out of your pocketbook.

Phantom or vampire electric usage come from any device that consumes electricity when turned off. Some devices, like your TV or cable box, use standby power to make life more convenient and need to stay plugged in to avoid running a time-consuming set-up program. Others – cell phone chargers, microwave and toaster ovens, tool battery chargers, computers, printers, scanners and broadband or cable modems – can be plugged into power strips that are easily and safely turned on and off.

Research states that up to eight percent of a home's energy usage goes to phantom loads. The average home in the U.S. uses around 11,000 kilowatt hours of per year, meaning 880 kilowatt hours are consumed by phantoms and vampires. At 10 cents per kilowatt hour, parasitic loads cost customers around \$88 per year.

How can you find those sneaky parasitic devices? Turn off the lights one evening and go from room to room, making note of the lights you see shining in the dark. Then, decide which of those devices can be safely plugged into power strips.

Each phantom or vampire eliminated will result in more dollars in your wallet.



Black Hills Power will soon offer you, our customers, the convenience of receiving and paying your bill online. This environmentally friendly approach to billing will allow us to better serve you.

Simplicity.

Dependability.

Security.

eBill.

Look for details soon at www.blackhillspower.com and in future bills.

You may have noticed that your bill was printed on white paper this month instead of tan. Please be assured that all the useful information you are accustomed to seeing on the statement is still there, only the paper color has changed.

Weatherizing Your Home Before Winter Is As Easy As 1-2-3

The average house – even a well-insulated house – contains cracks and gaps between building materials that allow outside air and humidity to enter. In the winter, those gaps may make the house drafty and chilly. And a leaky house wastes energy throughout the year.

Here are a few easy steps you can take to weatherize your home as winter creeps into our region.

1. Insulate. Insulation added to outside walls, floors and attics is one of the most practical and cost-effective ways to cut energy costs. A water heater blanket and hot water pipe insulation will also help with energy savings.
2. Seal cracks around windows and doors. Caulking and weather-stripping windows, doors and seams on sliding glass or French doors that lead

outside are easy and inexpensive ways to keep heat in and cold out. Easy-to-use window film kits can cut cold air leaking around windows that don't seal well.

3. Maintain your heating system. Change the filter to your furnace monthly and schedule a check of your heating system each year to prevent breakdowns and unwanted energy costs.

Black Hills Power Sponsored events

- Nov. 19-20 Festival of Trees
Rapid City, 343-7262
- Nov. 22 Love Inc. Banquet
Rapid City, 718-5683
- Nov. 25-26 Thanksgiving Holiday
BHP Offices Closed
- Nov. 26 Old Tyme Hill City Christmas
Hill City, 574-2368
- Nov. 26 Newcastle Parade of Lights
Newcastle, Wyo.,
307-746-2739
- Nov. 27-28 Storybook Island
Holiday Lights
Storybook Island,
Rapid City, 342-6357
- Nov. 27 Festival of Lights Parade
Rapid City, 343-1744

Inspect Holiday Lights And Displays For Worn Or Cracked Cords, Bad Connections

Soon, the holiday season will be upon us, and many will be decorating with electric lights and decorations for the holidays. To ensure that your holiday season is safe from electrical hazards, follow these safety tips.

- Read and follow the instructions. Before putting up decorations, be sure to read and follow the manufacturers' instructions for installation and maintenance of all decorative electrical products.

- Use decorations certified by a testing laboratory. Use indoor and outdoor lights and decorations certified by a recognized independent testing laboratory, such as Underwriter's Laboratories (U.L.).

- Outdoors. Only use lights and decorations that are certified for outdoor use.

- Inspect lights, decorations. Carefully inspect each decoration to make sure it is in good working condition. Replace any lights or decorations that have cracked, frayed or loose wires or loose connections. It could cause a serious electrical shock or start a fire.

- Don't over-extend holiday lights. Never connect more than three light strings together. Light strings with screw-in bulbs should have no more than 50 bulbs connected together.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International

Black Hills Power Supports United Way

As part of Black Hills Power's mission to "Improve Life With Energy", hundreds of employees volunteer and donate to give to the United Way of the Black Hills.

"Black Hills Power and Black Hills Corp. give more to the United Way than any other business in Rapid City," said Renee Parker, United Way executive director. "We're very grateful for their commitment to the United



Way, and continued efforts to help our community," she added.

Last year, Black Hills Power, Black Hills Corp and its employees donated \$195,000 to the United Way of the Black Hills, and had 32 employees volunteer at the annual Day of Caring.