

# ENERGY Connection

September 2010



## Energy Efficiency Awareness Day October 2 at Rushmore Mall

Black Hills Power and Montana-Dakota Utilities will again partner on the fifth annual Energy Efficiency Awareness Day, which is being held Saturday, October 2, at the Rushmore Mall in Rapid City.

By bringing Energy Efficiency Awareness Day to the Rushmore Mall, customers will be able to talk with industry professionals

who specialize in renewable energy, weatherization, the design and building of energy efficient homes and businesses, and efficient ways to use electric, gas and water resources.

“Black Hills Power offers Energy Efficiency Awareness Day as an opportunity for customers to learn about energy efficient

equipment, technology and services,” Mutch Usera, director of energy services and external affairs at Black Hills Power, said. “Plus, we offer customers the opportunity to learn weatherization and conservation practices for their homes and businesses that will result in energy savings.”

## Energy Audit Can Identify Ways to Improve Energy Efficiency

Looking for ways to improve the energy usage of your home or business? An energy audit may provide the answer. An energy audit is often used to identify cost-effective ways to improve the comfort and energy efficiency of a home or building.

An audit involves taking a look at the construction and condition of a home or building to find areas that may need an upgrade or repair. Simple weatherization practices like caulking and weather-

stripping of doors and windows can prevent air leakage, while insulation can improve comfort levels year-round.

Other aspects of an audit take into account energy usage by appliances, electronics like televisions, stereo systems and computers, and energy “phantoms” or “vampires” like cell phone chargers and cable boxes.

Customers can complete a free easy-to-use energy audit by visiting the



Home Energy Suite at [www.blackhillspower.com](http://www.blackhillspower.com). Black Hills Power also offers a basic walk-through audit for electric heat and demand control customers at no charge.

# Keep Children Safe While Traveling To And From School

Research shows that school-age children are actually nine times more likely to sustain an unintentional injury – whether on the playground or in school -- than to be the victim of violence while at school. An estimated 2.2 million children ages 14 and under are injured in school-related accidents each year, according to the National SAFE KIDS Campaign.

Accidents can be prevented if parents are on the lookout for potential hazards. To help you keep your children safe, here are some safety tips from SAFE KIDS, the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

## Traveling to and from school:

- Plan a walking route to and from school or the bus stop, using the most direct route with the fewest street crossings and intersections with crossing guards. Walk the route with your child beforehand.
- Teach your child to never talk to strangers or accept rides from strangers.

- Be sure your child walks to and from school with a sibling, friend or neighbor.
- Teach your child to obey all traffic signals, signs and traffic officers, especially in bad weather.
- When driving kids, drop them off as close to school as possible.
- If your child bikes to school, make sure he or she wears a helmet that meets safety standards.
- If your child rides a scooter to school, make sure he or she wears a helmet, sturdy shoes and knee and elbow pads
- Teach children to arrive at the bus stop early, stay out of the street and wait until the bus comes to a complete halt before boarding.
- Remind your children to stay seated at all times and keep their heads and arms inside the bus while riding.
- Tell your child not to bend down in front of the bus to tie shoes or pick up objects, as the driver may not see him before starting to move.



# Prepare Now To Save Energy This Winter

As Black Hills Power customers prepare for the approaching winter months, it is important to remember that energy conservation can be a key element to keeping your energy costs low.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, 43 percent of your utility bill goes toward heating and cooling. No matter what kind of heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system you have in your house, you can save money and increase your comfort by properly maintaining and upgrading your equipment.

By combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with appropriate insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings, you can cut your energy use for heating and cooling from 20 to 50 percent.

## Energy Saving Tips for You:

- Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable in the winter and as high as is comfortable in the summer.
- Clean or replace filters on furnaces once a month or as needed.
- Clean warm-air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators as needed; make sure they're not blocked by furniture, carpeting or drapes.
- Turn off kitchen, bath, and other exhaust fans within 20 minutes after you are done cooking or bathing; when replacing exhaust fans, consider installing high-efficiency, low-noise models.
- During the heating season, keep the draperies and shades on your south-facing windows open during the day to allow the sunlight to enter your home

and closed at night to reduce the chill you may feel from cold windows.

- An annual tune-up of your heating system can save you money on your utility bill and reduce the chance of an unexpected breakdown.

Black Hills Power offers a free Heat Loss analysis to BHP customers interested in receiving an energy cost comparison for your new or existing home. The cost comparison demonstrates electric operational cost savings of specific water heaters and heating and cooling systems installed in a home. Visit [www.blackhillspower.com/lossgain.htm](http://www.blackhillspower.com/lossgain.htm) for more information, or call Black Hills Power.

## BHP District Offices

Belle Fourche: 605-723-2460

Custer: 605-673-4455

Deadwood: 605-722-2420

Hot Springs: 605-745-3120

Newcastle, Wyo: 307-746-2726

Newell: 605-456-2896

[www.blackhillspower.com](http://www.blackhillspower.com)

Rapid City: 605-721-2660

Spearfish: 605-722-2400

Sturgis: 605-720-2440