

Energy Efficient Gift Ideas for You

Gift Ideas That Will Save Your Family Money

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IF YOU'RE SCRATCHING YOUR HEAD THINKING OF gifts for those on your holiday lists, why not consider practical gifts that can yield years of energy savings?

Granted, if the people on your list are looking for something small, shiny and in a velvet box, these ideas might not be for you, but they do provide some thought-provoking suggestions.

For the Gourmet

If shiny new kitchen appliances have been on your spouse's wish list, purchasing that new stainless kitchen set might actually pay for itself, if you take into account future energy savings.

Consider this: a 19 to 21.4 cubic foot refrigerator manufactured between 1990 and 1992 will use about 1,271 kilowatt hours a year, according to ENERGY STAR®. If you're paying 10 cents a kilowatt

hour for electricity, your annual operating costs will run about \$127 a year. However, upgrade to an ENERGY STAR-

rated model and you'll slash your operating costs to about \$41 a year.

Replacing a dishwasher manufactured before 1994 with an ENERGY STAR qualified dishwasher can save you more than \$30 a year in utility costs.

An ENERGY STAR qualified clothes washer can save you \$550 in operating costs over its lifetime compared to a regular clothes washer.

That family refrigerator accounts for about 6 percent of the average home's annual energy bill. Dishwashing and clothes washing and drying account for another 12 percent.

For the Hunter

Looking for a gift for the avid outdoorsman in your life? Take a look at that large chest-style freezer that stores the fruits of those hunting and fishing expeditions.

A pre-1980 large, chest-style freezer (think those above 24.5 cubic feet) will use about 1,880 kwh annually



and cost approximately \$180 a year to run. Upgrading to an ENERGY STAR model will reduce operating costs to less than \$50 a year. So, based on a \$130 a year savings, it will only take less than seven years to pay for the new freezer with just energy savings alone.

(For some pre-holiday fun, check out ENERGY STAR's Refrigerator Retirement Savings Calculator at <http://www.energy-star.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=refrig.calculator>. The calculator allows you to input information about your current refrigerator or freezer and your electric rate to determine what type of savings you can expect from upgrading those appliances.)

For the Gadget Guy or Gal

For the technophile on your shopping list, consider a solar-powered emergency cell phone charger. Some flashy models also sport a bright LED flashlight. For at home use, an outlet strip with an off switch will help avoid phantom loads drawn by chargers that are plugged in but not actively charging a phone. But, they've got to remember to flip the switch to get the savings.

For the Sports Enthusiast

Get your sports enthusiast ready for the big game with a new television.

Televisions account for 2 percent to 4 percent of a home's annual energy costs.

Starting in November 2008, a new, much more stringent ENERGY STAR specification for TVs will be effective that includes requirements for both standby and active (when they're on) modes. TVs that earn the ENERGY STAR label under these requirements will be up to 30 percent more efficient than nonqualified models. Manufacturers qualified their models ahead of the Nov. 1, 2008, effective date.

Make sure to do your homework – there are energy differences between Plasmas and LCD. An added bonus: upgrading to a new digital-ready television will mean you won't need a converter box when Feb. 17, 2009, rolls around – the date that all broadcasters must switch from an analog to a digital signal.

Analog televisions will still work after 2009, but you will need a converter.

For Around the Home

While the most energy-efficient method of clearing snow from your driveway might be giving your teenager a shovel, Toro's Power Shovel – an electric shovel – offers an alternative.

The manufacturers say the lightweight, electric shovel is a great gift for any homeowner, because the machine does the work for you, tackling snow up to 6-inches deep on any hard surface. They recommend the shovel for cleaning snow from patios, decks and walkways also for lighter snowfalls when your snow removal service doesn't cover the job or for clearing



areas where a larger snowthrower won't reach.

The Power Shovel weighs 13 pounds. And, because the product does not require gas or oil, the manufacturers claim it is eco-friendly and maintenance free. It has a suggested retail price of \$99. Look for the Toro Power Shovel at select Toro dealers and large retailers.

For the DIYer

Direct your family's do-it-yourselfer to www.touchstoneenergysavers.com for an online home energy audit. Armed with information about your home and your family's energy use, your DIYer will be able to determine how to improve your home's energy efficiency. For under the tree, give the DIYer caulk, cans of spray foam and batts of insulation so he or she is ready to implement home improvements recommended by the audit and watch the savings come in.

Stocking Stuffers

Looking for stocking stuffers? There's a whole host of items under \$10 to consider.

- Compact fluorescent light bulbs – These energy efficient light bulbs use about a quarter of the electricity of a regular incandescent bulb to deliver the same amount of light. They save more than \$40 in electricity costs and last 10 times longer than standard bulbs. Changing the 10 most used lights in your home to CFLs would save \$400 during the bulb's life cycle.

- Cans of spray foam – While not an ideal gift for youngsters, the holiday break could be made into a fun scavenger hunt of places in your home that could benefit from being sealed up. While the kids can help identify the leaks, adults should do the actual spraying of the foam.

- Clothes pins and a drying rack – Bypassing the family dryer can save \$45 a year in the family budget.

