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Turn over a new leaf on New Year's Day

KCP&L and regional experts provide tips for going green in 2009

Kansas City, Mo. (Dec. 26, 2008) – Make a New Year's resolution that you can actually keep this year: make a pledge to become green.

KCP&L and regional organizations, such as Bridging the Gap, Mid-America Regional Council and the Sierra Club, provide practical advice on how people can take the first step in living green in 2009. All it takes is adopting a few simple practices.

Make the switch to CFLs

The public has a misconception about what it means to go green, said Kevin Bryant, vice president of Energy Solutions at KCP&L.

"It doesn't mean you have to make a large monetary or time investment," Bryant said. "Start out by making small adjustments and advance from there. For example, you can switch out a standard light bulb with an energy efficient light bulb that uses 75 percent less energy and lasts about 6,000 hours."

According to Energy Star, if a household replaces one light bulb with a compact fluorescent light, it could save \$30 in energy costs and prevent 400 pounds of greenhouse emissions over the life of the bulb.

Do away with bottled water

By making a \$5 to \$10 investment in a reusable, washable water bottle, you will not only save money over the long term, but also help eliminate the 860 million bottles that are thrown away each week, said Kristin Riott, director of community outreach at Bridging the Gap.

"This New Year's, go back to the tap," said Riott. "If you are concerned about the quality of your tap water, your municipal water company can supply you with information on standards and current test results. If you still have doubts, use a filter."

Reduce stress from morning commute

Would you spend two weeks of your time commuting to work? You already do.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, Americans spend 100 hours commuting to work each year.

David Warm, executive director of the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) suggests evaluating environmentally friendly commuting alternatives, such as carpooling, vanpooling or public transportation.

Turn over a new leaf- 2

“Sharing a ride with a spouse, friend or coworker once a week can help alleviate traffic congestion, and reduce air pollution and energy you consume,” said Warm.

Want to know how to get started? MARC’s RideShare program is a free, publicly funded commuter service designed to inform people about commuting alternatives (www.marc.org/rideshare). Carpool Connection is a matching service that helps commuters find other people whose schedules and locations match theirs (marc.greenride.com/en-US).

Start the new year with a simple, green plan

“Sometimes it’s the small things that can make a sizeable difference,” said Melissa Hope, Sierra Club, associate regional representative in Missouri.

Hope suggests performing a home energy audit, installing a programmable thermostat and unplugging the second refrigerator being used only to cool a few incidental items such as beer or soda.

KCP&L offers several programs that can help customers stick to their green New Year’s resolutions:

- With **Home Performance with Energy Star** program, Missouri customers can receive rebates of up to \$600 to offset costs of a home energy audit.
- **Energy Optimizer** program provides qualifying customers with a free, Honeywell programmable thermostat that helps control energy costs.
- **CoolHomes** program offers instant rebates up to \$850 through participating HVAC dealers toward the purchase of a new energy-efficient A/C or heat pump.

For more information, go to www.kcpl.com.

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