

ENERGY STAR program can save localities money

THE ENERGY STAR label is one of the most visible, best known “green” symbols in America. A joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy, ENERGY STAR helps consumers, including local governments, save money and protects the environment by promoting use of energy efficient products and practices.

EPA introduced ENERGY STAR in 1992 as a voluntary labeling program designed to identify and promote energy-efficient products to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Computers and monitors were the first products to carry the label. EPA expanded the label over the next three years to include office equipment products and residential heating and cooling equipment.

In 1996, EPA partnered with the Department of Energy for particular product categories. The ENERGY STAR label is now affixed to major appliances, office equipment, lighting, electronics used at home and at work, and more. EPA has also extended the label to cover new homes, as well as commercial and industrial buildings.

Through its partnerships with more than 12,000 private and public sector organizations, ENERGY STAR delivers the technical information and tools those organizations and consumers – including local governments – need to choose energy-efficient solutions and best management practices.

Over the past decade, ENERGY STAR has been a driving force behind the more widespread use of such technological innovations as efficient fluorescent lighting, power management systems for office equipment,

and low standby energy use. Local governments in all corners of Virginia make use of these and other innovations daily.

Recently, soaring energy prices have dominated not only the news, but conversations around office water coolers, too. The ENERGY STAR program provides a roadmap for reducing energy use. It provides a

trustworthy label on more than 50 product categories (and thousands of models) for the home and office.

These products deliver the same or better performance as comparable models while using less energy and saving money. ENERGY STAR also provides easy-to-use

home and building assessment tools so that homeowners and building managers can start down the path to greater efficiency and cost savings.

The results are adding up. ENERGY STAR was responsible for preventing 40 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions in 2007 alone – equivalent to the annual emissions from 27 million vehicles. The monetary savings in 2007? More than \$16 billion in utility bills.

Savings are on track to nearly double again in 10 years as more households, businesses and organizations rely on ENERGY STAR for guidance on investing in energy-efficient products, practices and policies. The 2007 ENERGY STAR results represent about one-third of the total greenhouse gas emissions reductions from EPA climate change programs.

At home

Energy efficient choices can save families about a third on their energy bills with similar savings of

greenhouse gas emissions, without sacrificing features, style or comfort. ENERGY STAR helps consumers make energy efficient choices.

If looking for new household products, look for ones that have earned the ENERGY STAR. They meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set by EPA and the Department of Energy.

If looking for a new home, look for one that has earned the ENERGY STAR.

If looking to make major improvements to your home, EPA offers tools and resources to help plan and undertake projects that reduce your energy bills without sacrificing comfort.

At work

Because a strategic approach to energy management can produce twice the savings – for the budget bottom line and the environment – ENERGY STAR offers a proven energy management strategy that helps in measuring current energy performance, setting goals, tracking savings, and rewarding improvements.

EPA provides an innovative energy performance rating system that businesses have already used for more than 62,000 buildings across the country.

In summary

Global climate change has emerged as one of the world's most significant environmental challenges. As the effects begin to manifest themselves, businesses, consumers and organizations are looking for real solutions that they can implement today. Energy efficiency is a very effective strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions right now at little or even negative cost.

Since 1992, the ENERGY STAR program has worked to dismantle identifiable and pervasive market barriers stifling investment in energy efficiency and bring practical solutions to the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors. It will continue to do so in the future.



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