

CHANGE A LIGHT BULB, CHANGE THE WORLD



Retail shelves are packed with LED energy star lights for holiday decorating.

Buzz Word of the Week

LED A light-emitting-diode is a semiconductor diode that emits light when an electric current is applied in the forward direction of the device, as in the simple LED circuit

The District of Houston held its annual Christmas Light Up last week. With the help of local school groups and sporting teams, they hung approximately 2,000 strings of brilliant twinkling lights from one end of town to the other. As impressive as their display is, it is even more impressive to see their dedication to energy conservation.

Over the last two years the Chamber of Commerce and the District of Houston have significantly reduced their Christmas energy consumption by taking three simple steps. They shortened their Light Up event to run for four weeks instead of eight, installed timers on all lights so that they are only lit from dusk to dawn, not 24 hours every day, and finally, they started switching over to LED Seasonal Lights.

It is activities like this that have made the District of Houston a strong contender in the Energetic Olympics. For more ideas on how municipalities are taking up the energy challenge check out www.onesky.ca/energetic.

According to BC Hydro's website, decorating your home with LED lights could reduce holiday lighting energy use by up to 95%. A typical 50-bulb incandescent strand of lights uses 250 watts and an equivalent 70-bulb LED strand uses only three watts. For a house that operates holiday lights for six hours a day through the month of December, with an energy price of 8.27 cents per kilowatt hour, six strands of incandescent holiday lights would cost over \$23 to power versus a mere 28 cents for LEDs. By replacing the incandescent strands with LEDs, it would save you \$22.79 in energy

costs for the month. Multiply that by 10 or 15 years of use and you will save a lot of money.

It saves our electricity grid even more. About 2/3 of the total energy required to run Christmas lights is used up in the transmission lines, transformers and generation process that is delivering the energy to your house. For every watt that you save an additional 2 watts was never required to deliver it to your house.

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Many people in BC are under the mistaken belief that their energy is coming directly from environmentally "friendly" hydro dams. Actually, our grid electricity is a complicated trading scheme involving the purchase of fossil fuel generated electricity from Alberta at night during low consumption periods, that is then offset by electricity sales from BC sources during high consumption periods in the day. It is just as likely your Christmas lights are lit up by coal or fossil fuel as by a large hydro dam.

If you choose to decorate with Christmas lights switch over to LEDs, it's a brilliant idea that just makes good, clean cents.

In The Neighbourhood

BC Hydro is currently running a mail-in promotion offering \$3 rebates on eligible brands of Seasonal LED Light Strings with a limit of two rebates per household. For more information of BC Hydro programs and incentives, check out their website at www.bchydro.com.



Smithers and Telkwa are participating in the Energetic Olympics. To find out how to sign up, go to our website:

WWW.ONESKY.CA/ENERGETIC