



## PRESS RELEASE

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# EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup> Tip: Holiday Contest

**COLUMBUS, Neb.** — It's happening again! Just as the Yuletide spirit starts to gear up, so does the battle between the Grizwatts and the Schneevolts.

Each family refuses to be outdone by the other for having the best family Christmas celebration. Without realizing, each family has also engaged in the competition of who can be the least energy-efficient during the Christmas season for the last 10 years! The prize? The highest utility bills in the neighborhood this December!

Over the last decade, here's what each family did and didn't do to manage energy costs:

Grizwatt losses:

- Papa Clark loves the look of the old nostalgic Christmas lights with the C9 bulbs. He usually puts up 15 to 20 strands.
- Aunt Edna loves a good Christmas-time soaking in the hot tub to soften her toenails. (Don't ask!) So she wouldn't complain, the family turned the outdoor hot tub up to 110°F and didn't bother to cover it when she wasn't "marinating."
- After the family feast, Uncle Lewis got a hot flash, so he opened four windows in the living room. They were never shut until Ruby Sue got chilled at Valentine's Day.
- Mama Ellen continuously ran the kitchen range exhaust fan, claiming it was necessary to remove the burnt figgy pudding smell, but her mom suspects it was to cover up her closet smoking habit.
- Daughter Audrey turned up the water heater to 150°F so she wouldn't run out of hot water, even if Grandma Frances left it on continuously while rinsing dishes.
- Cousin Eddie plugs in the extra refrigerator in the furnace room to "cool" his night crawlers and holiday beverages.
- Cousin Catherine discovered the house became warmer more quickly by switching the heat pump thermostat to "emergency/backup." Why use the heat pump mode when the furnace does fine by itself, she thought!

Schneevolt losses:

- Ampy Schneevolt wanted gift opening around a roaring fire. Unfortunately, he left the fireplace flue open until his St. Patrick's Day fire.
- Cousin Wyedy's diesel pickup didn't like winter, so he plugged in his engine block heater for the duration of his three-week stay, during which it was very cold.
- Uncle Shorty had a problem with the master blower for his "Christmas Inflatables" display. Therefore, he jiffy-rigged Grandpa Ohmer's air compressor to run continuously.
- Though Aunt Thermen worked 40 years for the natural gas industry, the family wired the sunroom with electric radiant heat and figured 78°F was a comfortable setting for the month.
- Due to Cousin Ether's video gaming addition, the Y-box and other electronics were left on and battery chargers were plugged in continuously when not in use.
- Zap, the family dog, had a bowel infection. Grandpa Hertz figured penning him into the master bathroom and leaving the exhaust fan "on" was the best way to deal with that.
- The entire Schneevolt family knew how to turn a light switch "on" when they needed it, but never could figure out how to shut lights off when they left a room.

While the Grizwatts and the Schneevolts willingly pay for their annual holiday energy oversights, you gotta ask yourself, "Am I trying to compete with these guys?" Some of their issues may sound all too familiar!

Here are some tips to keep you out of the competition:

- Decorate with LED lighting. A string of LEDs often uses 90 percent less electricity than traditional incandescent light strings.
- Once all the embers and fumes are out, tightly close fire place dampers when not in use. Repair or replace dampers that don't tightly seal.
- Turn off any supplemental heat in spare bedrooms, garages or other temporary areas when it's no longer needed.
- In winter, set thermostats to 68°F during occupied periods and 60°F during unoccupied and nighttime periods to manage heating costs. If you have a heat pump, use caution when returning the temperature to 68°F, so as not to cause the back-up heat to kick on unnecessarily.
- If you open a window for ventilation, close it as soon as the air has cleared.
- Turn off and/or unplug all unnecessary appliances, electronics and lights. Good luck with this if you have a lot of kids in your home!

Don't wait until your utility bills start showing up in January to find out if you're competing against the Grizwatts and Schneevolts. Make the most of the energy flowing into your home and eliminate unnecessary usage. It might be the best gift you get this season!

For additional information on how to make your home, business or school EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup>, contact Loup Power District, Cornhusker Public Power District, Nebraska Public Power District, or your local public power utility. While you're at it, check out the EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup> programs designed to help you save money. Find energy efficiency information online at [www.loup.com](http://www.loup.com), [www.cornhusker-power.com](http://www.cornhusker-power.com), and [www.nppd.com/save-energy](http://www.nppd.com/save-energy).

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