

Energy Conservation

Global warming and climate change have received an increasing amount of media coverage over the past several years, and energy conservation has become a hot topic of discussion. Over 50 percent of the United States' electricity is generated from coal. The U.S. Department of Energy, Department of Fossil Energy is researching ways to virtually eliminate sulfur, nitrogen, and mercury released during the burning of fossil fuels, ways to capture greenhouse gases, and ways to increase the efficiency of coal fueled power plants.

The use of oil and natural gas accounts for 35 percent of the energy consumed in the United States. It is likely that the use of oil, coal, and natural gas will continue to increase even with new renewable and nuclear technologies. The DOE is working to improve its many renewable energy sources. Renewable energy sources include wind, solar, geothermal, hydrogen, and biomass energies. Hydroelectric power facilities generate enough energy to supply 28 million households with electricity, which is equivalent to 500 million barrels of oil. Cecil County is home to the nation's largest privately owned hydroelectric power plant, the Conowingo Dam. The Conowingo Dam and Hydroelectric Plant is located on the Susquehanna River, bordering Cecil and Harford Counties.



Image Credit: Conowingo Dam

http://www.portdeposit.org/gallery/Scenic/Conowingo_Dam_4_9

From My Backyard to Our Bay

As population and development demands increase in the United States the demand for energy increases. It is important to begin conserving energy on an individual scale. The following is a list of simple steps homeowners can take to reduce energy demand and save money.

Tips for Conserving Energy

- Turn off the lights when leaving the room.
- Keep doors, windows, and drapes closed when running the air conditioning and the drapes open when running the heat.
- If your air conditioning unit is old, consider replacing it with a new energy efficient model that could save up to 50 percent of your electricity bill.
- Air dry dishes instead of using the drying cycle on your dishwasher.
- Clean the lint filter in the clothes dryer after every load to improve circulation.
- Consider buying a laptop for your next computer upgrade, laptops use less energy than desktop computers.
- Plug appliances, like TVs and DVD players, into power strips. When the appliance is not in use turn the power strip off. Appliances still use energy when plugged in and not in use. Electricity used by appliances accounts for 20 percent of a typical American's electric bill.
- By cutting your programmable thermostat from 72 to 68 degrees for 8 hours a day (when at work), your heating bill can be cut up to 10 percent.
- Lighting accounts for 15 percent of household electricity use. Fluorescent bulbs reduce energy use by 75 percent and last ten times longer when compared to incandescent bulbs.

Where To Get Help for energy conservation information

- United States Department of Energy; <http://www.energy.gov>
- 53 Ways to Conserve Energy; <http://www.reupower.com/energysvc/53ways.html>
- 85 Ways to Save Money and Energy;
<http://www.pepco.com/my-home/save-money-and-consume-energy/home-energy-saving-tips/>
- Maryland Energy Administration; <http://www.energy.state.md.us/>
- For a guided tour by appointment or more information about the Conowingo Dam and Hydroelectric Plant call **410-457-5011**