

“Librarian’s Shelf” by Karen Schlautman & Jill Owens

Kill A Watt meters available at Columbus Public Library

Cornhusker Public Power District and Loup Public Power District recently donated two Kill A Watt meters to the Columbus Public Library as part of their ongoing EnergyWise program with Nebraska Public Power District. The meters became available for check-out November 15th and may be checked out for one week at a time.

As the cost of energy goes up, more people are becoming concerned about their utility costs. Consumers are looking for ways to manage their energy use and reduce costs. “The first step in controlling your energy costs is knowing what they are,” said Cornhusker Power Information and Marketing Director Karen Schlautman. “The Kill A Watt may be just the tool you need to jump start your energy efficiency efforts,” said Schlautman.

Using a Kill A Watt meter is a simple way to see how much energy is used. Simple to use, you just plug it in the wall outlet and then plug the appliance you want to monitor into the Kill A Watt. After recording for a day or longer, customers can do some basic math and calculate the energy usage and cost to run the appliance. A LCD display will count consumption by the kilowatt hour. You can calculate power expenses by the day, week month, even an entire year.

New Business Supervisor Rick Cheloha of Loup Power said, “Some customers are surprised to find out some appliances use wattage even when they are off. This is known as “phantom load” and is basically the power needed to have all these things warmed up and ready to go the second you turn them on.”

Items that typically use “phantom load” when plugged in, yet not in use are: cell phone chargers, coffee makers (with display that has lights on at all time), TVs, computers, anything that is in a stand-by mode when not in use or anything that has a transformer-type plug in, such as a hair dryer.

The meters also help understand the benefit of buying an ENERGY STAR appliance when it is time to buy a new item. Compare how much energy your current appliances are using with the energystar.gov site to find out how much a new ENERGY STAR model costs to run. Items you may want to check with a Kill A Watt meter include refrigerators, freezers, microwaves, stereos, TVs, fans, computers, heaters, game systems, washing machines, and any appliance that uses energy.

If you are interested in using the Kill A Watt device, check it out from the Columbus Public Library, 2504 14 Street, Columbus, and diagnose your electrical usage. Recent memorials received by the Columbus Library Foundation in memory of Richard Cruickshank were given by Dick & Patti Luebbe, and Larry & Kay Berg.