



EDITORIAL: Conserve That Energy

Wednesday, February 04, 2009 1:57 PM

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(Source: North Adams Transcript)By North Adams Transcript, Mass.

Feb. 4--One has to be impressed that Williams College saved \$90,000 in heat and electricity costs by shutting down most of its operations over the winter break from Dec. 25-Jan. 2 (see story, Page A3).

While few other businesses and institutions could save that amount of money in 11 days, some of the steps the college took can at least shave costs here and there, and if a multimillion-dollar operation is taking these steps because of the harsh economic times, we all would be wise to follow suit. In fact, can we afford not to?

That goes for homeowners and renters, too. All of us might not be too concerned about reducing our "carbon footprints," as the college is, but we'd be foolish to scoff at trying to save a few bucks.

So, what can you do? Here's a short list to get you started. It's by no means complete, and you should do a Google search or contact the Center for Ecological Technology in Pittsfield for many more ways to save. The ones here are those that will cost you nothing, or very little, to start:

Unplug your appliances (except the stove and refrigerator) and all other electronic devices when they are not in use. Turn off your computers when you're not using them. Shut off the lights after you leave a room, and by all means replace standard light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) -- the savings on using these bulbs alone can be up to 75 percent.

If you haven't already

weather-stripped your doors and windows, by all means do so. This is New England. We've still got at least two months -- and more than likely three or more months -- left of weather that's cold enough to pack a wallop in our heating bills.

Get that wood stove going to conserve costly oil, gas and electricity. Or put on a sweater (or two), grab a lap robe and lower the thermostat. Close off rooms that aren't in use. Pull the drapes during the night and open them during the day to let as much sunlight in as possible.

While you're at it, shut the door behind you (this isn't a barn!), wipe your feet, and stop tracking mud and snow all over the nice clean carpet!

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