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Summer temperatures have arrived in the Valley region. Start now to curb your energy use to keep your power bill under control.

As we proceed further into the summer cooling season, we expect warm weather will continue to impact energy consumers. Remember that summer energy use is usually highest between 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., during the warmest part of the day and when people arrive home from work. Reducing energy consumption between those hours will assist you in better controlling energy costs.

So, to help beat the “heat of higher utility bills,” use these tips:

Top Tips for Saving Energy in the Summer Heat

- **Keep it clean when the sun goes down.** Refrain from running your dishwasher, clothes washer or dryer during the heat of the day.
- **Filter it out.** Make sure your air conditioner filter is clean—a dirty filter means the air conditioner won’t get as cool and uses more power than necessary.
- **Shut those doors!** Try to minimize the amount of times you open and shut your main doors leading outside to keep the cool air in. The same theory includes the refrigerator door.
- **Do a fan dance.** Use ceiling and floor fans to keep air moving in your home—they use a lot less power than setting your air conditioner lower.
- **Unplug to power down.** Unplug any unused or unnecessary electronic devices—even when turned off, they still are generating heat if they’re plugged in.
- **Cut your cord to the old appliances.** Got an old additional fridge out in the garage or basement that you’re still using? Consider letting that sentimental dinosaur go...it’s still inefficient.
- **Lighten up.** Make that switch to more energy-efficient light bulbs. You’ll save money, and—bonus—they put off less heat!
- **A slightly warmer house equals less sizzle on your budget.** Setting your thermostat between 75-78 degrees during the day (even higher if no one is home) can make a significant difference in your power bill.
- **Made in the shade.** Create your own shade by keeping curtains closed during the day on the south, west, and east sides of the house to block out sunlight.
- **Kiss the hot cook goodbye.** Plan menus ahead of time for meals that require less range or oven heat. Consider using the microwave instead...it cooks faster and doesn’t create as much heat as stovetop cooking.
- **Or, get out of the house.** Consider using your gas or charcoal grill outside for cooking rather than kitchen appliances.

These free and low-cost measures may not guarantee your energy bill will be lower, but they can offset the additional energy needed to run your air conditioner throughout the summer.