



A Program of the Maine Public Utilities Commission

Press Release

Efficiency Maine Campaign Will Solve the Whodunit Mystery

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PORTLAND, Maine – One of the most requested and popular whodunits at public libraries around Maine this winter is likely to be Kill A Watt®.

No, it's not the latest mystery novel on the best sellers list but rather an electricity usage monitor and educational tool kit that will help residents understand and manage power consumption of appliances and electronics in their homes and businesses.

The Kill A Watt® and tool kit will be on loan from all Maine public libraries as of next week as part of a state-wide community outreach campaign by Efficiency Maine, which was launched in Scarborough today by Maine Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) Chairman Sharon Reishus.

Reishus said Efficiency Maine, a program of the MPUC, has teamed up with the Maine Library Association to distribute the Kill A Watt® monitors to give Mainers the tools necessary to take more responsibility in reducing their energy bills.

"We hear a lot of unhappy news these days about how energy-use costs us money and does damage to the environment, so it is refreshing to be able to offer Mainers something which in a very fun way will help them figure out what to do about it at their home or businesses," she said.

Members of the public will be able to check out the Kill A Watt® monitors like they do a book, from their local library at no charge. These monitors simply plug into electrical outlets and then allow a consumer to plug in any appliance to obtain a reading on how many kilowatt-hours the appliance is drawing and therefore help them make more educated decisions on how to use electricity wisely. The educational tool kits will include a home energy savings tips brochure and energy tips bookmark which patrons will be able to keep.

"The Kill A Watt® is not only a very practical device to show just how much energy appliances and electronics are using but it is also a very fun thing to use," said Reishus.

"The average Maine residential customer consumes 6,817 kWh per year and the Kill A Watt® will certainly solve the mystery of which appliances and electrical devices use the most power and which ones contribute the most to pollution and climate change.

She said in 2008, Efficiency Maine has helped the State save 107,517 MWh of electricity, a 24% increase in savings from 2007, worth an estimated \$122.5 million in lifetime economic benefits.

Cumulatively since 2004, Efficiency Maine has provided incentives, technical assistance, and other services that will avert the consumption of over three million MWh of electricity—enough to power 46,371 Maine homes for a decade. This has saved Maine business and residential consumers more than \$310 million in energy costs.

Maine Library Association spokesperson and Director of the Scarborough Public Library, Nancy Crowell said the Association was pleased and proud to participate in the Kill A Watt® campaign.

"Libraries have changed over the years. We've transformed from being the reading room for people of all ages, valued amenities in our communities. We are now much more than a physical space and collections. We are uniquely skilled at forming valuable partnerships with entities throughout our community to leverage our social and economical resources. Today we have an exciting new opportunity to partner with Efficiency Maine to help our communities address the high cost of energy in their homes and businesses. We look forward to our part in this newest partnership and joining our citizens in the hunt for the hidden energy thieves," she said.

Maine State Representative and Co-Chair of the Utilities and Energy Committee Jon Hinck said the take away message from today's launch was very simple.

"Get one of the Kill A Watt® monitors and information kits, take them home, see how much electricity your appliances use, and the ones that use the most, turn off when you don't need to have them on. This way you will be saving yourself money as well as helping save electricity," he said.

State wide marketing featuring a whodunit, detective-thriller style narrative will begin next week in support of the Kill A Watt® campaign.

The Maine Public Utilities Commission is committed to ensuring that consumers have access to safe and reliable service for public utilities and that the rates for these utilities are just and reasonable. MPUC programs include Maine Enhanced 911 Service, Dig Safe, and Efficiency Maine.

To arrange an interview with Chairman Reishus, Commissioner Vendean Vafiades or Commissioner Jack Cashman, please contact Fred Bever at 207.287.6141 or by e-mail at fred.bever@maine.gov. The Commission's website, www.maine.gov/mpuc may be accessed through the Maine School and Library Network at all public libraries in Maine.