



Smartphones and utility apps are available to monitor and control the amount of energy consumers use in their homes.

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Take Advantage of Energy-Saving Tech Today

By Brian Sloboda

What does the home of the future look like to you? Perhaps the home of George and Jane Jetson comes to mind, where dinner and laundry are taken care of with the press of a button.

Today, the average home may not quite be “Jetsons-esque,” but household appliances are smarter and more energy efficient than ever before. A growing number of appliances now connect to the internet and offer new capabilities.

In many cases, buying a new television, refrigerator or other large appliance will result in lower energy use, assuming you properly dispose of the old appliance.

Many of these smart appliances offer features aimed at comfort, convenience and, sometimes, energy savings.

Manufacturers add communication modules inside many appliances, which often use Wi-Fi to communicate simple messages to a home’s wireless network. The messages vary by device, but typically include energy use information, power control and thermostat settings.

Efficiency-savvy consumers can save energy and money using one of these systems. The bulk of the savings will come from the ability to remotely control your air-conditioning system’s thermostat.

Studies show that consumers generally do not program their programmable thermostat, but smartphone apps associated with internet-enabled thermostats are often easier to use.

These thermostats can learn your daily routine by sensing when you are away from home, and adjust your thermostat to save energy and money.

There are many devices you can have installed in your home’s electric panel to educate you on the energy consumption of various appliances.

These in-home monitoring devices provide more information to consumers about their household energy costs and have been shown to help people reduce their energy consumption.

One study of 36 energy feedback programs concluded that when presented with information on energy consumption, consumers can reduce their home energy use 4 to 12 percent.

By itself, technology will not save a significant amount of energy. But other activities—such as weather sealing and turning off lights when not in use—will save significant amounts of energy and money.

Technology has an important role to play, but the key is finding the right mix of technologies that fit your lifestyle and budget. ■

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

September 2016

- 9/1**—Dave Matthews Band in concert, Gorge Amphitheatre, George
- 9/2-4**—International Bigfoot Conference, Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick
- 9/2-4**—Tumbleweed Music Festival, Howard Amon Park, Richland
- 9/2-5**—Trout Lake area annual rummage sale
- 9/3**—Car show and flea market, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with more than 140 antique vehicles, Bickleton
- 9/3**—Chris Isaak concert, Maryhill Winery, 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., Goldendale, www.maryhillwinery.com
- 9/3-5**—Apple Valley Labor Day Peach Celebration & Country BBQ, Apple Valley Store, Hood River
- 9/3-5**—Labor Day Weekend Celebration at Maryhill Winery, live music 1 to 5 p.m., Goldendale
- 9/4**—Jam session at the American Legion—good old country music, 1 to 4 p.m., Goldendale
- 9/5**—Labor Day—Klickitat PUD offices closed
- 9/5**—Roy Webster Cross-Channel Swim, 5:30 a.m., 720 E. Port Marine Drive, Hood River
- 9/13**—Klickitat PUD Board of Commissioners’ meeting, 2 p.m., Goldendale
- 9/17-18**—Apple Valley Pear Dumping Days & Country BBQ, Apple Valley Store, Hood River
- 9/23-10/2**—Central Washington State Fair, Yakima
- 9/24**—Hood River Hops Fest, noon to 8 p.m.
- 9/27**—Klickitat PUD Board of Commissioners’ meeting, 2 p.m., Goldendale
- 9/30-10/2**—Bend Fall Festival, downtown