

Power Cost Monitor and home energy consumption

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A homeowner's tool that lets you monitor your energy costs, let's welcome **PowerCost Monitor™** and [Peter Porteous](#), CEO of Blue Line Innovations.

Q.: Peter, thanks for being our guest. Will you please tell Home and Living Readers a little about your company?

A.: [Blue Line Innovations](#) is a pioneer in this idea of real time energy feedback. The company was founded by 2 brothers, [Maurice and Danny Tuff](#), in [St John's Newfoundland](#) in 2003. The base principle is "you can't change what you can't measure". Energy use and conservation has been a topic of concern for quite some time and academic research back in the 1970's and 1980's validated the theory that putting better energy use information into the hands of families could make a significant difference – projecting double digit reductions. In 2005 that theory was validated in a pilot test with [Hydro One](#) in Ontario Canada.



Q.: Your product, PowerCost Monitor™, just came out this summer, correct? Can you tell Home and Living Readers what it is?

A.: The [PowerCost Monitor™](#) has been on the market since 2005 but upgrades to the model were released this summer. The latest model is referred to as the BLI 28000. The [PowerCost Monitor™](#) allows families to see real time exactly how much energy (\$ or kWh) is being consumed in the home. The product consists of two components, a sensor which attaches passively to the meter on the outside of a home and transmits wireless to a portable LCD display in the home. Numerous independent research studies by US and Canadian utilities have confirmed that most homes using the [PowerCost](#)

[Monitor™](#) save between 6 and 18% on their monthly electricity bill.

Q.: What are some of the properties of PowerCost that make it a good product?

A.: Universality – this one product is compatible with approximately 90% of all homes in North America. Wireless – No Electrician required. Excellent value – at \$109 US with no added installation costs a family through reductions in their monthly electricity bill can payback their purchase in a matter of months. On top of that they can take pride in the fact that they have made a positive contribution to the planet – one family, one step.

Q.: How are customers using the PowerCost Monitor™ in their homes?

A.: We find that the [PowerCost Monitor™](#) has a [home](#) on the kitchen counter but it wanders. It's very much interactive learning – taking the [PowerCost Monitor™](#) and standing in front of the clothes dryer and experimenting with different temperature settings to understand the true electrical cost of each setting; or moving to the family room and experimenting with various light settings, turning the TV, VCR on/off to measure the impact. The appliance feature helps measure the impact of specific appliances or behavior changes. The other very interesting component is the "estimating" feature. We know from our research that homes where the entire family is "engaged" with the [PowerCost Monitor™](#) produce the largest energy consumption reductions and what the kids need to stay engaged is frequent interaction and feedback. The estimating feature allows you to learn, make a few changes and then project the impact of those changes over a 30 day period. "Hey, we used to be spending \$200 per month and we have now dropped it to \$180 – let's keep going and try a few more changes – how low can we go".



Q.: How does your product give homeowners additional power over their energy bills?



A.: It's all about access to quality information. The [PowerCost Monitor™](#) let's you see and understand how and where you are consuming energy – real time. You can make changes and get immediate feedback on the impact of those changes – no more waiting until the end of the month to get your scorecard. The other key ingredient is the [PowerCost Monitor™](#) heightens your awareness and sensitivity to the topic. Your watching the monitor, seeing numbers move up and down, it's engaging.

Q.: Peter, I had difficulty in finding out my own energy costs per kw (kilowatt hour) because there are so many variables. Can you speak to that?

A.: That's a great point. We often get calls from customers who report that they are having difficulty "installing"

their PowerCost Monitor™ but a lot of times it's really not fully understanding how to read the energy bill and rate structure. The one thing that we do know is electricity rate structures are going to become more complex (time of use billing methods) where the cost of energy will be different by the time of day. We have some tools and a 1 800 support team to help customers understand their bill structure to get the correct data loaded but again the PowerCost Monitor™ serves to heighten awareness and sensitivity to behavior changes that can produce significant reductions in [energy consumption](#) and cost of energy use.

Q.: What kinds of feedback are you getting from PowerCost Monitor™ users?

A.: Very positive. Customers take pride in their achievements; both bill reduction and making a positive difference, and want to share their stories. Those stories range from finding hidden energy “suckers” (the old fridge in the garage, the dehumidifier in the basement which runs non stop all year long), to “never knew” moments (wow, I knew hot water was expensive but I never knew what that 20 minute shower really cost), to using the PowerCost Monitor™ as the last check before going to bed or leaving the home to insure everything that should be turned off really is off.

Q.: Can you tell homeowners where they can purchase your product? And what is your mission?

A.: For a full listing of our preferred retailers please visit www.bluelineinnovations.com. The Black & Decker branded Power Monitor can be found in Canada at [Canadian Tire](#) (in the lighting aisle) and in the US at [Amazon.com](#) and [Lowe's](#).

Q.: Is there anything else you would like to tell Home and Living Readers?

A.: This is something that most families in North America can do. Whether your motivation is reducing your monthly expenses or saving the planet the PowerCost Monitor™ is a proven difference maker. Why wouldn't everyone not want to reduce their electricity consumption by 6, 10, 12 or 18%? While others are talking about lofty solutions to the economic issues or climate change...this is something that we can all do – today – in our own home. Take control, make a difference today.

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