

From Orangeville Citizen – July 15, 2010

Hydro helping users save energy

By DAN PELTON Staff Reporter

Bombarded by reminders that our energy resources are finite, and subjected to new consumption monitoring technologies – such as smart meters – that often result in higher monthly bills, homeowners could use a helping hand when it comes to the wise use of hydro.

Orangeville Hydro is offering a service, called the Home Energy Audit Lending Program, wherein participants can borrow one of 25 home energy audit kits for up to two months.

Offered to the public on a first-come, first-serve basis, the kits are actually two kits in one.

The first, an energy consumption audit, allows homeowners to measure the consumption of various appliances and gadgets in their home; with the aim of identifying which devices use a lot of electricity and to target “phantom load.”

Phantom load comes into play when devices such as televisions and computers continue to consume electricity even when they are turned off. Phantom load is estimated to account for up to 15 per cent of monthly electricity use,

The second kit is an energy consumption and draft detector audit kit which contains two devices. The power cost monitor measures an entire home and targets phantom load.

Not only will this device measure energy use from appliances and gadgets, it can also provide estimates of a monthly hydro bill, based on existing behavioral tendencies.

The kit’s second device, a thermal leak detector, is designed to identify air leaks in the home through a point-and-click laser mechanism.

Information garnered from use of these kits can, in the words of Orangeville Hydro conservation coordinator Pietra Velinor, “save up to 30 per cent on electricity bills. Every little bit helps.”

The monitoring unit, as well as the energy meter and the thermal draft detector, are available for purchase locally at Orangeville Home Hardware.

On Saturday from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., Orangeville Hydro will be holding a home energy audit workshop at its facility on C-Line.

“This is just one of many ways Orangeville Hydro is giving back to the community,” says Orangeville Hydro president George Dick.

“We will continue to develop and implement programs and tools to help homeowners and businesses better manage their energy consumption every year, realizing each one of us can make a difference.”

Meanwhile, Ms. Velinor has some encouraging figures in regards to overall hydro consumption in Orangeville. “We are definitely improving,” she said. While not privy to figures for 2009, she is confident the downward trend in consumption since 2006 is continuing.

According to Orangeville Hydro, the reduction in consumption in 2006, 2007 and 2008 was 738, 1,312 and 1,770 megawatt/hours respectively. Over the same period, the town’s electricity demands have decreased by four megawatts.

This puts Orangeville on line to meet targets set out by the Ontario Board of Energy. The OBE is suggesting a target demand decrease of three megawatts over the period from 2011 to 2014. It is also looking for an overall consumption decrease, during that period, of 12 gigawatt/hours.