2012 DFW Solar Home Tour
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Reference – Appendix – Utility Rates

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Ten Steps to Cut Your Energy Costs in Half

Summary

1. **Aggressively manage your electric utility rate**
2. **Replace every incandescent light bulb with CFL**
3. **Change your living style**
4. **Turn stuff off**
5. **(Optional) Understand and measure actual energy consumptions**
6. **Research what your governments and utilities are offering**
7. **Look very hard at heating & cooling the structure – maybe include energy audit**
8. **Replace appliances with Energy Star or lower power versions**
9. **Put in home automation system to save even more**
10. **Put in solar PhotoVoltaic (PV) system to make your own power**

No cost, or low cost; small effort

Higher cost; larger effort
How to choose an electricity rate plan

■ Make sure you understand your current plan. Is there a penalty for leaving the plan or an advantage to signing a new contract with your existing company?
■ Go to www.powertochoose.org to compare pricing plans. Most experts recommend fixed-rate plans for residential customers. Plans range from three months to two or three years, and there is usually a penalty for leaving the plan early.
■ Identify a few pricing plans with a term that’s right for you, then read the Facts Labels. Look at the average price you will pay based on your monthly electricity use. Then look carefully for any fees or extra costs that could drive up your bill. Are any fees excluded from the price?
■ When you have chosen a pricing plan, read the terms of service to make sure you understand the price, fees and payment rules. What are the payment options? What happens when the contract expires? Call the company if you can’t find the answers to these questions.
■ Click “sign up,” which takes you to the provider’s website. Sometimes companies charge deposits, so be prepared to walk away and start over if the deposit is too expensive.

How to game the introductory-rate system

Squeezing the most out of introductory variable rates requires diligent work, much like the old 12-CDs-for-a-penny music clubs. This is not for the automatic bill payment crowd. Here’s how it can be done:

Know the date of your monthly meter read and put it on your calendar each month. If you can’t find it on your bill, call Oncor. This is crucial because some introductory rates end on the date of your next meter read.

Go to www.powertochoose.org and find the cheapest variable rate. The lowest rates (right now as low as 4.5 cents per kilowatt-hour) are likely to be introductory rates that will rise after the first billing cycle.

Read the rules carefully. Some companies raise the rate after your next meter read, even if that’s only a few days away. Other companies give you the rate for a full month.

Mark on your calendar the date the offer ends. Find out what your rate will rise to the next month by scouting around the company’s website or calling.

As the end date approaches, shop for another rate. You could try hopping from one introductory rate to another. Or use the introductory rate to try out a new company and, if you like the retailer, switch to its lowest fixed-rate contract after the promotion ends.
Monthly kWh Rate - 2006 to Present

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cost per kWh</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>10.3 ¢/kWh</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>14.7 ¢/kWh</td>
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<td>2007</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>11.5 ¢/kWh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Key Point:
Rate paying now (8.9¢) still less than avg rate paid in 2005 (10.3¢)