

## Five Million and Five Reasons to Embrace Energy Efficiency

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The issues surrounding energy generation, transportation, and use are at the center of political, climate, social, and technical debate and will continue to become more urgent as the demands for increasingly limited resources grows. By all accounts, the least expensive and most easily generated energy is the energy that isn't used. When we endeavor to use less energy, we not only save ourselves money, but also help ensure that the energy that our utilities produce meets our demand, thus preventing the need for additional generation capacity. There are so many ways that we, as energy consumers, can benefit from this simple concept, but let's focus on the top five:

1. **Being energy efficient saves money.** With no investment and no pain, small changes that we make at home and work can save money on our utility bills. Even small efforts can add up over the course of several months or a year. Top examples include programming or setting back your thermostat at night or when you are away, setting your water heater to medium (120 degrees), and turning off lights, electronics, and appliances when they are not being used. Small investments such as changing your furnace filter at recommended intervals, repairing water and air leaks, and installing efficient LED bulbs in your most used fixtures, can pay big dividends on your utility bill as well.
2. **Being energy efficient can improve home comfort.** Larger investments in efficiency are likely to not only save you money on your utility bills, but also improve the comfort in your home. Top examples include bringing floor, wall and attic insulation up to code, replacing an old inefficient furnace with a high efficiency model and ensuring your ducts are sealed, and replacing old appliances such as water heaters, refrigerators, freezers and washing machines with Energy Star models.
3. **Utilities offer rebates to promote energy efficiency.** "Help us help you!" In addition to information and helpful tips, our local utilities Cascade Natural Gas, Pacific Power, and Columbia REA all offer cash rebates to their customers to help offset the cost of many of the upgrades mentioned above. Customers can even request a free energy saving kit to help get started! Visit your utility's website to see all the ways that they can help you in the energy efficiency effort.
4. **Being energy efficient helps our local economy.** A perfunctory internet search yields multiple results that support and provide in-depth analysis of how investments in energy efficiency provide net positive benefits for participants. A simply analysis, however, would suggest the same – dollars saved by rate payers are spent elsewhere in the local economy. Additionally, monies spent on efficiency measures provide direct benefits to businesses providing the services and their field and office workers, retailers who sell products and their staff, rebate program providers, city or county permit administrators, auditors, and more. Indirect benefits are also achieved when these same workers purchase goods and services in the local economy.
5. **Energy efficiency efforts help reduce carbon emissions.** According to United States Environmental Protection Agency, the main source, or 37%, of carbon (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions in the United States can be attributed to the combustion of coal, oil, and natural gas to produce

electricity<sup>1</sup>. Our efforts to increase efficiency ensure that we are maximizing the output from our finite fossil fuel resources and minimizing the greenhouse gas emissions into the air.

Five amazing reasons to embrace energy efficiency! What about the other FIVE MILLION? That is where a community effort called Walla Walla Power Play (WWPP) comes in! Walla Walla is a semi-finalist in the nationwide Georgetown University Energy Prize competition. Along with forty-nine other small and medium sized towns and communities across the US, Walla Walla seeks to win \$5M by reducing residential and municipal energy use over a two year period, from January 2015 through December 2016, in innovative ways that can be copied in other communities of differing sizes and demographics and net the best results. More information on the Prize can be found at [www.guep.org](http://www.guep.org). The \$5M is then to be used to benefit the whole community to undertake additional efficiency efforts including such things as a revolving efficiency fund, education and outreach, and investments in energy saving infrastructure.

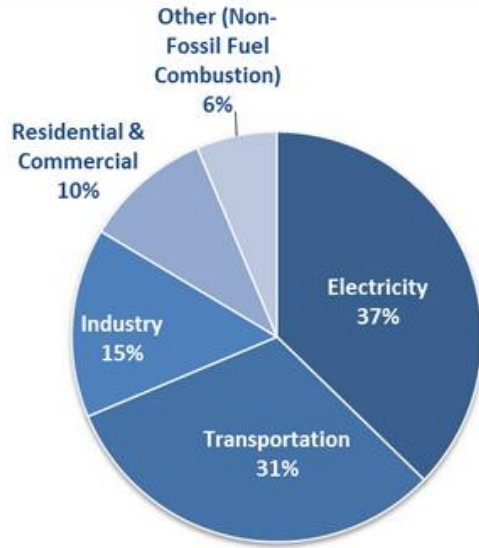
**Walla Walla Power Play** is the face of our effort locally and revolves around a BINGO game that provides tips and rewards small efforts for Walla Walla households to save energy. Participants complete a BINGO on the card by switching out a light bulb, taking shorter showers, reviewing their annual utility bill, and many more options. The completed BINGO card is then sent to the address on the back to be entered in a monthly prize drawing for an awesome prize! There is also a grand prize of \$1,000 for the Walla Walla household which documents the greatest reduction in utility consumption over the two year period! BINGO cards can be picked up at Walla Walla City Hall, Walla Walla Public Library, and the Chamber of Commerce. You can also print one online and see more details at [www.sustainablelivingcenter.com](http://www.sustainablelivingcenter.com). Also find Walla Walla Power Play on Facebook for contest updates, monthly prize winners and energy saving articles and tips.

Embracing energy efficiency is something that everyone can do for five million and five reasons (at least)! Start today and help save money, save energy, and help Walla Walla win \$5M.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/gases/co2.html>

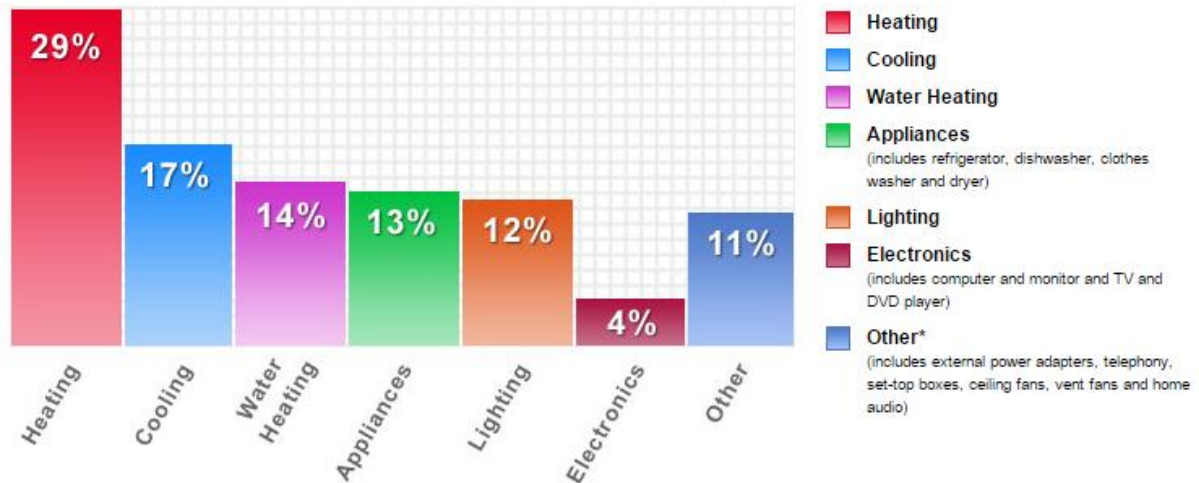
## U.S. Carbon Dioxide Emissions, By Source



Note: All emission estimates from the *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2013*.

## Where Does My Money Go?

The annual energy bill for a typical single home is approximately \$2,200.



Source: Typical House Memo, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, 2009 and Typical house\_2009\_Reference.xls spreadsheet.

Average price of electricity is 11.3 cents per kilo-watt hour. Average price of natural gas is \$13.29 per million Btu.

\* "Other" represents an array of household products, including stoves, ovens, microwaves, and small appliances like coffee makers and dehumidifiers.