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EnerStar Awards $2000 Grant to the Clark County Economic Development Corporation

EnerStar's Angela Griffin (left) and Julie Bounds, President of the Clark County Development Corporation visit to discuss the group's website. The CCEDC is organized to operate exclusively for charitable and educational purposes to promote community and economic development in Clark County.

Good news for Clark County as EnerStar Electric Cooperative has awarded the Clark County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) a $2,000 operational grant. Throughout the next year, the CCEDC will be expanding Clark County's website and revamping the "Networking Breakfast" series.

The Clark County organization dedicated to economic development identified the Internet as one of the most important marketing tools in today's economy. Due to the importance of the Internet in today's business climate, the CCEDC Board of Directors made their website (www.clarkcountyil.org) one of their top priorities in 2008. The CCEDC plans to include a detailed section on business recruitment and retention. This section will be designed to be printer-friendly allowing site consultants and other companies interested in Clark County to access the county's information quickly and efficiently.

"We must have a website that is full of the right information to educate people about the communities and economic development opportunities in Clark County, Illinois," states Tiffany Macke, Program Manager for the Clark County Economic Development Corporation. Macke and Julie Bounds, Economic Development Director for the City of Marshall, along with other members of the organization, spearheaded the grant application.

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Our Energy – Our Future

It's a great time to review what guides our cooperative.

Next month, the American people will take to the polls to choose the next President of the United States, members of Congress, and in many cases, state legislators and local officials. As electric cooperatives strive to meet our present and future energy needs, we are asking lawmakers of all stripes what they'll do to ensure that consumers continue to enjoy safe, reliable, and affordable electric power.

Today, many policymakers and elected officials believe renewable energy like wind, solar, and biomass (tree trimmings, farm byproducts, animal waste, and landfill gas) provide the solution to addressing climate change and establishing energy independence. But to keep the lights on and electric rates affordable, electric cooperatives will need to make use of all available generation resources, including renewables, nuclear power, and fossil fuels like coal and natural gas that use the latest environmental technology.

Our nation's electric system, commonly referred to as the "grid," relies on a network of power plants, transmission lines, and distribution facilities woven together in an intricate web to provide us with electricity. When a piece of this puzzle doesn't fit or goes missing, brownouts and blackouts can occur – as many folks in the Northeast remember from August 2003, or those in the West recall twice during the summer of 1996. Over the next 22 years, demand for electricity is predicted to increase 30 percent, and our country has used up the excess power capacity it once had available. That means we will need to build new power plants, all at a time when costs for construction materials such as steel, copper, and concrete, and fossil fuels like natural gas and coal are skyrocketing. The challenges we face are immense.

As a result, electric cooperatives are urging lawmakers to invest in technology that will allow us to help all households become more energy efficient, fast-track plans for building new transmission lines – connecting rural regions where renewable electricity is generated to the population centers where it's consumed, cut through the red tape that prevents construction of new nuclear power plants (which emit only clean water vapor), and capture and permanently store carbon from coal-fired power plants (as a way to reduce carbon dioxide emissions blamed for contributing to global climate change).

EnerStar®

Mission statement

EnerStar Electric Cooperative exists to reliably distribute affordable electricity to its member-owners while upholding our values of integrity, accountability, and commitment to our community.

These steps will not only strengthen our nation's electric infrastructure and head off an impending electric power crisis, but significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions. Even better, they will help ensure that any climate change goals ultimately adopted remain politically and economically sustainable over the decades necessary to make a difference.

Now's the time to make your voice heard. In addition to casting your vote on November 4, you can also help educate and inform lawmakers about these concerns. Electric cooperatives are currently engaged in a grassroots campaign called "Our Energy, Our Future: A Dialogue With America." Nearly 400,000 letters and e-mails have already been sent to Congress by your fellow consumers from all across the United States, each asking critical energy questions. To join the effort, visit www.ourenergy.coop.

In partnership with the federal government, electric cooperatives met the greatest engineering challenge of the 20th century – spreading the benefits of electric power to the most remote corners of our nation. The time has come once again for Congress to step up to the plate and make certain we continue to enjoy the electric service we've come to expect at a price we can afford.

Experts say that our nation's growing electricity needs will soon go well beyond what renewables, conservation and efficiency can provide; What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?

What are you doing to fully fund the research required to make emissions free electric plants an affordable reality?

Balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. How much is all this going to increase my electric bill and what will you do to make it affordable?

Start the conversation with your elected officials now @ www.ourenergy.coop

At the 2008 Annual Meeting, EnerStar members learned about this program and were encouraged to complete the cards to send to legislators and have their voices heard. All co-op members can visit the "ourenergy.coop" website and enter your name and address and send Congress your questions, beginning with "What are you doing to make sure we'll have the power we need in the future?" For those members without access to the Internet, call the EnerStar office to have the materials sent to your home so you can send a message, too.

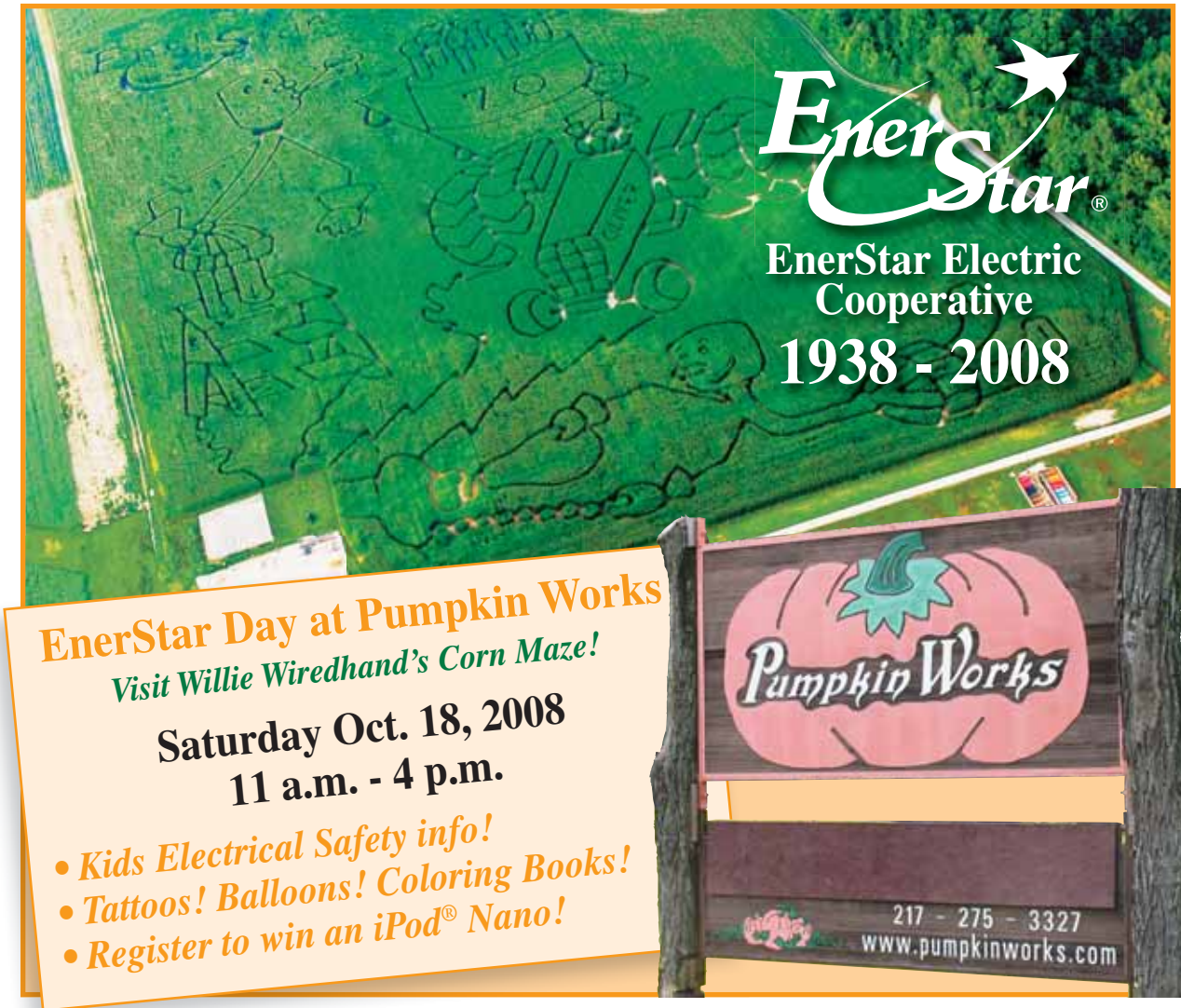
Thanks to cooperative grassroots efforts through the Our Energy, Our Future campaign, over 395,000 messages have been sent to legislators asking what they are doing to keep the light on. The dialogue has begun.

EnerStar Awards $2000 Grant *continued from page 16a*

The CCEDC also plans to expand their quarterly Networking Breakfast series. The Breakfast series features speakers from local, regional and state organizations and companies. In 2008, the CCEDC will be inviting entrepreneurship experts to talk with community residents interested in starting new businesses in Clark County. The series also provides the opportunity for professionals within Clark County to exchange ideas with other local businesses.

"Both of these projects require investment to be done right," Angela Griffin, Manager of Member Services for EnerStar explains, "and we wanted to make sure they had the funds necessary to complete both of these projects."

Grant funds were provided through economic development initiatives at Wabash Valley Power Association. WVPA is a generation and transmission cooperative based in Indianapolis that provides wholesale electricity to 28 distribution systems, including EnerStar Electric Cooperative.



October is National Cooperative Month

Each October, cooperatives all across America celebrate the role, accomplishments and contributions of our nation's co-operatives. Observing National Co-op Month gives electric co-ops yet another reason to tell our members that they are part of something special.

At a time of increasing national concern about the economy, especially rising energy costs, we also must communicate the cooperative difference to decision makers at all levels whose actions affect our members and the communities in which they live and work. The cooperative difference defines who we are and what we can achieve: looking out for our members' best interests.

For more information about National Cooperative Month, visit http://www.coopmonth.coop. This year's content includes the updated "A Day in the Life" publication with new intriguing cooperative member scenarios, as well as other great tools to help educate consumers as to the impact cooperatives have in their everyday lives.

Do You Remember When the Lights Came on?

It's been nearly 70 years since the first lines were strung that would bring electricity to rural Edgar and Clark counties. Things were a lot different back then. **We'd love to hear your story!**

The cooperative would also appreciate any early photos you may be able to provide to make copies. Contact EnerStar at 1-800-635-4145.

Classroom in the Sky

Learning can take place in many different venues. Some people learn better in a classroom, while others learn by getting their hands on the work. The job of an EnerStar lineman is not easy. It requires focus, concentration, and a lot of hands-on learning.

During the monthly safety meeting held in July, the Safety Department of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives conducted its annual "Pole Top Rescue" training at EnerStar. Co-op line crews reviewed how to safely rescue an injured worker from the top of an electrical pole.

This learning is somewhat like a "classroom in the sky." Each EnerStar lineman takes his turn putting on his climbing gear, climbing up the pole, and safely securing a rope around "Tuff-Kelly," a life-size mannequin designed especially for pole top rescue training. The lineman then must carefully lower the mannequin to the ground, descend back down the pole, and prepare to offer the appropriate first aid if needed. All this is to be done in four minutes or less to give quick care to a victim, should a rescue situation arise.

Like CPR, this is one of those training topics we hope our line crews never have to use, but should a situation ever present itself, the time spent training and reviewing pole top rescues will be time well spent.

Journeyman Lineman Dana Young demonstrates pole top rescue training.

TV Converter Box Coupon Program

You might have already heard about it but just in case you haven't on midnight, February 17, 2009, television viewing in America is scheduled to change. All full-power television stations in the United States are converting their broadcasting from analogue to 100 percent digital. This will result in better clarity of viewing and more programming options for the public.

Individual households will be required to have a conversion box if their television sets are not controlled through cable, satellite or fiber optics. From now until March 2009, consumers will be able to apply for up to two $40 coupons per household provided by the U.S. Government. The converter box is a one time purchase and prices are expected to range between $50 and $70 without the coupon. Coupons expire within 90 days of the date they are mailed out to consumers. Local retailers will carry the boxes for purchase.

For complete information here is a list of websites to visit:

For coupon applications please visit: **www.dtv2009.gov**

For information on where to purchase converter boxes, please visit: **www.ntiadtv.gov**

For information on how to install a converter box, please visit: **www.DigitalTips.org**

To learn more about options please visit: **www.DTVTransition.org**

What in the World Is Willie Doing Now?

Willie Wiredhand has been a celebrated official mascot of our nation's electric cooperatives for more than 50 years. Willie was the true embodiment of cooperative spunk, willing to stand up for rural consumers in the face of the impossible. As part of EnerStar's 70th anniversary, we are looking back at Willie through the years.

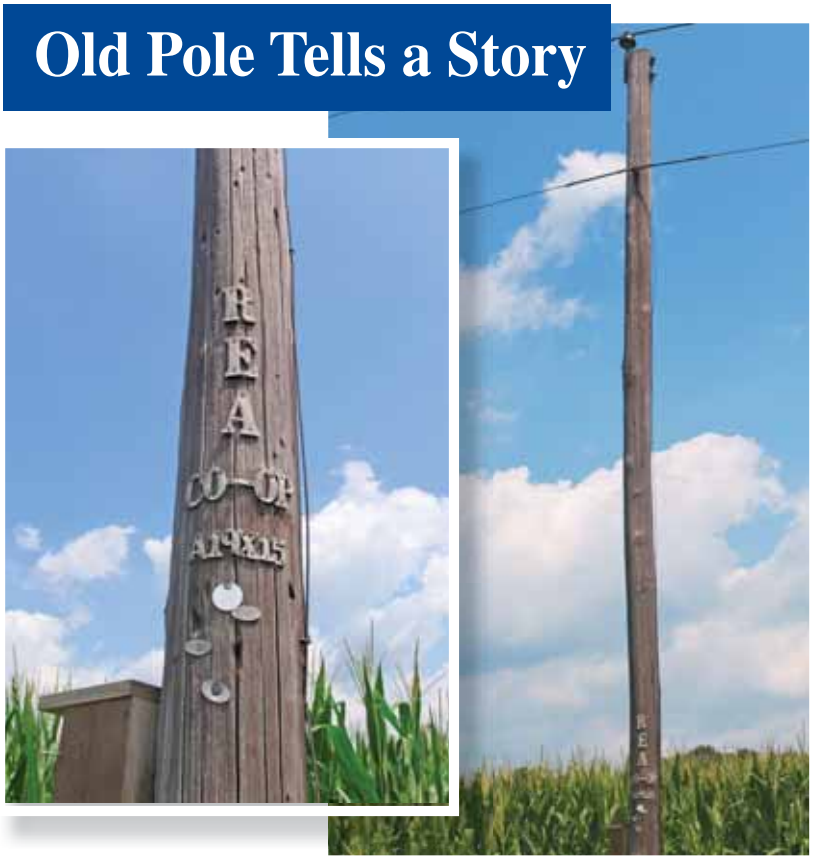
What in the world is Willie doing? Well, Willie has been out working on the farm all day and he just came in for a shower! And of course, that hot water comes from his high-efficient electric water heater! Willie loves all the modern conveniences provided by reliable electricity!

Back in the day, Willie often promoted electric water heaters but he is even happier to do so nowadays since today's electric water heaters are safe and energy efficient.

While many design features affect energy efficiency, two are particularly important. First, electric water heaters typically use two heating elements to heat water. One near the top of the tank keeps water at the desired temperature, while one near the bottom turns on when hot water is being drawn out and the tank is being refilled, so the water always receives just the right amount of heat. Second, because both elements are in the water, all of the heat energy goes directly into the water. Gas water heaters use combustion to heat an uninsulated flue (tube) that runs through the center of the tank and vents outside the home. That flue heats the water, but also allows combustion gases and some of the heat to escape through the vent.

From the basement to the garage, you'll find reliable electric water heaters in more homes than ever, providing consistent service without so much as a second thought from the people who have installed them. They're clean and efficient. They're affordable to buy and operate, and they're as good for the environment as they are for your family!

Old Pole Tells a Story

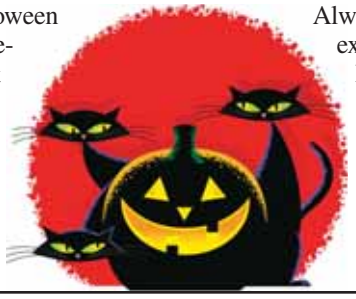


As our electric cooperative is celebrating 70 years of service, it is an appropriate time to show this photo! This is a good example of an original pole set sometime before 1939! It is located south of the town of Vermillion in Edgar County. It's still going strong because they just don't make them like they used to! One of the duties of long-ago cooperative employee Maurice Anderson (son-in-law of O.J. Bandy, an early coop director and manager) was to stamp poles with the "REA Co-op" and the map location. The map locations were used by the outside contractors hired to build the electrical system and were not used by the co-op for long. Member names were used as map locations before the cooperative adopted a standardized mapping system that is still in use today. For those new to the cooperative, REA stood for Rural Electrification Administration, the governmental organization born out of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration that loaned funds to local co-op boards to finance the construction of the electric lines. Electric cooperatives were often simply referred to as the "REA."

Avoid Electrical Hazards at Halloween

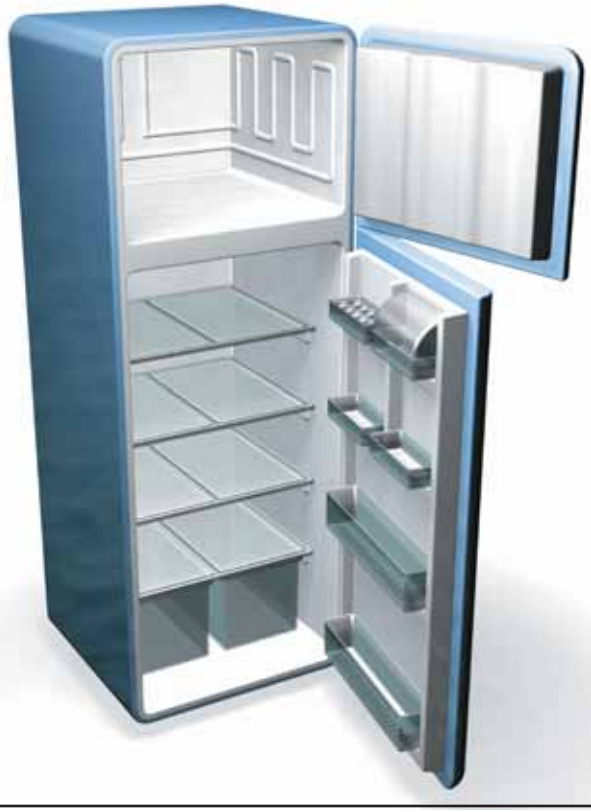
The decorative lights, fog machines, black lights, and animatronics of Halloween make for adventurous, entertaining times for children and adults. With these decorations, though, the risk of fire or electrocution could be lurking around the corner. It is important to check for electrical hazards before accidents happen. Use the following tips to keep electrical hazards from haunting you this Halloween:

- Inspect electrical decorations. Look for cracked or frayed sockets, loose or bare wires, and loose connections.
- Read manufacturer's instructions regarding installation and maintenance. Check the instructions to see how many light strings can be connected together.
- Always unplug light strings before replacing any bulbs.
- Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, walls or other firm supports. Do not use nails or tacks that could puncture light strings or electrical/extension cords.
- Provide well-lit walkways and porch lighting for trick-or-treaters. Make sure the walkways are clear for trick-or-treaters.
- Don't overload extension cords or place them near, or in, snow or water.
- Make sure electrical decorations are approved by a nationally recognized certification organization like "UL" (Underwriters Laboratory) and marked for outdoor use if you are using them outside. Many Halloween toys have been recalled in the past by the CPSC (Consumer Product Safety Commission).
- Do not overload your circuit breakers or fuses.
- Plug lights and decorations into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable outdoor GFCIs can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold.
- Make sure decorative lighting is well-ventilated, protected from weather and a safe distance from anything flammable like dry leaves and shrubs. Do not coil power cords or extension cords while in use or tuck under rugs or drapes.
- Turn out all lights and decorations before leaving or going to bed. Always have at least one fire extinguisher available and know how to use it.



Sources: Home Safety Council www.homesafetycouncil.org; Electrical Safety Foundation International www.electricalsafety.org

Keep Your Refrigerator from Using More Power Than Necessary

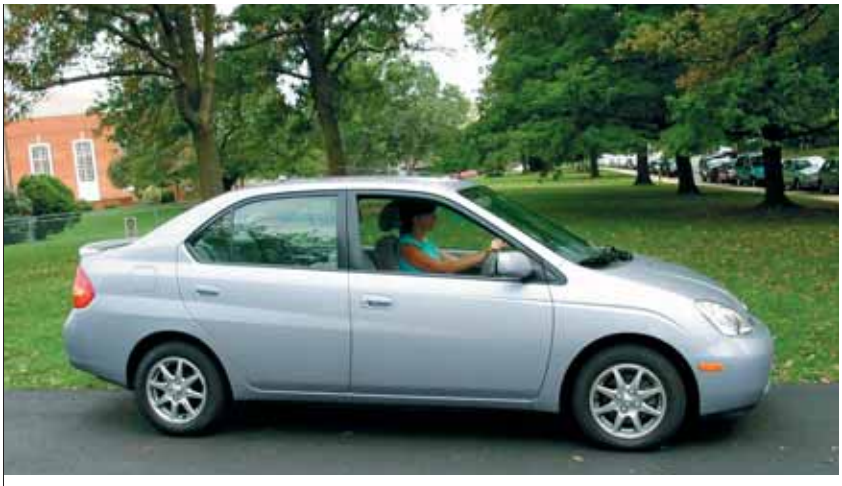


Your refrigerator runs often, which means it's the biggest energy user in your kitchen. If you have a really old unit, it will use even more energy. Check out these steps to keep your refrigerator running at its best.

1. Check the temperature. Your freezer should be between 0 and 5 degrees. Your fridge should be between 35 and 38 degrees. Use an appliance or outdoor thermometer to check the temperature.
2. Keep it full. A fridge or freezer with empty spaces loses the temperature more quickly, making the compressor run more often.
3. Clean it once a year. Not the inside—the outside. The condenser coils on the back of or underneath your fridge can get pretty dirty. Unplug the unit and then vacuum them.
4. Don't smother it. Find another place for storage; leave the top and sides free for ventilation.
5. Close the door. Keep the door closed and make sure it's tightly sealed. Just give it a little extra nudge each time to be sure.
6. Keep foods sealed. Put cooled foods in labeled plastic containers with lids. Evaporating moisture or hot foods make the compressor run more. ■

Energy Efficiency Behind the Wheel

At the time this article is being written, gasoline prices are softening a bit. But as consumers still reach deeper into their wallets, buying an electric-gasoline hybrid vehicle, like a Toyota Prius or a Ford Escape SUV, has become a new craze. But if buying a more fuel-efficient hybrid to reduce your "pain at the pump" (and carbon footprint) isn't in your budget, here are some steps that can trim gas consumption and improve vehicle mileage:



Observe the Speed Limit – While each vehicle reaches its optimal fuel economy at a different speed (or range of speeds), gas mileage usually decreases rapidly at speeds above 60 mph. Each 5 mph you drive over 60 mph, in fact, becomes the equivalent of spending an extra 30 cents per gallon for gas.

Remove Excess Weight – Avoid keeping unnecessary items in your vehicle, especially heavy ones. An extra 100 pounds in your vehicle could reduce your miles per gallon by up to 2 percent. The reduction is based on the percentage of extra weight relative to the vehicle's weight and affects smaller vehicles more than larger ones.

Avoid Excessive Idling – Cars with larger engines typically waste more gas at idle than cars with smaller engines.

Use Cruise Control – Using cruise control on the highway helps you maintain a constant speed and, in most cases, will save gas.

Use Overdrive Gears – When you use overdrive gearing, your car's engine speed goes down. This saves gas and reduces engine wear.

Drive Sensibly – Aggressive driving (speeding, rapid acceleration, and braking) wastes gasoline. It can lower your gas mileage by 33 percent at highway speeds and by 5 percent around town. In addition, sensible driving makes things safer for you and others.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy and www.fueleconomy.gov