



## Test Your Energy I.Q.

Consumer Reports (CR) ran an Energy IQ test in October, 2012 that shows the varied amount of knowledge that consumers have concerning energy usage and savings. Highlighted in this article are some issues in the CR quiz that we found interesting to share with EMP readers.

**The biggest return on investment** concerning home improvement options was sealing all air leaks, including leaky ducts. Duct sealing and insulating alone could lower annual heating and cooling bills by \$400 (CR recommends this be done by a professional). Adding attic insulation is the next best way to save energy. CR claims that laying 11 inches of fiberglass or rock wool or 8 inches of cellulose insulation could save up to \$200 a year. The return on investment may take several years but the up-front expense could reward your later years when you may have less income.

Although it seemed like a no-brainer that a standard-sized side-by-side refrigerator would use more energy than a standard high-definition DVR set-top box and 55-inch LCD TV, the annual consumption of the two choices (500 kWh vs 300 kWh) raised some eyebrows (both of mine). The energy usage for these home electronics could be expensive if you consider that many homes have multiple TVs and cable boxes. In the CR study, they used a set top box with an Energy Star 3.0 specification that could be at least 40 percent more efficient than many of us have at home. If you have an older more energy intensive model, you may be spending more money watching TV than cooling your food! Consider asking your cable provider to replace your set-top box with a more efficient model, if available. Unplug TVs and boxes that are used intermittently, like in guest rooms.



Lastly, 57 percent of respondents correctly checked that adjusting a thermostat 5-10 degrees F at night and when you are not at home can cut household annual energy costs by 10 to 20 percent. According to CR, programmable thermostats will pay for themselves several times within the first year. There are many programmable thermostats on the market and you should do your research to find one that is easy to use so that you will not get frustrated and fail to use its features. If you are a DIY type of person, some are very easy to install saving you money on installation. Otherwise, schedule its installation during a regular service call to save money on visits by your service provider.

To see the full article entitled “Test your energy IQ, what you don’t know about energy can cost you” [click here](#).

## Currently in the News

**Solar Energy:** A new approach to harvesting solar energy, developed by MIT researchers, could improve efficiency by using sunlight to heat a high-temperature material whose infrared radiation would then be collected by a conventional photovoltaic cell. This technique could also make it easier to store the energy for later use, the researchers say. [Article here](#).

**Energy Efficient Lighting:** Instead of going to the store and grabbing an incandescent off the shelf, you now have several options when shopping for light bulbs. [Read more here](#). This article from TIME-Tech will help you navigate the new bulb technologies, help you with options, quality and safety.



**Innovative Financing:** Energy efficiency in rural communities, public/private partnerships that promote the transition to a clean, low-carbon economy and wise energy choices. [Read the GreenBiz article here](#).

## Keep Up The Great Work!

Forsyth County employees continue to recycle their office paper and other items. Keep it up and spread the word; not only does this cut down on waste going to the land fill, it also generates income for the County. Your continued wise use of materials and tax payers dollars is imperative to the continued high quality of services we offer. Help make 2014 the best year to date on all our energy conservation efforts. As always, we love to hear what energy savings projects you do at home and work, as well as your ideas and stories.



Thank you!

Past Energy Management Program newsletters can be found here: [http://fcnet/EMP\\_newsletters.aspx](http://fcnet/EMP_newsletters.aspx)

If you have an idea for an article, or want to write one yourself, please contact us.