

green talk



2017 Rite of Spring Event

The 11th Annual RITE of Spring (Really Into the Earth) event will be held in April 2017. Please watch for information on the City's website. The spring newsletter will provide a complete schedule and event information.

Is Your Toilet Leaking?

Free Toilet Testing Tablets Available at City Hall

Drop these tablets into your toilet tank and wait a few minutes. Do not flush the toilet. If the toilet water turns blue, the seal around the flapper is leaking water from the tank to the bowl. This type of leak is often very hard to detect because it may not make filling or leaking noises or the fill valve may only kick on every 10 or 20 minutes (while you are not present). If your flapper is leaking, replace the flapper or toilet immediately! This is the most common water wasting problem in the home — it can rack up your water bill fast and you may not find out until you get the bill!

The tablets contain only FDA approved, non-toxic, non-carcinogenic pigments (not harmful if swallowed), packaged in moisture-resistant packs, detects leaks in any size toilet and come two tablets per packet.

Recycling Information

The City would like to send a special thank you to the **Tews Family on Birchwood Road** and the **Gibson Family on Berwick Place** for their extra efforts in recycling. Keep up the good work! For their extra effort, these families may stop in at City Hall and pick up a free *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle* water bottle. Each quarter we will pick two families to acknowledge.

Protect Your Drinking Water



On-site sewage treatment systems (septic systems) contribute to groundwater contamination if they are not operated properly or if not maintained on a regular schedule. Contamination of the groundwater can lead to the pollution of local wells, streams, lakes, and ponds — exposing family, friends, and neighbors to waterborne diseases and other health risks. Maintaining your septic system can also save you money by prolonging its life.

How to protect your drinking water resources:

- Make sure your system is compliant with local regulations.
- Have your system pumped every 2-3 years, and inspected once each year.
- Practice water conservation.
- Prevent paint or other hazardous materials from entering the system.
- Don't use harsh household chemicals or additives.
- Use liquid soaps for washing dishes and clothes.
- Check with a certified septic technician for help with system problems.

Practice the 3 Rs when Getting Rid of Old Stuff

Minnesotans throw away three million tons in a year. Let's lower that number practicing the 3 Rs — Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

Reduce: Less to begin with is part of the solution. Some of the things you can do include:

- Buy in bulk to reduce packaging.
- Use reusable bags and containers when shopping or packing lunches.
- Make use of community resources, like libraries or rental stores, to borrow materials instead of purchasing.
- Bypass a single-use product if a refillable or reusable version is available.
- Check into getting a broken household item repaired before you replace it.

Reuse: Many people throw out items that would be useful to others, leaving our garbage cans full and others wanting or buying new the very things that are being thrown away! Find a new home for your unwanted items, including clothing or household goods, by hosting a garage sale, using an online resale or donation site, or donating to a thrift shop or charitable organization.

Recycle: About 40% of what we throw away can be recycled according to a study released by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Are you using your curbside recycling to its fullest? Make sure you are recycling as much as you can including paper, cartons, metal, plastic and glass from your kitchen, bathroom, laundry room, office and other areas throughout your house. The paper, metal and glass you recycle are manufactured into new paper, cans, bottles and jars. Recycled plastic is manufactured into a variety of items, from toothbrushes to chairs to soda bottles to carpet.

Save money and the planet by getting rid of old stuff the green way using the 3 Rs — Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

Materials provided by the Solid Waste management Coordinating Board

Money and Energy-saving Tips — Heating



- 1. Have Your Furnace Regularly Maintained by a Professional**
 Regular furnace maintenance can reduce energy costs between \$18 and \$60 each winter with an 80% efficient furnace in a 1,600 square foot home.
- 2. Keep Your Fireplace Damper Closed**
 Keep your fireplace damper closed when not in use to prevent up to 5% heat loss. When using the fireplace, turn down your thermostat and open a window near the fireplace to prevent warm air from being pulled from other areas of your house.
- 3. Seal Duct Leaks**
 Seal leaky ducts with mastic, metal-backed tape or aerosol sealant. This will reduce heat loss when your furnace is on and may last longer than duct tape.
- 4. Use a Programmable Thermostat**
 This device can save as much as 20% on heating costs by automatically turning your heating system up or down to coincide with your daily routine. For example, set your thermostat to 60 degrees for the night and while you are away.



- 5. Keep Your Furnace or Heat Pump Filter Clean**
 Dirty filters reduce airflow, making your equipment work harder and use more energy. Replace your furnace filter monthly during the heating season, and you could reduce heating costs by 5%.
- 6. Open Inside Doors to Improve Air Circulation**
 Keep the doors inside your home open to improve air circulation and the efficiency of your heating and cooling systems.

- 7. Use Ventilation Fans Only as Needed**
 Don't forget to turn off a kitchen or bathroom ventilation fan. In just an hour, all the heated air in your home can be drawn out through an exhaust vent.
- 8. Use Passive Solar Heating On Sunny Days**
 Open drapes on south-facing windows when it is sunny. At night, close drapes to retain heat. Close drapes to provide insulation where windows receive no direct sunlight. Up to 15% of your heat can escape through unprotected windows.
- 9. Choose High-Efficiency Furnace and Boiler Systems**
 The furnaces with the highest efficiency ratings, 90% or more, use approximately 15% less energy than other models. You could save as much as \$100 each heating season with a high-efficiency natural gas furnace.
- 10. Lower Your Thermostat Setting**
 Reduce indoor thermostat temperature from 72 to 68 degrees during the heating season to save 5% on heating costs.



- 11. Ensure Your Home Is Properly Insulated**
 Poor or no insulation means losing up to 25% of your heating energy. Your attic needs at least six inches of insulation. Insulate crawl spaces, walls, floors and heating ducts to save money and increase your comfort.

Article provided by Xcel Energy