

Florence Energy News



NATURAL GAS PRICES

Be Prepared!

Don't be Caught in the Cold

A WEAKENING U.S. DOLLAR...HIGH CRUDE PRICES...GLOBAL DEMAND FOR ENERGY...AN INCREASING DEMAND FOR NATURAL GAS FOR ELECTRIC POWER GENERATION. ALL OF THESE ARE FACTORS THAT AFFECT INCREASING NATURAL GAS PRICES.

Gasoline prices are increasing daily, but it is not the only energy source that is on the increase. Our suppliers are warning us that natural gas market prices are 35% to 40% higher than last year for this summer, and the NYMEX prices for next winter are higher than last winter as well. Like gasoline, no one knows how high natural gas prices may go.

The Florence Gas Department will continue to utilize means to keep our rates as low as possible, by continuing the use of our Risk Management Purchasing Plan, by purchasing gas through a natural gas cooperative, and by maintaining our expenses as low as possible. This strategy provided you, our customer, with some of the lowest rates in North Alabama this past winter.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Call the Budget Billing Administrator (718-3210) and inquire about Budget Billing.
- Clean and/or replace your furnace filter regularly.
- If you have a fireplace, keep the damper doors closed when not in use.
- Consider replacement windows - double pane and/or storm windows reduce your energy usage by 25% to 50%.
- Use a programmable thermostat. Each degree your thermostat is reduced can potentially save you 3% on your heating bill.
- Consider insulating your attic. This could reduce your heat and cooling usage by 30%.
- Change the rotation of your ceiling fan to clockwise. This will push warm air at the ceiling down into the living area.
- Perform annual maintenance on heating equipment for proper operation.
- Replace older equipment with more efficient natural gas equipment.

Hopefully this information will help you prepare for the rising energy costs we are facing to heat our homes and businesses. If you have any questions, please call our office at 760-6490.

CITY OF FLORENCE SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING AND WATER/ WASTEWATER DEPARTMENTS PARTNERING TO RECYCLE COOKING OIL INTO BIODIESEL

The City of Florence is celebrating its 20th year of recycling thanks to its many dedicated participants.

A new program has been started that will convert used cooking oil into biodiesel. Any type of vegetable-based oil that residents or businesses want to get rid of will be collected with your weekly recycling. Please place your used oil in empty milk jugs or 2-liter soda bottles. Replacement bottles are available.

A biodiesel processing facility will be built at the City of Florence Wastewater plant, and special carrying cages have been added to the recycling trucks to pickup containers.

This new program gives the residents and businesses an easy method to use for disposal, and it reduces the amount of space taken up by the landfill.

For more information or a container, contact the Solid Waste and Recycling Department at 760-6495 or 760-6466.

The City of Florence urges you to:



RECYCLE

LOWER YOUR SUMMER ENERGY BILL

TOP 10 NO COST ENERGY SAVING STEPS

1. Turn up your cooling system's thermostat to **75-78°F**. Do not pay to keep your furniture cool - raise it even more when no one is home.
2. Perform a do-it-yourself energy audit. You can request a print version or perform your audit on-line at www.energyright.com.
3. Lower your water heater temperature to **120°F** and reduce hot water use by taking shorter showers and using cold water for laundry whenever possible.
4. Turn off lights, televisions, and other appliances when not in use. Use the "sleep mode" on computers.
5. Remove and recycle your second refrigerator.
6. Keep curtains closed on the south, east, and west sides of the house during the day to help keep cool.
7. Clean refrigerator coils and set the temperature to **36° to 39°F** and the freezer to **0° to 5°F**.
8. Use the microwave; it cooks faster and does not create as much heat as a stove burner.
9. Air-dry dishes instead of using the dishwasher's heat drying option.
10. Run your dishwasher and clothes washer only when full.



TOP 10 LOW COST ENERGY SAVING STEPS

1. Caulk and weatherstrip around windows and doors to stop air leaks. Seal any gaps in floors and walls around pipes and electrical wiring.
2. Change filters monthly - dirty filters make your air conditioning unit work harder.
3. Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents; they use **75%** less energy and last 10 times longer.
4. Install aerating, low-flow faucets and showerheads, and repair leaky faucets.
5. Tune up your heating and cooling system. Seasonal tune-ups will keep your system running as efficiently as possible. Have your ducts inspected. Repair air leaks and seal and insulate cooling system ductwork.
6. Insulate! Add insulation to your attic, crawl space, and any accessible exterior walls. Add pipe insulation to first 5 feet of water pipe coming from your heater. Install light switch and electrical outlet seals on exterior walls. Wrap your water heater with insulation or install an insulating blanket.
7. Look for ENERGY STAR® label when replacing large or small appliances.
8. Use power strips for home electronics, and turn off power strips when equipment is not in use. TVs and DVD players, etc. still use power when the switch is off.
9. Replace worn-out seals on your refrigerator and freezer.
10. Plant a tree! Shade trees placed on the south or southeast side of your home will keep it cooler.



Florence ENERGY

NEWS YOU CAN USE FROM FLORENCE UTILITIES

Gasoline prices are increasing daily, as well as natural gas. Our suppliers are warning us that natural gas market prices are **35% to 40%** higher than last year for this summer. The manager of the Florence Utilities Gas Department has prepared an important natural gas rate announcement, which is included in this issue for your review.

The City of Florence is celebrating its 20th year of recycling thanks to its many dedicated participants. A new program has been started that will convert used cooking oil into biodiesel. Used cooking oil will be collected with your recycling. Please place your used oil in empty milk jugs or 2-liter soda bottles. Replacement bottles are available.

Energy conservation tips are included in this issue to help you save money on your utility bill during the summer months. Please look over the tips listed inside, and start conserving energy today.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The amount of the convenience fee charged for utility bill paying with a credit or debit card will change soon. The new amount will be \$4.95 per payment.

More energy conservation tips can be found at www.energyright.com.

www.florenceutilities.com