**Hawaii Energy works to improve state’s efficiency**

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Question: What are the origins of Hawaii Energy, and what is its mission?

Answer: Hawaii Energy is the state’s energy conservation and efficiency program, funded by electric utility ratepayers for the benefit of ratepayers. We serve the counties of Hawaii, Hono­lulu and Maui under the direction of the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission.

Our core mission is to educate, motivate and incentivize electric utility customers to adopt energy conservation and efficiency measures to save electricity and reduce Hawaii’s dependence on imported fuels.

Q: Is Hawaii on track to meet the energy efficiency goals spelled out in the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative?

A: The program plays an important role in helping to achieve Hawaii’s goal of reducing total electric energy usage by 30 percent or 4.3 billion kilowatt-hours by 2030. To date, we are on track to reach and quite possibly exceed this goal. However, our work is far from over. Our efforts must continue to reduce the demand for Hawaii’s limited resources.

Q: People may know Hawaii Energy for the rebates it provides for compact fluorescent lights and energy-efficient appliances, but it also conducts education and outreach programs. How is that effort going?

A: Hawaii Energy is making significant progress with our transformational program’s wide range of educational and training opportunities, which are offered throughout the year for underserved population segments, teachers and energy professionals.

Q: Hawaii Energy works with both residential and commercial utility customers. Which area has greater potential to reduce Hawaii’s overall energy consumption?

A: Commercial energy-efficiency efforts, with support from Hawaii Energy incentives, make a significant impact due to their size and volume. We work with businesses big and small — ranging from hotels to mom-and-pop stores — to see how we can reduce their electric bill and increase their bottom line with energy-efficient technology.

That said, without the participation and support of residential customers, we will not meet our energy efficiency goals.

Q: Is it true that installing a solar water heater is the largest single energy efficiency improvement homeowners can undertake to cut their electricity bill?

A: Yes. A typical home’s largest energy consumer is the electric water heater — if the household doesn’t have air conditioning or a swimming pool. When a household of four or more switches to a solar water heater, it can save up to 40 percent, at least $600 a year, on its electric bill. Hawaii Energy’s limited-time $1,000 instant rebate, combined with applicable state and federal tax credits, reduces the cost of the average solar water heating system from approximately $6,600 to about $2,000.

Q: What are some of the other, less obvious ways that homeowners can reduce their electricity usage?

A: There are several low-cost and no-cost things people can do today to save on their electric bill. People still waste a significant amount of electricity that they do not need to use. Here are some solutions:

>> Replace old-fashioned incandescent light bulbs with energy-saving compact fluorescent lights or light-emitting diodes. We provide instant rebates for both at various local retailers. No coupons or forms are needed since the prices factor in the rebate.

>> Turn off lights, computers, televisions and other electronics when you are not using them. Or, use a power strip so you can easily turn off multiple devices.

>> Instead of using the air conditioner, open your windows to capture our breezy tradewinds. If you need more cooling, try fans instead of the air conditioner.

<http://www.hawaiienergy.com/>