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15 ways to go green without going broke

By Kate Ramsayer / *The Bulletin*

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It doesn't take switching to solar panels or buying a hybrid car to live a more environmentally friendly life. For every budget, there are things people can do to reduce their energy consumption and waste.

"I think people do feel that in order to be green and live sustainably, they need to have a lot of disposable income, but it's not true really," said Shauna Quistorff, with Bend's Environmental Center.

While buying energy-efficient appliances or switching to an all-organic diet cost money, she said, there also are actions people can take that don't cost anything — like turning off lights when you leave a room.

Here are some other ways to live greener on a range of budgets.

Use environmentally friendly cleaning supplies

Cost: Varies

Why? Green cleaning supplies aren't harmful to the environment or people, said Jeremy Graybill, with the Oregon Environmental Council, and people can even make their own from ingredients like vinegar and baking soda. The group provides recipes that can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/greenrecipecard>.

Make a donation

Cost: As much as you like

Write a check to your favorite nonprofit, or invest in an environmentally focused startup, suggested Jeremy Graybill, with the Oregon Environmental Center.

Replace the bulbs in one or two rooms with CFLs



<p>\$50& under</p> <p>Buy a reusable water bottle and mug for coffee and tea</p> <p>Cost: \$10-\$20. Strictly Organic. <i>Travel Mug — \$15.</i></p> <p>Why? Cuts down on disposable beverage cups and plastic bottles. Strictly Organic estimates its Astoria Avenue store goes through about 500 cups a day — which can end up in a landfill.</p>	<p>\$500& under</p> <p>Audit your home performance with Energy Star</p> <p>Cost: around \$400</p> <p>Why? A company like Bend's GreenQuest will do a series of tests to see where air escapes from the house, inspect insulation levels, analyze them against levels of carbon monoxide and more, said Kerrie Van Nieu, with the company. "It takes a lot of diagnostic equipment to really show the homeowner where the air and the heat are leaking out," said Kerrie Van Nieu, with Energy Trust of Oregon.</p>	<p>\$5,000& under</p> <p>Install a solar hot water heater</p> <p>Cost: \$2,500 to \$5,500, after tax credits and incentives</p> <p>Why? A solar hot water heater can cut water heating costs by about 20 percent, said Kerrie Van Nieu, with Energy Trust of Oregon — and heating water is a significant part of a home's energy bill.</p>
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<p>\$50& under</p> <p>Buy a warm, cozy sweater and turn down the thermostat</p> <p>Cost: \$25</p> <p>Why? Turning back the thermostat by 10 to 15 degrees for eight hours a day can save about 10 percent on a heating bill, according to the Energy Information Administration. You might want to set aside some of the budget for some warm socks as well.</p>	<p>\$500& under</p> <p>Tune up your car</p> <p>Cost: varies depending on dealer and mileage</p> <p>Why? "A tuned-up engine is going to work more efficiently than an engine that isn't tuned up," said Marc Dotts, spokeswoman with AAA Oregon. "Quick tune-ups or air filter or an efficient engine can decrease a car's mileage, so can having underinflated tires," she said. For every pound per square inch of pressure a tire is underinflated, fuel efficiency declines about 2 percent.</p>	<p>\$5,000& under</p> <p>Weatherize your home</p> <p>Cost: around \$5,000</p> <p>Why? Depending on how much insulation a house has, it can cost \$1,000 to \$1,500 to insulate the floor of a 1,500-square-foot building, between \$1,000 and \$1,400 to insulate an attic and about \$2,300 to add insulation to walls, said Kerrie Van Nieu, with GreenQuest, but with a year, people can make between 10 and 25 percent of the cost back in savings on their heating bill, she said.</p>
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<p>\$50& under</p> <p>Replace the bulbs in one or two rooms with CFLs</p> <p>Cost: \$5-\$10 per bulb</p> <p>Why? Compact fluorescent lights have reached beyond the typical spiral bulb, said Kerrie Van Nieu, with Energy Trust of Oregon. Consumers can purchase bulbs that fit in bathroom vanity fixtures or even recessed fixtures in ceilings — when the bulb is long these can be handy. CFL bulbs use 75 percent less energy than conventional bulbs, she said.</p>	<p>\$500& under</p> <p>Participate in a CSA program or start your own garden</p> <p>Cost: \$100 to \$500</p> <p>Why? Buying a share in a community-supported agriculture program provides periodic fresh produce, said Jeremy Graybill, with the Oregon Environmental Center. It also reduces the miles and emissions involved in shipping food long distances. Or, people could start their own garden with fruits and vegetables — further reducing transportation costs and emissions.</p>	<p>\$5,000& under</p> <p>Replace old appliances with Energy Star appliances</p> <p>Cost: varies</p> <p>Why? Appliances that meet the Energy Star requirements — or exceed them — can save on water, heating and electric bills. A high-efficiency clothes washer can use 30 percent less electricity, said Kerrie Van Nieu, with Energy Trust of Oregon. And a fridge with the Energy Star sticker is at least 20 percent more efficient than a standard model is required to be.</p>
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Cost: \$5-plus per bulb

Why? Compact fluorescent lights have evolved beyond the simple spiral bulb, said Kendall Youngblood, with Energy Trust of Oregon. Consumers can purchase bulbs that fit in bathroom vanity fixtures or even recessed fixtures in ceilings — where the bulbs' long lifespan comes in handy. CFL bulbs use 75 percent less energy than conventional bulbs, she said.



Participate in a CSA program or plant your own garden

Cost: \$420 to \$600

Why? Buying a share in a community-supported agriculture program provides pesticide-free produce, said Jeremy Graybill, with the Oregon Environmental Center. It also reduces the costs and emissions involved in shipping food long distances. Or, people could plant their own garden with fruits and vegetables — further reducing transportation costs and emissions.

Replace old appliances with Energy Star appliances

Cost: Varies

Why? Appliances that meet the Energy Star requirements — or exceed them — can save on water, heating and electric bills. A high-efficiency clothes washer can use 30 percent less electricity, said Kendall Youngblood, with Energy Trust of Oregon. And a fridge with the Energy Star sticker is at least 20 percent more efficient than a standard model is required to be.

Buy a bus pass and commute to work

Cost: \$30 for an adult monthly pass for Bend Area Transit

Why? Riding a bus is like “carpooling with a whole heck of a lot of people,” said Shauna Quistorff, with Bend's Environmental Center. It reduces emissions and traffic congestion, as well as oil and gas use.

Buy a bike and ride to work

Cost: \$350 to \$500-plus

Why? Reduces gas costs, emissions and also provides a workout. Bike commuters will have myriad options for \$500, said Jason Quade, of Bend Bike N Sport. They also can get a bike they already own into roadworthy shape for \$75 to \$100. Bikers also can purchase saddlebags to haul work papers or groceries for \$25 to \$100.

Replace old doors and windows

Cost: Varies based on number and style of the windows, for example, \$3,000 for six regular windows

Why? Going from a single-pane to an energy-efficient, double-pane window can make a huge difference, said Shauna Quistorff, with Bend's Environmental Center. “You'll notice it immediately just standing next to the window.”

Buy a warm, cozy sweater and turn down the thermostat

Cost: \$25

Why? Turning back the thermostat by 10 to 15 degrees for eight hours a day can save about 10 percent on a heating bill, according to the Energy Information Association. You might want to set aside some of the budget for some warm socks as well.

Tune up your car

Cost: Varies depending on dealer and mileage

Why? "A tuned-up engine is going to work (more efficiently) than an engine that isn't tuned up," said Marie Dodds, spokeswoman with AAA Oregon. Gunk that builds up in the air filters or an inefficient engine can decrease a car's mileage, as can having underinflated tires, she said. For every pound per square inch of pressure a tire is underinflated, fuel efficiency declines about 2 percent.

Weatherize your home

Cost: around \$5,000

Why? Depending on how much insulation a house has, it can cost \$1,200 to \$1,500 to insulate the floor of a 1,500-square-foot building, between \$1,000 and \$1,400 to insulate an attic and about \$2,300 to add insulation to walls, said Kendra Van Note, with GreenSavers. But within a year, people can make between 10 and 25 percent of that cost back in savings on their heating bill, she said.

Install a solar hot water heater

Cost: \$2,500 to \$5,500, after tax credits and incentives

Why? A solar hot water heater can cut water heating costs by about 70 percent, said Kendall Youngblood, with Energy Trust of Oregon — and heating water is a significant part of a home's energy bill.

Audit your home performance with Energy Star

Cost: around \$400

Why? A company like Bend's GreenSavers will do a series of tests to see where air escapes from the house, inspect insulation levels, ensure there aren't unsafe levels of carbon monoxide and more, said Kendra Van Note, with the company. "It uses a lot of diagnostic equipment to really show the homeowner where the air and the heat are leaking out," said Kendall Youngblood, with Energy Trust of Oregon.

Buy a reusable water bottle and mug for coffee and tea

Cost: stainless steel water bottle at rei.com — \$20; Strictly Organic travel mug — \$16

Why? Cuts down on disposable beverage cups and plastic bottles. Strictly Organic estimates its Arizona Avenue store goes through about 500 cups a day — which can end up in a landfill.

Install a Solatube

Cost: \$415 or \$515, before a 30 percent tax credit

Why? Solatubes provide natural light in an otherwise dim room, said Shauna Quistorff, with Bend's Environmental Center — eliminating the need to switch lights on and off. They come in 10- and 14-inch sizes, said Brennan Morrow, with Solar Light, which sells and installs the tubes to light anything from bathrooms to living rooms.

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